

Discussion Guide: Giving Mary her due

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Acts 2:42 (NIV)

December 21, 2003: Kimber discussed today what he called “reactionary theology”, in which one group develops a particular view on a theological subject in reaction to another’s view. Specifically he said that many Protestants have a reactionary view of Mary due to the view that many Catholics hold of her. “Let’s emphasize what the Bible emphasizes it, the way the Bible emphasizes it.”

Catholic theology includes: 1) Mary’s perpetual virginity 2) Her immaculate conception [i.e. that she herself was conceived sinless] and 3) Her bodily assumption into heaven—she did not die. These teachings are not biblical.

Some Protestants: 1) Ignore Mary 2) Over emphasize her sinfulness, without also commenting on her faith 3) Deny that there was anything special about Mary or her position/role.

Catholic view	Truth	“Reactionary” view
Mary is to be prayed to	Mary is a wonderful example of living by faith. Don’t ignore her, but don’t pray to her either!	Mary is to be ignored
Mary’s position now places her as co-redemptor and co-mediator with Christ	Mary’s position was unique—she alone bore the promised seed. This, however, does not place her in the current position of mediator. That position belongs only to Jesus	Mary’s position and role was not special
Mary never sinned	Mary lived by faith at the beginning [Luke 1:46-55]; stumbled periodically [John 2; and Mark 3:21 & 31], but recovered strong [at the cross, and Acts 1:14]—we can learn from her, but she certainly wasn’t sinless!	Mary’s life is not an example we should follow

Kim also discussed the role of women in the church and in God’s redemptive plan. He referred to I Timothy 2:15 and Matthew 1 [genealogy]

Questions:

- 1) What can we learn from Mary’s life?
- 2) List the good examples of living by faith from Mary’s life.—have someone read those passages.
- 3) List the times where she didn’t live by faith—have someone read those passages.
- 4) Have the group discuss what the Bible says about praying to the departed, such as Mary, or other saints.