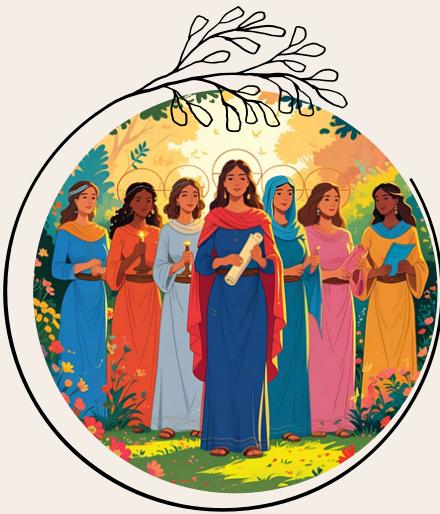


WOMEN OF FAITH

**6-WEEK
BIBLE STUDY GUIDE**



WOMEN OF FAITH



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Introduction

Welcome to "Women of Faith," a six-week Bible study exploring the remarkable women throughout Scripture who demonstrated extraordinary faith in God. Throughout history, women have played pivotal roles in God's redemptive plan, showing courage, wisdom, and devotion that continue to inspire believers today. This study will explore the lives of various women in the Bible, examining their challenges, triumphs, and the legacy of their faith. Each week will focus on different women or themes, providing rich biblical teaching, thoughtful questions for reflection, and practical application for our own faith journeys.

HOW TO USE THIS STUDY GUIDE

- Scripture Readings: Core passages to read and meditate on
- Context & Background: Historical and cultural insights
- Study Questions: For deeper reflection on the text
- Personal Reflection: Space to journal your thoughts
- Application: Practical ways to apply these truths
- Prayer Focus: Suggested prayer themes

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Week 2 – Ruth and Naomi | Loyalty

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Context & Background

Sarah (originally named Sarai) was the wife of Abraham and is considered the matriarch of the Israelite people. Her story spans many chapters in Genesis, from Abraham's call to leave his homeland to the miraculous birth of Isaac in her old age. Sarah's journey demonstrates both human frailty and remarkable faith.

Scripture Readings

Genesis 12:1-9

Genesis 18:1-15

Genesis 21:1-7

Hebrews 11:8-12

1. Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.

-Hebrews 11:11-



Sarah | The Mother of Faith

Discussion Questions

1. How does Sarah's initial response to God's promise in Genesis 18:9-15 contrast with her description in Hebrews 11:11?

2. What challenges to faith did Sarah face throughout her journey with Abraham?

3. How did Sarah's attempt to "help" God fulfil His promise through Hagar affect her relationship with God and others?

4. What transformation do you see in Sarah from Genesis 18 to Genesis 21?



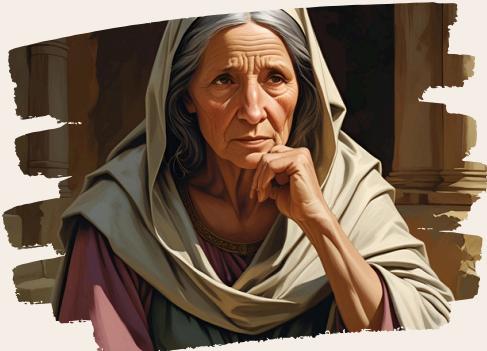
WEEK 1

Sarah | The Mother of Faith

Personal Reflection & Application

Like Sarah, we sometimes face situations that seem impossible from a human perspective. Reflect on a time when God called you to trust Him despite circumstances that seemed impossible.

This week, identify one area of your life where you're struggling to trust God's timing or promises. What practical step can you take to demonstrate faith in this area?



PRAYER FOCUS

Pray for increased faith in God's promises, patience in His timing, and trust in His plan even when it differs from your expectations.



Ruth & Naomi – Loyalty & Redemption

Background

The book of Ruth takes place during the time of the judges, a dark period in Israel's history. In the midst of national unfaithfulness, Ruth's story shines as an example of personal loyalty, faith, and God's providential care. As a Moabite woman who chose to follow her mother-in-law Naomi and Naomi's God, Ruth demonstrates extraordinary courage and faith.

Scripture Readings

Ruth 1:1-22

Ruth 2:1-23

Ruth 4:13-22

And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God:

-Ruth 1:16-



Ruth & Naomi – Loyalty & Redemption

Discussion Questions

1. Compare and contrast Ruth's response to adversity with Naomi's in Ruth 1. What do their different responses reveal about faith in difficult circumstances?

2. Ruth was a foreigner from Moab, a nation often at odds with Israel. What does her inclusion in God's redemptive plan (and in Jesus' genealogy) teach us about God's heart for all people?

3. How did Ruth demonstrate both faith and initiative? What can we learn from the balance she maintained?

4. What role did Naomi play in Ruth's story? How did their relationship strengthen both women?



Ruth & Naomi - Loyalty & Redemption

Personal Reflection & Application

Ruth's declaration to Naomi was a commitment that changed the course of her life. Reflect on the key commitments in your life and how they have shaped your faith journey.

This week, identify one relationship in your life where you can demonstrate Ruth-like loyalty and faithfulness. What specific action can you take to strengthen this relationship?

Prayer Focus

Pray for strength to remain loyal in your relationships, for God's guidance in times of transition, and for the ability to see God's hand at work even in difficult circumstances.



Esther | Courage for "Such a Time as This"

Background

The book of Esther is set during the Persian Empire, when many Jews lived in exile. Esther, a Jewish orphan raised by her cousin Mordecai, becomes queen through a series of providential events. When a plot to destroy the Jewish people emerges, Esther must find the courage to risk her life to save her people. Interestingly, God is never directly mentioned in the book, yet His providential hand is evident throughout.

Scripture Readings

Esther 2:5-18
Esther 4:1-17
Esther 7:1-10
Esther 8:1-8

For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?

-Esther 4:14-



- Esther -

Courage for "Such a Time as This"

Discussion Questions

1. In what ways did Esther demonstrate growth from a passive character at the beginning of the book to an active, courageous leader?

2. Mordecai's famous words "for such a time as this" suggest divine purpose in Esther's position. Have you ever felt placed in a situation specifically to make a difference? Explain.

3. What risks did Esther face in approaching the king? What gave her the courage to act despite these dangers?

4. Though God is not explicitly mentioned in the book of Esther, where do you see evidence of divine providence in the story?



- Esther -

Courage for "Such a Time as This"

Personal Reflection & Application

Esther needed three days of fasting and prayer before taking action. Reflect on a time when spiritual preparation was essential before a significant step of faith in your life.

This week, identify a situation in your life, community, or workplace where God may be calling you to speak up or take action. What is your "for such a time as this" moment, and what first step will you take?

Prayer Focus

Pray for courage to stand up for what is right, wisdom to know when and how to speak, and discernment to recognise God's providential hand in your circumstances.



Mary & Martha – Different Expressions of Devotion

Context & Background

Mary and Martha were sisters who lived in Bethany with their brother Lazarus. They were close friends of Jesus who hosted Him in their home multiple times. Through three key encounters recorded in the Gospels, we see different aspects of their personalities and their developing faith in Jesus. Their stories illustrate different temperaments and approaches to following Christ.

Scripture Readings

Luke 10:38-42

John 11:1-44

John 12:1-8

41 And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: 42 But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

-Luke 10:41-42-



Mary & Martha – Different Expressions of Devotion

Discussion Questions

1. Compare and contrast Mary and Martha's personalities and approaches to serving Jesus based on the passages you've read. What strengths do you see in each woman?

2. In Luke 10:38-42, what was Jesus' main point in His gentle correction of Martha? Was He condemning service itself?

3. In John 11, both sisters make the same statement to Jesus: "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." Yet their interactions with Jesus seem different. What do you observe about each sister's faith at this point?

4. How does Mary's act of anointing Jesus in John 12:1-8 demonstrate her understanding of Jesus' mission? What does Jesus' defense of her action teach us?



Mary & Martha – Different Expressions of Devotion

Personal Reflection & Application

Do you tend to identify more with Mary's contemplative approach or Martha's active service? How might you grow by incorporating elements of the sister you identify with less?

This week, if you identify more as a "Martha," schedule specific time to simply be with Jesus in prayer and meditation. If you identify more as a "Mary," look for a practical way to serve others in Jesus' name.

Prayer Focus

Pray for balance between being and doing in your spiritual life, for freedom from anxious distraction, and for a deeper understanding of what it means to choose "the better part."



Women at the Cross & Tomb – Faithful Witnesses

Context & Background

The Gospels record that many women followed Jesus throughout His ministry, financially supporting Him and learning from His teaching. Most notably, when male disciples fled at Jesus' crucifixion, many women remained present. They were also the first witnesses of His resurrection. In a culture where women's testimony was not valued in court, Jesus honored women by appearing first to them after His resurrection.

Scripture Readings

Luke 8:1-3

Matthew 27:55-61

Mark 15:40-47

John 20:1-18

Luke 24:1-12

Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.

-John 20:16-



Women at the Cross & Tomb – Faithful Witnesses

Discussion Questions

1. According to Luke 8:1-3, what role did women play in Jesus' ministry? How did this challenge cultural norms of the time?

2. What significance do you see in the fact that women were present at both the cross and the empty tomb? What does this reveal about their devotion to Jesus?

3. Compare Mary Magdalene's encounter with Jesus in John 20:11-18 with the other Gospel accounts. What stands out about their interaction?

4. What significance do you find in Jesus choosing to appear first to women after His resurrection, making them the first evangelists of the Christian faith?



Women at the Cross & Tomb – Faithful Witnesses

Personal Reflection & Application

The women at the tomb initially struggled to understand what they were seeing, yet their faith persisted. Reflect on a time when your faith helped you persevere through confusion or doubt.

The women at the tomb were called to share the good news of the resurrection. This week, identify one person with whom you can share your testimony or an encouragement from Scripture.

Prayer Focus

Pray for courage to remain faithful in difficult circumstances, for opportunities to be a witness to Christ's work in your life, and for eyes to recognise Jesus' presence in unexpected places.



Women in the Early Church – Partners in Ministry

Context & Background

The early Christian church included many women who played significant roles in ministry and leadership. The book of Acts and Paul's letters mention numerous women who hosted house churches, supported missionaries, taught doctrine, and served in various capacities. Their contributions were vital to the spread of Christianity throughout the Roman world.

Scripture Readings

Acts 16:11-15, 40 (Lydia)

Acts 18:1-3, 18-26 (Priscilla)

Romans 16:1-16

Philippians 4:2-3

I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea:

2 That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.

-Romans 16:1-2-



Women in the Early Church – Partners in Ministry

Discussion Questions

1. What do we learn about Lydia from Acts 16:11-15, 40? What role did she play in the establishment of the Philippian church?

2. In Acts 18:24-26, Priscilla and Aquila instructed Apollos. What does this tell us about Priscilla's knowledge and role in the early church?

3. Romans 16 mentions several women including Phoebe, Priscilla, Mary, Junia, Tryphena, Tryphosa, Persis, and others. What descriptors does Paul use for these women, and what do they suggest about women's contributions to the early church?

4. How did the inclusion and recognition of women in the early church continue the pattern established by Jesus during His ministry?



Women in the Early Church – Partners in Ministry

Personal Reflection & Application

The women in the early church used their unique gifts, resources, and positions to advance the gospel. Reflect on the specific gifts and opportunities God has given you to serve His kingdom.

This week, identify one way you can more fully use your spiritual gifts, resources, or influence to serve the church and advance the gospel. What step will you take to put this into action?

Prayer Focus

Pray for clarity about your spiritual gifts, for boldness to use them in service, and for unity in the church as all members—regardless of gender, background, or status—work together for God's kingdom.



Women in the Early Church

Bible Study Concluding Comments

CONCLUSION

Over the past six weeks, we've explored the stories of various women of faith throughout Scripture. From Sarah's journey of trust to the early church leaders who advanced the gospel, these women demonstrate that faith takes many forms and expressions.

As we conclude this study, consider how the examples of these biblical women might inspire your own faith journey. Each faced unique challenges, had different gifts and callings, and served God in their particular contexts. Yet all were part of God's greater redemptive story.

FINAL REFLECTION

Take some time to reflect on your journey through this study and the insights you've gained:

1. Which woman's story resonated most deeply with you, and why?

2. What common threads do you see in the faith journeys of these biblical women?

3. How has this study challenged or changed your understanding of faith and your role in God's kingdom?



Women in the Early Church

Bible Study Concluding Comments

CONCLUSION

Closing Prayer

Gracious God, thank you for the examples of faith we see in the women of Scripture. Thank you that through their stories, we see your faithfulness, your redemptive work, and your invitation to participate in your kingdom. Help us to walk in faith as they did—trusting your promises, stepping out in courage, serving with our gifts, and pointing others to you. May our lives, like theirs, be testimonies of your grace and power. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Suggestions for Continued Growth:

- Form a mentoring relationship with a woman of another generation
- Journal your own faith journey, noting God's faithfulness
- Create visual art inspired by these women's stories
- Share these stories with children to inspire the next generation

Additional Online Resources

- Bible Project videos on biblical books featuring women's stories
- Bible Gateway's topical resources on women in the Bible
- She Reads Truth Bible study materials

Recommended Books

- When God Calls the Heart at Christmas by Brian Bird and Michelle Cox
- All the Women of the Bible by Herbert Lockyer
- Twelve Extraordinary Women by John MacArthur
- Lost Women of the Bible by Carolyn Custis James
- Women of the Word by Jen Wilkin

