

A woman with long brown hair is wrapped in a light blue cloth, looking upwards and to the right with a contemplative expression. The background is dark.

# Mary

## God Chooses Those Who Are Available

*Mary said, "Behold, the bondservant of the Lord;  
may it be done to me according to your word."*

—Luke 1:38

# Ordinary People, Extraordinary Savior



Mary is a central character in the Christmas story. The fact is, without Mary, the Christmas story would not have taken place. God needed somebody to be the mother of the Savior of the world. Whom would He choose? God had to find a person who was available.

We find Mary's story in Luke 1:26–31:

*Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming in, he said to her, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was very perplexed at this statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus."*

Notice that the angel said to Mary, "Do not be afraid." In the Bible, angels usually came to deliver the bad news that judgment was coming. Can you imagine what Mary must have thought when an angel appeared to her? But in this case, the angel was saying, "Mary, you don't have to be afraid, because you have found favor with God."

Of the billions of women throughout history God could have chosen to be the mother of Jesus, why did He choose Mary? According to Jewish culture, Mary was probably a young teenager. Why did this peasant girl from Nazareth find favor with God? Mary exhibited four qualities of what it means to be available to God.

First of all, *Mary was pure*. Seven hundred years before the birth of Christ, Isaiah 7:14 prophesied that the Messiah would be born of a virgin. Mary was faithful to God, and she remained pure. When God is looking for somebody to use, He chooses those who are not necessarily the most talented, the most qualified, or the most beautiful, but those who are pure.

Second, *Mary believed God's word*. In Luke 1:45, Elizabeth said about her cousin Mary, "Blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what had been spoken to her by the Lord." Mary didn't understand how she was going to give birth to the Savior, but she believed what God said, and she acted accordingly.

Third, *Mary placed the glory of God above her own reputation*. Mary knew that if she agreed to be used by God like this, it would harm her reputation. After all, who was going to believe her? People would spread rumors about her. How many teenage girls do you know who

# God with Us



don't care about what people say about them? But Mary said to the angel in Luke 1:38, "Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word."

Finally, *Mary was willing to sacrifice what was most important to her*. Mary knew the consequences of allowing herself to be the mother of Jesus. The Old Testament law said if an engaged woman was unfaithful to her husband-to-be, she was to be put to death. And even if Joseph chose not to do that, he would probably break their engagement. Mary realized that saying yes to God meant losing the person who meant everything to her. To be available to God means to be willing to sacrifice what's most important to you. Are you willing to do that?

Every time you see Mary in a nativity scene, ask yourself: "Am I available to God? Am I keeping myself pure? Do I believe the promises of God? Am I willing to place God's glory above my reputation? Am I willing to sacrifice that which is most important to me?"

***God chooses those who are available.***

## Questions for Reflection

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1. Have you ever sensed God calling you to do something, but you thought you weren't qualified? How did you respond?
2. What opportunities is God giving you this Christmas season to be available to Him?