



WEEK 1 • GROUP GUIDE • MESSAGE BY CHAD BRUEGMAN

START

To get things started, go around the circle and answer this question:

Merriam-Webster defines a pet peeve as “a frequent subject of complaint,” or something that annoys a person. What would you say are your biggest pet peeves and why?

SHARE

Welcome to our brand new teaching series entitled, “Pardon the Interruption.”

This series about interruptions will last through Christmas. It is appropriate for this time of year, since the birth of Jesus Christ happened to be the biggest historical interruption the world has ever known. When we think of interruptions, we don’t typically welcome them and even tend to get frustrated when they come since they are usually not part of our plans. The very nature of an interruption means you were in the middle of doing something and now you suddenly are doing something quite different.

There is a great quote about life’s interruptions: “Life is what happens to you while you’re busy making other plans.” Each one of us has plans or purposes that we are living out with some degree of expectation that we will arrive or see those things happen. Almost all of us have experienced seasons where those plans seem to be derailed or drastically changed and we are set on a whole new course. Looking back on those interruptions in life, some of us would say that it was the best thing to ever happen to us, while others might say it was the worst thing to ever happen. Whether it is a job change, an abrupt shift in family dynamics, relational break-ups, or a change in the way you live life...interruptions cause us to see life differently.

What if we welcome interruptions in our lives and ask God to allow us to see things differently? What if we trust that God is good and can be trusted even when things don’t make sense to us in this broken world? Throughout this series we are going to see how God speaks in the interruptions in life and when the unexpected happens, we can always expect that our God sees, hears, strengthens, guides, loves and will direct our steps.



Pardon the interruption...

Let's read Matthew 1:18-25

What is your first response when you are interrupted?

How do you think this situation would affect you if you were Joseph?

What is the very first thing Joseph did when he woke up and why is that so important?

GROW

When we go through confusing times in life and feel that our plans have been interrupted, we need to take time to stop what we are doing and ask God to help us see things from another perspective. God's ways are higher than our ways and if God is truly a perfectly loving God, then we can trust him with those interruptions.

As Chad mentioned in his message, "All God's acts of redemption start with an interruption and in the Christmas story; interruption has a name and that is obedience."

Obedience is not our favorite word to hear when life seems confusing. Obedience is highly underrated, underused, and highly misunderstood by the majority of Christ-followers. Joseph, however; heard from an angel of the Lord and despite all the doubts, laid down his fears and trusted God. Trust in God allowed Joseph to be obedient and because he trusted the voice of God, he decided to "get up" and listen to God.

Proverbs 3:5-6

Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him and he will make your paths straight.

Did it make perfect intellectual sense for Joseph to trust God?

Was there a risk of relational fallout if Joseph trusted God?

Was there a risk of Joseph being judged or persecuted by others if he obeyed God?

According to Proverbs, what should we do if we desire to have God make our "paths straight?"

MOVE

Obedience will require each of us to make some of the gutsiest and boldest decisions we will ever encounter in a lifetime. It will require us to trust in the goodness and character of a perfect God and to truly believe that his commands to us are not to rob us of anything, but to give us joy, peace, hope and to make our paths straight.

Joseph learned this through a crazy time in life and it turned out that his interruption was the best gift that ever happened to him.

Do we truly believe that? Which of us can actually obey God perfectly? Who do we look to as our example? Jesus. Jesus did for us what we could not do on our own. Jesus obeyed God despite the circumstances and pain, and with perfect humility went to the cross for you and me. The story didn't end there. He went "for the joy set before Him!" He rose from the dead



and conquered that which looked to conquer him. He was then exalted to the highest place and now we have the Holy Spirit; God with us every day to give us the power and strength to live out this life of obedience.

When life seems to be interrupted by difficult times, we learn to trust God by obeying him. Yes it can feel humiliating, but God promises us joy, strength and peace.

Philippians 2:5-11

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Warren Wiersbe, in Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the New Testament describes the importance of humility and obedience:

Paul points to the attitude of Christ before His incarnation. Was He selfishly trying to hold on to His privileges as God? No! He willingly laid aside His glory and “put on” the form of a servant. He did not cease to be God, but He did lay aside His glory and the independent use of His attributes as God. His life as the God-Man on earth was completely subjected to the Father. “I do always those things that please Him” (John 8:29). Jesus humbled Himself to become flesh, and then to become sin as He willingly went to the cross.

But Christ's experience proves that exaltation always follows humiliation. “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time,” promises 1 Peter 5:6. The person who exalts himself will be humbled (Luke 14:11).

Exaltation follows humility, what do you think this means? Can you give an example of how you have experienced or seen this happen?

Chad talked about the correlation between obedience and joy. What do you think this means?

Think about your life today. Is there something that God has impressed on your heart that you know you need to be obedient in? (Consider sharing this question during the prayer time in guys and ladies groups. Sometimes it profoundly helps to be in separate groups for a big question like this)

PRAY

As a group, spend some time praying for each other and the struggles that we all face. If you are in a co-ed group, consider breaking up into men and women's groups to talk more freely.

TO GO

John 15:9-11

As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.

