

Not First #9:
PRAYER

Word

Scripture Reference

Luke 1:46-56

Discussion Questions

1. Share about a time when you felt blessed after sincerely praying.
2. Prayer is the most talked-about, least-done thing in the Christian life. If we look at how we pray and the content of our prayers, it mostly centers on me, myself, and I. Our self-centered prayer requests reveal our shallow view of God and His redemptive purpose in this world. If we are honest, our prayers show that we see God mostly as Someone who provides our wants and needs, Someone to alleviate our sufferings. This is not the God presented in the Bible. While the Bible indeed says to “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God...” (Philippians 4:6,7), there is so much more to pray for other than supplication. How often do you pray? Is your daily prayer focused only on your needs, your family, your health, your convenience, etc.? How would praying for someone other than yourself change your mindset about prayers? How could you be an effective prayer warrior for others?
3. Read Luke 1:46-56. Mary just heard from the angel Gabriel that she would be with child—the Savior. To encourage her, she was told that her cousin Elizabeth, who was advanced in age, was six-months pregnant. Mary went to visit her, and Elizabeth, who knew that Mary was with child, assured Mary that what the Lord had said to her would be fulfilled. Mary was so overwhelmed that among all of the women in all generations, she was the one

chosen to be the mother of Jesus. She responded with a prayer to God. Mary’s prayer shows us six areas (other than supplication) that we can pray about daily that can transform our self-centered mindset and help us cultivate a healthy prayer life:

- a. **A word of our adoration to God (v. 46).** Mary started her prayer by praising God. When she first heard about the news, she had some doubts—how could she be with a child when she was a virgin?—but then felt truly overwhelmed and blessed that what the angel told her has come to fruition. Discuss why adoration of who God is, which is a very important part of prayer, oftentimes being neglected? In your prayer life, how do you express your adoration to God. Why is He worthy to be worshipped and adored? What are the numerous characteristics of God that you can mention in your adoration and worship of Him.
- b. **A reminder of our salvation (v. 47).** By referring to God as her Savior, Mary personally recognized that she was a sinner who needed a Savior. Discuss why the doctrine that Mary is without sin wrong. Why do you need a Savior? Why is it so important to remember that you needed to be cleansed from your sin? How are you reminded in your life that Jesus is your Savior? How do you express your joy and thankfulness that you have a Savior only in Jesus Christ?
- c. **The recognition of God’s grace (v. 48).** Mary recognized the unworthiness of her life, calling herself a maidservant. Because of God’s grace she was chosen to be the mother of Jesus, and therefore, she considered herself blessed. What does “blessed” mean? What is the connection of being blessed with God’s grace? Discuss why you would call Mary a woman blessed by God. Share how you feel blessed because of God’s grace in your life.
- d. **An acknowledgement of God’s character (v. 49).** Mary recognized God’s characteristics in her prayer. She affirmed that He is mighty, someone who could do the impossible, the God who is holy. It is not for God to lower His standard of holiness to our level, but for us to reach His level of holiness. You should adjust to God and not the other way around. How do you recognize God’s holiness and wisdom in your life?

How should it move you to pray for His will to be done rather than yours and have an effective prayer and a changed life as a result?

- e. ***A resolve in our actions (v. 50-53).*** In her prayer, Mary said that God's mercy extends to those who fear Him, from generation to generation. A fear of God means honoring and having a healthy respect for the Lord. Mary further said that God doesn't honor the proud and will humble the prideful. Why do you think God hates the proud? How does God lift up the humble? In your personal life, how do you respect and honor the Lord?
- f. ***Remembering God's promises (v. 54-55).*** Mary mentioned how God has fulfilled His promise to Abraham and his descendants, that although the nation of Israel disobeyed him, His mercy was still upon them, and the Messiah was born. Have you ever reminded God of His promises? How does claiming God's promises in Scripture work? What promise of God can you claim right now?

Walk

Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, were together for three months encouraging each other. Mary returned to Nazareth with so much joy, even knowing she has to deal with scandal. What did you learn from her prayer life? Are you intentional in praying for others instead of just praying for your needs?

Worship & Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for reminding me through Mary's prayer how I should pray. I must admit that most of the time, I do pray for my own needs and for those who are close to me. Help me to be intentional in praying for others as well, that my prayer life will reflect how I adore You for Who you are. Thank You for being almighty and holy among the many things about who You are. May you help me to resolve what actions I should do for You for Your glory. Thank You for the many promises I can claim from Your Word. Please help my prayer life to be effective and life-changing. In Jesus' name. Amen.