



Christmas At The Cove

Part 1 – A Change of Plans

Discussion Guide

As we begin to prepare for the Christmas season, this week we'll look at what happens when things change suddenly. Like when we have things planned out perfectly, but they don't go exactly as planned. Let's look at the life of Mary, the surprising change of plans that impacted her life, and what we can learn from her responses and attitudes.

Jump Start

Leader: This section is designed to get discussions started, examine God's truth, and apply it to our week.

1. When have you had the perfect plan, but then things changed?
2. *When plans change, fear follows.* **Read [Luke 1:26-34](#).** Briefly imagine and discuss Mary's plans, hopes, and her probable life trajectory in that culture. Why could Gabriel's news have caused fear?
3. *With God's power and presence in our lives, we can walk in His purpose.* **Read [Luke 1:34-38](#).** What do you presume was Mary's attitude, based on the solitary question she asked? What empowered her response in verse 38?
4. *When plans change, live in favor, not fear.* **Read [Luke 1:39-45](#).** After the angel left her, Mary acted with confidence. Matthew's account tells us Joseph knew; she must have told him. Then she leaves town to visit her cousin. How is God directing her steps and encouraging her? How is she living in favor?
5. Final Thought. *I will not stay in fear; I will live in favor and in faith.* **Read [Luke 1:46-55](#).** Name some ways that Mary praises God and encourages herself. How can you apply these strategies in your life?

Deeper

Leader: This section is designed for further use in your Life Group or for personal study. These can also be used as discussion points and ways to stay connected with your group throughout the week.

6. **Read [Psalm 5:12](#), [Proverbs 8:35](#), and [Luke 4:18-19](#).** Who does the Lord bless with His favor, according to these verses? How do you get into this category of favored?

7. **Read [Psalm 84:11](#) and [2 Chronicles 16:9](#).** The Bible tells us in these two verses that God knows and rewards with favor, honor, and strong support those who are diligently following Him. What do you think it means to “walk uprightly” or to have a “blameless heart” towards God?

8. **Read [Joshua 3:5](#) and [Lamentations 3:25](#).** Consecration means “set apart.” How can we, as Christians, set ourselves apart, believe in, expect, and seek God’s favor?

9. King David said, “I entreat your favor with all my heart; be gracious to me according to your promise” (Psalm 119:58, ESV). When the Israelites made a golden calf and sinned against God, Moses “sought the favor of the Lord” (Exodus 32:11, NIV). He prayed God’s promises over His people. He begged God’s favor on behalf of the people and God was merciful. How can you, like King David and Moses, seek God’s favor more earnestly in your own life? Interceded for God’s favor in other people’s lives? How do these verses remind us that prayer activates God’s favor and promises to us?