

How to Enjoy the Bible Events Series

You hold in your hands one of the most remarkable Bible study materials ever written and published. This series was first published in English years ago and has been used by many thousands of people in the English-speaking world.

Now, with permission of the original publishers, the series is available in several languages as collections printed under many contemporary titles.

What makes this series so valuable is that each Bible event leads the reader or the group to discover the deepest truths of the Bible history for themselves. This is done through insightful multiple choice questions which draw the readers to enter into the story and find for themselves its meanings and implications and to apply the history to their own lives.

The series is best “taught” by persons who encourage the group to do most of the talking and thinking. The teacher best acts as a leader in which the group discovers its way through the Scriptural events. The teacher may help the group when he or she believes that valuable truths have been overlooked, but the first discoverers should be members of the group itself. This stirs tremendous interest on the part of the group. This also relieves the teacher of the responsibility, under older systems of teaching, to carefully master all the truths of the text and present them in a way that would hopefully interest and “teach” the group.

Almost all teachers report that their classes or groups show much more interest than before and that teaching this series is much easier than it was under the older systems of teaching.

In the same way, individuals who use these booklets for their own personal study find this investigative method much more interesting and meaningful. The reader is invited to sense the drama of each story in his or her own Bible, be it Catholic or Evangelical, and be led to discern the spiritual truths that are packed into each story.

“Every Community on Earth Deserves a New Testament Church”



Women Facing Challenges

From the “Bible Events” Series

**NATIONAL BIBLE READING
CAMPAIGN**



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Women Facing Challenges

Everyone experiences challenges in life. In fact, life largely consists of our response to the constant challenges that face us. Challenges have to do not only with the solving of problems, but also with making personal progress in the world of opportunities in which each one lives.

Women face many challenges which are unique to their sex, as well as the challenges that all human beings are faced with. The woman's ability to respond wisely and faithfully to the challenges that face her determines in large measure the success she will experience in life. In the next six meetings of your group, each member will think about the challenges she faces and will help and encourage the others in regard to their unique challenges. The real-life experiences of women in Bible times will serve as dramatic case-studies of women facing challenges.

National Bible Reading Campaign

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First Bible Event

NEVER TOO LATE FOR GOD**Genesis 18:1-15****THE THREE VISITORS**

The call to follow God is sometimes difficult and full of danger. When Abraham chose to follow God, Sarah, his wife, accompanied him with great faith and without recorded complaint. Sarah was a woman of great faith, but this does not mean that she never suffered doubts. Modern women should take heart from her example, knowing that God can use them greatly, even when they sometimes suffer doubt.

This story happened soon after the story in Genesis 17 in which the Lord appeared to Abram and again confirmed his covenant with him. God stated that his promise of Abram and Sarai bearing a son was so certain that from that time on they were given new names, Abraham and Sarah.

1. Why did Abraham try so hard to serve the three visitors?

- ☐ Eastern culture demanded it.
- ☐ He knew they were angels.
- ☐ He was a very hospitable person.
- ☐ He was looking for something in return.

2. When did Abraham realize the Lord was visiting him?

- ☐ immediately
- ☐ when the visitors asked about Sarah by name
- ☐ when the promise of a son was given
- ☐ when he was asked why Sarah was laughing to herself

3. If you were Sarah (childless and 89 years old), how would you have felt about what you heard?

4. How would you describe Sarah's laughter?

- ☐ Situational - You had to be there.
- ☐ Suppressed - She was trying to contain herself.
- ☐ Sarcastic - "Yeah, and Abraham will run a marathon!"
- ☐ Sinful - She displayed her lack of faith.
- ☐ Spiritual - She was honest with her feelings

5. What would it do you good to laugh about right now? What keeps you from doing so?

6. When you were a child, who served as an example of faith to you? What are you doing to pattern your life after that person?

7. What is the purpose of your faith?

- ☐ to fulfill my dreams
- ☐ to make me a stronger Christian
- ☐ to glorify God
- ☐ to encourage others
- ☐ to prepare me for eternity
- ☐ I'm really not sure.

8. Sarah seems to have given up on her desire to have a baby. Where in your life have you given up on your dream? If you're really honest, what seems "too hard for the Lord"?

9. What does this story about Sarah teach you? Where in your life may God be telling you it's never too late? Where might God be saying, "There's still something significant I want to do with your life"?

10. What kind of stress does your changing age add to your life? How do you deal with the reality of aging?

Second Bible Event

FAITHFUL WOMAN WITHOUT DOUBTS
Judges 4:1-24**DEBORAH LEADS ISRAEL**

Increasingly, women are looked up to for leadership in the modern world. It is a challenge to be able to meet the expectations of others when they look to a woman for leadership. Deborah is an example and a challenge to all women because she won the respect of her nation when women had little standing as leaders. Let us learn from her.

1. God's response to the Israelites' wickedness was to:

- ☐ punish them
- ☐ send an enemy to harass them
- ☐ abandon them
- ☐ show them their weakness

2. What made Deborah a leader in a man's world?

- ☐ her ability to predict the future
- ☐ her courage
- ☐ her military mind
- ☐ her strong faith
- ☐ the obvious gifts God gave her
- ☐ None of the men had her backbone.

3. What was Barak's problem (v.8)?

- ☐ He was chicken.
- ☐ He wasn't sure of the route.
- ☐ He wasn't convinced that this was the right thing to do.
- ☐ He wanted a spokesperson for God with him.
- ☐ He wanted to lean on Deborah.

4. How do you think the Israelite men felt about the honor of victory going to two women?
How do you think the Israelite women felt?

5. In this period, Israel went through cycles of turning away from God, suffering from oppression, crying out to the Lord, and being delivered by God through a human agent. When do you most often drift away from the Lord?

- ☐ when I get too comfortable
- ☐ when other things demand my attention
- ☐ when I get tired of being "good"
- ☐ when I ignore my "quiet time"
- ☐ when the pressure gets too great
- ☐ I can't explain it - it just happens.

6. How does God usually seem to "discipline" you?

- ☐ failure
- ☐ family crises
- ☐ illness
- ☐ things falling apart
- ☐ guilt
- ☐ other: _____

7. What is the most effective way for you to "cry out to God"?

- ☐ "Help!"
- ☐ talking to a Christian friend
- ☐ confessing my sin
- ☐ pouring out my soul in a journal

8. In what way have you experienced God's deliverance?

- ☐ healing
- ☐ people's help
- ☐ provision of resources
- ☐ spiritual growth through a crisis

9. What quality of Deborah's would you most like to have (and what would you attempt if you had it)?

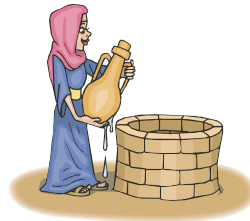
- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> foresight | <input type="checkbox"/> faith |
| <input type="checkbox"/> confidence | <input type="checkbox"/> leadership ability |
| <input type="checkbox"/> boldness | <input type="checkbox"/> inner strength |

10. How was Deborah able to be an "assertive servant"? What woman today do you look to as a similar example of that kind of strength? What can you do to be more like her and/or Deborah?

Third Bible Event

JESUS LOVES EVERYBODY

John 4:7-30

JESUS TALKS WITH A SAMARITAN WOMAN

One of the most influential evangelists in the New Testament was a woman who had one moral failure after another, but whose life was touched by Jesus. At her word, a whole community welcomed Jesus and many received him as Lord. The Samaritan woman shows that a woman does not need to have a flawless background to be powerfully used by God. Instead of avoiding Samaria as Jews often did, Jesus passed through this area that Jews considered inhabited by spiritual and ethnic half-breeds.

1. How would you describe this woman's response for most of her conversation with Jesus?

- ☐ Searching - "Is it possible this is what I've been looking for?"
- ☐ Avoidance - "I think I'd better try to change the subject."
- ☐ Skeptical - "Who does this guy think he is?!"

2. What most influenced the woman to consider that the man she was talking to was the Messiah?

- ☐ what he said about "living water"
- ☐ the way he knew so much about her without being told
- ☐ his accepting her though she was a loose-living Samaritan woman
- ☐ when he claimed, "I who speak to you am He"

3. What was Jesus saying about worshiping God?

- ☐ The Jews' worship is better than the Samaritans' worship
- ☐ The object of true worship the Messiah comes from the Jews
- ☐ Focusing on where to worship misses the point
- ☐ True worship is from the heart

4. What was this woman thirsting for?

- ☐ intimacy in her relationships
- ☐ intimacy with God
- ☐ acceptance of who she was
- ☐ forgiveness for the life she had led
- ☐ meaning and purpose in life
- ☐ basic survival in life

5. What are you really thirsting for?

6. What did it take for Jesus and this woman to get past their cultural differences to communicate like this? What can you do to help overcome barriers that exist in your "world"?

7. What have been the most significant changes you have gone through in your spiritual life?

- ☐ a conversion experience
- ☐ a spiritual crisis
- ☐ changes in my beliefs
- ☐ different choices than my family
- ☐ switching churches/denominations

8. In what ways have the changes in your spiritual life been stressful or unsettling? How have you worked through that?

9. What differences exist between you as a couple?

- ☐ religious differences
- ☐ racial or ethnic differences
- ☐ political differences
- ☐ differences about handling money
- ☐ different ideas about leisure time
- ☐ differences in how we see our roles as husband and wife
- ☐ other: _____

10. What helps you get past your differences?

- ☐ willingness to listen and learn
- ☐ willingness to see past certain controversies between us
- ☐ determination to make our marriage work
- ☐ the fact we don't just tolerate our differences we enjoy them!

11. What do you appreciate about this group? How have the members of your group helped you become refreshed by God's living water?

Fourth Bible Event

THERE IS TIME FOR EVERYTHING

Acts 16:11-15

LYDIA'S CONVERSION



Europe became the bastion of the Christian faith for many centuries. It is significant that the first convert to Christ in Europe, recorded in the Bible, was a business woman named Lydia. She was significant, not only as being Paul's first convert in Europe, but because her dedication to the Lord was complete and she led others to follow her faith. All our communities need "Lydias" because women are often the first to turn to Christ and have great influence over others.

The apostle Paul's missionary travels brought him to Phillippi. Paul's practice was to first preach at each city's synagogue, but there were so few Jews in Phillippi that there was no synagogue there. In such cities it was common for the Jews and the Gentiles interested in Judaism ("worshippers of God," like Lydia in this story) to gather outdoors near running water.

1. Which of the following words best describes your impression of Lydia?

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> persuasive | <input type="checkbox"/> hospitable |
| <input type="checkbox"/> spiritual | <input type="checkbox"/> impulsive |
| <input type="checkbox"/> trusting | <input type="checkbox"/> naive |
| <input type="checkbox"/> industrious | <input type="checkbox"/> friendly |

2. Which of the following do you find most impressive about Lydia?

- ☐ She was a business woman at a time when few women were.
- ☐ Her heart was immediately receptive to the Gospel.
- ☐ She convinced her household to be baptized.
- ☐ She was willing to open her home to strangers.

3. Lydia managed to care for her business, her spiritual life and her household. On a scale from 1 to 10, how would you rate yourself in each area:

- ___ business/professional life
- ___ spiritual life
- ___ home life

4. What step do you need to take to put your work life, spiritual life and family life in better balance?

5. Lydia's "place of prayer" was by a river. What is your favorite place to meet God?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> in church | <input type="checkbox"/> with others in a small group |
| <input type="checkbox"/> alone in my home | <input type="checkbox"/> outside in natural surroundings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> at special meetings or retreats | <input type="checkbox"/> other: _____ |

6. How did the Lord open your heart to respond to the Gospel? What people did God use as part of the process?

7. In comparison, how open to the Lord is your heart right now? What would make it, and keep it, more open?

8. When you were little, what did you want to be when you grew up?

9. Regarding career and family, what are your hopes and dreams now? What would you change about your life if you could?

10. Lydia's status appears to have been single head of household. What example from her life would you like to apply to your life?

- ☐ She didn't seem to resent her situation in life.
- ☐ She made the most of her life both vocationally and spiritually.
- ☐ She used her situation in life to hospitably serve others.
- ☐ She avoided loneliness by taking initiative to reach out to people.

11. What have you appreciated about this course, and how has this group served you?

Fifth Bible Event

JESUS CAN HEAL!**Mark 5:24-34****JESUS HEALS A BLEEDING WOMAN**

Many women confront situations that are only barely tolerable. This may be caused by chronic illness, by extremely difficult economic, family, or living situations. Jesus is the answer to every problem, but our own faith may be weak or uncertain. Today's Bible event portrays a woman who struggled and won in the battle of faith to receive deliverance from the Lord.

Jesus had just agreed to go to the home of a man whose young daughter was dying. On the way he encounters a woman who most likely suffered from steady menstrual bleeding. Her affliction was social as well as physical since, according to Old Testament ritual laws, both her and anyone touching her were "unclean."

1. What would you consider to be the worst of this woman's problems?

- ☐ her physical suffering
- ☐ spending all her money in vain
- ☐ being a social outcast
- ☐ always being religiously impure
- ☐ guilt and low self-esteem

2. What do you think gave her the courage to touch Jesus' clothes?

- ☐ She didn't have anything to lose.
- ☐ She was desperate.
- ☐ She believed she would be healed.
- ☐ She thought she could slip away unnoticed.

3. Why was it important to Jesus that the person who touched him be identified?

- ☐ so Jesus could see who it was
- ☐ so the crowd would know a miracle had taken place
- ☐ so he could point out that the woman's faith had healed her
- ☐ so the woman could know she was accepted and given God's peace
- ☐ so it would be clear her physical healing included social healing

4. What would have caused the woman's fearful reaction in verse 33?

- ☐ fear of what the crowd would do
- ☐ fear of Jesus shaming her
- ☐ fear her healing would be revoked
- ☐ years of failure and rejection

5. In what way does this woman most remind you of yourself?

- ☐ having pain that no one can heal
- ☐ struggling with finances
- ☐ feeling emotionally alone
- ☐ feeling spiritually impure
- ☐ being shy about asking for help
- ☐ being shy about sharing what Christ has done for me

6. When do you remember being the most desperate for God's help? How did Jesus "touch" you?

7. What causes the most shame associated with the sickness or the hard problems in your life?

- ☐ the guilt I feel just for being sick
- ☐ that my prayers aren't working
- ☐ all the money my illness has cost
- ☐ being such a burden to others
- ☐ relying on medicine/pain relievers

8. What obstacles do you (or did you) need to "push through" to bring yourself in contact with the healing power of Jesus?

- ☐ anger toward those who hurt me
- ☐ fear of rejection
- ☐ the pain of broken trust
- ☐ feelings of guilt
- ☐ doubts that I really can be healed
- ☐ the stigma of a shameful identity

9. What does this story say about recovery from abuse?

- ☐ Jesus always has time and compassion for the abused.
- ☐ Jesus can help the abused become whole.
- ☐ Jesus understands how one kind of pain causes another.
- ☐ No one is too shameful for Jesus' touch.

Sixth Bible Event

BUILD ON THE ROCK
Matthew 7:24-29**THE WISE AND FOOLISH BUILDERS**

How well do you confront serious problems in your life? Jesus warns us that one can be spared from such problems, but he assures us that some people will stand firmly in the face of anything and others will fail miserably. We conclude this series of lessons about the lives of distinguished women learning on what basis the life of each student can also be distinguished. This parable ends Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, which began in Matthew 5.

1. Who is Jesus addressing here?

- ☐ people with hearing problems
- ☐ housing developers
- ☐ a crowd faced with a big decision
- ☐ nobody I know
- ☐ everybody I know

2. What does the rock refer to?

- ☐ the truth of the Gospel
- ☐ faith in Jesus
- ☐ Jesus himself
- ☐ obedience to Jesus' words

3. What does the sand refer to?

- ☐ atheism and agnosticism
- ☐ weak doctrine
- ☐ inadequate commitment
- ☐ the world's values
- ☐ disobedience to Jesus' words

4. Why did the foolish man build his house on sand?

- ☐ He wanted a beach in his yard.
- ☐ It was an easier place to dig.
- ☐ He got the land at a bargain price.
- ☐ Other people were doing it.
- ☐ He didn't know he was doing it.

5. What is Jesus promising those who are willing to live by his words?

- ☐ You will never experience storms.
- ☐ You will experience the same storms as everyone else.
- ☐ The storms won't destroy your faith.
- ☐ You will remain standing, no matter what happens.

6. What kind of storm do you think claims the most spiritual casualties?

- ☐ intellectual doubts
- ☐ moral failures
- ☐ relational conflict
- ☐ personal crises
- ☐ creeping apathy

7. What's the immediate forecast for the "weather" in your life?

- ☐ sunny
- ☐ occasional thunderstorms
- ☐ dreary
- ☐ a hurricane

8. To be a "wise builder" at this point in your life, do you need to learn more or practice what you have already learned?

9. Being totally honest, what is the foundation you depend on?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> my abilities | <input type="checkbox"/> good health |
| <input type="checkbox"/> my status | <input type="checkbox"/> my family |
| <input type="checkbox"/> wishful thinking | <input type="checkbox"/> my resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> self-confidence | <input type="checkbox"/> faith in Christ |

10. How would you describe your spiritual foundation?

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> shaky | <input type="checkbox"/> steady |
| <input type="checkbox"/> brand new | <input type="checkbox"/> temporary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> eroding | <input type="checkbox"/> destroyed, but I'm trying to rebuild |

11. What is the message of this parable to you about the realities of life?

- ☐ If my focus is on the externals of life, the results will be disastrous.
- ☐ If spiritual foundations are right, circumstances don't really matter.
- ☐ If I base my life on Christ, he will make my dreams come true.
- ☐ If I base my life on Christ, my dreams may not come true, but God will make me content.