

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 12: God's People Live for Him

Unit 12 Big Question and Answer and Song:

"How Should God's People Live?"

They Should Live Like Jesus!" *PFI NIV Songs 12, Tracks 3,4*

Unit 12 Bible Verse and Song: Ephesians 5:1-2

"Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."

PFI NIV Songs 12, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

**We're learning... Bible Truth 4:
God's People Trust Him**

Trusting God means resting joyfully in God's care and plans. God's people trust God because they know that He is completely powerful, wise, and good. They know His plans are perfect and they are always for their good and His glory. They know that God always takes care of them and helps them do whatever He wants them to do, even if it is very hard.

God's people know that they won't trust God perfectly while they live on earth. God has forgiven them of their sins, but they are still sinners. And so here, they will sometimes struggle to trust God, even though they know He has never failed them. They are grateful for God's Holy Spirit, working in their hearts. He can help them to trust God more and more here on earth. They are even more grateful for the day when they will go to live with God in heaven forever. There, they will know and trust Him perfectly.

BIBLE VERSE

How do I know this is true? The Bible tells me so!

Bible Truth 4 Bible Verse: Proverbs 3:5-6

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight."

CASE STORY

Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-56

Our story is called:

The Case of the Wedding that Almost Wasn't.

As you listen to the story, see if you can figure out:

1. Whose wedding almost didn't happen? Why?
2. Who had to trust God in order for it to take place after all? How did God bless their trust in Him?

This story takes place in New Testament times, around the time Jesus came to live on earth.

Mary and Joseph stood with their fathers in front of their eagerly watching families. Mothers, grandparents, brothers, and sisters. Everyone wanted to be there for Mary and Joseph's day of Erusin--Betrothal Day.

Joseph's father gave the "mohar" of fifty shekels of silver to Mary's father as a promise that Joseph would marry her within a year. Joseph gave Mary a "mattan" of gold and silver jewelry as his promise to take her as his wife. In return, Mary and her father made promises to get Mary ready to be Joseph's wife and save her just for him.

The promises, called a Ketubah, were written down and agreed upon. Mary drank a special cup of wine to seal her promise to wait for Joseph, then the fathers' signed the Ketubah. Joseph and Mary were now engaged to be married! Everyone cheered and enjoyed a big feast together, celebrating the day. How happy Joseph and Mary must have been! Not just to be getting married, but to be getting married to someone who trusted and loved the Lord so much!

Both Mary and Joseph had special things to do to get ready for the wedding. Joseph had to add his huppah (a special room) onto his family's house and get it ready for his future wife. He had to build it, then decorate it beautifully. He filled it with lots of food and drink. Jewish custom was that Mary and Joseph would stay in it together without coming out for anything for the first, seven days of their marriage. For most young men, it took a whole year to get the huppah ready. And how did he know when it was ready? Only when his father said it was beautiful enough, would the young man know it was done and he could get his bride.

Mary and her family were busy, too. First of all, a special veil had to be made for Mary to wear every time she went out of her house. This veil showed everyone that she was promised in marriage. Then there was Mary's 'shiluhim' to

get ready. These were the things she would take with her for her new home. And there were the oil lamps used in the wedding parade to Joseph's house where the wedding would take place. Mary needed to have her shiluhim packed and the lamps ready for whenever Joseph might come and send for her. She didn't know what day or what hour he would come. Joseph wouldn't know what day or hour it would be either. He would wait until his father told him. Mary only knew that it would be whenever Joseph's father decided that the huppah was ready.

If Joseph was like most men, he would surprise Mary by coming at midnight for her. Everyone would be long asleep in their beds, when there would be a knock at the door at Mary's family's house.. They would open the door to a whole crowd of musicians, family, friends and relatives. Mary would be dressed like a queen, with a beautiful dress and jewelry, and even a crown. They would pick up all her things and carry them and her to Joseph's family's house, singing, cheering and playing music all the way, by the light of the oil lamps Mary had prepared.

At Joseph's family's house, they would present Mary to Joseph, who would be dressed as a handsome king. They would read and sign the final covenant promising before God to treat each other well, and then they would be married! What a wonderful night that would be!

Oh, but now all Mary could do was wait and wait. When would the knock at the door come? When would it be time for this most important day of her life? It would be easy for Mary to be impatient, sad and grumpy, but Mary was a girl who had decided to trust the Lord. She could joyfully rest in God's care and plan. Mary could trust God because she knew that He was completely powerful, completely wise, completely good, and even completely perfect in His timing. She believed that He would do for her what was for His glory and her good. He would always be able to take care of her and help her do whatever He wanted her to do, even if it is very hard. She could even trust Him with this most important of days.

But one day something very, very surprising happened to Mary that changed all of Mary's and Joseph's plans and dreams for their wedding. An angel of the Lord named Gabriel appeared to Mary and said, "Hello, Mary! The Lord highly favors you! He is with you." Gabriel's words puzzled and concerned Mary. Why would an angel speak to her, a plain, ordinary girl and tell her that she was highly favored

by God?

But the angel said to her, "Don't be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You are going to have a baby boy. Name him "Jesus." He will be great and will be called God's Son. He is the Messiah, come to save God's people. He will reign as King forever."

Now Mary had even more questions. "How will this be," Mary asked, "I have no husband and have promised to not have babies until I do?"

"The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High God will overshadow you. So the Holy One to be born will be called the Son of God," Gabriel explained. "You know your relative Elizabeth who everyone said could never have children. She is over sixty years old, yet she is six months pregnant with a baby who will be the special messenger for your son! Nothing is impossible with God," he told Mary.

Mary's mind must have been filled with so many thoughts and questions. "Am I to become a mother without being married to a man? Will my family or Joseph's family believe me when I tell them or will they think I'm lying? If they don't believe me, the wedding will be called off. I might even be killed, if they think I've been with a man who's not my husband. What should I do?" she surely wondered.

It would be easy for Mary to be worried and sad, but in her heart, she knew what to do. Mary was a girl who had decided to trust the Lord. She would joyfully rest in God's care and plan. If this was what He wanted her to do, she believed He would always be able to take care of her and help her do it, even though it would be very hard. Mary would even trust Him with this incredible news and whatever might happen next.

So Mary answered Gabriel, "I am the Lord's servant. May everything happen just as He desires it to." Then the angel left her.

Mary went to visit Elizabeth for three months. Together they praised God for His amazing plans to save God's people that He would use their sons to bring about.

At the end of the three months, Mary went home to Nazareth. By now the little baby had grown enough for everyone to see Mary was pregnant. Mary's family broke the news to Joseph's family...and then to Joseph, himself.

"What will happen to me? What will people say? What will they do to me?" Mary must have thought. There were many hard things she might have to go through now

that everyone knew about the baby. But even then, Mary would trust in the Lord. She would rest joyfully in God's care and plan.

When Joseph heard the news, he thought the same thing that everyone else thought. "How could Mary do this?" Joseph wondered. "She made a promise to me! So did her family! I've been working so hard on the huppah for her! All of my dreams and plans were for nothing."

Joseph had decisions to make. He had to think carefully about what was the right thing to do. "The law gives me the right to have her stoned to death for what she's done," thought Joseph. "I don't want Mary to be killed for what has happened," he mercifully decided, "but I can't marry a woman who is pregnant from another man. I will divorce her quietly. Tomorrow my father and I will go and take back our presents and tear up the Ketubah," he decided.

But that night the Lord showed Himself worthy of Mary's trust. He sent an angel to Joseph in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, don't be afraid to take Mary as your wife. The son she is having is of the Holy Spirit. Give him the name Jesus, because he will save His people from their sins," he explained.

When Joseph woke up, he knew just what to do. He went and brought Mary home to be his wife. Mary hadn't broken her promises to him! This baby was from the Lord. Instead of something shameful, Mary was someone to whom God had given a special honor. Joseph had known that Mary was a girl who loved the Lord and trusted Him, but never could he had imagined that the Lord had given to him a girl so special that she would be the mother of the Messiah! Perhaps the family wouldn't understand why he was marrying Mary; but he, too, would trust God to help them through whatever they would say to him or Mary. If the Lord had done this amazing thing in Mary, surely He could be trusted to help them through whatever else would come!

What happened to Mary's beautiful wedding day? How far had Joseph finished the Huppah? Did everyone come to celebrate or was it just a quiet wedding because everyone was ashamed of Mary? We don't know. But, we do know that both Mary and Joseph trusted the Lord and praised Him for choosing them to would raise the very Son of God. What was the joy of a wedding celebration in exchange for an honor like that? The Lord always knows best and does best.

Our Bible Truth is: God's People Trust Him

Our Bible Verse is: Proverbs 3:5,6:

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight."

Why did the Lord choose Mary to be the mother of Jesus, the Son of God? The Bible never mentions if she was pretty or especially smart. It never mentions if she had many friends. Her family wasn't particularly rich. We don't know if she was really good at doing things that girls were supposed to do in those days. She certainly wasn't perfectly good--no one but God is. Many of the things we think of as really important we don't know about her at all.

What we do know is that Mary trusted the Lord. She was willing to do whatever He wanted her to do, even if she couldn't understand it, even if it was very hard. She was willing to not lean on her own understanding, but allow God to direct her path—to show her what she should do. It was her trust in Him and willingness to obey Him that made her pleasing to Him.

What about you and me? Perhaps we think a lot about whether we are smart or pretty or really good at something. Maybe we wish we had nicer things or more friends. But in this story we can see what's really important in God's eyes is what Mary had: trust in God. And that this is the best thing for us to have, too. Let's praise this God who is completely good and powerful and wise, completely worthy of our trust. Let's ask Him to help us to trust Him with our whole lives, by turning away from our sins, trusting Jesus as our Savior. Let's ask Him to help us to rest joyfully in His care and plan for our lives, just as Mary did.

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

1. A Question about the Bible Truth, True or False:
 Trusting God means resting joyfully in God’s care and plans.
Answer: True.

2. Crack the Case Questions
a. Whose wedding almost didn’t happen? Why?
Answer: Mary and Joseph’s. Because Mary was pregnant and they weren’t married.

b. Who had to trust God in order for it to take place after all? How did God bless their trust in Him?
Answer: Both Mary and Joseph had to trust God. God gave them the honor of raising Jesus, the Son of Mary, the Son of God, who would save God’s people from their sins.

3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse:
Proverbs 3:5-6
 “Trust in the ___ with all your heart and lean not on your ___ understanding; in all your ways acknowledge ___, and he will make your paths ___.”
Answers: LORD; own; him; straight.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

Trust and Obey
PFI NIV Songs 12, Track 12

Verse 2
 Not a burden we bear, not a sorrow we share,
 But our toil He doth richly repay;
 Not a grief or a loss, not a frown or a cross,
 But is blest if we trust and obey.

Refrain:
 Trust and obey,
 For there’s no other way,
 To be happy in Jesus,
 But to trust and obey.

Words: Daniel B. Towner Music: John H. Sammis

This song is about how we can trust God all the time, even when very hard things happen that we don’t understand. It reminds us that those who trust in Jesus can be happy, even in times when it’s hard to understand, because God is that good. He will always bless His people--those who turn from their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior! They can count on that. They can just go ahead and obey Him. They can trust that it will all turn out for our good and His glory. We can be happy in Jesus, trusting and obeying Him, when we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus, too.

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

A=Adoration, C=Confession, T=Thanksgiving, S=Supplication

A God, we praise You for being our Savior.

C God, we confess that often we choose not to trust You, even though You are so trustworthy.

T God, we thank You that You can help us trust You, just like You helped Mary.

S God, work in our hearts! Help us to turn away from our sins and trust Jesus as our own Savior. Send the Holy Spirit to live in our hearts and help us to trust You.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

Trust in the LORD
PFI NIV Songs 12, Track 14

Trust in the LORD with all your heart,
 And lean not on your own understanding.
 In all your ways acknowledge Him,
 And He will make your paths straight.
 Trust in the LORD with all your heart,
 Trust in the LORD with all your heart,
 Trust in the LORD with all your heart.
 Trust in the LORD with all your heart.
 Proverbs Three, verses five and six.

Words adapted from Proverbs 3:5-6 Constance Dever © 2011

This verse reminds us that we can always trust the LORD and His good plans, even when we don’t understand what He is doing. He wants us not to depend on ourselves and what we see, but on Him, His Word and His good plans. And when we do, we can know that He will show us what He wants us to do, every day of our lives.