HOLY PLACES GUIDE

Women of Faith

A Scripture Study Journal

Twenty-four lives. Thoughtful reading. Room for your own response.

THIS JOURNAL BELONGS TO

Read each life with care

This journal studies women across the Old and New Testaments. Read the listed passages in your preferred Bible translation before using the reflections.

01 CONTEXT BEFORE APPLICATION

Notice the setting, relationships and what the passage actually says. A short reflection cannot include every part of a person's story.

02 QUESTIONS, NOT LABELS

Avoid reducing a woman to one trait or treating every event as a rule for your life. Leave room for complexity and further study.

03 A GENTLE PACE

Use one study at a time, alone or with a group. The reflection text is original; the Scripture references let you return to the source.

My intention for this study

Bring curiosity rather than a need to identify with every story. Your circumstances may differ greatly from the world of the text.

DATE _____

- *What I hope to understand more deeply*

- *Questions or assumptions I want to examine*

- *A rhythm for reading, reflection and conversation*

Eve

Genesis 2-3

Read the creation and garden narratives together. Notice relationship, responsibility and the consequences of human choices without assigning every woman the role of blame.

DATE _____

- *What does the text say about human relationship and responsibility?*

- *Where am I tempted to shift responsibility rather than speak honestly?*

- *What would a truthful and compassionate response look like?*

Sarah

Genesis 18:1-15; 21:1-7

Sarah's response to a promised child includes laughter and uncertainty. Read her particular story without making it a prediction about another person's fertility or future.

DATE _____

- *What do Sarah's words reveal about her experience?*

- *Where do hope and uncertainty meet in my life?*

- *How can I support someone whose longing remains unresolved?*

Hagar

Genesis 16

Hagar is an enslaved woman who experiences harsh treatment and flees. Attend to her vulnerability and the divine encounter without using the story to tell anyone to remain in danger.

DATE _____

- *What power differences shape Hagar's situation?*

- *Whose voice or suffering is easy to overlook?*

- *How can I offer practical care that respects safety and dignity?*

Rebekah

Genesis 24

Rebekah offers water to a traveler and his camels, then faces a life-changing decision. Notice both the hospitality described and the question put to her about leaving.

DATE _____

- *Which details reveal Rebekah's initiative?*

- *What helps me make a thoughtful decision?*

- *How can I respect another person's voice and choice?*

Leah

Genesis 29:16-35

Leah's story unfolds within a family marked by deception and unequal affection. Read with compassion rather than treating her pain as a simple lesson in patience.

DATE _____

- *How does the family situation affect Leah?*

- *Where do I seek recognition or belonging?*

- *How can I affirm a person without comparing them with someone else?*

Rachel

Genesis 29:16-30; 30:1-24

Rachel's story includes affection, rivalry and painful longing. Notice the complexity of the family rather than assuming that a desired outcome resolves every wound.

DATE _____

- *What pressures shape the relationships in these passages?*
- *How does comparison affect my attention to others?*
- *What would compassionate language sound like around unresolved longing?*

Miriam

Exodus 15:1-21

Miriam is named as a prophet and leads the women in music after the crossing of the sea. Read her song within the larger story of deliverance.

DATE _____

- *How do music and shared memory function in this passage?*

- *What story of help or courage do I want to remember?*

- *How can I make room for others to participate in gratitude?*

Deborah

Judges 4-5

Deborah serves as prophet and judge in a time of conflict. Read the narrative and song carefully, recognizing the violence of the setting rather than making it a model for personal hostility.

DATE _____

- *What forms of leadership does Deborah exercise?*

- *Where do I need wise counsel before acting?*

- *How can I use responsibility with courage and care?*

Ruth

Ruth 1-4

Ruth, a Moabite widow, accompanies Naomi and seeks food through gleaning. Her story invites attention to loyalty, migration, vulnerability and the practical work of care.

DATE _____

- *What risks and choices does Ruth face?*

- *Who has shown steadfast care in an ordinary way?*

- *What practical form could loyalty take in my life?*

Naomi

Ruth 1; 4:13-17

Naomi returns to Bethlehem after bereavement and speaks openly of bitterness. Read her grief alongside the relationships around her without demanding a quick emotional resolution.

DATE _____

- *How does Naomi describe her experience?*

- *What does it mean to listen without correcting someone's grief?*

- *How can I remain present to a person whose story is unfinished?*

Hannah

1 Samuel 1:1-2:11

Hannah brings deep distress into prayer and is initially misunderstood by Eli. Her account is a particular biblical story, not a promise that prayer guarantees a child.

DATE _____

- *What does Eli misunderstand, and how does Hannah respond?*

- *Where do I need space to speak honestly?*

- *How can I respond more gently to distress I do not understand?*

Abigail

1 Samuel 25

Abigail acts quickly to prevent bloodshed amid a dangerous conflict. Attend to her courage and discernment without implying that someone is responsible for managing another person's abuse.

DATE _____

- *How does Abigail address the immediate danger?*

- *When do I need help to respond to conflict wisely?*

- *What would de-escalation with appropriate boundaries look like?*

Esther

Esther 4

Esther faces a grave decision when her people are threatened. Read her conversation with Mordecai in the wider story and notice the preparation and collective support she seeks.

DATE _____

- *What risks and responsibilities does Esther weigh?*

- *Where might silence or action affect other people?*

- *Who can help me discern a courageous and responsible response?*

Elizabeth

Luke 1:5-25, 39-45

Elizabeth's story includes waiting, pregnancy and a generous welcome for Mary. Her experience should not be used as a timetable or guarantee for someone else's longing.

DATE _____

- *What does Elizabeth recognize and affirm in Mary?*

- *Who has encouraged me without competing with me?*

- *What sincere encouragement can I offer today?*

Mary, mother of Jesus

Luke 1:26-56

Mary asks a question, responds to the angel and later voices a song of praise. Attend to her words and their scriptural setting rather than reducing her to silent passivity.

DATE _____

- *What questions and convictions appear in Mary's words?*

- *Where can I bring uncertainty into prayer?*

- *What does a thoughtful, willing response look like for me?*

Anna

Luke 2:36-38

Luke names Anna as a prophet and describes her worship and public witness when she sees the child Jesus. Her brief appearance gives weight to sustained attention and testimony.

DATE _____

- *What does Luke choose to tell us about Anna?*

- *What practice helps me remain attentive over time?*

- *What hope can I share honestly with someone else?*

The Samaritan woman

John 4:4-42

A conversation at a well develops into questions about worship and identity. Do not assume details about the woman's moral character that the passage does not provide.

DATE _____

- *How does the conversation develop?*

- *Which assumptions might limit my willingness to listen?*

- *What have I learned that I can share without exaggeration?*

The woman who reached out

Mark 5:25-34

An unnamed woman who has endured years of bleeding approaches Jesus. Notice her words, vulnerability and the care with which she is addressed; do not turn healing into a test of someone's faith.

DATE _____

- *Which details help me understand her situation?*

- *What does being heard with dignity mean to me?*

- *How can I care for someone without promising an outcome?*

Martha

Luke 10:38-42; John 11:17-27

Martha appears both as a host and as a person who speaks with Jesus in grief. Reading both scenes resists a one-dimensional portrait of a woman who is merely busy.

DATE _____

- *What do the two encounters reveal about Martha?*

- *How do service, listening and honest questions meet in my life?*

- *What burden or question do I need to name?*

Mary of Bethany

John 12:1-8

John describes Mary anointing Jesus' feet at a meal in Bethany. Read this scene on its own terms; Mary of Bethany should not be casually merged with Mary Magdalene.

DATE _____

- *How do different people respond to Mary's action?*

- *What makes an act of care meaningful?*

- *How can generosity remain thoughtful and attentive?*

Mary Magdalene

John 20:1-18

John presents Mary Magdalene at the tomb and as a witness to the risen Jesus. Follow the movement of the narrative from loss and confusion toward recognition.

DATE _____

- *What changes as the encounter unfolds?*

- *Where do I need room for both sorrow and hope?*

- *What can I communicate truthfully from my own experience?*

Lydia

Acts 16:11-15, 40

Lydia listens to Paul, is baptized with her household and offers hospitality. Notice her work, initiative and the role of her home in the emerging community.

DATE _____

- *What actions does Lydia take in the passage?*

- *Which resources could I use to welcome or support others?*

- *What would generous hospitality with healthy limits look like?*

Priscilla

Acts 18:1-3, 18-28

Priscilla and Aquila work alongside Paul and explain the way of God more accurately to Apollos. The account offers a picture of shared work, learning and instruction.

DATE _____

- *How do Priscilla and Aquila approach Apollos?*

- *When have I benefited from patient correction?*

- *How can I share knowledge with humility and respect?*

Phoebe

Romans 16:1-2

Paul commends Phoebe and asks the Roman believers to welcome and assist her. Translations differ in how they render her role; compare them without claiming the wording settles every later debate.

DATE _____

- *What does Paul ask the community to do?*

- *Whose contribution deserves recognition and support?*

- *How can I offer concrete help to someone serving others?*

Threads across the stories

Look for connections without making every woman's experience the same. Return to the passages when comparing themes.

DATE _____

- *Different expressions of courage, care and faith*

- *Contexts and differences I need to respect*

- *A question these studies have helped me ask*

A prayer of gratitude and hope

God of mercy, thank you for the lives preserved in Scripture. Help me read with care, resist easy judgments and practice compassion in my own time. Amen.

DATE _____

- *Women whose care has shaped my life*

- *People and situations I hold in prayer*

- *My own words of thanks, lament or hope*

Continuing the conversation

Choose one passage to study more deeply. If meeting with others, allow each person to decide how much personal experience to share.

DATE _____

- *A passage and question to explore next*

- *A practical response I want to try*

- *People, books or study resources that may help*