

## MONDAY: Mary's Praise Song

After the angel Gabriel told Mary that God had chosen her—as a virgin—to have baby Jesus, her response was amazing. You can read what she said in Luke 1:38. Rewrite verse 38 in your own words.

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Mary used the word *Lord*, a term of power or authority. She let God have the authority and power over her life. Whatever He decided was okay with her.

All of us like to have power over our own lives. Mary was a teenager who was not married. Now she was going to have a baby. People were going to think she had been immoral. Her life and family would never be the way she thought it would be. Why do you think Mary was willing to let God have power over her life?

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The reason Mary could trust God was that she knew Him. Not a general knowledge that there is a God running the universe, but a deeper knowledge – a personal relationship.

Friendship only works with two-way communication. When Mary understood God's communication of what His plan was for her, she communicated back to God. Her response was a beautiful praise song. We don't know if she sang it, but it is written in a style like the book of Psalms in the Bible. *Psalms* means "songs." Mary grew up singing the book of Psalms.

The next thing Luke tells us is that Mary went to Elizabeth for an extended visit. Maybe it was there that Mary wrote her praise song in response to God. Perhaps the words Elizabeth said to Mary when she came helped get Mary thinking. What does Elizabeth say to Mary in Luke 1:45?

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We don't trust people we don't know. Mary trusted God to keep His promises which lets us know she knew God personally. What would need to happen for you to get to know God?

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## TUESDAY: Mary's Praise Song

Read Mary's praise song in Luke 1:46–55.

What does Mary say her soul is giving to the Lord? \_\_\_\_\_

What is she delighting in? \_\_\_\_\_

She is delighting in God her Savior even as her Savior was growing inside her. Jesus, her son, would save Mary from her own sins.

Mary was amazed that God had noticed her. Why does she say others would not notice her?

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Do you ever feel like others do not consider you to be important? Please explain.

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Mary knew she was (1) a woman (in a culture that valued men), (2) young (in a culture that valued older people), (3) single (in a culture that valued married people), (4) poor (in a culture that valued the rich), (5) Jewish (in a world that has never been a friend to Jews).

While those five things may have made others think Mary was not important, God knew better. He gave Mary her value when He created her as a reflector of God. God gives each of us our value.

Read 1 Corinthians 1:26–29. God chooses people who are not wise or powerful or from important families. Why does this passage say God chose people that others consider a foolish choice?

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If you are not the smartest or best or most important, you qualify as someone God wants to use. When God chooses people who are just normal and uses them to do amazing things, they don't brag about themselves. They brag about God. How was Mary bragging about God in Luke 1:49?

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## WEDNESDAY: Mary's Praise Song

Read Mary's praise song in Luke 1:46-55.

Mary points out that God has mercy on people. Who does God have mercy on? \_\_\_\_\_

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Mercy is when someone shows you kindness even when you don't deserve it. How has God shown His mercy on you?

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If Mary were to write a personal list about God, so far—from her praise song in Luke 1—we know that she believes these truths about God.

- God is my S\_\_\_\_\_.
- God is choosing me and blessing me.
- God is the M\_\_\_\_\_ O\_\_\_\_\_.
- God is Holy.
- God is doing great things for me.
- God is merciful.

Which of these truths about God stands out to you today? Why? \_\_\_\_\_

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What would you add to Mary's list that you know to be true about God? \_\_\_\_\_

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## THURSDAY: Mary's Praise Song

Mary's praise song is not over yet. List six of the things Mary says in Luke 1:51 that God has done.

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Mary understood history. Adam and Eve, the first rulers over the earth, were proud: they thought they knew better than God. They lost their place in the garden and ended up dying. The people of Noah's day were too proud to believe God and get inside an ark full of animals. God's mighty power came in a worldwide flood. The proud were scattered. The people building the tower of Babel tried to stay in one area when God had said to spread out. They thought they could reach heaven with their big building. God scattered them. Years later the proud giant warrior Goliath would fall to a small stone thrown by a small shepherd.

Can you think of a story from history (your personal history or the history of the world) that is an example of how God took down people who were proud?

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Who did Mary say God had helped in Luke 1:54? What did she say God remembered? \_\_\_\_\_

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After Christmas we will learn all about how God chose the nation of Israel to show kindness to. We will learn about Abraham and the promises Mary was talking about. How did it help Mary to understand the history of her people of Israel?

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## FRIDAY: Your Praise Song

Perhaps when Luke began to write his book about Jesus, he asked Mary what she remembered about the time before Jesus was born. Mary may have had her song written out or maybe she had memorized it from signing it over and over as she rocked Jesus and her other children to sleep.

If Mary had kept a journal, she might have written her praise song in her journal. Keeping a prayer and praise journal to God is one of the most powerful things you can do to draw close to God. Sometimes we don't feel like writing out our praise because the life we live has difficulties and hardships. Mary would understand. She was praising God even though her life would be full of misunderstanding, complications, and heartbreak. Even with all that, Mary knew God deserved praise.

Time to brainstorm. If you were going to write your own praise song for what God has done in your life, what are some things you would include in your song? List those items below.

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List favorite truths about God that you know from the Bible.

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List some ways you know God has specifically cared for you.

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List things you have to be thankful for.

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Your turn. Take time to write your own praise song or two over Christmas break. This page can give you the ideas to get started. Mary had the right idea. God is worthy of all our praise!