

# SHACKLED

Community Group Discussion: 12.08 - 12.22

## **SERIES OVERVIEW**

*You may be familiar with Charles Dickens' classic short novel, A Christmas Carol. Dickens' character Ebenezer Scrooge is haunted by the ghosts of Christmas past, present, and future. His former employer, Jacob Marley visits him as a spirit wearing shackles, symbolizing the failings of their life on earth. Whether sins of the past, present, or future, we often wear our own proverbial shackles and are bound by them in this life. The good news of Christmas, however, is God putting on flesh and becoming as one of us. In Jesus, we find freedom from the shackles of our past, our present, and our future.*

## **MAIN TEXT**

Matthew 1:26-38, Joshua 1:9, Psalm 23:4, Matthew 11:28-30

## **GETTING STARTED**

Where would you place your self on the Christmas excitement scale?

Scrooge — 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — Buddy the Elf

## **DIGGING DEEPER**

1. Read Luke 1:26-34. If you were Mary how would you have responded to this? What would you be feeling? If you were Joseph how would you receive this news from Mary?
2. According to Luke 1:29 and 34, Mary was feeling some fear, confusion and anxiety. In what area of your life do you have fear or anxiety? How much do you feel like fear or anxiety effects your life?
3. Joshua 1:9 and Psalm 23:4. What is the relationship between the command, "Do not fear," and the promise, "I am with you"? What can you do to help you focus on God's presence more than your problems?

4. On a scale of 1-10, with one being slow and 10 being frantic, how would you describe your pace of life in this season of your life? What adjustments do you think would be healthier for you?
5. Read Matthew 11:28-30. What parts of this verse stand out to you most? What characteristics of the way Jesus lived and his pace of life stand out to you? What can you learn from watching him?
6. God put a special emphasis on sabbath when he created it, calling it Holy. How important is taking a sabbath to you? Do you think a sabbath is beneficial to your relationship with God?

## **NEXT STEPS**

Read Luke 1:38. Mary surrendered her will for her life to God's will for her life. When have you had to do this in the past? Where, or what, in your life do you need to surrender to God now?



**Dec. 22: 5 & 7 p.m.**

Both Campuses