

Consent

Seek God's Word for Truth

Read the following passage:

God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a village in Galilee, to a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David. Gabriel appeared to her and said, "Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you!"

Confused and disturbed, Mary tried to think what the angel could mean. "Don't be frightened, Mary," the angel told her, "for God has decided to bless you! You will become pregnant and have a son, and you are to name him Jesus. He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David. And he will reign over Israel forever; his Kingdom will never end!"

Mary asked the angel, "But how can I have a baby? I am a virgin."

The angel replied, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby born to you will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God."

Mary responded, "I am the Lord's servant, and I am willing to accept whatever he wants. May whatever you have said come true." And then the angel left.

Luke 1:26-35, 38

From the above passage, what do we learn about Mary? (e.g., She was from Galilee.)

According to Gabriel's greeting, what was God's attitude toward Mary?

How did Mary respond to the angel's greeting?

Gabriel reassured Mary and proceeded to explain his mission. List the things he revealed to Mary regarding herself. And what does he tell Mary about the child?

Mary reminds the angel that she is a virgin and asks him how she can become pregnant. What additional information does Gabriel give her?

How does Mary respond?

Find God's Ways for You

According to the following passage from Scripture, God speaks to us today through his written Word.

All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It straightens us out and teaches us to do what is right. It is God's way of preparing us in every way, fully equipped for every good thing God wants us to do.--2 Timothy 3:16-17

How is God's Word useful to us?

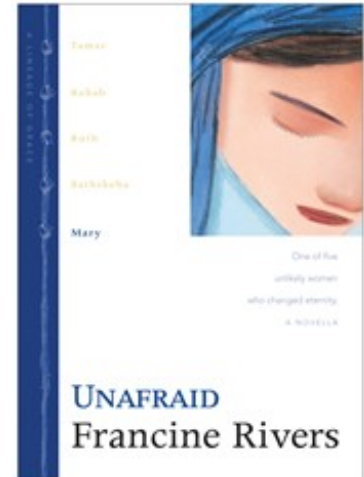
Mary was alone and quiet when God spoke to her. God speaks to us in small, quiet ways today, but are we available to hear? List the things that might distract us and keep us from hearing him.

When you hear God's voice, how do you respond?

Read Jesus' words in the following passage from Scripture:

Anyone whose Father is God listens gladly to the words of God. Since you don't, it proves you aren't God's children.--John 8:47

What reason does Jesus give for our not hearing God?



Stop and Ponder

But people who aren't Christians can't understand these truths from God's Spirit. It all sounds foolish to them because only those who have the Spirit can understand what the Spirit means. We who have the Spirit understand these things, but others can't understand us at all. How could they? For, "Who can know what the Lord is thinking? Who can give him counsel?" But we can understand these things, for we have the mind of Christ.

1 Corinthians 2:14-16

Do you have the mind of Christ?

Celebration

Seek God's Word for Truth

Read the following passage:

At that time the Roman emperor, Augustus, decreed that a census should be taken throughout the Roman Empire. (This was the first census taken when Quirinius was governor of Syria.) All returned to their own towns to register for this census. And because Joseph was a descendant of King David, he had to go to Bethlehem in Judea, David's ancient home. He traveled there from the village of Nazareth in Galilee. He took with him Mary, his fiancée, who was obviously pregnant by this time. And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born. She gave birth to her first child, a son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the village inn.

That night some shepherds were in the fields outside the village, guarding their flocks of sheep. Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terribly frightened, but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news of great joy for everyone! The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born tonight in Bethlehem, the city of David! And this is how you will recognize him: You will find a baby lying in a manger, wrapped snugly in strips of cloth!"

Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God:

"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to all whom God favors."

When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other,

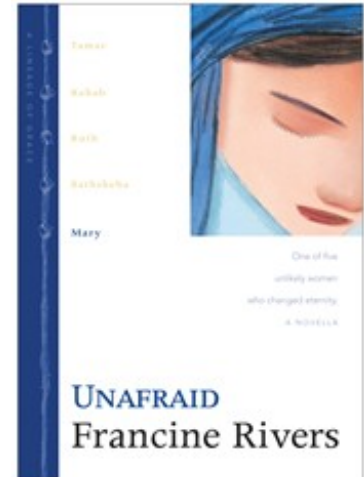
"Come on, let's go to Bethlehem! Let's see this wonderful thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

They ran to the village and found Mary and Joseph. And there was the baby, lying in the manger. Then the shepherds told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child. All who heard the shepherds' story were astonished, but Mary quietly treasured these things in her heart and thought about them often. The shepherds went back to their fields and flocks, glorifying and praising God for what the angels had told them, and because they had seen the child, just as the angel had said.

Luke 2: 1-20

Why were Mary and Joseph traveling to Bethlehem?

When they were in Bethlehem, what happened to Mary? What details are given?



Angels visited the shepherds. What sign was given to the shepherds regarding the event? What was their response?

What was Mary's response to the shepherds' visit?

List all the evidence of celebration from the above passage.

Find God's Ways for You

The best laid plans often go awry. How do you handle interrupted plans?

Share a time when you had to "make do" with your circumstances.

Read the following verse:

You can make many plans, but the Lord's purpose will prevail.--Proverbs 19:21

What do we learn from this verse?

Mary found reasons to rejoice and events to treasure even when her circumstances were not what she would have chosen. What causes you to treasure things in your heart?

Stop and Ponder

We can make our plans, but the Lord determines our steps.--Proverbs 16:9

How can we understand the road we travel? It is the Lord who directs our steps.-

-Proverbs 20:24

Your word is a lamp for my feet and a light for my path.--Psalm 119:105

Do you trip over—or treasure—interruptions?

Compliance

Seek God's Word for Truth

Magi from the East came seeking the newborn baby. Following a star, they arrived in Bethlehem. Read the following passage about their arrival:

When they saw the star, they were filled with joy! They entered the house where the child and his mother, Mary, were, and they fell down before him and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasure chests and gave him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. But when it was time to leave, they went home another way, because God had warned them in a dream not to return to Herod. After the wise men were gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up and flee to Egypt with the child and his mother," the angel said. "Stay there until I tell you to return, because Herod is going to try to kill the child." That night Joseph left for Egypt with the child and Mary, his mother, and they stayed there until Herod's death.

When Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and told him, "Get up and take the child and his mother back to the land of Israel, because those who were trying to kill the child are dead." So Joseph returned immediately to Israel with Jesus and his mother.

Matthew 2:10-15, 19-21

When the magi arrive, what do they do?

What gifts do they bring the child?

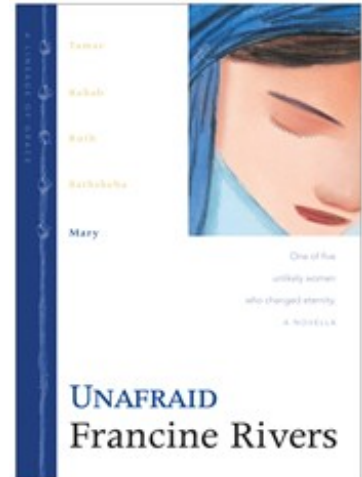
After the magi leave, to whom does the angel appear? And by what means?

What is the angel's message?

What does Joseph do and when?

Sometime later, the angel appears again. What event gave rise to this second appearance, and what was the message this time?

How do Joseph and his wife, Mary, respond this time?



Find God's Ways for You

How do you handle the recognition and praise of people who are close to you?
How do you respond to the praise of people you do not know well?

Read the following Scripture passage:

Don't be selfish; don't live to make a good impression on others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourself. Don't think only about your own affairs, but be interested in others, too, and what they are doing.--Philippians 2:3-4
According to the above verses, what should our attitude be?

Mary willingly complied/obeyed when asked to be uprooted and moved. How do you handle major changes in your life?

Stop and Ponder

Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will direct your paths.--Proverbs 3:5-6
Do you trust God and where he may be leading you?

Concern

Seek God's Word for Truth

Read the following passage:

Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the Passover festival. When Jesus was twelve years old, they attended the festival as usual. After the celebration was over, they started home to Nazareth, but Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents didn't miss him at first, because they assumed he was with friends among the other travelers. But when he didn't show up that evening, they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. When they couldn't find him, they went back to Jerusalem to search for him there. Three days later they finally discovered him. He was in the Temple, sitting among the religious teachers, discussing deep questions with them. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.

His parents didn't know what to think. "Son!" his mother said to him. "Why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been frantic, searching for you everywhere."

"But why did you need to search?" he asked. "You should have known that I would be in my Father's house." But they didn't understand what he meant. Then he returned to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them; and his mother stored all these things in her heart.

Luke 2:41-51

What annual event took the family to Jerusalem?

When did Mary and Joseph leave Jerusalem?

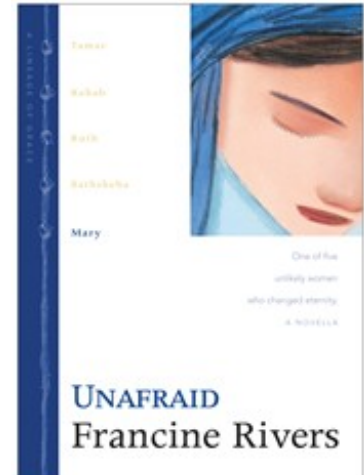
What were they unaware of and why?

Describe their search.

Upon finding Jesus, what did Mary say to her son? What did her son say to her?

We are told that Mary and Joseph didn't understand what Jesus said to them.

What is Mary's response to all that happened?



Find God's Ways for You

Describe a time when, as a child, you were not where you were supposed to be.

How did you feel?

How did your parents react?

What was your response to their reaction?

Read the following passage:

God has said, "I will never fail you. I will never forsake you." That is why we can say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper, so I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?"--Hebrews 13:5-6

There are all kinds of fear. Children may fear their parents when they have been disobedient; parents fear for the safety of their children, etc. What confidence does a child of God have when facing frightening circumstances?

Stop and Ponder

You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, whose thoughts are fixed on you! Trust in the Lord always, for the Lord God is the eternal Rock.--Isaiah 26:3-4
Where do you place your confidence?

Conflicts

Seek God's Word for Truth

Read the following passage:

The next day Jesus' mother was a guest at a wedding celebration in the village of Cana in Galilee. Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the celebration. The wine supply ran out during the festivities, so Jesus' mother spoke to him about the problem. "They have no more wine," she told him.

"How does that concern you and me?" Jesus asked. "My time has not yet come."

But his mother told the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."--John 2:1-5

According to this passage, what event was Mary attending? Who else was there?

At the wedding, Mary noticed that the wine ran out. What did she do?

How does Jesus answer her?

How does Mary deal with her son's reply?

Read about another time:

Once when Jesus' mother and brothers came to see him, they couldn't get to him because of the crowds. Someone told Jesus, "Your mother and your brothers are outside, and they want to see you."

Jesus replied, "My mother and my brothers are all those who hear the message of God and obey it."--Luke 8:19-21

What do we learn about Mary and Jesus' relationship from this passage?

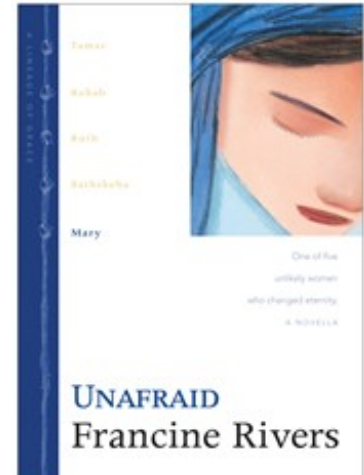
What appears to be happening to her relationship with her firstborn son?

Find God's Ways for You

Describe a time when you embarrassed yourself or a family member at a family event. What did it do to your relationship? How do you go about helping family members you think are on the edge of trouble?

Read the following passages:

Share each other's troubles and problems, and in this way obey the law of Christ. If you think you are too important to help someone in need, you are only fooling yourself. You are really a nobody. Be sure to do what you should, for then you will enjoy the personal satisfaction of having done your work well, and you won't need to compare yourself to anyone else. For we are each responsible for our own conduct.--Galatians 6:2-5



Stop judging others, and you will not be judged. For others will treat you as you treat them. Whatever measure you use in judging others, it will be used to measure how you are judged.--Matthew 7:1-2

What do we learn about relationships and responsibility in the above verses?

Stop and Ponder

So be careful how you live, not as fools but as those who are wise. Make the most of every opportunity for doing good in these evil days. Don't act thoughtlessly, but try to understand what the Lord wants you to do.

And further, you will submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.--

Ephesians 5:15-17, 21

Are you thoughtless or considerate in your relationships?

Confession

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Read the following passage:

Standing near the cross were Jesus' mother, and his mother's sister, Mary (the wife of Clopas), and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother standing there beside the disciple he loved, he said to her, "Woman, he is your son." And he said to this disciple, "She is your mother." And from then on this disciple took her into his home.--John 19:25-27

According to this passage, where was Mary? Who was with her at the crucifixion? Who was missing?

What does Jesus say to Mary?

What provision does Jesus make for her?

After Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension, his disciples gathered in Jerusalem.

Read the following passage:

The apostles were at the Mount of Olives when this [the Ascension] happened, so they walked the half mile back to Jerusalem. Then they went to the upstairs room of the house where they were staying. Here is the list of those who were present: Peter, John, James, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James (son of Alphaeus), Simon (the Zealot), and Judas (son of James). They all met together continually for prayer, along with Mary the mother of Jesus, several other women, and the brothers of Jesus.--Acts 1:12-14

Where was Mary and what was she doing?

Besides the disciples, who was with Mary this time?

Finally, Mary is remembered for her obedient servant's heart. In the Gospel of Luke, we find her song:

Oh, how I praise the Lord. How I rejoice in God my Savior!

For he took notice of this lowly servant girl, and now generation after generation will call me blessed.

For he, the Mighty One, is holy, and he has done great things for me.

His mercy goes on from generation to generation, to all who fear him.

His mighty arm does tremendous things! How he scatters the proud and haughty ones!

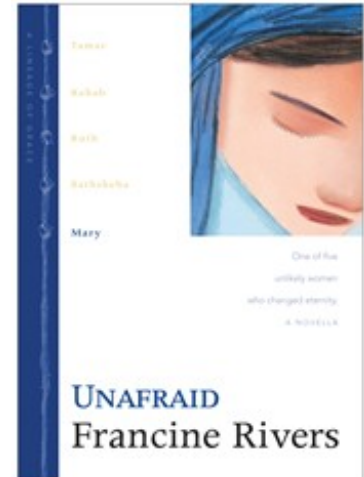
He has taken princes from their thrones and exalted the lowly.

He has satisfied the hungry with good things and sent the rich away with empty hands.

And how he has helped his servant Israel! He has not forgotten his promise to be merciful.

For he promised our ancestors—Abraham and his children—to be merciful to them forever.--Luke 1:46-55

List the names and attributes of God that you find in this confession of Mary's faith.



Find God's Ways for You

Of all the Gospel writers, John knew Mary best, and yet he wrote the least about her. It is in his Gospel that we read Mary's last recorded words: "Do whatever he [Jesus] tells you." Since Mary said to do what Jesus tells us, let's look at what Jesus has to say in the following passages:

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. God did not send his Son into the world to condemn it, but to save it.

There is no judgment awaiting those who trust him. But those who do not trust him have already been judged for not believing in the only Son of God.--John 3:16-18

Contrast the choices that are before you.

What does Jesus offer you?

"Don't be troubled. You trust God, now trust in me. There are many rooms in my Father's home, and I am going to prepare a place for you. If this were not so, I would tell you plainly. When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am. And you know where I am going and how to get there."

"No, we don't know, Lord," Thomas said. "We haven't any idea where you are going, so how can we know the way?"

Jesus told them, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me. If you had known who I am, then you would have known who my Father is. From now on you know him and have seen him!"--John 14:1-7

What are Jesus' instructions? What are his promises?

Who alone saves us?

Stop and Ponder

Read the following words of Jesus:

Look! Here I stand at the door and knock. If you hear me calling and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal as friends. I will invite everyone who is victorious to sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat with my Father on his throne. Anyone who is willing to hear should listen to the Spirit and understand what the Spirit is saying to the churches.

Revelation 3:20-22

Have you opened the door?

the genealogy of JESUS the CHRIST

THIS is a record of the ancestors of Jesus the Messiah, a descendant of King David and of Abraham:

Abraham was the father of Isaac.

Isaac was the father of Jacob.

Jacob was the father of Judah and his brothers.

Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah (their mother was Tamar).

Perez was the father of Hezron.

Hezron was the father of Ram.

Ram was the father of Amminadab.

Amminadab was the father of Nahshon.

Nahshon was the father of Salmon.

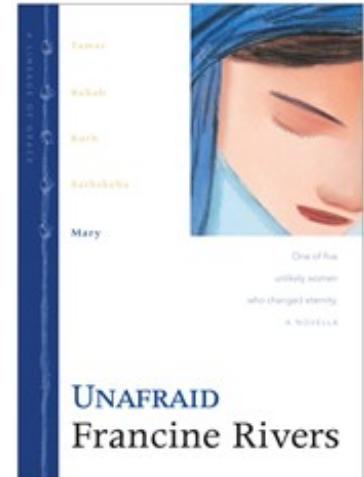
Salmon was the father of Boaz (his mother was Rahab).

Boaz was the father of Obed (his mother was Ruth).

Obed was the father of Jesse.

Jesse was the father of King David.

David was the father of Solomon (his mother was Bathsheba, the widow of Uriah).



Solomon was the father of Rehoboam.
Rehoboam was the father of Abijah.
Abijah was the father of Asaph.
Asaph was the father of Jehoshaphat.
Jehoshaphat was the father of Jehoram.
Jehoram was the father of Uzziah.
Uzziah was the father of Jotham.
Jotham was the father of Ahaz.
Ahaz was the father of Hezekiah.
Hezekiah was the father of Manasseh.
Manasseh was the father of Amos.
Amos was the father of Josiah.
Josiah was the father of Jehoiachin and his brothers (born at the time of the exile to Babylon).
After the Babylonian exile:
Jehoiachin was the father of Shealtiel.
Shealtiel was the father of Zerubbabel.
Zerubbabel was the father of Abiud.
Abiud was the father of Eliakim.
Eliakim was the father of Azor.
Azor was the father of Zadok.
Zadok was the father of Akim.
Akim was the father of Eliud.
Eliud was the father of Eleazar.
Eleazar was the father of Matthan.
Matthan was the father of Jacob.
Jacob was the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary.
Mary was the mother of Jesus, who is called the Messiah.
MATTHEW 1:1-16

