

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 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 which they then can apply 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.

Individuals who use these lessons for their own personal study find this investigative method interesting and meaningful. The reader is invited to sense the drama of each story in his or her own Bible and be led to discern the spiritual truths that are packed into each story.



## *Courtship &* **A HAPPY MARRIAGE**

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*From the “Bible Events” Series*

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**NATIONAL BIBLE READING  
CAMPAIGN**



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### National Bible Reading Campaign

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## *Courtship &* **A HAPPY MARRIAGE**

Marriage is meant to be happy. This is God's plan and purpose for the home. Happiness in marriage begins with the way the marriage has begun and continues with the way that the couple serves one another and God. Whether the group consists of married people or of those who some day hope to be married, the examination of these Biblical families may give guidance for the future happiness and success of each family - present and future.

## First Bible Event

**PLEASE SAY: "YES"***Genesis 24:1-29, 50-66*

## ISAAC AND REBEKAH



Wedding customs vary from community to community and from time to time. Every marriage, however, depends upon choices. The first of these is to make one's choice of a life partner and to marry. What is God's role in choosing one's future spouse? His choice is unquestionably the best for the happiness and success of the marriage. But every person must decide whether or not to seek God's guidance in this matter. The following romantic story tells of a couple that chose well.

God had promised that through his son Isaac, Abraham would become the "father of many nations." Now after Sarah's death, Abraham takes the initiative to find Isaac a wife.

1. What title would you give this story?
  - ☐ "Mission Impossible"
  - ☐ "Matchmaker, Matchmaker, Make Me a Match"
  - ☐ "Father Knows Best"
  - ☐ "Love at First Sight"
2. Abraham wanted Isaac to marry one of his own religion because he:
  - ☐ Was prejudiced
  - ☐ Liked to be in control
  - ☐ Desired to be the father of an ethnically pure nation
  - ☐ Was determined that Isaac marry a "believer"
3. Why did Abraham object to Isaac going to "the old country" himself?
 

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4. Why did the servant plead to leave as soon as Rebekah's family gave their consent?
  - ☐ He was on a roll and didn't want to push his luck
  - ☐ He was afraid Rebekah's family would change their minds
  - ☐ He was afraid Rebekah might refuse to go
  - ☐ He knew Abraham and Isaac were anxiously waiting

5. What impresses you about the end of the story?
  - ☐ Rebekah's modesty
  - ☐ The dramatic first meeting
  - ☐ The way Isaac and Rebekah both got swept off their feet
  - ☐ The instant success of an arranged marriage
6. What made Abraham's plan successful?
  - ☐ The servant's tenacious faith
  - ☐ Some very fortunate timing
  - ☐ God's sovereign control
  - ☐ The gifts that assured Rebekah's family she would be well off
  - ☐ Rebekah's cooperation
  - ☐ Isaac's acceptance of the plan
7. When have you asked for a sign like the servant did? How valid is it to ask for God's guidance in that way? If you could ask God for one thing, what would it be?
 

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8. Singles: What has been the most frustrating thing for you in seeking out dating relationships? What does this story say to you about where you should "look"?
 

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9. Singles: How important has dating someone with a similar faith been to you? How have you sensed God's involvement in your dating decisions?
 

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10. Marrieds: What was the beginning of your relationship like? How was it like this story?
 

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11. Marrieds: What are the best memories of your relationship? What have been some of your hardest times together?
 

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## Second Bible Event

**ROMANCE WITH HONOR***Ruth 2:1-22*

## RUTH MEETS BOAZ



Another Bible event demonstrates the uniqueness of marriage customs of Old Testament times. Ruth and Boaz had one of the great romances of the Bible. One thing that distinguished them was the sensibility and honor that characterized their romance, which led to one of the great marriages of all times.

Years earlier, Naomi, her husband and their two sons left Israel because of famine. While in Moab, all three men died. Now Naomi has just returned to Israel with her faithful Moabitess daughter-in-law Ruth.

1. What are your first impressions of this story?
  - ☐ Sounds like a romance novel
  - ☐ What a knight in shining armor!
  - ☐ I'm glad I wasn't a widow then
  - ☐ A "real man" would have rescued Ruth from the fields altogether
  - ☐ Respect for each other was the basis for a later love relationship
2. What do you most admire about Boaz in this story?
  - ☐ His rapport with his workers
  - ☐ His respect for a foreign woman
  - ☐ His initiative to protect Ruth from sexual harassment
  - ☐ His generosity with his grain
3. What do you most admire about Ruth in this story?
  - ☐ Her courage and willingness to take risks
  - ☐ Her loyalty to those she loved
  - ☐ Her positive attitude about menial work
  - ☐ The way she took refuge "under God's wings" (v. 12)
  - ☐ The way she respected others and really appreciated what others did for her
4. How would you rate yourself on a scale from 1 to 10 regarding the answers to the previous question? (10 being the strongest)

5. If you are married, what were the most important things your spouse left behind because of his/her love for you?
  - ☐ Strong ties to family
  - ☐ The area where he/she grew up
  - ☐ Professional opportunities
  - ☐ An old girlfriend/boyfriend
  - ☐ The freedoms of single life
6. How does your spouse show the kind of honor that Boaz and Ruth showed each other?
  - ☐ By protecting me
  - ☐ By affirming me
  - ☐ By listening to me
  - ☐ By supporting me in my work
  - ☐ By discussing important decisions
  - ☐ By speaking highly of me to others
  - ☐ By speaking to me kindly
7. Which of the answers in the previous question do you need to do more often to better "love, honor and cherish" your mate?

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## Third Bible Event

**SERVING ONE ANOTHER***John 13:1-17***JESUS WASHES THE DISCIPLES' FEET**

Marriage is of such blessing because it draws two people of the opposite sex to love and care for one another. The measure of success of any marriage is found in the degree that the husband and wife serve one another. A special moment in the life of Jesus and his friends demonstrates the kind of service-love that makes any life successful and any marriage happy.

It was customary in Jesus' day for people's dusty, sandaled feet to be washed, usually by the lowest ranking servant, before a meal was served.

1. Why didn't the disciples wash their feet before supper?
  - ☐ They forgot
  - ☐ It wasn't their job
  - ☐ There weren't any servants there
2. What would you have done if Jesus wanted to wash your feet?
  - ☐ Left the room
  - ☐ Objected like Peter did
  - ☐ Insisted that I wash his feet
  - ☐ Kept quiet but felt uncomfortable
  - ☐ Felt honored by his caring act
3. What did Jesus mean when he said, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me?"
  - ☐ "I don't want to share a room with anyone with dirty feet"
  - ☐ "To be part of me you have to learn to receive from me"
  - ☐ "You have to let my coming sacrifice cleanse you from your sin"
  - ☐ "As long as you live you will need cleansing and forgiveness"
  - ☐ "Unless you're a servant like I am, you can't be my disciple"
4. Why did Jesus wash his disciples' feet?
  - ☐ To shame them
  - ☐ To be an example of servanthood
  - ☐ To illustrate his whole mission
  - ☐ To show them real leadership
  - ☐ To show his deep love for them before he died

5. How did Jesus expect the disciples to follow his example?
  - ☐ To wash each other's feet literally
  - ☐ To be willing to do the "dirty work"
  - ☐ To take care of each other
  - ☐ To observe footwashing regularly as a ceremony in the church
6. Why do you think Christians don't serve each other more than they do?
7. What one thing occurs to you to do at home, work or church this week to follow Jesus' example of serving?
8. What would it mean to practice footwashing in your marriage relationship?
  - ☐ To serve my spouse more
  - ☐ To let my spouse serve me
  - ☐ To listen to my spouse more
  - ☐ To show more affection
  - ☐ To show more appreciation
  - ☐ To be more patient and forgiving
  - ☐ To serve with no strings attached
  - ☐ To do things that aren't "my job"
9. Growing up, how often did your family sit down and eat together? How much did you visit around the table? How does that compare to your current lifestyle?
10. How can you better serve your children?
  - ☐ Spend more time with them
  - ☐ Give them my undivided attention
  - ☐ Give them more affection
  - ☐ Bless them more with special meals and other fun occasions
11. Which of the following is true about your job?
  - ☐ My job has nothing to do with serving it's about making money
  - ☐ Jesus' example of servanthood is what keeps me going in my job
  - ☐ I have to do many servant tasks, most of which are pleasant
  - ☐ I have to do many servant tasks, most of which are unpleasant

## Fourth Bible Event

## THE COSTLY CHOICE

Genesis 29:1-30

## JACOB MARRIES LEAH AND RACHEL



Many couples today simply begin to live together. Their prospects for an enduring and happy marriage are poor. True love can be costly, but the price is gladly paid because the marriage is worth it. Jacob's strange experience with Laban, though hard to understand in today's society, demonstrates the love of a man who was glad to make a costly choice for the one he truly loved.

After deceiving his father to get the blessing intended for his brother Esau, Jacob was running away from Esau's wrath. He was also instructed by his parents to go and marry one of his Uncle Laban's daughters, rather than marry a Canaanite woman.

1. Men: If you were Jacob, how would you have felt about your first day in this new place?
  - ☐ God must be with me
  - ☐ I'm so glad Laban welcomed me
  - ☐ That Rachel is a real knock-out!
  - ☐ I wonder what Rachel thinks about me
  - ☐ I wonder if Laban would let me marry Rachel
2. Women: If you were Rachel, how would you have felt about Jacob's entrance of the scene?
  - ☐ How romantic!
  - ☐ God must be with him
  - ☐ What a gentleman the way he took care of the sheep for me
  - ☐ I like a man like Jacob who can show his emotions
  - ☐ I wonder if he thinks I'm attractive
3. Why did Laban trick Jacob and give him Leah?
  - ☐ He wanted another seven years of free labor
  - ☐ He figured both daughters would end up married that way
  - ☐ The deceiver Jacob deserved to be deceived

4. How could Laban's wedding night scheme work?
  - ☐ That's what I'd like to know!
  - ☐ It must have been really dark
  - ☐ Leah must have kept her veil on
  - ☐ Jacob must have gotten drunk
  - ☐ Leah must have done a good Rachel impersonation
5. We're told how Jacob and Laban felt (vv. 25-27). How do you think Leah and Rachel felt? How do you think the four of them felt about each other after Laban agreed to let Jacob marry Rachel also?
 

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6. What are you waiting for in your life right now? How are you at waiting? What could you do to be better at it?
 

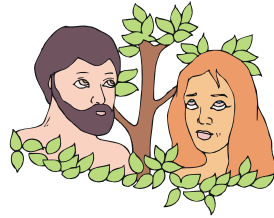
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7. When have you felt like Leah unattractive and unloved? When, like Rachel, have you had the rug pulled out from under your dreams? How does your relationship with God help you cope when the "romance" isn't there?
 

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8. Marrieds: The seven years "seemed like only a few days" to Jacob because of his love for Rachel. Regarding time and my marriage, it seems like:
  - ☐ We have been together forever
  - ☐ Only yesterday we fell in love
  - ☐ What happened before we met was in another lifetime
  - ☐ A permanent commitment has been really important
  - ☐ A lifetime won't be long enough to be together
  - ☐ We never have enough time
9. Singles: How do you think Jacob and Rachel dealt with waiting seven years (and seven days) to get married? How do you handle times of waiting in your dating life? What helps you keep sexually pure while you wait?
 

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## Fifth Bible Event

**IT IS NOT GOOD TO BE ALONE***Genesis 2:4-25*

## ADAM AND EVE

God made people to need one another, to be mutually dependant. Even so, our innate sense of selfishness makes it difficult for us to be dependable and to be able to depend on others. Marriage is given to us by God as the relationship that can be most intimate and most precious of all. Though many may disappoint us, our marriage merits our very best efforts to keep as the relationship of greatest confidence and maximum mutual dependence.

1. If you could have a picture of just one scene in this story, what would it be?

- ☐ God forming Adam out of the dust
- ☐ A wide-angle photograph of the unspoiled Garden of Eden
- ☐ God bringing the animals to Adam
- ☐ Adam and Eve seeing each other for the first time

2. Why didn't God make Adam and Eve at the same time?

- ☐ To demonstrate that people aren't complete when isolated
- ☐ To help Adam appreciate his new companion
- ☐ To establish Adam as the leader in their relationship
- ☐ To save the best for last

3. What does this story say to you about the nature of men and women?

- ☐ Men and women need each other
- ☐ Men are created with unique authority and responsibility
- ☐ Women are designed to be helpers
- ☐ Men are more task-oriented and women more relational
- ☐ Men and women are more alike than different

4. What did God mean when he described Eve as a "helper"?

- ☐ She will serve Adam
- ☐ She will be a great partner
- ☐ She will be a source of strength
- ☐ Adam and Eve will work together

5. Why were Adam and Eve naked and not ashamed?

- ☐ No one told them any different
- ☐ They were one flesh
- ☐ They didn't have a knowledge of good and evil
- ☐ They hadn't sinned yet

6. Describe a time in your life when you were so intensely lonely that you learned the truth of God's statement, "It is not good... to be alone"

7. Singles: How does this story make you, as a single person, feel?

- ☐ It reinforces the stigma that I can't be complete without a spouse
- ☐ It reassures me that it's normal to need companionship
- ☐ It confirms that God is in control of my life and relationships
- ☐ It convinces me that God doesn't want me to be lonely

8. Singles: How difficult is it for singles in general to experience companionship apart from marriage? How difficult is it for you?

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9. What ideas and attitudes do people have about the "submission" of women? How have you felt about this issue? What does this story say to you about God's intent for women?

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10. Marrieds: What about your marriage are you most grateful for?

- ☐ My spouse's help and support
- ☐ The companionship we share
- ☐ The sizzle of our romance
- ☐ The intimacy of knowing each other fully, without shame

11. Marrieds: How could you be more "helpful" to your spouse? How could you deepen your companionship as a couple? Your romance?

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## Sixth Bible Event

**PARTNERS WITH GOD***Acts 18: 1-4, 18-28*

## PRISCILLA, AQUILA AND APOLLOS



The Bible shows that marriage is meant not only to be a special relationship between a man and a woman, but also a relationship between them and their God. History is full of the accounts of husbands and wives who accepted their marriage as a special opportunity to serve God. There are few better examples of this than that of Aquila and Priscilla, servant family of Jesus Christ.

1. What surprises you most?
    - ☐ That the apostle Paul supported himself by making tents (v. 3)
    - ☐ That Paul had his hair cut off because of a vow (v. 18)
    - ☐ That Priscilla, a woman, was so active in ministry, and her name was even mentioned before her husband's (vv. 18-19, 26)
    - ☐ That Apollos with all his fervor and knowledge did not understand Christian baptism (vv. 24-25)
  2. What best illustrates Priscilla and Aquila's virtues as servant-leaders?
    - ☐ Their tentmaking business partnership with Paul
    - ☐ Their invitation and willingness to travel with Paul
    - ☐ Paul's leaving them in Ephesus to start forming a new church there
    - ☐ Their ability to teach Apollos
    - ☐ Their hospitality toward Paul in Corinth and Apollos in Ephesus
  3. How do you envision Apollos?
    - ☐ A silver-tongued orator
    - ☐ An absent-minded professor
    - ☐ A fiery preacher
    - ☐ A sophisticated philosopher
    - ☐ An argumentative bulldog
  4. In their lives, Priscilla and Aquila encountered Paul and Apollos one was a teacher to them and one they taught. Who was one of your early mentors? Whom have you in turn mentored or could you mentor?
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5. What are the primary gifts God has given you for Christian service?
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6. On scale of 1 (totally disagree) to 10 (totally agree), how do you feel about each of the following statements:
  - ☐ Women in leadership was acceptable in the New Testament church
  - ☐ Women in leadership is acceptable in the church today
  - ☐ God encourages women to be all that they can be
  - ☐ Women can realize their full potential in the church
  - ☐ Gender doesn't matter; what matters is using our gifts for Christ
7. What type of role do you have in the church? What role would you like to have? What keeps you from that?

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8. Priscilla and Aquila were a model of partnership in marriage. Regarding the possibility of discovering a mate, it's important to me to find someone. . .
  - ☐ Who knows how to make tents
  - ☐ Who shares my faith and values
  - ☐ Whom I find attractive
  - ☐ Who complements my personality and gifts
  - ☐ With whom I can serve the Lord
  - ☐ Who likes to do everything I like
9. How can you as a couple use your gifts to serve God and others? How would finding a ministry or service project in which to share affect your marriage?
  - ☐ Disastrous We don't have much free time the way it is
  - ☐ Mostly bad it would keep our focus off of our marriage
  - ☐ Mostly good it would force us to spend more time together
  - ☐ Wonderful a common fulfillment would bind us together
  - ☐ We are already doing this