...BUT LET US ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER-AND ALL THE MORE AS YOU SEE THE DAY APPROACHING.

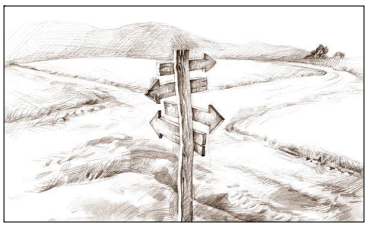
HEBREWS 10:25

The Encouragement Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue 2 **April 30, 2008**

Thank You!!...

To begin, I would like to thank everyone who responded to the first issue of The Encouragement Newsletter. Many provided helpful suggestions that I've incorporated. I pray you will continue to be encouraged. As always, feel free to share the newsletter with others.



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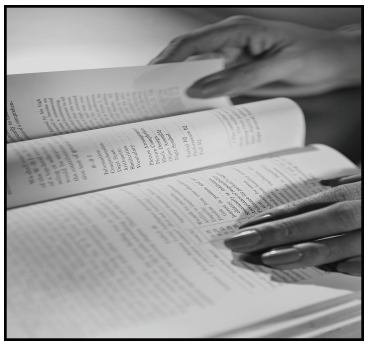
Learning from Mary, Joseph and Jochebed

In this issue of The Encouragement Newsletter, I sensed the Lord wanted me to focus on encouraging mothers. I cannot write about all of the complexities of motherhood, I know there are many, but I want to share some lessons from the life of Mary, Joseph and Jochebed. Although I will be focusing on mothers, I believe all readers will be able to receive encouragement and truths to apply to their lives.

Typically, when we hear or read the biblical account of Mary, the mother of Jesus, it is centered around the birth of Jesus during the Christmas season. However, I'd like to bring attention to Mary as a mother and convey some things she encountered and the emotions she may have experienced.

The two accounts I'd like to share are found in the books of Luke and Matthew.

In Luke 1:27-38, we see the angel Gabriel delivering the message from God to Mary. In these verses, we find the dialogue between Mary and Gabriel. Gabriel's first words were words of blessing - "Mary you are highly favored and the Lord is with you". These words troubled her. I wonder if these words troubled her because of St. John 1:46. According to this scripture, there were doubts if anything good could come out of Nazareth, Mary's hometown. Looking at life's circumstances, we may ask the same question—Can any good



thing come out of my family, my community or my culture? I say yes it can!

The angel then told her not to be afraid and because she had found favor with God, she would be with child, give birth to a son and call his name Jesus. No matter how things look in life, when God gives us favor, we have favor. The favor God gives is not based upon our striving to "keep the rules". It is given because He has looked down and found a heart after Him.

Today, the Lord is pronouncing purpose and favor on those whose hearts have been after Him and not the things of the world. Also, these words may trouble us because of what we see, but we must receive his peace and listen for the next step. Remember, He not only sees where we are, but He knows where we are going.

Mothers have an awesome responsibility and play a vital role in influencing the next generation. No matter the circumstances surrounding "how" you became a mother, you have been given the awesome opportunity to have a positive impact on your children. We must use wisdom in what we expose our children to. We have to be watchful of what is allowed to enter into our homes that would influence them in an ungodly way.

In verse 34, Mary asks, "How will this be since I am a virgin". We often ask the same question, "How can this be possible, since I am ____ *(you fill in the blank)*. What Gabriel spoke to Mary was going to be supernatural and humanly impossible. The answer Mary received is the same for us today - "The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you…."

Today, we experience so many challenges trying to train our children in the ways of God. How can we train them day after day with the enemy attempting to plant ungodly seeds into their mind? The music, television, movies, school violence and violent video games are pressures coming at them hard and strong every day to conform them to the world.

►

Words of Exhortation to Mothers

By: Mrs. Jessie LeSane Hall

I am the mother of six children, three boys and three girls. My oldest daughter is the author of this newsletter. The oldest three have blessed my husband and I with seven grand children.

Some one might say, "wow that's a big family", but I came from a family of eight and my husband from a family of fifteen. Knowing that children are a blessing from God, made training them much easier.

When my third child was born I realized they all had different personalities. I had to seek wisdom from God to know how to deal with each child. The greatest challenge was making sure no one thought I was showing favoritism.

In many ways I trained my children the way my parents raised me. They were all taught to -

- Except Christ as their personal savior;
- Pray;
- Be reliable;
- Do their share of the chores around the house;
- Obey the rules in our home. (*they were not allowed to do things just because other children were allowed to do them*); and
- Attend Sunday School and church. (*when they became teenagers they still had to attend church*).

I was blessed to be able to work at home. Other than the financial aspect—no child care expenses, transportation fees, and clothes for work-the greatest advantage was being able to train my own children full-time.

Cell phones, the internet and TV has so much negative influence on children today. This modern technology is good in so many ways, but at the same time it causes a concern for mothers that I did not have to contend with.

The Hall Clan: Top Left to Right—Bernard & Joseph,. Bottom Left to Right -Miaya, Veronica, Tawana & Michael (falling on the girls). The family that plays together -stays together.

To mothers both married and single, just remember, God is the same yesterday today and forevermore, so trust Him. Ask God to give you a mentor. Even with a mentor it is important to seek God's wisdom to apply what you are seeing your mentor do and hearing her say.

Learning from Mary, Joseph and Jochebed

So, how will we be able to train this next generation? It will be done by allowing the Holy Spirit to come upon us and letting His power to overshadow us. Most importantly, remember verse 37— "For nothing is impossible with God". It may feel like the odds are stacked against us, but because nothing is impossible with God, we will victoriously overcome the odds.

After the dialogue with Gabriel, Mary concluded one thing, "I am the Lord's servant...may it be as you have said". This was Mary's total surrender to the will of God. Mothers, let us be like Mary and surrender to His will by saying, "Lord, let your purpose prevail. Be it unto me according to Your will".

After the birth of Jesus, Herod the king issued a decree to kill all boys age two and younger. (See Matthew 2) Can you imagine the mayor or governor giving a decree to kill your child? Just the thought create feelings of anxiety, stress and fear within me. I am sure Mary was not exempt from these emotions .

In our day, there are systems in place to kill children. For example, many sporty clothes are designed with skull and cross bones—a sign of death disguised in fashion. Layered under catchy beats are lyrics filled with death, suicide, sexual promiscuity, drug use and hopelessness.

The legalization of abortion is another system in place. Since the inception of Roe vs. Wade in 1973, millions of babies growing in the womb have been legally aborted. The child's purpose has been cut off. We never know the destiny of the unborn. Only the Lord God-Creator of all life knows it all.

Like Mary, we are living in a day with systems in place to kill children before birth and after. Although these systems are in place, it could not kill Jesus and we can believe that our children will live and not die prematurely.

Mary did not have to care for Jesus alone. After Herod issued the decree, Joseph, Mary's husband, heard the word of the Lord in a dream. The words to him were - "Get up...take the child and His mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill Him". (Matthew 2:13) To the fathers reading, like Joseph, you are vital to the mothers and children. As mothers, we may not always realize it, but we need you to hear, speak, and obey the Lord's direction for the family. Together, with God, we can train our children in the way they should go. (Proverbs 22:6)

For the mothers who say, "The father is not around" or "He is in the home, but sleeping on the job". The Lord can and will give you the same wisdom he gave Jochebed, Moses' mother. (see Exodus 1—2 & 6:20) Pharaoh issued a decree to kill all males. In this crisis, God gave Jochebed the wisdom to hide and protect Moses, the deliverer, from death. After she could no longer hide him, she put him in the basket she had made and placed it in the Nile River. He did not drown. Rather, he was drawn out. Again, we clearly see the Lord's purpose prevailing over the decree of death.

Mary was favored by God to birth and care for Jesus. She was with him all the way to the cross and beyond. Joseph obeyed the words of God and his family survived terror. Then we saw Jochebed. She used wisdom to preserve Israel's deliverer. ►

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I believe we are like Mary, Joseph and Jochebed. God's chosen vessels. We have the call to finish the task God has given us. We must stand for righteousness and teach our children the fear of the Lord. This is not an option. It is a mandate. God will give us the necessary wisdom to preserve our children. Hold your head up and look to the hills, to where your help comes and gain new strength for a new day. You may have made some mistakes and said some things that can not be retracted, but you can repent to God and the children, if need be, and start a new.

"....seek wisdom from God to know how to deal with each child.

I have two teenage boys and wish I could go to the local bookstore and get a "How To" manual for each one. There are many helpful books and other women to learn from, but the best manual is the word of God. Use every Godly resource you can find to train your children and pray without ceasing. You never know, he or she may be the deliverer of the next generation.

Decree for Your Family and Children

Decree— Def. An authoritative order having legal force .

As for me and my family, we will serve the Lord. Because I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, I shall be saved, and my entire house. Because I am a covenant child of God, my household is blessed. We have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ. Blessings come upon us and overtake us.

My family, home, marriage, and children are blessed, and all that I put my hands to do. I am blessed coming in, and I am blessed going out. The Lord has established my household as a people for Himself. He causes us to about in prosperity, in the offspring of our bodies and the offspring of our beasts and the produce of our ground. The Lord surrounds my family and entire household with favor as a shield. No good things does He withhold from us. His banner is love, over my home, marriage, and family. No weapon formed against us as a family prospers. What the Lord has blessed, no man can curse. We abide in the shadow of the Almighty and not evil befalls us.

My children shall be mighty on the earth, for the generations of the upright are blessed. They shall be as signs and wonders in the earth.

My children will flourish like olive plants around my table. They are a gift from the Lord, and the fruit of the womb is my reward. My children are like arrows in the hand of a warrior. My sons in their youth are as grown-up plants and my daughters as corner pillars fashioned as for a palace.

Lord, Your covenant with me declares that Your spirit which is upon me and Your words which You have put in my mouth shall not depart from my mouth, nor from the mouth of my children, nor from the mouth of my children's children. All my children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be their peace and prosperity. In righteousness they will be established, and they will be far from oppression. They will not be led into temptation, but they will know deliverance from evil. I confess that my children are pure in heart and therefore they shall see God. They hunger and thirst after righteousness, therefore, they are filled. The Spirit of the Lord is poured out upon my children and they prophecy. The Lord's blessing is upon them. They will spring up among the grass like poplars by streams of water. One will say, " I am the Lord's," and another one will call on the name of Jacob, and another will write on his hand, "Belonging to the Lord."

SCRIPTURAL REFERENCE:
Joshua 24:15; Acts 2:17; 16:31; Ephesians 1:3, Deuteronomy 28:1-12; Psalm 5:12; 84:11; 91:1, 10; 112:2; 127:3-4; 128:3, 144:12; Song of Solomon 2;4; Isaiah 8:18; 59:21; 44:3-5; 54:13-14, 17; Matthew 5:6,8; 6:13; Proverbs 1:23; 2:2-3; Jude 24

I confess that my children are seekers of wisdom and understanding. They hold fast to Your Word and to Your ways. They treasure Your commandments, and they cry for discernment. The spirit of wisdom is poured out upon my children and my children's children, and words of wisdom are being made known to them.

The Lord keeps my family from falling and presents them blameless before the presence of the Father's glory with exceeding joy.

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May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by His grace gave us eternal Encouragement and good hope, Encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.
II Thessalonians 2:16 -17 (NIV)

If this newsletter has been an Encouragement to you, please let me know by e-mailing me at hisminstrl@yahoo.com. I'd love to hear from you.

Jesus Christ is the Author & Finisher of my faith

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