

Read Isaiah 7:1-17

For the background to this story, read 2 Kings 16:1-9. What picture do these two passages give you of the kind of king Ahaz was?

Why did Ahaz refuse to trust in God to rescue him from Aram and Israel?

In what ways do you find it difficult to trust fully in God? What situations and circumstances are you facing (or have you faced in the past) where you have struggled to trust God?

What sign was Ahaz promised to confirm that he could trust in God to deliver Judah (v14)?

How is the sign of 'Immanuel' still important and relevant to us today?

How does the assurance that God is with us (Immanuel) help us to trust him in difficult times?

What does it look like practically to trust in God? How does it relate to other steps such as seeking good advice and strategic planning?

Read the following excerpt from *The Shack* (William Paul Young). It is written from God's perspective:

*"The real, underlying flaw in your life, MacKenzie, is that you don't think I am good. If you knew I was good and that everything—the means, the ends, and all the processes of individual lives—is all covered by my goodness, then while you might not always understand what I am doing, you would trust me. But you don't...MacKenzie, you cannot produce trust, just as you cannot "do" humility. It either is or is not. Trust is the fruit of a relationship in which you know you are loved. Because you do not know that I love you, you cannot trust me."*

What does this reveal about trusting God?

What underlying assumptions about God may be preventing you from fully trusting him?

What steps could you take this week to develop greater trust in God in one area of your life?