<center>**Christmas Character**
The example of Joseph
Matthew 1:18-25</center>

Introduction:
●Joseph trivia
1. Joseph is never q_____ in any Scripture.
2. Joseph's character traits are clearly d_____.
●What if every Christian were known to have the character traits of Joseph? As you celebrate Christmas, be reminded to display the following traits.

Uncompromising – submit to biblical standards (18,19)
●Joseph did not compromise m_____
1. V. 18 – *before they <u>came together</u>*
   a. This word often refers to people gathering together for a m_____ (e.g. Mark 14:3)
   b. This word can also mean to come together s_____ (e.g. 1Cor 7:5)
   c. In this context
      1) The Jewish engagement was as b_____ as marriage and so to break it was equal to d_____.
      2) The groom was traditionally self-s_____ and had his own home.
      3) At the end of the engagement period, the groom would lead a processional of family and friends to the bride's home and carry her to his h_____.
      4) After a time of celebration with friends, the bride and groom would "come together" to consummate the m_____.
2. He was a r_____ man – this was not just how God viewed him, but how people viewed him. He lived God's w_____.

●**Application**
1. Jesus came to set us f_____ from our sinful desires (Jn 8:32)
   a. This does not make life e_____
   b. This does make all our c_____ easy

2. Compromise is one of the greatest temptations
   a. Compromise will m_____ your life
   b. God will never mess up your life (don't let anyone, any goal, or anything make you think different).

Compassionate – consider others first (19b)
● How did Joseph discover this pregnancy? – we aren't t_____
   1. We get the idea from Luke 1:39 that Mary i_____ went to her cousin Elizabeth's home in another town.
   2. She told her the "miracle story" and stayed with Elizabeth for ____ months.
   3. Either news of Mary's pregnancy spread to Joseph while she was away or as soon as she returned.
● What was Joseph's reaction to this pregnancy?
   1. Joseph did not want to d_____ her by a public divorce, which would brand Mary as an a_____.
   2. Joseph decided to end the engagement p_____
   3. Joseph did not consider his feelings first, but Mary's and handle the matter in the most l_____ way he knew.
● Application
   1. When mankind wronged God, God thought of mankind f_____ and sent His only Son so as to give us the greatest motivation to repent.
   2. When you are wronged (or think you are wronged) by someone, whom will you consider first?
      a. See others hearts like a g_____ and plant compassion.
      b. This will take great thought, time, and effort.

Compliant – adjust to God's leadership (20-25)
● Joseph was not rash in his decision but s_____ on it
   1. An angel communicated to him in a d_____ that Mary was pregnant by the Holy Spirit.
   2. The angel told him to not be a_____ to marry her.
   3. The angel told him to name the baby, Jesus because He would s_____ His people from their sins (Jesus means Yahweh is salvation)

●Joseph got up and adjusted to God's leadership and continued adjusting.
  1. He married her although he would have to endure the g_____
  2. After Jesus was born in Bethlehem, he took his family to E_____ in obedience to God (2:13,14)
  3. After Herod died, he returned to the land of I_____ by God's order (2:19,20).
  4. He went to Nazareth (a place he would have wanted to avoid), after being warned in a dream.
●Application
  1. God does not usually tells us the reasons for leading us to certain places, people, or situations. He just says, "T_____ Me and adjust!"
  2. How have you adjusted to God's leadership?
     a. We often r_____ God's leadership initially.
     b. Sometimes we p_____ in resisting His leadership (this is a painful process)
     c. We usually submit to His leadership e_____.
        So why not just submit immediately? God's leadership is better than anyone, anything, any plan, any place (agree?)

Conclusion – This is character that truly celebrates Christ:
1. Uncompromising in biblical standards
2. Compassionate toward others
3. Compliant to God's daily leadership

Merry Christmas!