



# CHOSEN

When God Calls Your Name

Session 1: When God Changes Everything

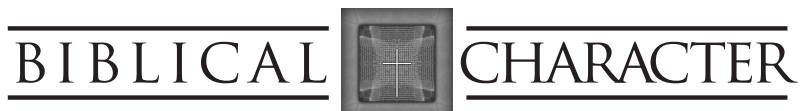
Session 2: When You Feel All Alone

Session 3: When Life Breaks Your Heart

Session 4: When Life Must Go On

PHIL TUTTLE

WALK THRU THE BIBLE®



S E R I E S

# Session 1: When God Changes Everything

## MARY'S PLAN - Luke 1:26-27

Mary was a young virgin, probably a \_\_\_\_\_.

Mary was pledged to be married to \_\_\_\_\_.

Engagement was much more \_\_\_\_\_ in Jewish culture than ours.

**Betrothal** was much more binding in Joseph and Mary's culture than a typical engagement is today. It could take place as early as 12 years old. According to Tyndale's New Testament Commentaries, "It was a solemn undertaking to marry, so binding that divorce was necessary to break it."

## THE INTERRUPTION - Luke 1:28

God chose \_\_\_\_\_ to visit Mary.

Gabriel said Mary was highly \_\_\_\_\_ and assured her the Lord was with her.

Favored is from the same root word as \_\_\_\_\_.

We associate the word favor with "favorite." And perhaps we think of that spoiled "daddy's girl" or "momma's boy" who gets whatever he/she wants. But as we will see from Mary, being divinely favored doesn't mean entitled or guaranteed an easy life free of struggles. The word favor, used in this context, doesn't suggest that Mary is able to give favor to others. Rather, it means that she has received favor from God. He chose her to be the mother of our Savior.

# Session 1: When God Changes Everything

## DID YOU KNOW?

Only three angels are named in

Scripture:

### **Gabriel**

Daniel 8:16; 9:21;  
Luke 1:19, 26

### **Michael**

Daniel 10:13, 21;  
12:1; Jude 9;  
Revelation 12:7

### **Lucifer**

Isaiah 14:12

## DID YOU KNOW?

One of the strongest advocates for the miraculous claim that Jesus was born of a virgin was Luke, a physician.

## **GOD'S PLAN - Luke 1:29-33**

Mary was greatly \_\_\_\_\_ and full of \_\_\_\_\_.

Gabriel told her not to be \_\_\_\_\_ and repeated that she had found \_\_\_\_\_ with God.

Mary would give birth to a \_\_\_\_\_.

- His name would be Jesus.
- He would be great.
- He would be called the Son of the Most High.
- He would be given David's throne.
- He would reign forever.

## **MARY'S QUESTION - LUKE 1:34-35**

Mary asked how this was possible since she was a \_\_\_\_\_.

Mary's response was based on \_\_\_\_\_ rather than \_\_\_\_\_.

Gabriel told Mary her baby would be conceived by the Holy Spirit. Jesus' virgin birth was both a \_\_\_\_\_ and a \_\_\_\_\_.

Mystery can lead us to confusion and frustration or to \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

## Session 1: When God Changes Everything

“We are not uncertain of God, but uncertain of what He will do next. If we are only certain in our beliefs we get dignified and severe and have the ban of finality about our views but when we are rightly related to God, life is full of spontaneous, joyful uncertainty and expectancy.”

—Oswald Chambers

My Utmost for His Highest

### **GABRIEL’S ANSWER - LUKE 1:36-37**

Gabriel used Elizabeth’s pregnancy to illustrate God’s \_\_\_\_\_.

Gabriel assured Mary that God will always \_\_\_\_\_ His promises.

### **MARY’S RESPONSE - LUKE 1:38**

Mary declared that she was the Lord’s \_\_\_\_\_.

Mary surrendered herself and \_\_\_\_\_ her role in God’s plan.

Mary chose to please God regardless of the \_\_\_\_\_.

## Discuss

## Session 1: When God Changes Everything

1. What is God doing in your life right now that doesn't make sense?
2. Prior to this study, what has been your knowledge/opinion of Mary Put another way, what would you have said about her a month ago if—let's say—a five year-old child had said to you, "Tell me all about Jesus' mommy"?
3. The story of Mary raises so many important issues and questions. Her experience is first and foremost about change , about a life suddenly interrupted and radically redirected. How are you when it comes to change? Rate yourself on a 1-10 scale (where 1 – "I break into hives if I have to get a new toothbrush!" and 10 – "I go nuts if I don't get to change my job and my address about every six months!"). How possible is it for change-resistant people to, well, change?
4. In a matter of moments, Mary's entire world was flipped upside down. Talk about blind-sided! When in your life have you most dramatically seen your plans and dreams suddenly go up in smoke? What did you do (are you doing)?
5. Mary, despite being very young, demonstrated great maturity. She declared herself to be God's servant. She relinquished her plans, her future. In effect, she said, "I'm all in...let's do this." What does this reveal about her character and faith (especially when you consider that other, older biblical characters, like Moses and Jonah, argued with God when He called them to special tasks)?
6. Think about a time when you were selected for something wonderful (i.e., a great honor like being on an All-Star team, he or she said "I love you," given a big promotion at work). Now think about a time when you were approached about tackling a tough task, or chosen by a superior to handle an unpleasant situation, etc. Compare and contrast those different experiences. How was Mary's calling both at once?

## Session 1: When God Changes Everything

## Apply

1. What comes to mind when you hear the word favor ? How would you interpret someone telling you, "God has favored you!"?

2. For the great majority of the world, God's calling is rarely as clear as what Mary received. Think about it. She got an angelic visitor... who brought her a heavenly message...and this was followed by a miraculous pregnancy. Mary is one of the few people in history who could never honestly say, "I didn't have a clue what God put me on earth to do."

But clear or not, God has plans and purposes for each of us (Ephesians 2:10). What do you believe God is calling you to do at this stage of your life, and why do you think that? How are you doing with that call?

3. In what area of your life are your plans and hopes being thwarted or perhaps even destroyed (i.e., things are not going the way you anticipated)?

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> My career              | <input type="checkbox"/> My marital hopes        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> My desire for children | <input type="checkbox"/> My ministry aspirations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> My financial goals     | <input type="checkbox"/> My spiritual desires    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____           |  |

How can you emulate the attitude of Mary in your hard and disappointing situation?

4. The verses in Luke 1:26-38 don't have time stamps on them. That is, we don't know how long this interaction with Gabriel lasted. But it's worth noting that Mary doesn't ask for a few days or a couple weeks to think, pray, and/or talk through the angel's news with Joseph, her best friend, and/or her small group. Her submissive spirit of surrender is evident immediately. Where specifically in your life do you sense God calling (and yet you're stalling)? What will you do today to begin moving in a direction of trust and obedience?

## Session 2: When You Feel All Alone

### THE BACKGROUND - LUKE 1:35

Gabriel left and Mary was all \_\_\_\_\_.

### MARY'S ESCAPE - LUKE 1:39-40

Soon after the angel left, Mary \_\_\_\_\_ to see Elizabeth.

Her journey was about \_\_\_\_\_ and would have taken \_\_\_\_\_.

Elizabeth was the wife of a priest named Zechariah. They were very godly. They were also old and childless. An angel appeared to Zechariah to tell him that Elizabeth would have a son. They were to name this child John (who would later be known as John the Baptist). Elizabeth was a relative of Mary, and you can read her story in Luke 1.

### ELIZABETH'S REACTION - LUKE 1:41-45

Even before Mary shared her news, God \_\_\_\_\_ His presence.

- Elizabeth felt the baby leap in her womb.
- Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

Elizabeth declared God's \_\_\_\_\_ on Mary and her child.

Elizabeth focused on Mary's \_\_\_\_\_.

Friendship is unnecessary, like philosophy, like art...it has no survival value; rather it is one of those things that give value to survival.

—C.S. Lewis

## Session 2: When You Feel All Alone

A friend loves at all times,  
and a brother is born for a time of adversity.  
—Proverbs 17:17

I have hidden your  
word in my heart  
that I might not sin  
against you.  
—Psalm 119:11

### **MARY'S SONG - LUKE 1:46-56**

Mary glorified \_\_\_\_\_ rather than herself.

Mary rejoiced that God had provided her \_\_\_\_\_.

Mary \_\_\_\_\_ her passionate knowledge of God's Word.

Mary recognized that her son would \_\_\_\_\_ God's covenant with Abraham.

Mary returned home ready to face her new \_\_\_\_\_.

### **ELIZABETH AND MARY**

- Both knew God's Word well.
- Both were filled with the Holy Spirit.
- Both still needed a \_\_\_\_\_.

Their friendships were built on shared experiences.

- Exhilaration of miracle births
- Pain of their sons' rejection
- Horror of their sons' brutal deaths



1. In what area of your life do you need an Elizabeth right now? Who can be that person for you?
2. In our last session we saw the angel Gabriel visit Mary and deliver the stunning news that God had favored her—that she would give birth to Israel’s Messiah. Gabriel dropped that massive bombshell on Mary...and promptly disappeared. Though Mary accepted this news with remarkable humility, she had to be feeling overwhelmed. Though “the Lord was with her” she must have felt alone.
3. TA study of the Gospels reveals that Jesus engaged people in three primary contexts:
  - in large groups (sermons to the masses; feedings/healings of giant crowds);
  - in a small group setting (the 12 disciples; the smaller group of three within the 12);
  - one-on-one (Mary or Matthew, Zacchaeus or the rich young ruler) The implication is that as we follow Jesus, all of these settings are important to our growth.  
What is it about small groups and one-to-one relationships that makes them so indispensable to our spiritual and emotional health and growth? Why are personal face-to-face interactions preferable to exchanges via social media?
4. Upon seeing Mary at her door, Elizabeth erupted in praise (read Luke 1:42-45). How might her words have encouraged Mary?
5. Read Luke 1:46-55. Elizabeth’s outburst caused Mary to break into a spontaneous song, with lyrics straight from the Old Testament. Clearly Mary knew big chunks of God’s Word by heart, so that in such moments, she could call God’s truth to mind.

Writer Kathleen Norris once said, “If I had to find one word to describe how belief came to take hold in me, it would be ‘repetition.’” How much of God’s Word have you repeated (i.e., repeatedly read and pondered) until it was imprinted in your memory?

## Session 2: When You Feel All Alone

## Discuss

In addition to memorizing, someone has said we can hear God's Word (taught or preached), read it, study it, and meditate on it. Which of these practices do you tend to do most and least?

6. Following Mary's visit, Elizabeth gave birth to her son, John (i.e., John the Baptist, the one prophesied by Isaiah who would be the forerunner of the Christ [see the "Did you know?" box about John the Baptist].) Interestingly, both mother and son had ministries of preparation: Elizabeth helped prepare Mary for what lay in front of her; John later prepared peoples' hearts to hear the good news announced by Jesus. What might a ministry of preparation look like today?

## Apply

1. Gabriel told Mary that the Lord was with her. Then God confirmed His presence using Elizabeth's baby. How has God confirmed His presence in your life recently?
2. God knew He was asking both Mary and Elizabeth to live extraordinary lives ... lives that would be too much for them to handle alone. What in your life requires a close community of support, a circle of trust?
3. In what specific area of your life do you need to lean more fully on God's Word? Has anyone ever trained you in how to study God's Word for yourself?
4. What specific steps will you take beginning this week to gain a better knowledge of God's Word? Here's a thought: have you ever read the Bible - i.e., from cover to cover? If not, check out Daily Walk, a monthly devotional magazine from Walk Thru the Bible that helps you read from Genesis to Revelation in one year (and understand what you're reading!). Here's another application. Pick out one verse - say 2 Corinthians 5:17 - and learn it by heart. Then share it daily with your spouse, kids, or a good friend. Next week, pick out a new verse - say, John 10:10.

## Session 3: When Life Breaks Your Heart

### Luke 2:25-35

The Holy Spirit was on Simeon and had \_\_\_\_\_ that he would live to see the Messiah.

Simeon \_\_\_\_\_ that this baby was the Messiah.

Simeon declared that Jesus was the Messiah for \_\_\_\_\_ nations, both Gentiles and Jews.

Simeon blessed Mary and Joseph and also made a \_\_\_\_\_ prediction.

Simeon warned that Mary's blessing would bring great personal \_\_\_\_\_.

### THE FULFILLMENT

Mary's heart was pierced multiple times during the life of Jesus.

\_\_\_\_\_ her son from Herod

### Matthew 2:13-15

\_\_\_\_\_ her son in the temple.

### Luke 2:48-50

\_\_\_\_\_ control of her son at the wedding.

### John 2:1-5

\_\_\_\_\_ her son's rejection in Nazareth.

### Luke 4:28-30

\_\_\_\_\_ her son's new definition of family.

### Luke 8:19-21

Through all the experiences Mary became Jesus' first and best \_\_\_\_\_.

## **Session 3:** When Life Breaks Your Heart

### **THE ULTIMATE SUFFERING**

Mary's heart had been pierced over and over, but nothing had prepared her for what would happen next.

**John 19:25-30**

Mary \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus' agony on the cross.

Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ Mary to John's care.

Mary watched as Jesus surrendered the life she had \_\_\_\_\_ her life to protect.

1. What heartbreak or disappointment are you struggling with right now?
2. Compare Luke 2:22-24 with Leviticus 12:6-8. What does this suggest about the “economic status” of Mary and Joseph? Does this surprise you? When in your life have you faced your biggest financial hardships? Describe that experience.
3. Read about devout old Simeon in Luke 2:25-35. What stands out to you? What can we learn from him? What quality (or qualities) in his life would you like to see in your own and why?
4. After gushing over Jesus, Mary’s newborn son, Simeon somberly foretold the pain Mary would experience because of her child. What do you think he might say to the person who insists that those who are chosen by God are guaranteed health and wealth—in short, a blessed, problem-free life?
5. Why do you think, when Jesus said flatly, “In this world you will have trouble” (John 16:33), so many people are drawn to versions of the gospel that promise we will be kept from problems and poverty and sickness? In what ways is this teaching destructive?
6. In many parts of the world (and in many lives), things often get harder after a person comes to know Christ. Why is this so?

## Session 3: When Life Breaks Your Heart

## Apply

1. The life of Mary teaches us a somber lesson (that we'd rather not hear, much less acknowledge): suffering is part of the spiritual life. Life can break your heart. What's the most painful thing in your life right now?
2. As Simeon predicted, Mary's heart was pierced multiple times during the tumultuous and unpredictable brief life of her Son. When your own heart has been pierced, what has enabled you to keep going?
3. What do you think Mary thought when Simeon told her that her greatest blessing would also bring her the deepest personal pain? What would your assumption be if someone said this to you?
4. In a real sense, Mary—this woman who endured such heartache in being the mother of Messiah—was Jesus' first and best disciple. The last recorded words we have of her are found in John 2:5, "Do what he tells you." What specifically do you sense Jesus telling you to do right now in your life?

## Session 4: When Life Must Go On

Mary watched as Jesus surrendered the life she had \_\_\_\_\_ her life to protect.

Jesus' earthly life was finished, but Mary's life had to \_\_\_\_\_.

### THE EPILOGUE

Luke's Gospel ends with:

- Jesus' death on the cross.
- Jesus' burial in the tomb.
- Jesus' resurrection from the dead.
- Jesus' appearances to His followers.
- Jesus' ascension into Heaven.

### NOW WHAT?

How would they react to all they had experienced?

How would they fill the void left by Jesus' departure?

The book of Acts continues the story Dr. Luke began in his Gospel.

### Acts 1:1-14

Even when Mary's life seemed totally out of control, she had the power to make key \_\_\_\_\_.

### MARY AND THE OTHERS

- \_\_\_\_\_ even when they didn't fully understand.
- \_\_\_\_\_ for God to intervene and empower them.

The Holy Spirit would empower them to be Jesus' \_\_\_\_\_ locally, regionally, and globally.

- \_\_\_\_\_ together and resisted the tendency toward isolation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ even when their faith wavered.

1. Remember the choices Mary and the others made. Which of these do you struggle with the most? What steps can you take to follow Mary's example?\*

- Obey even when you don't fully understand.
- Wait for God to intervene in your life.
- Gather together and resist the tendency toward isolation.
- Pray even when your faith wavers.

2. Luke records the disciples asking the resurrected Jesus about His kingdom (Acts 1:6-7), and Jesus telling them bluntly, "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set." Why do you think, despite this clear statement from Christ, so many Christians insist on trying to figure out the exact timing of the Lord's return?\*

3. When heartbreak comes our way, we do have to go on. What lessons have you learned from others? What insights have you gained from your own experience?\*

4. Jesus instructed the disciples to wait—which runs counter to the voices inside our heads that scream, "Don't just sit there...do something!" Where do you find yourself waiting on God? And how can this group encourage you to persevere and keep trusting?\*

5. Parents know:

- that our kids aren't really "ours"—they belong to God and He has put them in our care for a brief window of time
- that our job description is to love them, teach them, point them to God, prepare them, and launch them (not hover over and control them)
- that the day is coming when our children will leave—and should leave the nest
- that the goal isn't to raise good kids...it's to raise God-loving adults



## Discuss

## Session 4: When Life Must Go On

Still, even knowing the truth and wisdom of all that, it's painful to watch our kids grow up, to cut the cord, to let them go and find their place in this world. Like any mom, Mary wanted certain things for her Son—but as His disciple she had to surrender her desires to the will of God. What about Mary's parenting of Jesus inspires you as you pour into your children and prepare them for adulthood?

6. The disciples didn't just post vague status updates on social media. They gathered together face-to-face and prayed with and for each other. During those days of waiting in Jerusalem, they shared fears, doubts, tears, hopes, dreams, and laughter. Spend some time as a group doing that now. And if this group is disbanding now that you've completed the Chosen study, determine to find a new group to be part of.

## Apply

1. Even when Mary and the others didn't know what their future held and weren't sure how to go on, they obeyed the Lord. They stayed in Jerusalem, which was a dangerous place. (Consider...if the authorities killed Jesus, what would they do to His followers?) What's the specific area of life in which you sense God urging you to trust and obey Him right now?
2. It took a lot of courage and faith for both Mary and John to be at the cross with Jesus. Who are the people who have walked through the worst times of your life with you?
3. Read 2 Corinthians 1:3-4—Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. Why do you think it matters to God that we are able to accept His comfort and, in turn, comfort others?
4. Having completed this study, summarize the best lesson you learned. What is the most powerful insight you gained into the life of Mary?

## ANSWER KEY

Here are the answers to the fill-ins for each session.

### Session 1

1. Teenager
2. Joseph
3. Binding
4. Gabriel
5. Favored
6. Grace
7. Troubled
8. Wonder
9. Afraid
10. Favor
11. Son
12. Virgin
13. Confusion
14. Unbelief
15. Miracle
16. Mystery
17. Reverence
18. Humility
19. Power
20. Fulfill
21. Servant
22. Accepted
23. Consequences

### Session 2

1. Alone
2. Hurried
3. 80 miles
4. 4-5 days
5. Confirmed
6. Blessing
7. Faith
8. God
9. Savior
10. Demonstrated
11. Fulfill
12. Reality
13. Friend

### Session 3

1. Promised
2. Recognized
3. All
4. Somber
5. Pain
6. Protecting
7. Losing
8. Releasing
9. Watching
10. Experiencing
11. Disciple
12. Witnessed
13. Entrusted
14. Dedicated

### Session 4

1. Dedicated
2. Continue
3. Choices
4. Obeyed
5. Waited
6. Witnesses
7. Gathered
8. Prayed

## CHOSEN: WHEN GOD CALLS YOUR NAME

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For more information contact:

Walk Through the Bible

Oak Business Park, Beaumont, Essex

[www.Bible.org.uk](http://www.Bible.org.uk)

01255 871000

