

### Discussion Guide

*Use this guide by yourself, with a friend, or in a group to help you pursue a deeper relationship with Jesus this week!*

#### Open

As we begin this year's Christmas series, Pastor Don takes a look at the story of Mary to help us understand how we can depend on God's consistent love and care for us even when our circumstances seem chaotic and random. When the angel told Mary that she was going to become the mother of Jesus, he was announcing an upheaval of her entire life - her relationships with friends and family, her expectations of her life, and her understanding of how God works in the world. So what do we do when our life seems to spin out of control? To get the group started, go around the room and let everyone tell about a time when they felt like their lives had slipped into chaos - how did they deal with it? And what ended up happening?

#### BIG THOUGHT

God wants us to respond to the seemingly random events in our lives by accepting that He will use them to make us into the people He created us to be.

#### Dig

1. To get started, read Luke 1:26-29 (note: Elizabeth was Mary's relative who was miraculously pregnant with the baby later known as John the Baptist). Who sent the angel? And what was Mary's status at the time? (v. 27) Why is it important for Luke to note Joseph's lineage? (see Psalm 89:35-37) If you had been Mary and an angel appeared to you, what do you think would have been your response? (v. 29)
2. Now read v. 30-33. How did Gabriel describe the child born to Mary? What title would Jesus have? (v. 32) What Old Testament person was a part of Jesus' royal line? (v. 32-33)

3. Read Mary's response to the angel in v. 34-37, and then read Zechariah's (Elizabeth's husband) response to Gabriel's announcement to him in Luke 1:18-20. Are Zechariah's and Mary's responses different or the same? What about Gabriel's responses? Why do you think that is? How would you explain the difference between "asking God questions" and "questioning God"?
4. Now read v. 38. How does Mary's answer show her high level of trust in God? What do you think *your* response would have been if you had been her? Explain...
5. To finish, read Jesus' affirmation of Gabriel's declaration (v. 37) in another context in Matthew 19:26. What "impossibilities" in your life do you want to thank God for this week even before He finishes resolving them? Share with the group...

#### Take it Further

Go ahead and talk with God about the difficult things in your life that you're struggling to understand right now, and then thank Him that He will use all of them for your good (Romans 8:28).

#### Daily Readings

Day 1: 1 Peter 5:7  
Day 2: John 14:27  
Day 3: Psalm 27:1

Day 4: 1 Corinthians 1:9  
Day 5: Philippians 4:13  
Day 6: Jeremiah 29:11

Memory Verse: Luke 1:38



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