

# MATRIARCHS

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**Week:** Five

**Author:** Debbie Taylor Williams

**Biblical Mom:** Mary, the Mother of Jesus

**Title of Lesson:** Stubbornly Inflexible or Sacredly Flexible

**Key Influence:** The Mother of Jesus

**Key Verse:** Luke 1:38

**Video Link:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DEqM1TQGE8M>

## MARY - Stubbornly Inflexible or Sacredly Flexible

The Bible is, in addition to other things, a record of God's caring interaction with mothers; of His intervening in their lives, encouraging, and helping them.

Could you use some encouragement and help today from God?

Maybe you're a planner, but your life seems chaotic now that you have children. Instead of everything going according to your plan, it seems nothing goes according to plan.

Are you disappointed that you're not the mom you envisioned yourself to be? You're easily angered. Or, perhaps you struggle with depression and its affecting your children.

Does it seem everyone else is doing a better job of parenting than you; even though you're doing your best?

Today's lesson is that God can help us and He wants to help! He created us and "wired" us with a spirit so that He who is Spirit, can commune with us and we with Him. We're all familiar with the blessing of navigational apps on our phones and cars. The app knows where we are and tells us how to navigate from point A to point B. If we get off course, the app lets us know and updates our course to get us back on track. Today, we're going to see how one mom totally "got it" that her Heavenly Father was the best source to navigate her through life. He who could see everyone and knew everything could direct her. Who was this wise woman? Mary, the mother of Jesus. Let's learn from her!

## Sacredly Flexible or Stubbornly Inflexible?

We notice in Mary what I term in my book, *The Plan A MOM in a Plan B World*,<sup>1</sup> “**sacred flexibility.**” What does this mean? Unlike some moms in the Bible who took things in their own hands, or lived in despair, Mary was sacredly flexible in God’s hands. In other words, she was sensitive to and led by her Heavenly Father. Instead of reacting to life with only her natural eyes, ears, mind, and emotions, she was open to God’s leading and timing.

The opposite of sacred flexibility is being **stubbornly inflexibility.** A stubbornly inflexible person, who lives by what the Bible calls “the flesh,” often experiences outbursts of anger, disputes, jealousy, getting drunk; even immorality. Galatians 5:19-21. They’re out of step with God which leads to their being out of step with their children and others.

God gives us a choice. We can look to our Heavenly Father during our day and respond to His promptings and Word. Or we can rush through our day, ignoring our Heavenly Father.

Following are areas where we see Mary practice sacred flexibility. As we observe her sacred flexibility in God’s hands, let’s think how He might be calling us to be more sacredly flexible.

*Heavenly Father, thank You for each mom who is joining this Bible study. Bless her. Speak to her. Help each mom look to You for help and guidance in the midst of her days. In Jesus’s name, Amen.*

## Sacred Flexibility to God’s Will

What we notice about Mary is her sacred flexibility. She consents to become pregnant by the most unconventional means. Could she have crossed her arms and said, “No way”? What if she had said to the heavenly messenger, “I’m engaged to Joseph and simply can’t get pregnant now”? But Mary didn’t say those things. Instead, she said, “Behold, the bonds slave of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word” (Luke 1:38).

Her opportunity to practice being flexible didn’t stop with that confession and act of submission. Near her due date, when she probably would have preferred to stay near home, she and Joseph had to go to Bethlehem on a government-mandated business trip. Flexible or inflexible? She went.

There we find Mary and Joseph combing the streets for a hotel. Keep flexing, Mary. How about a stall? I suppose Mary could have complained, “I’m NOT having a baby in a stinky dirty stall.” Yet, it was the only place available.

After the hard journey to Bethlehem, the strain of searching for a place to stay, and going through labor giving birth to Jesus, Mary must have been beyond exhaustion. How did she respond when Joseph said, “Mary, there are shepherds who want to see Jesus”?

“Dirty shepherds from the fields? Joseph, no!” Is that what Mary said? Not at all. Perhaps no woman better prophesied over herself than when she said to the angel, Gabriel, “Behold, the bonds slave of the Lord.”

Are we yet able to grasp how God daily, moment-by-moment, used this mother because she was sacredly flexible? She was not spineless or weak. It took the strongest of women to bear the harsh criticism of an out-of-

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<sup>1</sup> Debbie Taylor Williams, *The Plan A MOM in A Plan B World* (Abilene, TX: Leafwood Publishers, 2011, 151-159.

wedlock pregnancy, withstand the journey to Bethlehem, deliver her baby in a stable, raise the Son of God and then watch Him die on the cross.

Being sacredly flexible is not synonymous with weakness. It's experiencing God's leading when we yield our body, mind, and souls as instruments to Him. You and I may think of daily activities as ho-hum. But **the daily becomes divine when it's marked with God's presence and Spirit.** (tweet this)

In order for our days to be touched with the glory of God, we must be in communion with Him and sensitive to the Spirit's leading. This begins with opening our eyes to His presence in the mornings. It continues as we offer our bodies to His service and respond to His promptings throughout the day. We stay sacredly flexible in God's hands when we face a difficulty with a child and turn to Him in prayer, listening for His guidance on how to handle our situation.

## Sacred Flexibility in Decisions

We see why God chose Mary to bear His Son. And we can learn from her sacred flexibility.

As a betrothed couple, and prior to Mary's becoming pregnant with Jesus, Joseph and Mary had perhaps talked about what they would name their children. However, Luke 2:21 tells us they didn't get to select Jesus's name. God chose it. "His name was then called Jesus, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb." Keep flexing, Mary. You are part of something higher than you can see right now. Isaiah 55:8

## Sacredly Flexible in Change of Plans

It's the middle of the night. You're sound asleep. Suddenly you're shaken awake by your husband, who whispers urgently: "Get up. Get Jesus. We have to leave now!" "Why? What's going on, Joseph? Why the change of plans?" Mary could have been inflexible when Joseph woke her following the angel's warning of Herod's plot. But instead, Mary left in the middle of the night for Egypt as Herod gave the order to kill all male boys, two years old and under, in the vicinity of Bethlehem. (Matthew 2:13)

Mary probably never expected to live in Egypt. It was a change of plans. No doubt she missed her family. However, instead of doing what *she* wanted, she followed God's voice as **He navigated** their family to a safety.

## Sacredly Flexible in Where She Lived

When Herod died, an angel again appeared in a dream to Joseph while they were still in Egypt. The angel said, "Get up, take the Child and His mother, and go into the land of Israel; for those who sought the Child's life are dead" (Matthew 2:19–20).

"Mary, pack your bags."

"Why, Joseph? Where are we going?" Mary asked.

"Back to Israel."

Sacred flexibility. We could go on and on showing how God used Mary's sacred flexibility. Praise God, her heart wasn't hardened to spiritual things. She wasn't so set in her ways that she couldn't sense His direction and respond. She wasn't adamant that she live where she wanted to live. She didn't waste moments or miss opportunities God divinely orchestrated.

If Mary had not been flexible, perhaps she would never have encountered the shepherds who validated the angel's announcement, or the wise men who worshipped Jesus and provided the young couple with financial gifts that may well have financed their flight to Egypt. **Mary's flexibility was key in sparing Jesus' life from Herod's sword.**

## Sacred Flexibility Has a Positive Impact On Our Children

I wonder how many Divine assignments we miss each week. I wonder, if we were more flexible, if our children would experience more of God's blessings. I wonder if our sacred flexibility and resulting blessings might encourage our children to be more sacredly flexible adults.

Mary experienced spectacular miracles—the kind that make you rejoice and praise God. True, it's hard to be flexible when everything in you wants to stick to the status quo. However, it's **the mothers who are sacredly flexible in God's hands who walk in God's will.**

### 3 KEYS to SACRED FLEXIBILITY

In order for God to guide us, we must be in communion with Him and sensitive to the Spirit's leading. How does this occur?

1. It begins when we open our hearts and minds to God's presence in the mornings. We may pray, "Fill me with Your Spirit," in accordance with Ephesians 5:18 which commands us, "Be filled with the Spirit." This can be likened to when we put our desired destination in our navigational app. Our prayer is stating our intention; that our desired destination for the day is to be a Spirit-filled sacredly flexible mom, following God."
2. We read His Word before we read our emails or begin texting. We offer our minds to Him so He can speak to us through the Bible. His Word is truth and reading it each morning keeps us on the road of truth. For instance, if we don't feel like forgiving someone, His Word keeps us on course; just as our navigational app keeps us on course. His voice speaks to us through Ephesians 4:32, "Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you." If we've been off course, steering in the direction of being unforgiving, we turn around and go in the right direction. This sacred flexibility will steer us to a better marriage. It will model God's grace to our children.
3. Our sacred flexibility continues during the day as we respond to God's voice commands; His navigational voice, "Discipline in love, not anger," (Ephesians 4:26) steers us in the right direction. It keeps us from a crash of wills. We stay sacredly flexible in God's hands when we face a difficulty with a child and turn to Him in prayer, listening for His guidance on how to handle our situation. James 4:8 "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you."

If we are unmarried, we must make up our minds to only date and marry someone who is in tune to God and sacredly flexible; whose desired destination is to serve and live for Him. Why? Because when two people marry, they become one. Your life and your children's lives are at stake. If God tells you not to marry someone, even though you are lonely and afraid of not finding another person, do not marry the wrong person. Many women have told me that they knew they shouldn't marry someone, but they did anyway.

The words "scared" and "sacred" are not to be confused. If you're a Christian, you may be *scared* about something, but the answer is to go to God and follow His divine voice. He is navigating you to abundant life. (John 10:10) His destination for you is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, and self-control. (Galatians 5:22-23)

**God doesn't promise that we won't have anxious moments when plans change. However, He has given believers the gift of His presence, the Helper, the Holy Spirit.** (John 14:16) Whether plans are changed due to another person's actions, sin, or an unstoppable force of nature, we can look to God. We can take our thoughts captive and submit them to Him. 2 Corinthians 10:5

Model sacred flexibility to your children so they will grow up to be sacredly flexible in God's hands.

## Mom Checkup

We haven't been left alone as we navigate through life. Prayer is a two-way street. We go to God, and He comes to us through the Scriptures and by confirming His will in our hearts. God doesn't ask us to be other people's puppets. He asks us to be His friends and to serve Him. (John 15:14) We can choose to practice sacred flexibility and experience His divine presence leading us in the midst of our days. (Romans 8:14, Galatians 5:25) Or we can stubbornly cross our arms and refuse. Which kind of mother have you been? Which kind of mother do you want to be?

1. What's your Plan B, C. OR Z?
2. How sacredly flexible are you? Do you talk to God about what's happening in you and your child's life? Do you ask Him to guide you, follow His promptings, and trust His sovereignty?
3. How might being more sacredly flexible and open to God's plans affect you and your children in a positive way?

WHAT GOD'S WORD IS SAYING TO ME: \_\_\_\_\_  
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HOW I CAN APPLY IT TO MY LIFE: \_\_\_\_\_  
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PRAY ABOUT IT: Father, thank You for Mary's example of being sacredly flexible in Your hands. Help me practice sacred flexibility so my children have the opportunity to see Your glory and grace. In Jesus' name, amen.

MEMORY VERSE: Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word. Luke 1:38

