

Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all....
Proverbs 31:29

What a great testimony for a woman, and what a great goal for us as we study many of the women of the Bible. They will give us examples in many ways – some good, some not so good. May we learn from them to be able to aim for the highest goals in our lives, so that we can say with Paul,

I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.
1 Tim. 4:7

Our study is a combination of two studies plus added lessons at the end. This way we have enough studies with study questions to fill our calendar. They are not in chronological order. So, I made a chart that we will look at later in this lesson that tells us where these women fit into history in the Bible.

Remember to do the study questions for each lesson during the week before it is taught. We will follow our same format at before: Start at 9:30 with a few minutes of worship; hear the lesson taught by the teacher; then discuss a few study questions and any other questions or comments about the lesson; finish by 10:45.

Do you have a favorite? When I mentioned this study to one of my sons, he asked which woman was my favorite and quickly said, “You can’t pick Mary, everybody picks Mary.” My thoughts:

Deborah – brave leader, honored God

Miriam – I would ask, how did you and your brother Aaron let the trouble in?

Esther – her bravery, how God arranged everything and moved miraculously on behalf of His people; how it ties in with the history of Persia and of Israel at that time

Ruth – her loyalty to Naomi and to God; all about her is good; a Moabite brought into the righteous line of the Lord Jesus

Anna – held baby Jesus after waiting for many years

The Woman at the Well – very important; early in Jesus’ ministry; asked the right questions and shared her faith so that others could come to the Lord

All of the Women of the Bible, by Edith Deen (© 1955), has lots of good information and understanding of the subject. She wrote that we want to understand each woman’s spiritual experience, good or bad, and also her faith and relationship with God. These things determine so much of what a person’s life will be.

Edith Deen wrote how many women are in the Bible:

More than 50 women in the foreground

More than 150 named women in the background

More than 100 nameless women in the background

Our study this year does not include any purely “bad” women.

Eve sinned really badly, but even she and Adam tried later to make things right. We will learn important lessons from Eve.

But what about Lot’s wife, Delilah, Jezebel and others? We will not be studying these women this year.

There is a book about the bad women of the Bible – not for me!

**We will now take a look at the chart of the women we will study. ** (page 4)

Mary

Mary is one woman I would like to cover briefly today. We will probably study about Mary, Jesus’ mother, in a later lesson. But today I want to touch on a few things about her that seem interesting and relevant for today’s introduction.

Mary is the only woman who bridges for us the time from the Old Testament to the New. (There may be others, but they are not followed in the Bible.) She lived as part of the believing remnant waiting for Messiah. She was instrumental or present in Jesus’ life from His conception in her womb, to the Cross, His Resurrection, and His ascension. AND she was there when the Church began with the mighty move of the Holy Spirit.

Mary was probably a teenager when it all began. Yet, when the angel Gabriel told her what would take place, she asked in faith how this would happen. Perhaps a description of Mary’s whole life is in her words recorded in Luke 1:

And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

Luke 1:38

This is a lesson for us!

Several times things happened and words were spoken that amazed and perplexed Mary – and Joseph. What did Mary do?

But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. ...

51 ... [Jesus’] mother kept all these sayings in her heart.

Luke 2:19

May we, too, wait on the Lord when things seem puzzling. And may we keep His Word in our hearts and ponder it all. To ponder means to consider, and we are to first of all consider the Lord and His Word and then think about things in that light. May that be our goal this year.

Conclusion

As we launch into our study of Women of the Word, we will see where they fit into history, their families, and their communities. Be on the look-out for how they related to God and how that made a difference in their lives. What do we see in each one that teaches us about the Lord and how to walk more closely with Him? What examples do you find of what not to do? Paul wrote about this in 1 Corinthians:

*Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples:
and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.*

1 Corinthians 10:11

On the other hand, what examples do you see in these women of joy, serving the Lord and usefulness for His Kingdom?

Now in our time, each of us is a daughter of the King. Here is a glimpse of the blessings on us and our future hope. Because of that hope, we desire to look to Jesus and let Him change us to be more like Him.

*Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us,
that we should be called the sons [children] of God: therefore the world knoweth us not,
because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God,
and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear,
we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*

And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

1 John 3:1-3

As we look to Jesus to purify and change us, let us remember:

*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,
and a light unto my path.*

Psalm 119:105

Women of the Word – in Order on Timeline of History in the Bible

Eve	Genesis 3	4004 BC
Sarah	Genesis 11 and following	Born 1986 BC
Rebekah	Genesis 24 and following	About 1850 BC
Jochebed	Exodus 2 (bore Moses)	1570 BC
Miriam	Exodus 2 and following	1570 BC and following
Rahab	Joshua 2	About 1450 BC
Naomi	Ruth; (time of Judges 4)	1280-1271 BC
Ruth	Ruth; (time of Judges 4)	1280-1271 BC
Deborah	Judges 4	1280 BC
Hannah	1 Samuel 1 and 2	About 1150 BC
Michal	1 Samuel 14 and following	About 1060 BC
Abigail	1 Samuel 25	1060 BC
Shunamite Woman	2 Kings 4	890 BC
Esther	Esther	519-509 BC
(Mary)	(Gospels, Acts 1, 2)	04 BC – 30 AD and?
Anna	Luke 2	04 BC
Woman at the Well	John 4	27 AD
Woman of Faith	Matthew 9	29 AD
Mary and Martha	Luke 10	29 AD
Syrophoenician Woman	Matthew 15; Mark 7	29 AD
Dorcas	Acts 9	33 AD
Lydia	Acts 16	51 AD
Lois and Eunice	Acts 16; 2 Timothy 1	51 AD
Priscilla	Acts 18	52 AD
Phebe	Romans 16	59 AD
Eudias and Syntche	Philippians 4:2	63 AD

Women of the Word - Introduction

Questions

1. Who is your favorite? And/or who would you like to study more? Tell us why.
2. Do you think there is a difference between studying women of the Bible and studying men of the Bible? Explain.
3. How did the woman of Proverbs 31 excel?

29 Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.

30 Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain:

but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised.

31 Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates.

What were her rewards?

(v.30) What kind of praise would she receive?

(v.31) What does this mean: *Give her the fruit of her hands?*

4. What are you looking forward to in this year's study together?