

# Lutheran Women in Mission

---

## BIBLE STUDY

### Creative Disobedience

by Nikki Rochester

#### Opening

Read together **Romans 8:28**: *And we know that in all things God works together for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*

This Bible verse is familiar to many believers. But we can perhaps treasure the passage most when we can see and appreciate how much God loves and cares for us—even when we are "outside the lines" of His will. If we profess to love Jesus as our Savior and Lord, obeying God's will is a vital commitment for us. But consider how easy it can become for us to make day-to-day choices and decisions that ignore or disobey God's will!

**Romans 8:28** is a word of hope and encouragement, a beautiful statement of God's grace and compassion on His called (chosen) but errant servants. To fulfill His divine plan, our creative God works through and around and despite our disobedience.

How do well-intentioned believers manage to stray outside the lines? Let's examine some beloved role models. (Note: If your time is limited, divide into three groups. Have one group do the Sarah section, another the Rebekah portion and the third, Joseph. After 15-20 minutes, share the highlights of the three discussions with all participants. Then complete the personal application section together.)

#### Look at Sarah

God told Abraham that despite their advanced age and Sarah's barrenness they would have a son. But the years were passing and nothing seemed to be happening.

Read **Genesis 12:1-2, 4-7 and 15:3-6**.

How does Sarah respond to God's promise? Why? See **Genesis 16:1-4a**.

What are some of the consequences of Sarah's decision?

- **Genesis 16:4b-6**
- **Genesis 16:11-12**
- **Genesis 21:8-11**

How does God work for the good of His chosen people even when they have detoured from his plan?

- **Genesis 16:7-10, 13-14**

- **Genesis 17:1-2, 19-21**
- **Genesis 21:1-3**

### **Look at Rebekah**

God told her she would have twins, and the older would serve the younger. In a culture where the rights of the eldest son were paramount, such a prophecy was extremely unusual; but the promise thrilled Rebekah, who favored her younger son, Jacob, while her husband, Isaac, favored the older son, Esau.

Read **Genesis 25:21-23, 27-28**.

How does Rebekah respond to God's promise? Why? See **Genesis 27:1-13**.

What are some of the consequences of Rebekah's actions?

- **Genesis 27:18-24**
- **Genesis 27:41-45**
- **Genesis 28:6-9**

How does God work for the good of his chosen people despite Rebekah and Jacob's deceitfulness?

- **Genesis 28:10-15**
- **Genesis 32:3-11; 33:1-4, 8-11**

### **Look at Joseph and his brothers**

Joseph has two strange dreams that he impulsively shares with his father Jacob (Israel) and eleven brothers. In a culture where dreams were known to be prophetic sometimes, Joseph's older brothers were enraged to hear that he might someday wield authority over them all.

Read **Genesis 37:3-11**.

How do Joseph's brothers respond to an apparent revelation of God's plan?

Read **Genesis 37:19-28**

What are some of the consequences of their actions?

- **Genesis 37:31-35**
- **Genesis 39:1, 7, 11-12, 16-20**
- **Genesis 45:1-3, 50:15**

How does God work for the good of his chosen people despite their self-centeredness and evil actions?

- **Genesis 41:14-16, 25-27, 33, 37-40**
- **Genesis 45:4-8**
- **Genesis 50:15, 19-21**

**Personal Application** *(The leader may read this section aloud for the group, allowing time for personal, private introspection after each question.)*

**And now look at YOU!** God guarantees a happy ending with Him in heaven to all

who believe in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. But in the meantime, our faith will be challenged by all kinds of stress and trauma-some resulting from our own disobedience.

Think carefully.

- Are there times when you ignore or fail to consider God's Word and will in your decision making?
- Can you recognize or recall when you followed Sarah or Rebekah's example and tried to "take over" God's will instead of letting Him unfold His own plan?
- Can you recognize or recall when you followed the example of Joseph's brothers and resisted or rebelled against what God was showing you?
- With the blessed advantage of hindsight, can you recognize some of the consequences of your choices and actions?

And now the BIG question:

- Can you see how God has worked for your good as His chosen person despite your disobedience?

### Closing

Recite **Romans 8:28** aloud with fresh appreciation. If you do not already know the verse, plan to commit it to memory.

Read together verses 1 and 2 of the hymn "Come Ye Disconsolate" (*TLH* 531).

Discuss the ways it echoes **Romans 8:28**. Conclude by singing the hymn together.

Nikki Rochester is a member of Berea Lutheran Church, Baltimore, Maryland, where she serves as Christian education coordinator. She has been writing devotions, Bible studies and lesson materials for Concordia Publishing House for several years.

---