



Humble Surrender = Joy by Carol Landis

This year, as I prepare for Christmas, I'd like Mary's reply to the angel's message to shape my focus. *"I am the Lord's servant...may it be to me as you have said."* (Luke 1:38, NIV). Her humble, obedient response reveals a heart I want to explore.

After hearing the angel's message that she would become pregnant with God's Son, Mary first asks a question. *"How will this be...since I am a virgin"* (v.34). She's clear, direct, and honest. This seems a wise response to a life-altering, and unbelievable message. A question, with only a few words to identify her feelings, she states the human impossibility. This question, opens the door for more information (vs.35-37).

Then, after expounding on the first explanation, the angel concludes with a final proclamation. *"For nothing is impossible with God"* (v. 37). Was this the reminder Mary needed to hear? Her next response is: *"I am the Lord's servant."* To me, this statement seems an audible realignment to her commitment to God. The path before her is not what she would have chosen, it made no earthly sense, but she would trust God in all things.

This speaks to me. I have a strong will. I know what I want. I know how I feel life should unfold. I also have a keen sense of fairness and unfairness. But, when I asked Jesus to be Lord of my life, I relinquished my "rights." If I live clinging to what I perceive to be "my rights," and continue striving to make what I want happen, I'm telling my Lord and Savior what to do. This is the opposite of Mary's response. *"May it be to me as you have said."* Mary models one humbly submitted to her great God. I, too, am a servant of the Lord Most High.

Although she could not have understood how all the angel said would unfold, her humble, obedient heart is already filled with joy.

Reading on in Luke 1, we read Mary's song (vs.46-55). With a full heart she sings, *"My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior."* Although she could not have understood how all the angel said would unfold, her humble, obedient heart is already filled with joy. And this is not surprising, because there is joy, as well as freedom, in surrender. I have experienced this, too.

*Does my heart seek God's will above my own?
In unplanned situations do I recognize that God is God, and I am not?
Is my heart filled with joy? If not, why?*

December 2022





Making Connections

This month we are highlighting our **Bible Memorization/Meditation Email Group**. This year our group totals 12 ladies. On the first of the month, either Jane Seaman or Carol Landis sends an email out to the group. They include a few personal thoughts, and the verse(s) they plan to memorize or meditate on in the coming month. From this email, others in the group respond, sharing their verses, possibly a personal thought, and maybe a prayer request. How often and how much they respond varies. Some may not respond at all, but they still find encouragement by being in the group.

Several of the ladies who have been a part of this year's group shared below why they found it helpful:

Lauren Landis: The first of the month email is a reminder to store up scripture in my heart and mind. Reading what others write, their experiences and thoughts, helps me to view things outside the box I may have put things in because of my life experiences. Many times I read everyone's scripture multiple times over the month because it's like a devotional for me. Everyone's verse(s) is a good one to memorize. But that makes all kinds of sense, really when I think about it, lol! It's ALL Gods word, so of course they all would be!

Ruth Detweiler: Memorizing scripture has helped me work on some things that were not right in my life. I tried to pick verses that spoke to problems I was having or sins present in my attitude and responses. It didn't always happen right away, but in God's timing.

Janet Derstine: I have been blessed by memorizing Scripture, but find it is much harder to remember what I memorized than when I was younger. I like the accountability of being part of a group and sharing our prayer requests and concerns. I especially like II Cor. 5:21 which says, "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God". We know that the Bible is God's word to us, so by memorizing Scripture we are learning more about God each day.

Bev Anders: I feel like I'm going through a little slump right now. I'm not putting enough into it, I'm sure. I read the verse every day, but I'm not really dwelling on it. But I know there is value in it, so I press on. And regardless of how well I'm memorizing myself, I still enjoy hearing thoughts and perspectives from others and the sharing of prayer concerns that happen.

Rena Derstine: Me too, Bev! I've been wrestling with God for a while. I have been a silent observer to this group, and I apologize for that, but still love to hear all of you women share your hearts and struggles. And just like Bev, I try to press on.

Jane Seaman: This practice has blessed and encouraged me by the sharing of scripture by other women and seeing we all are dealing with issues and we are not alone! It's a great support for me!

Carol Landis: Trying to memorize my verses is a blessing. It helps me refocus on the eternal when the earthly overwhelms me; it draws me back to God. "My verses" are a sword and shield to combat middle of the night anxiety; it draws me

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Making Connections

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closer to God. And being part of the group strengthens the bond of feeling we're sisters in Christ.

A new memorization/meditation group will be forming in January 2023. Both new and current participants are invited to sign up! This past Sunday, Pastor Kyle encouraged us to be saturated in Scripture, and this group is the perfect opportunity.

This group is for ALL ages. If you would like more information, please connect w/Jane Seaman or Carol Landis. You can sign up at the Women's Ministry table, or by emailing franconiawomen@gmail.com. We hope to hear from you!



Get Involved!

Winter Women's Bible study

Have you ever resolved to study your Bible more, only to realize that you didn't really know how to go about it? Often it seems easier to just listen to the "experts," rather than studying on our own.

But God has given us minds to understand his Word, and with a little guidance, all of us can learn how to not just read, but study and understand our Bibles!

Join us for a 4-week study on
"How to Study Your Bible"

In several short videos, Bible teacher Jen Wilkin will guide us through steps of how to study a book of the Bible. We will apply these steps as we work through the book of James together.

Wednesday evenings in January

(beginning on the 4th)

7:00-8:30 pm

Facilitated by Julie Kratz

Don't miss this opportunity to gain valuable study tools so you can dig into God's word on your own and in so doing, become a more faithful follower of God!

Scripture journal - \$5

Please **SIGN UP** at the Women's Ministry Table, or by emailing franconiawomen@gmail.com.

Pictures from our **Christmas Wreath Craft Night**



December 2022

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
				1	2	3 Souderton Christmas Parade
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11 Christmas Song Service	12	13 Sewing Circle 8am-4pm Prayer Shawl Ministry 7pm	14	15	16	17
18 Christmas Caroling	19	20	21	22	23	24 Christmas Eve Service 6:30pm
25 Merry Christmas!	26	27	28	29	30	

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