

WEEK 6, DAY 1

MIGHTY WOMEN OF GOD



SIGHTSEEING, PART 1

During our journey we have spent much time in the first chapter of Luke. Drawing from this Gospel I'd like to share what I imagined took place on that first night at the home of Elizabeth. I pray with all of my heart that it will give you a better understanding of how important women friendships are in the Body of Christ. I'll begin with Mary and later we will hear from Elizabeth.

Climbing into bed, Mary pondered all that had happened in such a short time. During Gabriel's visit, she had longed to ask him more. But, his presence didn't invite more questions—just more faith. When the angel left, she knew what she must do—go to Elizabeth. It was her destiny. Why else would the angel mention her name and that she too was expecting a miracle child? Uncertain of when she would conceive, her instincts told her that it would be soon. She realized she must hurry.

As she journeyed to Elizabeth's, her jumbled thoughts were a constant companion. What would Elizabeth say? Would she believe her? Although she repeatedly reminded herself of Gabriel's words to "fear not," it was difficult. It had taken great faith to make this journey. While she had received the highest honor possible for a woman, her future was uncertain. Yes, there was only one place to go. Who else could possibly understand her circumstances? As she headed to the Judean hills she clung to Gabriel's words, "Your relative Elizabeth is in her sixth month."

Nothing had prepared her for Elizabeth's reaction. Just like Gabriel's visit, another defining moment was engraved upon her heart forever. With Elizabeth's prophetic words she knew that the countdown to the Messiah had begun. Her body would be the dwelling place of God's Son. Suddenly her fear vanished. With the long journey behind her, she pulled the blanket closer and smiled.

For the first time since the angel's appearance, she allowed the honor of being the mother of the Messiah to flood her soul. The fact that God had provided Elizabeth to share this experience with her was another manifestation of His great love. Elated and exhausted, she finally drifted into sleep.

Conversations with Modern-Day “Marys”

Perhaps you are a young woman, and life has suddenly placed you in an overwhelming situation, and you do not know where to turn. This week, we are going to dive into God’s Word and learn how God provides for His people. Yes, dear one, God has an Elizabeth for you.

The challenge we have is this: do we have the faith to reach out to *our* Elizabeth? And do we have a teachable heart to receive her instruction and advice?

For each season of life (from youth to midlife and beyond), we need women of faith to nurture and mentor us. Mentors are mature women of faith who are farther down the road of life than we are. They are where we hope to be someday, grounded in faith, established in God’s Word, and enjoying life as a believer. These precious women have experienced life and developed a strong faith in God. Now they are equipped to help others navigate successfully through the difficult places of life.

At this young age, Mary had few life experiences that prepared her to be the mother of God’s Son and a wife to Joseph. However, there was someone who had a lifetime of experiences—her elderly relative Elizabeth.

Open again turn to Luke 1:56. How long did Mary stay with Elizabeth?

Mary’s apprenticeship with Elizabeth would not be brief. Life lessons seldom are. During our study, have you wondered what would have happened if Mary had not gone to Elizabeth’s? Briefly write your thoughts.

Today, we are going to do a little more sightseeing before we continue our conversation.

SIGHTSEEING, PART 2

Now, let’s imagine the scene from Elizabeth’s perspective. Jot your own thoughts in the margin.

Closing the door to the guest room, Elizabeth was too overcome with emotion to sleep. Even though the baby in her womb had finally settled down, she could not! The fact that the mother of the Messiah was sound asleep in the next room still amazed her. She was so consumed with joy that she needed time with her Lord. Once again she spoke the words, “Lord, why am I so favored to have the mother of my Lord come to me?”

Her joy was so much sweeter because of the sorrow she had known. In this sacred moment, her life came full circle. Although she didn’t know why, she realized that her painful past would prepare Mary for her unknown future. How like God to use heartache for His glory!

Suddenly she laughed aloud, thinking how Jehovah God had given her a double portion of blessings! *Not only do I have a son in my womb, but for now, a daughter in my home! For as long as the Lord allows, I will treat her like the daughter I never had, the one my heart longed for.*

Elizabeth thought about the wonderful time they would have and made a mental list of all the things she would share with Mary. She would eagerly prepare this young girl for womanhood.

Conversations with Modern-Day “Elizabeths”

I can relate to Elizabeth. I did not have the joy of having a daughter born to me, but I have been privileged to have many spiritual daughters, born out of my heart. They come from every season of life. Yes, my spiritual family is quite large. How about yours? Are you willing to enlarge your family and open your arms to the Marys that God brings your way? Are you willing to equip them to bring Christ into their world?

The call on Elizabeth’s life is also our calling, and it is *sacred*. Are you prepared? Do you feel intimidated or inadequate?

Certainly, Elizabeth felt inadequate to mentor the mother of God’s Son, but, fortunately for Mary, she didn’t let any lack of knowledge stop her. She shared what she knew. Her faith, her love of God, her home, her experience in marriage, her struggles with being the object of scorn and gossip, and the joy that comes from a life of obedience. Now, carefully ponder this: what can you share with the Marys in your world? This week you will discover how you can reach and nurture the younger women God places in your lives. But first, here are a few final thoughts about Mary’s time with Elizabeth.

During the next three months, both teacher and student would bond in ways that only women understand. Mary was exactly who Elizabeth needed—she

provided youthful energy, companionship, and hope. Elizabeth provided what Mary needed—wisdom, solidity, and hope. In preparing for motherhood, they also prepared for their Messiah.

With holy reverence, they understood that, like Queen Esther, they too were chosen to be a part of God's plan of redemption. What they shared was sacred and planned long before time began. While they could not comprehend it, they chose to cherish it. They were two women who were called by God, for such a time as this. It was friendship, and it was God's idea.



TRAVEL DIARY

Looking back over Elizabeth's life, and drawing from what we have learned, list some things that prepared Elizabeth to be the perfect mentor for Mary:

What qualities might have made Mary a perfect young companion for Elizabeth?

To whom might you be an Elizabeth?

To whom might you be a Mary?

In this study, we view “older” women as Elizabeth and “younger” women as Mary. While physical age certainly applies, it is possible for a younger woman to be “older” in the faith, based on her maturity in Christ. With that in mind, do you think it is possible for a young woman to be an “Elizabeth” or an older woman to be a “Mary?” Write your thoughts here.

 TRAVELING MERCIES

*Dear Father,
I praise Your holy name for the older women who have invested in me throughout my life. Lord, help me to be a woman who never stops learning. Thank You, Father, for the younger women who bring energy and a fresh perspective on life, serving as a reminder that the cycle of life continues. Amen.*

 SNAPSHOT

Mentor: someone whose hindsight can become your foresight.