

Women OF THE Scarlet Thread

STORIES OF GOD'S REDEEMING LOVE



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A College Park Church Women's Bible Study

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WEEK ONE

Introduction

Welcome! We are so glad you are joining us for this study of seven women in the lineage of Jesus Christ. Over the next seven weeks, you're invited to open your Bible and discover women who, in some ways much like yourself, experienced the redeeming power of God's love. You'll discover how God has woven their stories into His overall plan of redemption and hopefully, see his purpose for you, too.

As you begin this study, here are a few things to keep in mind:

- Begin your study time in **prayer**. Ask God, through his Holy Spirit, to open your eyes to the truths found in Scripture, to give you insight into his character, and to help you see application to your life.
- Each week you'll find five days of individual study, with our class happening on the sixth day, leaving the seventh day of the week for rest and reflection. We designed it this way to encourage you to **spend time in the Word daily** and allow Scripture to saturate your week in preparation for the class time.
- We will be **memorizing Galatians 4:4-7** together. We'll start with one verse and then add a verse and review each week. Memorizing a passage of Scripture can be a real joy as the Word is massaged into your heart. Take time each day to learn and review the verse presented in each lesson.
- Each week you'll complete a **Scripture observation** exercise. We've included the entire passage for you—feel free to use colors and/or symbols as you mark up the text. Notice patterns and repetitions as the Scripture comes alive visually.
- Occasionally, you may be asked to look something up in a dictionary or in a different translation of the Bible. (Phone apps are handy tools!) Otherwise, *wait to do further study in commentaries or study notes until after our class discussion and teaching*. The weekly Discussion Group time is designed for you and others in your group to share what you've learned in your study, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

May God bless your study of his Word!

TEACHING NOTES

WEEK TWO
Leah: Lovely in His Sight
Genesis 29 – 35; 49:31; Ruth 4:11

MEMORY VERSE

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under the law, (Galatians 4:4)

DAY ONE | Review Introduction, Eve: The Story Begins
Genesis 2-3

Write out this week's memory verse, **Galatians 4:4**.

1. Look over your notes from last week's teaching. Write down one or two key points or main takeaways from last week.

2. How did God demonstrate his redeeming love for Eve?

3. What is the "scarlet thread" in Scripture?

DAY TWO | Leah: Lovely in His Sight
Genesis 29:1-30

Write out this week's memory verse, **Galatians 4:4**.

Genesis 29:1-30

Then Jacob went on his journey and came to the land of the people of the east. **2** As he looked, he saw a well in the field, and behold, three flocks of sheep lying beside it, for out of that well the flocks were watered. The stone on the well's mouth was large, **3** and when all the flocks were gathered there, the shepherds would roll the stone from the mouth of the well and water the sheep and put the stone back in its place over the mouth of the well. **4** Jacob said to them, "My brothers, where do you come from?" They said, "We are from Haran." **5** He said to them, "Do you know Laban the son of Nahor?" They said, "We know him." **6** He said to them, "Is it well with him?" They said, "It is well; and see, Rachel his daughter is coming with the sheep!" **7** He said, "Behold, it is still high day; it is not time for the livestock to be gathered together. Water the sheep and go, pasture them." **8** But they said, "We cannot until all the flocks are gathered together and the stone is rolled from the mouth of the well; then we water the sheep." **9** While he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherdess. **10** Now as soon as Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, Jacob came near and rolled the stone from the well's mouth and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother. **11** Then Jacob kissed Rachel and wept aloud. **12** And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's kinsman, and that he was Rebekah's son, and she ran and told her father. **13** As soon as Laban heard the news about Jacob, his sister's son, he ran to meet him and embraced him and kissed him and brought him to his house. Jacob told Laban all these things, **14** and Laban said to him, "Surely you are my bone and my flesh!" And he stayed with him a month. **15** Then Laban said to Jacob, "Because you are my kinsman, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what shall your wages be?" **16** Now Laban had two daughters. The name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. **17** Leah's eyes were weak, but Rachel was beautiful in form and appearance. **18** Jacob loved Rachel. And he said, "I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel." **19** Laban said, "It is better that I give her to you than that I should give her to any other man; stay with me." **20** So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days because of the love he had for her. **21** Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife that I may go in to her, for my time is completed." **22** So Laban gathered together all the people of the place and made a feast. **23** But in the evening

he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob, and he went in to her. **24** (Laban gave his female servant Zilpah to his daughter Leah to be her servant.) **25** And in the morning, behold, it was Leah! And Jacob said to Laban, “What is this you have done to me? Did I not serve with you for Rachel? Why then have you deceived me?” **26** Laban said, “It is not so done in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn. **27** Complete the week of this one, and we will give you the other also in return for serving me another seven years.” **28** Jacob did so, and completed her week. Then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel to be his wife. **29** (Laban gave his female servant Bilhah to his daughter Rachel to be her servant.) **30** So Jacob went in to Rachel also, and he loved Rachel more than Leah, and served Laban for another seven years.

4. Read **Genesis 29:1-30** (printed above). Circle each person mentioned in the passage.

a. In a sentence or two, summarize the main events from this passage.

b. How is Jacob related to Laban? (v. 10)

5. Who are Leah and Rachel? How does the passage describe each of them? (v. 17)

6. What reason did Laban give for “tricking” Jacob into marrying Leah first? (v. 26)

*Despite the fact that Jacob took two wives, polygamy was not acceptable according to God (see **Genesis 2:24, 25**) or in the Mosaic Code (see **Leviticus 18:18**). Taking sisters as wives in polygamous unions was common in Egyptian, Chaldean, and Canaanite unions, but always*

forbidden by God. John MacArthur explains that “Moses, because of hard hearts, tolerated it, as did others in Israel in the early stages of that nation. But it always leads to tragedy.”¹

7. How does the text show Jacob’s love for Rachel? Give an example of where his love is stated and where it is inferred.

8. Rejection is always painful, but to be rejected *by* her new husband and *for* her younger sister must have been almost unbearable for Leah. Think about a time when you’ve experienced rejection or watched someone you love experience rejection. What words come to mind when you think about that time?

¹ MacArthur Study Bible, NKJV. Thomas Nelson. 1997. p 57, 179.

DAY THREE | Leah: Lovely in His Sight
Genesis 29:30-35

Write out this week's memory verse, **Galatians 4:4**.

Before arriving to Laban's household Jacob was no stranger to deception. He "purchased" his older (twin) brother Esau's birthright with a bowl of stew and then (with the help of his mother Rebekah) tricked his ailing father Isaac into giving him the blessing intended for Esau. He fled to his mother's brother's household to escape the wrath of an angry Esau. Deceit could have been Jacob's middle name and now the deceiver was deceived himself!

Genesis 29:30-35

30 So Jacob went in to Rachel also, and he loved Rachel more than Leah, and served Laban for another seven years. **31** When the Lord saw that Leah was hated, he opened her womb, but Rachel was barren. **32** And Leah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Reuben, for she said, "Because the Lord has looked upon my affliction; for now my husband will love me." **33** She conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Because the Lord has heard that I am hated, he has given me this son also." And she called his name Simeon. **34** Again she conceived and bore a son, and said, "Now this time my husband will be attached to me, because I have borne him three sons." Therefore his name was called Levi. **35** And she conceived again and bore a son, and said, "This time I will praise the Lord." Therefore she called his name Judah. Then she ceased bearing.

9. Read **Genesis 29:30-35** (printed above). Underline the names of Leah's first four sons.

10. What verb is used for how the Lord knew Leah was hated? (v. 31)

a. What does the Lord do for Leah because he knows she was hated?

b. How does he respond to Rachel? (v. 31)

11. Complete the table using the names of Leah's first 4 sons that you underlined in the passage. Note each name's meaning.

Birth Order	Son's Name	Meaning of the Name
1 (v. 32)		
2 (v. 33)		
3 (v. 34)		
4 (v. 35)		

12. Describe the change that occurs in how Leah names her sons.

a. What do you see specifically about Judah's name? How is it different from Reuben?

b. If Simeon means "heard" namely by the Lord, what does it tell us about what Leah had been doing?

13. The way in which Leah named her sons was an outward expression of inward heart change. What might have caused a heart change in Leah?

DAY FOUR | Leah: Lovely in His Sight | Genesis 30:1-22, 33:1-3

Write out this week's memory verse, **Galatians 4:4**.

Genesis 30:1-22

When Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, she envied her sister. She said to Jacob, "Give me children, or I shall die!" **2** Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel, and he said, "Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?" **3** Then she said, "Here is my servant Bilhah; go in to her, so that she may give birth on my behalf, that even I may have children through her." **4** So she gave him her servant Bilhah as a wife, and Jacob went in to her. **5** And Bilhah conceived and bore Jacob a son. **6** Then Rachel said, "God has judged me, and has also heard my voice and given me a son." Therefore she called his name Dan. **7** Rachel's servant Bilhah conceived again and bore Jacob a second son. **8** Then Rachel said, "With mighty wrestlings I have wrestled with my sister and have prevailed." So she called his name Naphtali. **9** When Leah saw that she had ceased bearing children, she took her servant Zilpah and gave her to Jacob as a wife. **10** Then Leah's servant Zilpah bore Jacob a son. **11** And Leah said, "Good fortune has come!" so she called his name Gad. **12** Leah's servant Zilpah bore Jacob a second son. **13** And Leah said, "Happy am I! For women have called me happy." So she called his name Asher.

14 In the days of wheat harvest Reuben went and found mandrakes in the field and brought them to his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, "Please give me some of your son's mandrakes." **15** But she said to her, "Is it a small matter that you have taken away my husband? Would you take away my son's mandrakes also?" Rachel said, "Then he may lie with you tonight in exchange for your son's mandrakes." **16** When Jacob came from the field in the evening, Leah went out to meet him and said, "You must come in to me, for I have hired you with my son's mandrakes." So he lay with her that night. **17** And God listened to Leah, and she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son. **18** Leah said, "God has given me my wages because I gave my servant to my husband." So she called his name Issachar. **19** And Leah conceived again, and she bore Jacob a sixth son. **20** Then Leah said, "God has endowed me with a good endowment; now my husband will honor me, because I have borne him six sons." So she called his name Zebulun. **21** Afterward she bore a daughter and called her name Dinah. **22** Then God remembered Rachel, and God listened to her and opened her womb.

14. As you read **Genesis 30:1-22** (printed above), underline the names of all the additional children who were born to Leah, Rachel, and their maidservants.

a. What did Rachel do to produce children for Jacob? (v. 3)

b. What did Leah do to produce more children for Jacob? Why did she do this? (v. 9)

15. Draw Jacob's family tree below. Include Rachel, Leah, Zilpah, Bilhah, and all the children in the story so far.

16. Verses 14-18 describe a tense scene between the rival sisters. Mandrakes were associated with fertility (also seen in the book of the Song of Solomon). What happened? What trade occurred? How did each sister leverage her "power" over the other sister?

17. Despite Leah bearing Jacob the most sons, how do we know that Rachel still had Jacob's favor based on this passage?

18. When the time comes for Jacob, his wives, and his children to return to his home, he's understandably worried about seeing Esau again. Remember why he had to leave in the first place? Continue reading the story in **Genesis 33:1-3**. What actions did Jacob take that confirmed his affection for Rachel over Leah?

19. At first glance, one might think that the Lord's blessing for Leah was opening her womb but looking deeper we see his blessing was in how he saw her pain and heard her prayers. Write down an example of a time when the Lord didn't necessarily remove your pain but made it evident that he **saw** you and/or **heard** your prayers.

DAY FIVE | Leah: Lovely in His Sight
Genesis 49:8-10, Revelation 5:5, Ruth 4:11

Review this week's memory verse, **Galatians 4:4**.

20. Throughout Leah's marriage to Jacob, we see pictures of God's redemption. She may have been *unloved* by her husband and even *unlovely* by societal standards, but she was *loved* by a holy God. This week we've seen how the Lord *saw her pain, heard her prayers, and acted on her behalf*. Read the following verses and look for other examples of the Lord seeing, hearing, or acting on the behalf of others. Jot down the circumstances in each passage.

Genesis 16:11-13

Psalm 139:16

1 Samuel 2:20-21

21. Throughout the history of the earth, beauty is an attribute that is admired, sought after, and revered. Read the following verses and record what the Bible has to say about beauty.

Proverbs 31:30

Ezekiel 28:17

1 Peter 3:3-4

For Leah, being seen and heard, and bearing children might have been enough... but the Lord gave her more! He chose Leah (not Rachel) to be the mother of Judah, whose lineage would include King David and eventually the Messiah—Jesus Christ!

22. Read **Genesis 49:8-10**. Before he died, Jacob (now called Israel) blessed his sons, the tribes of Israel, and this passage is the blessing for Judah and his tribe. There's a lot of symbolism in this passage and it's likely that even his sons were confused about his blessing. List any words or phrases that refer to honor, strength, power, or royalty.

a. Verse 8 has to do with praise and verse 9 refers to Judah's strength and success. Note the word "scepter" in verse 10 (a scepter is a staff carried by rulers). Name two kings that Judah precedes.

b. This passage alludes to a commonly used term for the Messiah: "The Lion of Judah." We have spent a lot of our time so far in Genesis, the very first book of the Bible, but you'll see that the story hasn't changed, even in the last book. Read **Revelation 5:5**. Which two men are (still) recognized and honored in the line of Jesus in this final book of the Bible?

23. While Judah wasn't Jacob's only son (and wasn't even his most favored son), he was the son chosen by God to have King David and ultimately the Messiah, Jesus Christ in his family! Turn back to Day 3 of this study and recall what you wrote down for the meaning of Judah's name (**Genesis 29:35**). How does the naming of Judah seem especially appropriate in light of his lineage to Christ?

*The end of Leah's story includes being buried by Jacob (while Rachel was buried elsewhere) along with Rebekah and Isaac. She was given the blessing of bearing him many sons, namely Judah - chosen to be in the line of Christ. She (and Rachel) are remembered as women who "built the family of Israel" as seen in **Ruth 4:11**. Though she may or may not have ever felt loved by Jacob, she was undoubtedly loved by the Lord.*

24. The bittersweet story of Leah tugs at the heart of women (sometimes more because of the bitter than the sweet reasons). How have you seen glimpses of yourself in her? If you only resonate with the bitter parts of Leah's story, how can you now see your own story in the sweetness of how the Lord saw, heard, and acted on her behalf?

TEACHING NOTES

WEEK THREE
Tamar: The Problem of Tamar
Genesis 38:1-30; Ruth 4:12; 1 Chronicles 2:4; Matthew 1:3

MEMORY PASSAGE

4 But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under the law, **5 to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons** (Galatians 4:4-5).

DAY ONE | Review Leah: Lovely in His Sight
Genesis 29-35:15, 49:31; Ruth 4:11

Write out this week's memory verse, **Galatians 4:5**.

1. Look over your notes from last week's teaching. Write down one or two key points or main takeaways from last week.

2. How did your view of Leah change as a result of studying her story? How will you think about her when her name comes up in the future?

3. What attributes of God are most evident in Leah's story? How did God demonstrate his redeeming love to Leah? How did you see his plan for the redemption of mankind in Leah's story?

DAY TWO | Tamar: The Problem of Tamar

Genesis 38:1-30

Write out this week's memory verse, **Galatians 4:5**.

Genesis 38:1-30

1It happened at that time that Judah went down from his brothers and turned aside to a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah. **2**There Judah saw the daughter of a certain Canaanite whose name was Shua. He took her and went in to her, **3**and she conceived and bore a son, and he called his name Er. **4**She conceived again and bore a son, and she called his name Onan. **5**Yet again she bore a son, and she called his name Shelah. Judah was in Chezib when she bore him. **6**And Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, and her name was Tamar. **7**But Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD put him to death. **8**Then Judah said to Onan, "Go in to your brother's wife and perform the duty of a brother-in-law to her, and raise up offspring for your brother." **9**But Onan knew that the offspring would not be his. So whenever he went in to his brother's wife he would waste the semen on the ground, so as not to give offspring to his brother. **10**And what he did was wicked in the sight of the LORD, and he put him to death also. **11**Then Judah said to Tamar his daughter-in-law, "Remain a widow in your father's house, till Shelah my son grows up"—for he feared that he would die, like his brothers. So Tamar went and remained in her father's house. **12**In the course of time the wife of Judah, Shua's daughter, died. When Judah was comforted, he went up to Timnah to his sheepshearers, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite. **13**And when Tamar was told, "Your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep," **14**she took off her widow's garments and covered herself with a veil, wrapping herself up, and sat at the entrance to Enaim, which is on the road to Timnah. For she saw that Shelah was grown up, and she had not been given to him in marriage. **15**When Judah saw her, he thought she was a prostitute, for she had covered her face. **16**He turned to her at the roadside and said, "Come, let me come in to you," for he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law. She said, "What will you give me, that you may come in to me?" **17**He answered, "I will send you a young goat from the flock." And she said, "If you give me a pledge, until you send it—" **18**He said, "What pledge shall I give you?" She replied, "Your signet and your cord and your staff that is in your hand." So he gave them to her and went in to her, and she conceived by him. **19**Then she arose and went away, and taking off her veil she put on the garments of her widowhood. **20**When Judah sent the young goat by his friend the Adullamite to take back the pledge from the woman's hand, he did not find her. **21**And he asked the men of the place, "Where is the cult prostitute who was at Enaim at the roadside?" And they said, "No cult prostitute has been here." **22**So he

returned to Judah and said, "I have not found her. Also, the men of the place said, 'No cult prostitute has been here.'" **23**And Judah replied, "Let her keep the things as her own, or we shall be laughed at. You see, I sent this young goat, and you did not find her." **24**About three months later Judah was told, "Tamar your daughter-in-law has been immoral. Moreover, she is pregnant by immorality." And Judah said, "Bring her out, and let her be burned." **25**As she was being brought out, she sent word to her father-in-law, "By the man to whom these belong, I am pregnant." And she said, "Please identify whose these are, the signet and the cord and the staff." **26**Then Judah identified them and said, "She is more righteous than I, since I did not give her to my son Shelah." And he did not know her again. **27**When the time of her labor came, there were twins in her womb. **28**And when she was in labor, one put out a hand, and the midwife took and tied a scarlet thread on his hand, saying, "This one came out first." **29**But as he drew back his hand, behold, his brother came out. And she said, "What a breach you have made for yourself!" Therefore his name was called Perez. **30**Afterward his brother came out with the scarlet thread on his hand, and his name was called Zerah.

4. Read **Genesis 38:1-30** (printed above). As you read this passage, circle each time **Tamar** is mentioned and draw a rectangle around **Judah's** name. Read the passage a second time and each time Tamar or an event involving her is mentioned, make a brief note in the margin about what you think Tamar may have felt, how she reacted, or her response to the situation (For example, "obedient", "helpless", etc.).

5. Read **Ruth 4:12** and **Matthew 1:1-3**. What do these verses tell you about Tamar? What is your initial reaction to the fact that Tamar is included in the lineage of Jesus Christ?

6. There are other Biblical examples of women who took things into their own hands or manipulated circumstances instead of waiting on God. One of those examples is Sarai (Sarah). Read **Genesis 15:2-5; 16:2-5; and 18:14**. Compare and contrast Sarai's actions and Tamar's.

7. Can you think of a time or circumstance when you've been tempted to take matters into your own hands instead of waiting on God? If so, what did you do? What reflections do you have about that decision now?

8. Finish today's study by reading and meditating on **Psalm 27:13-14** and **Isaiah 40:31**. Record your thoughts.

DAY THREE | Tamar: The Problem of Tamar

Various Scriptures

Write out this week's memory verse, **Galatians 4:5**.

The account of Tamar and Judah is certainly not one that is easily absorbed or understood. Before we can learn from Tamar's story and gain insight on her inclusion in the lineage of Christ, some background information about both Judah and Tamar is instructive.

9. **Judah.** You'll recall from last week's lesson that Judah was the fourth son of Leah and Jacob. Let's take a closer look at Judah.

a. Read **Genesis 27:35-37**. How did Judah's father, Jacob, secure his blessing from his father, Isaac?

b. Read **Genesis 22:15-18**. What was God's promise to Abraham (Judah's great grandfather)?

c. Read **Genesis 49: 3-10**. Where did Judah stand in terms of birthright (in relation to his brothers)?

d. Read **Genesis 37:17-28**. Just prior to his involvement with Tamar, what had Judah been doing?

10. At the beginning of **Genesis 38**, we find that after the situation with Joseph, Judah leaves his brothers and goes to Adullam, which is in Canaan, and marries a Canaanite woman.

a. Read **Genesis 28:1** and **Deuteronomy 7:1-4**. What's the admonition about Jews intermarrying with Canaanites? For what reason?

b. Where do you think Judah's heart is, at this point, as it relates to God?

11. **Tamar**. The name "*Tamar*" means palm tree or date tree. Because women typically married just after reaching puberty, Tamar was likely just a young woman when she married Er. Her marriage to Er was arranged by Judah, and arranged marriages were standard in Biblical times. It is believed that Tamar was a Canaanite.

*In the book "Vindicating the Vixens," Carolyn Curtis writes, "Contrary to the biblical depiction of the marriage relationship where 'a man leaves his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh' (2:24), in patriarchal cultures the wife is absorbed into her husband's family. She becomes their property and comes under the thumb of her husband's family."*²

a. How is Tamar's husband, Er, described in **Genesis 38:7**?

b. Read **Genesis 6:5** to see when this type of description was used before. What insight does this give you about God's judgment of Er?

² *Vindicating the Vixens*, Chapter 1: Tamar: the Righteous Prostitute, Carolyn Curtis James, MA, p. 38.

c. Following Er's death, Tamar was given to Er's brother Onan. Onan purposefully made sure that he would not impregnate Tamar. What does **Genesis 38: 10** say about Onan's actions and his fate?

12. Based on this background information about Judah and Tamar, what kind of example of a patriarch, father, and father-in-law do you think Judah was for his sons and Tamar? How does this information impact your thinking about the relationship and dynamics between Judah and Tamar?

DAY FOUR | Tamar: The Problem of Tamar
Genesis 38:6-11

Write out this week's memory verse, **Galatians 4:5**.

13. Onan and Tamar. Following the death of her husband, Er, Tamar was given to Onan. After Onan's death, what did Judah tell Tamar to do in **Genesis 38:11**?

a. What do you think was behind the basis of Judah's directive to Tamar?

b. What are your observations and thoughts about Judah's motivations as it relates to himself and to Tamar?

14. The custom of "kinsman redeemer" was a Levite custom and is described in **Deuteronomy 25:5-10**. According to Old Testament law, when Er died and Onan stepped in, what would the status of any son born to Tamar and Onan be?

*This custom, if fulfilled by the birth of a son with Tamar, would have affected Onan's share of any inheritance, reducing it substantially (See **Ruth 4:6**). In fact, without a child, Onan would receive two-thirds of the estate and only one-quarter of the estate if Tamar had a son.*

15. Tamar's Dilemma. How did Onan's and Judah's (by not having Shelah fulfill the kinsman redeemer role) failures affect Tamar and her future? In contrast, read **Ruth 4:14**.

16. Baker's *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, describes the status of a widow as follows:

"...Nonetheless, the loss of a husband in ancient Israel was normally a social and economic tragedy. In a generally patriarchal culture, the death of a husband usually meant a type of cultural death as well. Although the denotation of widow referred to a woman whose husband had died, because of the social context the word quickly acquired the connotation of a person living a marginal existence in extreme poverty. ...Since she was in an extremely vulnerable economic position, she became the prime target of exploitation."

It also describes the levirate marriage custom as it relates to a widow as follows:

*"If she was childless and of marriageable age (i.e., still able to reproduce), it was the duty of the closest male relative on her husband's side (normally the brother-in-law [Lat. levir]) to marry her and provide an heir for the land of her dead husband, and to continue his name in Israel (**Deuteronomy 25:5**). The story of Judah and Tamar (**Genesis 38**) is an example of this custom of "levirate" marriage.³"*

a. How do you think Tamar felt when she realized that Judah didn't have any intention of giving her to Shelah in marriage?

b. Have you been, or are you currently in, a set of circumstances where things seem stacked against you seemingly at no fault of your own? Describe how you handled the situation, either positively or negatively.

³ <https://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionaries/bakers-evangelical-dictionary/widow.html>.

17. The promises found in **Romans 8:28**, **Galatians 6:9**, and **1 Corinthians 1:8-9** are helpful when we face difficult circumstances. Read each verse. Does one of them specifically speak to you or is there another that you rely upon?

DAY FIVE | Tamar: The Problem of Tamar
Genesis 38:14-27

Review this week's memory passage, **Galatians 4:4-5**.

18. Tamar Acts. At this point in the story, Judah's wife has died, and Tamar is living in her father's home as a widow. Tamar decides to pose deceitfully as a prostitute and offer herself to her father-in-law, Judah. Based on what you have learned so far, what do you think Tamar is thinking? What do you think her goal is?

a. Does Tamar's deception remind you of Jacob and Esau? How so? (See **Genesis 25:26** and **Genesis 27:18-29**)

b. What basis, rationalization, or justification do you think Tamar had for her actions?

c. Have there been times that you've rationalized your actions based on circumstances? What are the dangers in doing so? How should you respond? Read **Romans 12:19-21**.

19. Judah is Caught. When Judah finds out that Tamar is pregnant, what is his reaction (**Genesis 38:24**)?

a. Do you think his reaction was disproportionate to the circumstances?

b. Read **Matthew 7:1-5** and write out verse 5.

c. In these verses, it is easy to see applications of Jesus's statement to Judah, but is there an area in your own life where you struggle with "getting the log out of your own eye"?

d. When Tamar showed Judah his signet, cord, and staff, what was his response?

e. Do you think Judah's response meant that what Tamar did was righteous? What do you think his response meant?

20. When Tamar's twins were born, what "twist" happens in the story?

21. What do you notice about God's grace in the account of Tamar and Judah? How has their story helped you see God's grace in your life regardless of the decisions you may have made?

TEACHING NOTES

WEEK FOUR
Rahab: From Fear to Faith
Joshua 2:1-21; 6:17-25; Matthew 1:5; Hebrews 11:31; James 2:25

MEMORY PASSAGE

Review Galatians 4:4-5.

4 But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

DAY ONE | Review Tamar: The Problem with Tamar
Genesis 38:1-30; Ruth 4:12; 1 Chronicles 2:4; Matthew 1:3

Review this week's memory passage, **Galatians 4:4-5**.

1. Look over your notes from last week's teaching. Write down one or two key points or main takeaways from last week.

2. **Genesis 38** is an "*interruption*" to the story of Joseph. Judah goes from helping plot his brother's demise in **Genesis 37:18-26**, to risking his own life to make sure Jacob doesn't lose his son, Benjamin (See also **Genesis 43:8-14; 44:30-33**).

a. What role did Tamar play in God's plan to bring Judah to his senses?

b. Can you think of a time in your life when God used someone to "interrupt" your life and draw you closer to him?

3. After studying Tamar, has your opinion changed since day two of last week about the inclusion of Tamar (and Perez) in the lineage of Christ?

If so, explain how and why your perspective has changed and what you think can be learned from Tamar's inclusion in the lineage of Christ in **Matthew 1:1-3**.

4. How does the reference to Tamar in **Ruth 4:12** give evidence of God's redeeming love in her life?

DAY TWO | Rahab: From Fear to Faith

Joshua 2:1-21; 6:17-25

Review this week's memory passage, Galatians 4:4-5.

Joshua 2:1-21

1And Joshua the son of Nun sent two men secretly from Shittim as spies, saying, "Go, view the land, especially Jericho." And they went and came into the house of a prostitute whose name was Rahab and lodged there. **2**And it was told to the king of Jericho, "Behold, men of Israel have come here tonight to search out the land." **3**Then the king of Jericho sent to Rahab, saying, "Bring out the men who have come to you, who entered your house, for they have come to search out all the land." **4**But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them. And she said, "True, the men came to me, but I did not know where they were from. **5**And when the gate was about to be closed at dark, the men went out. I do not know where the men went. Pursue them quickly, for you will overtake them." **6**But she had brought them up to the roof and hid them with the stalks of flax that she had laid in order on the roof. **7**So the men pursued after them on the way to the Jordan as far as the fords. And the gate was shut as soon as the pursuers had gone out. **8**Before the men lay down, she came up to them on the roof **9**and said to the men, "I know that the LORD has given you the land, and that the fear of you has fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land melt away before you. **10**For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you devoted to destruction. **11**And as soon as we heard it, our hearts melted, and there was no spirit left in any man because of you, for the LORD your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath. **12**Now then, please swear to me by the LORD that, as I have dealt kindly with you, you also will deal kindly with my father's house, and give me a sure sign **13**that you will save alive my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them, and deliver our lives from death." **14**And the men said to her, "Our life for yours even to death! If you do not tell this business of ours, then when the LORD gives us the land we will deal kindly and faithfully with you." **15**Then she let them down by a rope through the window, for her house was built into the city wall, so that she lived in the wall. **16**And she said to them, "Go into the hills, or the pursuers will encounter you, and hide there three days until the pursuers have returned. Then afterward you may go your way." **17**The men said to her, "We will be guiltless with respect to this oath of yours that you have made us swear. **18**Behold, when we come into the land, you shall tie this scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and you shall gather into your house your father and mother, your brothers, and all your father's household. **19**Then if anyone goes out of the doors of your house into the street, his blood shall be on his own head, and we shall be guiltless. But if a hand is laid on anyone who is with you in the house, his blood shall be on

our head. **20**But if you tell this business of ours, then we shall be guiltless with respect to your oath that you have made us swear.” **21**And she said, “According to your words, so be it.” Then she sent them away, and they departed. And she tied the scarlet cord in the window.

Joshua 6:17-25

17And the city and all that is within it shall be devoted to the LORD for destruction. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall live, because she hid the messengers whom we sent. **18**But you, keep yourselves from the things devoted to destruction, lest when you have devoted them you take any of the devoted things and make the camp of Israel a thing for destruction and bring trouble upon it. **19**But all silver and gold, and every vessel of bronze and iron, are holy to the LORD; they shall go into the treasury of the LORD.” **20**So the people shouted, and the trumpets were blown. As soon as the people heard the sound of the trumpet, the people shouted a great shout, and the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they captured the city. **21**Then they devoted all in the city to destruction, both men and women, young and old, oxen, sheep, and donkeys, with the edge of the sword. **22**But to the two men who had spied out the land, Joshua said, “Go into the prostitute’s house and bring out from there the woman and all who belong to her, as you swore to her.” **23**So the young men who had been spies went in and brought out Rahab and her father and mother and brothers and all who belonged to her. And they brought all her relatives and put them outside the camp of Israel. **24**And they burned the city with fire, and everything in it. Only the silver and gold, and the vessels of bronze and of iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD. **25**But Rahab the prostitute and her father’s household and all who belonged to her, Joshua saved alive. And she has lived in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

5. Read today’s Scripture passages (printed above). Circle words and phrases that give details about Rahab and her character. Make a list of words that describe Rahab, both good and bad. Include words specifically used in the text and descriptions that are implied.

6. What do we learn about the two men who visited Rahab? Where are they from? Why are they in Jericho? What do we learn about their faith?

7. Where is Jericho? Where are the soldiers coming from who will attack Jericho?

8. Do some research on walls surrounding ancient cities. How were they designed and what were they made of? Why are they significant?

9. How does knowing that only God could cause the walls to fall down shape your view of him and his ability to do the impossible?

DAY THREE | Rahab: From Fear to Faith
Various scriptures

Review this week's memory passage, **Galatians 4:4-5**.

10. **Joshua 2:10** refers to two historical events where the Lord moved on behalf of the Israelites. List these two events and briefly describe what took place in each one (See **Exodus 14** and **Numbers 21:21-35**).

a.

b.

11. In each case, why were the Israelites victorious despite overwhelming obstacles against them?

12. How did the people in Jericho respond when they heard about these historical events? (**Joshua 2:11**)

13. How was Rahab's response different than the rest of the inhabitants of Jericho (review yesterday's Scripture passage)? What enabled this response? See **Hebrews 11:31** and **James 2:25-26**.

14. Read the following passage and note what Scripture says about fear and faith. Where does each originate?

Philippians 4:6

Luke 17:5-6

2 Timothy 1:7

Ephesians 2:8

1 Peter 5:7

Hebrews 12:2

15. Think about a time that you've been overwhelmed by fear or a seemingly impossible situation. How did the Lord give you courage to respond in faith?

DAY FOUR | Rahab, From Fear to Faith
Various Scriptures

Review this week's memory passage, **Galatians 4:4-5**.

16. Complete the chart below with everything you learn about faith and works from each passage (Some boxes will be left blank).

Scripture	What do you learn about faith?	What does faith require?
Romans 3:22		
Romans 5:1		
Galatians 5:6		
Ephesians 2:8-10		

Hebrews 11:1; 6; 31		
Hebrews 12:1-3		
James 2:14-17		
James 2:25-26		

17. How would you explain the tension between needing faith to please God and faith being a gift from God?

18. How would you describe the amount of faith it took for Rahab to do what she did? How much did she actually know about the one, true God and what he required of his followers (OT laws, etc.)? How much do you think Rahab knew about the future ramifications of her actions when she hid the spies?

19. Are you holding back from stepping out in faith in some area in your life because you're waiting on greater maturity, having a better understanding of your future, or some other circumstance?

DAY FIVE | Rahab: From Fear to Faith

Joshua 2:1-21; 6:17-25; Matthew 1:5; Hebrews 11:31; James 2:25

Review this week's memory passage, **Galatians 4:4-5**.

20. Review Rahab's story in **Joshua 2:1-21; 6:17-25**. What was the final outcome for Rahab and her family?

21. What change in lifestyle (religion, culture, food, friends) would this have required? What do you think life would have been like for Rahab and her extended family as they were saved, but their entire culture and community were destroyed?

22. What is the significance of Rahab's marriage and the son she bore? What's the connection between Rahab and Ruth, whom we will study next week? See **Matthew 1:5**.

23. What can we learn about God, knowing that he is willing to destroy a whole city because of sin but also that he would spare a prostitute with faith in him?

24. Spend some time reflecting and then answer the following questions:

a. What were the circumstances that caused you to see your need for a saving faith in Jesus? What sacrifices has a life of faith required of you?

b. Describe a time that you chose to live differently from the people around you because of your faith in Jesus.

TEACHING NOTES

WEEK FIVE
Ruth: Accepted in the Beloved
Ruth 1-4; Matthew 1:5

MEMORY PASSAGE

4 But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. 6 And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" (Galatians 4:4-6)

DAY ONE | REVIEW Rahab: From Fear to Faith

Joshua 2:1-21; 6:17-25; Matthew 1:5; Hebrews 11:31; James 2:25

Write out this week's memory verse, **Galatians 4:6**.

1. Look over your notes from last week's teaching. Write down one or two key points or main takeaways from last week.

2. Did last week's lesson change your view of Rahab? If so, how? Where did you see evidence of God's redeeming love towards Rahab?

3. What desperate situation in your life has God redeemed? How did this strengthen your faith? Or, what trial in your life right now are you praying for God to intervene in and redeem?

DAY TWO | Ruth: Accepted in the Beloved

Ruth 1

Write out this week's memory verse, **Galatians 4:6**.

*The book of Ruth was written in the same timeframe as the book of Judges and serves as a light in a dark place, giving us a glimpse of God at work fulfilling his plans for his people. He had promised a Redeemer, a Savior who would crush the serpent's power (**Genesis 3:15**), and that had not changed. As we follow the Scarlet Thread, revealed by the partial genealogy at the end of Ruth's story, we find yet again that God's business is redeeming broken lives and joyously including them—not as tagalongs, but as honored vessels in his plan of redemption.*

Ruth 1

1In the days when the judges ruled there was a famine in the land, and a man of Bethlehem in Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons. **2**The name of the man was Elimelech and the name of his wife Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah. They went into the country of Moab and remained there. **3**But Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died, and she was left with her two sons. **4**These took Moabite wives; the name of the one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. They lived there about ten years, **5**and both Mahlon and Chilion died, so that the woman was left without her two sons and her husband. **6**Then she arose with her daughters-in-law to return from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the fields of Moab that the LORD had visited his people and given them food. **7**So she set out from the place where she was with her two daughters-in-law, and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah. **8**But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go, return each of you to her mother's house. May the LORD deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. **9**The LORD grant that you may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband!" Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept. **10**And they said to her, "No, we will return with you to your people." **11**But Naomi said, "Turn back, my daughters; why will you go with me? Have I yet sons in my womb that they may become your husbands? **12**Turn back, my daughters; go your way, for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, even if I should have a husband this night and should bear sons, **13**would you therefore wait till they were grown? Would you therefore refrain from marrying? No, my daughters, for it is exceedingly bitter to me for your sake that the hand of the LORD has gone out against me." **14**Then they lifted up their voices and wept again. And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her. **15**And she said, "See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law." **16**But Ruth

said, "Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. **17**Where you die I will die, and there will I be buried. May the LORD do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you." **18**And when Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more. **19**So the two of them went on until they came to Bethlehem. And when they came to Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them. And the women said, "Is this Naomi?" **20**She said to them, "Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. **21**I went away full, and the LORD has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi, when the LORD has testified against me and the Almighty has brought calamity upon me?" **22**So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabite her daughter-in-law with her, who returned from the country of Moab. And they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest.

4. Read the passage above. Circle the names of the main characters. Underline the descriptive information given about each of them.

a. Using a Bible dictionary or other source, such as www.blueletterbible.org, research the meaning of each name mentioned and write it below.

b. How does verse 2 show us the Scarlet Thread?

5. According to verse 1, when does this story take place?

a. What do we know about the political and spiritual state of the nation at this time (See **Judges 21:25; Deuteronomy 28:1-24**)?

b. What crisis was the land experiencing?

6. What action did Elimelech and Naomi take in light of the crisis (v. 2)?

a. Moab is a region east of the Dead Sea. Read **Genesis 19:30-38**. Why might moving to Moab be a surprising choice?

b. Can you discern if Elimelech and Naomi were believers? Why or why not?

7. What added crises hit this family?

a. In that time and culture, what would this have meant for the women?

b. What news reached Naomi? What plans did she make? What instructions did she give her daughters-in-law? (Compare to **Deuteronomy 25:5-6**.)

c. How did the daughters-in-law respond, and what does this tell you about their relationship with Naomi?

8. When Naomi pressed the matter, what was the result?

a. List Ruth's declarations/promises (vv. 16-18).

b. What does this reveal about her character? Her faith?

9. Based on Naomi's statement when she arrived in Bethlehem, how did she view God's hand in her hardships, and how had she responded?

a. Compare this crisis with its resolution in **Ruth 4:17-22** and **Matthew 1:1-17**. In the midst of their personal crises, what don't the two women know about the bigger picture, and the sovereign plan of God for their lives?

b. How can an understanding of God's ways be a comfort to us personally? (See also **Psalm 119:75; Romans 8:28-30; 1 Peter 4:12-13, 5:10**)

DAY THREE | Ruth: Accepted in the Beloved
Ruth 2

Write out this week's memory verse, **Galatians 4:6**.

10. How is Ruth referred to throughout chapters 1 and 2, and what does that tell us? (Compare to **Ephesians 2:11-12**)?

11. Who are we introduced to in verse 1 of chapter 2? What information are we given about him here and elsewhere in the chapter?

12. How did Ruth offer to help support herself and her mother-in-law, and what would this have involved? See also **Leviticus 19:9-10**.

a. Where did she “happen” to glean? What do you think about this coincidence?

b. Who noticed her, and what did his field manager say about her character and work ethic?

c. What instructions did Boaz give to Ruth and to his workers?

13. What blessing did Boaz speak over Ruth (vv. 11-12)?

a. What might this blessing entail (compare **Psalm 91:1-4, 9-16**)?

b. How does the blessing of Boaz reflect God's loving protection and care of those that are his?

c. What other benefits did Boaz arrange for Ruth?

14. What was Naomi's reaction?

We've already been introduced to the term "kinsman redeemer" in the life of Tamar. Take a few moments to review Week Three, Day Four before we dig a little deeper.

15. What would be the hope in Boaz being a close relative, a "redeemer" (kinsman)?

a. What was one of the actions of a redeemer according to **Leviticus 25:47-49**?

b. How had God redeemed Israel? See **Deuteronomy 7:8** and **2 Samuel 7:23**.

c. How might this be reflected in the work and person of Christ Jesus? Use our memory passage to support your answer, **Galatians 4:4-7**.

DAY FOUR | Ruth: Accepted in the Beloved
Ruth 3

Write out this week's memory verse, **Galatians 4:6**.

16. What did Naomi offer to find for Ruth? What does the term “rest” mean in this context? Compare with **Ruth 1:9**.

17. Compare **Ruth 3:1** with **1:20-22**. What change had taken place in Naomi, and to what do you attribute it?

a. Describe Naomi's strategy for helping Ruth find “rest” (vv. 2-4). List the actions.

b. Imagine how the plan might have sounded to Ruth, the foreigner. How does it sound to us now?

c. What was Ruth's response?

18. Naomi mentioned a threshing floor and winnowing. Do a quick internet search and write down a description of each.

19. In your own words, describe the actions of Ruth and Boaz's response in verses 6-17.

a. What did asking for covering imply? Compare with **Ruth 2:12; Psalm 91:4; Ezekiel 16:8.**

b. What was the first obstacle Boaz had to clear before he could be Ruth's redeemer?

20. What sage advice did Naomi give when Ruth arrived home (v. 18)?

DAY FIVE | Ruth: Accepted in the Beloved
Ruth 4

Review this week's memory passage, **Galatians 4:4-6**.

21. List the key words and most repeated phrases in this chapter and explain what they indicate about the main subject of the chapter.

22. In ancient times, city gates were the centers of city life and business (See also **Genesis 19:1; 23:17-18**). Our passage today says that Boaz went to the city gate and sat down. What is the equivalent of a "city gate" today?

a. When Boaz saw his relative, the other possible redeemer, what did he assemble? What two proposals did he publicly make to the man, and how were they each received?

b. What are we told about the custom of sealing a transaction? Compare with **Genesis 38:16-18**.

c. What did Boaz declare before the elders and witnesses?

23. Two men are presented to us in this action, but only one was willing and able to redeem. When it comes to the redemption of the soul, there is only One that is qualified, able, and willing to redeem. How is Christ foreshadowed in Boaz?

a. What blessings did the people bestow on Boaz and Ruth, and what do they indicate?

b. What was the happy outcome?

24. In your own words, re-tell the celebration and blessings as if you were there (vv. 14-17).

25. The last few verses are the genealogy of Obed. What is the significance of this son, his birthplace, and his role in God the Father's plan of redemption? (See also **Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:1a; Luke 2:1-7; Ephesians 1:7; 2:12-13**)

26. How does this account help us to understand the heart and plans of God to redeem the outcast, the woman whose past is full of idols and shame?

a. How does this account help us to view hardships through the lens of faith, trust, and hope in God? What life circumstance can you apply this truth to?

b. Have you been to Jesus, the Redeemer, and asked him to redeem you - not from earthly hardship, but from the hardship of sin and its eternal consequences? (See **Ephesians 1:6-7**)

Prayer

Take a moment now and go to the Lord in prayer. If you belong to Christ, praise him for your redemption! Then, be honest with him about your life assignment and any fears, bitterness or anger. Make the choice to trust him and surrender to his sovereign will for your life. Tell him that by faith you believe there will be a harvest after the famine. His business is redemption.

TEACHING NOTES

WEEK SIX
Bathsheba: From Ashes to Beauty
2 Samuel 11:1-12:25; 1 Kings 1:1-31; 2:10-25; Matthew 1:6

MEMORY PASSAGE

4 But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. 6 And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” **7 So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.** (Galatians 4:4-7)

DAY ONE | Review Ruth: Accepted in the Beloved
Ruth 1-4; Matthew 1:5

Write out this week’s memory verse, **Galatians 4:7**.

1. Look over your notes from last week’s teaching time. Write down one or two significant things that have stuck with you.

2. Describe God’s redeeming love in the life of Ruth (and Naomi).

3. What have you learned about trials in life and the sovereign hand of God?

4. What have you learned about the redeeming work of Jesus Christ, and how does it help you love him more?

DAY TWO | Bathsheba: From Ashes to Beauty

2 Samuel 11:1-12:25

Write out this week's memory verse, **Galatians 4:7**.

2 Samuel 11:1-12:25

1In the spring of the year, the time when kings go out to battle, David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel. And they ravaged the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem. **2**It happened, late one afternoon, when David arose from his couch and was walking on the roof of the king's house, that he saw from the roof a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful. **3**And David sent and inquired about the woman. And one said, "Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?" **4**So David sent messengers and took her, and she came to him, and he lay with her. (Now she had been purifying herself from her uncleanness.) Then she returned to her house. **5**And the woman conceived, and she sent and told David, "I am pregnant." **6**So David sent word to Joab, "Send me Uriah the Hittite." And Joab sent Uriah to David. **7**When Uriah came to him, David asked how Joab was doing and how the people were doing and how the war was going. **8**Then David said to Uriah, "Go down to your house and wash your feet." And Uriah went out of the king's house, and there followed him a present from the king. **9**But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and did not go down to his house. **10**When they told David, "Uriah did not go down to his house," David said to Uriah, "Have you not come from a journey? Why did you not go down to your house?" **11**Uriah said to David, "The ark and Israel and Judah dwell in booths, and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are camping in the open field. Shall I then go to my house, to eat and to drink and to lie with my wife? As you live, and as your soul lives, I will not do this thing." **12**Then David said to Uriah, "Remain here today also, and tomorrow I will send you back." So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next. **13**And David invited him, and he ate in his presence and drank, so that he made him drunk. And in the evening he went out to lie on his couch with the servants of his lord, but he did not go down to his house. **14**In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it by the hand of Uriah. **15**In the letter he wrote, "Set Uriah in the forefront of the hardest fighting, and then draw back from him, that he may be struck down, and die." **16**And as Joab was besieging the city, he assigned Uriah to the place where he knew there were valiant men. **17**And the men of the city came out and fought with Joab, and some of the servants of David among the people fell. Uriah the Hittite also died. **18**Then Joab sent and told David all the news about the fighting. **19**And he instructed the messenger, "When you have finished telling all the news about the fighting to the king, **20**then, if the king's anger rises, and if he says to

you, 'Why did you go so near the city to fight? Did you not know that they would shoot from the wall? **21**Who killed Abimelech the son of Jerubbesheth? Did not a woman cast an upper millstone on him from the wall, so that he died at Thebez? Why did you go so near the wall?' then you shall say, 'Your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.'" **22**So the messenger went and came and told David all that Joab had sent him to tell. **23**The messenger said to David, "The men gained an advantage over us and came out against us in the field, but we drove them back to the entrance of the gate. **24**Then the archers shot at your servants from the wall. Some of the king's servants are dead, and your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also." **25**David said to the messenger, "Thus shall you say to Joab, 'Do not let this matter displease you, for the sword devours now one and now another. Strengthen your attack against the city and overthrow it.' And encourage him." **26**When the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she lamented over her husband. **27**And when the mourning was over, David sent and brought her to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD.

1And the LORD sent Nathan to David. He came to him and said to him, "There were two men in a certain city, the one rich and the other poor. **2**The rich man had very many flocks and herds, **3**but the poor man had nothing but one little ewe lamb, which he had bought. And he brought it up, and it grew up with him and with his children. It used to eat of his morsel and drink from his cup and lie in his arms, and it was like a daughter to him. **4**Now there came a traveler to the rich man, and he was unwilling to take one of his own flock or herd to prepare for the guest who had come to him, but he took the poor man's lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him." **5**Then David's anger was greatly kindled against the man, and he said to Nathan, "As the LORD lives, the man who has done this deserves to die, **6**and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity." **7**Nathan said to David, "You are the man! Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you out of the hand of Saul. **8**And I gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your arms and gave you the house of Israel and of Judah. And if this were too little, I would add to you as much more. **9**Why have you despised the word of the LORD, to do what is evil in his sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and have taken his wife to be your wife and have killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. **10**Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.' **11**Thus says the LORD, 'Behold, I will raise up evil against you out of your own house. And I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun. **12**For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel and before the sun.'" **13**David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." And Nathan said to David, "The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die. **14**Nevertheless, because by this deed you have utterly scorned the LORD, the child who is born to you shall die." **15**Then Nathan went to his house. And the LORD afflicted the child

that Uriah's wife bore to David, and he became sick. **16**David therefore sought God on behalf of the child. And David fasted and went in and lay all night on the ground. **17**And the elders of his house stood beside him, to raise him from the ground, but he would not, nor did he eat food with them. **18**On the seventh day the child died. And the servants of David were afraid to tell him that the child was dead, for they said, "Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spoke to him, and he did not listen to us. How then can we say to him the child is dead? He may do himself some harm." **19**But when David saw that his servants were whispering together, David understood that the child was dead. And David said to his servants, "Is the child dead?" They said, "He is dead." **20**Then David arose from the earth and washed and anointed himself and changed his clothes. And he went into the house of the LORD and worshiped. He then went to his own house. And when he asked, they set food before him, and he ate. **21**Then his servants said to him, "What is this thing that you have done? You fasted and wept for the child while he was alive; but when the child died, you arose and ate food." **22**He said, "While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept, for I said, 'Who knows whether the LORD will be gracious to me, that the child may live?' **23**But now he is dead. Why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he will not return to me." **24**Then David comforted his wife, Bathsheba, and went in to her and lay with her, and she bore a son, and he called his name Solomon. And the LORD loved him **25**and sent a message by Nathan the prophet. So he called his name Jedidiah, because of the LORD.

5. As you read **2 Samuel 11:1-12:25** (printed above), underline every reference to Bathsheba (when she is referred to by name and by other descriptions.) In a different color, underline every mention of David.

a. Who is the main character of this passage?

b. Underline all uses of the verb "send/sent" in a unique color. Write down who is sending and who is being sent. Who is the only person to refuse King David?

c. List the descriptions of Bathsheba.

d. From the description of Bathsheba in **2 Samuel 11:3**, what should have been a warning to David?

e. Draw a triangle around every reference to the LORD. What is the implication in the number of times God is mentioned?

6. **2 Samuel 11:2** and **11:4** say David “saw”, “took,” and “lay” with Bathsheba. Look up the following verses and describe who else did the same things (sometimes the verbs vary a little but have the same intent).

Genesis 3:6

Genesis 34:2

Genesis 38:2-3

Joshua 7:20-21

Judges 14:1, 7, 8

7. These texts show the same sequence of seeing, desiring, and taking the forbidden. Sin is often sequential—one sin not dealt with leads to another. Thinking back over your life, can you in hindsight recognize a time when one sin led to another?

8. What do you think the significance of Bathsheba almost always being referred to by something other than her name is in chapter 11?

9. Have you seen a movie or read a fiction book based on the story of Bathsheba? If so, how was Bathsheba pictured in these accounts?

10. What was Bathsheba doing when David saw her? See **Leviticus 15:19-33**.

a. Do you think Bathsheba was intent on seducing David? Do you think she played any part in these events?

b. Who is the Lord displeased with in **2 Samuel 11:27**? Is there any mention of Bathsheba?

c. According to **1 Kings 15:4-5** what was David's general bent in life? How is the incident with Bathsheba referred to?

11. What do you think was going through Bathsheba's head when she realized she was pregnant?

12. Most women have had conflict with someone in power over them (abusive parent, date/spouse, friend, boss in the work place). Can you think of time when this was true for you? How did you respond? Have there been unintended consequences? Are you still bothered by it? If so, how?

DAY THREE | Bathsheba: From Ashes to Beauty
1 Samuel 12:1-25

Write out this week's memory verse, **Galatians 4:7**.

13. Nathan, the prophet, told David (once a shepherd) a parable. Who do you think the following characters of the parable represent?

Rich man

Poor man

Many flocks and herds

Traveler

Little ewe lamb

14. What three infinitives ("to" + verb) are used in **2 Samuel 11:11b** to describe what Uriah refuses to do? What three verbs are used in **12:3b** to describe what the little ewe lamb did?

15. Note in **2 Samuel 11:4** that David "took" Bathsheba. In **2 Samuel 12:4** the rich man was unwilling to "take" from his own flock, but "took" the poor man's lamb. What is Israel warned kings will do in **1 Samuel 8:10-17**?

*Nathan was the same prophet that told David in **2 Samuel 7** that he was not the one who would build the temple, but "**When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom.**" Nathan was obedient to God and spoke to David with wisdom.*

16. Do you have a friend who has encouraged you, and was also not afraid to help you by correcting you? Who was it, and what did they tell you?

17. When have you loved someone else enough to confront them with their sin? Did it go well?

18. What do the following verses advise about concealing sin or confronting others?

Proverbs 25:11-12

Proverbs 27:6

Proverbs 27:17

Proverbs 28:13

Galatians 6:1-2

19. David wrote **Psalms 32 and 51** about this period of time in his life. What insight into sin, repentance, and forgiveness can you gain from these psalms?

20. How do you think David's repentance affected Bathsheba? What do you think her thoughts were as she observed this change in David?

21. Scripture does not tell us Bathsheba's side of this story. How do you think Bathsheba handled the losses in her life that were caused by David's sin? The loss of her husband? The loss of her home? The loss of her child?

22. Where do you turn when someone else's sin negatively affects your life? See **Romans 12:19-21**.

DAY FOUR | Bathsheba: From Ashes to Beauty
2 Samuel 12:24-25 and 1 Kings 1:1-31; 2:10-25

Write out this week's memory verse, **Galatians 4:7**.

1 Kings 1:1-31

1Now King David was old and advanced in years. And although they covered him with clothes, he could not get warm. **2**Therefore his servants said to him, "Let a young woman be sought for my lord the king, and let her wait on the king and be in his service. Let her lie in your arms, that my lord the king may be warm." **3**So they sought for a beautiful young woman throughout all the territory of Israel, and found Abishag the Shunammite, and brought her to the king. **4**The young woman was very beautiful, and she was of service to the king and attended to him, but the king knew her not. **5**Now Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, "I will be king." And he prepared for himself chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him. **6**His father had never at any time displeased him by asking, "Why have you done thus and so?" He was also a very handsome man, and he was born next after Absalom. **7**He conferred with Joab the son of Zeruiah and with Abiathar the priest. And they followed Adonijah and helped him. **8**But Zadok the priest and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada and Nathan the prophet and Shimei and Rei and David's mighty men were not with Adonijah. **9**Adonijah sacrificed sheep, oxen, and fattened cattle by the Serpent's Stone, which is beside En-rogel, and he invited all his brothers, the king's sons, and all the royal officials of Judah, **10**but he did not invite Nathan the prophet or Benaiah or the mighty men or Solomon his brother. **11**Then Nathan said to Bathsheba the mother of Solomon, "Have you not heard that Adonijah the son of Haggith has become king and David our lord does not know it? **12**Now therefore come, let me give you advice, that you may save your own life and the life of your son Solomon. **13**Go in at once to King David, and say to him, 'Did you not, my lord the king, swear to your servant, saying, "Solomon your son shall reign after me, and he shall sit on my throne"? Why then is Adonijah king?' **14**Then while you are still speaking with the king, I also will come in after you and confirm your words." **15**So Bathsheba went to the king in his chamber (now the king was very old, and Abishag the Shunammite was attending to the king). **16**Bathsheba bowed and paid homage to the king, and the king said, "What do you desire?" **17**She said to him, "My lord, you swore to your servant by the LORD your God, saying, 'Solomon your son shall reign after me, and he shall sit on my throne.' **18**And now, behold, Adonijah is king, although you, my lord the king, do not know it. **19**He has sacrificed oxen, fattened cattle, and sheep in abundance, and has invited all the sons of the king, Abiathar the priest, and Joab the commander of the army, but Solomon your servant he has not invited. **20**And now, my lord the king, the eyes

of all Israel are on you, to tell them who shall sit on the throne of my lord the king after him. **21**Otherwise it will come to pass, when my lord the king sleeps with his fathers, that I and my son Solomon will be counted offenders.”**22**While she was still speaking with the king, Nathan the prophet came in. **23**And they told the king, “Here is Nathan the prophet.” And when he came in before the king, he bowed before the king, with his face to the ground. **24**And Nathan said, “My lord the king, have you said, ‘Adonijah shall reign after me, and he shall sit on my throne’? **25**For he has gone down this day and has sacrificed oxen, fattened cattle, and sheep in abundance, and has invited all the king’s sons, the commanders of the army, and Abiathar the priest. And behold, they are eating and drinking before him, and saying, ‘Long live King Adonijah!’ **26**But me, your servant, and Zadok the priest, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and your servant Solomon he has not invited. **27**Has this thing been brought about by my lord the king and you have not told your servants who should sit on the throne of my lord the king after him?”**28**Then King David answered, “Call Bathsheba to me.” So she came into the king’s presence and stood before the king. **29**And the king swore, saying, “As the LORD lives, who has redeemed my soul out of every adversity, **30**as I swore to you by the LORD, the God of Israel, saying, ‘Solomon your son shall reign after me, and he shall sit on my throne in my place,’ even so will I do this day.” **31**Then Bathsheba bowed with her face to the ground and paid homage to the king and said, “May my lord King David live forever!”

1 Kings 2:10-25

10Then David slept with his fathers and was buried in the city of David. **11**And the time that David reigned over Israel was forty years. He reigned seven years in Hebron and thirty-three years in Jerusalem. **12**So Solomon sat on the throne of David his father, and his kingdom was firmly established. **13**Then Adonijah the son of Haggith came to Bathsheba the mother of Solomon. And she said, “Do you come peacefully?” He said, “Peacefully.” **14**Then he said, “I have something to say to you.” She said, “Speak.” **15**He said, “You know that the kingdom was mine, and that all Israel fully expected me to reign. However, the kingdom has turned about and become my brother’s, for it was his from the LORD. **16**And now I have one request to make of you; do not refuse me.” She said to him, “Speak.” **17**And he said, “Please ask King Solomon—he will not refuse you—to give me Abishag the Shunammite as my wife.” **18**Bathsheba said, “Very well; I will speak for you to the king.” **19**So Bathsheba went to King Solomon to speak to him on behalf of Adonijah. And the king rose to meet her and bowed down to her. Then he sat on his throne and had a seat brought for the king’s mother, and she sat on his right. **20**Then she said, “I have one small request to make of you; do not refuse me.” And the king said to her, “Make your request, my mother, for I will not refuse you.” **21**She said, “Let Abishag the Shunammite be given to Adonijah your brother as his wife.” **22**King Solomon answered his mother, “And why do you ask Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? Ask for him the kingdom also, for he is my older brother, and on his side are

Abiathar the priest and Joab the son of Zeruiah.”**23**Then King Solomon swore by the LORD, saying, “God do so to me and more also if this word does not cost Adonijah his life! **24**Now therefore as the LORD lives, who has established me and placed me on the throne of David my father, and who has made me a house, as he promised, Adonijah shall be put to death today.” **25**So King Solomon sent Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and he struck him down, and he died.

23. As you read the above passage, underline every reference to Bathsheba (when she is referred to by name and by other descriptions.)

a. Compare these references to your answers from Day 2, #5. Why do you think there is a change in the way Bathsheba is described?

b. In **Matthew 1:6**, how is Bathsheba referred to? Why do you think she is called this instead of by her name?

24. Based on **2 Samuel 12:24-25**, who does Bathsheba become the mother of?

a. What does **2 Samuel 12:24** say about the Lord’s relationship to this child?

b. What other name was given to him?

c. Using a Bible dictionary or a tool like www.biblehub.com or www.blueletterbible.org , write down the meanings of each name.

25. Near the end of David's life, no clear predecessor to the throne had been established and his oldest living son, Adonijah, decided to take the throne himself. Nathan heard of the plan and went to Bathsheba to inform her. Based on **1 Kings 1:15-16**, how is her relationship with King David pictured?

26. After Solomon was made king, in an attempt at a second coup, what did Adonijah request of Bathsheba (See **1 Kings 2:17**)? What does this verse say about her relationship to her son Solomon?

27. In **1 Kings 2:19**, how did King Solomon greet his mother and what did he do for her?

Jesus Christ will ultimately fulfill Isaiah 61:3 "...to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair..." (NIV). Bathsheba went from ashes to a crown of beauty, from mourning to gladness, and from despair to praise. There is no situation God cannot redeem for good.

28. Sometimes Christians can be rather flippant when they quote **Romans 8:28** "...all things work together for good..." As you see the brokenness of this world, do you believe **Romans 8:28** deep in your heart?

a. How can you trust God more this week in a tough situation?

b. Re-read **Romans 8:28** and continue to verse 29. What is His purpose in allowing hard situations?

DAY FIVE | Bathsheba, From Ashes to Beauty

Various Scriptures

Review this week's memory passage, **Galatians 4:4-7**.

29. Because God is omniscient (all-knowing) he sees every sin, whether it occurs in public, in secret, or even in a person's mind. Adam and Eve thought they could hide from God (**Genesis 3:8**). What do the following verses say about hiding?

Jeremiah 16:17

Jeremiah 23:24

Hebrews 4:13

30. David's sin should be a warning to all Christians of how capable each of us are of falling into sin. What does **1 Corinthians 10:6-13** say the Old Testament Scriptures should be to us? What are we warned to do? What encouragement are we given?

31. David's sin, like all sin, comes at a price, and it is never worth the cost. Based on **2 Samuel 12:10, 11**, and **14**, what were the consequences of David's sin? Who else was affected by his sin?

*Nathan, the prophet, used the story of the killing of a lamb to expose the immensity of David's sin. David's sin had been "put away" by God (**2 Samuel 12:13**). He deserved death for his adultery and murder. But "putting away" looks forward to the cross. It looks at the slaughter of another Lamb. It is the transfer of David's sin to another, Jesus Christ. This is the Scarlet Thread.*

32. According to **Ephesians 2:1-3**, as Christians, what should our relationship to sin be?

33. Based on the following verses, what does Jesus's blood do for sinners?

Ephesians 2:13

Colossians 1:20

1 Peter 1:18-19

1 John 1:7

34. What did Jesus do with our sin according to **Hebrews 9:26b-28**?

What a lovely picture of redemption is seen in Bathsheba's story. She went from being unnamed, without a voice, weak, and powerless to being named, honored, and her voice being heard. God created beauty from the ashes of a shameful experience. God's redemption is shown as Bathsheba and her son, Solomon, are in the lineage of Jesus. God can take a painful experience and use it in a beautiful way.

35. Do you have an experience of ashes in your past? Have you seen how God has used it in a beautiful way? How does Bathsheba's story give you hope God will use your past for something glorious?

TEACHING NOTES

WEEK SEVEN

Mary: Mother of Her Savior

Matthew 1-2, 12:46-50; Mark 3:21, 31-35; Luke 1-2, 8:19-21; John 2:1-11; 19:25; Acts 1:12-14

MEMORY PASSAGE

4 But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. 6 And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” 7 So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God. (Galatians 4:4-7)

DAY ONE | Review Bathsheba: From Ashes to Beauty

2 Samuel 11:1-12:25; 1 Kings 1:1-31; 2:10-25; Matthew 1:6

Review this week’s memory passage, **Galatians 4:4-7**.

1. Look over your notes from last week’s teaching. Write down one or two key points or main takeaways from last week.

2. Did last week’s lesson cause you to think about Bathsheba in a different light? How has your perspective on her changed?

3. Why would God use a tragic incident like Bathsheba’s in the lineage of our Savior and Redeemer, Jesus? How is this an example of God’s redeeming love towards Bathsheba?

4. How can you encourage someone who has been a victim of a powerful male (or female) from what you learned in the Bathsheba and David account?

DAY TWO | Mary: Mother of Her Savior

Luke 1

Review this week's memory passage, **Galatians 4:4-7**.

Each year at Christmas we are reminded of the miracle of Jesus' birth. It's a beautiful story with a mixed cast of characters – an engaged couple, angels, shepherds and wise men. This week we are going to look again at these familiar events and others, with our eyes on Jesus' mother, Mary.

5. Read Luke 1:26-38.

- a. Based on verses 26-27, what do you learn of Mary?

- b. How does the angel describe Mary? (v. 28) What emotion does the angel identify? (v. 30)

- c. In your own words, describe the angel's message.

- d. What is Mary's question and how does the angel answer her? By telling Mary of her relative Elizabeth's pregnancy, how does he reassure her of God's plan?

6. In what areas of your life do you need to believe that nothing is impossible with God? What keeps you from believing this? What helps you believe this to be true?

7. Continue reading in **Luke 1, verses 39-45**. Where does Mary go after her conversation with the angel? What word in verse 39 describes her journey? Why do you think she was in a hurry?

8. Describe Elizabeth's reaction to Mary's arrival.

The next passage is Mary's song of joy as she realizes that Elizabeth is indeed pregnant as the angel had told her, and that even Elizabeth's unborn baby served as a confirmation that she was carrying the Savior. In the safety of Elizabeth's presence, Mary's spontaneous reaction is to sing! Her song has been called the Magnificat. To magnify something is often thought of as a microscope, making small things big. But it can also mean, like a telescope, to bring large things near.

Mary's song is copied below. Read and answer the following observation questions:

Luke 1:46-56

The Magnificat

46 And Mary said,

“My soul magnifies the Lord, _____

47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, _____

48 for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant. _____

For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed; _____

49 for he who is mighty has done great things for me, _____

and holy is his name. _____

50 And his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. _____

51 He has shown strength with his arm; _____

he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts; _____

52 he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate; _____

53 he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty. _____

54 He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy.

55 as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever.” _____

56 And Mary remained with her about three months and returned to her home.

9. In the passage printed above, circle each "he has" and underline the action of God that follows.

10. Mary's song is based heavily in Scripture. Read each Old Testament verse and write the reference in the blanks next to the corresponding line of Mary's song above (These are mixed up, so read carefully. The first four have been done for you.)

My soul magnifies the Lord, 1 Samuel 2:1a
And my spirit rejoice in God my Savior, Isaiah 45:21
For he has looked on the humble estate of his servant 1 Samuel 1:11a
For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed Genesis 30:13

~~Genesis 30:13~~
~~1 Samuel 1:11a~~
~~1 Samuel 2:1a~~
1 Samuel 2:6-8

Psalm 89:10
Psalm 89:13
Psalm 105:6-9
Psalm 107:9

Psalm 111:9
Psalm 126:3
~~Isaiah 45:21~~
Isaiah 51:8

11. What does this tell you about Mary's knowledge and use of Scripture? Do you find it unusual?

12. Mary spent three months with Elizabeth. Reflect on their relationship. How might this be an example of **Titus 2:3-5**?

DAY THREE | Mary, Mother of Her Savior
Matthew 1, Luke 2

Review this week's memory passage, **Galatians 4:4-7**.

13. When Mary returns to Nazareth, she would have been approaching her fourth month of pregnancy. Read **Matthew 1:18-25** and summarize what happens next.

The Hebrew tradition of betrothal was called kiddushin and happened a year prior to marriage. In this time, the groom prepares a home for the couple to live in once they are married. The betrothal carried the same legal ramifications as marriage, while each partner remained chaste. One of the points of kiddushin was to demonstrate the fidelity of both partners. Adultery during betrothal or marriage was punishable by stoning to death.

14. What do you learn about the character of Joseph?

15. The story continues in **Luke 2**. Read verses 1-7. What is Luke careful to remind the reader of concerning Mary in verse 5?

The word for "inn" is actually kataluma or guest room. Contrary to popular belief there probably wasn't an inn for travelers in Bethlehem. Inns of this type were on the road in between towns. Rather, in the middle-eastern culture of hospitality, each home was built with a room that could be used as a storage room or guest room.

16. Now, reflect on your answer for the previous question and read verse 7 again. Speculate the reasons why there was no room for them in the guest rooms of the town's homes.

17. Bethlehem was the town of Joseph's family. Although each house may have been full of other travelers, there is also a case to be made that Mary's condition and their unmarried status may have been a factor. Housing an unmarried, expecting couple would have defiled the ritual purity of the home.

a. How do you think Mary may have felt as an unmarried woman expecting a baby?

b. From what you know of the other events of Jesus' birth, what events did God provide to assure Mary and Joseph in their situation?

18. Knowing what you know of Jesus' birth and the perception of outsiders' observing Mary and Joseph's situation, how do you interpret the Pharisees' statement to the adult Jesus in **John 8:41**? What are they referring to?

19. Though innocent and perfect, Jesus was shamed by his death on the cross (**Galatians 3:13-14**). Mary also experienced cultural shame although she did nothing to deserve it. Have you ever experienced shame for something *you did not do*? Have you felt shame for something *you did do*?

20. Read the following verses and record what they have to say about shame:

1 John 1:9

Hebrews 12:2

Psalms 34:4-5

Romans 10:11

2 Corinthians 5:21

21. What is your response to the fact that on the cross, he bore our shame?

DAY FOUR | Mary: Mother of Her Savior
Matthew 2, Luke 2

Review this week's memory passage, **Galatians 4:4-7**.

22. Read **Luke 2:21-24**. What do these verses reveal about Mary and Joseph?

a. Continue reading in **Luke 2:25-38**. What similarities do you see between Simeon's prophecy and Mary's Magnificat?

b. Simeon has a special word for Mary in verses 34-35. How do you think she would have interpreted his words in that moment?

c. An older woman once again appears in Mary's life as Anna, the prophetess approaches the young couple and Simeon. How do you think her appearance might have been a comfort to Mary at just this moment?

23. The gospel of Matthew records the visit of the wise men. Read **Matthew 2:1-12** and record your observations. Where were Mary and Joseph at the time of the wise men's visit? What do you suppose has happened between Jesus' birth and the arrival of the wise men? How do you think the new parents felt to be visited by such an important group of people?

24. Continue reading in **Matthew 2: 13-18**. What did the angel tell Joseph to do? What do you think Mary's reaction to this news would have been? What kind of preparations would

have had to have been made? How would they have felt once they heard what happened after they left?

25. After some time in Egypt, Joseph receives his third dream with an angelic message. Read **Matthew 2:19-23**. How do you think Mary felt to be finally returning home? What kind of reception do you think she and Joseph received?

26. The Bible is mostly silent about Jesus' childhood with the exception of his visit to the temple when he was twelve years old. The twelfth year was the final year of preparation before boys would function as men in temple and synagogue duties. Read **Luke 2:41-52**.

a. Mary had not seen her son in three days (one day travel home to Nazareth, realize he's missing, one day travel back to Jerusalem, one day spent searching). What do you think Mary was thinking about? Think of a time when perhaps you were searching for yours or another's child.

b. What does Jesus know about himself at this time? What does verse 51 say about his behavior towards his parents?

c. Record your thoughts concerning the following statement: *"And His mother treasured up all these things in her heart."* **Luke 2:51b** (see also **Luke 2:19**) How is Mary like other mothers? How is she different?

27. **Luke 2:52** is a beautiful verse to pray for the children or the young people in your life. What four areas of growth does it cover?

DAY FIVE | Mary: Mother of Her Savior

Matthew 12:46-50; Mark 3:21, 31-35; Luke 8:19-21; John 2:1-11; 19-25, Acts 1:12-14

Review this week's memory passage, **Galatians 4:4-7**.

28. The first miracle of Jesus' ministry occurs at a wedding in Cana. Read the story in **John 2:1-11**.

a. Although John states that Jesus and his disciples were invited to the wedding, it appears that Mary might have been helping as an organizer for the event. What does she ask Jesus to do? Why do you think she would turn to Him for help in this situation?

b. What does Jesus mean, "My hour has not yet come?" See **John 7:30; 8:20; 12:23; 12:27**.

c. What do you think of Mary's response in **John 2:5**?

29. What do we learn of Jesus' family in **Matthew 13:55-56** (see also **Mark 6:3**)? How does this change or add to your thoughts about Mary's home life?

30. Read **Mark 3:20-21, 31-35** (see also **Matthew 12:46-50; Luke 8:19-21**). Why was Jesus's family worried about him? What were they trying to do? What kind of conversations do you think they may have had before trying to see him?

31. Jesus is not trying to negate the importance of a biological family but is emphasizing the importance of a person's commitment to him in the kingdom of heaven. His kingdom is a realm where the king views his subjects as brothers and sisters. How does that reflect his relationship with you?

32. Through the years, how has Mary's role in her son's life changed?

33. Jesus ministry climaxes at the cross. From **John 19:25-27**, who do we see at the foot of the cross?

a. As Mary looks on this horrific scene, what do you think was going on in her thoughts and emotions? How does this fulfill Simeon's prophecy in **Luke 2:34-35**?

b. In Jesus' last moments, he was concerned with care for his mother. What does that tell you about him, about Mary, and about their relationship?

34. Scripture does not record the resurrected Jesus visiting with his mother, but we do get a glimpse of her life after his ascension to heaven. Read **Acts 1:12-14** and record what you see.

WRAPPING UP

The women in the lineage of Jesus are an interesting and varied group! Coming from different backgrounds and cultures, each faced various trials and hardships. Each of their lives was woven, by God, into His sovereign design of redemption – the Scarlet Thread that runs through the story theme of the Bible.

Take a moment and reflect on God’s redeeming love as seen in each of their stories. Record your thoughts.

Eve

Leah

Tamar

Rahab

Ruth

Bathsheba

Mary

You

Women of the Scarlet Thread

Stories of God's Redeeming Love

Resources

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The Women of The Scarlet Thread

Stories of God's Redeeming Love

Writing Team

Lindsay Atkinson and her husband, Chris have been married fifteen years and are thankful to have spent almost their entire marriage at College Park. Lindsay taught fourth-grade for six years before staying home with their two boys, Asher (10) and Jesse (7). Still loving the classroom, she finds it a joy and privilege to teach third grade Sunday School at College Park with her husband. Lindsay loves helping at her boys' school, cheering them on in whatever sport is in season, and traveling with her family any chance they get.

Caroline Gilchrist and her husband, Brad, live in Brownsburg and have two grown sons. For many years, she has loved and been involved with women's Bible studies, where she has grown and been impacted by both the studies and her fellow sojourners. By day, Caroline is a partner in the law firm, Baker & Gilchrist. Caroline also loves playing tennis, reading, travel, and cooking and baking (all things food!).

Dorothy Gilbert and her husband, Bill, have four children whom they have been raising at College Park since 2001. She coordinates Tuesday morning Bible studies and has invested many years leading and learning in women's Bible studies. She delights in seeing women of all ages and stages connecting and encouraging one another with the life-transforming power of God's Word. Dorothy enjoys Tazo Awake tea, deep conversation, fitness classes with friends, audio books, and anything outdoors with her family (especially if it involves warmth and a beach!).

Pam Russell is a lover of the Word and works by day as a missionary to the political arena through Public Servants Prayer ministry. She is a published author and accomplished speaker. Born and raised in rural England, Pam is an avid tea drinker and is proudly the "co-founder" of eleven remarkable grandchildren.

Laura Huff and her husband, Jamie, have attended College Park since 1988. Laura is currently a leader in a CPC women's Bible study, the Women's Bible Studies Administrator, and a longtime leader at Creative Living Bible study. In the past, she has been involved with Bible studies and women's outreach in Brussels, Belgium, and Johannesburg, South Africa. After living abroad for seven years, the travel bug keeps her and Jamie visiting new places worldwide. Laura loves all things food-related. Her current passion is baking macarons, and she has given many baking lessons. Laura and Jamie have three children, one granddaughter, and two grandbabies on the way.

Karen Pourcho and her husband, Bob, have three grown children. After serving and teaching for many years in Community Bible Study, Karen accepted the position of Director of Women's Ministry at College Park Church in 2015. Besides loving Bible study, Karen enjoys playing the piano, baking, gardening, needlepoint, walking with her trusted pup, Tracker, and traveling with her best friend, Bob.