



ENGAGE (15 MINUTES)

THE POINT EMBRACE GOD'S CALL ON YOUR LIFE.

LEAD OPTION 1

Choose two students to come up front and stand by a table with various ingredients for salsa. Have one student read instructions from a recipe while the other prepares the ingredients. Give the students two minutes to make it. Say, **"God calls us to follow His will for our lives, so we bring Him glory and experience His goodness."**

LEAD OPTION 2

Place objects around the room representing different professions. Say, **"God has different plans in store for all of us, so we should trust Him and embrace His call on our lives."**

LEAD OPTION 3

Search the Internet for "17 Christian Ways to Say No." Play the video as you begin the session. Say, **"God has a plan for our lives, and we should willingly follow His call."**

NOTE: Always make sure you preview any video clip you show students and ensure that it is appropriate for your church and ministry.



For **free online training** on how to lead a group visit MinistryGrid.com/web/BibleStudiesForLife
For **free Midweek Options** for your group, visit lifeway.com/BSFLWin19fullpicture

LEADER PACK ELEMENTS

If you have the optional Leader Pack, consider one of the following:

ITEM 3: Engage students in the session by displaying the *Corrie ten Boom Quote* poster.



THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

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THE SETTING

While Matthew's Gospel tells of Jesus' birth from Joseph's perspective, Luke's Gospel considers Mary's point of view. Therefore, Luke began with the birth of John the Baptist to Elizabeth, Mary's relative. The birth of both boys was supernatural—John's birth because Elizabeth was old and barren, and Jesus' birth because Mary was a virgin. God's gospel plan unfolded from these miraculous events experienced by God's people.

FACT:

ONLY EIGHT PERCENT OF THE WORLD'S CURRENCY IS PHYSICAL MONEY.¹ THE REST EXISTS ONLY ON COMPUTERS AND HARD DRIVES, AND WE DEPEND IN A BIG WAY ON TECHNOLOGY FOR OUR EARNING AND BUYING.

We interact with things every day which, basically, we're clueless about. Nonetheless, we trust and use them. For instance:

- You may be reading this from a physical, printed book. Few of us understand the printing process and how presses work.
- For those reading from a digital device, the technology inside our phones and tablets is mind-blowing.
- The texts we send, the cars we drive, and the video games we play all work in ways we can't even begin to understand.

When I left for college, I had no clue what I wanted to do for a living. Even though I'd wanted to study medicine for most of my life, all of a sudden I had a scholarship to study music. I understood clearly God was leading me in that direction. I didn't know what the future held, but I trusted that, if I followed God, He'd take care of the rest.

Mary, Jesus' mother, surely didn't understand what was about to happen, but she trusted God. We see from her experience, even without fully comprehending everything in God's plan, we can trust and embrace what He wants us to do.



IMPART

THE POINT EMBRACE GOD'S CALL ON YOUR LIFE.

LUKE 1:26-30

In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man named Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came to her and said, "Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you." But she was deeply troubled by this statement, wondering what kind of greeting this could be. Then the angel told her: "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. LUKE 1:26-30

When I was in high school, students served as aides in the office and helped with light administrative responsibilities, including delivering messages from the office. On more than one occasion, I was in class when an aide knocked on the door and announced to the class, "Jeff Belcher, you are needed in the principal's office." When things like this happen, it might be because the school has chosen to give us an award, or it might be to deliver news of a scholarship. However, that's not usually where our minds go, right?

Leader: Describe a time when you experienced something like this. Allow students to share as well.

Angels are God's servants who often deliver important messages to God's people. In fact, the word angel means "messenger." Gabriel, one of the few angels named in the Bible, came to Mary with a message of greeting. The message was quite simple, yet Mary was confused, even frightened, by the angel's greeting. I'm sure any one of us would have felt the same way. However, Gabriel comforted her and let her know she had no reason to be afraid, for she had found favor with God. To be in God's favor literally means to be "full of grace." Because of God's grace in Mary's life, she could experience peace that comes only from Him.

For all those who have, by faith in Jesus, become a part of God's family, we, like Mary, have received God's grace. As His children, we have no reason to fear judgment, but instead experience peace with Him. We may not understand everything God has planned for our lives, and when He shows up with a new message for us, it can be frightening. However, it's important to remember:

- **God gives grace freely to His children.**
- **We can trust He is always working for our good.**
- **We have no reason to fear.**

DAILY DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE (P. 22)

- 1** *Why might it be troubling to be singled out by God?*
- 2** *Which passage from Scripture brings you comfort when you find yourself in unexpected circumstances?*





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LUKE 1:31-33

Now listen: *You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. 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. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and his kingdom will have no end.* **LUKE 1:31-33**

When my wife and I had our first child, it was common for people to tell us, "She looks just like her mom," or, "It's a good thing she got her mama's looks." (And I wholeheartedly agree!) Josie, who's now 12, does look quite a lot like her mom. Beyond that, she has many of her mom's mannerisms, values many of the same things, and wants to be just like her. Why does this happen? For one, it's because we're a family, and Kelly spends a lot of time with our kids. But even more importantly, Josie has her mother's genes.

Gabriel comforted Mary, explaining that, because of God's grace in her life, she had no reason to fear. He then took it a step further and shared just what it meant for her to be favored by God. Mary would have the great honor of giving birth to the Son of the Most High. The Messiah wouldn't have an earthly father like every other child. Instead, He would be the Son of the King of creation. "Most High" conveys the strength and authority of God, and it means the Father is superior to all people in every way. Jesus, the Son of God and not of man, would receive the nature of His Father and would be Himself God.

Leader: Feel free to share about similarities between you and your parents.

VERSE 32: Calling a child "his father's son" is a way of communicating a son's resemblance to his father. The phrase "Son of the Most High" expresses that Jesus bears the Father's qualities, even to the point of signifying equality.

The angel went on to explain that Mary's son would be royalty. He was fit to be Israel's king because He came from the line of David. However, unlike any earthly king, the kingdom of Mary's child would have no end. He would be not only the King of Israel, but as the Son of God, He would reign as King over God's people for eternity.

VERSE 33: God promised David an eternal reign (2 Sam. 7:12-16), and Jesus stepped in as the Messiah who would fulfill that role. The Jews expected the Messiah to deliver the people from earthly oppression and establish a political kingdom. However, God had much bigger things in mind—Jesus would deliver God's people spiritually by establishing an eternal kingdom.

God had much bigger things in mind—Jesus would deliver God's people spiritually by establishing an eternal kingdom. #BSFLfullpicture



DAILY DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE (P. 23)

- 3** *How have you learned to trust God's plan for your life?*
- 4** *What keeps you from fully trusting God's plan?*





IMPART

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LUKE 1:34-38

Mary asked the angel, "How can this be, since I have not had sexual relations with a man?" 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. "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. For nothing will be impossible with God." "I am the Lord's servant," said Mary. "May it be done to me according to your word." Then the angel left her. LUKE 1:34-38

Gabriel delivered incredible news to Mary, and she didn't doubt God, but she did have questions. She knew about the birds and the bees, so she asked the angel how this could be. When Zechariah asked a similar question, his ability to speak was taken away because he asked in doubt (Luke 1:18-20). Because Mary's question was born out of wonder and she asked in faith, the angel didn't rebuke her, but instead clearly described the creative work of the Holy Spirit she would soon experience.

VERSE 35: *Come upon*—the language avoids the connotation of mating or sexual relations, but instead reflects the work of the Holy Spirit. *Overshadow*—this describes the holy, powerful presence of God, as in the way the cloud covered the tabernacle when it was filled with God's glory.

From a natural perspective, this was impossible! However, God had accomplished the impossible in Elizabeth when she became pregnant in her old age. Now, God would do something even more powerfully miraculous in Mary's life. Though Mary was favored by God because of her trust in Him, Gabriel nonetheless reminded her God can accomplish anything He desires.

VERSE 37: Similar words were also spoken to Abraham and Sarah, Jeremiah, Job, and Jesus' disciples. These examples of the power of God encourage us to trust God even more than our own senses.

Mary's response to all Gabriel had said was humble and honest. Many times, we may think we'd like to see God accomplish the impossible through us. However, we fail to realize this comes at a great price. For Mary to experience the honor of giving birth to the Messiah, she had to be willing to suffer the ridicule associated with accusations of adultery and becoming pregnant outside of marriage.

Mary's humility is a reflection of the way Jesus lived. He too would suffer for following the Father's plan. He lived in perfect submission to God's will, and because of this, we have the honor of being a part of God's family. As Christ's followers, we are called to live in submission to God. At times, this will be difficult, but when we obey, we will experience the blessings and grace of God in our lives.

DAILY DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE (P. 23)

- 5** *What can we learn from Mary about how to respond to God's plans?*
- 6** *How can we live as though nothing is impossible with God?*
- 7** *What did it cost Mary that God's purposes would be fulfilled in her life?*





LIVE IT OUT (10 MINUTES)

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▶ CHRIST

We often dream big dreams, but when they become reality, it can be pretty frightening. For instance, I wanted to be a singer, and within a matter of months, I sang in front of 15,000 people—scariest day of my life! When we pray for big things, God has a way of delivering.

▶ **Read Psalm 56:3.**

What things are currently causing fear in your life?

How can you grow in trusting God?

▶ **Memorize Psalm 56:3 and make it a point to pray it every day this week.**

▶ **Write a brief prayer asking God to help you follow Christ fearlessly.**



LIVE IT OUT

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► COMMUNITY

Mary's response to Gabriel's message was to humbly declare her position as God's servant. God has also called us to lives of service.

8 What "impossible" situations are you aware of in your church?

9 How can you comfort or encourage someone by serving them?



► CULTURE

Israel was looking for a Messiah who would reign from David's throne and meet their temporary, earthly needs and desires. However, God had something much better in mind.

10 List some examples of the ways our culture focuses on the here-and-now and not on the eternal.

11 How will you help a non-believing friend to see Jesus is the answer to our deepest, eternal needs?

Make it a point to pray every day for your lost friends, and be willing to live fearlessly so God would work through you.