



HER *God* STORY

6-WEEK DEVOTIONAL

COMPILED AND EDITED BY JODIE CHIRICOSTA



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Cover design by Ashley Stringer

Interior design by Belinda Thacker

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Created and printed in the United States of America.

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Introduction

God often uses stories to teach us truth and show us His nature, character, and ways. That is why the Bible tells us about the foibles and faith of people from many diverse backgrounds and times. As we read about and ponder their lives, the Holy Spirit speaks to us about our situations, experiences, and relationships today. He also uses other verses or portions of the Bible to give clarity and support for the truths revealed through the narratives.

This devotional is designed to draw you close to women spoken of in God's Word so you can hear the truths He is revealing through their stories. It is our hope that, as you ponder their lives, you will gain a deeper understanding of who God is and how He relates to us; that your love for Him will deepen; that obeying Him will become your delight; and that you will grow in intimacy with our loving God and Savior.

These revelations will come as you read the daily encouragements, meditate on assigned Scripture portions, journal what the Holy Spirit speaks to you, and commit it to Him in prayer. As you tune your ear to the Father's voice and respond to His leading, you will be swept up in a God story all your own!

Each section of this book has five days of devotions as well as two days to review and apply what the Lord has been speaking to you that week. Many people choose to start each section on a Monday, but you can begin anytime.

To get the most out of this devotional, we suggest that you:

- First, quiet your mind and heart before the Lord, inviting Him to speak to you;
- Read the assigned scripture portions in your favorite translation;
- Meditate on the truths highlighted in the daily devotional;
- Journal how they apply to your life and what the Holy Spirit speaks to you, including any concrete ways you will respond to His word for you each day;
- Let the written prayer guide you into deeper communion with the Father.

Once you have completed this devotional, we encourage you to continue the habit you have begun. You may want to explore the stories of other women of the Bible, asking the Lord to speak to you through their lives and experiences. If you have not read the entire Bible through recently, find a plan that guides you to systematically read through it in a year or two. You'll be amazed at what the Holy Spirit will reveal to you in fresh and new ways when you commit to study and act on His Word.

We would love to hear testimonies and feedback on what God does through this devotional guide! Let us know at SomebodyCares@SomebodyCares.org.

If you have prayer needs, you can email us at Prayer@SomebodyCares.org, or call or text our 24/7 Prayer Line at 855-459-CARE. The Somebody Cares team would be honored to pray for you!

We also invite you to be a part of a growing company of women who are helping widows and orphans, in response to James 1:27. Join us with a donation at HerGodStory.org by clicking Help Now! To find out more about this or Somebody Cares, visit our ministry website at SombodysCares.org or follow us on one of your favorite social media platforms.



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WEEK 1:

Lessons from

*Mary's
God Story*

BY JODIE CHIRICOSTA



This week we will explore a little of Mary's story. Of course, being a key figure in the life of Christ, we will not cover her entire life in one week.

There is so much the Holy Spirit wants to teach us from her life! So, before you begin each day, quiet your heart and ask Him to speak to you. You can use the positioning prayer, or your own words, to focus your attention on the Lord, prepare your heart, and expect to receive a word from Him.

Day 1: Believing



POSITIONING PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I come to You now with hunger to hear Your Word for me today. As I quiet my heart, give me ears to hear what You are saying and a heart to understand and be transformed. In Jesus' name I ask and believe I will receive from You. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING:

Luke 1:35-45; Genesis 15:1-8; Romans 4:18-25; Exodus 34:6

DEVOTIONAL:

In 1998, "The Prince of Egypt" animated movie was released. It's theme song, "When You Believe," sung by Whitney Houston and Mariah Carey, is inspiring. ¹ The chorus, with a slight alteration of mine, goes:

*There can be miracles when you believe
Though hope is frail, it's hard to kill
Who knows what miracles <God> can achieve?
When you believe, somehow <He> will
<He> will when you believe*

Mary's hope may well have been frail when she rushed to see her aged relative, Elizabeth, shortly after her angelic encounter. She believed the angel, but she was eager to verify the miraculous news which was about to up-end her life in every possible way.

As soon as Mary arrived, God gave her the confirmation she so desperately needed. Before Mary had a chance to tell Elizabeth anything, her kinsman was filled with the Holy Spirit and began to bless Mary as the mother of the Lord. At this point Mary's pregnancy was not showing, so Elizabeth's revelation was a welcomed confirmation of God's plan. And, Mary saw first-hand the miraculous pregnancy of Elizabeth, who was well beyond child bearing years!

Mary believed the word of the Lord spoken to her by the angel, and she acted on His word. As she did, God affirmed that belief in ways that strengthened her faith for the days ahead.

Abram had a similar experience. When he believed God's seemingly impossible promise, God credited that faith as righteousness. Even though Abram believed God, he still asked questions about the

¹<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LKaXY4ldZ40>

promise. Despite his questions, God still considered Abram righteous because of his belief. Abram had faith, but he asked for confirmation so he could “know” it was true. The Hebrew word used by Abram was *yada*², which has a rich meaning that includes understanding, realizing, and experiencing. He wanted his faith to come alive! In response, God visited Abram and made a covenant with him.

That loving response is not what many people expect from God. Too many have been fooled into thinking God is quick to anger and intolerant of our fears and frailties. But that is a lie from the enemy. In truth, God is slow to anger and abounding in love and faithfulness. He wants us to know (*yada*) Him; to understand and experience Him.

Has God spoken something to you that requires an extra measure of faith? It is okay to go back to Him, in humility, and ask how you can know (*yada*)! God is eager to answer the prayer of the righteous. If you have believed in God who raised Jesus from the dead, you, too, are considered righteous. He will answer you!

If, however, you have never put your faith in Jesus, believing He died on the cross for your sins and rose to life so we can be made right with God, you can do that right now!

Either way, spend a few moments praying and listening for His response!

WHAT THE LORD IS SAYING TO ME TODAY:

ACTIVATING PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, thank You for sending Jesus to show me the way back to You. Thank you for sending Him to take my punishment, pay my debt, and defeat hell and the grave so I can be part of Your family and live eternally with You! I believe! I want to live the supernatural life You have for me. I invite You to speak to me, guide me in Your ways, and confirm Your word to me so I can always know I am walking in Your will. Thank You for always being faithful, loving and so kind. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

² https://biblehub.com/hebrew/strongs_3045.htm

Day 2: Help My Unbelief



POSITIONING PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I come to You now with hunger to hear Your Word to me today. As I quiet my heart, give me ears to hear what You are saying and a heart to understand and be transformed. In Jesus' name I ask and believe I will receive from You. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING:

Luke 1:35-45; Genesis 3:1-3; Mark 9:15-27; John 20:30-31

DEVOTIONAL:

From time to time we all struggle with doubt. It is one of satan's favorite tools. "Did God say..." is often used against even the most ardent believers!

And sometimes we raise the shadow of doubt in our own minds without satan's intervention. It is hard to imagine change will come when things have been the same for so long. And when the promise of something we have never seen or heard of is made, it seems safer to cling to doubt.

We need to learn a lesson from Mary. As we saw yesterday, her quick flight to visit Elizabeth gave her the confirmation she needed to remain steadfast in her faith. She needed confirmation and she got it!

Yesterday we also looked at Abram. He believed God but had some questions. God did not take offense, but instead He revealed Himself to Abram in a way he would never forget.

When Jesus walked the earth, news about the healings He performed and the people He delivered spread like wildfire. Even His disciples had been used to minister healing and deliverance. So, in Mark 9:15-27, when a desperate father brought his deaf and infirmed son to them for help, he was full of hope. But when Jesus' disciples were unable to heal his son, this father's faith began to slip.

When Jesus arrived and began inquiring about the boy, the father wasn't sure He could help. "If you can do anything, take pity on us," the man said. I can imagine what was going through his mind: "Maybe Jesus has finally met His match; maybe my son can't be saved." He wanted to believe Jesus' power would set his son free, but there was some doubt.

When Jesus proclaimed, "Everything is possible for one who believes," the father was brutally honest. "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief," he cried.

That is all Jesus needed. He cast the demon out and healed the boy! His father sure believed after that!

If you struggle with doubting God or His promises, be honest with Him! Ask for His help! And spend time reading the Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. John 20:30-31 says, "*Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*" (NIV)

The more you know Christ, the stronger your faith will grow!

Day 3: Declare God's Goodness



POSITIONING PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I come to You now with hunger to hear Your Word to me today. As I quiet my heart, give me ears to hear what You are saying and a heart to understand and be transformed. In Jesus' name I ask and believe I will receive from You. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING:

Luke 1:46-55; Psalm 103

DEVOTIONAL:

Just as I was heading into high school, my father's job moved us across the country. I loved where we were living and the active mountain lifestyle we enjoyed. And I had close friends I would be leaving behind. It was tough heading into the unknown, to a new city, a new school, and a different lifestyle. As we packed the house, loaded the car, and headed south, I had many unanswered questions and a bit of trepidation. God worked everything out, but that transition was at times unnerving.

Mary faced a huge transition with many unknowns. When she left her hometown to visit Elizabeth, she had no idea what lay ahead. Would Joseph, her betrothed, still agree to marry her? What would happen when people found out she was pregnant? How would her family react?

Of course, God had spoken to her and confirmed His word. But that still left her with a lot of unanswered questions. Instead of focusing on the unknowns, Mary focused on what she did know, proclaiming the goodness and provision of God in her life!

Over and over again in the Psalms we see David do this. When he was being chased by his enemies, or was betrayed by a friend, or winning battles and receiving the adoration of his kingdom, David focused on God. No matter what David's mental or emotional state, when he starts telling of God's goodness and faithfulness, his outlook always improves!

Maybe Mary learned that secret by hearing stories about David at synagogue as a young girl. It is a secret worth learning! When we put this into practice, it not only changes our perspective but also invites God's miraculous power into our situation – and that is always good!

Are you facing some unknowns? Take a few moments to focus on God's faithfulness and proclaim His goodness in your life as well!

PROCLAMATION TO BE READ ALOUD!

I, <insert your name>, praise the Lord. Everything in me, praise His holy name! Yes, I say, praise the Lord, and don't forget any of His benefits! He forgives all my sins. He heals all my diseases. He has redeemed

me from the pit and crowned me with love and compassion. He satisfies my desires with good things and renews my youth like the eagle's. The Lord works righteousness and justice for me and for all the oppressed. The Lord is compassionate and gracious to me; He is slow to anger, abounding in love. He does not treat me as my sins deserve or repay me for my wrongdoings. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His love for me! He has removed my sin from me as far as the east is from the west. The Lord is a good and loving father to me, tender and compassionate. He knows my weaknesses, and still His love and kindness remain on me forever! *(Adapted from Psalm 103)*

WHAT THE LORD IS SAYING TO ME TODAY:

ACTIVATING PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, You are good! Thank you for loving me. Forgive me for forgetting Your benefits when I get overwhelmed with circumstances. Help me remember that You are everything I need. I invite You into every situation I face, and know I can trust in You. Lead me today, dear Lord. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Day 4: He Has!



POSITIONING PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I come to You now with hunger to hear Your Word to me today. As I quiet my heart, give me ears to hear what You are saying and a heart to understand and be transformed. In Jesus' name I ask and believe I will receive from You. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING:

Luke 1:46-55; 2 Corinthians 4:18; Psalm 27: 13-14

DEVOTIONAL:

Yesterday we considered how Mary responded to the great unknowns in her life by focusing on God's goodness and provision. Her proclamation of praise was inspired by the Holy Spirit and is written in God's Word, too! Today let's look more closely at what she said.

Mary was quite mature in her understanding of spiritual things. She understood that God had already accomplished what she needed, even if she did not see it in the natural yet. She declares repeatedly that "He has" already done the things she describes. She knew the unseen world is eternal while her circumstances and what she could see are only temporary.

Mary first praises God for being mindful of her situation. The Greek word used is *epiblepo*³, which means "to pay special attention to someone."

Knowing the road ahead could be difficult, Mary declares that God has done great things for her! She recounts that God's mercy extends to all generations.

Mary then broadens the scope of her declaration, describing what God has done for all mankind! Here are the truths she declares:

- He has performed mighty deeds.
- He has scattered the proud and haughty.
- He has removed wicked rulers, while raising up those who are humble before God.
- He has cared for those who are hungry and in need.
- He has dealt with those who are greedy with their wealth.
- He has kept His promises.

Mary recognized God's character motivates all His actions. Knowing He is the same yesterday, today, and forever, she was confidently able to rely on His past goodness for her present and future.

³<https://biblehub.com/greek/1914.htm>

What do you need today? God is paying special attention to your situation. As you declare His goodness in your life, believing it is a reality, you invite Him to perform mighty deeds for you as well! Remember all God has done and know He will do those wonderful things again.

PROCLAMATION TO BE READ ALOUD!

I, <insert your name>, praise the Lord. I rejoice in God my Savior! For God pays special attention to me and knows my situation; from now on all who see His work in my life will call me blessed. For the Mighty One is my Father, and He is holy. He has done and is doing great things for me. The Lord shows mercy to all who fear Him, and that includes me. Mighty power flows from Him to scatter those who are haughty and proud. He removes prideful rulers from their seats of power and replaces them with those who are humble and right before Him. He has filled the hungry with good things, physically and spiritually; and sent those who are self-satisfied away with empty hands. He remembers His promises and keeps them, throughout all generations of those who rely on Him. I am the beneficiary of His goodness. I will see that goodness in the land of the living, so I will wait for Him! *(Adapted from Luke 1:46-55 and Psalm 27:13-14 NLV and TPT)*

WHAT THE LORD IS SAYING TO ME TODAY:

ACTIVATING PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, You are so good! Thank You for the mighty deeds You have done in the past. I know You are doing mighty things even now! Forgive me for doubting that You are willing and/or able to set right everything wrong that faces me. I give those situations to You right now. I ask You to move in me, for me, and through me so that Your good and merciful will is done today. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Day 5: A Spiritual Weapon



POSITIONING PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I come to You now with hunger to hear Your Word to me today. As I quiet my heart, give me ears to hear what You are saying and a heart to understand and be transformed. In Jesus' name I ask and believe I will receive from You. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING:

Psalm 27; Psalm 23; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5

DEVOTIONAL:

The past two days we have seen how Mary focused on the character and nature of God rather than on her circumstance. This was a habit King David regularly practiced as well. It is a powerful spiritual weapon we can use at any time to demolish doubt and other lies that satan throws at us. We can use it to take our thoughts captive so they are aligned with God's reality.

Take time now to personalize one or both of today's Psalms as your declaration! Remember to speak it out loud!

WHAT THE LORD IS SAYING TO ME TODAY:

ACTIVATING PRAYER:

Great are You, Lord! Thank You for equipping me with spiritual weapons that will not fail but will instead demolish strongholds and help me walk with You in victory. Teach me, Lord, how to wield these weapons effectively. As my Good Shepherd, I trust You to lead and watch over me in every place and situation. In Jesus' mighty name I pray. Amen.

Day 6&7: Review



SCRIPTURE READING:

Psalm 91

It's time to review this week's devotions. Look back over the notes you have taken this week. What has the Lord been saying to you?

- **Read Psalm 91 and meditate on it; personalize it as your declaration. Remember to say it out loud!**
- Has the Lord convicted you of anything? If so, confess it to Him and set your mind and heart to think and act rightly.
- Has the Lord encouraged you in some way? Write down His thoughts toward you so you can remember His great love for you when times get tough.
- Has the Lord given you a glimpse of how He wants to work in and through you? Write this down as well, ask Him to reveal more to you, and listen for His response!

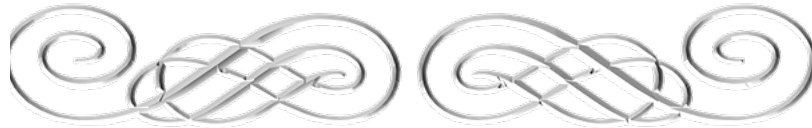
WHAT THE LORD IS SAYING TO ME THIS WEEK:

We also encourage you to fully participate in a local fellowship of believers. If you are not connected with one, ask the Lord to guide you to a church or group of believers where you can grow in your faith, serve with others, and let His light shine through you!

WEEK 2:

Lessons from
Women honored
by Paul

BY LAURA MOOREHEAD



This week, we will look into the lives of some of the women honored by the Apostle Paul in his New Testament letters. In Paul's lifetime, women were not generally seen as leaders. Like Jesus, Paul respected women by empowering their role in the Kingdom of God. Before beginning each day, take time to quiet your heart and be ready to hear from the Lord.

Day 1: Phoebe INFLUENCE



POSITIONING PRAYER:

God, I love you. Thank You for this day and the opportunity to hear from You through the Holy Spirit and Your Holy Word. I am so grateful to be able to hear from You and to serve You. Speak to me like only You can today. In Jesus' name. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING:

1 Corinthians 12, Romans 16:1-2

DEVOTIONAL:

As part of the body of Christ, we each have unique roles in the Kingdom of God. God designs each of us with our own gifts, abilities, and personalities. If you are like me, there are things about yourself that you wish you could change. For instance, I wish I was of the personality to be on time, that I would not lose my keys on a regular basis, that I would remember that I live in Houston and need to put on deodorant before I leave for work. There is something in my being that thinks of 500 things at once, all while not accomplishing as much as I should. The list goes on!

You may not be able to relate to these. Maybe you are the put together person who cannot deal with the person I just described and have your own set of things you are geared toward that you wish you could change. While the Lord will grow us through some of the less desirable things in our human nature, He gives each and every one of us influence. It is our responsibility to seek the Lord and steward our lives in a godly manner. Stewardship is not just for our finances, it is for every aspect of our lives, including our influence.

In the first verse of Romans 16, Paul calls Phoebe his sister, a servant of the Church, someone worthy of a welcome of the saints, and a patron. Here we see Paul use his influence to honor and empower Phoebe. While there are only a couple of verses that include Phoebe directly, her servant leadership is etched in the most important historical document of all time. From a believer's point of view, it is such an honor to be revered by Paul, a man God used to write a significant portion of the New Testament. In his mention of her, Paul is lending some of his considerable influence to her for the work God called her to do. In addition to the influence Paul lent to her, Phoebe most likely had quite a bit of influence of her own.

Maybe you are a person of influence or you know a person, like Phoebe, who is actively involved and carries influence in your community, church, or company. Whether you have a high profile or not, you, too, have influence—for good or bad.

As you reflect on the influence you carry, consider how you can use it for God’s purposes.

- How are you using your current influence in your home life, community, and family?
- What kind of influence are you exerting through your social media presence?
- Like Phoebe, are you using your gifts, talents, and influence to aid the world around you?
- Are you stewarding your influence well?
- Is there someone or something influencing you that does not align with what God has for you?

WHAT THE LORD IS SAYING TO ME TODAY:

ACTIVATING PRAYER:

Gracious God, I thank You for Your Word. It encourages me in so many ways. Thank you for the lives of those who have gone before me, showing me the way to serve You fully and faithfully. Show me how to steward well the influence You have given me to glorify and honor You. Give me discernment about who to connect with in this journey of faith and put me in relationship with those You want to influence through me. Lord, as I reflect on my life, please bring to mind anything that needs to change so I can more fully honor You. Give me the self-control and strength to do so. I love you. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Day 2: Priscilla

CO-LABORERS IN CHRIST



POSITIONING PRAYER:

God, I love you. Thank You for this day and the opportunity to hear from You through the Holy Spirit and Your Holy Word. I am so grateful to be able to hear from You and to serve You. Speak to me like only You can today. In Jesus' name. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING:

Romans 8:17, Romans 16:3, 1 Corinthians 16:19, 2 Timothy 4:19, Acts 18:1-3, Acts 18:18, Acts 18:26

DEVOTIONAL:

As part of the Body of Christ, we are co-heirs and co-laborers in Christ. Oftentimes, writers of the Bible briefly mention notable co-laborers. Romans 16 is the first place we see Priscilla mentioned. Paul appreciates her and her husband, Aquila, for their work in building the local church. From Scripture, we know they were tentmakers by trade; they were refugees; they risked their lives for Paul; they hosted a church in their home; and they had knowledge of God and the Scriptures. They also taught Apollos how to deliver the Lord's message. Apollos went on to preach to the nations.

Priscilla impacted the Kingdom while co-laboring in the local church. She used her knowledge of the Scriptures to help shape her fellow believers. Like Priscilla, we have our own attributes to offer the Kingdom. The world desperately needs the Body of Christ working out their faith shoulder to shoulder. Each believer has distinctive value.

There are times when my church needs help with different events; but instead of jumping in, people make excuses: "I have already done my part," "I do not feel called to do that," "I do not know why they are doing that," or "I don't have time." Understandably, there are times when the Lord has us in a season of rest or focusing more on our families, so it does not allow us to give as much of ourselves to the Kingdom. But be mindful that satan will throw up roadblocks to keep you from fulfilling what God has called you to do. Be discerning of the Lord's will before declining an opportunity to serve.

Thankfully, we have examples like Priscilla, who showed us how to be a fellow co-laborer. Here are some questions to help you reflect on your own life:

- How am I benefiting my co-laborers in Christ? (This may be my husband, my family, a friend, my church, and/or my community.)
- If I lived in biblical times, would my contribution be notable?
- Am I causing others to miss out on what I have to offer?

WHAT THE LORD IS SAYING TO ME TODAY:

ACTIVATING PRAYER:

Holy Lord, I thank You for Your Word. Thank You for Priscilla’s testimony and how she served so faithfully. I am grateful that You also invite me to serve what You are doing in the world in my time. Forgive me for where I have fallen short, whether in attitude or deed. Lord, speak to me! What do I have to offer that I need to share with others to help spread the Good News of Jesus? I love You. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Day 3: Priscilla

ACCOUNTABILITY WITH OUR TIME



POSITIONING PRAYER:

God, I love you. Thank You for this day and the opportunity to hear from You through the Holy Spirit and Your Holy Word. I am so grateful to be able to hear from You and to serve You. Speak to me like only You can today. In Jesus' name. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING:

Acts 18:2-3, Acts 18:18-26; Romans 16:3-5, John 15:13; Ephesians 2:10

DEVOTIONAL:

As Paul sends personal greetings to the church in Ephesus, he expresses his gratitude for Priscilla and Aquila.

"Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my co-workers in Jesus Christ. They risked their lives for me. Not only I but all the churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them." (Romans 16:3-4 NIV)

Believers in the Early Church were crucial to spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ. Many of them, like Priscilla, had a fire for living out their faith for the glory of God.

Priscilla was a wife, helped run a tent-making business, and was devoted to sharing the Good News of Jesus in a hostile culture. The thing I find the most captivating about her, though, is that she did what it took. She was willing to lay down her life for another believer. She and her husband willingly left everything to travel with and support Paul in the work he was called to do. Along the way, God gave them the opportunity to disciple or mentor another young minister, Apollos, so his ministry would be fruitful, too.

Believers today are still crucial in spreading the Good News. Every day we are laying our lives down to something. We have 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 52 weeks a year, and hopefully many years here on Earth. Every day we get to choose what we spend those hours, days, and weeks doing. If we take an inventory of our lives, we begin to see how we are investing ourselves. You may be like me, lacking self-control in some areas and needing accountability with your time.

At the beginning of this year, I took a hard look at how I was investing my time. I was shocked when I realized how much time I wasted just scrolling on my phone. I put time limits on the apps on my phone to keep myself from whittling away my time. This is just one of the ways I started to become more accountable with my time.

Have you ever inventoried how you spend your time? I encourage you to prayerfully consider how you are investing your life. Like Priscilla, are you willing to lay your life down for the glory of God and sharing

the Good News of Jesus? How can you take control of your time to better steward it for God’s purposes?

WHAT THE LORD IS SAYING TO ME TODAY:

ACTIVATING PRAYER:

God, I thank You for who You made me to be. I am grateful, Lord, that You created me and You loved me enough to send Your Son to lay His life down as an atoning sacrifice for my sins. I am thankful for the guidance and empowerment of the Holy Spirit. Lead me and guide me into Your perfect will. Right now, I ask You to bring to mind anything I am doing that is drawing me away from Your plan and show me what should take its place. Call me out, Lord! You have told me in Your Word that you created me to do good works, which You already prepared for me to do! I want to do those things! Help me, Lord! I love you and pray all this in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Day 4: Junia

LEGACY



POSITIONING PRAYER:

God, I love You. Thank You for this day and the opportunity to hear from You through the Holy Spirit and Your Holy Word. I am so grateful to be able to hear from You and to serve You. Speak to me like only You can today. In Jesus' name, Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING:

Romans 16:7, Titus 1:6-8, Proverbs 31:30

DEVOTIONAL:

Scripture does not give us many details about Junia, other than she was a highly respected believer who put her faith in Christ even before Paul. Like Junia, our reputation precedes us. For the most part, we get to determine what that looks like. As Christ followers, we are to live our lives above reproach. If we consistently live our lives for the Lord with integrity, our reputation not only speaks for itself but we build a legacy.

We all know of women who have made an incredible impact on the lives of others, maybe even you! If you have not had this experience, find a mentor. You will not regret it!

God gifted me the chance to have a friend in Debbie. Debbie loved the Lord and had a heart for children and their mothers. She loved people in such a way that everyone felt like her favorite! Her relationship with the Lord was evident, and she exuded His presence. Because of this, Debbie was offered the opportunity to head up the moms' ministry at my church. We had no idea how well God had gifted this woman. Debbie started the ministry when she was 69, but she had the energy and passion of a 20-year-old. She poured love into countless women and had a God-sized vision for the ministry. She laid a solid foundation, and the ministry began serving those who needed to know the tangible love of God.

The Lord called Debbie to heaven after she turned 70. It seemed premature to the many who had experienced her love. She left a legacy that impacted generations of people, and those she mentored are being called to step in and continue that service of love. While on Earth, her reputation preceded her. She was compassionate, loving, passionate, and she loved the Lord. People knew that about her. Her reputation opened doors for her to help and love more people. Even though she is now gone, her legacy of love continues.

Here are a few questions to help you reflect on what God is saying to you:

- What has God been putting in my heart to do?
- What do I want to be known for in this life?
- What can I do now to build a legacy that will live on after I go to heaven?

WHAT THE LORD IS SAYING TO ME TODAY:

ACTIVATING PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I thank You for Your Word. Thank You for all the incredible women who have gone before me. Let me hear from You, Lord. If there are inconsistencies in my life that need to change, I ask You to work in me to both will and do Your good pleasure. Give me the strength and accountability to obey You and glorify Your name. Like Junia, I want to be known for loving You. I ask for the wisdom and strength to do what it takes. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Day 5: Making an Impact



POSITIONING PRAYER:

God, I love you. Thank You for this day and the opportunity to hear from You through the Holy Spirit and Your Holy Word. I am so grateful to be able to hear from You and to serve You. Speak to me like only You can today. In Jesus' name. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING:

Romans 16:7; Revelations 12:11, 1 Peter 4:1-11

DEVOTIONAL:

I hope you enjoyed this look into the women Paul honored. I encourage you to continue your study into the women leaders of the Bible. The Holy Spirit is very intentional to acknowledge and honor women in the Scriptures for their roles in the work of the Lord. There is power in testimony, and we can all glean much as we consider what God deemed important to acknowledge for posterity. It is a good reminder to us that we will all give account to the Lord for our actions and attitudes.

Let's look at other women the Apostle Paul greeted and commended in Scripture. As you read the verses that mention these women, make a note of the character trait or action for which they are celebrated. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you insight on this, as not all are immediately apparent. Some even receive loving correction from Paul while he is commending them.

Apphia (Phm 1:2) _____

Chloe (1 Co 1:11) _____

Claudia (2 Tim 4:21) _____

Eunice (2 Tim 1:5) _____

Euodia (Philippians 4:2-3) _____

Syntyche (Philippians 4:2-3) _____

Lois (2 Tim 1:5) _____

Lydia (Acts 16:11-15, 40; Phil 1:1,3-6) _____

Nympha (Colossians 4:15) _____

Mary (Romans 16:6) _____

Persis (Romans 16:12) _____

Rufus' Mother (Romans 16:13) _____

Tryphena (Romans 16:12) _____

Tryphosa (Romans 16:12) _____

Day 6&7: Review



SCRIPTURE READING:

Romans 16

It's time to review this week's devotions. What has the Lord been saying to you?

- **Consider the people Paul greets in Romans 16 and notice what commendations he has for each of them.**
- Has the Lord convicted you of anything? If so, confess it to Him and set your mind and heart to think and act rightly.
- Has the Lord encouraged you in some way? Write down His thoughts toward you so you can remember His great love for you when times get tough.
- Has the Lord given you a glimpse of how He wants to work in and through you? Write this down as well, ask Him to reveal more to you, and listen for His response!

WHAT THE LORD IS SAYING TO ME THIS WEEK:

We also encourage you to fully participate in a local fellowship of believers. If you are not connected with one, ask the Lord to guide you to a church or group of believers where you can grow in your faith, serve with others, and let His light shine through you!

WEEK 3:

Lessons from

Miriam's

God Story

BY ALISSA GUSTAFSON



This week we will look at various aspects of Miriam's story and make application to our lives today. Before you begin each day, quiet your heart and ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you. You can use the positioning prayer, or your own words, to focus your attention on the Lord, prepare your heart, and expect to receive a word from Him.

Day 1: Boldness



POSITIONING PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I come to You now with hunger to hear Your Word to me today. As I quiet my heart, give me ears to hear what You are saying and a heart to understand and be transformed. In Jesus' name I ask and believe I will receive from You. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING:

Exodus 1:15-2:10, Proverbs 28:1, Psalm 138:3, Hebrews 4:16

DEVOTIONAL:

When I was a young girl, I wasn't really interested in playing dress-up or with dolls like most girls. I spent my days devouring Nancy Drew books and watching the TV show "Charlie's Angels." I would spend my time convincing my friends to play detective. We'd take turns on which "Angel" to be. We'd solve the mystery and save the day! Some of my favorite childhood memories still involve those moments of rushing around and having all the answers!

At the time of Moses' birth, there weren't a lot of stories about women playing a vital role, much less being the heroes. When Pharaoh tried to destroy the Hebrew babies, he only focused on the male babies. He didn't think the females were of any consequence. Yet God didn't see them that way. He saw them as a vital part of His will being accomplished.

Miriam was probably right there as Jochebed gave birth to Moses. She was old enough to understand that Pharaoh would order him killed. She had probably heard the story of the brave Hebrew midwives being called before Pharaoh for not killing the male Hebrew babies. She knew this was a desperate time.

For three months, she helped her mother hide her baby brother. She watched as Jochebed built a small ark and carefully placed Moses by the river bank. Then she took her turn in God's plan. She became Moses' protector.

As she watched over Moses, she saw the daughter of the Pharaoh and her entourage come toward the river. I'm sure Miriam's anxiety rose the closer the princess came to Moses. Closer and closer. . .you can almost see Miriam inching closer and closer as well. Then the vital moment arrives: the ark is spotted! Miriam's heart was probably ready to burst out of her chest! Here is the daughter of the man who wants her baby brother killed. What is going to happen now?

Miriam is close enough to hear the conversation clearly by this point. She hears the princess say, "This is a Hebrew baby." What should she do now? The princess could order him to be killed, but she hasn't done so yet. Miriam takes a breath, then boldly steps forward and asks, "Shall I go and get one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?" I can just see Miriam holding her breath waiting for the

Day 2: God, Our Protector & Deliverer



POSITIONING PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I come to You now with a hunger to hear Your Word to me today. As I quiet my heart, give me ears to hear what You are saying and a heart to understand and be transformed. In Jesus' name, I ask and believe I will receive from You. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING:

Exodus 14-15:21, Psalm 20:7, Psalm 18:2, 2 Timothy 1:7

DEVOTIONAL:

Have you ever faced an impossible situation? One where there seems to be no way out? The Israelites can identify. They had been told to gather their belongings quickly and make a fast exit out of Egypt. Then they came to the Red Sea, and Pharaoh changed his mind and sent an army after them. They were between a rock of an army and an ocean of a hard place.

Up to this point, all of God's miracles had protected them from the disasters surrounding them. They watched as the Egyptians battled frogs, locusts, and even death. Yet it hadn't touched them. But now here they were facing down an army. They had no weapons. They had never even fought in a battle before. A few hours before they had been marching boldly out of Egypt. But there had been no army pursuing them at that time.

Miriam is in the middle of this crowd. She can hear the fears and feel the desperation. She is used to being the one protecting her brother, but now she's among the thousands looking to him for direction. Then she hears her brother's voice ring out over the crowd: *"Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the LORD will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still."* (Exodus 14:13-14 NIV)

What? Can this even be possible? How in the world is God going to defeat a whole army?

We all know the story. God splits the sea and the Israelites walk through on dry ground. I can just see Miriam as she begins to feel the wind blow and hears a noise behind her back. The astonishment on her face as she turns and sees the water dividing, revealing a dry path. Her first steps were probably tentative; after all, this can't really be happening, can it?

But it did happen. God used the very sea that had been their barrier to destroy their enemies. Miriam and the Israelites were ecstatic! Many sermons and songs have been written about that moment. All praising God's mighty deliverance in an impossible situation. Moses and Miriam were the first in a long line of worshippers to sing praise to God about His deliverance of the Israelites. Miriam picks up a timbrel

Day 3: Restored



POSITIONING PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I come to You now with a hunger to hear Your Word to me today. As I quiet my heart, give me ears to hear what You are saying and a heart to understand and be transformed. In Jesus' name, I ask and believe I will receive from You. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING:

Numbers 12, Romans 2:4, 2 Corinthians 7:10

DEVOTIONAL:

Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses, God's servant, for marrying a Cushite woman. God is angry and confronts them for their sedition. He then leaves and strikes Miriam with leprosy.

Moses had been married for a while. Why would Miriam and Aaron choose now to complain about his choice in a wife?

Let's look back one chapter. In Numbers 11, we see the 70 elders appointed and anointed. Miriam and Aaron watched as these leaders were chosen, gathered, and had the Spirit of God rest upon them. And they were not among the ones chosen for this task. Aaron was the High Priest and Miriam had been a leader of all the women. Yet they were not counted among this special group of leaders.

What does this have to do with Moses' marriage? For that we need to look at Exodus 18. It was Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, who had first suggested this council of elders. If Moses had not married Zipporah, then Jethro wouldn't have been around to make the suggestion in the first place. Miriam and Aaron may have been displacing blame for their jealousy of being left out.

Either way, God wasn't having it. He strikes Miriam with leprosy in punishment. Even after Moses prays for her healing, God sends her out of the camp for the required time. One thing that strikes me about this passage is that it doesn't say God instantly healed her. Leprosy is an infection that primarily affects the skin, nerves, upper respiratory system, and eyes. So it affected her vision, her breath, and everything she felt.

While her healing was being completed, she had to stay apart from the camp. I wonder if she spent her time longing to see clearly again—not only physically, but spiritually as well. She had felt left out, yet because of her response, she had now been put out. The Israelites were waiting on her completed healing as well. They stayed put until her time had come.

Some may question why God only struck Miriam and not Aaron, too. The reason may have been God's mercy. The priest was the one designated to declare someone free of leprosy. If Aaron had been struck, as

Day 4: Being Made Holy



POSITIONING PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I come to You now with a hunger to hear Your Word to me today. As I quiet my heart, give me ears to hear what You are saying and a heart to understand and be transformed. In Jesus' name, I ask and believe I will receive from You. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING:

Numbers 20:1, Numbers 13:26-29, Romans 6:22, 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13

DEVOTIONAL:

Miriam died in Kadesh. The Israelites had been here before. When God first tried to send them into the Promised Land, He positioned them in Kadesh. They refused to go in, and God sent them around the wilderness for a few decades. Then He brought them back to Kadesh. Why Kadesh?

The Israelites attached a great significance to names. God was even known to change the names of some key players in His great plan. Unfortunately for Miriam, her name meant "rebellion."¹ At one point, she had rebelled against God's plan and suffered the consequences. She had years to think about that moment before her death. We never again hear of her rebelling after that point. She had been brought back into relationship and stayed there for the rest of her life.

How do we know that? Because of where she died. She died in Kadesh, which means "Holy."² She may have had her rebellious moments, but God lovingly brought her back to a place of holiness. She went from being an Egyptian slave to willingly serving God where He placed her. He established her in holiness.

I don't know about you, but I identify with Miriam. I've had my moments of rebellion. I've felt separated from God by my actions. I have felt that the world could see where I messed up. I have felt out of reach. But each time God has reached out and brought me back in. He has healed me of all that could keep me from Him. He is making me increase in love so that my heart may be established blameless in holiness. It's not because of anything that I've done, but in spite of what I've done.

Beloved daughter, you are never beyond God's reach. His greatest desire is to be in relationship with you. If you allow Him, He will bring you from that place of rebellion and distance. He not only brought Miriam and the Israelites back to that place of holiness, He gave the Israelites a second chance at entering the Promised Land. He can do that for you, too.

¹<https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h4813/kjv/wlc/0-1/>

²<https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h6946/kjv/wlc/0-1/>

Day 5: Legacy



POSITIONING PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I come to You now with a hunger to hear Your Word to me today. As I quiet my heart, give me ears to hear what You are saying and a heart to understand and be transformed. In Jesus' name, I ask and believe I will receive from You. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING:

Micah 6:4, 1 Chronicles 6:3, Exodus 15:17, Deuteronomy 4:20, 1 Peter 1:3-5

DEVOTIONAL:

The Cambridge Dictionary defines “legacy” as “money or property that you receive from someone after they die” or as “something that is a part of your history or that remains from an earlier time.”³ Many people wonder about what type of legacy they will leave behind for posterity. What kind of impact will they have on those around them?

Miriam was born in a time when women generally weren't valued. Their contributions to society were often overlooked or forgotten. No one considered that a woman would have a legacy to leave behind. Yet Miriam did.

In 1 Chronicles, she's included in the genealogy in a time when women were rarely included. In Micah 6:4, we see that God had sent her along with Moses and Aaron to the Israelites. He counted her as one of the leaders that He sent ahead of them as they left Egypt, when speaking to their later generations. He gave her a legacy and made her story part of the inheritance.

Through her life, she was a watcher, a protector, a bold daughter, a worshipper, and yes, even a leader. Yet like us, she wasn't perfect and made mistakes.

Have you, like Miriam, made mistakes that separated you from God? Do you feel your errors have invalidated your legacy and left you with nothing to leave behind? Take heart from Miriam's story. God lovingly reconciled her into relationship with Him and led her to a place of holiness and significance. Then He counted her story as part of the inheritance of Israel.

He has plans of an inheritance for us as well. It's the story of His work in our lives. A story filled with His mercy and birthing us into a living hope.

³<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/legacy>

Day 6&7: Review



SCRIPTURE READING:

Exodus 15:1-21

It's time now to review this week's devotions. What has the Lord been saying to you?

- **List some truths from Miriam's song that apply to you even today.**
- Has the Lord convicted you of anything? If so, confess it to Him and set your mind and heart to think and act rightly.
- Has the Lord encouraged you in some way? Write down His thoughts toward you so you can remember His great love for you when times get tough.
- Has the Lord given you a glimpse of how He wants to work in and through you? Write this down as well, ask Him to reveal more to you, and listen for His response!
- Turn on your favorite worship music and spend time letting Him know how much He means to you.

WHAT THE LORD IS SAYING TO ME THIS WEEK:

We also encourage you to fully participate in a local fellowship of believers. If you are not connected with one, ask the Lord to guide you to a church or group of believers where you can grow in your faith, serve with others, and let His light shine through you!

WEEK 4:

Lessons from
Naomi's
God Story

BY MARLENE YEO WITH JODIE CHIRICOSTA



This week we will explore the tremendous heartache and life changes Naomi experienced and how God restored her. Before you begin each day, quiet your heart and ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you the areas of loss in your own life so you, too, can be healed and restored. You can use the positioning prayer, or your own words, to focus your attention on the Lord, prepare your heart, and expect to receive a word from Him.

Day 1: God Is Not Against You



POSITIONING PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I come to You now with a hunger to hear Your Word to me today. As I quiet my heart, give me ears to hear what You are saying and a heart to understand and be transformed. In Jesus' name, I ask and believe I will receive from You. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING:

Ruth 1:1-14, Romans 8:31, Psalm 139:1-10

DEVOTIONAL:

"No my daughters; for it grieves me very much for your sakes that the hand of the Lord has gone out against me!"

It is not uncommon when we go through trauma or loss that we have thoughts and feelings that God must be against us to allow such a thing to happen. After all, He could have prevented it.

Naomi's story is one of grievous loss and heartache. It begins with the loss of community, then the death of her husband, followed by the loss of her two sons 10 years later. In biblical times, when this happened to a wife and widowed mother, it meant they had no hope for the future. Today, widowhood does not necessarily equate to a future with no hope, but widows still face hardship and heartache.

Maybe you are not widowed or have not experienced the death of a child. But no one escapes the deep sorrow that accompanies loss. Any kind of crisis, tragedy, disaster, or grievous disappointment imposes traumatic feelings of loneliness, fear, and anxiety. We are marked by the experience and are left to face devastating heartache and disappointment, which can cause emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual debilitation.

We are told time heals, but that is not truth. Only God heals. Here's the interesting thing about heartache: time camouflages pain. Like a grain of sand in the oyster, we build layer upon layer to cover over the irritation. We think we have moved on in healing because we no longer feel the irritation of the pain every day. But it can come in waves on the anniversary of the loss or when a memory is triggered.

Many Christians are walking wounded. They may smile on the outside but on the inside, just below the radar, are wounds, unfinished business, deep regret, and disappointment. The devastation of a broken marriage ending in divorce, the battle lost over cancer, the life taken by addiction, terror of pandemics, and more have left so many people reeling.

How does one recover from such loss? How did Mary the mother of Jesus recover from seeing the horror of her Son brutally beaten and murdered for the sins of humanity? It begins with opening your

Day 2: God Gives a Companion for the Journey



POSITIONING PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I come to You now with a hunger to hear Your Word to me today. As I quiet my heart, give me ears to hear what You are saying and a heart to understand and be transformed. In Jesus' name, I ask and believe I will receive from You. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING:

Ruth 1:15-22; Psalm 46:1-5; John 14:15-18; Psalm 56:3-11

DEVOTIONAL:

Ruth did not cling to her mother-in-law because of her own need. She clung to her with a sacrificial love that was more concerned with care for Naomi. You can hear it in Ruth's response to Naomi in verses 16-17, as she pledges to stay with her to the very end.

God gave Naomi a loyal companion in her daughter-in-law. Initially, however, Naomi saw Ruth as bereft and empty too. It is true, Ruth also understood the pain of widowhood, but the difference with Ruth is she let the pain refine her, not define her. Two people can go through the same experience and react so differently. Ruth saw God as her way out of the valley, and she walked forward into the unknown with confidence in Him. Naomi returned home defeated and with bitter expectations of rejection.

When we get lost in our loss, it is hard to perceive the Lord who rescues the lost. We forget He is our ever-present help in trouble. God provided Naomi a companion to walk alongside her, but also to lead her through the valley into a place of harvest and provision once again. And He has provided you with someone, too—His Holy Spirit, who is with you forever. It may take time, but God is faithful to see you through the loss and bring you to a place of harvest again in your life, if you are willing to release it to Him.

We know that we are to look to Him for our help, not to people. But there may be times, when walking through the valley of the shadow of death (facing tremendous loss and pain), God will send a companion of His choosing to walk beside you. It may not be until after you have walked through it to the other side of grief that you recognize they were sent by God.

didn't already know, but He still listened as they proceeded to give their story of woe. After listening, He began to answer all the questions in their hearts. They invited Him to stay and eat with them and, as they continued to listen, He opened their eyes to reality. It is not until we invite the Lord to abide with us that we have a witness of His peaceful presence.

He wants us to talk to Him about the situation and our feelings.

"Casting all your care upon Him for He cares for you." (1 Peter 5:7)

He knows you are hurting. Psalm 56:8 tells us He sees your tears and collects each one you have shed in a bottle.

It is normal and natural to grieve loss, but when grief overwhelms you with hopelessness and you see no way forward—it is time to resist the devil's scheme and run into the arms of Jesus.

Satan would have you cling to the grief and make you lose your identity. But God gave you authority to resist the devil, who comes only to kill and destroy. When you submit to God, and resist the devil, he will flee (James 4:7). Then the fullness of life can be restored to you.

Don't allow Satan to rob you of your hope for your future. Instead, ask the Lord to open your eyes and give your heart understanding, like He did for the disciples in Emmaus. Let His presence minister His peace to your heart.

ACTIVATING PRAYER:

Father, I acknowledge my deep sorrow and grief. By faith, I declare that I will not let that become my identity. I submit myself to You. I resist the devil and his lie of hopelessness. Instead, I put my hope firmly in You. Open my eyes to see the way forward. Give me an understanding heart. I choose to believe that You have a good plan for me and my family's future, and I give thanks to You even though I do not feel or see it now. I set my heart to receive what I cannot see. I will not "fake it until I make it," I will "faith it until I make it!" In Jesus' name. Amen.

Day 3: The Favor of God



POSITIONING PRAYER:

Lord, I want Your favor first and foremost, but I also expect to receive the favor of man, as written in I Samuel 2:26: *“And the child Samuel grew in stature, and in favor both with the LORD and men.”* I want the Kingdom relationships that You have for me and not those I choose for myself. You are the best judge of character. Protect me from those who would use me and direct me to those who You want to use in my life. In Jesus’ name. Amen

SCRIPTURE READING:

Ruth 2:10-13, 4:13-17; Romans 8:28; Jeremiah 29:11

DEVOTIONAL:

Naomi’s late husband was a relative of Boaz. Hearing of Ruth’s kindness toward Naomi, Boaz was moved with compassion and set Ruth up to bless her, commending her for her selfless love for Naomi. Even in the midst of Ruth’s own loss and grief, she had served and cared for her mother-in-law. The report of her dedication had reached the ears and touched the heart of Boaz. He was moved by her act of love.

Ruth was still young, with the hope of finding a new life with a new husband. But instead of pursuing the chance of a better future for herself, she took refuge in the Lord and chose to care for Naomi. Her selfless love positioned them both to benefit from the favor of both God and man.

The story of God’s favor unfolds as Boaz takes Ruth as his wife and she gives birth to a son named Obed. The women of the city spoke words of blessing to Naomi in Ruth 4:14-17, saying *“may his name be famous, a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age.”* They also praised Ruth, telling Naomi that she was better to her than seven sons.

This child Obed is the father of Jesse, the father of David, which makes Naomi the great, great grandmother of King David and in the lineage of Jesus Christ. Talk about redemption! I love how the story ends! As the Lord has promised to those who love Him, He turns everything around for good (Romans 8:28).

Some of us may not live to see the redemption of God manifested fully in our lifetime, but future generations will reap the blessing of our faith and obedience. Hebrews 11:13 says, *“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.”*

Day 4: Dependency



POSITIONING PRAYER:

I humble myself, Lord, and repent for trying to deal with my life on my own and in my own way. I don't want my way; I want Your way. Forgive me, Lord, for leaving You out of my healing journey. I renounce _____ (fill in the blank; for example, dependency on others; finding comfort in food, substance or shopping to anesthetize my pain; etc.) I break off self-blame for not knowing how to handle the pain, and I invite You into my mess to make me a message of Your healing love. In Jesus' name. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING:

I Kings 3:6-9, 4:29; Philippians 2:5-11; Ruth 3:1, 17; Job 1:13-22

DEVOTIONAL:

Humility and honor are the currency of heaven. And if we humble ourselves under God's mighty hand, He can work for good in the midst of our challenges or pain. Life may never look like it did before, but it can still be good again. God enlarges the heart to give wisdom and understanding to those who humble themselves.

When Naomi began looking beyond her own loss, she began to see a new future. In humility she released Ruth to also walk into a new future, shifting her dependency to the Lord. As she did, God made sure Naomi had all she needed as well.

In I Kings 3:6-9, Solomon acknowledged his dependency on God and his need for understanding. His humble prayer of asking the Lord for wisdom and understanding was so he could discern what was good and evil and to care for the people well.

Because Solomon was humble and did not ask anything for himself, God granted his petition and gave above all he asked or imagined (I Kings 4:29). This does not mean we should not ask our Heavenly Father for what we need; but He is clear that the priority must be to seek first His kingdom and His righteousness.

"If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!" (Matthew 7:11)

Jesus emptied Himself of His privileges and rights as the Son of God (Philippians 2:5-11). When we hurt, we may feel we have the right to be angry at whoever caused the pain or angry at God for not preventing it. When we remain in this broken state, we will not operate in the Holy Spirit's gifts of wisdom, knowledge, and discernment, needed not only for our life but also for others. Without healing and deliverance, our perceptions are distorted by our pain. But when we humbly ask God for wisdom, healing, and restoration, depending on Him alone, He will bring new life into areas we did not think possible.

Day 5: A New Identity



POSITIONING PRAYER:

Lord, no matter the cost, I choose to let You show me the deep recesses of my heart and mind where things from the past are still at work in my soul. I welcome You, Holy Spirit, to uncover and expose whatever is needful that I may walk in true freedom and joy. May my life be a testimony to the world of Your goodness and faithfulness. In Jesus' name. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING:

Ruth 1:19-21, 4:13-17; Psalm 139:16-18, 23-24; Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

DEVOTIONAL:

Upon her arrival into Bethlehem, the people were excited to see Naomi, but she was different. She had left her homeland a happy woman and was returning with heavy sadness. The grieving in her soul changed how she saw herself, life, and God. She declared bitterness over her life and claimed that God had afflicted her and left her empty.

But Naomi was a daughter of the Most High God and, as she returned home to Bethlehem, she was also returning to a community of God's people. It was there that she returned to corporate worship and was encouraged in her faith. Her friends wept with her, loved her, encouraged her, and ultimately rejoiced when God restored her hope and purpose. It was in her return to worship and community where her identity and future were restored.

Many who suffer tragic loss, of any kind, become a different person from that moment on. They allow the heartache to redefine who they are and live the rest of life with a sad countenance. They disguise feelings and thoughts and even accuse God of being distant, unfair, and uncaring. But that is not true. He is the One who counts you precious in His sight. His loving thoughts about you outnumber the sand. There is nowhere you can go that His love cannot reach.

Wise King Solomon wrote that there is an appointed time for everything. There is a time to weep and mourn, but we must not stay there. We must allow God to restore us so we can also experience again the times of laughing and dancing. We must learn to discern the times and seasons of life like the sons of Issachar (1 Chronicles 12:32).

To know God as Father, Christ as Savior, and Holy Spirit as Teacher and Comforter is the single, most essential thing in all the world. God is the One who can quiet the questions in our heart and reveal His purposes for you.

In the past few years, the world has gone through corporate trauma, suffering tremendous loss. It's

Day 6&7: Review



SCRIPTURE READING:

The Book of Ruth

It's time to review this week's devotions. What has the Lord been saying to you?

- ***Read through all four chapters of Ruth, paying special attention to Naomi's life. List the ways God provided for and restored her.***
- Has the Lord convicted you of anything? If so, confess it to Him and set your mind and heart to think and act rightly.
- Has the Lord encouraged you in some way? Write down His thoughts towards you so you can remember His great love for you when times get tough.
- Has the Lord given you a glimpse of how He wants to work in and through you? Write this down as well, ask Him to reveal more to you, and listen for His response!

WHAT THE LORD IS SAYING TO ME THIS WEEK:

We also encourage you to fully participate in a local fellowship of believers. If you are not connected with one, ask the Lord to guide you to a church or group of believers where you can grow in your faith, serve with others, and let His light shine through you!

WEEK 5:

Lessons from

*Abigail's
God Story*

BY NATASHA MILLER



This week, we will look at Abigail's predicament and make application to our lives today. Before you begin each day, quiet your heart and ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you. You can use the positioning prayer, or your own words, to focus your attention on the Lord, prepare your heart, and expect to receive a word from Him

Day 1: The Power of Honor



POSITIONING PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I deeply desire to walk in alignment with You and to know You. Teach me Your ways. Bless me with understanding. Allow Your wisdom to guide my every thought, word, and deed. Thank You for speaking to me as I study Your Word. In Jesus' name. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING:

1 Samuel 25:2-44

DEVOTIONAL:

My children have started to spontaneously honor me with their lips. I awake in the morning to their compliments and go to bed at night covered with their words of blessing. I never knew the power of this honor until I became the recipient of their positive words.

Their compliments overwhelm me and give me energy to do more and more for them. They have learned that they experience an energetic smiling Mommy when they fill their mouths with honor.

Honor shifts relationships and situations. When we choose to honor, peace invades and everything moves in a positive life-giving direction. Dishonor causes the opposite results: destruction, devastation, and death. Abigail's story emphasizes the power of honor.

David, while living in the wilderness, had been protecting Nabal's shepherds and flocks to such an extent that he and his men were described as a "wall" that provided such protection that the shepherds *"were not hurt nor did [they] miss anything."* Instead of raiding the flocks for food, he preserved them so that the shepherds and sheep flourished. David honored Nabal and literally created wealth for him without asking for anything in return. This is an example of sacrificial wealth-creating honor.

Then, during a Feast Day, David via representatives asked Nabal for some food. Nabal's response was dishonorable, disrespectful, and insulting. His response was such a slap in the face that David armed 400 of his men to kill every male in Nabal's family. Nabal's dishonor was about to bring death, devastation, and destruction upon his household.

Fortunately, Abigail, Nabal's wife, had an honorable servant who witnessed the exchange, knew it was wrong, and reported it to Abigail. The brave servant honored David and his men by reporting to Abigail the truth. This is an example of honor brought about by taking the role of an advocate of truth.

Abigail, being a woman of honor, worked in haste to correct her husband's wrong. Knowing his dishonorable state of mind, she did not consult him. She did the right thing by quickly gathering food and jumping on a donkey to intercept David. She honored David with her behavior by *"[falling] on her face before David and*

Day 2: God Will Avenge



POSITIONING PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I deeply desire to walk in alignment with You and to know You. Teach me Your ways. Bless me with understanding. Allow Your wisdom to guide my every thought, word, and deed. Thank You for speaking to me as I study Your Word. In Jesus' name. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING:

1 Samuel 25:2-44; Romans 2:6; Deuteronomy 32:35

DEVOTIONAL:

Many times, our first instinct is to lash out in revenge. Somebody did us wrong, WE will set it straight. Anger, righteous indignation, pain, embarrassment can all contribute to our response. But there is a better way.

David was right; Nabal had repaid him evil for good. David had directly increased Nabal's wealth by acting as a private security detail for every shepherd and sheep. In response to this, Nabal denied knowing David and even called him a mere run-a-way slave. David, the King's son-in-law, known to be a victorious warrior in battle, an unknown? No, Nabal with his words and denial of David's request for food, had unleashed insults and disrespect upon David. This was evil.

David's warrior instincts went into high gear. In a flash, Nabal had become an enemy and now his household would deeply suffer. Around 400 men *"girded on [their] sword"* with the intent to kill.

Then, Abigail, with her wisdom and honor, turned David's heart. She brought gifts: *"two hundred loaves of bread, two skins of wine, five sheep already dressed, five seahs of roasted grain, one hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs."* She took the lowly position as she *"fell on her face before David, and bowed down to the ground."* She began to speak against Nabal's actions, to ask for forgiveness, to declare the promises of God over David's life, and to give advice. Her words reminded David who he ultimately was and that he did not need to avenge himself, the Lord would avenge him.

And, in fact, the Lord did avenge David. *"The Lord struck Nabal, and he died,"* and David *"proposed to Abigail, to take her as his wife."* *"The Lord [had] returned the wickedness of Nabal on his own head,"* and David married a wise and honorable woman. God will avenge.

Day 3: Separate Yourself from Foolishness



POSITIONING PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I deeply desire to walk in alignment with You and to know You. Teach me Your ways. Bless me with understanding. Allow Your wisdom to guide my every thought, word, and deed. Thank You for speaking to me as I study Your Word. In Jesus' name. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING:

1 Samuel 25:2-44; Romans 14:17-18; 1 Peter 4:8

DEVOTIONAL:

Being married to a fool is hard. Being irreversibly connected with foolish people through bloodlines and community is hard. How do you live an honorable life before God and deal with fools?

Abigail represents a perfect example of how to live a Kingdom lifestyle while navigating the effects of idiots. Literally, her husband's name Nabal means "fool."¹ He lived up to his name; even his servants called him in KJV a "son of Belial," meaning a "good for nothing"; in other translations, like NKJV, he is called a "scoundrel." Nabal's foolish decision to insult David was not unique. He had a pattern of this behavior.

Abigail was able to exist in this environment because of her 1) faith, 2) joy, and 3) righteous behavior. Her faith, on display in her conversation with David, indicates a woman who trusted and had a relationship with God. Her joy, known by her name meaning "my source is joy,"² allowed her to righteously respond in wisdom to the situation. Joy, being her source, led her to righteous behavior; she was not paralyzed by anxiety, stress, or other carnal responses. These three things separated her from the foolishness of her husband.

Some may think, because Abigail went behind her husband's back, she wronged her husband. While he was partying, she was blessing David with food, humility, and godly advice. But Abigail did not wrong her husband. Walking in wisdom and love, she was protecting him and her whole household. Foolishness had blinded him, but she could see clearly and as his wife had the authority to cover his sin. The next day, after he was sober, she then informed him of her actions. Her actions were not selfish but intended to protect the whole household, even her husband. Nabal had no idea what devastation he was bringing down on them. His brashness invited the slaughter of all the males.

Abigail, because she knew right from wrong and good from evil, did not allow herself to be lulled into

¹<https://www.biblestudytools.com/lexicons/hebrew/nas/nabal-2.html>

²<https://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionary/abigail/>

Day 4: Value Discernment



POSITIONING PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I deeply desire to walk in alignment with You and to know You. Teach me Your ways. Bless me with understanding. Allow Your wisdom to guide my every thought, word, and deed. Thank You for speaking to me as I study Your Word. In Jesus' name. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING:

1 Samuel 25:2-44; Proverbs 3: 21-27

DEVOTIONAL:

Dishonesty runs rampant. It always unnerves me that someone can look me in the eyes and lie to my face. But people do it often. That's one of the reasons I love walking with the Lord. The Holy Spirit always leads me to know who to trust or what to trust in a moment. We need to know the best choice, the good choice, and the bad choice. The need for discernment is essential to detect liars and to make decisions. By valuing discernment, we will readily recognize and act on it.

Abigail needed discernment. One day, out of the blue, her servant tells her a treacherous story of blessing and betrayal and her husband is playing the villain. Her servant could have been lying to her. He could have misunderstood the exchange. There are several variables that could have qualified his side of the story as tainted. Quickly, Abigail had to assess the situation. History with her husband, Nabal, and history with this servant definitely helped her assessment. She had to take her servant's first-hand account of David's protection as truth. She had to believe that her husband would scream/revile/rail at David. She had to believe that because of what her husband did, now *"harm is determined against [Nabal] and all his household."* The stakes were high.

Truly, only God knows the heart. The Lord had blessed Abigail with discernment, likely honed over many years. Accordingly, in an emergency, she was able to discern that everything the servant said was truth and, as a result, she had to act fast. Praise God that she did! She intercepted David and around 400 men on their route to slaughter the men of her household. She not only discerned the trustworthiness of her servant, but she discerned what she needed to do: bring food, beg for forgiveness, and honor David and his relationship with the Lord. It was within her power to do this, so she did.

Without discerning all of this, a horrendous tragedy would have befallen them all. But because she had developed and valued discernment, she and her whole household were able to go to bed without fear that night because sudden disaster had been averted.

Day 5: Character Matters



POSITIONING PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I deeply desire to walk in alignment with You and to know You. Teach me Your ways. Bless me with understanding. Allow Your wisdom to guide my every thought, word, and deed. Thank You for speaking to me as I study Your Word. In Jesus' name. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING:

1 Samuel 25:2-42; Psalm 15; 2 Samuel 3:3

DEVOTIONAL:

Many measure the value of a person based on their financial worth. However, wealth and excellent character are not directly related. Wealth doesn't indicate excellent character, and vice-a-versa. In fact, wealth doesn't change a person, it just magnifies who the person really is.

Nabal stripped of his wealth was a mere fool; Nabal with his wealth was a dangerous fool. His foolishness caused his household to be an unsafe and hostile environment, with everyone always covering their backs. Abigail, however, was *"a woman of good understanding and beautiful appearance,"* with or without wealth! Character matters.

Nabal, who was financing a huge party, could have easily blessed David with food. It was already prepared. It was a small ask compared to the wealth he gained by having a private security force guarding his employees and goods day and night. If he had character, he would have not only given David food, but would have invited him and some men to the party. He may have even gifted David with some of his profits. But Nabal was a man of no character and, thus, put his whole household in jeopardy.

Abigail could have heard the news and rejoiced that David would kill her husband and she would finally be rid of him. She could have picked up her things, her favorite relatives, and servants, and left Nabal for a couple of days. She could have said that the Lord orchestrated this whole situation for her to escape her horrible husband and not lifted a finger. But Abigail was a woman of character. She understood that, as Nabal's wife, she was one flesh with him. So she readied herself to make the wrong right and even shield her husband from his own folly. She led her servants, faced an enraged "enemy," and turned David's heart in such a way that he called her "blessed." She did what was right. Character matters.

God honored Abigail's character. The Lord dealt with Nabal and then placed Abigail under the protection of a godly husband, David. God gave her a son, which was a sign of God's favor in her day. And, the Lord included her story in the Bible so, through the ages, people can learn from her! Character matters!

Day 6&7: Review



SCRIPTURE READING:

Psalm 1

it's time to review this week's devotions. What has the Lord been saying to you?

- **How do you see Psalm 1 played out in Abigail's life? How have you seen it played out in your own life?**
- Has the Lord convicted you of anything? If so, confess it to Him and set your mind and heart to think and act rightly.
- Has the Lord encouraged you in some way? Write down His thoughts towards you so you can remember His great love for you when times get tough.
- Has the Lord given you a glimpse of how He wants to work in and through you? Write this down as well, ask Him to reveal more to you, and listen for His response!
- Turn on your favorite worship music and spend time letting Him know how much He means to you.

WHAT THE LORD IS SAYING TO ME THIS WEEK:

We also encourage you to fully participate in a local fellowship of believers. If you are not connected with one, ask the Lord to guide you to a church or group of believers where you can grow in your faith, serve with others, and let His light shine through you!

WEEK 6:

Lessons from the
Book of
Proverbs

BY JODIE CHIRICOSTA



This week we will look at a few often-overlooked verses in Proverbs to glean some wisdom for our lives. There is so much the Holy Spirit wants to teach us from this book of wisdom! So, before you begin each day, quiet your heart and ask Him to speak to you. You can use the positioning prayer, or your own words, to focus your attention on the Lord, prepare your heart, and expect to receive a word from Him.

Day 1: Gaining Honor



POSITIONING PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I come to You now with hunger to hear Your Word to me today. As I quiet my heart, give me ears to hear what You are saying and a heart to understand and be transformed. In Jesus' name I ask and believe I will receive from You. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING:

Proverbs 11:16; Proverbs 22:4; Proverbs 3:13-18

DEVOTIONAL:

Dr. Mary Walker¹ is the only female Congressional Medal of Honor recipient to date. A medical doctor, she served the Union Army during the Civil War, first as a volunteer and eventually in a paid position. She was quite brave, skilled, and resilient, even when captured and held prisoner by the Confederate army for a time. She has rightly been recognized for her service to our nation.

Congressional Medals of Honor are awarded to military service members for deeds considered to be of a "distinguished level of valor." While prestigious, it pales in comparison to the honor spoken of in our scripture readings today. This is honor that the Lord bestows.

The word honor in these verses has a rich, full meaning that includes abundance, glory, splendor, dignity, and good reputation². It is conferred not for a single deed done, but for exemplary character in the eyes of the Lord.

Proverbs 11:16 relates that honor is given to the kindhearted woman; someone who is gracious to others; one who can consistently overlook the failings and foibles of others, treating them with kindness and generosity of spirit.

Proverbs 22:4 explains that honor is one of the wages of humility, which comes from the fear of the Lord. A gracious person understands their own standing before the Lord and is humbled by His forgiveness and love, and rightly extends that to others.

Proverbs 3:13-18 reveals that honor is an outcome of wisdom and true understanding. Those who know God and what pleases Him, and act accordingly, are the ones who have attained wisdom.

To gain honor, you must pursue wisdom from the Lord, recognizing His mercy in your life so you can graciously extend that to others.

Do you know anyone like that? If you do, you know they walk in the dignity, splendor, and abundance of the Lord! Let us all grow in the kindness, humility, and wisdom of God!

¹https://www.army.mil/article/183800/meet_dr_mary_walker_the_only_female_medal_of_honor_recipient

²<https://biblehub.com/hebrew/3519.htm>

Day 2: Don't Adorn a Pig!



POSITIONING PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I come to You now with hunger to hear Your Word to me today. As I quiet my heart, give me ears to hear what You are saying and a heart to understand and be transformed. In Jesus' name I ask and believe I will receive from You. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING:

Proverbs 11:22; 1 Samuel 21:10-15; 1 Peter 2:9; 1 John 1:9

DEVOTIONAL:

I went to Spring Break in Fort Lauderdale one year when I was in college. That was quite a few years ago, but even then, it was a place where generally decent people thought they could let loose their inhibitions and set aside discretion to have a good time. Thankfully the Holy Spirit kept my discretion intact, but alcohol and peer pressure got the better of many beautiful girls who played the fool for a little attention.

Today that kind of foolishness has been elevated to an artform and applauded. "Jersey Shore" and other Reality TV shows have glamorized indiscretion, with the goal of normalizing it. Sadly, for many, it has become normal.

But the indiscretion spoken of in Proverbs 11:22 does not only refer to partying, drunkenness, and sexual promiscuity. It refers to setting aside our good judgement and sound reasoning to attain approval, acceptance, security, etc., through any type of demeaning behavior.

When David went to Achish to escape Saul, he became afraid for his safety. He pretended to be insane so the Philistines would not see him as a threat. The word insane, in this story, comes from the same Hebrew word as "no discretion" in Proverbs ³. On the surface, David's ploy might seem like a wise strategy. But it was not. Instead of trusting in God and letting Him be glorified, David played the fool in front of his enemies. He demeaned himself, the one God had chosen to be King of Israel.

Most of us will never be in a situation that extreme, but indiscretion and madness of behavior can take many forms. Of course, drunkenness and promiscuity are among them. But so is wearing provocative clothing for anyone other than your husband; or flagrant outbursts of rage; or incessant gossip, backbiting, and slander. The list could go on, but hopefully you get the point. Remember, you are part of a royal priesthood, chosen to glorify God. When we demean ourselves, it does just the opposite – it's like a gold ring in a pig snout!

³ <https://biblehub.com/hebrew/2940.htm>

Day 3: A Wise Woman Builds Herself Up



POSITIONING PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I come to You now with hunger to hear Your Word to me today. As I quiet my heart, give me ears to hear what You are saying and a heart to understand and be transformed. In Jesus' name I ask and believe I will receive from You. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING:

Proverbs 14:1; Matthew 7:24-27; 1 Corinthians 6:18-20; 2 Corinthians 6:16-18; Psalm 18:2; John 1:14

DEVOTIONAL:

There are a lot of opinions about what defines a woman as wise. Some are horribly off the mark. Others sound pretty good. And a few even line up with Biblical truth! Can you tell the difference? Here are a few to test you.

- "A wise woman wishes to be no one's enemy; a wise woman refuses to be anyone's victim."
Maya Angelou
- "A wise woman knows how to summon her courage and do what is right, rather than what is easy." Suze Orman
- "A wise woman said 'I'm out of here' and lived happily ever after." Author Unknown
- "When a wise woman speaks, her words are gracious. Ask God to help you find words that speak life to those around you." Stormie Omartian

To know for sure, we'll explore the multifaceted meaning found in Proverbs 14:1. At face value it seems simple—build up your household—and that is certainly part of it. But there is more.

The word translated "builds" is the Hebrew word *banah*⁴. It can also be translated as: construct, fashion, fortify, have or obtain children, rebuild, and restore.

The word translated "house" is the Hebrew word *bayith*⁵. Among other things, this can be translated as daughter, palace, treasury, and temple.

In a fuller sense, this verse tells us that a wise woman constructs, fashions, fortifies (protects), and restores her temple, while a foolish woman destroys hers.

Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 6 that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. So, to be wise, we must build ourselves up and commit our bodies to the Lord as holy. Jesus taught that, to be wise, we must build our house or temple on solid rock. Of course, He is the Rock, our fortress and salvation; He is also the

⁴<https://biblescan.com/searchhebrew.php?q=banah>

⁵<https://biblehub.com/hebrew/1005.htm>

Day 4: A Wise Woman Builds Up Others



POSITIONING PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I come to You now with hunger to hear Your Word to me today. As I quiet my heart, give me ears to hear what You are saying and a heart to understand and be transformed. In Jesus' name I ask and believe I will receive from You. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING:

Proverbs 14:1; Ephesians 2:19-22; 1 Corinthians 3:10-17; Jude 1:17-23; 1 Thessalonians 5:11

DEVOTIONAL:

There is an oldies song that goes:

"... Wherever we go, whatever we do,
We're gonna go through it together.
We may not go far, but sure as a star,
Wherever we are, it's together.

"... Wherever I go I know he goes.
Wherever I go I know she goes.
No fits, no fights, no feuds
And no egos, Amigos, together!

"... Through thick and through thin,
All out or all in.
And whether it's win, place, or show.
With you for me and me for you,
We'll muddle through whatever we do.
Together, wherever we go.

"... We go in a group,
We tour in a troupe.
We land in the soup, but we know
The things we do, we do by threes.
A perfect team.
No, this way, Louise!
Together
Together
Wherever
Wherever
Together, wherever we go!"⁶

Yesterday we read that we, as individuals, are temples of the Holy Spirit. But God works in mysterious ways, and so in our reading today, we see that, together, the Body of Christ is also a holy temple for the Lord.

Paul tells us in Ephesians that we are fitted together to become a holy temple, a dwelling in which God's Spirit lives. And he warns us in 1 Corinthians 3:17a that *"if anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person."* Yikes! I don't want to be that person!

⁶ <https://genius.com/Jule-styne-together-wherever-we-go-lyrics>

Instead, I want to be a wise woman who builds up and fortifies God’s corporate temple; and I want to use materials that will withstand the test of fire. The Epistles give us a few clues how to do that:

1. Build yourself up by praying in the Holy Spirit, that way you will be able to do the other things.
2. Be merciful.
3. Encourage one another.
4. Be at peace and be patient with others.
5. Help the weak.
6. Do good for each other.
7. Value others and look out for their interests.

In the words of the song, be “a perfect team.” It actually sounds a lot like love! A wise woman loves others, building them up so that together we are a holy temple for the Lord!

WHAT THE LORD IS SAYING TO ME TODAY:

ACTIVATING PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, You are so wise. Thank You for inviting me to be part of Your family, part of Your holy temple. Show me the unique place and role You have for me so I can build others up as I am also built up. Forgive me for the times I have done damage to Your holy temple by unkind, unloving words or actions. Show me, even today, how I can build up and fortify other believers, so Your Spirit can dwell in us and shine through us. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Day 5: A Wise Woman Rejects Division



POSITIONING PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I come to You now with hunger to hear Your Word to me today. As I quiet my heart, give me ears to hear what You are saying and a heart to understand and be transformed. In Jesus' name I ask and believe I will receive from You. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING:

Proverbs 14:1; 2 Samuel 20: 1-2, 14-22; Romans 16:17-19; Ephesians 4:1-6

DEVOTIONAL:

God hates division among His people. In Romans, He says that those who cause divisions are not serving Him. They are serving their own appetites. And those who believe their divisive words are naïve.

In the middle of King David's reign over Israel, a troublemaker named Sheba rose up to divide the nation. He started bad-mouthing David throughout the whole country and gathering rebels together in a city called Abel. David sent his army to defeat Sheba and his followers and to restore peace and unity in the nation. The army used a battering ram on the wall of the city to break it open. I imagine the townspeople were confused and frightened for their lives!

But a wise woman saved the city. Instead of reacting in fear by cowering in the corner or crying out for people to take up arms against the invaders, she became a mediator of peace. She discovered that Sheba was leading a rebellion against the King and was using her city as his basecamp.

The woman spoke to David's army, convincing them that further attacks on the city would bring damage to all of Israel. She was clearly already a respected voice in her city because she quickly persuaded the men of the city to apprehend Sheba, execute him, and throw his head down to the waiting army.

Remember, Sheba was not alone in the city, he had gathered quite a few followers along the way. So apprehending him would not have been easy. But heeding the woman's wisdom, the men of the city banded together and did what was necessary to restore peace to the city and, ultimately, the whole nation.

You may not be positioned to influence a whole city right now, but you can certainly encourage unity and harmony among the fellowship of believers where God has placed you. And if you post on social media, you can be a voice of peace in the midst of increasingly caustic online posts.

Of course, there are times when honest discussion about hard topics is necessary. But when opposing views turn into divisions that make fellowship with one another difficult—it has gone too far. Hearsay and derogatory remarks are not appropriate.

In Ephesians, Paul exhorts us to *"make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of*

peace" (NIV). He says to approach every situation with complete humility, gentleness, patience, and love.

Do you know of a situation needing this approach? Ask the Lord to give you grace and wisdom to bring reconciliation to those involved.

WHAT THE LORD IS SAYING TO ME TODAY:

ACTIVATING PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I thank You that You are the Prince of Peace. Convict and forgive me, Lord, for anything I have done or said to stir up dissention. I want to be the bearer of Your peace everywhere I go and in every situation. Holy Spirit, give me wise strategies and the right words to say, with humility, when I encounter division. Set Your favor on me so that I will have the influence needed to bring godly resolution in times of disunity so we can fellowship again in love and glorify You! Even today, Lord, help me to be wise in all my interactions. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Day 6&7: Review



SCRIPTURE READING:

2 Corinthians 1:10-13, 12:12-31

It's time to review this week's devotions. What has the Lord been saying to you?

- **What are some of the other things satan uses to sow division in the Body of Christ? Remember, a wise woman rejects all of these!**
- Has the Lord convicted you of anything? If so, confess it to Him and set your mind and heart to think and act rightly.
- Has the Lord encouraged you in some way? Write down His thoughts towards you so you can remember His great love for you when times get tough.
- Has the Lord given you a glimpse of how He wants to work in and through you? Write this down as well, ask Him to reveal more to you, and listen for His response.
- Turn on your favorite worship music and spend time letting Him know how much He means to you.

WHAT THE LORD IS SAYING TO ME THIS WEEK:

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Join us in helping
Widows
& Orphans

We invite you to live what you believe!

*Become a part of a company of women
supporting widows and orphans in need.*

In response to James 1:27, which reads, “Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world,” Somebody Cares has a Widow and Orphan Fund.

Working with partner organizations, Somebody Cares provides for the special needs and supports the special gifts of orphans as well as widows in need who have served the Lord alongside their husbands.

Please join our number with a gift at www.HerGodStory.org!



Contributing Authors

JODIE CHIRICOSTA serves as the Vice President of Somebody Cares America/ International and is host of the "Her God Story" podcast. She has led Women's Ministry in her local church; consults on a variety of U.S. and international outreach initiatives; and serves on the Board of Somebody Cares America. Jodie is published in several print as well as on-line publications and speaks occasionally in the U.S.A. and overseas. She holds a D.Min. from West Coast Bible College and Seminary, a M.A. in Biblical Studies as well as Communication from Regent University. When she married Ron, a widower, Jodie was blessed with a family of six children: now grown. They live in Virginia.

ALISSA GUSTAFSON was raised in a Christian home as a preacher's kid. She currently serves with Somebody Cares America as the Development Specialist, which involves creating episode notes for podcasts and proofing articles. She is a devoted wife and homeschool mom. After struggling for years with depression, she shares her testimony with others about how God set her free in order to help others find freedom. In her spare time, she reads, plays with her dog, and cheers on the local baseball team. Go, Astros!

LAURA MOOREHEAD works as the Disaster Response and Project Manager at Somebody Cares America. She is a devoted wife, mother, and Lolli to her grandkids. In her spare time, she attends Liberty University for Apologetics, serves on the board for Her Heart Pregnancy Help Center and attends the Church on MastersRoad in Manvel, Texas.

NATASHA MILLER personally understands the power of prayer and God's promises concerning prayer. With a prayer focus, she launched The Haggai Project, with the goal of building individual believers as Houses of Prayer (www.TheHaggaiProject.org). Natasha believes the next Prayer Movement will be millions of nameless and faceless believers who are solid Sons of God because they have built themselves as Houses of Prayer. She holds a Master of Divinity and loves to lavish the Lord with spontaneous songs. She cherishes her husband and absolutely adores her children.

MARLENE YEO is the Founder/Executive Director of Somebody Cares New England and Founder/Director of He Cares for Me ministry. She also planted CCF Ministries of Haverhill, Mass., and co-planted Renaissance City Church in Bradford, Mass. Marlene has authored four books, including her latest, *Gain Understanding And Then We Will Talk*. She and her husband, Harry, have three children and 10 grandchildren.

HER GOD STORY

is a weekly podcast hosted by Jodie Chiricosta, taking you behind the curtain to find out the real story of some extraordinary women! Some of them you may already think you know; others serve in relative obscurity. But together we hear their struggles and triumphs, as we discover how much in common we all have.

In this devotional, we take a look at women in the Bible and journey through their God stories, exploring their lives through the eyes of our podcast guests and our Somebody Cares America staff. As you study their lives, we pray that you will encounter truth that will move you and set you free to be all God wants you to be!



JODIE CHIRICOSTA serves as Vice President of Somebody Cares America/International. Through her 25+ years of experience in disaster response, humanitarian relief and development, and Christian discipleship, as well as her continual involvement in a variety of community service and international outreach activities, she has long been an agent of positive change. She has also invested significant time in equipping and empowering local churches and believers across the U.S. to be tangible expressions of the love of God in their communities.

Jodie has been published in several printed as well as online publications and is an occasional conference speaker in the U.S.A. and overseas, covering a wide variety of topics facing churches, lay leaders, and individual believers. She holds a D.Min. from West Coast Bible College and Seminary along with an M.A. in Biblical Studies and an M.A. in Communication from Regent University. She resides in Chesapeake, Virginia, with her husband, Ron. They have five adult children.

