

## Day 1

December 10



Pray | *Pray to be unafraid and a part of God's plan for your life.*

### DO NOT BE AFRAID

On a recent Doctor Who episode the Doctor says to a main character, "Don't be scared. All of this is new to you, and new can be scary."

"Do not be afraid" is what the angel Gabriel says to both Zechariah and Mary. These four words and at what point they are spoken seem to differentiate the two interactions. Notice these are the first words Zechariah hears and are meant to quell his shock and fright. Yet with Mary, the angel begins by telling her how she is favored by God. She is perplexed by the intended meaning and the application towards her. Gabriel calms Mary and reassures her she is in God's favor.

To Zechariah, Gabriel brings a message of an answered personal prayer; it includes God's plan for John. To Mary, Gabriel brings a message of an appointed personal mission; it includes God's plan for redeeming all people.



Read | Luke 1:26-30



Reflect | *Spend time reflecting on one or more of the following:*

Many angel names and job duties are not given nor explained when they appear in the Biblical narrative. Gabriel is an exception being both named and telling us he has been sent as a messenger. How does knowing the same angel visited Zechariah and Mary help link their stories for you?

Beware of strangers making odd comments. If you have ever had someone you don't know come up to you and start a conversation on a unusual note you may be able to understand Mary's pause to comprehend that she is in God's favor. What things does this brief introduction to Mary tell us about her character?

Especially in the Catholic church Mary has been given an elevated status. Looking at verse 29, are you reassured that Mary is exactly what she is presented as being in Scripture and nothing more? Why?

## Day 2

December 11



Pray | *Ask God for wisdom to understand the information he gives you.*

CRAZY, WONDERFUL, INFORMATION OVERLOAD.

Mary is having quite a day. An angel appears and gives her so much heavy information that a psychiatrist could easily prescribe an infinite number of counseling sessions just to begin to sort it out. God in his wisdom has chosen a young woman in a small town, who is promised to a man to whom she is not yet married, to bring forth the plan of redemption. Mary does not waver; she does not break. Rather she rises to the challenge and accepts the message as it's delivered by the angel Gabriel. He tells Mary she will give birth to a son. This baby will be an eternal king—none other than the son of God! Imagine Mary taking everything in. Who to even tell? How? It is crazy, wonderful, information overload.



Read | [Luke 1:31-33](#)



Reflect | *Spend time reflecting on one or more of the following:*

When things are repeated in the Bible it becomes obvious that we need to pay attention to what is being said. In what ways does the angel's response to Zechariah and Mary remind us of how to have a healthy fear of God?

The angel said what Mary (and every other Jewish person) has been waiting to hear... the promised Messiah is coming! God's messenger describing your child's accomplishments in advance makes parenting an extraordinary responsibility. How about your responsibility to share the good news of Jesus?

God chose Mary to share the incredible journey of raising the incarnate Messiah as her son. She raised him to watch him give his life as a ransom for many—and for you. Have you ever asked Jesus into your life as your savior?

## Day 3

December 12



Pray | *Thank God for the lessons of Mary's faithfulness.*

NOT DOUBT, ONLY CONFIDENCE IN GOD

Looking at Mary's exchange with Gabriel we can begin to see what an incredible person she was; faithful and confident God can do anything. Not unlike Zechariah after hearing the angel's message, Mary asks the angel a question, too. Yet, very much unlike Zechariah's doubting inquiry, Mary accepts what is foretold as being well within the realm of God's abilities. Her question is not if, but how will this virgin pregnancy transpire. Note how Luke tightens the links between Zechariah and Mary's experiences with Gabriel by bringing Elizabeth back into the narrative. God sends his messengers and also utilizes them to offer us reassurances.



Read | [Luke 1:34-36](#)



Reflect | *Spend time reflecting on one or more of the following:*

Zechariah wanted proof of the promise. Mary wanted the logistics of how a virgin pregnancy worked exactly. When you question God's messengers you can either query what God is capable of, or you can ask how it works; you are on board and just want to understand how it all goes down. Which approach better describes your response, and how can you move from doubt towards belief?

Believing in God and having faith he will fulfill his promises doesn't mean we have all the answers. In what ways is questioning God healthy for our spiritual development and in which ways is it not?

If you believe God is precisely that-God-then you automatically need to expand your belief to expect that he is also capable of delivering on every promise he has ever made. What things do you need to repent of right now that are keeping you from totally accepting God can do what he says he will?



## Day 4

December 13



Pray | *Thank God for who he is, and what he can do.*

IT IS ONLY IMPOSSIBLE UNTIL YOU KNOW HOW TO DO IT.

Magicians, illusionists, and con artists all rely on the fact that the audience, or victim if you prefer, do not know how a ruse is done; that is why it can be successful repeatedly. You can see an illusion or magic trick over and over, and still fall for it every time. You may even think it is an impossibility-at least up until you are shown the secret of how it is done.

In no way are the miracles of God on the same level as illusions and magic tricks. God is trustworthy. His Word offers us example after example about his unfailing nature, and most importantly, that he can and does do what he says he will, period!



Read | [Luke 1:37](#)



Reflect | *Spend time reflecting on one or more of the following:*

Verse 37 says God's word never fails. So do you believe what it says-not simply agree with it but really, and truly, believe it with no exceptions or rationalizations required?

Do an internet search for DC Talk's song lyrics for "What if I Stumble". Read the the first four lines. Now ask yourself if you have watered down the absolute truth of Luke 1:37 because of people's actions rather than God's?

The next time you have something that frustrates you, distracts you, or seems impossible for you, remember Luke 1:37. Then pray about the situation. See what God does when you take him out of the box you may have put him into.

## Day 5

December 14



Pray | *As a servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.*

### ACCEPTANCE

Chicken and egg scenario. Did the angel appear to Mary because God knew she would agree or did Mary agree because she already knew God would do what the angel said he would do? This one verse has a lot to it. It is a mini-sermon by itself on how Mary shows us we are to live for God. Three observations. First, Mary believes in God. Second, she serves God including accepting his extremely huge ask on her life. Finally, she does these things willingly and with the expectation that God will fulfill his word.



Read | [Luke 1:38](#)



Reflect | *Spend time reflecting on one or more of the following:*

Everyone serves something. How you spend your time, your money, who you hang out with, and the words you say all say a lot about who or what you serve. What things may God be prompting you through Mary's example to change in your life?

Remember that God does not need you to get things done but he enables you to be a part of what he is doing. When God has a big ask on your life you can choose to opt out knowing this or step up and follow him. Which one is your default mode and how can you ask God help you to step up more?

The Serenity Prayer's line to "accept the things I cannot change" hints like Mary's response does that we need to reach acceptance of certain things. Once you accept that God is who he says he is then you can also accept that his word to you will be fulfilled. Do you believe this?

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