

LET IT BE CHRISTMAS



sStudy Guide

LET IT BE

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INTRODUCTION

God has brought 'up there' down here so that we can experience 'up there' down here. That's what Christmas is all about; at least that's what it's supposed to be about. But the rub is, what does 'up there' look like and feel like down here amidst all the wrappings of the season? How does one actually experience the Christ child anew each Christmas? How do we, like Mary, bear God to our world, bringing 'up there' down here - bringing a little heaven to earth?

Begin by reading Luke 1:26-38

1. Share a favourite Christmas tradition, carol, food, etc. Why is it a favourite?
2. What strikes you about the way the birth of Jesus is foretold? What questions, thoughts, insights, words jump out at you? What emotions, if any, are evoked?
3. Re-read the opening verses again. What do you learn about God, the angel Gabriel, and Mary through the greeting she receives?
4. Mary is chosen to bear God, to bring His salvation to the world (that's what the name Jesus means, coming from the Hebrew root Jeshua, or Joshua, meaning God's my deliverer). When she is confronted with the impossible ("*How can this be since I am a virgin?*"), what is Gabriel's answer? When you think about the ministry of the Holy Spirit in your life, what do you most appreciate?
5. Mary was committed to doing God's will above her own even though it made her life very complicated. Someone said that the most important part of discovering God's will for your life is wanting it no matter what, or coming to the place that you have no will of your own. Describe a time when you struggled to discern and do God's will in your life.

Moving Forward

In the 2nd century, the early church father, Irenaeus, said that, "Because of His boundless love, Jesus became all that we are in order that He might make us all that He is." Mary is an archetype of a fully devoted follower of God. In order to bear God to the world that first Christmas, she had to make space for God in her life and say one simple but costly word, "Yes". What if we were to do this Christmas what Mary did that first Christmas? What if, with that same word, we invite the Christ Child to be born in us again this Christmas? What if we allow the surprise of His birth in us to create within us a longing to be free from self and fully present with Him and others? We know this is beyond us but we need the overshadowing presence of the Spirit. What if it sparked new and imaginative ways to celebrate an unconventional Christmas? What might that look like? Take some time for personal and corporate reflection/prayer making Mary's response (v. 38) your own.

changing your mind

And Mary said, "Yes, I see it all now: I'm the Lord's maid, ready to serve. **Let it be** with me just as you say." Luke 1:38 (The Message)