

Mary

THE
PONDERING
HEART



itStartssmall.com

Mary

INTRODUCTION

IN THE WORD

FAITH AND OBEDIENCE

COURAGE

HUMILITY AND TRUST IN THE UNKNOWN

PRaise IN THE MIDST OF TRIALS

STEADFASTNESS AND PERSEVERANCE

IMPORTANCE OF SEEKING GOD'S WORD AND GUIDANCE

PARENTING LESSONS

JOURNAL PROMPTS

CONCLUSION

Mary

INTRODUCTION

Mary, a vibrant young woman from Nazareth in Galilee, stands as a beacon of hope and faith in Christianity as the beloved mother of Jesus Christ. Chosen by God for this extraordinary calling, her life radiated unwavering devotion and obedience to the divine. The Annunciation marked the profound beginning of her exceptional journey. The Archangel Gabriel revealed to Mary that she would miraculously conceive and bear the Son of God through the mighty power of the Holy Spirit. With a heart full of courage, Mary embraced God's magnificent plan with a fervent faith. This sacred moment not only transformed her life but also altered the course of human history forever.

Mary's story unfolds vibrantly with her visit to Elizabeth, who also carried the precious promise of John the Baptist. These two extraordinary women, enveloped by the Holy Spirit, erupted in joyous celebration for the divine gifts they had received. In a moment of pure ecstasy, Mary poured forth her heart in the Magnificat, praising God with fervent devotion. She stood as a steadfast presence throughout Jesus's ministry, marveling at miraculous wonders and fervently supporting his transformative teachings. In the darkest hour, she remained by his side during the crucifixion, an embodiment of unwavering maternal love and unyielding

Mary

INTRODUCTION

faith. After his death and triumphant resurrection, Mary united in prayer with the apostles, fervently awaiting the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. From the miraculous Annunciation to her steadfast companionship with the early Christians, her life radiates an enduring example of faith, hope, and profound love for all believers.

Mary

IN THE WORD

The following is all scriptural references to Mary in scripture. As you read through the scripture, make any notes about her character, who she was, major events that happen, and anything that reveals the character of God or His work in her life.

16 and Jacob fathered Joseph the husband of Mary, who gave birth to Jesus who is called the Messiah.

17 So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations; and from David until the exile to Babylon, fourteen generations; and from the exile to Babylon until the Messiah, fourteen generations.

18 The birth of Jesus Christ came about this way: After his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, it was discovered before they came together that she was pregnant from the Holy Spirit. 19 So her husband, Joseph, being a righteous man, and not wanting to disgrace her publicly, decided to divorce her secretly.

20 But after he had considered these things, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, don't be afraid to take Mary as your wife, because what has been conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21 She will give birth to a son, and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

22 Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

23 See, the virgin will become pregnant and give birth to a son,

Notes:

Mary

IN THE WORD

and they will name him Immanuel,
which is translated “God is with us.”

24 When Joseph woke up, he did as the Lord’s angel had commanded him. He married her 25 but did not have sexual relations with her until she gave birth to a son. And he named him Jesus.

Matthew 1:16-24

55 Isn’t this the carpenter’s son? Isn’t his mother called Mary, and his brothers James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas?

Matthew 13:55

3 Isn’t this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and the brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And aren’t his sisters here with us?” So they were offended by him.

Mark 6:3

31 His mother and his brothers came, and standing outside, they sent word to him and called him. 32 A crowd was sitting around him and told him, “Look, your mother, your brothers, and your sisters are outside asking for you.”

Mark 3:31-32

Notes:

Mary

IN THE WORD

26 In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, 27 to a virgin engaged to a man named Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. 28 And the angel came to her and said, "Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you." 29 But she was deeply troubled by this statement, wondering what kind of greeting this could be. 30 Then the angel told her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 Now listen: You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David. 33 He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and his kingdom will have no end."

34 Mary asked the angel, "How can this be, since I have not had sexual relations with a man?"

35 The angel replied to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore, the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. 36 And consider your relative Elizabeth—even she has conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called childless. 37 For nothing will be impossible with God."

38 "See, I am the Lord's servant," said Mary. "May it happen to me as you have said." Then the angel left her.

Mary's Visit to Elizabeth

39 In those days Mary set out and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judah 40 where she entered Zechariah's house and

Notes:

Mary

IN THE WORD

greeted Elizabeth. 41 When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped inside her, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. 42 Then she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and your child will be blessed! [f] 43 How could this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? 44 For you see, when the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby leaped for joy inside me. 45 Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill what he has spoken to her!"

Mary's Praise

46 And Mary said:

My soul magnifies the Lord,
47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
48 because he has looked with favor
on the humble condition of his servant.
Surely, from now on all generations
will call me blessed,
49 because the Mighty One
has done great things for me,
and his name is holy.
50 His mercy is from generation to generation
on those who fear him.
51 He has done a mighty deed with his arm;
he has scattered the proud
because of the thoughts of their hearts;
52 he has toppled the mighty from their thrones
and exalted the lowly.
53 He has satisfied the hungry with good things

Notes:

Mary

IN THE WORD

and sent the rich away empty.

54 He has helped his servant Israel,
remembering his mercy

55 to Abraham and his descendants forever,
just as he spoke to our ancestors.

56 And Mary stayed with her about three months; then she returned to her home.

Luke 1:27-56

2 In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that the whole empire should be registered. 2 This first registration took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. 3 So everyone went to be registered, each to his own town.

4 Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family line of David, 5 to be registered along with Mary, who was engaged to him and was pregnant. 6 While they were there, the time came for her to give birth. 7 Then she gave birth to her firstborn son, and she wrapped him tightly in cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

Luke 2:1-7

16 They hurried off and found both Mary and Joseph, and the baby who was lying in the manger. 17 After seeing them, they reported the message they were told about this child, 18 and

Notes:

Mary

IN THE WORD

all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. 19 But Mary was treasuring up all these things in her heart and meditating on them. 20 The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had seen and heard, which were just as they had been told.

21 When the eight days were completed for his circumcision, he was named Jesus—the name given by the angel before he was conceived. 22 And when the days of their purification according to the law of Moses were finished, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord 23 (just as it is written in the law of the Lord, Every firstborn male will be dedicated to the Lord) 24 and to offer a sacrifice (according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons).

25 There was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. This man was righteous and devout, looking forward to Israel's consolation, and the Holy Spirit was on him. 26 It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he saw the Lord's Messiah. 27 Guided by the Spirit, he entered the temple. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to perform for him what was customary under the law, 28 Simeon took him up in his arms, praised God, and said,

29 Now, Master,
you can dismiss your servant in peace,

Notes:

Mary

IN THE WORD

as you promised.

30 For my eyes have seen your salvation.

31 You have prepared it
in the presence of all peoples—

32 a light for revelation to the Gentiles
and glory to your people Israel.

33 His father and mother were amazed at what was being said
about him. 34 Then Simeon blessed them and told his mother
Mary, “Indeed, this child is destined to cause the fall and rise
of many in Israel and to be a sign that will be opposed—

35 and a sword will pierce your own soul—that the thoughts
of many hearts may be revealed.”

Luke 2:16-35

41 Every year his parents traveled to Jerusalem for the Passover Festival. 42 When he was twelve years old, they went up according to the custom of the festival. 43 After those days were over, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. 44 Assuming he was in the traveling party, they went a day’s journey. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. 45 When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. 46 After three days, they found him in the temple sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. 47 And all those who heard him were astounded at his understanding and his answers. 48 When his parents saw him, they were astonished, and his mother said to

Notes:

Mary

IN THE WORD

him, “Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you.”

49 “Why were you searching for me?” he asked them. “Didn’t you know that it was necessary for me to be in my Father’s house?” 50 But they did not understand what he said to them. 51 Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was obedient to them. His mother kept all these things in her heart. 52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and with people.

Luke 2:41-52

2 On the third day a wedding took place in Cana of Galilee. Jesus’s mother was there, 2 and Jesus and his disciples were invited to the wedding as well. 3 When the wine ran out, Jesus’s mother told him, “They don’t have any wine.”

4 “What has this concern of yours to do with me, woman?” Jesus asked. “My hour has not yet come.”

5 “Do whatever he tells you,” his mother told the servants.

6 Now six stone water jars had been set there for Jewish purification. Each contained twenty or thirty gallons.

7 “Fill the jars with water,” Jesus told them. So they filled them to the brim. 8 Then he said to them, “Now draw some out and take it to the headwaiter.” And they did.

9 When the headwaiter tasted the water (after it had become wine), he did not know where it came from—though the servants who had drawn the water knew. He called the

Notes:

Mary

IN THE WORD

groom 10 and told him, “Everyone sets out the fine wine first, then, after people are drunk, the inferior. But you have kept the fine wine until now.”

11 Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee. He revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him.

12 After this, he went down to Capernaum, together with his mother, his brothers, and his disciples, and they stayed there only a few days.

John 2:1-12

25 Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother, his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. 26 When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple he loved standing there, he said to his mother, “Woman, here is your son.” 27 Then he said to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” And from that hour the disciple took her into his home.

John 19:25-27

12 Then they returned to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives, which is near Jerusalem—a Sabbath day’s journey away. 13 When they arrived, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying: Peter, John, James, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas the son of James. 14 They all were continually united in prayer,[b] along with the women,

Notes:

Mary

IN THE WORD

including Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

Acts 1:12-14

4 When the time came to completion, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law,

Galatians 4:4

Notes:

Mary

**FAITH
and
OBEDIENCE**



itStartssmall.com

Mary

45 Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill what he has spoken to her!"

Luke 1:45

Mary, the mother of Jesus, embodies an extraordinary testament to unwavering faith and steadfast obedience in Christian tradition. Her life radiates an inspiring trust and a courageous willingness to embrace God's divine plan, even amidst trials and uncertainty that would leave many trembling in doubt.

Here's how Mary's life exemplifies these virtues:

Faith

Responding to the Impossible: At the Annunciation, Mary, a young virgin, was told by the Angel Gabriel that she would conceive and bear a son, the Son of God. Her question, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" (Luke 1:34) showed a natural human response, but not disbelief. Instead, she believed the seemingly impossible words of the angel. Elizabeth confirms Mary's faith by stating, "Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!" (Luke 1:45).

Trusting in God's Promises: Mary's Magnificat, a hymn of praise she uttered during her visit to Elizabeth, showcases her profound faith in God's promises and His faithfulness to His covenant with Israel. She recognized God's mercy and power, expressing joy and gratitude for being chosen as the mother of the Savior.

46 And Mary said:

*My soul magnifies the Lord,
47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
48 because he has looked with favor*

FAITH AND OBEDIENCE

*on the humble condition of his servant.
Surely, from now on all generations
will call me blessed,
49 because the Mighty One
has done great things for me,
and his name is holy.
50 His mercy is from generation to generation
on those who fear him.
51 He has done a mighty deed with his arm;
he has scattered the proud
because of the thoughts of their hearts;
52 he has toppled the mighty from their thrones
and exalted the lowly.
53 He has satisfied the hungry with good things
and sent the rich away empty.
54 He has helped his servant Israel,
remembering his mercy
55 to Abraham and his descendants forever,
just as he spoke to our ancestors.*

Facing Uncertainty with Courage: Mary didn't fully understand all the implications of her divine calling, but she courageously moved forward in faith, trusting that God would guide her through the unknown. Her faith wasn't naive or ignorant.

Remaining Steadfast at the Cross: Mary's presence at the foot of the cross, witnessing her Son's suffering, is a testament to her unwavering faith and love, even amidst immense pain and despair. Her steadfastness during this darkest moment serves as an inspiration to persevere through difficulties with trust in God's plan.

FAITH AND OBEDIENCE

Obedience

"Let it be done to me according to your word" (Luke 1:38): Mary's response to the Angel Gabriel, a direct quote from the Bible, epitomizes her total submission to God's will. She freely chose to cooperate in God's plan, prioritizing His will above her own desires or fears of societal judgment. This "yes" (fiat) mirrors Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane, demonstrating her complete surrender to God.

Honoring the Law: Mary and Joseph took Jesus to the temple according to the Law for his circumcision and also offered the required sacrifice, demonstrating their adherence to the Jewish Law.

Following Jesus: Mary continued as a disciple, remaining with Jesus throughout his ministry, supporting him, and standing by him at his crucifixion. Her obedience continued even after Jesus' ascension as she gathered with the apostles and other believers, praying and awaiting the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

Mary's example offers profound inspiration for navigating life with faith and obedience. Here are ways her life can influence your own:

Cultivating faith in the unexpected

Embracing God's plans: Mary's "yes" to God's calling, even when it seemed impossible and brought potential social stigma, challenges us to be open to God's purpose for our own lives, even when it is daunting or unclear. This might involve accepting a difficult job, stepping into a new role, or embracing a challenging path with trust in God's guidance.

Trusting God's promises: Her Magnificat, a song of praise despite the challenging circumstances, reminds us to praise God and trust in His faithfulness even when life doesn't turn out as we expect.

FAITH AND OBEDIENCE

Persevering through trials: Mary's steadfastness at the foot of the cross is a testament to her strength amidst suffering.. This encourages us to face our own challenges with patience, love, and grace, clinging to hope and God's unwavering support.

Practicing obedience in daily life

Surrendering to God's will: Mary's "let it be done to me according to your word" (Luke 1:38) models obedience and encourages seeking and embracing God's will. This can involve making time for daily prayer, reflecting on scripture, or acting in accordance with God's Word in all circumstances.

Following through on responsibilities: Mary's actions, from adhering to Jewish law by taking Jesus to the temple to consistently joining Joseph for Passover, demonstrate commitment to fulfilling duties as a wife and mother. This encourages diligence and responsibility in vocations and relationships, recognizing God's role.

Serving others with compassion: Mary's concern for others is evident in her visit to Elizabeth and her intercession at the Wedding at Cana shows self-forgetful love and concern for the needs of others. This inspires compassion, empathy, and love in interactions, remembering that serving others also serves God.

Learning from Mary's humility and wisdom

Recognizing God's greatness: Mary's humility, reflected in her Magnificat, acknowledges God's greatness. This inspires cultivating a humble heart, recognizing God's sovereignty and dependence on His grace.

Reflecting on God's word: Mary's practice of pondering events suggests reflection and meditation in spiritual journeys. This encourages taking time to re-

FAITH and OBEDIENCE

flect on God's Word and meditate on His promises, according to the Church of Jesus Christ.

Mary's life and example ignite a fervent inspiration for a journey of unwavering faith and devoted obedience, boldly confronting challenges with extraordinary courage and boundless compassion, while uncovering profound strength in the radiant love and steadfast faithfulness of God.

Mary



courage



itStartssmall.com



Mary, the Mother of Jesus, embodies extraordinary courage throughout her life, fueled by her deep faith, unwavering obedience, and relentless trust in God's divine plan, even amid daunting challenges and the threat of profound hardships. Her courage radiates brilliantly as she bravely confronts the potential stigma of unwed motherhood and the cruel accusations of adultery; yet, she stands resolute, steadfast in her commitment to God's purpose.

Instances of Mary's Courage

Accepting the Annunciation: Mary's response to the angel Gabriel's announcement that she would conceive Jesus as a virgin, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word," demonstrates remarkable trust and courage. This choice meant facing potential ostracization, disgrace, and even death within her community for being pregnant outside of marriage.

Giving Birth Away From Home: Enduring childbirth in an animal shelter, far from family and support, showcases Mary's strength and resilience.

Enduring Hardship and Persecution: Mary faced trials and persecution, from the flight into Egypt to protect baby Jesus from Herod to raising the Son of God and witnessing his crucifixion. She displayed unwavering faith and fortitude.

Standing at the Foot of the Cross: Mary's presence at the crucifixion symbolizes her deep love and courageous perseverance amidst immense sorrow.

Mary's courage is a testament to the power of faith and submission to God's will, even in the face of fear, uncertainty, and hardship. Her example inspires believers to trust in God's plan, surrender to His will, and face life's challenges with strength and unwavering faith.

courage

How can I have godly courage like Mary?

The Bible passionately asserts that true courage, or godly courage, is far more than just the absence of fear – it is the fervent strength to act boldly even in the face of fear, firmly grounded in unwavering faith and a deep reliance on God. But from where does this extraordinary godly courage arise? It springs forth from a multitude of powerful sources:

6 Be strong and courageous; don't be terrified or afraid of them. For the Lord your God is the one who will go with you; he will not leave you or abandon you."

Deuteronomy 31:6

God's Presence: Courage is knowing that God is with you, as stated in Deuteronomy 31:6.

*14 Wait for the Lord;
be strong, and let your heart be courageous.
Wait for the Lord.*

Psalm 27:14

Trusting God's Promises: Believing in God's faithfulness provides courage, as Psalm 27:14 suggests

7 For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but one of power, love, and sound judgment.

2 Timothy 1:7

The Holy Spirit: God empowers believers with the Holy Spirit to overcome fear, according to 2 Timothy 1:7.

How to have godly courage

To cultivate godly courage, you can:

- Seek God's presence through prayer, worship, and scripture.
- Meditate on God's promises, like the assurance found in Isaiah 41:10.
- Obey God's call by acting in faith.
- Seek support from other believers.
- Face fears with faith, trusting God's guidance, as seen in Psalm 56:3.
- Remember past instances where God has helped you.
- Pray for courage.
- Persevere in faith through challenges.

By relying on God's presence, promises, and the Holy Spirit through these actions, you can develop godly courage.

Mary

**HUMILITY
and
TRUST IN
THE
UNKNOWN**



itStartssmall.com

Mary

Mary's story in the Gospels, especially the breathtaking Annunciation in Luke, offers a stirring testament to the extraordinary strength of humility and unwavering trust as they intertwine in the face of the unknown.

Humility in the face of the divine calling

A "lowly" servant: Despite being chosen for the extraordinary role of bearing the Son of God, Mary refers to herself as a humble "handmaid of the Lord". This reveals her understanding that God's favor was a gift, not something she earned or deserved.

Giving God the glory: In her Magnificat, Mary's song of praise, she acknowledges her humility, stating, "He has been mindful of the humble state of his servant" (Luke 1:48). This highlights her perspective that her blessedness came from God's actions, according to Lakeview Christian Church not her own merit.

Accepting the unforeseen: Mary's willingness to embrace God's plan, even when it meant facing the potential social stigma of an unwed pregnancy, is a testament to her humility, notes Bible Study Tools.

Trust in the unknown

Responding to God's word: When Gabriel announced the seemingly impossible, Mary's initial question, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" (Luke 1:34), shows a natural human reaction to the unknown. However, after the angel's explanation, she responded with profound trust: "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word" (Luke 1:38).

Not demanding all the answers: Mary did not demand all the details or try to control the situation. She trusted God's plan, even without knowing the path ahead.

HUMILITY AND TRUST IN THE UNKNOWN

Believing in God's power: The angel's assurance, "For with God nothing will be impossible" (Luke 1:37), strengthened Mary's trust, demonstrating her belief in God's ability to accomplish His will despite the circumstances.

A "yes" that changed history: Mary's "yes" to God's will, her fiat, had an enormous impact, paving the way for the Incarnation and God's plan of salvation.

By embracing humility and trusting in God's plan, even amidst the unknown, Mary provides an inspiring example of faith and surrender. Mary's story encourages recognizing that God's ways are often beyond understanding, but confidence is possible in His goodness and faithfulness to guide and provide as one embarks on their own journeys of faith.

How can I cultivate a heart of trust and humility in my everyday life?

Cultivating humility and trust in your daily life is a profound journey that requires you to shift your gaze away from your own limited perspective and embrace the magnificent plan and character of God. This transformative process calls for dynamic, actionable steps rooted in powerful biblical principles that elevate your spirit and deepen your connection with the divine.

Here's how to make it an everyday practice:

1. Recognize your dependence on God

- Acknowledge God's greatness and your complete dependence on Him for everything, including life, breath, and purpose. Trust in the Lord with all your heart and avoid relying solely on your own understanding (Proverbs 3:5-6). Consider verses like Exodus 15:11 which highlights God's unique majesty and power.

HUMILITY AND TRUST IN THE UNKNOWN

2. Embrace a servant's heart

- Selflessly serve others without expecting anything in return. Philippians 2:3-4 encourages counting others as more significant than yourself and looking out for their interests. Follow Christ's example of humility and service (Matthew 20:26-28).

3. Practice gratitude

- Cultivate a heart of gratitude for the blessings in your life, giving thanks in all circumstances as instructed in 1 Thessalonians 5:18. Acknowledge and appreciate the contributions of others around you.

4. Guard against pride

- Confess pride to God and seek the Holy Spirit's help in becoming selfless. Remember that God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble (James 4:6). Be vigilant against pride, as Proverbs 16:18 warns it leads to destruction. Regularly examine your actions and attitudes for signs of pride (Psalm 139:23-24).

5. Embrace a teachable spirit

- Be open to learning from others and accepting constructive criticism. Proverbs 12:15 points out that a wise person listens to advice. Practice being quick to hear and slow to speak (James 1:19).

6. Take time for reflection and prayer

- Regularly take time to reflect and pray, asking God to reveal areas for growth in humility and trust (Psalm 139:23-24). Pray for humility and God's guidance (James 4:6, Psalm 25:4).

HUMILITY AND TRUST IN THE UNKNOWN

By wholeheartedly integrating these transformative practices and fervently seeking God's unwavering guidance through prayer and scripture, you can ignite a profound passion to cultivate a remarkably humble and trusting heart.

Mary

**praise in
THE
MIDST OF
TROUBLES**



itStartssmall.com

Mary

Mary's fervent reply to the angel Gabriel's miraculous revelation — that she, a humble virgin, would miraculously conceive the Son of God (Luke 1:26-38) — stands as a profound testament to the power of unyielding faith and the act of glorifying God, even in the face of daunting challenges and unknowns.

Here's how Mary's actions demonstrate this:

1. Immediate praise despite troubling news

- The angel's message was not without potential difficulties and societal repercussions for Mary. She was a virgin, engaged to be married to Joseph, and facing a culture that could be harsh towards an unwed pregnant woman.
- Despite these potential troubles, Mary's immediate response is not complaint or fear, but a song of praise known as the Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55).
- Her words: "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked on the humble state of his servant" clearly demonstrate her worshipful attitude.

2. Focus on God's greatness and faithfulness

- Mary's song of praise doesn't dwell on her fears or the challenges ahead, but rather focuses on God's character and power.
- She acknowledges God as the "Mighty One" who has done "great things" and whose "name is holy".
- Mary also praises God for His mercy and for remembering His promises to

praise in the midst of troubles

Abraham and His people Israel.

3. Humility and trust in God's plan

- Mary describes herself as a "humble servant," highlighting her humility and submission to God's will.
- Her words demonstrate a deep trust in God's plan, even when the future was uncertain and potentially fraught with difficulty.
- She doesn't question God or demand assurances, but rather accepts her role in God's redemptive plan.

In essence, Mary's praise in the face of troubles stemmed from her:

Faith: A deep belief in God's promises and His ability to accomplish His will.

Humility: A recognition of her dependence on God and His sovereignty.

Focus on God: Choosing to magnify God's character and power rather than dwelling on her fears.

Her song stands as a vibrant declaration of how believers can passionately transcend trials and tribulations, embracing a heart that radiates with praise and steadfast trust in God's magnificent faithfulness and power.

Cultivating a heart of praise and thankfulness, regardless of life's circumstances, is a powerful act of faith that deepens our relationship with God and strengthens our resolve. Here's how to cultivate that praise:

Focus on God's unchanging nature and recall His faithfulness, as seen in passages like Psalm 107:1 and 1 Chronicles 16:34. Practice intentional thanksgiving in all circumstances, recognizing it as God's will (1 Thessalonians 5:18). You

praise in the midst of troubles

can express praise through song (Psalm 95:2-3) and meditate on scriptures about praise (Psalm 34:1). Seek community and praise with fellow believers. Choose to praise God even in difficult times, aligning yourself with His will and bringing peace (Philippians 4:6-7).

How can I make this everyday practice?

Making praise a daily habit involves intentionally seeking God's presence and expressing gratitude throughout the day. Here's how to cultivate a heart of praise in your daily life, inspired by Scripture:

1. Start your day with God

- **Read the Bible:** Dedicate time each morning to read and reflect on scripture, allowing God's word to shape your perspective for the day. Consider a daily Bible reading plan or using resources like the Bible Gateway app.
- **Listen to Worship Music:** Fill your environment with worship music, letting the lyrics lift your spirits and direct your thoughts toward God's goodness. Create a worship playlist to help focus on God throughout the day.
- **Thank God for the Day:** Before starting your activities, pause and express gratitude for waking up, for the gift of life, and for the blessings you anticipate. James 4:8 encourages believers to "Come near to God and He will come near to you".

2. Incorporate praise into daily activities

- **Turn Complaints into Praise:** When facing frustrations or inconveniences, consciously shift your focus to what you can be thankful for. Instead of complaining about a pile of dishes, for instance, thank God

praise in the midst of troubles

for having a family to cook for and food to eat. This can transform your mindset and attitude.

- **Enjoy God's Creation:** Take time to appreciate the beauty of nature – whether it's a sunrise, a garden, or the sound of birds. Psalm 95:4-5 reminds us, “In His hand are the depths of the earth, and the mountain peaks belong to Him. The sea is His, for He made it, and His hands formed the dry land”. Thank God for His creation and the joy it brings.
- **Serve Others:** Acts of service can be acts of worship. Colossians 3:23-24 says, “Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men”. Serving a friend, volunteering, or helping family members can be a tangible expression of your praise.

3. Maintain a mindset of praise and gratitude

- **Pray Intentionally:** Throughout the day, have conversations with God, sharing thoughts, feelings, and offering thanks. Psalm 25:14 states that “The Lord confides in those who fear Him; He makes His covenant known to them”.
- **Keep a Gratitude Journal:** Writing down things for which you are thankful, either in a notebook or using a gratitude app, helps in recognizing God's blessings and cultivates a more positive outlook.
- **Memorize Scripture:** Choose verses related to praise, gratitude, or God's character and commit them to memory. Psalm 119:11 states, “I have hidden Your word in my heart that I might not sin against You”.
- **Be Mindful of Your Language:** Choose words that reflect appreciation and praise, even when facing challenges. For instance, instead of saying, “I have to do this,” reframe it as, “I get to do this” or “Thank you,

praise in the midst of troubles

God, for the opportunity to do this".

Consistent implementation of these practices can cultivate a heart that overflows with praise to the Lord in every circumstance.

Mary

**STEADFASTNESS
AND
PERSEVERANCE**



itStartssmall.com

Mary

Mary, the mother of Jesus, consistently demonstrated steadfastness and perseverance throughout her life, particularly in the face of numerous challenges. Her unwavering faith and commitment to God's plan are evident in several key moments:

1. Enduring the hardship of the journey to Bethlehem and Jesus' birth

Mary's journey to Bethlehem while heavily pregnant was not an easy one. This trip involved traveling roughly 85 miles by foot or on a donkey, along a rough and hilly road. She faced the discomfort of being in her final stages of pregnancy and arriving at a crowded city with no proper place to stay.

Despite these difficulties, Mary and Joseph persevered, trusting that God would provide. She gave birth to Jesus in a humble stable, surrounded by livestock, yet her focus remained on the miraculous birth and the fulfillment of God's word.

Her perseverance during this difficult time highlights her unwavering trust in God's plan and her commitment to bringing it to pass.

2. Facing the flight to Egypt

After Jesus' birth, an angel warned Joseph to take Mary and Jesus and flee to Egypt to escape Herod's deadly decree to kill all male infants in Bethlehem. This presented another significant challenge for the young family, forced to become refugees in a foreign land.

Mary's steadfastness is evident in her willingness to immediately obey this difficult command, trusting in God's protection amidst the chaos and uncertainty of the situation. This action demonstrates her perseverance in following God's will, even when it led them into exile and hardship.

STEADFASTNESS AND PERSEVERANCE

3. Remaining steadfast at the foot of the cross

Perhaps the most powerful example of Mary's perseverance is her presence at the foot of the cross during Jesus' crucifixion. While most of Jesus's disciples fled in fear, Mary, along with other women and John the Beloved Disciple, remained with Jesus, even in his final moments. This act of unwavering love and devotion, despite the unimaginable pain and suffering she endured witnessing her son's death, showcases her profound steadfastness.

Mary's presence at the cross reveals her continuing faith and trust in God's plan of salvation, even amidst the deepest sorrow and confusion. She did not lose hope, but stood firm in her belief in Jesus as the Son of God.

Throughout her life, Mary consistently displayed unwavering faith and commitment to God, even in the face of immense challenges and suffering. Her life serves as a powerful example of steadfastness and perseverance for believers to emulate.

How can I cultivate a steadfastness and perseverance in my everyday life?

Cultivating steadfastness and perseverance in your daily life ignites a fierce determination to remain unwavering in your purpose, faith, or actions, even when faced with daunting challenges, frustrating delays, or overwhelming difficulties. This powerful quality is essential for vibrant Christian growth, deeply rooted in a profound reliance on God and passionately guided by His transformative Word.

Cultivating steadfastness and perseverance in your everyday life:

STEADFASTNESS AND PERSEVERANCE

1. Ground yourself in God's Word

4 For whatever was written in the past was written for our instruction, so that we may have hope through endurance and through the encouragement from the Scriptures.

Romans 15:4

Study and Meditate on Scripture: Regular immersion in God's Word can strengthen resolve to endure by understanding God's promises and character.

*11 I have treasured your word in my heart
so that I may not sin against you.*

Psalm 119:11

Memorize Key Verses: Commit verses about strength, endurance, and God's faithfulness to memory for encouragement during difficulties.

*15 A fool's way is right in his own eyes,
but whoever listens to counsel is wise.*

Proverbs 12:15

Embrace a Teachable Spirit: Be open to learning from others and accepting constructive criticism.

2. Develop a consistent prayer life

18 Pray at all times in the Spirit with every prayer and request, and stay alert with all perseverance and intercession for all the saints.

Ephesians 6:18

Pray for Strength and Endurance: Ask God for the strength to persevere,

STEADFASTNESS AND PERSEVERANCE

knowing He is faithful to those who seek Him.

5 Now if any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God – who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly – and it will be given to him.

James 1:5

Pray for Guidance and Wisdom: Seek God's direction in daily tasks and decisions, which helps one stay the course.

3. Focus on God's character and promises

*22 Because of the Lord's faithful love
we do not perish,
for his mercies never end.
23 They are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness!*

Lamentations 3:22-23

Remember God's Faithfulness: Recalling past instances of God's faithfulness builds confidence for future challenges.

12 Therefore, since we also have such a large cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us lay aside every hindrance and the sin that so easily ensnares us. Let us run with endurance the race that lies before us, 2 keeping our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. For the joy that lay before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Hebrews 12:1-2

Fix Your Eyes on Jesus: When facing discouragement, look to Christ, who endured the cross.

STEADFASTNESS AND PERSEVERANCE

4. Take small, consistent steps

*27 Complete your outdoor work, and prepare your field;
afterward, build your house.*

Proverbs 24:27

Break Down Large Goals: Break large tasks into smaller, manageable steps, and focus on completing each one faithfully.

27 Instead, I discipline my body and bring it under strict control, so that after preaching to others, I myself will not be disqualified.

1 Corinthians 9:27

Practice Daily Discipline: Cultivate self-discipline in small areas (e.g., waking up early, exercising, spending time in prayer) to build the "muscle" of perseverance.

5. Seek godly community

*17 Iron sharpens iron,
and one person sharpens another.*

Proverbs 27:17

Find Accountability: Share goals and struggles with trusted Christian friends or mentors for encouragement and accountability.

24 And let us consider one another in order to provoke love and good works, 25 not neglecting to gather together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging each other, and all the more as you see the day approaching.

Hebrews 10:24-25

STEADFASTNESS AND PERSEVERANCE

Draw Encouragement from Others: When feeling weak, allow others to lift you up and remind you of God's truth.

6. Embrace a long-term perspective

2 Consider it a great joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you experience various trials, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance. 4 And let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking nothing.

James 1:2-4

Understand the Purpose of Trials: View challenges as opportunities for growth and refinement.

9 Let us not get tired of doing good, for we will reap at the proper time if we don't give up.

Galatians 6:9

Focus on the Eternal Reward: Remember that perseverance is not in vain, and there are eternal rewards for faithfulness.

By wholeheartedly embracing these powerful principles in your daily journey and drawing upon the unwavering strength of God, you can ignite a resilient spirit and fierce perseverance within you, empowering you to confront life's daunting challenges with unshakeable faith and a profound sense of purpose.

Mary

**IMPORTANCE
OF seeking
GOD'S WORD
and
GUIDANCE**



itStartssmall.com

Mary

Mary's life powerfully exemplifies the profound significance of fervently seeking God's Word and divine guidance, vividly evident in her stirring actions, heartfelt responses, and deep reflections on the miraculous events that shaped the birth and life of Jesus.

1. Responding to God's word and guidance

When the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary to announce that she would conceive the Son of God, according to the New International Version she was initially perplexed and asked, "How will this be since I am a virgin?". Despite this question, her response to the angel's explanation, "I am the Lord's servant. May your word to me be fulfilled," shows acceptance and a willingness to follow God's plan. This highlights a desire for understanding and a trust in God's guidance.

2. Treasuring and pondering God's word

The Gospel of Luke emphasizes Mary's habit of "treasuring" and "pondering" things in her heart. After the shepherds visited the infant Jesus and shared the angels' message, Luke records, "But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart" (Luke 2:19).

Similarly, after finding the 12-year-old Jesus in the Temple, astounding the teachers, Luke states that "His mother treasured all these things in her heart" (Luke 2:51).

This demonstrates that Mary didn't merely receive God's Word but actively reflected on it, seeking to understand its deeper meaning and significance in her life and in God's overall plan. This was a process of internalizing and meditating on the divine revelations, according to Bible Hub which allowed her to grow in faith and understanding.

IMPORTANCE OF SEEKING GOD'S WORD AND GUIDANCE

3. Recognizing God's fulfillment of His promises

Mary's Magnificat, a song of praise recorded in Luke 1:46-55, reveals her deep knowledge of Old Testament Scriptures and her understanding that God was fulfilling His promises through the birth of Jesus. Her song speaks of God's mercy, His justice, and His faithfulness to the covenant made with Abraham.

Her ability to connect current events with the long history of God's redemptive plan shows she was actively seeking and understanding God's Word and its implications.

Mary serves as a powerful example of someone who recognized the vital importance of seeking God's Word and guidance through:

Openness and questioning: She sought clarification when the message was initially unclear or seemed impossible.

Obedience and surrender: She ultimately submitted to God's will despite uncertainties and potential social difficulties.

Active reflection and meditation: She treasured and pondered the events and words in her heart, seeking deeper meaning.

Connecting with God's wider plan: Her praise demonstrates her knowledge of scripture and her understanding of God's faithfulness in fulfilling His promises.

How can we make each day a priority for seeking God's Word and guidance in our everyday lives?

Making God's Word and guidance a priority is central to a thriving faith. Here are ways to cultivate this in your daily life, supported by Scripture:

IMPORTANCE OF SEEKING GOD'S WORD AND GUIDANCE

1. Start your day with God's word and prayer

Dedicate time in the morning for reading the Bible and prayer. Begin by expressing gratitude. What do the following verses reveal about this?

- Mark 1:35
- Psalm 5:3
- Psalm 118:24

2. Integrate God's word and guidance throughout the day

Pray continuously. Reflect on Scripture and seek biblical guidance. Consider journaling and listening to Christian content.

- 1 Thessalonians 5:17
- Philippians 4:6
- Psalm 1:2
- Joshua 1:8
- Proverbs 3:5-6
- James 1:5

3. Prioritize worship and community

Engage in worship individually and with believers. Surround yourself with supportive individuals.

- Psalm 100:2

IMPORTANCE OF SEEKING GOD'S WORD AND GUIDANCE

- Hebrews 10:24-25

4. Live out your faith through actions

Serve others. Cultivate a thankful heart and strive for excellence.

- Mark 10:45
- 1 Thessalonians 5:18
- Colossians 3:23-24

Implementing these practices can help you prioritize seeking God's Word and guidance, ultimately enriching your spiritual journey and fostering a deeper connection with your faith. By dedicating time each day to reading scripture, reflecting on its teachings, and praying for understanding, you invite the Holy Spirit into your life to illuminate your path. This intentional commitment not only cultivates a habit of mindfulness but also empowers you to align your daily decisions and actions with divine wisdom, providing clarity and strength in times of uncertainty.

Mary's visit to Elizabeth, described in Luke 1:39–45, is highly important for several reasons:

It offers confirmation and grace. Mary's presence, carrying the unborn Son of God, brought a divine confirmation to Elizabeth, who was also carrying a miraculous child. The moment Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, her baby – the future John the Baptist – leaped in her womb, and she was filled with the Holy Spirit. This was a sign that what the angel had told Mary was true and a validation of both women's miraculous callings.

It demonstrates faith in action. After the angel Gabriel announced her pregnancy, Mary immediately set out on the long journey to see Elizabeth. This

IMPORTANCE OF SEEKING GOD'S WORD AND GUIDANCE

shows that her faith was not just a passive belief, but an active trust in God's promises, as reflected in James 2:17.

It emphasizes the importance of Christian fellowship. In a time of uncertainty and wonder, the two women came together to share, celebrate, and support one another in their unique journeys. This models the power of community in navigating God's call and the importance of having relationships with other believers.

It provided an opportunity for celebration and praise. Elizabeth's filled-with-the-Spirit exclamation of blessing led Mary to respond with the Magnificat, a song of profound praise to God. Their shared joy magnified the Lord's goodness and helped both women process the miraculous work He was doing in their lives.

What can we learn from their example?

From the encounter between Mary and Elizabeth, we can learn valuable lessons about seeking and affirming godly guidance:

Act on divine promptings

Mary was told that Elizabeth was also miraculously pregnant and made the journey with haste.

- Principle: When God gives you a word or direction, act on it, even if it seems unconventional or difficult.
- Scripture: *But be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.* James 1:22

IMPORTANCE OF SEEKING GOD'S WORD AND GUIDANCE

Seek validation and support in community

Mary went to be with Elizabeth, a trusted woman of faith, who could understand what she was experiencing. This helped Mary find reassurance.

- Principle: God can use fellow believers to affirm His will and strengthen your faith. Seek out godly counsel when facing significant callings or challenges.
- Scripture: *and let us consider one another in order to provoke love and good works, not neglecting to gather together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging each other, and all the more as you see the day approaching.* Hebrews 10:24-25

Affirm and encourage others in their calling

Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, affirmed Mary's role as the mother of the Lord, which in turn inspired Mary to praise God.

- Principle: When you see God at work in someone else's life, affirm them. Your encouragement can provide strength and confirm their path.
- Scripture: *Therefore encourage one another and build each other up as you are already doing.* 1 Thessalonians 5:11

Prioritize celebration over comparison

Despite her own amazing miracle, Elizabeth humbly blessed Mary, rejoicing with her rather than comparing their circumstances.

- Principle: Avoid the trap of comparing your journey to others. Instead, celebrate God's goodness in their lives, knowing that He has a

IMPORTANCE OF SEEKING GOD'S WORD AND GUIDANCE

unique and important purpose for everyone.

- Scripture: *I wish that all people were as I am. But each has his own gift from God, one person has this gift, another has that.* 1 Corinthians 7:7

Make time for shared joy

The meeting of the two women was filled with the joy of the Holy Spirit, reminding us of the power of sharing spiritual experiences with others.

- Principle: Make time to share your faith journey with others. Sharing your joy can magnify God and bring encouragement to those around you.
- Scripture: *Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep.* Romans 12:15

Mary

parenting Lessons



itStartssmall.com

Mary

Mary, alongside Joseph, poured every ounce of her being into the nurturing and teaching of Jesus, immersing him in the profound ways of the Lord with unwavering love and dedication. Her heart brimmed with relentless care and support, as she interceded for him at the joyous wedding feast at Cana and stood steadfast at the foot of the cross. Mary's extraordinary embodiment of motherhood – marked by boundless devotion, indomitable strength, and fierce, unconditional love – ignites a powerful flame of inspiration for mothers today, urging them to embrace these virtues. Mary, the mother of Jesus, shines as a luminous beacon of godly motherhood through her deep faith, obedient heart, and sacrificial love. Her life exemplifies the essence of prioritizing God and trusting in His divine plan, even amidst the storms of uncertainty and pain.

Humble Obedience

*38 "See, I am the Lord's servant," said Mary. "May it happen to me as you have said."
Then the angel left her.
Luke 1:38*

Mary showed humble obedience when the angel Gabriel announced she would conceive the Son of God. Her desire to serve God and follow His will surpassed her fear of social consequences.

Treasuring and Pondering God's Word

*19 But Mary was treasuring up all these things in her heart and meditating on them.
51 Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was obedient to them. His
mother kept all these things in her heart.
Luke 2:19, 51*

PARENTING LESSONS

Mary actively treasured and reflected on the words and events confirming her son's divine nature, seeking deeper spiritual understanding.

Providing a Godly Foundation

Mary's deep knowledge of the Scriptures and prayerful nature suggests she provided Jesus with a strong spiritual upbringing.

- Mary's song of praise, the Magnificat, includes references to Old Testament passages (Luke 1:46–55).
- Jesus's understanding of Scripture at age 12, when He discussed it with the teachers in the Temple, indicates a strong faith foundation taught by His parents (Luke 2:41–52).

Supporting Jesus' Ministry

5 “Do whatever he tells you,” his mother told the servants.
John 2:5

Mary showed discernment and support for her son's public ministry, as seen during the wedding at Cana, where she instructed the servants.

Demonstrating Unwavering Dedication

25 Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.
John 19:25

35 and a sword will pierce your own soul – that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.”
Luke 2:35

PARENTING LESSONS

Mary remained with her son, even during the most painful moments of His life, as He endured crucifixion.

Persevering in Prayer and Ministry

14 They all were continually united in prayer, along with the women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

Acts 1:14

After Jesus' ascension, Mary continued to pray with the apostles, demonstrating her continued devotion and faithfulness.

Mary, the mother of Jesus, is a powerful model of faith and motherhood that can be applied to everyday life by reflecting on her humility, trust, attentiveness to God's Word, and unwavering support.

Here is how you can apply Mary's example as a mother in your own life:

Embrace humility and obedience

Mary's willingness to accept God's will, despite the challenges, is a powerful example.

- Application: Approach challenges and joys with humility and trust in a higher power's plan.
- Scripture: *"See, I am the Lord's servant," said Mary. "May it happen to me as you have said." Then the angel left her.* Luke 1:38

Ponder and reflect on experiences

Mary "treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart."

- Application: Take time to reflect on life experiences, seeking understanding and growth.
- Scripture: *19 But Mary was treasuring up all these things in her heart and meditating on them.* Luke 2:19

PARENTING LESSONS

Nurture a spiritual environment

Mary's faith and praise (the Magnificat) contributed to the environment in which Jesus was raised.

- Application: Create a supportive and spiritually enriching environment.
- Scripture: 6 *These words that I am giving you today are to be in your heart. 7 Repeat them to your children. Talk about them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.* Deuteronomy 6:6-7

Support and encourage growth

Mary supported Jesus's ministry and purpose.

- Application: Encourage growth and purpose in those around you.
- Scripture: 5 *"Do whatever he tells you," his mother told the servants.* John 2:5

Remain steadfast in challenging times

Mary's presence at the cross shows her unwavering dedication.

- Application: Offer support and strength during difficult times.
- Scripture: 25 *Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.* John 19:25

Mary

JOURNAL PROMPTS



itStartssmall.com

Mary

Journaling about the extraordinary life of Mary, the mother of Jesus, unveils deep and transformative insights into unwavering faith, profound humility, and absolute trust in God's divine plan. Here are some inspiring journal prompts, sparked by the pivotal moments and cherished attributes in Mary's remarkable journey, accompanied by powerful scripture references.

On humility and acceptance

- The Annunciation (Luke 1:26–38): Mary, though a young woman of humble standing, was chosen by God for an extraordinary purpose.
 - Journal Prompt: Consider a time when a task seemed beyond your abilities. How did you respond? What can be learned from Mary's trusting reply, "I am the Lord's servant; may it be to me as you have said"?
- Willingness to serve (Luke 1:38): Mary's surrender was a 'yes' that changed history.
 - Journal Prompt: Consider areas of your life where God is asking you to surrender control. What fears or hesitations hold you back? How might Mary's example bring healing?

On reflection and spiritual depth

- Pondering and treasuring (Luke 2:19, 2:51): The shepherds' visit and Jesus's actions in the temple led Mary to reflect deeply on these events.
 - Journal Prompt: What "treasures" has God placed in your life recently? Take time to ponder their meaning and significance, just as Mary did. How can reflection be prioritized over immediate reaction?
- The Magnificat (Luke 1:46–55): Mary's song is a deep reflection on God's character and promises.
 - Journal Prompt: Write your own version of a "Magnificat." What attributes of God are you most grateful for, and how has He shown



faithfulness in your life?

On navigating the unknown

- Flight to Egypt (Matthew 2:13–15): Mary and Joseph fled to Egypt to protect Jesus from Herod's decree.
 - Journal Prompt: Consider a time when a difficult decision had an uncertain outcome. How did you trust in God, even without knowing what would happen next?
- Prophecy of suffering (Luke 2:34–35): Simeon prophesied that a "sword will pierce" Mary's own soul.
 - Journal Prompt: How can you prepare your heart for potential future struggles? What can be learned from Mary's example of accepting a difficult truth while trusting in God's larger plan?

On perseverance and endurance

- The wedding at Cana (John 2:1–5): Mary's trust in Jesus's power led to His first miracle.
 - Journal Prompt: What seemingly impossible situations are you facing? How can Mary's example of trusting in her son's abilities encourage you to place your trust fully in Jesus?
- Standing at the cross (John 19:25): Mary stayed with Jesus during His crucifixion.
 - Journal Prompt: What does Mary's presence at the cross teach about enduring hardship and pain? Who are the people in your life who are suffering? How can you be a steadfast presence for them, even when it's difficult?

Mary

On motherhood and spiritual growth

- A "spiritual mother" (Luke 1:43): Elizabeth's greeting of Mary as "the mother of my Lord" has spiritual significance.
 - Journal Prompt: Who in your life has served as a "spiritual mother" or mentor? How have they encouraged and supported you on your faith journey? How can you serve as a "spiritual mother" to others?
- An instrument of God (Luke 1:48): Mary was chosen as a vessel for God's purposes.
 - Journal Prompt: How is God using you as an instrument to fulfill His purposes? Are you living a life that is eternally focused and encouraging to others?

Mary



CONCLUSION



itStartssmall.com

Mary

The life of Mary, the mother of Jesus, is a breathtaking testament to the beauty of wholly surrendering to God's will. From her humble acceptance of a miraculous calling to her unwavering presence at the foot of the cross, she embodies profound humility, indomitable faith, and extraordinary perseverance. Mary's quiet strength and attentive spirit, as she treasured and pondered events in her heart (Luke 2:19), reveal that a life devoted to God is not always loud or public; often, it flourishes in the sacred stillness of faithful reflection and obedience. Her inspiring example beckons us to trust God's promises — even when enveloped in uncertainty — which becomes the true wellspring of courage and peace in our lives.

For those embarking on their own unexpected journeys, Mary's story radiates with fervent encouragement. Her life powerfully illustrates that God empowers ordinary individuals to achieve extraordinary feats, and that every challenge can be embraced with unwavering grace and a heart overflowing with praise. By nurturing humility and fervently seeking God's guidance, we can draw profound strength from her inspiring example to confront our own fears and uncertainties. Ultimately, Mary's journey passionately redirects our focus to her son, Jesus, reminding us that by fixing our gaze upon Him, we can uncover the courage and faithfulness needed to stride confidently in our own divine callings.



itStartsSmall.com

© 2024 It Starts Small Ministries. This free printable scripture writing journal is intended for personal use and small group study. Please do not reproduce or modify without written permission. Visit www.itstartssmall.com for inquiries.

All graphics contained within this journal are used in accordance to the purchased commercial license requirements and is available upon request.