

FAMILY MATTERS — WOMEN IN CHRIST'S GENEALOGY

Bible Study • Leader Guide

[Please provide a copy of this study and a Bible for each participant. Assure the group that all narratives shared within the group stay in the group, unless permission is given.]

Opening prayer: Almighty God, thank You for calling each of us to be your precious daughters and giving us the gift of faith. Please bless our time in Your Word as we learn from the Old Testament and apply these lessons to our lives. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Have you ever felt unsure of how God could use you to point others to Him? Maybe you're new in your faith and do not feel good enough, or you keep remembering your past sins and think you aren't holy enough to be a vessel for God's mission.

The Gospel of Matthew reminds us of some women from the Old Testament. Matthew started his recording of Jesus' life by writing a genealogy. The genealogies (lists of people in the generations leading up to Jesus) in Scripture are easy to just skim over because there are so many unrecognizable names (plus some that are just plain difficult to say out loud). It was traditional for these genealogies to list only men. However, Matthew intentionally included five women in his list.

Read Matthew 1:1–17.

Write the names of the women in the verses listed below and record how they are described.

verse 3:

Tamar, mother of Perez and Zerah by Judah

verse 5:

Rahab, mother of Boaz by Salmon

verse 5:

Ruth, mother of Obed by Boaz

verse 6:

wife of Uriah (aka Bathsheba), mother of Solomon by David

verse 16:

Mary, mother of Jesus, wife of Joseph

What was so great about these women that Matthew included them? Why were they so holy and magnificent to be included in the introduction to Matthew's description of the birth of our Savior? Take a look at their stories in the Old Testament to learn more about them.

Write down what surprises you about each woman and summarize her reputation.

Genesis 38:12–17, 24

(To get more context, you can read all of Genesis 38:6–26.)

She was a widow who was viewed as an adulterer when she got pregnant with twins. She was to be burned at the stake for her sins. (Judah didn't realize he was the one who had impregnated her when he thought she was a prostitute.)

Joshua 2:1–7

Rahab was a Gentile (non-Israelite) prostitute in Jericho. She had little to no standing/reputation and yet protected the spies by hiding them from the guards of Jericho.

Ruth 1:1–6, 22

(You can also read Ruth 2:8–13 or more of chapters 1–2 as time allows.)

She was a Moabite, a Gentile/non-Israelite. She would have been seen as an outsider when she moved to Israel with Naomi.

She was a widow who chose to live with her mother-in-law, who was also a widow, rather than return to her family to be cared for and maybe get married again. This put her into the poorest class and made her dependent on assistance from others for food and money to survive because she had no children.

2 Samuel 11:2–5, 26–27

(To get more context, you can read all of 2 Samuel 11.)

Bathsheba was obedient to the king, but because of King David's lust she got pregnant and her husband was killed in battle in an attempt to hide that he (Uriah) was not the father. Matthew listed her as Uriah's wife rather than as Bathsheba to remind readers just how many sins occurred to bring Bathsheba into the palace.

Matthew 1:18–19

Mary hadn't yet married Joseph when she conceived Jesus; they were only engaged. So, her reputation was tarnished when others logically assumed she got pregnant by another man. Not only did it make her and Joseph look bad to their community, but according to the Jewish laws she could be killed for her supposed premarital relations.

So, why were these women amazing enough to be recorded by Matthew? The answer is: they weren't! On their own they looked pretty bad. No one was looking up to them as role models. Three of the five had, for some amount of time, shame and troubles due to seemingly ill-timed pregnancies. These five women, like all of us, had sinned and made mistakes that affected their relationships and reputation with others.

Read the following verses and write down how God turned around these women's lives and used them for His plan.

Genesis 38:25–27

Her life was saved when the truth was revealed that Judah was the father of the twins in her womb and he realized he was in the wrong for not caring for his daughter-in-law earlier.

Her son Perez is listed as an ancestor of Jesus.

Joshua 6:17, 25

God gave her faith and spared her during the destruction of Jericho.

She married an Israelite man named Salmon and their son Boaz is listed as an ancestor of Jesus (and husband of Ruth).

Ruth 4:13–22

She was a Gentile in a country that was foreign to her, but Boaz married and cared for her.

Her son Obed was the father of King David, an ancestor of Jesus.

1 Kings 2:19

Bathsheba lost many loved ones and suffered the consequences of David's sins and shame yet became a wife of King David and later the honored mother of King Solomon.

Matthew 1:20–25

When Joseph decided to not marry Mary, God sent an angel to tell Joseph that Mary was going to give birth to the Son of God so Joseph protected them both.

God saw these down-trodden women as His beautiful daughters and used them in His plan to bring salvation for all people through the birth of Jesus. The amazing part about these women is that they had life-altering faith in the one true God. He enabled them to be a blessing to others despite the hardships they had experienced and the rotten labels and sins with which others associated them.

What is your reputation? How can God use you because of or despite your past mistakes?

Allow women to answer out loud if they wish or just write something down. (These questions may be very personal for some.)

All answers will vary. Despite good or bad reputations God has a plan to use each of us, and we all are part of the mission to share the Gospel!

Even when we cannot see His plan, God has a way to use you and your gifts to benefit your church and to further His mission of sharing the Gospel with others. No matter what we have experienced, by God's grace we are empowered to live lives that point others to Him. Our sins are no longer a death sentence because Jesus has paid the price for us. We can live each day in celebration and excitement as we, with the power of the Holy Spirit in our hearts, grow in faith and share the great news of our Savior (with an amazing genealogy!) with others we know!

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, thank You for sending Jesus to redeem us, regardless of the mistakes we have made and sins we have committed. We praise You for empowering us, through the Holy Spirit, to show Your love to others in our day-to-day lives, even when we are not perfect! Bless us with Your peace and comfort as we rest in the assurance that we are Your daughters and will live with You eternally. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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