



Rivka
leader guide



Rivka

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Rivka



Dawud
Mariam's
Elder
Brother



Yacoub,
Neighbor
and Family
Friend



Mariam



Noah,
Mariam's
Younger
Brother



Abram,
Yacoub's
Father



Laila,
Mariam's
Mother



Moussa,
Mariam's
Father



Haroon,
Rivka's
Husband



Sara,
Mariam's
Elder Sister



Noura,
Neighbor to
Mariam's
Family



Debra,
Rivka's
Servant



Ayoub,
Sara's
Husband



Daliyah,
Mariam's
Friend



Amira,
helped by
Laila

Introduction

The Story

Rivka is a series of 12 short video lessons. Set 25 years after *Magdalena: Released From Shame*, the main character is “Rivka,” the woman who accepted Christ at the end of *Magdalena*. We watch her share her faith with friends and family as well as teach new believers how to grow and walk with Jesus. Rivka exemplifies New Testament discipleship.

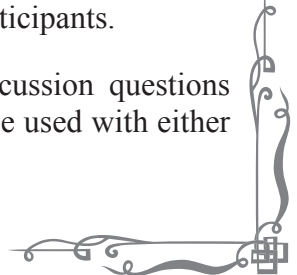
This series follows the story of a first-century community in Palestine experiencing the joys and sorrows that life brings. The story depicts romance, joy, pain and suffering as the characters live their lives, depending on God to give them the strength they need. The episodes teach women and men alike that even in difficult times, we serve a loving God who wants to sustain us with His strength and give us hope for the future.

As the women in your group begin to engage the Lord and grow in their faith, suggest to them that this is a resource they can share with others. Encourage them to gather a small group of friends or family to watch *Rivka* together. The DVDs you have can be copied and given to the members of your group, and we encourage you to do this!

Tools Included with *Rivka*

The *Rivka* series includes two options for leading a discussion. The first of these is the *Rivka* Bible Study. Each episode comes with a corresponding study that builds on the teachings in each episode. The Leader’s Guide is for the Bible study leader or discussion group leader. The Participant’s Guide is for all other participants.

The second option is to use the on-screen discussion questions read at the end of each episode. The video may be used with either



the Bible study or the simple discussion questions. Use these tools however you desire. Be creative!

Teachings in the Episodes

Episode 1: In the Family focuses on our access to God.

Episode 2: Handiwork teaches that all of Jesus' followers are in the family of God.

Episode 3: Daily Bread affirms the reliability of God's Word.

Episode 4: Troubled Times teaches that we can rely on God to help us even in the most difficult circumstances.

Episode 5: The Wind and the Wells teaches how to live in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Episode 6: Finding Peace focuses on prayer.

Episode 7: Friends and Enemies teaches that we are to love all people.

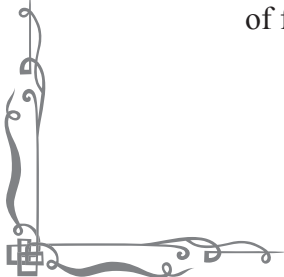
Episode 8: Cleaning the Lamps shows us that God values each one of us.

Episode 9: Wedding Day teaches that we can be content in any situation.

Episode 10: The Dropped Stitch teaches about forgiveness.

Episode 11: Births focuses on facing persecution and suffering.

Episode 12: Sharing the News teaches how to share our own stories of faith.



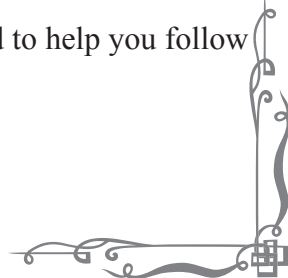
Things to Remember

God is drawing women all over the world to faith in Jesus Christ. *He* has inspired the development of many tools which demonstrate the love of Jesus for each of us, the sacrifice He made for us, our need for forgiveness, and the wonderful truth that, through Jesus we can have a personal relationship with God.

This film series is one such tool. We believe God has prepared you to share this series with your friends and neighbors. This Leader's Guide will help you lead a discussion of each episode. The most important thing to remember is that God is the One doing the work in the lives of the women who watch this film. It is His Holy Spirit who will direct you as you invite women, serve them and start discussions about Jesus. He is the one who will transform lives—not you! This means that He is carrying the burden of each woman's life, and you do not have to. That is very freeing!

Therefore the most important thing you can *do* is pray!

- ❧ Pray God will lead you to the women He is preparing to be in your group.
- ❧ Pray God will protect you and prepare you to lead the discussion.
- ❧ Pray God will give you wisdom and the words you need to share.
- ❧ Pray God will bind the group together to love and support each other.
- ❧ Pray God will work in each woman, opening up the questions and/or fears each one has regarding His mighty work of love.
- ❧ Remember: This Leader's Guide is designed to help you follow the leading of the Holy Spirit.



Getting Started

As you prepare to share *Rivka* with others, consider asking a friend to work with you. One of you can host the group and the other lead the discussion. You can pray together for the women in the group. The one not leading the discussion will be able to notice if anyone is feeling uncomfortable, fearful, left out or angry. As partners you can support each other and help those who need personal attention.

There are 12 episodes or lessons in this film series. You can watch and discuss one lesson per week, or you may want to take two or three discussion times to cover one lesson. Be sensitive to the needs of the women in your group. Your primary goal is to help them learn the truths presented in these lessons, not to make sure you complete the whole series in a certain amount of time.

The Bible Study

Each Bible study is designed to follow the viewing of an episode in the film series, and the first few questions of each lesson are intended to help the women in your group understand the key points of the story. This also will encourage those who have not participated in a discussion group before to begin to share their thoughts and insights. The discussion is not based on anything they do not already know. The rest of the questions will focus on passages in the Bible that relate to the themes in that episode. These questions will help the women understand how to study the Scriptures and apply them to their everyday lives.

This Leader's Guide contains some suggested answers as well as background information or notes that may be helpful during your discussions. All of these are written in italics and do not appear in the students' guides.

If the women in your group are not familiar with the Bible, show them how to find the books in the Bible by looking at the Table of Contents. Show them what the numbers mean (i.e., chapter and verse). Remember, they may not be as familiar as you are with this important book.

Rivka

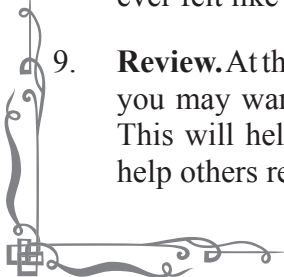
Next are some pointers for leading a discussion group. You probably already know these things, but they are helpful reminders. If you have any other questions or difficulties, please contact your trainer for additional assistance.

Pointers for Leading a Discussion

In order for the women to open their hearts, ask questions and hear what you want to share, you want your group to be a place of safety, trust and respect. Here are some things to remember. You might want to share some of them with the group as “ground rules.”

1. **Plan.** Watch the video and complete the lessons yourself beforehand. This will help you direct the flow of the discussion and ensure that key truths are not lost along the way. As you prepare for the lesson, bear in mind that some answers may require more time. Be prepared to move on with the lesson in order to get to the content and application. You need to be the one to decide when to push toward the application at the end or when to slow down to make sure the group understands the content.
2. **Personal things shared in the group should stay in the group.** Do not discuss any personal details mentioned during your time together with anyone outside the group.
3. **The discussion should be centered on Jesus.** Avoid talking about ethnic groups, nationalities, religions or church denominations. Your purpose is not to promote or condemn anyone or any group, but to promote understanding and faith in Jesus.
4. **You may have someone who dominates or takes over the discussion.** Try to direct the discussion to include others, for instance saying: “That is a good insight! Does anyone else have other thoughts or ideas?” You may want to talk later, outside the group, with your talkative friend, and ask her to help in getting others to share or ask questions.

5. **You may have someone who is shy or afraid to say a word.** Make sure to take time before or after the group discussion to let her know how glad you are that she is there. Ask if she had any questions or ideas during the group discussion, encouraging her that you really would like to know her thoughts. When she does speak during the group discussion, encourage her.
6. **You do not want to be “the teacher,” with all the discussion directed toward you or you doing all the talking.** People learn best when they discover truth themselves. If someone asks you a question, try directing it back to her: “That’s a really good question! What do you think?” You might ask the group what they think as well. If they do not come up with a reasonable answer, then you can say something like, “That’s an interesting idea, but the Bible says”
7. **What if someone asks a question you cannot answer?** Say you do not know and will try to find the answer before your next time together. Be sure you do try to find the answer (by doing research or asking your trainer), or tell the person you were unable to find it. Some questions do not have answers.
8. **Use the group’s questions and comments.** Each episode has key truths it teaches, and you will want to make sure these are discussed. If someone raises a question or makes a comment which points to one of those truths, launch the discussion from what was said. For example, after watching the first video, “Anna” comments that, like Mariam, she does not feel she has the right to ask God about her problems. Later in the meeting, you can turn the discussion to that point by saying: “Anna, you said earlier that you felt like Mariam did when she tried to pray. Has anyone else ever felt like that? ... What did Rivka tell Mariam?”
9. **Review.** At the beginning, perhaps even before watching the video, you may want to review what was covered in the last meeting. This will help new people connect with what is happening and help others remember what they have learned.



After the discussion, review what was just covered. Include some of the key observations made by the women themselves, using their names when possible. For example, “Just as Rebecca said tonight that we cannot come to God on our own merit ...”

At the beginning of the next lesson, encourage the women to think about what they learned during the week and to share what they have been thinking about, if they would like to.

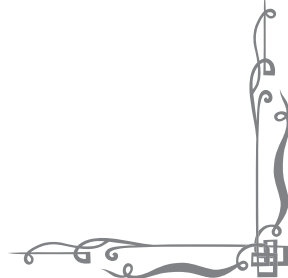
10. **You do NOT have to cover everything in one session!** Be aware of the needs and concerns of the women in the group to determine how much you cover in each meeting.

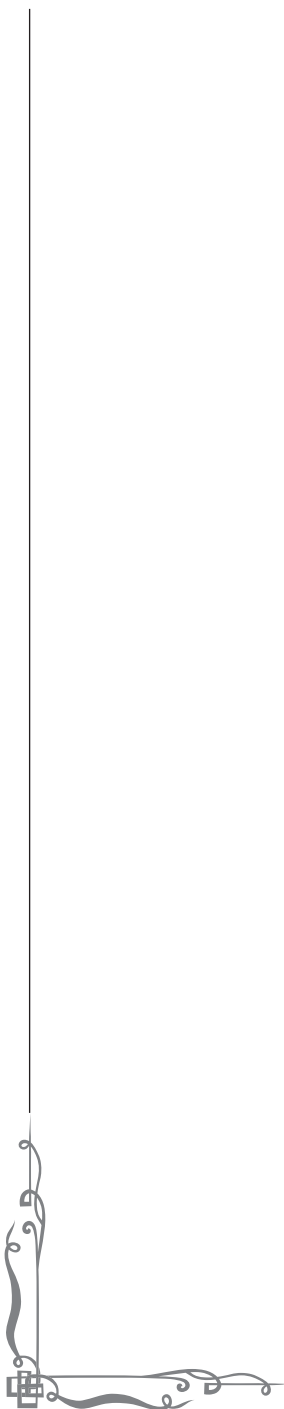
Finally, remember to pray!

After the Study

After you finish going through the entire series, please ask the women in your group the following questions. This will help to evaluate the time you spent together and may help as you prepare to lead the study again.

- ☞ What did you enjoy about this series?
- ☞ What did you find helpful in the discussions?
- ☞ Is there anything you wish had been covered during this series?
- ☞ Do you have any other comments?





Riska

lesson one

In the Family

Key Characters

Mariam, Rivka,
Sara, Laila,
Moussa, Dawud

The Story



Episode 1 is 15:16 long.

Mariam's mother, Laila, lies in bed, burning with fever. Although fearful of the Roman soldiers who patrol the streets, Mariam hurries to the home of her mother's close friend, Rivka. Mariam knows he is defying her father's wishes, for he does not want Rivka in their home. He dislikes her because she is married to a tax collector and because she is a follower of Jesus. Yet Laila, who also follows Jesus, asked for Rivka.

As Rivka tends to Laila, Mariam says that she feels ashamed when she tries to pray and unworthy for God to hear her prayers. Rivka assures her that God hears her and loves her, for Mariam, too, has accepted Jesus as her Messiah. Comforted, Mariam then asks how God can love someone like her brother, Dawud, who cares more about fighting the Romans than caring for his family. She asks, "How can God love someone who's willing to throw away everything that's important?" Rivka tells Jesus' story of the selfish son who took his inheritance early and squandered it through shameful living. When the son returned home, his father welcomed him with open arms and forgave him. Rivka assures Mariam that God not only is waiting for Dawud, but also running after him. As she leaves their home, Rivka encourages Mariam to take hope in God's presence and in His Word.



Access to God

notes

✠ **Major Lesson** – None of us can come to God on our own; we all are impure because of our sin. When we do something that hurts another person, something that hurts God, something against the law, or even simply have those attitudes in our hearts, God takes those things very seriously and calls them sin. Sin is going our own way, and in doing so, falling short of God’s perfect plan for our lives. Jesus paid for our sin, taking away our shame and our guilt, through His death on the cross and His resurrection from the dead. We accept the peace God offers us when we receive His promised Messiah, our Savior Jesus, and His sacrifice for us. His sacrifice gives us access to God.

✠ **Life Lesson** – God sees us as His children—loved, treasured, valued. No matter how we feel or what our situation, His view of us is the only true view. As followers of Jesus, we are friends and daughters of God. We now have access to Him that otherwise would be impossible.

1. Which character do you most relate to and why?
2. Mariam said that when she prays, she does not feel God hears her. Do you ever feel that way?



Risika - lesson one

3. What do you think we need to do in order to be accepted into God's presence and be assured that He hears our prayers?
4. Do you have the power to make yourself worthy to be in God's presence?

notes

The Bible tells us how God's love for us is shown through Jesus' death. Paul wrote many letters to early followers of Jesus, and in his letter to followers in ancient Rome, now known as the Book of Romans, Paul explained who Jesus was and how to follow Him.

The Book of Romans in the Bible explains that no one is good enough to approach God on her own; we all have sinned against God and never can make ourselves good enough. However, Jesus lived a perfect life; He never did anything wrong or even thought anything that was not good. He never sinned against God and always loved all people perfectly. Let's look at what God says in the Bible about this.

Romans 3:21-24 says:

“But now God has shown us how to become right with Him. ... It has nothing to do with obeying the law. We are made right with God by putting our faith in Jesus Christ. That happens to all who believe. ... Everyone has sinned. No one measures up to God's glory. The free gift of God's grace makes all of us right with

him. Christ Jesus paid the price to set us free.”

Romans 5:6-8 says:

“At just the right time Christ died for ungodly people. He died for us when we had no power of our own. It is unusual for anyone to die for a godly person. Maybe someone would be willing to die for a good person. But here is how God has shown his love for us. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

5. What do these verses say about our ability to make ourselves worthy enough to come before God?

6. How is “obeying the law” like trying to make ourselves worthy for God to hear us?

“Obeying the law” is like all the other things we do to try to reach God and to take away our shame and guilt on our own. We never will be able to make ourselves good; only God can do that.

The story Rivka told Mariam about the son who chose to go his own way is actually a story Jesus told in His teachings. It can be found in chapter 15 of the Gospel of Luke. In the story the son left home, cutting all ties to his father and soon found himself starving and alone in a foreign land. When he came to his senses, he knew he no longer

was worthy to be his father's son and there was nothing he could do to make himself worthy or earn back his place in the family. However, he decided to return home, hoping his father would take pity on him and allow him to be a worker in his fields. Much to the son's surprise, his father welcomed him home and restored him to his place as his son. His father had the whole household celebrate because "this son was dead, and now he's alive; he was lost, but now he has been found."

notes

7. Romans 5 says that, just like the father who lovingly accepted his son back into the household, God desires for us to leave our self-directed paths and return to Him. How does it feel to know that God cares so much for you that He wants to have a relationship with you?

8. What does Romans 3:21-24 say is the only way we can be made right with God?

Through putting our faith in Jesus, by receiving His death in place of our own to pay the penalty for our sins (the things we have done wrong and the ways we have not pleased God).



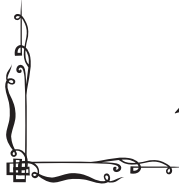
notes

Note to Leader: At this point you may present the gospel if your group members do not seem to understand it. See Appendix A: How to Get Access to God by Knowing God Personally. Print a copy for each person if you think it would be helpful.

This Week

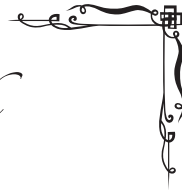
Begin each day asking God to show you the truths in this lesson.

If you have questions or doubts, please speak with your leader.



lesson two

Handiwork



Key Characters

Mariam, Daliyah,
Rivka, Haroon,
Sara, Noura,
Moussa, Noah,
Dawud



The Story

Episode 2 is 18:24 long.

Previously, Rivka encouraged Mariam in her faith in Jesus. She also helped Mariam understand that God loves her brother, despite Dawud's selfish choices and acts.

In this episode, Rivka visits with Mariam's sister, Sara, and Noura, a neighbor. Sara expresses fear for her current pregnancy—that she will miscarry again. She confesses that God seems far away and uncaring. Rivka recounts the story of Jesus' disciples' fear when in a storm at sea, even though Jesus was right there with them. They cried out to Jesus, asking why He did not seem to care about the danger they faced. Though it was not unreasonable for them to be afraid of the storm, He rebuked them for their lack of faith in His care for them. She assures Sara—even if she feels like God does not care for her—that He truly does. As news comes that the Romans have ordered Mariam and Sara's father to work in Beirut, a very dangerous place, Noura wonders if God has forsaken them. Rivka explains God's salvation through Jesus and the hope to be found in Him. She explains how God cleanses us from our sins, making us perfect in His sight. She tells Noura that God wants to be close to her, encouraging Noura to pray to Him. Noura tells Rivka, "I will think about what you have told me."



Family of God

notes

- ❧ **Major Lesson** – God planned for each of us to be His child, His daughter. He made this possible for us through the death of Jesus. God made us to enjoy His love as a member of His family, a very large family.
- ❧ **Life Lesson** – As a child of God, we can bring all our cares, fears and joys to Him.
 1. Rivka used the wool the women were cleaning to explain God’s work in them. What is Rivka trying to show by comparing the dirty wool with Sarah’s finished carpet?

Cleaning wool is an example of how God works in our lives. Today we will look at another letter written by Paul, this one to the group of early followers of Jesus in the city of Ephesus. Unlike Paul’s letter to the Romans, he knew the Ephesians very well. Paul spent three years with the followers of Jesus in Ephesus, and this letter was written about 10 years after he had left them.

Ephesians 2:8-10 says:

“God’s grace has saved you because of your faith in Christ. Your salvation doesn’t come from anything you do. It is God’s gift. It is not based on anything you have done. No one can brag about earning it. God made us. He created us to belong to

Rivka - lesson two

Christ Jesus. Now we can do good things. Long ago God prepared them for us to do.”

notes

2. What does this tell you about God’s work in each of us?

Even though we are made by God—His handiwork—sometimes you may not feel that way. You might feel like unclean wool, a beautiful rug, or something in between. Just as transforming wool into a rug is a process, so is God’s work in our lives.

The next passage we will look at comes from Paul’s letter to the followers of Jesus in Philippi. It was written around the same time as his letter to the Ephesians, and Paul started a church in Philippi only a few months before he arrived in Ephesus.

Philippians 1:6 says:

“I am sure that the One who began a good work in you will carry it on until it is completed. That will be on the day Christ Jesus returns.” We can be sure God will continue to work in our lives, not only because He says so, but because He cares for us, and we are a part of his family.



notes

3. How have you seen God working in your life?
4. How is family important to the characters in this episode? How is this similar to your life?
5. Noura asks, “You are saying I can be God’s daughter?” How would you answer Noura’s question?

In the Bible, John 1:12, 13 says:

“Some people did accept Him. They believed in His name. He gave them the right to become children of God. To be a child of God has nothing to do with human parents. Children of God are not born because of human choice or because a husband wants them to be born. They are born because of what God does.”

6. According to these verses how do you become a child of God?
- 

7. What questions do you have about God's family and your part in His family?

notes

8. If we both are children of God, what does that make us to one another?

9. As children of God, we can bring all our cares, fears and joys to Him. One way of doing that is through prayer—talking with God. Is there anything you want to tell or ask God today that you have not felt you could say before?

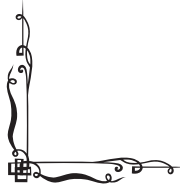


notes

This Week

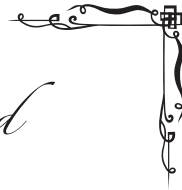
If you are unsure that you are a child of God, or if you have questions, review what we have discussed so far. You also can talk with your leader.

If you know you are a child of God, but are afraid of something (like Sara and the disciples on the boat) remember that, as His child, God always will care for you, even if He feels far away. Pray He will help you to feel His presence this week.



lesson three

Daily Bread



Key Characters

Mariam, Laila,
Moussa, Dawud,
Yacoub

The Story

Previously, Rivka encouraged Sara and Noura to face their fears by trusting in God's love and care



Episode 3 is 16:13 long.

for them. She also encouraged Noura to consider becoming a child of God by choosing to follow Jesus. Mariam and Sara's father, Moussa, received orders from Rome to leave their home and work in Beirut.

In this episode, Mariam's family prepares for her father to leave. Moussa, desiring to provide for Mariam, tells her he plans to make arrangements, before he leaves, for her to marry Enoch, a responsible young man. Because Enoch does not follow Jesus, Mariam asks her father not to make her do this. Laila intervenes, asking her husband to wait on marriage arrangements for their daughter until after he returns home. Later, Mariam questions her mother about their decision to follow Jesus, wondering how they can be sure what they believe about Him is true. Laila reminds her that Jesus' words and the events of His life were foretold hundreds of years ago through prophecies in Scripture. He fulfilled all of God's prophecies by the way He lived and died and rose again. She encourages Mariam to trust the Scriptures because they have proven to be true; they are the Word of God.

Doubts and Fears About the Bible

notes

☞ **Major Lesson** – What is the Bible and where did it come from? One of the reasons we know the Bible is true is because of fulfilled prophecy. Fulfilled prophecy means the Bible accurately tells of the life and words of Jesus thousands of years before they came true.

☞ **Life Lesson** – We can trust the Bible is true and is useful in our daily lives because faith is not wishful thinking, but certain trust.

1. Mariam is a follower of Jesus, but she still has doubts. Is it all right to doubt? What are we to do with our doubts?

Bring them to Jesus, trusting He will provide answers when we need them.

2. In this episode Mariam asked several interesting questions: “How can I know Jesus is the way? How can I know His words are true?” How did Laila answer Mariam?

We can trust the Bible. She answered with many examples of fulfilled prophecy.

Our confidence in Jesus is based on what the Bible tells us, so we need to know it is true. The Bible contains 66 books written by at least 40 writers over more than 1,500 years. The writers include kings, prophets, philosophers, military men, a farmer, a fisherman, a doctor and a tax collector. They wrote in three different languages: Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic. Even so, the Bible is consistent.

Rishka - lesson three

We can easily say the Bible is true and trustworthy, but what proof do we have? The Bible is the only book of any religion that contains fulfilled prophecy and claims to come from God.

notes

Sixty of the major prophecies in the Old Testament were made hundreds of years before Jesus was born and were fulfilled in Him. Most of these prophecies were about events no one could control.

Let's look at a few of the prophecies that Laila mentioned.

Genesis 3:15 (God speaking to the serpent):

“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; He will crush your head, and you will strike His heel” (New International Version).

Isaiah 7:14:

“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call Him Immanuel” (NIV). See Luke 1:26-38.

Micah 5:2:

“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for Me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times” (NIV). See Luke 2:1-7.

Isaiah 53:4, 5:

“Surely He took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered Him stricken by God, smitten by Him, and afflicted. But He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed” (NIV). See John 19:16-30.

Note: For more information, please read “More Than a Carpenter.”

The last example Laila mentioned is found in Isaiah 53:4, 5 and 12:

“He suffered the things we should have suffered. He took on himself the pain that should have been ours. But we thought God was punishing Him. We thought God was wounding Him and making Him suffer. But the Servant was pierced because we had sinned. He was crushed because we had done what was evil. He was punished to make us whole again. His wounds have healed us. ... He was counted among those who had committed crimes. He took the sins of many people on Himself. And He gave His life for those who had done what is wrong.”

We see the fulfillment of this prophecy in Luke 22:37, which says:

“It is written, ‘He was counted among those who had committed crimes.’”

(Isaiah 53:12). I tell you that what is written about me must come true. Yes, it is already coming true.”

notes

3. Who do these verses refer to?

Jesus

If you have a copy of the "JESUS" film, watch the trial and death of Jesus. Discuss how this is similar to what Isaiah wrote.

If you have more time and access to a Bible, you can read one of the following passages: Matthew 26:47-27:61; Mark 14:43-15:47; Luke 22:47-23:56; John 18, 19.

God worked in the mind of the authors, giving them the exact words He had chosen. Second Timothy 3:16 says:

“God has breathed life into all of Scripture. It is useful for teaching us what is true. It is useful for correcting our mistakes. It is useful for making our lives whole again. It is useful for training us to do what is right.”

Second Peter 1:20, 21 says:

“Above all, here is what you must understand. No prophecy in Scripture ever came from a prophet’s own understanding. It never came simply because a prophet wanted it to. Instead, the Holy Spirit guided the prophets as they spoke. So prophecy comes from God.”

Daily Bread

4. If this is true, and the prophecies prove it is, then can we rely totally on the truth of the Bible?

5. When do you have doubts about the truth of the Bible? How do you handle them?

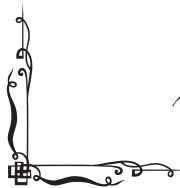
6. How will this lesson help you in the future?

This Week

When you have doubts like Mariam did, remember these verses from Proverbs 3:5, 6:

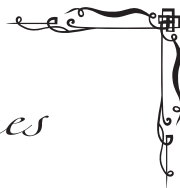
“Trust in the Lord with all your heart.
Do not depend on your own understanding.
In all your ways remember Him.
Then He will make your paths smooth
and straight.”

Note: Have the group members repeat these verses together many times before leaving, so it will be easy for each one to remember them.



lesson four

Troubled Times



Key Characters

Sara, Ayoub, Miriam,
Laila, Noura, Rivka

The Story

Previously, as Mariam and her family prepared for her father's leaving to work in Beirut, Miriam also struggled with doubts about following Jesus. Her mother helped ease Mariam's doubts by reminding her of the scriptural prophecies fulfilled by Jesus' life and words.



Episode 4 is 11:50 long.

In this episode, a peaceful morning is shattered when robbers attack Ayoub, Sara's husband, leaving him severely beaten and with a broken arm. Their neighbor, Yacoub, brings the injured Ayoub home, where Sara and Laila tend to his wounds. Mariam learns that their neighbors believe the attack happened because they follow Jesus. Ayoub says this could be true, for Jesus warned troubles would come to His followers. Noura arrives to help, as does Rivka. After setting Ayoub's broken arm, Rivka and Noura talk together in the courtyard. Noura comments, "Sometimes we have to go through pain so that we will not be left broken, so we can truly be healed." She proceeds to tell Rivka that she has decided to follow Jesus, even though she is an old woman and can do little for Him. Rivka, overjoyed at Noura's decision, assures her that her days of following Jesus will be her best days. Noura remarks, "I know this will make trouble for me and my family."

"But the pain is worth the healing?" asks Rivka.

"Just so," smiles Noura.



Help in Troubled Times

notes

✦ **Major Lesson** – God gives each one of us the opportunity to follow Him. Sometimes our commitment is tested. As we continue to trust God, however, He will give us joy in the midst of our difficulties. Even in times of trouble, God is a strong foundation we can depend upon.

✦ **Life Lesson** – Following Jesus is an individual choice. You can trust Him to lead and guide you in all your troubles.

1. What were the townspeople saying are the reasons for the attack?

Because they are Christians and because they deserted the ways of their fathers.

2. How did Sara, Laila and Ayoub react?

3. We all face troubles and react in different ways. Describe how you react.

Ayoub and his mother-in-law, Laila, shared Jesus' teaching about the house built on the sand and the house built on the rock. Here is that passage from the Gospel of Matthew 7:24-27:

“So then, everyone who hears My words and puts them into practice is like a wise man. He builds his house on the rock. The rain comes down. The water rises. The winds blow and beat against that house. But it does not fall. It is built on the rock.

Riska - lesson four

“But everyone who hears My words and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man. He builds his house on sand. The rain comes down. The water rises. The winds blow and beat against that house. And it falls with a loud crash.”

notes

4. How are these “houses” the same and how are they different?

5. What do we learn about troubles from this passage?

Now we will look at a book from the Old Testament of the Bible. The Book of Psalms is a collection of songs, poems and prayers used in the worship of God. King David wrote many of the psalms. Let’s look at what David and other ancient writers wrote about facing their troubles.

Psalm 46:1, 2:

“God is our place of safety. He gives us strength. He is always there to help us in times of trouble. The earth may fall apart. The mountains may fall into the middle of the sea. But we will not be afraid.”

Psalm 34:17-19:

“Godly people cry out, and the Lord hears them. He saves them from all of their troubles. The Lord is close to those whose hearts have been broken. He saves those whose spirits have been crushed. Anyone who does what is right may have many troubles. But the Lord saves him from all of them.”

Troubled Times

Psalm 40:1, 2:

“I was patient while I waited for the Lord. He turned to me and heard my cry for help. I was sliding down into the pit of death, and He pulled me out. He brought me up out of the mud and dirt. He set my feet on a rock. He gave me a firm place to stand on.”

6. What do you learn about God from these verses? Does this change your idea of God?
7. According to these verses, what are some ways we can respond when troubles come?
Patience, cry out to God, turn to Him for strength, trusting the truth of God
8. How can your daily life change now that you know these things?
9. When you face troubles, what one point from this lesson do you want to apply to your life?

This Week

If you face troubles, think about the psalms we discussed.

Note: Choose one of the verses above (for example Psalm 46:1) to repeat and learn together.

lesson five

The Wind and the Wells

Note: This is a long episode and lesson. You may want to use two sessions to complete it.

Key Characters

Amira, Laila, Rivka, Mariam, Sara, Noura

The Story

Previously, robbers severely beat Ayoub, perhaps because of his faith in Jesus. After the women tended to his wounds, Noura tells Rivka that she has decided to follow



Episode 5 is 18:29 long.

Jesus, even though she knows this will make trouble for her family.

In this episode, Mariam looks up from her chores to see Rivka helping an obviously ill Laila return from a visit to care for her friend, Amira, and her family. Laila had convinced Amira's family to stop using dirty water from their well, which had been making them sick, and instead draw pure water from the town well. Yet, because of the long walk into town, Amira and her family went back to using their well water, becoming sick again.

While Laila rests, Rivka speaks to Mariam, Sara and Noura about the Holy Spirit. Rivka uses the example of the wind to explain how the Holy Spirit works in our lives. Although He cannot be seen, we can feel His presence and His work in us. She also contrasts the bad water in Amira's well with that of the town well's pure water, illustrating how we can choose to be filled with what makes us sick (sin) or what brings us life (the Holy Spirit).

Life in the Holy Spirit

☞ **Major Lesson** – When we receive Christ, God welcomes us into His family, gives us a new identity, and we become a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17), but the old nature (self-directed life) still exists. The old nature is like a dirty well we have chosen to drink from. The new nature (Spirit-controlled life), however, is like a well that gives living water. The well we drink from is our choice—which may not always be an easy or convenient choice.

☞ **Life Lesson** – When Jesus returned to heaven after His resurrection, He sent God’s Holy Spirit to live within those who belong to the family of God. Being filled with the Holy Spirit makes it possible to live the kind of life that glorifies God. This is not a one-time event; we must choose to be filled with Him over and over again.

1. Rivka uses the example of the wind to explain the Holy Spirit. In what ways do we see the wind work? Can we see the wind itself when it does these things?

2. How is the Holy Spirit similar to the wind?

Just as the wind can be a powerful force in nature, God has given us the Holy Spirit to enable us to live the life He wants us to live. In the Bible, Galatians 5:16 says:

“So I say, live by the Holy Spirit’s power. Then you will not do what your sinful nature wants you to do.”

The Holy Spirit lives in all people who have invited Jesus into their lives, but we are not filled with the Holy Spirit unless we allow Him to direct us and give us power. We choose to be filled (directed and empowered) with the Holy Spirit through faith on a daily, even moment-by-moment basis.

Ephesians 5:18 says:

“Don’t fill yourself up with wine. Getting drunk will lead to wild living. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit.”

3. From this passage what role do you suppose the believer has in being filled with the Holy Spirit?

God commands us to be filled with the Holy Spirit, but He also promises He will fill us with the Holy Spirit when we ask in faith. 1 John 5:14, 15 says:

“There is one thing we can be sure of when we come to God in prayer. If we ask anything in keeping with what He wants, He hears us. If we know that God hears what we ask for, we know that we have it.”

notes

4. Amira's dirty well still sits right by her house. In the same way, our old nature still lives in our hearts. Just as Amira's family continued to drink from the dirty well, we can continue to "drink from the well" of our old nature. Why do we do this?

We are not allowing the Holy Spirit to direct us and give us power to live the Christian life.

5. In this episode, how does Sara show her old nature? How does she then show her new, Spirit directed nature?

Sara yells at Mariam in the beginning of the episode. Later she apologizes and asks Mariam to forgive her.

6. What might have happened in their relationship if Sara had not asked her sister to forgive her? In her relationship with God?

7. How might our relationships be changed if we listen to the Holy Spirit and confess our sins quickly?

notes

8. Even though believers are given a new nature, why do you think we still sin?

In the Bible, Galatians 5:16, 17, 22-25 says:

“So I say, live by the Holy Spirit’s power. Then you will not do what your sinful nature wants you to do. The sinful nature does not want what the Spirit delights in. And the Spirit does not want what the sinful nature delights in. The two are at war with each other. That’s what makes you do what you don’t want to do. ... But the fruit the Holy Spirit produces is love, joy and peace. It is being patient, kind and good. It is being faithful and gentle and having control of oneself. There is no law against things of that kind. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed their sinful nature to His cross. They don’t want what their sinful nature loves and longs for. Since we live by the Spirit, let us march in step with the Spirit.”



notes

9. What does Galatians say about why we still sin?

There is war between our old nature and our new Spirit-controlled nature. The old nature did not just go away when we accepted Jesus.

10. How do these verses describe the thoughts and actions produced by the Holy Spirit?

11. This passage says the Spirit produces this fruit in us: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Do you struggle to have any of these qualities in your life?

Spiritual breathing is a way to deal with these struggles. It is a word picture that can help you experience moment-by-moment dependence upon the Holy Spirit. Just as we physically breathe out bad air and breathe in good air, we can practice spiritual breathing.

Risika - lesson five

Breathe out: Confess your sin the moment you become aware of it—agree with God that you are wrong and thank Him for His forgiveness.

notes

Breathe in: Surrender control of your life to Jesus and rely, by faith, on the Holy Spirit to fill you with His presence and power.

Practicing spiritual breathing is how you return to being a spiritual person from a self-directed person. Like Amira, we have a choice to make: Are we going to choose to walk with God, filled with His Spirit (drawing water from the new well) or go our own living a self-directed life (drawing water from the old well)?

We are filled with the Holy Spirit by faith. Prayer is one way of expressing your faith. If you feel that you are not living out of the direction and empowering of the Holy Spirit moment by moment, the following is a sample prayer:

“Dear Father, I need You. I have been directing my own life, and as a result I have sinned against You. I thank You that You have forgiven my sins through Jesus’ death on the cross for me. I now invite Jesus to again take His place on the throne of my life. Fill me with the Holy Spirit as You commanded me to be filled and as You promised in Your Word that You will do if I asked in faith. I now thank You for directing my life and for filling me with the Holy Spirit.”

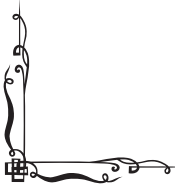


notes

This Week

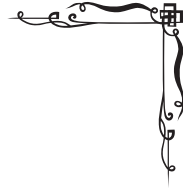
Take time this week to read Appendix B on how to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

When you become aware of sin in your life, practice spiritual breathing: confess your sin (agree with God that you have sinned) and ask the Holy Spirit to fill you and produce the fruit of the Spirit in your life.



lesson six

Finding Peace



Key Characters

Rivka, Mariam,
Dawud, Ayoub, Sara,
Laila, Yacoub



The Story

Previously, with Moussa away working in Beirut, Laila attempted to help a family in need, but the effort used her to become ill. While Laila rested, Rivka taught Mariam, Sara and Noura about the Holy Spirit.

Episode 6 is 14:31 long.

In this episode, Dawud rushes into the courtyard and quickly gathers belongings and food. He tells Mariam he must go into hiding because the Romans are looking for him. As soldiers enter the courtyard, he escapes over the roof. Failing to find Dawud, the soldiers roughly grab Ayoub and arrest him instead. Rivka, Sara and Mariam gather around Laila's bed and pray, asking God to free Ayoub.

Mariam asks Rivka how she stays calm in the midst of so much trouble. Rivka explains about the importance of prayer, that prayer and time with God must be part of everyday life. She encourages them to bring everything, large and small, to God, and they will find they have the resources and peace to face what comes their way, no matter how difficult it might be. In the midst of their conversation, Ayoub suddenly returns, explaining to the women that a centurion told the soldiers to release him. "God does answer prayer," smiles Mariam.



Devotional Life and Prayer

notes

⌘ **Major Lesson** – Personal prayer and spending time with God our Father is part of our relationship with Him. Turning to God in prayer will help you deal with any of life’s troubles. God will place His peace in your heart.

⌘ **Life Lesson** – You can talk to God any time—good or bad—through prayer. He wants to hear about every big thing and every little thing in your life.

1. What happened in this episode that stands out to you the most?

2. What did the women pray after Ayoub was arrested?

They worshipped God, thanking the Lord in faith even in a difficult time. They asked God to deliver Ayoub, to keep him safe and to give him wisdom and peace. They admitted they did not understand what was going on, but they thanked and praised God and chose to trust in Him alone.

3. What do you learn about prayer from the example of these women?

4. How did God answer their prayer? Does He always answer prayer this way?



Risika - lesson six

Praying is as simple as talking to God and sharing your heart with Him. Praying and spending time with God, while worshipping Him and thinking on His Word, helps you grow in your relationship with God and shows your trust in Him.

notes

5. Rivka says prayer was a way of life for Jesus. What do you learn about prayer from each of the passages below about Jesus?
- “But Jesus often went away to be by Himself and pray” (Luke 5:16).
 - “On one of those days, Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray. He spent the night praying to God. When morning came, He called for his disciples to come to Him. He chose 12 of them and made them apostles” (Luke 6:12, 13).
 - “It was very early in the morning and still dark. Jesus got up and left the house. He went to a place where He could be alone. There He prayed” (Mark 1:35).

Here are some other Bible verses that speak about prayer:

Philippians 4:6, 7:

“Don’t worry about anything. Instead, tell God about everything. Ask and pray. Give thanks to Him. Then God’s peace will watch over your hearts and your minds

Finding Peace

because you belong to Christ Jesus. God's peace can never be completely understood."

James 5:13:

"Are any of you in trouble? Then you should pray. Are any of you happy? Then sing songs of praise."

1 John 5:14-15:

"There is one thing we can be sure of when we come to God in prayer. If we ask anything in keeping with what He wants, He hears us. If we know that God hears what we ask for, we know that we have it."

6. What do these Bible verses say we should pray about?

7. What do these Bible verses promise we will receive when we pray?

8. What have you learned about prayer that you did not know before?

This Week

What one thing do you want to do this week to make prayer a part of your life every day?

lesson seven

Friends and Enemies

Key Characters

Rivka, Sara,
Mariam,
Haroon,
Moussa, Laila,
Yacoub, Titus



The Story

Episode 7 is 19:42 long.

Previously, Dawud went into hiding, narrowly escaping the Roman soldiers who had come to arrest him. Angered at not finding Dawud, they arrested Ayoub in his place. After praying with Sara and Mariam for his release, Rivka talked about the importance of spending time in prayer each day. The women joyfully saw God answer their prayer when Ayoub was released, unharmed.

In this episode, while Sara is visiting Rivka, Mariam rushes in with news that their father, Moussa, has returned suddenly from Beirut. Sadly, he has seriously injured his eyes, causing blindness. The girls are shocked to see a Roman soldier sitting in their courtyard, but Moussa tells them the soldier is a good man. This young soldier cared for him and brought him home. Moussa tells them to fix a meal for the soldier. Although she does not want to, Mariam begins to cook food for the soldier, but she tells Rivka that she hates the Romans. Rivka reminds her that Jesus taught them to love their enemies. She tells Mariam, “God loved us while we were still His enemies, and He asks us to do the same.” Mariam replies, “This isn’t easy, loving our enemies.” No matter her feelings, Mariam brings food to the soldier, smiling kindly as he takes it.



Unconditional Love

notes

☞ **Major Lesson** – How can we love difficult people? This is known as “loving by faith.” This means we love them even though they do not deserve love. God loves us this way—we do not deserve His love because we are sinners, but He offers it to us as a free gift.

☞ **Life Lesson** – Loving is not always easy, but God wants us to love other people even if we consider them unlovable. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, believers in Jesus can love even when it is hard.

1. During this episode, several people said they hated someone else. What were some of the reasons for their hard feelings?

Moussa hates Rivka because of her husband; Mariam hates the Romans because they have taken over her country; Sara hates the robbers who stole their sheep and broke Ayoub's arm; Haroon hates Micah.

2. There were also some relationships based on love. Describe the ones you saw in this episode.

Rivka loves her husband Haroon even though he is often harsh to her. Rivka shows love to Moussa even though he treats her as an enemy. Laila loves Moussa even though he is bitter and is mean to her dear friend. The whole family loves Dawud even though he is putting them all in danger.

Rivka - lesson seven

3. Why do you love the people you love?

notes

4. How would you describe Rivka's marriage?
How does Haroon treat her?

5. How did Rivka respond when Haroon embarrassed her with his words and actions?

6. What gave Rivka the strength or motivation to love him even when he did not return her love?

In the Bible, Jesus teaches about how to show love, even to our enemies.

This passage is from the book written by Luke, who was a doctor from Syria and a good friend of Paul's. Luke did not travel with Jesus while He was on earth, but he did travel with Paul for many years. Luke talked with many of Jesus' first followers, including Jesus' mother Mary and His disciples. Luke wrote down all that Jesus did. He wrote it for a man who was interested in knowing the truth about Jesus and about Paul's ministry.

Friends and Enemies

In Luke 6:32-37, Jesus says:

“Suppose you love those who love you. Should anyone praise you for that? Even ‘sinners’ love those who love them. And suppose you do good to those who are good to you. Should anyone praise you for that? Even ‘sinners’ do that. And suppose you lend money to those who can pay you back. Should anyone praise you for that? Even a ‘sinner’ lends to ‘sinners,’ expecting them to pay everything back. But love your enemies. Do good to them. Lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then you will receive a lot in return. And you will be sons of the Most High God. He is kind to people who are evil and are not thankful. So have mercy, just as your Father has mercy.”

7. What did Jesus tell His followers to do in this passage?

8. Are we able to love our enemies in our own strength?

No.

Recently we talked about our need to make a choice, whether to live **in our own power** (self-directed life) or to live a life **directed by the Holy Spirit** (Spirit-controlled life). Loving by faith is one aspect of that choice. We can try either to **love people in our own strength**, or we can **walk with God’s love** operating in our lives.

In the passage above, Jesus commanded us to love our enemies and to do good to them. God does not command us to do something without giving us the power to obey. Let's look at what the Bible says about loving people in the power of the Holy Spirit.

notes

Ephesians 5:1-2 says:

“You are the children that God dearly loves. So be just like Him. Lead a life of love, just as Christ did. He loved us. He gave Himself up for us. He was a sweet-smelling offering and sacrifice to God.”

Galatians 5:16 says:

“So I say, live by the Holy Spirit's power. Then you will not do what your sinful nature wants you to do.”

9. According to these verses, where does the power come from to love our enemies?

10. In past lessons what have we learned about how to live in the power of the Holy Spirit?

Note: Review Lesson Five if needed.

11. How can we show love in difficult situations or with difficult people?

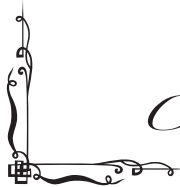


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This Week

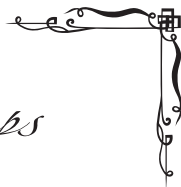
Think about someone in your life who is hard to love. What could you do this week to love him or her better?

Note: Ask each group member to share her answer with the group or at least one person in the group. Knowing that someone else knows what she plans to do will help her do it. This also will help build relationships within your group. Remember to ask them about this next time you meet and to praise them for any steps taken, however small they may be.



lesson eight

Cleaning the Lamps



Key Characters

Rivka, Mariam, Yacoub, Abram (Yacoub's father), Laila, Moussa, Sara, Debra, Daliyah



The Story

Episode 8 is 19:22 long.

Previously, Moussa returned to his family, blinded by an accident in Beirut. Mariam admits to Rivka that she hates the Romans, and Rivka helps her to understand that, as a follower of Jesus, she must love her enemies and pray for them.

In this episode, Yacoub and his father meet with Moussa to arrange a marriage between Yacoub and Mariam. Mariam visits Rivka to share the news that she will be married in three months. They talk about what it means to be submissive as wives and before God. Mariam asks if marrying Yacoub will help her be a better person. Rivka tells Mariam that value and maturity do not come from being married or not married. Growth comes through obeying God and serving Him and others. "You and I are like lamps, Mariam. Our life's purpose is to shine with God's light in the world, but each of us will do that in a slightly different way." She reminds Mariam that God gives gifts and talents to everyone, whether married or single, rich or poor. She encourages Mariam to live fully for God; then He will shine through her.



God Values You

notes

☞ **Major Lesson** – God values each individual person, regardless of his or her marital status, giving everyone different gifts and talents to be used for His glory. We all are different, but we all have the same purpose: to shine God’s light to the world.

☞ **Life Lesson** – Those who put their trust in Jesus are uniquely gifted regardless of their marital status. As followers of Jesus, we desire to use our gifts and talents to shine His light in the world.

1. What were Mariam’s concerns and fears regarding marrying Yacoub?

2. How does Rivka respond to Mariam’s concerns and fears?

3. What does your family and community expect from women who are wives?

Rivka - lesson eight

4. Is one considered better than the others?
Why or why not?

5. Galatians 3:28 says:

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

According to Galatians 3:28, does God view a married woman differently than an unmarried woman?

6. Rivka uses cleaning and filling her lamps to explain to Mariam that we all have the same purpose. What does Rivka say is this purpose?

In Matthew 5:14-16, Jesus says:

“You are the light of the world. A city on a hill can’t be hidden. Also, people do not light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand. Then it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine in front of others. Then they will see the good things you do. And they will praise your Father who is in heaven.”

7. How does Jesus describe our purpose in these verses?

Rivka also mentions that each of us has been given gifts and talents. In the Bible, Romans 12:4-6 tells us:

“Each of us has one body with many parts. And the parts do not all have the same purpose. So also we are many persons. But in Christ we are one body. And each part of the body belongs to all the other parts. We all have gifts. They differ in keeping with the grace that God has given each of us. ...”

Also, 1 Corinthians 12:11-14 says:

“All of the gifts are produced by one and the same Spirit. He gives them to each person, just as He decides. There is one body. But it has many parts. Even though it has many parts, they make up one

body. It is the same with Christ. We were all baptized by one Holy Spirit into one body. It didn't matter whether we were Jews or Greeks, slaves or free people. We were all given the same Spirit to drink. The body is not made up of just one part. It has many parts."

notes

8. According to these verses, who gives us these gifts and talents?

9. What are the talents, abilities or gifts you see in your own life? (For example, good mother, able to help others when they are sick, sing well, good with sewing, etc.)

Note: Be sure to remind the group that each talent, ability or gift comes from God.

10. How does our light shine in our families and to others?

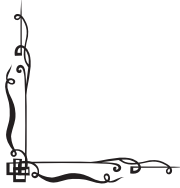
Note: You may want to start by telling how you see each woman shine the light of Jesus.



notes

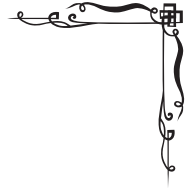
This Week

Think about the individual gifts and talents you have been given by God. Which can you use to bless or encourage someone else this week?



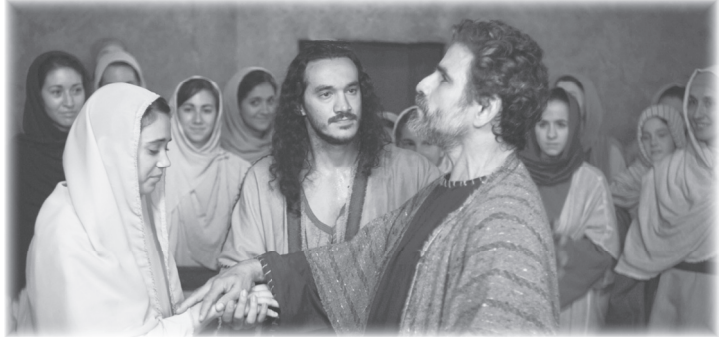
lesson nine

Wedding Day



Key Characters

Mariam, Rivka, Sara, Laila, Noura, Daliyah, Yacoub, Dawud



The Story

Previously,
Mariam's father

Episode 9 is 21:37 long.

arranged her marriage to Yacoub, which will take place in only three months. Rivka helped Mariam understand that whether married or not, it is her relationship with God that gives her value. Rivka helped her see that as she lives fully for God, she will “shine” for Him in all she does.

In this episode, Mariam's wedding day is here! Laila watches as Sara, Rivka, Noura and Daliyah (Mariam's friend) braid Mariam's hair and help her dress, and she asks them to share words of wisdom with her. They remind Mariam to focus on God every day, to pray and meditate on the Scriptures, and to bring all her needs and requests to Him. They encourage her to find joy in the little things and to remember that her true beauty comes from within.

As they walk Mariam through the courtyard to meet her groom, she is overjoyed to see that Dawud has come out of hiding to be at her wedding. The wedding celebration begins, and soon Mariam and Yacoub speak their vows to one another. Suddenly Roman soldiers storm through the door to arrest Dawud. He tries to run, but they capture him and take him away. Laila cries out in grief and collapses.



Contentment

notes

✦ **Major Lesson** – Both marriage and singleness are gifts from God, designed and blessed by Him. The most important thing for us is to keep our relationship with Jesus as our first priority. We can trust God has placed us in the situation that is best for our relationship with Him and for His glory.

✦ **Life Lesson** – With Jesus' help, we can choose to be content no matter what is happening in our lives.

1. During marriage preparation the women share words of wisdom. Noura shares the story of the 10 virgins waiting for the bridegroom found in Matthew 25:1-13. Who would like to tell the story in your own words?

2. Also, during this time, Sara shares the story of Mary and Martha found in Luke 10:38-41. Which of you would like to tell the story in your own words?

3. What lesson do these stories have in common?

A relationship with Jesus is your highest priority.

Risika - lesson nine

4. How do you think Daliyah, who was single, felt during the wedding preparations?

notes

We know from episode eight that Daliyah is afraid she will never get married though she wants to very much. It probably was hard for her to be happy with Mariam about her marriage, but also be sad about not yet being married herself.

Noura referred to the apostle Paul's teaching given in 1 Corinthians 7:6-8:

“I say those things to you as my advice, not as a command. I wish all of you were like me. But you each have your own gift from God. One has this gift. Another has that. I speak to those who are not married. I also speak to widows. It is good for you to stay single like me.”

5. In these verses from 1 Corinthians, Paul is saying that both marriage and singleness are gifts from God. How is that different from what our culture says?

Now we are going to look at a passage from the Bible where Paul talks about how he learned to be content no matter what was happening in his life. Paul has the authority to speak about being content because he has been through many trials.

This is from a letter Paul wrote to early followers of Jesus in the city of Philippi. He had gone to Philippi to tell people there about Jesus and had established a church in the city. This letter was written to them as a thank you for gifts they had sent to him as he continued telling people about Jesus in other cities.

Philippians 4:12,13 and 19, 20 says:

“I know what it’s like not to have what I need. I also know what it’s like to have more than I need. I have learned the secret of being content no matter what happens. I am content whether I am well fed or hungry. I am content whether I have more than enough or not enough. I can do everything by the power of Christ. He gives me strength.”

“My God will meet all your needs. He will meet them in keeping with His wonderful riches that come to you because you belong to Christ Jesus. Give glory to our God and Father for ever and ever. Amen.”

In 2 Corinthians 11, Paul lists all the things that have happened to him during his years traveling to teach others about Jesus: He was beaten many times until they thought he was dead; shipwrecked three times; he spent a night and a day in the open sea. He was in danger from rivers and robbers. He was in danger from both his own people and foreigners. He was in danger in the city, in the country and at sea. He was in danger from people who pretended to be followers of Jesus. He had worked very hard, gone without sleep, been without food or water and even naked and cold.

6. What does Paul say is the secret to contentment in every situation?

Paul learned to be content in his circumstances through the strength Christ gave him.

notes

7. Contentment is not just enduring a situation; it is making a choice to embrace the situation by faith through the strength Jesus gives. How does the strength to do all things in Christ lead to contentment in every situation?

We can trust that God is in control, and He has placed us in these situations for our good and His glory. Walking in the power of the Holy Spirit yields the fruit of the Spirit.

8. Is there an area in your life where you need to be more content? How can you learn to be more content in this area?

Identify areas where you struggle to be content. Take them to Jesus in prayer, which will help you see your situation from His view. It may be helpful to review spiritual breathing from Lesson Five.

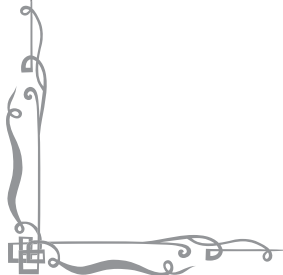


notes

This Week

What can you do to trust God in the midst of your current circumstances?

What can you do to make your relationship with Jesus your highest priority?



lesson ten

The Dropped Stitch

Key Characters

Sara, Ayoub, Moussa, Debra, Rivka, Noura, Mariam, Yacoub

The Story

Previously, on the day of Mariam's wedding, Dawud surprised her by coming out of hiding to be at her wedding. Yacoub and Mariam's

happy wedding celebration with family and friends was cruelly interrupted when Roman soldiers burst in to arrest Dawud. The shock caused Laila to collapse.

In this episode, Moussa blames Rivka's husband, Haroon, for Dawud's arrest. He demands to be taken to their home, but once he arrives, he finds only Rivka there. Moussa speaks cruelly to Rivka, cursing her and her husband, even spitting on the ground before her. Rivka loses her temper, shouting at him as he leaves. Noura arrives to find Rivka weeping. Rivka tells her she is ashamed of her behavior toward Moussa. She should not have lost her temper. Noura encourages Rivka to forgive him, and Rivka prays for Moussa, asking God to bless him. Then she tells Noura she must go to Moussa to apologize. When she arrives at Moussa's home, Sara and Mariam are inside with their mother, whose illness has become much worse. Rivka no sooner speaks her apology to Moussa when Sara and Mariam scream for help. Rushing into Laila's bedroom, they find her gasping for her last breath; then she becomes still. Her family gathers around her bed, sobbing with grief.



Episode 10 is 17:45 long.



Forgiveness

notes

✦ **Major Lesson** – Bitterness is the result of holding on to anger and not forgiving others. Jesus commands us to forgive and bless those who curse and mistreat us. Forgiveness sets us free from bitterness.

✦ **Life Lesson** – We each must make a choice to forgive and bless others and to ask those we wrong to forgive us.

1. What was Moussa's anger doing to him? What was Rivka's response to him?

Moussa was consumed by his anger and allowed it to damage many of his relationships. Unable to contain her anger, Rivka shouts at Moussa.

Although Rivka has taught many women, we see that she also struggles with sin. Everyone fails, sometimes even when leading others. We all must look to Jesus as our example for how to live.

2. How is bitterness like a dropped stitch, which creates a hole that grows larger and larger?

While bitterness may appear to be a small thing, it will grow and grow, ruining the peace of God in your heart.

3. Moussa is the one who cursed Rivka. Why is it important for Rivka to ask for his forgiveness?



Rivka - lesson ten

Jesus teaches us in Luke 6:27, 28:

“But here is what I tell you who hear Me. Love your enemies. Do good to those who hate you. Bless those who call down curses on you. And pray for those who treat you badly.”

And Paul says in Colossians 3:12-15:

“You are God’s chosen people. You are holy and dearly loved. So put on tender mercy and kindness as if they were your clothes. Don’t be proud. Be gentle and patient. Put up with each other. Forgive the things you are holding against one another. Forgive, just as the Lord forgave you. And over all of those good things put on love. Love holds them all together perfectly as if they were one. Let the peace that Christ gives rule in your hearts. As parts of one body, you were appointed to live in peace. And be thankful.”

Paul also instructs us in Romans 12:14-19:

“Bless those who hurt you. Bless them, and do not call down curses on them. Be joyful with those who are joyful. Be sad with those who are sad. Agree with each other. Don’t be proud. Be willing to be a friend of people who aren’t considered important. Don’t think that you are better than others. Don’t pay back evil with evil. Be careful to do what everyone thinks is right. If possible, live in peace with everyone. Do that as much as you can. My friends, don’t try to get even. Leave room for God to show His anger. It is written, ‘I am the One who judges people. I will pay them back,’ says the Lord.”



4. What are Jesus and Paul teaching us to do in these verses? How can we bless others, especially when they are cursing us?

Jesus commands us to bless those who curse and mistreat us. We have to make a choice (as an act of our will), through the power of the Holy Spirit, to forgive, even if the other person does not apologize or forgive us. That person's response is not our guide; our guide is the teaching from Jesus to love our enemies, to bless them, and to do good to them.

5. Do you have any "dropped stitches," any bitterness, in your life? Is there someone you need to ask forgiveness from or someone you need to forgive? What are some steps you can take to move toward forgiveness?

Forgiveness can be difficult. Again, it is a choice we each must make. The first step is to begin to pray that God will allow us to be willing to forgive as well as asking for forgiveness when we are wrong.

This Week

Take the first step toward forgiveness (question five).

What can you do to actively bless someone else?

lesson eleven

Births

Key Characters

Dawud,
Moussa, Rivka,
Sara, Ayoub



The Story

Previously,
after angry words

passed between Moussa and Rivka, she wept, knowing it was wrong of her to lose her temper. Noura encouraged her to forgive Moussa, which Rivka did. She went to Moussa and apologized. Before he could respond, cries came from Laila's bedroom where Sara and Mariam were caring for her. Sadly, Laila died.

Episode 11 is 21:18 long.

In this episode, a short time has passed, and now Ayoub and Sara welcome the birth of their daughter. Dawud unexpectedly appears at the door, beaten and bruised. Haroon interceded for him and paid the fine for his release—he is free. He goes on to tell an amazing story: Jesus appeared to him while he was in prison! He now follows Jesus and wants to tell others of this good news. All rejoice with him except Moussa. He does not want Dawud to follow Jesus; he feels it will give the Romans a reason to arrest him again. He is afraid Dawud's desire to tell others about Jesus will only continue to put himself and his family in danger. Dawud looks kindly at his father. "I am not ashamed of Him, Father. ... I want to tell the whole world!"

Facing Persecution and Suffering

☞ **Major Lesson** – While salvation is a free gift from God, following Jesus requires picking up a cross daily and facing difficulties.

☞ **Life Lesson** – We can boldly follow Jesus wherever we are and experience His joy in every circumstance as we identify ourselves with Him.

1. What happened to Dawud in prison?

He was beaten, but also saw Jesus and began a relationship with Him.

2. Why do you think Moussa and Daliyah reacted as they did to Dawud's story?

3. Dawud says several times he wants to tell others about his new relationship with Jesus, and he is not afraid of how his family or others will react. How and when would you advise him to share this news with his family and friends?

Paul says in Colossians 4:2-6:

“Spend a lot of time in prayer. Always be watchful and thankful. Pray for us too. Pray that God will open a door for our message. Then we can preach the mystery of Christ. Because I preached it, I am being held by chains. Pray that I will preach it clearly, as I should. Be wise in

Riska - lesson eleven

the way you act toward outsiders. Make the most of every opportunity. Let the words you speak always be full of grace. Season them with salt. Then you will know how to answer everyone.”

notes

“Outsiders” refers to those who do not yet believe and follow Jesus.

4. What does this passage say about how we should pray for each other?

5. How do you think you could be wise in the way you act with those who do not yet believe? What would a conversation “full of grace, seasoned with salt” sound like?

In other passages “salt” refers to the good news or the gospel.

6. What is our motivation to share with others about what Jesus has done in our lives?

7. How would you respond if someone misunderstood and became angry when you shared with them?

One of Jesus’ disciples, Peter, wrote this in a letter to early followers of Jesus who were suffering for their faith (1 Peter 4:12-14):

“Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though

something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when His glory is revealed. If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.”

8. Are you experiencing any “painful trials” right now? What does Peter tell you about your circumstances?

Earlier in His ministry, Jesus said to those following Him (Matthew 16:24-26):

“... If anyone wants to follow Me, he must say no to himself. He must pick up his cross and follow Me. If he wants to save his life, he will lose it. But if he loses his life for Me, he will find it. What good is it if someone gains the whole world but loses his soul? Or what can anyone trade for his soul?”

9. What did you learn from this verse? How can you apply this verse to your life?

This Week

What can you do this week to share God’s love with those around you? How can you make sure you are listening to God’s direction for your life every day?

lesson twelve

Sharing the News

Key Characters

Dawud, Rivka,
Mariam, Daliyah,
Moussa, Noura,
Yacoub, Ayoub

The Story

Previously,
Mariam's family
rejoiced at the

birth of Sara and Ayoub's daughter. Their joy increased when Dawud returned home, free. He told them Jesus appeared to him in prison, and now he follows Jesus.



Episode 12 is 21:28 long.

In this episode, family and friends gather to celebrate the new baby's birth. While there, Dawud tells of his experience in prison when Jesus appeared to him, and he shares the gospel message. Rivka tells how her friend, Mary Magdalene, was at the tomb of Jesus when He rose from the dead—how she saw Jesus, and He talked to her. Rivka says Jesus appeared to many of His followers after that, and then they saw Him go up into heaven. Dawud encourages everyone there, "Believe in the Lord Jesus and be baptized in His name." Later, Mariam prays with her friend Daliyah as Daliyah asks God for faith to believe in Jesus. Still later, Rivka and Mariam watch the sunset. Mariam says, "I know He is with me. I can talk to Him. ... It doesn't always take the sorrow, the pain, away, but He helps me bear it. It's as if I'm going through a desert place, but somehow, because He is there, He makes the desert—even the driest, harshest place—rejoice!"

Sharing Your Story

⌘ **Major Lesson** – Jesus gives each of us the command to tell others about Him. God will give us the power through the Holy Spirit to be His witnesses.

⌘ **Life Lesson** – God wants us to tell others our story (or testimony) about how we came to know Jesus. We can expect some people to accept the news gladly, but others might not receive our story.

1. Dawud gives us a good example of how to share our story.

How does he describe his life before he met Jesus?

How does he describe meeting Jesus?

How has his life changed now that he knows Jesus?

In the Bible, Jesus says in Acts 1:8:

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you. Then you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem. You will

Riska - lesson twelve

be My witnesses in all Judea and Samaria.
And you will be My witnesses from one
end of the earth to the other.”

notes

2. What does Jesus promise us in this verse?
What does He ask us to do?

Jesus commands each of us to tell our story,
both where we live and to the rest of the
world. Matthew 28:19, 20 is called the Great
Commission. Jesus tells us in these verses:

“So you must go and make disciples of
all nations. Baptize them in the name of
the Father and of the Son and of the Holy
Spirit. Teach them to obey everything I
have commanded you. And you can be
sure that I am always with you, to the
very end.”

3. What task is Jesus giving to all of us? What
does He promise us?

Ayoub gives us an example of using Scripture to
answer those who have doubts when he quoted
Isaiah 53:5:

“But the servant was pierced because we
had sinned.
He was crushed because we had done
what was evil.
He was punished to make us whole again.
His wounds have healed us.”

4. How does he use this verse to answer the questions raised by the crowd?

Instead of relying on one person's opinion, we need to point people back to Jesus and the truth of Scripture. We can confidently rely on Scripture because God says in Isaiah 55:11 that His Word will not return back to Him without producing results.

“The words I speak are like that. They will not return to me without producing results. They will accomplish what I want them to. They will do exactly what I sent them to do.”

5. One of the young women in the crowd asks: “What does this mean for us? For me?” How would you answer her?
6. What concerns did Dalayah share with Mariam? How did Mariam answer Dalayah?

Dalayah is concerned about what her parents would say. Also she wants to believe it is true, but she does not understand. She does not have enough faith.

Mariam told her she could pray and ask God to show her what was true, ask Him for faith and courage.

7. Daliyah asks Mariam what she should do if she wants to become a follower of Jesus later. How would you answer this question?

notes

8. Think about your story. Take some time and quietly answer these questions to yourself so you will be prepared to tell others your story.

What did you learn as a child about godly living that was confirmed when you met Jesus?

How did you meet Jesus?

How has your relationship with Jesus enabled you to be a better daughter, sister, friend or wife?



notes

This Week

Think of some people in your life who do not know Jesus. Pray and ask God to give you the chance to share your story with them and share the *Magdalena* film with them. Pray about which of your friends and family you could gather weekly to watch *Rivka*.

If you have time, please help the women practice their stories.

There are many ways to tell others about Jesus. Be prepared to offer suggestions of other tools they can use (for example, showing the JESUS film, sharing the Four Spiritual Laws booklet, or other tools available in your country).



Rivka - lesson twelve

APPENDIX A: how to get access to God by knowing God personally.

1

Just as there are physical laws that govern the physical universe, so are there spiritual laws which govern your relationship with God.

LAW ONE GOD LOVES YOU, AND HAS A WONDERFUL PLAN FOR YOUR LIFE.

(References contained in this booklet should be read in context from the Bible, God's Word, wherever possible.)

God's Love

“And we have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him” (1 John 4:16).

God's Plan

(Christ speaking) “I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly” (that it might be full and meaningful) (John 10:10).

Why is it that most people are not experiencing the abundant life? Because...

2

LAW TWO MAN IS SINFUL AND SEPARATED FROM GOD. THEREFORE, HE CANNOT KNOW AND EXPERIENCE GOD'S LOVE AND PLAN FOR HIS LIFE.

Man Is Sinful

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).

God Is Holy

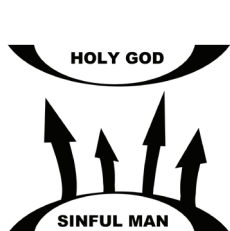
“The Lord said: You shall be Holy, for I am Holy” (1 Peter 1:16).

Man was created to have fellowship with God; but, because of his stubborn self-will, he

chose to go his own independent way and fellowship with the Holy God was broken. This self-will, characterized by an attitude of active rebellion against God or passive indifference, is what the Bible calls sin.

Man Is Separated From Holy God

“For the wages of sin is death” (spiritual separation from God)
(Romans 6:23).



This diagram illustrates that God is holy and man is sinful. A great gap separates the two. The arrows illustrate that man is continually trying to reach God and the abundant life through his own efforts such as a good life, ethics, philosophy or religion, etc. But despite all his efforts, man is not able to bridge this gap.

The third law gives us the only answer to this problem...

3

LAW THREE

JESUS CHRIST IS GOD'S ONLY PROVISION FOR MAN'S SIN. THROUGH HIM YOU CAN KNOW AND EXPERIENCE GOD'S LOVE AND PLAN FOR YOUR LIFE.

His Miraculous Birth

Jesus Christ was not the son of a human father, but He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary. This is why He is called the son of God.

“And Mary said to the angel, ‘How can this be, since I am a virgin?’ And the angel answered and said to her, ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason, the holy offspring will be called the Son of God’” (Luke 1:30-35).

He Died in Our Place

As God redeemed, with a wonderful lamb, the son of Abraham when he was going to sacrifice him to God; likewise, God redeemed the whole world by the Great Lamb, namely, Jesus Christ, who died in our place to remove our sins.

“The next day, John the Baptist saw Jesus coming to him and prophesied, ‘Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world’” (John 1:29). “But God demonstrates His own love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8).

He Rose From the Dead

“Christ died for our sins...He was buried...He was raised on the third day, according to the Scriptures... He appeared to Peter, then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred...” (1 Corinthians 15:3-6).

He Is the Only Way

“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me’” (John 14:6).

“For God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:16).



This diagram illustrates that God has bridged the gap which separates us from Him by sending Jesus Christ, the Holy Lamb of God, to die on the cross in our place to pay the penalty for our sins.

“He (Christ)...offered one sacrifice for sins for all time” (Hebrews 10:12).

Do you accept these three laws?

If you do, it is not enough just to know and accept these three laws...

4

LAW FOUR

WE MUST INDIVIDUALLY RECEIVE JESUS CHRIST AS SAVIOR AND LORD, THEN WE CAN KNOW AND EXPERIENCE GOD'S LOVE AND PLAN FOR OUR LIVES.

We Must Receive Christ

"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name" (John 1:12).

We Receive Christ Through Faith

"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast" (Ephesians 2:8, 9).

When We Receive Christ, We Experience a New Birth

(Read John 3:1-8.)

We Receive Christ by Personal Invitation

(Christ is speaking) "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him" (Revelation 3:20).

Receiving Christ involves turning to God (repentance) and trusting Christ to come into our lives, to forgive our sins and to make us the kind of people He wants us to be. Just to agree intellectually that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that He died on the cross for our sins is not enough. Nor is it enough to have an emotional experience. We receive Jesus Christ by faith, as an act of the will.

These two hearts represent two kinds of lives:



SELF-CONTROLLED LIFE

- S – Self on the throne
- † – Christ outside the life
- – Interests controlled by self, often resulting in discord and frustration.



CHRIST-CONTROLLED LIFE

- † – Christ on the throne of the life
- S – Self dethroned
- – Interests under control of infinite God, resulting in harmony with God's plan.

Which heart best represents your life?

Which heart would you like to have represent your life?

The following explains how you can receive Christ:

YOU CAN RECEIVE CHRIST RIGHT NOW THROUGH A PRAYER OF FAITH

(Prayer is talking to God)

God knows your heart and is not so concerned with your words as He is with the attitude of your heart. The following is a suggested prayer of faith:

“Lord Jesus, I need you. Thank You for dying on the cross for my sins. I confess and repent of my sins, and I open the door of my life and receive You as my Savior and Lord. Thank You for forgiving my sins. Take control of the throne of my life. Make me the kind of person You want me to be. Amen.”

Does this prayer express the desire of your heart?

If it does, pray this prayer right now by faith, and Christ will come into your life, as He promised.

How to Know That Christ Is in Your Life

As you prayed, did you receive Christ into your life? According to His promise in Revelation 3:20, where is Christ right now in relation to you? Christ said that He would come into your life. Would He mislead you? Therefore, how do you know that God has answered your prayer? (The trustworthiness of God Himself and His Word, the Bible. In other words, God keeps His promises).

The Bible Promises Eternal Life to All Who Receive Christ

“And the witness is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may know that you have eternal life” (1 John 5:11-13).

Thank God often that Christ is in your life and that He will never leave you (Hebrews 13:5). You can know on the basis of His promise that Christ lives in you and that you have eternal life, from the very moment you invite Him in. He will not deceive you.

What about feelings?

DO NOT DEPEND UPON FEELINGS

This promise of God's Word, the Bible—not our feelings—is our authority. The Christian lives by faith (trust) in the trustworthiness of God Himself and His Word. This truck diagram illustrates the relationship between fact (God and His Word), faith (our trust in God and His Word) and feeling (the result of our faith and obedience) (John 14:21).



The truck will run with or without the trailer. However, it would be useless to attempt to pull the truck by the trailer. In the same way, we, as Christians, do not depend upon feelings or emotions, but we place our faith (trust) in the trustworthiness of God and the promises of His Word.

NOW THAT YOU HAVE RECEIVED CHRIST

The moment that you receive Christ by faith, as an act of the will, many things happened, including the following:

1. Christ came into your life (Revelation 3:20 and Colossians 1:27).
2. Your sins were forgiven (Colossians 1:14).
3. You became a child of God (John 1:12).
4. You received eternal life (John 5:24).
5. You began the great adventure for which God created you (John 10:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 Thessalonians 5:18).

Can you think of anything more wonderful that could happen to you than receiving Christ? Would you like to thank God in prayer right now for what He has done for you? The very act of thanking God demonstrates faith.

Now what?

SUGGESTIONS FOR CHRISTIAN GROWTH

Spiritual growth results from trusting Jesus Christ. “The righteous man shall live by faith” (Galatians 3:11). A life of faith will enable you to trust God increasingly with every detail of your life, and to practice the following:

- G *Go to God in prayer daily (John 15:7).*
- R *Read God’s Word, the Bible, daily (Acts 17:11) - begin with the Gospel of John.*
- O *Obey God, moment by moment (John 14:21).*
- W *Witness for Christ by your life and words (Matthew 4:19; John 15:8).*
- T *Trust God for every detail of your life (1 Peter 5:7).*
- H *Holy Spirit - allow Him to control and empower your daily life and witness (Galatians 5:16,17; Acts 1:8).*

THE IMPORTANCE OF A GOOD CHURCH

In Hebrews 10:25, we are admonished to forsake not “the assembling of ourselves together” Several logs burn brightly together; but put one aside from the burning flames, and the fire in the log goes out. So it is with your relationship to other Christians. If you do not belong to a local fellowship of believers, do not wait to be invited. Take the initiative; contact or visit a nearby church where Christ is honored and His Word is preached. Start this week, and make plans to attend regularly.

You will want to share your discovery...

APPENDIX B

Satisfied?

Satisfaction: (n.) fulfillment of one's needs, longings, or desires

What words would you use to describe your current experience as a Christian?

<i>Growing</i>	<i>Frustrated</i>
Disappointing	Fulfilled
Forgiven	Stuck
Struggling	Joyful
Defeated	Exciting
Up and down	Empty
Discouraged	Duty
Intimate	Mediocre
Painful	Dynamic
Guilty	Vital
So-so	Others?

Do you desire more? Jesus said, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him" (John 7:37, 38).

What did Jesus mean? John, the biblical author, went on to explain, "By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified" (John 7:39).

Jesus promised that God's Holy Spirit would satisfy the thirst, or deepest longings, of all who believe in Jesus Christ. However, many Christians do not understand the Holy Spirit or how to experience Him in their daily lives.

➔ *The following principles will help you understand and enjoy God's Spirit.*

The Divine Gift Divine:

Divine (adj.) given by God

God has given us His Spirit so that we can experience intimacy with Him and enjoy all He has for us.

The Holy Spirit is the source of our deepest satisfaction.

The Holy Spirit is God’s permanent presence with us.

Jesus said, “I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth” (John 14:16, 17).

The Holy Spirit enables us to understand and experience all God has given us.

“We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us” (1 Corinthians 2:12).

The Holy Spirit enables us to experience many things:

- *A genuine new spiritual life (John 3:1–8).*
- *The assurance of being a child of God (Romans 8:15, 16).*
- *The infinite love of God (Romans 5:5; Ephesians 3:18, 19).*

Life Without the Spirit

Before Receiving Christ



Life With the Spirit

After Receiving Christ



FAITH

The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. (1 Corinthians 2:14).

The spiritual man makes judgments about all things... We have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:15, 16). But those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit. (Romans 8:5, NLT).

➔ Why are many Christians not satisfied in their experience with God?

The Present Danger

Danger: (n.) a thing that may cause injury, loss, or pain

We cannot experience intimacy with God and enjoy all He has for us if we fail to depend on His Spirit.

People who trust in their own efforts and strength to live the Christian life will experience failure and frustration, as will those who live to please themselves rather than God.

We cannot live the Christian life in our own strength.

“Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?” (Galatians 3:3).

We cannot enjoy all God desires for us if we live by our self-centered desires.

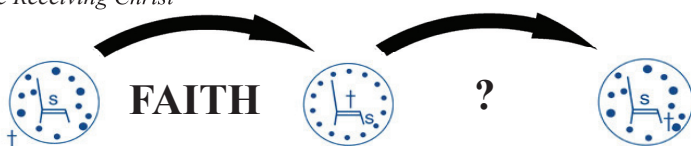
“For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want” (Galatians 5:17).

Three Kinds of Lifestyles

*A Self-centered Life
Before Receiving Christ*

A Christ-centered Life

*A Self-centered Life
After Receiving Christ*



“Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual, but as worldly—mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men?” (1 Corinthians 3:1–3).

➔ How can we develop a lifestyle of depending on the Spirit? Faith.

The Intimate Journey

Journey: (n.) any course from one experience to another

By walking in the Spirit we increasingly experience intimacy with God and enjoy all He has for us.

Walking in the Spirit moment by moment is a lifestyle. It is learning to depend upon the Holy Spirit for His abundant resources as a way of life.

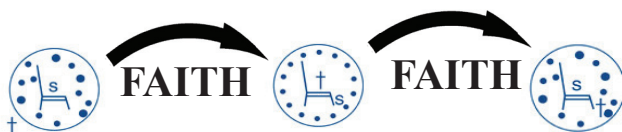
As we walk in the Spirit, we have the ability to live a life pleasing to God.

“So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature... Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit” (Galatians 5:16, 25).

As we walk in the Spirit, we experience intimacy with God and all He has for us.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control” (Galatians 5:22, 23).

The Christ-centered Life



Faith (trust in God and His promises) is the only way a Christian can live by the Spirit.

Spiritual breathing is a powerful word picture which can help you experience moment-by-moment dependence upon the Spirit.

Exhale: Confess your sin the moment you become aware of it—agree with God concerning it and thank Him for His forgiveness, according to 1 John 1:9 and Hebrews 10:1–25. Confession requires repentance—a change in attitude and action.

Inhale: Surrender control of your life to Christ, and rely upon the Holy Spirit to fill you with His presence and power by faith, according to His command (*Ephesians 5:18*) and promise (*1 John 5:14, 15*).

➔ *How does the Holy Spirit fill us with His power?*

The Empowering Presence

Empower: (v.) to give ability to

We are filled with the Spirit by faith, enabling us to experience intimacy with God and enjoy all He has for us.

The essence of the Christian life is what God does in and through us, not what we do for God. Christ's life is reproduced in the believer by the power of the Holy Spirit. To be filled with the Spirit is to be directed and empowered by Him.

By faith, we experience God's power through the Holy Spirit.

"I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith" (Ephesians 3:16, 17).

Three important questions to ask yourself:

1. Am I ready now to surrender control of my life to our Lord Jesus Christ? (Romans 12:1, 2)
2. Am I ready now to confess my sins? (1 John 1:9) Sin grieves God's Spirit (Ephesians 4:30). But God in His love has forgiven all of your sins—past, present, and future—because Christ has died for you.
3. Do I sincerely desire to be directed and empowered by the Holy Spirit? (John 7:37–39)

By faith claim the fullness of the Spirit according to His command and promise:

God **COMMANDS** us to be filled with the Spirit.

"...be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18).

God **PROMISES** He will always answer when we pray according to His will.

"This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him" (1 John 5:14, 15).

➔ *How to pray to be filled with the Holy Spirit...*

The Turning Point

Turning point: time when a decisive change occurs

We are filled with the Holy Spirit by faith alone.

Sincere prayer is one way of expressing our faith. The following is a suggested prayer:

Dear Father, I need You. I acknowledge that I have sinned against You by directing my own life. I thank You that You have forgiven my sins through Christ's death on the cross for me. I now invite Christ to again take His place on the throne of my life. Fill me with the Holy Spirit as You commanded me to be filled, and as You promised in Your Word that You would do if I asked in faith. I pray this in the name of Jesus. I now thank You for filling me with the Holy Spirit and directing my life.

Does this prayer express the desire of your heart? If so, you can pray right now and trust God to fill you with His Holy Spirit.

- ***How to know that you are filled by the Holy Spirit***
- ***Did you ask God to fill you with the Holy Spirit?***
- ***Do you know that you are now filled with the***
- ***Holy Spirit?***
- ***On what authority? (On the trustworthiness of God***
- ***Himself and His Word: Hebrews 11:6;***
- ***Romans 14:22, 23.)***

As you continue to depend on God's Spirit moment by moment you will experience and enjoy intimacy with God and all He has for you—a truly rich and satisfying life.

An important reminder...

Do Not Depend on Feelings

The promise of God's Word, the Bible—not our feelings—is our authority. The Christian lives by faith (trust) in the trustworthiness of God Himself and His Word. Flying in an airplane can illustrate the relationship among fact (God and His Word), faith (our trust in God and His Word), and feeling (the result of our faith and obedience) (John 14:21).

➔ *Continued on the next page . . .*



To be transported by an airplane, we must place our faith in the trustworthiness of the aircraft and the pilot who flies it. Our feelings of confidence or fear do not affect the ability of the airplane to transport us, though they do affect how much we enjoy the trip. In the same way, we as Christians do not depend on feelings or emotions, but we place our faith (trust) in the trustworthiness of God and the promises of His Word.

Now That You are Filled with the Holy Spirit

Thank God that the Spirit will enable you:

- ***To glorify Christ with your life (John 16:14).***
- ***To grow in your understanding of God and His Word (1 Corinthians 2:14, 15).***
- ***To live a life pleasing to God (Galatians 5:16–23).***

Remember the promise of Jesus:

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth”
(Acts 1:8).

If you would like additional resources on the Holy Spirit, please go to www.campuscrusade.org

If this booklet has been helpful to you, please share it with someone else.



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