

Transformed



Transformed

Ordinary People Changed Forever by an Extraordinary God

The Bible is full of stories of how ordinary people have been transformed by an extraordinary God. As people from all ages and stages of life have experienced His goodness, come to know and trust His character, and encountered the abundance of His love, they have been changed forever. Even though, at first, their stories may seem to pale in significance next to the likes of Abraham's, David's, Esther's or Mary's, their ordinary lives confirm that God is just as gracious, generous, kind, and loving to all who come to Him by faith. In His eyes, no one's life is too ordinary, too insignificant, or too small to testify to His glory.

Over the next six weeks, we will study how God impacted the lives of some lesser-known men and women in the Bible - how He saw and knew just what they needed to deal with the struggles they faced and the contexts in which they lived. While some of their stories may consist of only a few verses, they have been included in scripture for a very specific reason. The manner in which God transformed their lives is recorded to teach, encourage, and instruct us as we live through good times and bad. Their lives will, therefore, teach us that God can continue to transform our lives - that He can change us forever - when we come to Him by faith, even if we feel isolated, alone, and overwhelmed by the changes that COVID-19 has brought into our day-to-day routines.

This study guide includes the stories of two men and four women as recorded in the English Standard Version (ESV) of the Bible. It aims to introduce you to their stories to prepare you for the lessons which will be video-recorded and posted on the MetWomen Ottawa YouTube channel. Each week, teachers will supplement the study guide with questions to help you apply lessons from these stories to your own life and to enable you to participate in discussion sessions, if you should wish to do so.

Schedule

Week 1 - Jochebed

Week 2 - Abigail

Week 3 - Mephibosheth

Week 4 - Onesimus

Week 5 - Martha

Week 6 - The Bleeding Woman

Suggested Memory Work

Romans 12:2 (ESV) – “Do not be conformed to this world, but be **transformed** by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”

2 Corinthians 3:18 (ESV) – “And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being **transformed** into [His] image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.”



Week 1 - Jochebed



Jochebed's story takes place during a very difficult time for God's people. Not only had they been forced to endure some 400 years of slavery in Egypt, they had been ordered by Pharaoh to kill any and every Hebrew baby boy at birth. Severe punishment, possibly even death, surely would have come to anyone who defied Pharaoh's order.

Enter Jochebed, an ordinary woman whose faith in our extraordinary God allowed her to play an integral part in the history of God's people, both at that particular moment in history and forever.

Read Exodus 2:1-10

1. According to Exodus 2:2-3, what did Jochebed do with her baby boy and why did she do what she did?
2. What happened next to Jochebed's baby boy, according to Exodus 2:5-10?
3. Put yourself in Jochebed's shoes at this point of her story? How do you think she might have felt?
4. The Bible refers to Jochebed four other times, sometimes directly and other times indirectly. Look up the following verses and note what else we can learn about her.

Exodus 6:20	
Numbers 26:59	
Acts 7:20	
Hebrews 11:23	

5. On the basis of what the Bible tells us about Jochebed, what words would you use to describe her?

Notes and Prayer Requests



Week 2 - Abigail



Abigail's story takes place in the midst of the decades-long quest that King Saul undertook to kill David and save his throne. Once, while David was on the run from Saul, he came across a man named Nabal – a wealthy owner of thousands of sheep and goats and a man known to be foolish, harsh, and badly behaved.

Enter Abigail, Nabal's wife. Her character and actions would eventually save David's life and see her taken into David's household as his wife upon the death of Nabal. Her ordinary story, therefore, is part of God's extraordinary story - the story of redemption in which God would send His own Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to save us from our sins through the house and line of David.

Read 1 Samuel 25:1-44

1. How is Abigail described in 1 Samuel 25:3?
2. According to 1 Samuel 25:5-11, what did David's men ask of Nabal, and how did Nabal respond?
3. David reacted furiously to Nabal's response by ordering 400 of his men to take up their swords against Nabal. Read the following verses and note why David re-thought his plan and eventually stood down from the attack?

1 Samuel 25:14-17	
1 Samuel 25:18-22	

4. According to 1 Samuel 25:23-31, what did Abigail do for, and say to, David when she met him?
5. How did David respond to Abigail according to 1 Samuel 25:32-42?
6. On the basis of what the Bible tells us about Abigail, what words would you use to describe her?

Notes and Prayer Requests



Week 3 - Mephibosheth



Mephibosheth's story comes at a critical time in King David's reign. David's rightful and God-ordained place on the throne of Israel was under attack as he faced a rebellion from some of his own family and advisors. In the midst of the rebellion, David thought about one of his closest and most loyal friends, Jonathan – the late son of David's predecessor, King Saul.

Enter Mephibosheth – Jonathan's crippled son. David sought to show kindness to Mephibosheth for Jonathan's sake by blessing him and providing for his physical and material needs. David was gracious, even though there was nothing worthy or commendable about Mephibosheth in his own right. David's graciousness demonstrates how our extraordinary God lavishes us, ordinary men and women, with His love, mercy, and grace.

Read 2 Samuel 9:1-13

1. According to 2 Samuel 9:3, what did David say he wanted to show to the only surviving member of Jonathan's household, Mephibosheth?
2. How did Mephibosheth respond to David once he had been brought before him as noted by 2 Samuel 9:6?
3. Look at 2 Samuel 9:7. What did David say to Mephibosheth and, specifically, what did he promise him?
4. In your own words, summarize how Mephibosheth responded to David's act of kindness as recorded in 2 Samuel 9:8.
5. In addition to the lands that he was given, what was the ultimate result of David's act of kindness towards Mephibosheth according to 2 Samuel 9:11?
6. What words could you use to describe the changes that came into Mephibosheth's life?

Notes and Prayer Requests



Week 4 - Onesimus



The book of Philemon is a letter that Paul wrote to his dear friend while in jail in Rome. Philemon was a wealthy Christian who lived in the city of Colossae. He opened his home to a group of Christians so that they could fellowship and worship together. Like many in the culture of his day, Philemon had slaves who worked in his home.

Enter Onesimus – one of Philemon's slaves and one who had run away to Rome. While in Rome, Onesimus met Paul and was transformed. Upon becoming a Christian, Onesimus's life was changed forever. Whereas he had once been a "useless" slave to Philemon in earthly terms, he had become a "useful" and beloved brother in Christ to Paul. In fact, God used Onesimus in extraordinary ways to help carry out Paul's ministry of sharing the gospel throughout the known Roman world.

Read Philemon 1-25

1. Based on verses 1-7, describe the kind of man that Philemon was and the kind of faith that he had upon becoming a Christian.
2. Summarize how Paul felt about Onesimus on the basis of verses 10-16.
3. According to verse 17, what did Paul want Philemon to do?
4. Drawing from verses 18-21, how did Paul expect Philemon to respond?
5. Paul also mentions Onesimus at the end of his letter to the Colossians. Read Colossians 4:7-9. What do these verses tell us about Onesimus in terms of what he had done for Paul and/or the type of person he had become as a Christian?
6. On the basis of his story, what words would you use to describe Onesimus?

Notes and Prayer Requests



Week 5 - Martha



The four gospels include wonderful stories of how Jesus interacted with ordinary men, women, and children. He healed them, taught them, rebuked them, and loved them. He always had time for them, even though His disciples sometimes tried to chase them away.

Enter Martha – a woman who, along with her brother and sister, welcomed Jesus into her home three separate times. We will look at each of these visits on their own. At first glance, it can be tempting to dismiss Martha as a woman who had the wrong priorities and attitude when it came to Jesus. However, her interactions with Jesus demonstrate how she changed. The depth of her faith and sincerity of her love for Her Lord demonstrate how she, an ordinary woman, was transformed forever by her encounters with our extraordinary God.

Visit # 1 - Read Luke 10:38-42

1. Drawing from Luke 10:38-40, list and compare Martha's words and actions to those of her sister, Mary, when Jesus came into their home.

Martha	
Mary	

2. According to Luke 10:41, how did Jesus respond to Martha? What sort of tone do you think he may have used?

Visit # 2 - Read John 11:1-44

3. Drawing together John 11:5, 33-38, summarize how Jesus felt about Martha, her sister, and Lazarus?
4. According to John 11:20-27, 39-40, how do Martha's interactions with Jesus demonstrate her personality in terms of her characteristics, her faith, and her love for her Lord?

Visit # 3 - Read John 12:1-8

5. What did Martha do while Jesus was in her home on this particular occasion?
6. On the basis of these three visits, would words would you use to describe Martha?

Notes and Prayer Requests



Week 6 - The Bleeding Woman



Sometimes, the Bible tells us stories of men or women without mentioning them by name. Our woman this week is one such person. Her story is tucked into that of another man named Jairus, a recognizable and well-known Jewish leader in Capernaum, a town on the west side of the Sea of Galilee. One day, Jairus fell at Jesus's feet and begged Him to come see his daughter who was at the point of death. Jairus boldly declared that should Jesus come and lay His hands on her, she would be healed and would live.

Enter our woman – one whom the Bible only describes as a woman who suffered from bleeding for 12 years. Her brief encounter with the eternal God transformed her life forever. Her story reminds us of the incredible way that God sees us and the manner in which our very identity will be radically changed when we come to believe in His Son.

Read Mark 5:25-34

1. According to Mark 5:25-26, what had this woman done to try to improve her situation?
2. Read Mark 5:23 and 27-28. List and compare Jairus' words with the thoughts of our woman when they both approached Jesus.

Jairus	
The Woman	

3. Which approach to Jesus is more like your own, Jairus or the bleeding woman?
4. What happened when the woman touched Jesus, according to Mark 5:29-32? What word does Mark use twice to describe the speed at which that action took place?
5. Mark explains how both the woman and Jesus responded after she touched him. Read Mark 5:33-34 and note their words, both in terms of what they said and the tone in which they said it.

The Woman	
Jesus	

6. On the basis of Mark's account, what words would you use to describe this woman?

Notes and Prayer Requests

