

# Fire Starter

Matthew 1:1–25

**THINK:** Do you ever feel that because of your past failures or what you've been through that God could never use you for a great purpose? Jesus came to earth to relate to your pain so that you could relate to His purposes. Look back at Old Testament passages that highlight the lives of Jesus' ancestors. You'll find that many of these individuals have major character flaws and failures in their past (e.g., Jacob, who lied; Rahab, the prostitute).

**RESPOND:** What does the title "Christ" refer to when connected to Jesus? (Greek: *christos* means "anointed," which is like saying chosen, commissioned, empowered, set apart for special service.) What does it mean that Jesus was the "son of David"? (Matthew demonstrates that Jesus was a legal descendant of David by tracing the family history of his earthly father, Joseph, who was from King David's family line.) Why did Matthew list Jesus' ancestors in this way? (Jewish custom traces family history through one's paternal line—that is, His earthly father's side.) Considering the variety of people in Jesus' family line, what does this tell you about God and the people He can use to serve His highest purposes? How can this provide comfort and encouragement to you? What does the name Jesus mean and what is its significance in relation to Christ? (Jesus is the Greek version of the Hebrew name *Yeshua* [Joshua], translated "the Lord saves." Christ in Greek is the Hebrew equivalent of "Messiah," referring to the Savior the Jews were waiting for.) Why did Jesus have to live and suffer as a human, and how does that relate to you?

**PRAY:** Give God thanks for His forgiveness and for the assurance that the hurts and failures of your past do not have to stand in the way of God's ultimate plans for your life. If there is anything that is hindering your personal relationship with Jesus, confess it to Him and submit to His purposes.

**ACT:** Demonstrate God's love through an act of kindness or word of encouragement to someone who may seem spiritually distant or "unreachable." Pray for that individual and do something practical to help them. If you have the opportunity, let the person know that God loves them and you are praying that they discover God's plan for their life.