

V. Parenting in Biblical Perspective  
Biblical Parenting Illustrated in the Lives of Joseph and Mary  
“Biblical Motherhood Illustrated in the Life of Mary”

Luke 2

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This is our fifth study in Biblical parenting. I just want to go over some of the definitions I've given you. The Biblical definition of a family, recognizing in a sin-cursed world this may not always be the case, but the Biblical definition of what God's people move toward is that a family is to consist of one man and one woman united in the covenant of marriage with parental responsibility for their children. What does it mean to engage in that responsibility? We laid out the essential practice of Biblical parenting and it's really interesting to me that there is such a small amount of material on the parenting of Jesus by Joseph and Mary and His siblings. Yet it is clear that in Matthew and Luke that one thing keeps resounding and that is their customary engagement in the gathered Assembly of God's people at the temple (in Jerusalem) and the synagogue (in Nazareth). They were as a family embedded in the church of Jesus Christ. So that brings us to the essential practice which is effective Biblical parenting is only achievable with Christian parents who insistently bring the church to their home by intentionally bringing their home to the church. That is God's family for you, the church, and the home, your family for God and I will continue to emphasize this in application after application because I do believe it's essential.

I do not believe that the church of Jesus Christ is just an added thought. I do believe that you can be in a church and not be saved but I do not believe that you can grow to the full maturity that God has called you to be unless you are properly embedded in a Christ-centered, Gospel-saturated, Spirit-led, God-glorifying church that is growing in grace and that seeks to apply the means of grace to you and to your family. Joseph and Mary clearly enunciated that in the habits of their life when the Scripture says 'as was their custom (habit).' In these very few verses that is about their parenting it is repeated by direct explicit or implicit statements six different times that they were engaged in the gathered Assembly of God's people.

Then that led us to what is Biblical parenting and we basically identified it as a commitment by Christian parents to bring their covenant children to a saving relationship in Christ within Christ's church by intentional Gospel evangelism and discipleship. With all due respect to all the books that are written with techniques on parenting, I'm not saying they are not valuable but the basic call of parenting is knowing your child is born helpless and hopeless apart from Christ yet you are a covenant family so you have a promise from God – “I will be a God to you and your children after you.”

You have five power plants – the Word of God, the Gospel of grace, prayer, the church of the Lord Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit. All of that is in place for you to apply with all the hope of God's promises for the challenge that is before you. With all of that in front of you, your objective is simply to do that which was enunciated when Jesus was out teaching the multitudes and parents were bringing their children to Him to be blessed by Him. The disciples told them “Don't bother Him.” They tried to prevent it. Not only did Jesus rebuke the disciples but in that moment He gave you the objective in parenting, to overcome all obstacles by God's grace and with His power to bring your children to Christ and then to teach them to think with the mind of Christ that they might be saturated with the love of Christ, so that their lives

might be shaped to be like Christ. That's the call. That is where God has called us to do in evangelism and discipleship.

In the last study we looked at parenting in terms of fatherhood. We tried to illustrate it from Joseph's life and from Deuteronomy 6 where it says that fathers can't lead their children until God's Word is on your heart. Then you instruct them and identify the glory of the Lord in the Word of God into your home. It's on the sign posts, it's everywhere. Then you infiltrate all of life with the Word of God, when you rise up, sit down and walk by the wayside you are bringing your children into the arena of God's Word that you might bring them to the God of the Word. This is incarnation by a dad of the Word of God and instruction from his heart where the Word is, to the heart of his children. Then there is the identification with the glory of the Lord with the Word of God throughout your home. Then there is the infiltration and penetration of the Word of God into every arena of life as you teach your child when you rise up and walk by the wayside. That means you're a model and mentor to your child. That means you are a manager of your home. Let him manage his household well. That means you are motivator of your child's heart where you are giving your child a big view of God that they might have a big view of life. That's what dads do.

Why did Joseph move all over the place? He fulfilled prophecy by doing that. He moved five times in about five years but he isn't just moving to fulfill Scripture. He is doing it because he is guarding his wife and Child. He is guiding them. On the eighth day he goes to get Jesus circumcised. He takes in to the temple to be presented on the fortieth day. He is raising Him in wisdom, stature, favor with God and favor with man. He regularly brings him to the temple and synagogue. He is guarding and guiding his son as he will do with his other children as well.

What I'm about to say is pure speculation but I think it might be some sanctified speculation. On about the 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> trip that I took people to Israel I went to a little town that was about four miles from Nazareth that is not even mentioned in the Bible. I went there to investigate something and I'll give you the fruit of that investigation and how it relates to dads. Joseph's occupation was a carpenter and the word carpenter actually means technician which could have to do with wood, stone or both. Nazareth had maybe 200 to 300 people in the days of Jesus. How are you going to raise a whole family in a town that small? That's not a lot of opportunity for a carpenter or a stone mason or technician.

Interestingly, when Jesus was a child and almost the same time Joseph arrived back in Nazareth to be raised as a child, there was a stimulus program from Rome that was begun. Herod's sons did what Herod did. They liked to do stimulus programs that were paid for by the Roman Revenue Service which had to do with paying taxes but you thought you were getting a deal. They rebuilt a destroyed city four miles from Nazareth during the childhood of Jesus. Do you think maybe Joseph might have had some work over there? I understand this is speculation on my part but I can see him making that four mile journey, taking his Son with him when he rises up and walks by the wayside and into His life and on the job.

Sephora is the name of the city four miles from Nazareth and the number one construction that is still there today is a theater. Rome determined that this would be the theatrical dramatic center of the Palestinian land. They brought all the resources for drama and Greek tragedies there. How many of you know the transliteration of the Greek word for 'actor'? An actor was someone who was called a hypocrite. It meant someone that changed faces, depending on the scene. What was Jesus' number one phrase? Who is it that used the phrase to describe those who have a profession but no root in their life and in their heart? Jesus would say "You Scribes, you Pharisees, you hypocrites." I believe that Jesus picked that name up while He

walked with his daddy to work, did work, met all those actors and heard that word time and time again. Therefore His vocabulary was in place. His father had helped develop it and with that world and life view of wisdom he was able to apply it in preaching ministry. It is amazing what a dad can accomplish in the life of his son and his daughter as he takes them into life.

Those moments in my life where my dad took me on life journeys stand out to me. One of those times happened to me when I was in third grade. My granddaddy had come to get me out of school and he took me to one of the spring training baseball camps where the Washington Senators were playing the Boston Red Sox. We walked into Calvin Griffin Stadium and my dad was with one baseball organization and my granddad was a scout for the Washington Senators. We walked down to the box seats with all the other scouts and I felt like big stuff with my dad. Nothing compared to the moment when granddad picked me up and put me on the field and I looked up and shook hands with Ted Williams. That has never left my life. If only I could have hit like Ted Williams. Somehow that part didn't get across to me. My dad took me into his life but he didn't show me how to hit the curve ball the way Ted Williams could hit the curve ball.

Dads bring your children into your life. Yes, go play there games but I think a lot of men are under some sense of guilt that if you don't put your children into 38 organized leagues and coach each one of them then you're not being a good dad. Your children will never forget you taking them into your life, when you rise up and walk by the wayside.

Now what about the call to motherhood? Let's look at Mary and I want to show you a couple of passages. First let's look in Luke 1. In Luke 1 Mary is instructed by Gabriel concerning the birth of Jesus. I can preach through all of this text but I want to give you some installation. Luke 1:26-45 says [26] *In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, [27] to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. [28] And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored (graced) one, the Lord is with you!" [29] But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. [30] And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. [31] And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. [32] He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, [33] and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."*

[34] *And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" [35] And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. [36] And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. [37] For nothing will be impossible with God." [38] And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.*

[39] *In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, [40] and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. [41] And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, [42] and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! [43] And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? [44] For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy (a pre-birth conversion of John). [45] And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord." Then after*

this comes Mary's marvelous song where she thanks and praises the Lord that she is bearing the Savior of sinners and her own Savior.

In Luke 2 they have brought Jesus to the temple to be presented and Simeon has spoken and now Anna, the prophetess speaks. Luke 2:36-38 says [36] *And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived with her husband seven years from when she was a virgin, [37] and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day. [38] And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.* There Mary sees and hears Anna speaking of her Son.

Luke 2:39-40,49-52 says [39] *And when they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. [40] And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him.*

[49] *And he (Jesus) said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" [50] And they did not understand the saying that he spoke to them. [51] And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them. And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart. [52] And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.*

I want to make some basic statements about Mary. Here is Mary submissive to the will of the Lord, believing in the Lord, willing to endure shame and suffering to serve the Lord, being encouraged by Elizabeth and Anna, and I know this is controversial in some branches of the church but here is Mary saved by grace, "O favored one." Grace is always present whenever sin must be overcome. While she stands as this glorious model she too needed a Savior and Gabriel had enunciated she had been favored with the grace of the Lord and the free gift of God's saving work was not only upon her but would be delivered through her. The Spirit of the Lord would be with her and then in union with her husband. Notice that the Scripture said Jesus was submissive to them. Both of them are raising Him up. Certainly Joseph has his responsibilities in fatherhood but now Mary engages fully in motherhood. Her role in concert with Joseph's role brings about a Man who in adolescence in strength and in wisdom. When He gets to manhood He has grown in wisdom, stature, favor with God and favor with man.

What kind of motherhood did Mary practice? It is Biblical motherhood. What is this calling to motherhood? In a moment I will give you the three aspects of motherhood but first I want to look at a couple of passages. Let's first look at Proverbs 1. Let's see if we can define this motherhood displayed by Mary. What does it mean to have this high, divine, holy calling to motherhood? I fully realize that women have multiple calls in life and God's grace will be sufficient but in terms of motherhood itself what is it?

Proverbs 1:8-9 says [8] *Hear, my son, your father's instruction, and forsake not your mother's teaching, [9] for they are a graceful garland for your head and pendants for your neck.* There is this wonderful garland that is put around you with the father's instruction and the mother's teaching. Now let's look at Proverbs 31. Again I can treat this exhaustively but I want to draw a few things out here.

Proverbs 31:10-31 says [10] *An excellent wife who can find? She is far more precious than jewels. [11] The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain. [12] She does him good, and not harm, all the days of her life. [13] She seeks wool and flax, and works with willing hands. [14] She is like the ships of the merchant; she brings her food from afar. [15] She rises while it is yet night and provides food for her household and portions for*

*her maidens. [16] She considers a field and buys it; with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard. [17] She dresses herself with strength and makes her arms strong. [18] She perceives that her merchandise is profitable. Her lamp does not go out at night. [19] She puts her hands to the distaff, and her hands hold the spindle. [20] She opens her hand to the poor and reaches out her hands to the needy. [21] She is not afraid of snow for her household, for all her household are clothed in scarlet. [22] She makes bed coverings for herself; her clothing is fine linen and purple. [23] Her husband is known in the gates when he sits among the elders of the land. [24] She makes linen garments and sells them; she delivers sashes to the merchant. [25] Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she laughs at the time to come. [26] She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue. [27] She looks well to the ways of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness. [28] Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: [29] "Many women have done excellently, but you surpass them all." [30] Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised. [31] Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her works praise her in the gates.*

When I spoke on this passage at a Women's conference I said to them "If I were you women, I would never turn to this passage the rest of my life." My guess is that when she pulls her cloak back there is an "S" on her t-shirt. This sounds like Superwoman to me. What an amazing woman!

It starts off with the priority of the relationship with her husband and what she brings into his life. Then it moves to what she brings to her household. It moves to what she provides for her household. Then it talks of her businesses. She is planting gardens and bringing food from it. She has a manufacturing plant going. She has servants that are reporting to her that she takes care of and who are doing work for her. She is a seamstress. She is making clothing. She has some kind of selling process that is going on. All of this is going on in her life even while her husband is being completed and her children are being cared for. The testimony goes out and the Lord is being honored. Her husband is being honored. Her children are being taken care of as she looks to her household.

Let me give you the three pieces of the calling to motherhood. The first two come from Proverbs 1 and 31. Number one is to love your husband in Christ as a completer and a helper. This is where my heart breaks knowing how many women are not hearing this and are being shaped in their womanhood and what it means to be a wife by the sitcoms, articles, and editorials of this age who would say to a woman "if you would like to work this in, it's fine but just be yourself." Christ says to you as a redeemed woman in the covenant of marriage, your number one responsibility is to be a completer. It was not good for the man to be alone but there was made a suitable helper.

The Bible says God made man (singular) in His image, male and female He made man in His image. In other words, to properly image God requires male and female. All of the distinctions of God cannot be properly reflected in either female or the male but the male and the female. It takes both to image God. The woman is given the privilege to bear one name of God applied to two persons of the Trinity. In John 14 and 16 Jesus said "I must go away and if I go away I will send to you the other helper." So who is Jesus? He is the Helper. Who is the Holy Spirit? He is the other Helper. Who is the woman? She is bearing the name of Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

The sacredness of the calling of a woman is to strengthen, to be a completer, to be the helper and there is nothing demeaning about it at all. It is the call of submission. Submission is

not indentured servitude. A woman is not called to compete with her husband to take his headship. Look at Eve. Where did Eve come from? She didn't come from his head, nor his feet but she came from his side, to fit alongside of him and that is the Biblical concept of submission. She is to come alongside and be a completer to the one whom you have been called in the covenant of marriage. What God called him to do, he can't do without you. I say this advisably and I understand the human limitations but just as I cannot live for Christ as a Christian without the Helper, the Holy Spirit, a man cannot accomplish what God has called him to do without the helper He has given to make him whole and complete.

It's God's design. It is not a statement of inferiority or superiority but it's a statement of distinction and how we are put together. I don't apologize for it. I think it's freeing and delivering when we see a husband and a wife as one joined together, not just a biological and sexual dynamic but actually a true oneness of intimacy as they have come together. The woman says "I am his completer. I am his helper. I am the one called alongside of him to make him whole. I will do him good and not evil all the days of our life together." That's what a woman has been called to do.

The second aspect of motherhood from the text is to be a keeper and manager of a Christian home. The old phrase used to be a homemaker. Let me try to show you this also in another passage in Titus 2. Titus 2:1-4 says [1] *But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine.* [2] *Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness.* [3] *Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good,* [4] *and so train the young women to love their husbands and children,* [5] *to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled.*

Their relationship to their husbands, their managing and keeping of the home, is actually a testimony that brings glory to God instead of detraction to God. One might look at this and ask if a woman can work outside the home. Note to self – visit Proverbs 31. Did the Proverbs 31 woman work outside the home? Absolutely. She had a garden, a manufacturing plant, sold real estate and all kinds of amazing things, but it was never at the expense of and always contributed to her focus of being a helper, completer to her husband and it was all to accomplish looking well to her household.

I want to say something to men here. Men, that means you and I set up a lifestyle and expectations that we don't put upon our wives the major responsibility of the lifestyle of our home. What they do, is complete us that we can do what God has called us to do. Not only do they complete us but we free them up to do what I think is the most important thing in all the world. I do believe the woman who rocks the cradle shapes the world. She manages and develops that home. Can there be ancillary activities outside? Yes, but please give me enough grace to know that I can't address every possible situation in this broken world. I am giving you what the Bible says we are to promote through discipleship in following Jesus Christ. In so doing the husband is encouraging all of that and making room for that as she is completing and loving him all the days of her life. He is freeing her up so she can manage that household well. She can be a worker in the home and she can give the nurturing environment to the children that needs to be there so that she may love her husband and her children. That is what Paul tells Titus.

I want to show you an example of that. Let's look at II Timothy 3. This is Paul's last letter to his trusted disciple. II Timothy 3:10-15 says [10] *You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness,* [11] *my*

*persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra—which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. [12] Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, [13] while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. [14] But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, **knowing from whom you learned it** [15] and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.* Paul is not speaking of himself when he tells Timothy to remember from whom you learned it. He is speaking of what Timothy learned from childhood.

Let's look at II Timothy 1. Here is what Paul is referring back to where Timothy learned from. II Timothy 1:5 says *[5] I am reminded of your (Timothy) sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well.* Who is it who brought Timothy up in the Scriptures to a saving relationship with Jesus Christ? It was from his grandmother and his mother.

Now let's look at Acts 16. Here is the occasion just to reinforce it and also to show you this was not easy for Lois and Eunice because Timothy was raised in a broken home. He had a mother and grandmother who knew and loved the Lord but not so of his father. Acts 16:1 says *[1] Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. A disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek* (was still bound as a Gentile pagan and was not a believer). God used her in that she developed that household and that brings me to the third aspect of the calling of motherhood.

Thirdly, is to teach, nurture and launch your covenant children to Christ and into the world for Christ with a Biblical world and life view. You are nurturing and teaching your child the teaching of kindness. If we follow the call to fatherhood and motherhood you might be unleashing a Timothy in your home who will revitalize the church at Ephesus. You might be unleashing a Timothy who will carry the banner of the Apostle Paul as you give yourself to these priorities. This is a glorious calling. I understand the challenges of working outside the home and single parenting and all of that and they need to be addressed but in terms of what we are called to begin to disciple and develop in the redeeming and powerful transforming grace of God. We are called to this complimentary view of men and women, not an egalitarian view where men and women are the same, meaning anything a man can do so can a woman and vice versa. That is not true.

Men and women are not superior and inferior. They are different and they fit together to make the whole. When they fit together the woman has this completer, helper call, the man has this guarding, guiding call, they unite together and then together in Christ they then begin to develop their children by teaching them, nurturing them, evangelizing them and discipling them with a Christ-centered, Christ-shaped, Christ-loving life view and then they launch them into the world for Jesus Christ. They propel them into the world to serve Jesus Christ wherever He has called them – pastor, teacher, doctor, lawyer etc. But you are teaching them by the way you develop that home.

Now I'd like to enumerate the takeaways to bring this into reality. Ladies, to do this you must have a prioritized relationship with Christ. You have to be like Mary. She believed the Word of the Lord. I don't know how many children you have but I do know Suzanna Wesley and I do know she managed her household well. I do know that her husband didn't all that he could for her but that didn't stop her. I also know that she would lead them in family worship and she would have her own worship even with 18 to 20 kids running around. She accomplished

having her own worship by sitting in the room, pulling her apron over her head and her children could not utter a word until she had finished reading her Bible and praying. The signal for them when it was over was when her apron came down. You may want to use something else and when you do that something else the children have to be quiet. Men, help your wives find the time to have their own time to meet with the Lord while you are taking care of things.

Secondly, you need to prioritize your relationship with your husband. I cannot tell you how many times I've seen where a husband and wife have children and gradually becomes the idolatry of children. Their whole identity gets wrapped up in their kids and they even start calling each other mommy and daddy and then the children grow up and leave. The couple look at each other and don't know each other anymore. Your children are not the reason for your unity. They are a result of it. Your unity is together in Christ. Men, just as I said in the last study prioritize your relationship with your wife. It must be met by a woman who loves her husband.

Number three, prioritize your relationship with your children, individually and together. We will talk more about this in later studies but all your children come with the same problem of sin and it is the same answer, Jesus, but each come in a different, configured package. The packaging is different so know them individually and personally. Be a model in front of them. Mentor them, manage them, manage your household and motivate them, just like a father is to be doing that also.

Number four, is a prioritized, personal, marital and family relationship in the Lord's church. As the church gathers for worship and disciple making take full advantage of it. This is what will probably happen. Fathers will be doing their work, mothers will be doing their work and it's their Sunday school teacher or the Youth pastor or a person who spoke at a retreat who probably leads your child to Christ. It's okay for that is the body of Christ working together but you're the one that has keyed that up because you have exposed your children to the means of grace that have been deposited in the body of Christ. You didn't just drive by church, you are the church of Jesus Christ.

Fifthly and finally, select, recruit and engage with a support team of mature spiritual mothers and sisters. You probably have some in your own home like your own mother and grandmother and that's great. I hope you take full advantage of it. Start with your immediate family, your extended family but also move into the body of Christ. You need both spiritual mothers and sisters so find both.

This is speculation. It's clear that Elizabeth was older than Mary but the reason I read that text was not only did the Lord give a miraculous birth to one that was called barren and John had to be born before Jesus because he was the one that paved the way but I also think that Mary needed Elizabeth's encouragement. I don't think that was any accident that she stepped in and this older woman who was her cousin began to encourage her for her willingness to believe, to be shamed by the world but to be faithful to the Lord. You need Elizabeths in your life. I don't think it's any accident that Eunice is able to do for her son Timothy because of her mother, Lois being there. I don't think it's any accident that when they showed up on the fortieth day the Lord had Anna there to encourage Mary. Don't wait for these women to come to you. Search the body of Christ for these women in your life. Go to them and say I need you in my life, you need me in your life and let's serve the Lord together.

You can't have a band of brothers but you can have a circle of sisters. Go find those spiritually mature women that you can draw from and look to. They are willing to be available to you. Go get your Elizabeths, Annas, and Lois' for they will be a great part of your life. Go



get the older women who can teach the younger women. People tend to ask me why the church doesn't arrange this. This is something that can't be programmed. I wish it could. This happens through relationships, congregational communities and small groups. You begin to see where you begin to be open with each other. It happens through your Spirit led initiative. Select, recruit, and engage them in your life. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the time we could be together in Your Word. Thank You Father for this holy, divine calling of motherhood. I pray that we have been faithful to Your Word. We haven't been able to be exhaustive but at least rudimentary principles of this divine calling and how to begin to engage it in life has been brought forth. We have at least begun to identify how to do this. Thank You for this wonderful example of Mary, not only as the one available to You to bring forth our Savior but one saved by that Savior, favored and graced and one whom we can learn from as she engaged in this Godly call of motherhood, honoring Joseph who would hold fast to her and raising her children and managing her household and launching the Redeemer and her sons into the world. Father, thank You that, that legacy continues in such women favored by grace that are reading this today. Please do not let the world press us into its mold with its slick programming, music, plays, movies and advertising. Help us to honor the Word of God as fathers and mothers for I pray in Jesus' Name, Amen.