

Mary Found Favor and We Can Too

ONE OF THE MOST PROMINENT characters of the Christmas story is Mary.

LUKE 1:26-38 When the angel announced God's plan to Mary, he said, "Rejoice for thou have found favor with God." The Bible says she was "deeply troubled." Then the angel says again, "Do not be afraid. You have found favor with God." We cannot manipulate God's favor, but we can examine the characteristics of Mary's life and seek to follow her example of finding favor with God. We too can find favor and be used by God.

Strive for Purity

She was the virgin mother of the Lord Jesus. In a culture that was politically and morally corrupt, Mary kept herself pure. 2 Timothy 2:21 reminds us, "If anyone purifies himself from these things, he will be a special instrument, set apart, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work." Purity places us in position to be blessed of God.

Submit to Authority

Mary was chosen to be the mother of Jesus because she was willing to submit to authority. She didn't understand God's plan, but she submitted to His will for her life.

See The Impossible

Mary says in the latter part of verse 38, "May it be done according to your word." Can you imagine the revival that would breakout all across the world, if professing Christians embraced the promises of God with the confidence of Mary? If we truly lived with a faith that could see the unseen, hear the inaudible, and conceive the inconceivable, we would turn the world upside down. Mary reminds us of the importance to listen to an impossible assignment and said, "I believe it, just like you have promised."

Study the Testimony

I'm convinced one of the reasons why Mary was favored and why she was able to believe God's promise was because she was a student of the Word of God. In the



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beautiful song of praise often called Mary's Magnificat (Luke 1: 46-55), she quotes at least ten different Old Testament passages.

Sacrifice Joyfully

Mary declared, "My spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior" (L: 47). Being chosen of God is a great honor, but it is not easy. Mary had to leave home. She was criticized. Her future husband accused her of unfaithfulness. Her immediate family probably doubted her story. The Bible is painfully silent about any friends she may have had. She will have to make a difficult trip to Bethlehem when she is nine months pregnant. Then she will have to escape to Egypt to avoid the assassination of her newborn child. But, Mary rejoiced!

Mary illustrates that rejoicing is an act of obedience. Joy is a gift of God, but we are commanded to rejoice. Rejoicing in the midst of difficulty is a beautiful sacrifice of faith that honors the Lord. I believe that God chose Mary to raise His son because she knew the secret discipline of rejoicing. Her ability to rejoice would never be determined by circumstances. She refused to be negative and resolved to rejoice in the Lord.

CONCLUSION

We must not regulate God's favor to the Christmas story. God wants to pour out His favor upon His children. In the psalm attributed to Moses, he prayed, "May the favor of the Lord our God rest upon us" (Ps. 90:17). This Christmas, as you think about the characters of the Christmas story, remember Mary. The mother of the Lord Jesus was highly favored and you can be too!