

9 Thanking God Mary

1 Luke 1:46-55

In a culture where the individual's wants and needs come first, it is easy for Christians to see their rights and freedoms as more important than service and responsibility; to esteem achievement more than obedience and to see being first as more godly than being last. We come to expect God's blessings because we think we merit them.

GROUP DISCUSSION. When do you find it difficult to thank God, and when do you find it easy?

PERSONAL REFLECTION. Spend some time thinking about what or who you thank God for when you pray, and what or who you fail to thank him for.

Mary had few rights-and even fewer privileges-in her culture and her religion. She was probably the last person to expect to be the mother of the Christ. She does not applaud God for choosing her or demand a reward for taking the job on. Instead she prays, conscious of both her God-given significance and the privilege of her calling to be Jesus' mother. *Read Luke 1:46-55.*

1. Based on what Mary prayed, what do you discover about what the God she knew was like?

How did Mary think God saw her?

2. How is your relationship with God similar to or different from Mary's?

3. Verses 46-47 tell us that Mary glorified the Lord and rejoiced in her Savior. In what ways can we do this in our prayers?

4. Verse 50 tells us that God's mercy extends to those who fear him. What does it mean to fear God?

How does your fear of God affect the way that you pray to him?

5. Mary thanked God for his choice of her as Christ's mother. However, she also refers to many other actions of God in her prayer. What does this show us about her understanding of God?

6. Imagine you have a Christian friend who feels that God is remote from his or her situation and has no sense of God's presence in his or her daily life. Consequently, prayer is difficult. How can you help that person to pray?

7. Verses 51-53 contain both warnings and encouragements. What are they?

Which of these do you need to hear and apply to your life?

8. In verses 54-55, Mary speaks of God acting consistently with what he had previously promised. How can the ways that God has fulfilled his past promises (as recorded in the Bible) help us give thanks?

9. Would you like praising and thanking God to play a greater or lesser part in your prayer life than they do already? Explain your answer.

Ask God to help you realize the extent of his love for you and to help you to live a life which more freely expresses your love in words, attitudes and deeds.

Now or Later

Make a list of some things that God has done in biblical history, as well as things that have happened in the last week, that you want to thank him for. Then spend some time in thanksgiving.