

GOD'S INVITATION ALWAYS LEADS TO A CRISIS OF BELIEF

Now without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

Hebrews 11:6 (NIV)

❖ Key Characteristics of Every Crisis of Belief:

1. Every encounter with God requires FAITH.

Jesus replied, "You of little faith, why are you so afraid?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm.

Matthew 8:26 (NIV)

2. Any encounter with God will be GOD-SIZED.

"I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you."

Matthew 17:20 (NIV)

3. How you respond to these encounters reveals what you BELIEVE about GOD.

David asked... "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?"... ⁴⁵David said to the Philistine, "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. ⁴⁶This day the Lord will hand you over to me, and I'll strike you down and cut off your head... and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel."

1 Samuel 17:26, 45-46 (NIV)

4. True FAITH under God's direction and leading requires ACTION.

For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.

James 2:26 (NASB)

❖ A Woman Named Mary (Luke 1:26-38):

1. God is always at WORK to carry out His purpose in the world.

In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

Luke 1:26-27 (NIV)

2. God pursues a LOVE RELATIONSHIP that is real and personal.

The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." ²⁹Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be.

Luke 1:28-29 (NIV)

3. God invites you to JOIN HIM in His work.

But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. ³¹You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus."

Luke 1:30-31 (NIV)

4. God speaks to you to REVEAL His PURPOSE.

"He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, ³³and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

Luke 1:32-33 (NIV)

5. God's invitation always leads to a CRISIS of BELIEF.

"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

Luke 1:34 (NIV)

6. You must make MAJOR ADJUSTMENTS in your life to join God in His work.

The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.

³⁶Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. ³⁷For nothing is impossible with God."

Luke 1:35-37 (NIV)

7. You will experience God as you OBEY HIM and He works through you.

"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said." Then the angel left her.

Luke 1:38 (NIV)

❖ Steps to Knowing and Doing God's Will:

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV)

1. God invites you to join Him to REVEAL HIMSELF to you and a lost world.
2. God will give you a GOD-SIZED assignment to carry out His work.
3. When confronted with His assignment it will lead to a CRISIS of BELIEF.
4. This crisis will lead you to a DECISION to either follow by FAITH or not.
5. How you respond to God will REVEAL what you really BELIEVE about God.