

Module Seven: Superstition and Mary- Talk Outline

1 Superstition and Fatalism

- 1 Powerful supernatural forces exist
- 2 They exert influence over us
- 3 We are not in control over them
- 4 We *can* gain control using the right practices

3 Mary is sinless- the "all holy" (*Panayia* in Greek)

4 Mary is the greatest Saint = "become god" = achieved *theiosis*

5 From heaven Mary can distribute grace to the Church

2 Devotion to Mary

1 Mary's co-operation brought salvation

2 Mary is *Theotokos*=Mother of God

3 Our Response

One Mediator: 1 Timothy 2:5

Ask: How Can we Honour Mary?

Module Seven: Superstition and Mary- Group Time



The Orthodox View of Superstition and Mary	What do our Orthodox friends need to hear?
1 Powerful supernatural forces influence our lives We are not in control over them but can be using the right practices 2 Mary is highly honoured. She is seen as the one who sympathises with us and can be approached for help or forgiveness.	Discuss what you would say to them

Below are two Bible studies on Superstition and Mary. As you may only have time for one, you could split into two groups looking at each passage and report your findings back to the larger group.

1 Freedom from Superstition and Fate

Read Colossians 2:13-15

1 What is the debt we have towards God?

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2 How has Jesus "erased this debt" for us?

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3 What is the result for us according to v13?

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4 Who is in control of life and death?

How is this a victory over all other powers (v15)?

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5 How does God being in control help us not fear? (see also Rom 8:38-39)

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2 Honouring Mary

As those who love and respect Mary we will want to hear and honour her words.

Read Luke 1:46-49

1 Mary is right in v48 to consider herself humble. She is one of the powerless in the world: a young unmarried girl from a backwater of Judea, under foreign occupation, without wealth or position.

Yet Mary says future generations will call her blessed (v48). Why?

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2 Who is Mary relying on to make her right with God (v47)?

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Read what Mary says about trusting God in **Luke 1:50-55**

3 Does God give people what they deserve or what they need? see vv50, 54

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4 What does Mary remember that causes her to trust that God will save his people?

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5 What is Mary's attitude towards God's promises in the Bible?

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If we honour Mary, we need to imitate:

her conviction that God saves people as a gift,
not because they deserve it (not even her)
her complete trust in God's promises in the Bible

3 Prayer

Pray that your Orthodox friends might know the freedom from superstition and fatalism that comes in knowing Christ. Pray that they might have the peace of recognising Christ as the only mediator they need to grant them complete forgiveness and access to pray directly to our Heavenly Father.

Before Session Eight

The study questions above can be used with your Orthodox friends to discuss Superstition and how they can honour Mary.

You can also read and share with your friends Chapter 4 "The Fates, Luck and The Evil Eye" and Chapter 5 "Honouring Mary" in *Certainty for Life: Questions, Answers and Discussion Guide*.

Module Seven: Superstition and Mary- Leader's Notes

The Orthodox View of Superstition and Mary	What do our Orthodox friends need to hear?
1 Powerful supernatural forces influence our lives We are not in control over them but can be using the right practices 2 Mary is highly honoured. She is seen as the one who sympathises with us and can be approached for help or forgiveness.	Discuss what you would say to them 1 God declared victory over all supernatural powers at the cross 2 The universe is under God's control so not random 3 God's people share in this victory and will be protected and richly blessed by God now and forever 4 Jesus is the one human mediator between us and God. He is the source of all grace and forgiveness and has given us access to pray directly to the Father

Below are two Bible studies on Superstition and Mary. As you may only have time for one, you could split into two groups looking at each passage and report your findings back to the larger group.

1 Freedom from Superstition and Fate

Read Colossians 2:13-15

1 What is the debt we have towards God?

it's our catalogue of sin, our failure to meet up with God's standards
it is conclusive evidence of our guilt before God and that we deserve his condemnation and death.

2 How has Jesus "erased this debt" for us?

v14- by dying the death we deserve in our place

3 What is the result for us according to v13?

life in Christ
all sins forgiven

4 Who is in control of life and death?

How is this a victory over all other powers (v15)?

We are not in control

God is in control- rescuing people from death by making them alive in Christ
the victory over other powers is that God demonstrates he has power over the ultimate enemy death and therefore he controls all things
the logic is that as the ultimate weapon is removed by God, he control evil powers completely
Satan no longer can hold the threat of death over God's people

5 How does God being in control help us not fear? (see also Rom 8:38-39)

Those in Christ are assured that, even in death, God will not abandon them
not even supernatural powers can interrupt our relationship with God

2 Honouring Mary

As those who love and respect Mary we will want to hear and honour her words.

Read Luke 1:46-49

1 Mary is right in v48 to consider herself humble. She is one of the powerless in the world: a young unmarried girl from a backwater of Judea, under foreign occupation, without wealth or position.

Yet Mary says future generations will call her blessed (v48). Why?

not because of what she has done
instead- v49- because God has done great things for her
she has done nothing to deserve it

2 Who is Mary relying on to make her right with God (v47)?

Mary rejoices in God her saviour for she trusts in him for salvation rather than in herself

She makes no claims to having earned or deserved forgiveness

Read what Mary says about trusting God in **Luke 1:50–55**

3 Does God give people what they deserve or what they need? see vv50, 54

the lowly and the hungry lack the power to provide for themselves
but God provides them – out of his mercy– as a gift, rather than what they deserve

4 What does Mary remember that causes her to trust that God will save his people?

Mary recalls how God has treated his people throughout Biblical history
In particular she remembers God's promise to Abraham: that through his descendants, the Israelites, God would bless the world
also his continually merciful character (v50)

5 What is Mary's attitude towards God's promises in the Bible?

Mary trusts that what God says in the Bible is true

If we honour Mary, we need to imitate:

her conviction that God saves people as a gift,
not because they deserve it (not even her)
her complete trust in God's promises in the Bible

3 Prayer

Pray that your Orthodox friends might know the freedom from superstition and fatalism that comes in knowing Christ. Pray that they might have the peace of recognising Christ as the only mediator they need to grant them complete forgiveness and access to pray directly to our Heavenly Father.

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