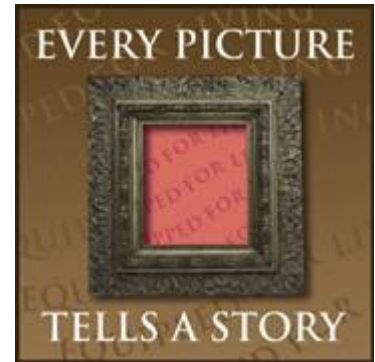




... when you need a break from the daily grind



EVERY PICTURE TELLS A STORY

#5 of 8: *Mary of Nazareth: a picture of purpose*

➤ **READY TO GO**

Purpose is one of today's buzzwords. Every organisation, no matter how small, tends to have a purpose statement. We all want to know our purpose, why we are here. Some modern thinkers have challenged the idea that there is a big picture to life, but it can be so important to know why we're doing what we're doing. Without a clear purpose we can sink into directionless apathy. It's great to have someone whom we can turn to as an example of a person who fulfilled her life's purpose, even though it cost her much to do so. Let me introduce you to Mary of Nazareth, the mother of Jesus.

➤ **READ**

- Read Luke 1:26-38. How did Mary respond at first to the angel's statement and how does this encourage you?
- What challenge do you derive from Mary's eventual acceptance of God's will for her life?
- Read Luke 2:41-52. Why did Jesus' words puzzle Mary and what do they tell us about Jesus' true identity and purpose?
- Read John 2:1-5. Notice the way Mary responded to Jesus. What does this indicate about the changing nature of their relationship?
- Read John 19:25-27. How do Jesus' last words to Mary confirm or challenge any view of him which you might hold?
- Read Acts 1:12-14. What practical lessons do you learn from the Bible's last mention of Mary?

➤ **REFLECT**

Mary was a true picture of purpose but in order to fulfil God's purpose for her life she had to do three crucial things. First of all, she had to respond to God's call. She was scared half to death by the appearance of the angel - and who wouldn't be, considering the implications of what he said? Yet she came to that point of complete submission to the will of God. Secondly, she had to relinquish control. There seem to have been a struggle going on between her desire to control her Son, and the need for her to let go of him so that he could fulfil his Father's purpose for his life and for the world. Then, finally, she had to identify with other Christ followers. Amazingly, although she was privileged to be the mother of the Saviour of the world it was only when she acknowledged him as her Saviour and identified with other believers that her true purpose was complete.

Fulfilling our life's purpose is not about seeing a blueprint for our life and following the details. It's about taking that first step of obedience and submission to the will of God whatever it might mean for us. Mary did that, and God saved the world through her Son.