

Mary - An Example of Motherhood

Luke 1:26-28

¹ In my opinion there is a Christian theological concept that elevates Mary, the mother of Jesus, higher than the Bible appears to picture her. For that reason, many today tend to ignore the fact that she was an extraordinary woman chosen of God to bear and raise His only begotten Son.

What kind of a woman was she? Why do you think God chose her? Notice from Luke, chapter 2, verses 26 through 28, what God thought about her. ² **In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."**

I believe God picked out the ideal mother. Notice the characteristics the Bible points out about her.

The first characteristic is that . . . ³

I. Mary Was a Virgin Until She was Married

Mary was a virgin until she was married! ⁴

Who was Mary? ⁵ She was the daughter of Eli of Judah. She was a peasant girl living in Nazareth which was a town located on the main trade route with the East. ⁶

She was a virgin until she married Joseph. Matthew, chapter 1, verse 23, says, **The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel.** This is a direct quote from Isaiah, chapter 7, verse 14. ⁷ The word in the original language in Isaiah for "virgin" ¹ means "a sexually mature female of marriageable age who may or may not be sexually active". She was, then, between 12 and 18 years old.

Some have argued that, because of the meaning in the original language here, Mary might not have been an actual virgin, but simply a girl this age. Because what Isaiah says doesn't mean she wasn't an actual virgin.

¹ הַעַלְמָה.

There is too much information in the fulfillment of that prophecy in Matthew and Luke to come to that conclusion. ⁸

In order for **the Word to become flesh**, described in John, chapter 1, verse 14, ² Mary would have had to be a virgin. ⁹ The context of Luke, chapter 1, verse 34, **"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin"?**, infers she was a virgin in our understanding of that word. Besides, her marriage had been arranged and she was already betrothed. So, she was legally bonded to Joseph as though she were already married to him. ¹⁰

Before we move on, there are a couple of misconceptions we should deal with. First, **she was not a perpetual virgin**. ¹¹ She had other children after Lord Jesus was born. Matthew, chapter 13 ³ and ¹²

² John 1:14 - The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

³ Matthew 13:55-56 - "Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother's name Mary, and aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas? Aren't all his sisters with us?"

Mark, chapter 6 ⁴ point this out. ¹³ Second, she likely died of old age. ¹⁴ Third, she did not live a perfect life. **for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.** ⁵
¹⁵ Only Lord Jesus ever did that! ⁶ ¹⁶

Mary was chosen by God, not to be worshipped or prayed to, but to be an example of the type of woman God would choose for this mission!

The second characteristic of this godly woman was . .

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II. She Was Quiet and Meditative

She was quiet and meditative. ¹⁸

This brings up the question, **why is being quiet important?** First Peter, chapter 3, verses 1 through 4, point out the potential results of the quiet spirit, **Wives, in the same way be submissive to your**

⁴ Mark 6:3 - Isn't this the carpenter? Isn't this Mary's son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren't his sisters here with us?"

⁵ Romans 3:23.

⁶ Hebrews 4:15 - For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are — yet was without sin.

husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. ¹⁹

How was Mary an example of this? ²⁰ Luke, chapter 2, verse 19, But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. ²¹ Luke continues in verse 51, Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart.

A third characteristic of Mary was that . . . ²²

III. She was Humble

She was humble. ²³

She accepted being poor by the offering she presented in the Temple. ²⁴ Leviticus, chapter 12,

verses 6 and 8 tell us the Law of Moses allowed poor people to offer less expensive sacrifices, **When the days of her purification for a son or daughter are over, she is to bring to the priest at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting a year-old lamb for a burnt offering and a young pigeon or a dove for a sin offering. . . If she cannot afford a lamb, she is to bring two doves or two young pigeons . . .** ²⁵ In Luke, chapter 2, verses 22

through 24, we find that was the offering Joseph and Mary presented, **Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord”), and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: “a pair of doves or two young pigeons.”** Joseph and Mary were poor enough to fit this allowance! ²⁶

Mary accepted rebuke, when she deserved it, at the marriage feast at Cana. Invited to the wedding reception of a friend Mary discovered that the wine supply was running low. Apparently when she asked Lord Jesus to help the implication was that He might use His miraculous power to solve the problem, because He responded to her with, **Dear woman, why do you involve me? . . . My time has not yet come.** ⁷ Although mildly rebuked, she knew her son would help. ²⁷

She also accepted rebuke the time she, and the Lord's other brothers, came to take Him home. In Luke, chapter 8, verses 19 through 21, the Lord rebuked her again, **Now Jesus' mother and brothers came to see him, but they were not able to get near him because of the crowd. Someone told him, "Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to see you." He replied, "My mother and brothers are those who hear God's word and put it into practice."**

⁷ John 2:4.

So, why did she come. ²⁸ We really don't know; but here's my opinion. The political climate was against the Lord now. King Herod was out to get Him. ⁸ She came with her family to persuade Him to come home and go under cover for awhile. Accepting rebuke shows she was a humble person.

The last characteristic was . . . ²⁹

IV. She was Godly and Courageous

She was godly and courageous. This was shown in three ways. ³⁰

First, **she was submissive to God's will.** The angel Gabriel visited Mary to tell her God wanted her to become pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit even though she was a virgin. ⁹ She was willing to obey God in spite of the possible consequences! ³¹

So, **what might have been the consequences of this submission?** In the light of the Law of Moses, she

⁸ Luke 13:31 - At that time some Pharisees came to Jesus and said to him, "Leave this place and go somewhere else. Herod wants to kill you."

⁹ Luke 1:26-38.

could have been executed! ¹⁰ ₃₂ The Law did allow, however, for the man to put his wife away secretly. Deuteronomy, chapter 24, verse 1, **If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him because he finds something indecent about her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house . . .** This was Joseph's choice! ³³ **In spite of these possibilities, Mary obeyed God! “I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May it be to me as you have said.”** ¹¹ ₃₄

Then, she skipped town! ¹² She went to see her cousin Elizabeth. That was quite a trip! The distance between Nazareth and the hill country of Judah where Elizabeth lived was fifty to seventy miles. Mary made this trip on a donkey when she was six months pregnant! That's submission to God's will! ₃₅

Second, **she trusted Lord Jesus.** Earlier, I mentioned

¹⁰ Deuteronomy 22:23-24 - If a man happens to meet in a town a virgin pledged to be married and he sleeps with her, you shall take both of them to the gate of that town and stone them to death . . .

¹¹ Luke 1:38.

¹² Luke 1:39.

the wedding reception at Cana when the wine supply was drained. ¹³ She brought the problem to the Lord and He gently rebuked her. Even after the rebuke, she trusted Him to do something about it. ³⁶ John, chapter 2, verse 5, His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.” Jesus miraculously turned the water into wine and the rest is history! ³⁷

Mary remained loyal to the Lord, even to the bitter end. ³⁸ At the cross Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, “Dear woman, here is your son,” and to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” From that time on, this disciple took her into his home. ¹⁴ ³⁹

She was told by the Prophet Simeon, when she dedicated the Lord at the Temple, that this would happen: **a sword will pierce your own soul.** ¹⁵ Imagine the courage a mother would need to stand there and watch! ⁴⁰

¹³ John 2:1-12.

¹⁴ John 19:26-27.

¹⁵ Luke 2:35.

After the Day of Pentecost she was found praying with the disciples and the Lord's brothers. ¹⁶ What a lady!

What's the conclusion, Christian mothers? ⁴¹ May you develop into this kind of woman God chose to be the mother of His Son!

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¹⁶ Acts 1:14.