

1. Isaiah 7:14 (is one of those watershed verses in the Bible--the prophecy about Christ's virgin birth--something quite impossible from a human standpoint but also of most importance to his story and our processing and understanding both his holiness and divinity. Now just imagine--knowing this prophecy in the abstract, but then one day you receive a visit from the angel Gabriel and all of a sudden the prophecy becomes personal. Well this did happen in Nazareth to a young woman named Mary and I think we are all acquainted with her story, but maybe we need to be more acquainted with her faith)
2. Mary's Faith: Believing the Impossible--Luke 1:26-56 (Incredibly Mary believed the angel--as Scripture attests--Against all logic; against all evidence--she believed. Of course, that was in her character as she found favor with God. But how? By reading her story, seeing her life and hearing her song--we can see how she was willing to believe the impossible. It took)
 - a. Humility
 - b. A sense of awe
 - c. Trust
 - d. Obedience (all of these are in sort of a symbiotic relationship with faith--cannot have one without the other. All of this open up hearts to faith--to God's working--to believing even the impossible and allowing God to accomplish his will within us. It did for Mary and it will for us as well.
3. (Jesus paid a nuanced testimony to Mary's faith in) Luke 11:27-28 (while at the same time encouraging us to have the exact same kind of obedient faith. Hearing the word of God from Gabriel, Mary obeyed in faith. For us hearing the word of God as revealed in Scripture and obeying it equals faith--faith that can even stand up against something as unbelievable as a virgin birth.)
4. (Remember) "For nothing is impossible with God."--Luke 1:37 (with God it is about what is possible; about overcoming even insurmountable obstacles; it is about building a boat when no one had seen rain or a flood; about an old man and barren woman giving birth to a nation; about a virgin birth and a resurrection; it is about taking the gospel to the world. Just check out **Hebrews 11** for more Mary stories. It is about the impossible made possible--but do we believe? Do we position ourselves as Mary did--having the kind of faith God can use to accomplish his will?)
5. "I am the Lord's servant. May it be to me as you have said."--Luke 1:38 (Now just imagine what God can accomplish in us now--imagine taking the abstract stories of Scripture and making them personal--of opening up ourselves to the endless possibilities of God's work within us--Do we have the kind of faith to welcome that and obey God when he calls?_
6. (One more verse) Ephesians 3:20-21