

Groups

Women of the Bible

Overview: This group is designed for a 10 week semester. Summer groups can pick specific women to fit into the 6 week semester.

Week 1: Esther – Courage & Purpose

Scripture: Esther 4:14 (NIV) states: "For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will come to the Jews from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to the royal position for such a time as this?"

Theme: God places us in specific roles for a divine purpose.

Summary:

Esther was a young Jewish woman who rose to become queen of Persia at a time when her people were at risk of annihilation. Though she initially concealed her identity, Esther's journey led her to a critical moment where silence meant death for her people. Her cousin Mordecai's famous words—"Who knows if you were made queen for such a time as this?" (Esther 4:14)—shifted Esther from passive beauty queen to brave intercessor.

Her story reveals the importance of divine positioning. Esther didn't seek influence, but she stewarded it when it mattered. Her ability to discern the right time to act, to fast and pray before approaching the king, and to use wisdom in how she revealed Haman's plot shows us that courage is not rash but rooted in faith. She balanced boldness with strategy.

From Esther, we learn that courage often means taking risks for the sake of others. It means choosing purpose over comfort. She teaches us that fear is natural, but faith propels us to act despite it. Esther models that sometimes, fulfilling your calling may mean being the only one willing to speak up when it's dangerous to do so.

As we reflect on her life, we are reminded that God orchestrates every season for a reason. Our careers, relationships, and environments may be the very platforms God wants to use for kingdom impact. Like Esther, we must ask: “Why am I here, now?” Her story compels us to seek God's voice for the courage to step into our divine assignment.

Discussion Questions

1. What stands out to you about Esther’s journey from orphan to queen?
2. How does Esther’s story challenge your understanding of courage?
3. Have you ever felt that you were in a position “for such a time as this”? How did you respond?
4. What fears might prevent someone from stepping into their calling, and how can faith overcome them?
5. How did Esther use prayer and fasting before taking action? What can we learn from that?
6. Where has God placed you right now that might be part of His bigger plan?
7. How can you practically grow in courage this week—at work, in relationships, or in ministry?

WEEK 2: Ruth – Loyalty & Redemption

Scripture: Ruth 1:16-17 (NIV) states: ¹⁶But Ruth replied, “Don’t urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. ¹⁷Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the LORD deal with me, be it ever so severely, if even death separates you and me.”

Theme: Faithfulness leads to favor and legacy.

Summary:

Ruth’s story begins with loss but is redeemed through loyalty. After the death of her husband, Ruth made a life-altering decision to stay with her mother-in-law Naomi. Her declaration, “Where you go, I will go... your God will be my God,” was an act of faith and allegiance not only to Naomi but also to the God of Israel. In a time when security

depended heavily on a male protector, Ruth chose covenant loyalty over personal comfort.

In Bethlehem, Ruth humbly gleaned in the fields to provide for Naomi, which led to her providential meeting with Boaz. Her character and consistent faithfulness won Boaz's favor, and he fulfilled the role of kinsman-redeemer. Their marriage not only restored Ruth's future but also placed her in the genealogy of Jesus Christ.

Ruth teaches us that when we honor others and walk in loyalty, God writes us into His larger redemptive story. Faithfulness in the ordinary is often the soil where God's favor grows. Her story reminds us that no one is too far outside God's plan to be used for something extraordinary.

From Ruth, we learn to be faithful, even when the outcome is unclear. Her life invites us to trust God with our decisions and to remain loyal in relationships, believing that He can redeem even the most broken seasons.

Discussion Questions:

1. What does Ruth's loyalty to Naomi teach us about covenant relationships?
2. How did Ruth's humility impact her journey?
3. What can we learn from Boaz's response to Ruth?
4. How does Ruth's story reflect God's redemptive power?
5. In what areas of life is God asking you to be faithful right now?
6. How have you seen loyalty honored in your own life?
7. What does it mean to be written into God's story?

WEEK 3: Mary (Mother of Jesus) – Obedience & Trust

Scripture: Luke 1:38 (NIV) states: ³⁸ "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

Theme: Radical obedience opens the door to divine purpose.

Summary:

Mary was a young, likely teenage girl when the angel Gabriel appeared to her with a message that would alter history: she would give birth to the Son of God. Her response, "I am the Lord's servant... may your word to me be fulfilled," displays total submission and trust in God's plan despite the social risks and personal cost.

Mary could have focused on the scandal, the questions, or the uncertainty ahead. But instead, she chose surrender. This type of obedience flows not from obligation but from a deep trust in God's character. Her faith didn't require full understanding; it only required willingness.

Throughout Jesus' life, Mary remained faithful—present at His birth, during His ministry, and even at the cross. She exemplifies how obedience to God isn't a one-time event but a lifelong posture of surrender. Her Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55) reveals a heart that glorifies God even in unknowns.

Mary's life teaches us that trust and obedience go hand in hand. Saying yes to God may invite hardship, but it also opens the door to a greater purpose than we can imagine. Her story encourages us to trust even when we don't understand.

Discussion Questions:

1. What made Mary's obedience so radical for her time?
2. How do you respond when God asks you to do something uncomfortable?
3. In what ways did Mary's faith sustain her through uncertainty?
4. What does a surrendered heart look like today?
5. How does Mary's example challenge our view of obedience?
6. Have you ever had a moment of obedience that changed your life?
7. How can we cultivate deeper trust in God?

WEEK 4: Deborah – Leadership & Wisdom

Scripture: Judges 4: 8-9 (NIV) states: ⁸Barak said to her, "If you go with me, I will go; but if you don't go with me, I won't go." ⁹"Certainly I will go with you," said Deborah. "But because of the course you are taking, the honor will not be yours, for the LORD will deliver Sisera into the hands of a woman." So Deborah went with Barak to Kedesh.

Theme: Godly leadership comes from divine confidence and spiritual insight.

Summary:

Deborah was a prophetess and judge during a time when Israel was under oppression. She led with boldness and spiritual discernment, offering counsel under the palm tree and commanding respect from the nation. Unlike many leaders, her authority came not from military strength but from her connection to God.

When Barak hesitated to go into battle, Deborah stepped up. She didn't diminish his role but encouraged him to act in obedience to God. Her courage and wisdom led Israel to victory and peace for 40 years. The Song of Deborah in Judges 5 celebrates not just her leadership, but her worship and gratitude to God.

Deborah's story breaks cultural molds. She was a woman leading in a man's world, but her authority was never questioned because it was evident that God was with her. She led with humility, clarity, and strength—a combination every leader should strive for.

Deborah teaches us that leadership is about serving others, hearing from God, and being willing to act when others won't. Her life invites both men and women to lead boldly when God calls.

Discussion Questions:

1. What made Deborah's leadership effective?
 2. How did she balance strength and humility?
 3. Why do you think Barak insisted Deborah come with him?
 4. What role does worship play in leadership?
 5. How can you discern if God is calling you to lead?
 6. What fears hold people back from stepping into leadership?
 7. Where is God calling you to lead with courage?
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WEEK 5: Hannah – Prayer & Surrender

Scripture: 1 Samuel 1:10-11 (NIV) states: ¹⁰In her deep anguish Hannah prayed to the LORD, weeping bitterly. ¹¹And she made a vow, saying, "LORD Almighty, if you will

only look on your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the LORD for all the days of his life, and no razor will ever be used on his head."

Theme: Surrendered prayer births breakthrough.

Summary:

Hannah was a woman of sorrow and longing. In her pain over infertility, she turned to the Lord with a prayer of raw vulnerability and deep faith. She didn't just ask—she vowed that if God gave her a son, she would give him back to the Lord. This act of surrender reveals the kind of heart God honors.

God answered her prayer with Samuel, and true to her word, Hannah brought him to the temple to be raised in service to God. Her willingness to release what she longed for most is a striking example of faith. Hannah's story didn't end with answered prayer—it led to national transformation through Samuel's leadership.

Her response to God's provision was worship, not possession. Her prayer in 1 Samuel 2 shows her spiritual maturity and understanding of God's sovereignty. She teaches us to bring our pain to God, surrender our dreams, and trust Him with the outcome.

Hannah encourages us to pray bold, surrendered prayers. Her life shows that God hears the cries of the brokenhearted and uses surrendered people for His glory.

Discussion Questions:

1. How does Hannah's prayer reflect both desperation and faith?
 2. What does it mean to surrender something precious to God?
 3. Why is it significant that Hannah worshipped after giving Samuel away?
 4. How has God responded to your honest prayers?
 5. In what ways can prayer be an act of surrender?
 6. How do we know when it's time to release something to God?
 7. What breakthrough are you believing for?
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WEEK 6: Mary Magdalene – Transformation & Devotion

Scripture: John 20:11-18 (NIV) states: ¹¹ Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb ¹² and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. ¹³ They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?" "They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him." ¹⁴ At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. ¹⁵ He asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?" Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him." ¹⁶ Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means "Teacher"). ¹⁷ Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" ¹⁸ Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her.

Theme: A transformed life leads to a life of intimate devotion.

Summary:

Mary Magdalene was once tormented by seven demons, but after her encounter with Jesus, she became one of His most faithful followers. She witnessed His miracles, stood near the cross, and was the first to see Him after the resurrection. Her past did not disqualify her from playing a pivotal role in the gospel story.

Her devotion is seen in her persistence. Even after Jesus' death, she stayed near His tomb, grieving and seeking. Jesus honored her loyalty by revealing Himself to her first and calling her by name—a powerful moment that validated her identity and her place in His mission.

Mary's life reminds us that no past is too dark for Jesus to redeem. Her transformation became her testimony, and her love for Jesus drove her to be near Him no matter the cost. She didn't let shame keep her away; instead, she pressed in with devotion.

From Mary Magdalene, we learn that deep devotion comes from deep gratitude. Her life is a model of what it looks like to follow Jesus closely, to weep in His presence, and to respond joyfully when He calls our name.

Discussion Questions:

1. What does Mary's transformation tell us about Jesus' power?
 2. Why is it important that Jesus appeared to her first after the resurrection?
 3. How did Mary show her devotion to Jesus?
 4. What past labels do you need to let go of?
 5. How does gratitude fuel your relationship with God?
 6. Have you ever had a moment where you felt Jesus call your name?
 7. What does a life of worship look like for you today?
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WEEK 7: Abigail – Discernment & Peacemaking

Scripture: 1 Samuel 25: 14-19 (NIV) states: ¹⁴One of the servants told Abigail, Nabal's wife, "David sent messengers from the wilderness to give our master his greetings, but he hurled insults at them. ¹⁵Yet these men were very good to us. They did not mistreat us, and the whole time we were out in the fields near them nothing was missing. ¹⁶Night and day they were a wall around us the whole time we were herding our sheep near them. ¹⁷Now think it over and see what you can do, because disaster is hanging over our master and his whole household. He is such a wicked man that no one can talk to him." ¹⁸Abigail acted quickly. She took two hundred loaves of bread, two skins of wine, five dressed sheep, five seahs^{ba} of roasted grain, a hundred cakes of raisins and two hundred cakes of pressed figs, and loaded them on donkeys. ¹⁹Then she told her servants, "Go on ahead; I'll follow you." But she did not tell her husband Nabal.

Theme: Wise and humble responses can bring peace and protection.

Summary:

Abigail was married to a wealthy but foolish man named Nabal. When David sought kindness from Nabal and was met with insult, he prepared to retaliate in anger. Abigail intervened with discernment and humility. She quickly gathered provisions, approached David with respect, and persuaded him to reconsider, effectively preventing bloodshed and keeping David from acting rashly.

Her boldness and tact did not come from a position of power, but from wisdom rooted in righteousness. She honored both God and David while honestly acknowledging her husband's folly. Abigail wasn't passive—she was active in diffusing a volatile situation, showing that peacemaking often requires courage and clarity.

David praised Abigail for her intervention, recognizing that God had used her to protect him from guilt. Later, after Nabal's death, David honored her again by asking her to become his wife. Her story is a reminder that a soft answer truly can turn away wrath (Proverbs 15:1).

From Abigail, we learn that peacemaking is not weakness—it's Spirit-led wisdom in action. Her life teaches us how to respond in tense moments with truth, grace, and courage, trusting that God honors those who pursue peace.

Discussion Questions:

1. What stands out to you about Abigail's response to conflict?
2. How did her humility and discernment change David's course of action?
3. What does this story teach us about the power of words?
4. Have you ever been in a situation where your response prevented conflict?
5. What does it mean to be a peacemaker in your family, church, or workplace?
6. How can you grow in discernment like Abigail?
7. Where might God be calling you to step into a peacemaking role?

WEEK 8: The Samaritan Woman – Evangelism & Grace

Scripture: Read John 4:1–42, John 4: 28-30 (NIV) states: ²⁸ Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, ²⁹ "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?" ³⁰ They came out of the town and made their way toward him.

Theme: God redeems our story and uses it to reach others.

Summary:

The Samaritan woman came to the well during the heat of the day—likely to avoid the judgmental stares of others. She had a complicated past, including five husbands and a current live-in partner. Yet, it was to her that Jesus revealed Himself as the Messiah. Their conversation broke social, racial, and religious barriers, and it changed her life.

Jesus didn't shame her; He spoke truth with love. He exposed her wounds not to condemn, but to heal. In response, she left her water jar—symbolizing her old life—and ran to tell her town about the man who "told me everything I ever did." Because of her testimony, many believed.

The Samaritan woman's story shows that no one is too far gone for God to use. Her transformation didn't happen after she had it all together—it happened in the middle of her mess. She became one of the first evangelists in Scripture, showing that grace is a powerful motivator for sharing the gospel.

From her, we can learn that evangelism isn't about perfection—it's about sharing what Jesus has done. God turns our past into a platform when we surrender it to Him.

Discussion Questions:

1. What does Jesus' interaction with this woman teach us about grace?
 2. Why do you think she left her water jar behind?
 3. How does your story reflect God's redemptive power?
 4. What barriers did Jesus cross in order to reach her?
 5. How can we engage people who feel excluded or ashamed?
 6. What would it look like to share your testimony with others this week?
 7. What do you need to let go of in order to live more freely like she did?
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WEEK 9: Lydia – Hospitality & Influence

Scripture: Acts 16:14-15 (NIV) states: ¹⁴One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message. ¹⁵When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us.

Theme: A generous heart creates space for the Gospel to grow.

Summary:

Lydia was a successful businesswoman and worshiper of God in the city of Philippi. When Paul came to preach near the river, the Lord opened her heart to respond to his message. Immediately, Lydia invited Paul and his companions into her home. Her hospitality became the birthplace of the first European church.

Her conversion marked more than a personal faith decision—it became a catalyst for community transformation. Lydia didn't wait to be disciplined for years before making an impact. She opened her home, her resources, and her life to the mission of God. Her influence came through both her generosity and her willingness to act quickly on God's prompting.

Though her story is brief, Lydia shows us that spiritual maturity isn't only tied to how long we've known Jesus, but also to how open we are to His leading. She leveraged her business success and social status for kingdom purposes, becoming an example of what it looks like to use what you have for God's glory.

From Lydia, we learn that influence often begins with a willing heart and an open door. Whether we lead a home, a business, or a ministry, God can use our space and our spirit to plant seeds of revival.

Discussion Questions:

1. What stands out to you about Lydia's immediate response to the Gospel?
2. Why do you think God used her home as the foundation for a church?
3. How can we practice hospitality in a way that honors God?
4. In what ways has your own home or workplace been a place of ministry?
5. What resources has God given you that could be used to serve others?
6. Why is generosity such a powerful witness to others?
7. What's one step you can take this week to open your life more to others?

WEEK 10: Priscilla – Teaching & Partnership

Scripture: Acts 18:24-26 (NIV) states: ²⁴Meanwhile a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. ²⁵He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervor^[a] and taught about Jesus accurately, though he knew only the baptism of John. ²⁶He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately.

Theme: Partnership in truth leads to powerful impact.

Summary:

Priscilla, along with her husband Aquila, was a tentmaker, a disciple, and a powerful teacher of God's Word. When they encountered Apollos—a passionate but theologically incomplete teacher—they took him aside and explained “the way of God more accurately.” This moment highlights the influence of humble correction and spiritual partnership.

Priscilla's name is often mentioned before her husband's, suggesting her leadership and respect within the early church. She was bold enough to teach, yet humble enough to do so privately and respectfully. Her willingness to correct Apollos helped shape him into a more effective minister, impacting countless others through his refined teaching.

Her story demonstrates that discipleship happens through relationship and that women have a vital role in shaping sound doctrine. Priscilla didn't need a stage or spotlight; her faithfulness in quiet instruction had generational effects.

We learn from Priscilla that partnership in ministry matters. Whether with a spouse, a team, or a community, the Gospel moves forward when we steward truth together with grace and courage.

Discussion Questions:

1. What does Priscilla's interaction with Apollos teach us about spiritual maturity?
2. Why do you think Luke highlights both her knowledge and her partnership?
3. How can we correct others in a way that builds rather than tears down?
4. What qualities made Priscilla a trustworthy teacher?
5. What does her example say about the role of women in ministry?
6. How are you actively partnering with others to build God's kingdom?
7. Where might God be calling you to speak truth in love?