

1. Under what circumstances do you find the most difficulty in hearing from God?

2. Read Luke 1:26-38. Set the context here. Who are the major characters? What's the setting? Why is this important?

3. Read Luke 1:26. God *sends* an angel to Mary. How does he typically communicate with us today?

4. In what ways do we see God speaking into obscurity (1:26)? Humility (1:29)? Emptiness (1:27, 34, 36)? Cloudiness (1:29, 34)? Fear (1:30)? Which of these five areas presents your area of greatest struggle? What might God be inviting you to do to remove the barrier in this area so that you might hear him more clearly?

5. Read Luke 1:36-37. In what ways have you seen God's power revealed for which you can give him praise? How does remembering his power in those situations give you confidence about trusting him for your future?

6. Read Luke 1:28. How does the message from Gabriel to Mary indicate that she is being chosen not by her merit, but by the Lord's own grace?

7. Read Luke 1:38. How does Mary ultimately respond to the message she's been given? How is that paradigmatic for how we can respond?

8. Ask God to give you humility and faith as you hear his word and put it into practice this Christmas season!