



# WISE MEN STILL **FOLLOW HIM**

WEEK 2

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When God **CHANGES** our plans, it's not because He's cruel or careless.

It's because **HE SEES** what we can't see.

## FOLLOW HIM: WEEK 2

# WHEN GOD REWRITES YOUR STORY

LUKE 1:30-31, NLT | LUKE 1:37-38, NLT

**M**ary had a good plan, the kind of plan that made sense to everyone around her. She was engaged to Joseph, a good man from the lineage of King David. They would marry, build a life together, and raise a family. Simple. Safe. Respectable.

And then God showed up.

When the angel Gabriel appeared with news that would turn her entire world upside down, Rather than celebrating, she was confused. The greeting "highly favored one" didn't feel like favor—it felt like her planned out future was about to collapse.

We've all been there, maybe not with an angelic visitation, but with that moment when God's plan crashes into ours and nothing looks the same anymore. The job offer in a city you never wanted to move to. The relationship that ends when you thought it was headed toward marriage. The health diagnosis that derails every plan you'd made for the next decade. The calling that requires you to leave behind everything familiar.

And in those moments, we wrestle with the same question Mary faced: "How will this be?" Not just practically, but emotionally. How will I survive this? How will people understand? How is this going to work out for good?

Here's what we miss about Mary's story when we "clean it up" it for Christmas: her "yes" to God meant a destroyed reputation. An unmarried pregnant woman in first-century Israel would face shame, rejection, and even the possibility of being stoned to

death. Joseph could have publicly disgraced her. Her family could have disowned her—and she knew all of this when she said yes.

Mary understood something we often forget: God's plans are always bigger than our own. When God changes our plans, it's not because He's cruel or careless. It's because He sees what we can't see. He's writing a story that will impact people we'll never meet, in ways we can't imagine.

Mary didn't have all the answers. She didn't know how Joseph would react or what the neighbors would say. She couldn't see the stable in Bethlehem or the cross on Calvary. But she knew enough: God had chosen her, God would be with her, and nothing is impossible with Him.

Her response wasn't passive, rather it was radical acceptance. "I am the Lord's servant. May everything you have said about me come true." She didn't just tolerate God's plan—she embraced it. She traded her safe, predictable story for one that would change the world!

When God changes your plans, it's not a punishment, it's an invitation into something greater. The question isn't whether His plan makes sense to you right now. The question is whether you trust Him enough to say yes anyway.

Because the girl who said yes to God's impossible plan became the mother of the Savior of the world. Her surrender didn't ruin her story. It made her story matter for all of eternity.





Luke 1:30-31, NLT

*Don't be afraid, Mary,' the angel told her, 'for you have found favor with God! You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus.*

## Historical Context

Mary was a young woman, likely a teenager, living in Nazareth, a small, insignificant town in Galilee. In early Jewish culture, her engagement to Joseph was a commitment that was as binding as marriage itself even though they had not yet begun living together as husband and wife. When Gabriel announced she would conceive, he was describing a plan that would bring suspicion of infidelity, and potentially deadly consequences. An unmarried pregnant woman could face public disgrace or even stoning. The word "favor" (Greek: *charis*) means grace, unearned favor from God. This wasn't a reward that Mary earned; it was God choosing to include her in His plan. The name "Jesus" means "The Lord saves," announcing from the very beginning that this child's purpose was to rescue humanity from sin.

- God's plans often require us to trust Him before we understand the "how"
  - Mary was chosen not because she was perfect, but because she was willing
  - The favor of God doesn't shield you from hardship; the opposite is often true
  - Mary's question "How will this be?" shows it's okay to ask God questions.
- She didn't doubt that God could do it; she just didn't understand how; honest questions aren't the same as unbelief

## Reflection

Mary was told she had "found favor with God." Yet, that favor led to potential disgrace and danger. How does this challenge our modern understanding of what God's favor looks like?

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What is one area of your life where God might be asking you to trust Him before you understand the "how"? What is holding you back from saying "yes"?

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Luke 1:37-38, NLT

*For the word of God will never fail. Mary responded, 'I am the Lord's servant. May everything you have said about me come true.' And then the angel left her.*

## Historical Context

After the Archangel Gabriel explained that the Holy Spirit would accomplish this miracle and that her cousin Elizabeth was already six months pregnant despite her age and barrenness, he declared that nothing is impossible with God. Mary's reply, "I am the Lord's servant," was **radical obedience**. She could have hesitated, resisted, or asked for more clarity, yet she wholeheartedly embraced God's plan. Her words, "May everything you have said about me come true," reflect an active faith, not passive surrender. Then the angel departed—leaving Mary to absorb it all and face whatever came next with nothing but God's promise to carry her.

- Nothing is impossible with God" is the foundation for radical acceptance
- Mary's "yes" came before she saw how it would work out
- Acceptance doesn't mean you understand—it means you trust
- Mary didn't negotiate or set conditions - She didn't say yes with exceptions or yes with requirements; true surrender has no conditions

## Reflection

Mary said "yes" before she knew how Joseph would react, how her family would respond, or how her life would turn out. What do you think made her able to surrender so completely?

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Is there a condition that you're placing on your obedience to God right now? (i.e. "I'll say yes if...", "I'll surrender as long as ...") What would a radical, no-conditions acceptance look like for you?

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# GUIDED PRAYER

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Heavenly Father,  
Thank You for loving us enough to include us in Your plans. We confess that we tend to hold onto our own plans, treating them as if they're better than Yours. Forgive us for the times we've fought Your direction, resisted Your calling, or even delayed our obedience because we wanted life on our terms.

Help us to trust You when You change our plans. Remind us that Your best gifts sometimes come wrapped in unexpected packages.

For those of us facing major life changes right now—career shifts, relationship changes, health challenges, or callings we didn't ask for—give us the courage to say yes. Remind us that nothing is impossible with You.

Teach us what radical acceptance looks like. Show us how to surrender without negotiating and how to embrace Your plan even when it disrupts everything we thought we wanted.

Thank You for the example of Mary, who traded her safe, predictable story for Your dangerous, world-changing one. Help us to see that when we surrender our plans to You, we're not losing—we're gaining something far greater than we could ever imagine.

Give us the faith to say, "I am the Lord's servant. May everything You have said about me come true." And help us to mean it.

We choose to trust that Your plans are bigger and better than ours.

In Jesus' name we pray,  
Amen.