

Things I need to STOP doing that get in the way of my testimony for Christ

<https://desperatemen.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Desperate-Men-Ministry-Mon-Sept-3-Stop-60-final-mix.mp3>

Preventing and Exposing Secret Sins like Pornography comes best through Accountability

<https://desperatemen.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Desperate-Men-Ministry-Monday-August-27-Thomas-The-Pastor-60-sec-fin....mp3>

God, Caterpillars, and Growing Christian Men

<https://desperatemen.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Desperate-Men-Ministry-Friday-July-13-Caterpillars-Born-To-Die-60-se....mp3>

Over-churched and Under-saved or Just Plain Lost?

<https://desperatemen.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Desperate-Men-Ministry-Friday-June-6-Completing-Our-Journey-Through-....mp3>

What Men Can Learn from the Most Amazing Girl in His-Story

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Exchanging Difficulties for Impossibilities (Part Three)

“For nothing will be impossible with God.” (Luke 1: 37 NASB)

The Difficulty: Biblical experts put her age as young as thirteen—no older than sixteen. By our standards today, if age is the discriminator, she was just a girl. But God in His infinite wisdom chose Mary, out of all her gender who came before or would follow, to be the earthly mother to bring His Son into the world. Wow! is about all that comes to mind.

This divine decision brought huge, possibly horrific, consequences. She was unmarried, although engaged to Joseph.

She was a virgin and planned to remain that way until she and Joseph were married. If what this angel said came true, she

would face embarrassment, ridicule, and, possibly, death.

The Impossibility: Who would believe such a ridiculous story from Mary? *“An angel showed up, told me God was going to get me pregnant, and I will give birth to the long-awaited Messiah.”* Let’s review this: (1) talking angel from God, (2) pregnant virgin, (3) and that with the Son of God-Messiah. Who among us would believe such a story?

Mary’s Response:

“And Mary said, “Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word.” (Luke 1:38 NASB)

Regardless of her physical age, here we are introduced to a very godly, young woman. No wonder she “found favor with the Lord.” (v. 30) Mary’s praise and prayer (known as the Magnificat vs 46-55) speak to her spiritual maturity as she quotes scriptures and accepts this incredibly difficult, yet awesome, assignment and responsibility. No equivocating or fear. Just incredible faith that her God was real and would do what He promised. Again, I say, Wow!

Our Response: What then do men of God learn from such a woman of God? Let me suggest (at least) three things. No matter how difficult our circumstances or God’s assignment may be today, our response must be that of Mary.

- **Surrender** our will to God’s will—His sovereignty.
- **Submit** our lives as “living sacrifices” as the Apostle Paul urged, and Mary demonstrated.
- **Serve** the Lord with gladness as David exclaimed and as Mary lived.

So easily said. So hard to live. Let us die trying.

LORD, thank You for incredible difficulties that grace our lives—particularly those that come at the worst times and are most unwelcome. Give us Mary’s strength and courage to walk

in faith knowing, as she discovered nine months later, there really is “*nothing impossible with God.*” Amen.

Walter

The Difference Between “Wishful Thinking” and Living Hope

The devotions this week featured key words that are, for many, hard to swallow and even harder to digest:

♦ Surrender ♦ Slavery ♦ Failure ♦ War

Each was presented in a biblical context to give us **hope** that:

- (1) **Victory** results when we *surrender* our wills to that of the Lord.
- (2) **Freedom** found only in Christ breaks the chains of slavery to sin.
- (3) Deep, abiding **faith** is often born out of abject failures.
- (4) **Peace** that passes all understanding can be ours even in the midst of spiritual warfare.

Today our focus is this **hope** to which I referred above. Most people reach a point in life when we come to the realization that *human hope* is little more than wishful thinking. It has no basis in reality or foundation upon which we may build, much less cling to, such hope.

As discouraging as that is for most, in Christ we have **certain hope**. That may, again, seem somewhat of an oxymoron, but if you examine the Scriptures, it will become clear and make perfect sense. Here are a just a couple of verses to help encourage your heart when circumstances overwhelm, people disappoint, or it seems Satan has a special posse whose assignment is to attack you on every front.

♦ **Hope in and through the written Word of God (Bible)** – *“For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope.”* (Romans 15:4 NIV)

♦ **Hope that is alive because Christ died and rose again just as He promised.** – *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,”* (1 Peter 1: 3 NASB)

“Now may the God of all hope fill you with joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” (Romans 15: 13 NASB),

Walter