



Introduction

IT ONLY TOOK ONE GIRL

Some people who pick up this book will probably think it is about Mary. Although it contains many insights into Mary's life, it is not really about Mary at all. This is a book about God and what He can do with one teenager fully committed to Him. Mary's life is merely used as a backdrop on which God's grace is brilliantly illuminated, despite waning human emotions and fears. This book highlights what happens when we let obedience rule our decisions and let God rule our lives.

God is looking for world changers. He found one in Mary; perhaps He will find one in you too. Every week I meet and receive e-mails from dozens of girls who are out there changing the world for Jesus Christ. Some of them don't even realize the impact they are having until it is pointed out to them.

Softly, and many times quietly, and almost always when people are not looking, these girls step forward and emerge from the shadows living lives that boldly point to Jesus. Their presence isn't even always noticed at first. They live lives that start as whispers and slowly grow into a loud roar. In this respect, they remind me of Mary.

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Every girl I meet is different—yet we all have similarities that unite us. We have characteristics that define us. And each and every one of us has the potential to change our world if we let God work through us the way He worked through Mary.

When presented with choices, Mary made the right ones. Hers is a story many of us know all too well. But often we overlook the details hidden in the pages of her life because we are busy seeing what we have always been taught to see. We overlook the fact that before Mary was a mother—perhaps the most well-known mother of all time—she was just a girl.

Mary was one teenager who revolutionized society. Had she lived in modern times, scholars say she wouldn't have even been old enough to have a driver's license. But God looked down from heaven and placed His favor on Mary. Before she probably even realized what had happened, her life was forever altered and she brought us the King of the world.

What an awesome story. Too bad for Hollywood, God beat them to the script. Lucky for Mary, God had all casting rights; otherwise she might have lost out to a glamour girl like Hilary Duff or one of the Olsen twins. Mary wasn't a beauty queen like Esther or a widow like Ruth. Some would probably even say Mary was just a small-town kid. There was nothing significant about her until the moment the angel of the Lord stepped on the scene.

Uninvited and unannounced, this angel came to inform Mary of the great call God had on her life. And

although I am no angel and I cannot give you any specifics, I'm here to tell you the same thing. God has plans for your life—big plans. You are called to be a world-changer, a girl who will make a difference for the kingdom of God.

Most of us, though, live like God is not calling and the world does not need changing. We believe the lie that it's too early to be used by God to make an impact. Because of this the world remains unchanged, and our lives become an endless cycle of going to school, doing homework, going to sports practice, going to youth group, eating junk food, and not getting enough sleep. Somewhere in the midst of living we lose sight of what we are really living for. Every now and then we all need a reminder that there is more to life than the world we live in; this book is such a reminder.

On an afternoon not that long ago, when I was going about the normal hustle and bustle of life, God took me to a story I knew well and He taught me to see it with different eyes. For the first time ever I didn't see Mary as someone who had it all figured out, or someone who was super spiritual.

The impact of her story didn't reside in Mary herself, but in the God who called her. It is the same with us. Because she was so much like us, there is a lot she can teach us. Yes, Mary had an incredible amount of faith—but it doesn't mean she never doubted or got confused.

Yes, Mary was blessed among women, as the Bible tells us in Luke—but that doesn't mean she never encountered

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disappointment or loneliness. Yes, Mary was loved and loved greatly—but that doesn't mean there weren't moments when she felt unloved. Mary had many moments like you and me where the path grew dim, life was hard, and she felt all alone. Yet God loved her and used her in mighty ways.

When Mary was born there was no earthquake, no lightning bolt, no angels blaring trumpets announcing that the world would one day be changed by this simple girl. She was from Nazareth. If there was a nowhere, Nazareth was the middle of it.

Nothing good ever came from Nazareth (John 1:45–46), at least not until God had His way in the life of one teenager who lived there. God delights in using uncommon heroes. In the end, it's never about the one who is called. It is about the One doing the calling. No matter what anyone tells you, it's not about you. It is about God—and He wants to use you to help get that message out.

Be part of something that will live longer than you ever will. Mary's impact was so great that the whole world still knows of her on a first-name basis over two thousand years later. Someone even played her in a box-office blockbuster (*The Passion of the Christ*) in 2004.

Although God called many great men of faith to incredible tasks in the past, there came a time when a man would not do. So ... God called a girl. And that girl changed the world. The same God is calling again, and this time He's calling *you*. Are you willing to step forward and answer that call?