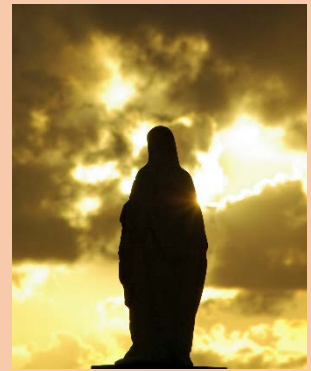


I preached a sermon entitled *Favored*. In this message we looked at Mary's encounter with the angel Gabriel in Luke 1:26-38 (NASB), where she learns that she will conceive the Christ child. The entire sermon audio and message outline will soon be available on our [media page](#). However, I wanted to use the last point of that message as a devotional here.



In a previous post we looked at Point #5 from that message: "The fulfillment of the purpose for which you have been favored will be accomplished by God." We were reminded that Mary could not produce a virgin conception and that what was happening in Mary would be accomplished supernaturally by God.

When we hear something like this we may ask ourselves, "Well if God is going to accomplish His purpose in me, then what am I supposed to do?" (I'm glad you asked this question.) We find the answer in Mary's response to Gabriel:

Luke 1:38 (NASB) And Mary said, "Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

Point #6: Our responsibility is to submit to God and surrender to the process (v. 38).

Thought: Spiritual disciplines (like Scripture reading, prayer, fasting, etc.) do not transform us, but are the means by which the Holy Spirit imparts grace to us and transforms us. In the same way, our cooperation with God is one of the means through which His plan is accomplished. Mary says to Gabriel I am the Lord's bond slave and I agree with- i.e. will support/cooperate with- all that God has said He will do.

Observation: Mary never chose to be favored by God, nor did she do anything to become the mother of the Christ child.

Takeaway: You are called to walk in God's purpose, not to choose it.

Can you imagine how miserable Mary would be if she resisted and hated what God was birthing in her? Everyday many people are either trying to fulfill God's purpose by their own means, or they are rejecting, and trying to abort it. The first question and answer in the Westminster Shorter Catechism (in Modern English) is: Question 1- What is man's primary purpose? Answer- Man's primary purpose is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.

You and I glorify God when we willingly submit to Him and surrender to His purpose and process. You and I will enjoy the Lord more fully when we are willing participants in the work He does in and through us.

Final admonition: Walk in God's purpose as He has revealed it to you. Do not determine for yourself what your purpose in life is. You will be most frustrated if you do. As Saul (who became Paul) learned, "It is hard for you to kick against the goads." (Acts 26:14 NASB).

Blessings,

Handwritten signature of Rev. Michael W. Hammond Sr.

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