



Real Life with MARY

GROWING IN VIRTUE TO
MAGNIFY THE LORD

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Pauline
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SUBMISSION TO GOD'S WILL

The Annunciation

1. Reread the story of the Annunciation (Luke 1:26–38). How did Mary surrender to God's will? What do you imagine was going through her head in that moment?
2. What is God asking you to trust him with today?
3. How can you give God your own fiat—your own “yes”—to that call? How can you be a “handmaid of the Lord” right now, in this moment?
4. Reread Luke 1:38, but this time as you read it, declare it as a personal promise to God.



CHARITY

The Visitation

1. What aspect(s) of charity do you excel at? What do you find to be a struggle?
2. We can only love as much as we're willing to inconvenience ourselves for another. Can you think of a time when you chose to set your own wants aside to serve the needs of someone else? How can you be more open to letting yourself be inconvenienced in order to serve others?
3. Reread Luke 1:39–40, 56. How much does Mary inconvenience herself to take care of Elizabeth? What does that say about the amount of love she had for her cousin?



PIETY

Blessed Are You

1. How can you live in a way that makes your faith stand out? How would you explain to others what makes you set apart?
2. How are the people in your life affected by you? How are you affected by them? Do you bring each other closer to or farther from Jesus?
3. Reread Luke 1:41-44. What does piety look like? How can it become transformative in your life?



HUMILITY

The Magnificat

1. God created you intricately, purposefully, and uniquely (see Psalm 139). Spend some time identifying the gifts that God gave you. What are some of those gifts that make you, *you*?
2. How can you use those gifts in a way that's pleasing to God?
3. Reread Luke 1:26–38 or Luke 1:39–56. In the first reading, Gabriel meets Mary with a reverent greeting and then calls her “favored one.” In the second, Elizabeth exclaims loudly and repeatedly calls Mary “blessed.” How does Mary recognize and celebrate her God-given gifts and turn that into praise of God? How can you do that, too?



FORTITUDE

Traveling to Bethlehem

1. *When the going gets tough, the tough get going*, or so they say. How can you “get going” and show fortitude in your own life today?
2. Athletes train their bodies through exercise and a healthy diet to become physically strong. How can you train your soul to get stronger? What training plan can you and God come up with together?
3. Reread Luke 2:4–7 and imagine all the hardships Mary and Joseph had to endure. How did they demonstrate fortitude during the tough times?



ADORATION OF JESUS

The Nativity

1. Have you ever thought of Jesus as adorable? How can you adore Jesus today?
2. How can you hold him out and share him with others?
3. Reread Luke 2:15-18 and Matthew 2:10-11. How is Mary like the monstrance during Adoration?



CONTEMPLATION

She Kept All These Things in Her Heart

1. What is the difference between thinking and contemplating? Why would contemplating be virtuous?
2. When was the last time you pondered something? I mean really, truly pondered?
3. Every moment with Jesus has meaning, but what is that meaning? What is he trying to teach you, today, right this very minute?
4. So much of the real, deep, *good* stuff in life doesn't come packaged with immediate answers. Take, for example, discerning a vocation, choosing a college, living on your own for the first time, starting a new job, getting married, or bringing home a baby. Those things require time, deep thought, lots of prayer, and the potential for mistakes. How does it feel to think about something and not understand it totally right away? How can you turn that feeling into trust in God?
5. Reread Luke 2:18–19. What can we learn from Mary in these passages?



FAITH

The Lord's Words Would Be Fulfilled

1. What is God calling you to trust him with today?
2. What does God say about who you are? What does he say about who he is?
3. How does it feel to give God the hard, messy, confusing parts of your life?
4. Reread Luke 1:45 while imagining God is speaking it over you.



RESPONSIBILITY

The Name the Angel Had Given

1. What responsibilities has God given to you today? How can you lovingly accept those responsibilities and hold yourself accountable to take care of them? How can you “show up” today?
2. How often does your “yes” mean “yes” and “no” mean “no”? How can you discern which responsibilities you choose to undertake?
3. Reread Luke 2:21. Because Mary followed through with the responsibility of naming her Son Jesus—the name he had been given before he was even conceived—you and I can know God by name. What do you think God wants us to know about who he is through the gift of his name?



GENEROSITY

The Presentation

1. What are some things in your life that you cling to?
How does it feel to think about not having them?
2. How can you let them go and trust Christ to fulfill your needs?
3. Read Luke 2:22-24. What does this say about what Mary does with her most cherished possessions?
4. What would Mary do with you if you gave yourself to her?



REDEMPTIVE SUFFERING

Simeon's Prophecy

1. How do you normally respond to pain and hardship in your life? What difficulties do you have right now?
2. How can you suffer with Jesus and for Jesus? How can you offer your suffering to God on behalf of someone else?
3. Reread Luke 2:34–35. Mary has a knack for keeping her eyes on the prize. The prize being Jesus, of course. She's there at the passion. She's there at the Cross. She's there at Jesus' burial. In the worst of the worst moments, she's there, keeping her eyes on Jesus. How can you keep your eyes on Jesus during your most difficult moments?



COURAGE

Fleeing to Egypt

1. What does courage look like, both in the big things and in the smaller, everyday things?
2. We can't be brave if we're not a little scared first. Is there anything that makes you a little scared? How can you be courageous in those areas of your life?
3. Reread Matthew 2:13-14. Put yourself in Mary's shoes and imagine how scary that situation must have been. And yet, perfect love casts out fear. For Mary and Joseph, their love for Jesus (and their desire to protect him) was bigger than their fear, which helped them choose courage when the time came. How can you show that your love for Jesus is bigger than your fears?



PERSEVERANCE

The Return to Jerusalem to Look for Jesus

1. Are you someone who finishes what you start? Or do you find it difficult to see things through to the end?
2. What is important enough to persevere through adversity for?
3. Reread Luke 2:41-47 and put yourself in Mary's shoes. What do you think it may have felt like to lose Jesus? To search desperately for him? To find him?



PATIENCE

Finding Jesus in the Temple

1. When do you find it most difficult to be patient?
When is it most difficult to be understanding?
2. How can you put yourself in someone else's shoes to help yourself grow in patience and understanding?
3. Reread Luke 2:41-52. How would you have responded in that situation? How is that similar to the way Mary responded? How is it different?



DETERMINED COOPERATION WITH GOD

Wedding in Cana

1. Oftentimes—at least in my own experience—God’s plans don’t make much sense on paper, but when I follow his direction anyway, everything miraculously (and beautifully) works out. What is Jesus calling you to do today? How can you trust him and determinedly cooperate with him to fulfill that call?
2. Do you have any “lost snorkel” (or problem) in your life that needs to be addressed? How can you work together with God to fix it?
3. Reread John 2:1–11. How does Mary’s determined cooperation shine through in this passage?



LOYALTY

Who Is My Mother?

1. Whom or what are you loyal to? How do you show it?
2. How can you be loyal to God and what he calls you to do, even when it makes zero sense on paper?
3. How do you usually respond to rejection? Have you ever experienced a time when God turned a seeming rejection into an invitation to a deeper relationship with him?
4. Reread Matthew 12:46–50. How does Mary's loyalty shine through in this passage?



COMPASSION

The Crucifixion

1. How can you console the Sacred Heart of Jesus today?
2. On the Cross, Jesus gave Mary to each of us to be our Mother. How does a child show love for her mother? How can you show Mary your love for her?
3. How can you show compassion toward the people God places in your life?
4. Reread John 19:25–27 and imagine what that moment must have been like for a grief-stricken mother whose intense love for Jesus now covers you. How can you allow yourself to be held by Mary today?



PRAYERFULNESS

Devoted Themselves with One Accord to Prayer

1. What does prayer mean to you? What does prayer time normally look like for you?
2. What would it look like to devote yourself to prayer more fully?
3. Reread Acts 1:13-14. What can you learn about the way Mary prays? How can you pray more like her? How can you trust in her intercession?



ZEAL

Sharing Jesus' Story

1. Do you live zealously for God? How can you use your unique gifts and personality to show zeal for God?
2. Is there anyone in your life who might be uplifted by a story about Jesus? How can you share the Word with them?
3. Reread Luke 1-2 as though they were family stories being told by a loving mother. What's it like to get a peek inside Jesus' baby book?