

APRIL STUDY GUIDE

Bible Study Guide

Topic: Bible characters (A review)

Memory Verse: Luke 1:46-49

This month we will be studying our first female bible characters who played a very significant role in the bible. The first being Mary the mother of God and the Samaritan woman.

Mary – We first learn about her from the words of the prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 7:14 - “behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Immanuel.”

Interestingly, one would expect Mary to have been highly exalted and much talked about in scriptures, but instead we find very little if nothing, mentioned about her or her background or personal life except as it relates to Jesus. We can deduct from this that the focus is not to be on Mary but on her son Jesus, just like John the Baptist who said “I must decrease while he must increase”. A Scripture which supports this observation is Mark 3:31-35, the family of Jesus were worried about him so they went looking for him, on finding him, Jesus' answer was blunt. His family is no longer his blood kin but anyone who believes in him.

In Luke 11:27 Jesus emphasized that the people who are really truly blessed are those who hear God's word and keep it.

Class discussion: what does this tell you about being blessed with a gift and using it?

In all this, we learn about Mary's humility and her love for God, how we must respond to God, which clearly shows why she was chosen and attributes we should emulate.

1. She was a regular teenager when angel Gabriel first appeared to her and she never acted high and mighty after receiving the message but was reverent and humble Luke 1:38, Luke 1:46-55
2. She believed in Jesus even though He was her son and respected Him though insistent as only a mother could be and caused him to perform his first miracle even though His hour had not come (John 2:1-11).
3. She was faithful to her religion and raised her children attending the local synagogue. God trusted her with raising Jesus like He did with Abraham in Genesis 18:19.
4. She had a relationship with God (Luke 1:28). We see through the Angels greeting that she was highly regarded by God.
5. Finally, she was redeemed. Luke 24:45; after Jesus was taken up to heaven, He told them to wait in Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high. They waited and Mary was one of them and became an integral part of the early church.

Class Discussion: What did you learn about Mary from the bible? And how has studying about her impacted your life?

The Samaritan woman

Who was she?

The story of the nameless Samaritan woman at the well, recorded only in the Gospel of John, is a revealing one, full of many truths and powerful lessons for us today. In John 4:4–42 we read about Jesus’ conversation with a lone Samaritan woman who had come to get water from a well (known as Jacob’s well)

This was an extraordinary woman. She was a Samaritan, a race of people that the Jews utterly despised as having no claim on their God, and she was an outcast and looked down upon by her own people. This is evidenced by the fact that she came alone to draw water from the community well when, during biblical times, drawing water and chatting at the well was the social highpoint of a woman’s day. However, this woman was ostracized and marked as immoral, an unmarried woman living openly with the sixth in a series of men.

The story of the woman at the well teaches us that God loves us in spite of our bankrupt lives. God values us enough to actively seek us, to welcome us to intimacy, and to rejoice in our worship. As a result of Jesus’ conversation, only a person like the Samaritan woman, an outcast from her own people, could understand what this means. To be wanted, to be cared for when no one, not even herself, could see anything of value in her—this is grace indeed.

But there are many other valuable truths we glean from this story. We learn that:

- 1) Only through Jesus can we obtain and receive eternal life: “Jesus answered, ‘Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life’” (John 4:13–14; cf. John 14:6).
- 2) Jesus’ ministering to those outcasts of the Jewish society (the Samaritans) reveals that all people are valuable to God and that Jesus desires that we demonstrate love to everyone . . . including even our enemies (John 4:7–9; Matthew 5:44).
- 3) Jesus is the Messiah (John 4:25–26; 1:41; Matthew 27:22; Luke 2:11).
- 4) Those who worship God, worship Him in spirit and truth (John 4:23–24; Psalm 145:18).
- 5) Our testimony about Jesus is a powerful tool in leading others to believe in Him: (John 4:39–42).

Additionally, we learn from Jesus’ dialogue with the woman at the well three absolute truths about salvation:

- 1) Salvation comes only to those who recognize their desperate need for the spiritual life they do not have. Living water can be obtained only by those who recognize that they are spiritually thirsty.

- 2) Salvation comes only to those who confess and repent of their sin and desire forgiveness. Before this immoral woman could embrace the Savior, she had to concede the full burden of her sins.
- 3) Salvation comes only to those who take hold of Jesus as their Messiah. For the absolute truth is that salvation is found in no one else (John 14:6; Acts 4:12).