



TASTE Reflection Questions

8 October 2026

Restored and Resilient

Mary Lenaburg

*Then I will rejoice in the Lord,
Exalt in God's Salvation. Psalm 35:9*



1. THE KITCHEN: Facing Our Struggles and Accepting God's Grace

- Mary spoke about using food and shopping to avoid painful feelings. What activities or distractions might you use to avoid facing difficult emotions?
- What makes it difficult to acknowledge our struggles and allow God to love us as we are?
- How can you become more aware of God's grace in the ordinary, messy moments of our lives?

2. THE BEDROOM: Healing Relationships Through Forgiveness

- Mary described forgiveness as a decision we must make repeatedly. Why is it sometimes difficult to forgive even after we have decided to do so?
- What does it mean to surrender painful memories to God rather than allow them to control our relationships?
- How can prayer, confession, and honest communication help restore relationships that have become strained?

3. THE ROOM DOWN THE HALL: Restoring Relationships Through Humility

- Mary's relationship with her son began to heal when she listened without defending herself. Why is it so difficult to hear someone else's pain without immediately explaining our own perspective?
- How might humility and a sincere apology change a strained relationship?
- Is there someone in your life with whom God may be inviting you to take a small step toward reconciliation?

4. THE LOCKED ROOM: Faith → Trust → Acceptance → Surrender → Peace and the Holy Spirit

- Mary described the progression from faith to trust, acceptance, surrender, and peace. Which step do you find most challenging, and why?
- How do you distinguish between accepting God's will and simply giving up?
- Which gift of the Holy Spirit do you most need right now to help you surrender something to God?

5. THE FRONT DOOR: Embracing God's New Purpose for Our Lives

- Mary discovered that her years of caregiving and suffering had prepared her for an unexpected ministry. How might God be using your past experiences to prepare you for something new?
- Have you ever felt that a particular season of your life or opportunity had passed? How does Mary's message challenge that belief?
- What is one small, courageous "yes" you could give God this week?

CLOSING REFLECTION: Mary reminds us that our lives are not finished stories, but houses still being restored by God. As we further reflect on this talk, consider: Which room of my life is God inviting me to open to Him, and what would it mean to trust Him with the key?

Mary Lenaburg invites us to imagine our lives as a house that God lovingly restores, one room at a time. Through personal stories of addiction, marriage struggles, parenting, grief, and new beginnings, she reminds us that God never sets us aside. His grace continues to heal, restore, and prepare us for new purposes, regardless of our age or circumstances.

1. THE KITCHEN: Facing Our Struggles and Accepting God's Grace

- The kitchen represents the places where we seek comfort, but sometimes hide our pain.
- Mary shared her struggles with food addiction and compulsive shopping, describing how she used them to numb feelings of inadequacy, loneliness, and grief.
- We may similarly turn to food, alcohol, social media, or constant busyness to avoid confronting our deepest hurts.
- God's grace meets us in our brokenness. We do not have to become perfect before allowing Him to love and heal us.
- Restoration begins when we stop pretending everything is fine, acknowledge our struggles, and invite God into them.

2. THE BEDROOM: Healing Relationships Through Forgiveness

- Mary described how pornography addiction and emotional distance nearly destroyed her marriage.
- Through counseling, prayer, confession, and a deeper understanding of the sacrament of marriage, Mary and her husband began rebuilding their relationship.
- A powerful moment of mutual forgiveness led them to renew their marriage vows privately during a retreat.
- Forgiveness is not a one-time event, but a continuing choice to release resentment rather than repeatedly reopen old wounds.
- God can redeem painful memories and transform our struggles into opportunities to help others. Mary's wounded marriage eventually became part of her ministry.

3. THE ROOM DOWN THE HALL: Restoring Relationships Through Humility

- Mary shared a painful counseling session in which her son revealed that he had felt neglected because of the overwhelming attention required by his disabled sister.
- Rather than defending herself, Mary listened, acknowledged his pain, and asked for forgiveness.
- Healing sometimes requires setting aside our own version of events and genuinely hearing another person's experience.
- Humility and vulnerability can reopen relationships that seem permanently closed and damaged.
- A sincere apology, without excuses or qualifications, may be the first step toward reconciliation with a child, spouse, relative, or friend.

4. THE LOCKED ROOM: Acceptance, Surrender, and the Holy Spirit

- The locked room represents buried dreams, unresolved grief, disappointments, and circumstances we struggle to control.
- Mary recalled taking her profoundly disabled daughter, Courtney, to Lourdes, praying for physical healing. Instead, she experienced an unexpected message: acceptance.
- She eventually understood that God had answered her prayers differently than she expected, teaching her to trust His plan.
- Mary described a spiritual progression: Faith → Trust → Acceptance → Surrender → Peace
- Acceptance does not mean that suffering disappears. It means trusting God enough to surrender what we cannot control.
- The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, received in Baptism and strengthened in Confirmation, help us find the wisdom, courage, and strength to surrender our struggles and respond to God's calling.

5. THE FRONT DOOR: Embracing God's New Purpose for Our Lives

- Following Courtney's death in 2014, Mary believed that her own life's purpose had ended.
- Gradually, accompanying other grieving families led to a speaking ministry that she had never imagined.
- Her years of caregiving, suffering, & personal struggles had prepared her to encourage and minister to others.
- God provides people who accompany us, support us in prayer, and remind us that we belong to Him.
- There is no age limit or expiration date on God's grace. Every stage of life offers new opportunities to love, serve, and grow.
- Restoration happens gradually, through small acts of faith and courageous decisions to begin again.

MARY'S CENTRAL MESSAGE: God is not demolishing our lives, but lovingly restoring them. Nothing is wasted, and no one is too old, too broken, or too late to respond to His calling.