

New Testament Women 1

A four week study

By Kathy Applebee



This Bible study is designed to be taught with the DRISAR format

D – Discuss. Break the class into small groups and allow each group to choose which discussion question(s) they wish to talk about. This allows for the formation of relationships as well as giving everyone in the group, if it is large, the opportunity to speak. Alternatively, the facilitator can lead a whole group discussion or do a four corner activity.

For four corners – prominently post one discussion question in each corner and allow the class to move to the question they want to discuss. This gives people an opportunity to move around and elect what and with whom they wish to discuss. Inform the groups they will have 5-7 minutes to discuss. They should choose a spokesperson to share one or two points with the entire group when you reassemble. Allow 5-7 minutes for discussion. Call the group together and have each group share briefly what they discussed.

Discussion can provide a warm up as well as activating prior knowledge about a topic.

R – Read. Read the scriptures.

I – Imagine. Imagine what life was like for this woman. How does it differ from modern day American women and their daily experiences? How are we alike? Good readers make pictures in their mind as they read. Some readers, even adults, need to be guided to make these mental images, particularly if the material has elements foreign to what they know or have experienced. Add supplementary materials for your specific mix of students including graphics, maps, power point or video clips to make the scriptures come alive.

S - Speculate. Apply what has been read and imagined to go beyond the surface. Allow people to brainstorm, keeping in mind we cannot know for sure anything the Bible does not explicitly tell us.

A - Apply. How does this apply to my life? Can I avoid a pitfall? Follow an example? Read the Bible with more clarity?

R- Reflect. Personal reflection time is important. Allow time for the class to journal silently or meditate briefly before prayer or pray silently before the facilitator or volunteer closes in prayer.

Please note that Eve, Esther and Ruth are three part series. Each contains a certain amount of overlap so they can be used individually. It is possible to divide a large class into three subgroups and have each group report back to the entire group about their particular “snapshot” of the woman. Then ask the class to synthesize the information. How has the woman changed over time? How have her important relationships, including the one with God, changed?

Life Stressor material

This can be used with each lesson or as a final culmination. Have students total up a Biblical woman's points on the chart. Discuss what kind and amount of stress these women were under. During class or reflection time or as homework, they may wish to total their own and compare and contrast with the Biblical characters.

Culmination

I asked the woman to think about which woman's story resonated the most with them and if they chose to, to share why. We discussed what one image or point stuck with them throughout the study. Having formed a relationship with the class, the facilitator should tailor the final summary to the group.

MARY

BEFORE YOU BEGIN: Discuss one or more of the following:

If you could bring any well known celebrity (sports, entertainment or art) to your house for dinner for a family member, who would it be? For yourself?

Who is the most important guest you have ever entertained? Did it come off without a hitch? Why or why not? Have you ever had a complete disaster with guests you'd like to share? What happened?

Which of these statements best describes you?

- I can handle crisis; it's the day to day stuff that gets me down.
- As long as things are going smoothly day to day, I make good choices but in a crisis, I could fall apart.
- I tend to take action; doing something is better than doing nothing.
- I wait and watch before choosing a course of action.

Luke 10: 38-42. Who invited Jesus? What did Mary do?

SPECULATE: If you were Mary, what kind of look would you have given Martha for asking Jesus to make you help? What is the difference between better and good?

READ: John 11: 1-3. Who is sick? **SPECULATE:** Why did they send word to Jesus?

READ verse 4-6. How does Jesus view this sickness? What is the relationship between Jesus and the family?

READ: verses 20. Why does Martha go? Why does Mary stay?

READ: verses 28-29. When Mary finally gets a personal invitation, how does she respond?

READ: verse 32.

SPECULATE what tone of voice Mary used. What does her body language convey?

READ: John 12: 1-3. What is Mary doing? Martha? NOTE: A pint of nard ointment today sells for \$176.00; a pint of the pure essential oil would cost \$591.00. It has an odor intensity of 5 out of 5.

READ: James 2:14-18, 24-26. Can we have faith OR deeds? Are both essential?

In the final analysis of the 3 incidences, do both Martha and Mary have faith, deeds? Are both listeners and speakers?

IF YOU HAVE TIME READ: John 12: 4-8.

MARTHA

BEFORE YOU BEGIN: Discuss one or more of the following:

When you extend the invitation to visitors, do you feel more responsible for the guests comfort than when another family member has extended the invitation?

Who is the most important guest you have ever entertained? Did it come off without a hitch? Why or why not? Have you ever had a complete disaster with guests you'd like to share? What happened?

Which of these statements describes you?

- I can handle crisis; it's the day to day stuff that gets me down.
- As long as things are going smoothly day to day, I make good choices but in a crisis, I could fall apart.
- I tend to take action; doing something is better than doing nothing.
- I wait and watch before choosing a course of action.

Luke 10: 38-42. Who invited Jesus? What did Mary do? Martha? What tone of voice do you think Martha used to ask Jesus her question? Why was she distracted? What is the difference between better and good?

READ: John 11: 1-3. Who is sick? SPECULATE: Why did they send word to Jesus?

READ verse 4-6. How does Jesus view this sickness? What is the relationship between Jesus and the family?

READ: verses 20. Why does Martha go? Why does Mary stay?

READ: verses 21-23.

SPECULATE: Why doesn't Martha just ask outright for Jesus to raise Lazarus? Why didn't Jesus answer "I'm going to raise him."?

READ: verses 24-27. When Martha speaks she goes well beyond the simple "yes" or "no" required. SPECULATE why.

Peter is the only other person recorded that declared Jesus the Christ and the son of God. (John called him the Lamb of God). READ: Romans 10:17. What does this tell us about Martha and listening to Jesus?

IF YOU HAVE TIME READ: John 12: 1-3. What is Mary doing? Martha? NOTE: A pint of nard ointment today sells for \$176.00; a pint of the pure essential oil would cost \$591.00. It has an odor intensity of 5 out of 5.

The Bleeding Woman

BEFORE YOU READ: Choose one or more of the following to discuss.

Share a time when you were ill. What caused this condition? How long were you like this? How did it disrupt your life?

Have you ever had a medical problem that seemed to take forever to get properly diagnosed and fixed? How did you feel physically? Emotionally? Which was harder to bear?

READ: Lev 15:19-30. How would having a bleeding disorder disrupt the life of an Israelite woman? How would it affect her ability to care for children? Run a household? Have a social life?

READ: Mt 9:18-23, Mark 5:24-34 and Luke 8:42-48. What ailment might the woman have had? How long had she suffered? What help had doctors been? Why did she seek out Jesus? When she was "caught" what was her reaction? (Mk 5:33, Lk. 8:47)

By touching Jesus, she would make him ceremonially unclean. Would you have done what she did, knowing this? Do we in our lives today, sometimes avoid Jesus because we might make him "unclean" by our "uncleanness"? Is that logical?

Read Acts 9:32-34 How long was the man bedridden? What difference might it have made had he been bedridden only 8 days or months?

What was the result, spiritually for others, that he was paralyzed for such a long time, and then healed by Jesus' name?

Read Romans 12: 1. What does it mean to be a living sacrifice? Imagine Jesus came to you in a dream and asked you to have a bleeding disorder for 12 years or to be paralyzed for 8 years so that one day he could be glorified by your healing. If you agreed to it, you would have no memory of the conversation and the entire time you would not know why you were suffering so. Speculate how you might respond. Is this scenario even a possibility? Would God ask such a “living sacrifice” of anyone?

How does not knowing why we might be suffering or ill or disabled affect us?

What from this woman’s story, pertains to us today?

Be ready to share a summary of what you read, discussed and concluded.

IF YOU HAVE TIME:

Read Isaiah 53: 1-5. In verse 4, it was prophesied Jesus would do what? How was this fulfilled when he healed in Matthew 8:16-17? What infirmities and sorrows has he borne for you?

The Crippled Woman

BEFORE YOU READ: Choose one or more of the following to discuss:

Share a time when you were on crutches or unable to function normally. What caused this condition? How long were you like this? How did it disrupt your life?

Have you ever known someone with severe arthritis? How did it affect their lives?

READ: Luke 13: 10-17. What was wrong with this woman? How long had she suffered this way? What was her reaction to being healed? The reaction of the synagogue ruler? The “people” (verse 17)

SPECULATE what life for her was like at this time. Physically? (No electricity, cars) Socially?

SPECULATE what your life would be like if you were to experience a similar condition. (The following questions are only suggestions to get you thinking) What would be different in your daily routine? What might be your biggest frustration? What would be easier in your life? How would it affect your social relationships? Self esteem? Ability to have and care for children or loved ones? Economically?

READ Jn. 1:1-3. Keeping in mind the man had to be at least 30 years old to be of age, what this man had in common with the crippled woman. How were their circumstances different?

According to Jesus, why was the man blind for over 30 years?

Read Romans 12: 1. What does it mean to be a living sacrifice? Imagine Jesus came to you in a dream and asked you to be crippled for 18 years so that one day he could be glorified by your healing. If you agreed to it, you would have no memory of the conversation and the entire 18 years you would not know why you were suffering so. Speculate how you might respond. Is this scenario even a possibility? Would God ask such a “living sacrifice” of anyone?

How does not knowing why we might be suffering or ill or disabled affect us?

What from this woman’s story, pertains to us today?

Be ready to share a summary of what you read, discussed and concluded.

IF YOU HAVE TIME:

Read Psalms 38:1-8 (Psalms 6, 147:1-3) Speculate how the bleeding woman would relate to these Psalms.

Consider Joseph, sold into slavery by jealous brothers at age 17(Gen 37), imprisoned for years for NOT committing a sin (Gen 39). Finally at age 30 (Gen 41:46) he gets out of prison. Read Gen. 45: 4- 7 and Gen 50:15-21. Would you have had the same attitude after 13 years like his?

Life Stressors

Thomas H. Holmes and Richard H. Rahe developed this test to identify the sources and amount of stress encountered in life. The following is a list of stress inducing events, in the order of their Life Change Unit (the weight assigned by mental health professionals, (LCU), from high to low. Note that even positive change or events can cause stress. Circle the items that apply to events experienced during the 12 months and add up their LCUs.

Life Event	LCU
1. Death of spouse	100
2. Divorce	73
3. Marital Separation	65
4. Jail Term	63
5. Death of a close family member	63
6. Personal injury or illness	53
7. Marriage	50
8. Being Fired from work	47
9. Reconciliation with spouse	45
10. Retirement	45
11. Change in health of family member	44
12. Pregnancy	40
13. Sexual difficulties	39
14. Addition of family member	39
15. Major business readjustment	39
16. Major change in financial state	38
17. Death of a close friend	37
18. Changing to a different line of work	36
19. Change in frequency of arguments with spouse	35
20. Mortgage for loan or major purchase over \$ 15,000	31
21. Foreclosure on a mortgage or loan	30
22. Major change in responsibilities at work	29
23. Children leaving home	29
24. Trouble with in-laws	29
25. Outstanding personal achievement	28
26. Spouse begins or stops work	26
27. Starting or ending school	26
28. Change in living conditions	25
29. Revision of personal habits (dress, manners, associations)	24
30. Trouble with boss	23

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31. Change in work hours, conditions	20
32. Change in residence	20
33. Change in school	20
34. Change in recreational activities	19
35. Change in church activities	19
36. Change in social activities	18
37. Mortgage or loan under \$15,000	17
38. Change in sleeping habits	16
39. Change in number of family gatherings	15
40. Change in eating habits	15
41. Vacation	13
42. Christmas	12
43. Minor violation of the law	11

If your total is 0-150:

Congratulations! At the moment, your stress level is low. Your chance of illness or accident related to your stress within two years is low. Any change can lead to stress, even enjoyable activities, such as vacations or new forms of recreation.

If your total is 150-300:

You have borderline high stress. Your chance of accident or illness related to your stress within two years is moderate.

If your total is over 300:

Warning: You have a high stress level. Your chance of accident or illness related to your stress during the next two years is great. Stress intervention techniques are strongly urged.

(From Discovery Health

<http://health.discovery.com/centers/stress/balancing/stress/assessment.html>)

Other on line self grading tools can be found at <http://www.stresstips.com/lifeevents.htm> or

http://www.medindia.net/Patients/calculators/life_stressor.asp

What does the Bible say about stressful events?

2 Cor. 1: ⁸We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. ⁹Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead.

2 Cor. 4: ⁷But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. ⁸We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; ⁹persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. ¹⁰We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body....¹⁶Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. ¹⁷For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. ¹⁸So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

See also

2 Chronicles 14:11, Psalms 55:22, 1 Peter 5:7, Romans 8:35, 2 Corinthians 12:9-11, Matthew 6:25-34