

## GO DEEPER

use these questions for further study

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**Read Matthew 1:18-23** Make 2-3 observations of what you see in the text and note any questions you have. Try to answer your questions by using information you find in the passage. Then answer some or all of the questions below.

Why does the Angel say that Jesus will be called “Immanuel”?

What does the birth of Jesus (the incarnation) teach us about who God is and what God desires?

What are some of the ways God shows up to/with people in the Bible?

On a scale of 1-10, how often do you live like God is really present with you?  
What makes it easy to live like God is with you? What makes it hard?

Have you had experiences when you clearly and vividly encountered the presence of God? If so, what was it like? Where were you? How did you respond?

Read Psalm 84: 5-7

How would you describe the Valley of Baca (tears) in your own words?

What is it like to walk through the Valley of Baca?

Have you had times in your life when it felt like God was far off?

When? What was it like?

How did you respond to this feeling?

Did things change? If so, how and when?

Why do we tend to notice or praise God in the good times more than in the bad?

Read Psalm 139:1-13. What thoughts or emotions does this Psalm stir in you?

How might this Psalm be an encouragement when we are in the valley?

Why is it that many people have their most profound encounters with God while in the valleys of life?

Scripture tells us to draw near to God and he will draw near to us (James 4:8).

How do we draw near to God? Be specific

Does it look the same in every season? Why/why not?

How might you need to draw near to God in this season?

Close by reading Jesus’ prayer for you in John 17:2--26 (Yes! He prayed this prayer for you!!). As you read it, notice what Jesus asks, notice his heart. Allow the Holy Spirit to minister to you through Jesus’ prayer, and know that the Father loves you with the same love he has for Jesus.

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