



STUDY
GUIDE

VIRTUOUS WOMAN™

SERVING & TEAMWORK

THE FELLOWSHIP OF CHRISTIAN ATHLETES

FCA VIRTUOUS WOMAN: SERVING & TEAMWORK

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FCA Virtuous Woman

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We offer special thanks to the Memphis FCA boards and Female Ministry Team for their encouragement and prayer.

We would like to dedicate this work to the women who have invested spiritually in us throughout our lives, the Memphis area coaches and the precious girls in Memphis whom we serve.

The purpose of this study is to present key character traits using examples of women in the Bible.

The goal of the FCA Virtuous Woman Curriculum is to present to women in the arena of athletics the privilege and challenge of learning and living out Biblical Womanhood in all areas of life. This goal is accomplished by introducing character traits found in female biblical characters that they can model in their own personal life. This is a question-driven small group Bible study which promotes discussion and guides participants to discover truth for themselves as they process questions and answers from the group. The question set created for each session seeks to reveal God as He truly is, discover how He has revealed Himself in Scripture, correct inaccurate ideas about God, and address worldview issues with which women struggle today.

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SERVING & TEAMWORK

INTRODUCTION

Purpose: To encourage women to serve others and work together to accomplish a common goal.

Character Goal: Serving & Teamwork – is modeling Jesus' example of humbly serving others while expressing our unity in Christ.

Biblical Character: Jesus

Scripture Readings: John 13:1–17

Discussion Questions:

- How did Jesus feel about His disciples who were in the world?
- What did Jesus do for His disciples?
- How did Peter respond to Jesus's actions toward him? Why?
- It requires humility to serve as well as be served. Discuss why you agree or disagree with this statement.
- How have you served and/or been served by your teammates?
- The passage tells us that Jesus knew who was going to betray Him. Although He knew this, do you think Jesus still washed His feet? What does this tell us about Jesus?
- On any sports team there is a probability for strife and dissention among the team members. What are some specific ways you can serve and pursue unity on your team in the midst of these challenges and toward those who may be undeserving?
- Describe a time where you served or were kind to someone you knew had betrayed or hurt you. How did your actions affect you? Them?
- What did the disciples call Jesus? What do the titles "teacher and Lord" signify?
- Knowing that Jesus had authority over and ruled in their lives, what did His actions toward the disciples teach them about what it means to be a leader?
- What are some qualities of a servant leader? What type of impact do these qualities have on the people around them?
- As a female athlete, you are a leader on your campus. How can you use your influence and position to serve others around you?
- The disciples were a group of people who traveled together and pursued a common goal, but they also had unique qualities and abilities. Go around and name one unique ability or quality of the person to your right. Discuss how you can use those things to serve one another and unify your team.
- How has Jesus served us with His life today? How can this influence us in serving others?
- Who is the person that will be blessed according to Jesus?
- What does this story teach you about God? How can you apply these truths to your life?
- **What is one thing I learned from this story that I can apply to my life before the next lesson?**

Training for Godliness

Although we refer to groups of athletes as "teams," not every group of athletes is a team. A team's performance is measured primarily by what is done collectively as a team. In order for the team to do well, the individuals must be doing all they can for the good of the team. If one individual on the team has a personal agenda that does not align with the overall goals, the team productivity begins to break down because the individual puts their desires above the team. What are some ways you can serve your teammates in order to accomplish a common goal? Maybe that goal is a championship, beating a particular rival, or even being more unified as a team. These are not things that will just happen on their own. They take work! In what ways can you work at serving your teammates in order to help your team reach its goals?

Core Truths:

- ▶ Good leaders lead by serving rather than lording over others to gain power.
- ▶ God gives us unique qualities and abilities for the purpose of serving others.
- ▶ God blesses those who follow Jesus's example.

Scripture Reading: John 13:1–17

Jesus Washes His Disciples' Feet: John 13:1–17

¹ It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

² The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. ³ Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; ⁴ so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. ⁵ After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

⁶ He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

⁷ Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand."

⁸ "No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet."

Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me."

⁹ "Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!"

¹⁰ Jesus answered, "Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." ¹¹ For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.

¹² When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. ¹³ "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. ¹⁴ Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. ¹⁵ I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. ¹⁶ Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. ¹⁷ Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.



STRENGTH

SESSION 1

Purpose: To encourage women to be strong both physically and spiritually.

Character Goal: Strength is a measure of both spiritual and physical progress that comes through faith and hard work.

Biblical Character: Deborah and Jael

Scripture Readings: Judges 4:1-23

Discussion Questions:

- What happened to the Israelites after their previous leader Ehud dies? Why?
- After the Israelites had been oppressed for twenty years, what did they finally do?
- Who was Deborah? What was her role in Israel at that time? What does this teach us about women and God's relationship with them?
- What does Deborah's role also tell us about her character?
- According to 1 John 2:14, what is it that makes Deborah spiritually strong? How will we become spiritually strong?
- Deborah was known to be a strong woman of God. As an athlete, how can you be the strong and feminine woman God uniquely created you to be?
- Who did God choose to lead the Israelites out of their oppression? What was his response after Deborah explained what God wanted him to do? What does this tell us about him?
- What do you think is Deborah's view of God? How is her view of God different from Barak's?
- How do each of their views about God affect how they live and respond to challenges? What does this teach us about our view of God?
- When you face certain challenges in life or in your sport, where do you look for strength? How can a high view of God strengthen you in difficult times?
- Because of Barak's lack of trust in God, to whom does God choose to give the victory of Sisera's defeat according to verse 9? What does this teach us about God? Women?
- To whose home did Sisera flee?
- What all do we know about Jael? Does Scripture tell us anything extraordinary about her? What does this tell us about the type of people God uses?
- After Sisera falls asleep, what happens to him? What trait do you think Jael possessed in order for her to kill him with one blow?
- Jael was faithful in the little things as she set up her and her husband's tent when they moved around. Describe how her diligence in one area helped her when a larger challenge arose. What can we learn from her example?
- As a woman and an athlete, what little things are you working on now to prepare you for what may come in the future? What are the small things you can do to be faithful and help your team?
- What does this story teach you about God? Women? How can you apply these truths to your life?
- **What is one thing I learned from this story that I can apply to my life before the next lesson?**

Training for Godliness

Often times when women are encouraged to be "strong" it is taken to the extreme in both physical strength ("act like men") and character ("overbearing" or "bossy"). Strength can be displayed in many ways, such as being mentally or emotionally strong or exercising self-control when we want to do otherwise. What is the world's view of a strong woman? What is God's view of a strong woman? How can you as a female, distinctly created by God, display God's idea of what it means to be a woman of strength both during and outside competition? What are some things you should not do in order to live in light of how God uniquely designed you as a woman?

Core Truths:

- ▶ Trusting in God and His Word makes us spiritually strong.
- ▶ God raises up women to be leaders and to accomplish His divine purposes.
- ▶ Spiritual and physical strength require discipline, hard work, and intentionality.

Memory Verse: "She sets about her work vigorously; her arms are strong for her tasks." Proverbs 31:17

Scripture Reading: Judges 4:1–23

Deborah and Jael: Judges 4:1–23

¹ Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD, now that Ehud was dead. ² So the LORD sold them into the hands of Jabin king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. Sisera, the commander of his army, was based in Harosheth Haggoyim. ³ Because he had nine hundred chariots fitted with iron and had cruelly oppressed the Israelites for twenty years, they cried to the LORD for help.

⁴ Now Deborah, a prophet, the wife of Lappidoth, was leading Israel at that time. ⁵ She held court under the Palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the Israelites went up to her to have their disputes decided. ⁶ She sent for Barak son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali and said to him, “The LORD, the God of Israel, commands you: ‘Go, take with you ten thousand men of Naphtali and Zebulun and lead them up to Mount Tabor. ⁷ I will lead Sisera, the commander of Jabin’s army, with his chariots and his troops to the Kishon River and give him into your hands.’”

⁸ Barak said to her, “If you go with me, I will go; but if you don’t go with me, I won’t go.” ⁹ “Certainly I will go with you,” said Deborah. “But because of the course you are taking, the honor will not be yours, for the LORD will deliver Sisera into the hands of a woman.” So Deborah went with Barak to Kedesh. ¹⁰ There Barak summoned Zebulun and Naphtali, and ten thousand men went up under his command. Deborah also went up with him.

¹¹ Now Heber the Kenite had left the other Kenites, the descendants of Hobab, Moses’ brother-in-law, and pitched his tent by the great tree in Zaanannim near Kedesh.

¹² When they told Sisera that Barak son of Abinoam had gone up to Mount Tabor, ¹³ Sisera summoned from Harosheth Haggoyim to the Kishon River all his men and his nine hundred chariots fitted with iron.

¹⁴ Then Deborah said to Barak, “Go! This is the day the Lord has given Sisera into your hands. Has not the Lord gone ahead of you?” So Barak went down Mount Tabor, with ten thousand men following him. ¹⁵ At Barak’s advance, the Lord routed Sisera and all his chariots and army by the sword, and Sisera got down from his chariot and fled on foot.

¹⁶ Barak pursued the chariots and army as far as Harosheth Haggoyim, and all Sisera’s troops fell by the sword; not a man was left. ¹⁷ Sisera, meanwhile, fled on foot to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, because there was an alliance between Jabin king of Hazor and the family of Heber the Kenite.

¹⁸ Jael went out to meet Sisera and said to him, “Come, my lord, come right in. Don’t be afraid.” So he entered her tent, and she covered him with a blanket.

¹⁹ “I’m thirsty,” he said. “Please give me some water.” She opened a skin of milk, gave him a drink, and covered him up.

²⁰ “Stand in the doorway of the tent,” he told her. “If someone comes by and asks you, ‘Is anyone in there?’ say ‘No.’”

²¹ But Jael, Heber’s wife, picked up a tent peg and a hammer and went quietly to him while he lay fast asleep, exhausted. She drove the peg through his temple into the ground, and he died.

²² Just then Barak came by in pursuit of Sisera, and Jael went out to meet him. “Come,” she said, “I will show you the man you’re looking for.” So he went in with her, and there lay Sisera with the tent peg through his temple—dead.

²³ On that day God subdued Jabin king of Canaan before the Israelites. ²⁴ And the hand of the Israelites pressed harder and harder against Jabin king of Canaan until they destroyed him.



KNOWLEDGE

SESSION 2

Purpose: To encourage women to increase their knowledge of God through Scripture.

Character Goal: Knowledge is glorifying God through the understanding of facts, truths and principles through study and education.

Biblical Character: Huldah

Scripture Readings: 2 Chronicles 34:14–33 5

Discussion Questions:

- What was found as they were cleaning and repairing the temple of the Lord?
- Being that they were without God's Word at this time, what can we assume about how the people were living?
- How did the king respond to hearing God's Word? What did he decide to do next?
- Who did the king's men (including the priest) go to in order to hear from the Lord? What does this tell us about this person's reputation among the people?
- How has having knowledge or information about your sport or the other team helped you as an athlete?
- What is your reputation among your peers about the things you have knowledge of? What do you want to have more knowledge of (your sport, school studies, spiritual things, etc.)? What is one thing you can do today to grow your knowledge in that area of your life?
- What all do we know about Huldah? Where did she live?
- The "New Quarter" was known to be a place where the Scriptures were taught and heard. What can we assume about Huldah considering where she lived and what surrounded her? What kind of impact do you think her surroundings had on her life?
- How does Huldah begin her answer to Josiah's men? What kind of knowledge does this tell us she possessed?
- How can we become women who possess the knowledge of God? Being an influential athlete on your campus, how could knowledge of God's Word influence you and the people around you?
- What answer does God give Huldah for Josiah? Why was he angry with His people?
- What answer did God have specifically for Josiah? Why was his answer different for Josiah? What does this tell us about God?
- What does the king do after he receives God's answer through Huldah?
- How did the king pledge to follow God? What did the people also decide to do? How did the knowledge of God through the Scriptures influence their decision?
- What was Huldah's role in the people turning their hearts back to God? What does this teach us about the influence of godly women on the culture around them?
- What does this story teach you about God? Women? How can you apply these truths to your life?
- **What is one thing I learned from this story that I can apply to my life before the next lesson?**

Training for Godliness

We can have knowledge of all sorts—book knowledge, street smarts, sports trivia, history, statistical knowledge of our favorite athlete or hero. While many of these things may be fun to learn, how are they shaping us as people, athletes, and women? Knowing God's Word brings joy and newness to us just as it did in the days of Josiah. Do you know God's Word? Do you read God's Word to know God more? What is the importance of knowing God's Word? What are some ways you can begin today and make God's Word a priority in your life?

Core Truths:

- ▶ God's Word brings revival to His people.
- ▶ In order to understand godly facts, truths, and principles, we must be intentional about reading His Word and surrounding ourselves with those who have knowledge of His truth.
- ▶ Women who have knowledge of God's Word play a vital role in the lives of God's people.

Memory Verse: "She perceives that her trading is profitable, and her lamp does not go out at night." Proverbs 31:18

Scripture Reading: 2 Chronicles 34:14–33**The Book of the Law Found: 2 Chronicles 34:14–33**

¹⁴ While they were bringing out the money that had been taken into the temple of the LORD, Hilkiah the priest found the Book of the Law of the LORD that had been given through Moses. ¹⁵ Hilkiah said to Shaphan the secretary, "I have found the Book of the Law in the temple of the LORD." He gave it to Shaphan. ¹⁶ Then Shaphan took the book to the king and reported to him: "Your officials are doing everything that has been committed to them. ¹⁸ Then Shaphan the secretary informed the king, "Hilkiah the priest has given me a book." And Shaphan read from it in the presence of the king. ¹⁹ When the king heard the words of the Law, he tore his robes. ²⁰ He gave these orders to Hilkiah, Ahikam son of Shaphan, Abdon son of Micah, Shaphan the secretary and Asaiah the king's attendant: ²¹ "Go and inquire of the LORD for me and for the remnant in Israel and Judah about what is written in this book that has been found. Great is the LORD's anger that is poured out on us because those who have gone before us have not kept the word of the LORD; they have not acted in accordance with all that is written in this book." ²² Hilkiah and those the king had sent with him went to speak to the prophetess Huldah, who was the wife of Shallum son of Tokhath, the son of Hasrah, keeper of the wardrobe. She lived in Jerusalem, in the New Quarter.

²³ She said to them, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: Tell the man who sent you to me, ²⁴ 'This is what the LORD says: I am going to bring disaster on this place and its people—all the curses written in the book that has been read in the presence of the king of Judah. ²⁵ Because they have forsaken me and burned incense to other gods and aroused my anger by all that their hands have made, my anger will be poured out on this place and will not be quenched.' ²⁶ Tell the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the LORD, 'This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says concerning the words you heard: ²⁷ Because your heart was responsive and you humbled yourself before God when you heard what he spoke against this place and its people, and because you humbled yourself before me and tore your robes and wept in my presence, I have heard you, declares the LORD. ²⁸ Now I will gather you to your ancestors, and you will be buried in peace. Your eyes will not see all the disaster I am going to bring on this place and on those who live here.'"

So they took her answer back to the king.

²⁹ Then the king called together all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem. ³⁰ He went up to the temple of the LORD with the people of Judah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the priests and the Levites—all the people from the least to the greatest. He read in their hearing all the words of the Book of the Covenant, which had been found in the temple of the LORD. ³¹ The king stood by his pillar and renewed the covenant in the presence of the LORD—to follow the LORD and keep his commands, statutes and decrees with all his heart and all his soul, and to obey the words of the covenant written in this book. ³² Then he had everyone in Jerusalem and Benjamin pledge themselves to it; the people of Jerusalem did this in accordance with the covenant of God, the God of their ancestors. ³³ Josiah removed all the detestable idols from all the territory belonging to the Israelites, and he had all who were present in Israel serve the LORD their God. As long as he lived, they did not fail to follow the LORD, the God of their ancestors.



PERSEVERANCE

SESSION 3

Purpose: To encourage women to persevere by trusting in the character of God.

Character Goal: To encourage women to persevere by trusting in the character of God.

Biblical Character: The Canaanite Woman and Persistent Widow

Scripture Readings: Matthew 15:21–28; Luke 18:1–8

Discussion Questions:

- Who came crying out to Jesus after He entered the city? Why?
- What do you think she heard and believed about Jesus that caused her to come crying to Him?
- How does Jesus initially respond to her request? What do the disciples urge Jesus to do to her?
- For whom does Jesus tell her that He was sent?
- Was she deterred by this answer? What did she continue to do and why?
- As a female athlete, what circumstances have you encountered that have caused you to persevere? What was the result of your perseverance?
- How does the Canaanite woman's faith in Jesus determine how she acted toward Jesus?
- After asking Jesus the second time to help her, how does He respond? Knowing the loving character of Jesus, why do you think He continued to deter her request for help?
- Did Jesus's response discourage the woman from seeking what she wanted from Him?
- What does Jesus finally do? What does He commend her for?
- What does the Canaanite woman teach us about faith and perseverance?
- As a woman and female athlete, how can you persevere in your faith and sport?
- Read Luke 18:1–8. For what reason do the Scriptures say Jesus taught them the parable? What character trait did Jesus want them to possess?
- What do we know about the judge? The widow?
- What did the widow do in order that she could get justice from her adversary?
- How did the judge respond to her pleas? How did she respond to his refusal?
- Because of her perseverance and persistence, what did the judge finally do?
- Is there something you have been crying out to God about for a long time? What does this parable teach that you should do?
- What does this story teach you about God? Women? How can you apply these truths to your life?
- **What is one thing I learned from this story that I can apply to my life before the next lesson?**

Training for Godliness

When things are harder than we expect or more difficult than we anticipate, it is hard to not want to give up. In the arena of sports, athletes train all year long in order to accomplish a goal during their season. The off-season training is difficult and offers little reward. The real reward comes during the regular season when the athletes are stronger, faster, and fiercer competitors. This is true in life as well. What are some healthy physical habits you practice on a regular basis that help you be at your best? What are some healthy spiritual habits you currently have or you want to have in order to know and walk with God? How can you obtain your goals?

Core Truths:

- ▶ Jesus is approachable and desires for us to persevere in our faith toward Him.
- ▶ What we believe about Jesus will determine whether we persevere through difficult circumstances.
- ▶ Without Jesus there is no healing, reconciliation, or hope.

Memory Verse: *"She perceives that her trading is profitable, and her lamp does not go out at night."*
Proverbs 31:18

Scripture Readings: Matthew 15:21–28; Luke 18:1–8**The Faith of a Canaanite Woman:** Matthew 15:21–28

²¹ Leaving that place, Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. ²² A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is demon-possessed and suffering terribly.”

²³ Jesus did not answer a word. So his disciples came to him and urged him, “Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us.”

²⁴ He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.”

²⁵ The woman came and knelt before him. “Lord, help me!” she said.

²⁶ He replied, “It is not right to take the children’s bread and toss it to the dogs.”

²⁷ “Yes it is, Lord,” she said. “Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master’s table.”

²⁸ Then Jesus said to her, “Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted.” And her daughter was healed at that moment.

The Parable of the Persistent Widow: Luke 18:1–8

¹ Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. ² He said: “In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared what people thought. ³ And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, ‘Grant me justice against my adversary.’

⁴ “For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, ‘Even though I don’t fear God or care what people think, ⁵ yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won’t eventually come and attack me!’”

⁶ And the Lord said, “Listen to what the unjust judge says. ⁷ And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? ⁸ I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?”



HUMILITY

SESSION 4

Purpose: To encourage women to humble themselves before the Lord to receive His mercy.

Character Goal: **Humility** is recognizing our own sinfulness before God, obeying God and submitting to His will knowing He desires good for us.

Biblical Character: The Sinful Woman

Scripture Readings: Luke 7:36-50; Luke 18:9-14

Discussion Questions:

- Whose house did Jesus go to for dinner?
- Who learned about Jesus being at the Pharisee's house?
- Upon entering the house, who does the "sinful woman" approach? What does this tell us about Jesus?
- What does she do while in Jesus' presence? What do you think moved her to act toward Him in this way?
- What character trait does she possess that allows her to worship Jesus in spite of her past sins and who was around?
- What things can try to keep us from worshiping Jesus? Why?
- How did the Pharisee view the woman and her actions toward Jesus? What does this tell us about him?
- How does Jesus respond to her actions toward Him? What does this tell us about Jesus and the kind of people He receives?
- How do you think the Pharisee viewed himself? How do you think the woman viewed herself? How does Jesus compare how the two relate to Him? (See vv. 44–47) What does this teach us about pride versus humility?
- Because of her humble attitude, what three things does Jesus say to the woman?
- To whom does Jesus tell the parable in Luke 18?
- Who went up to the temple to pray?
- Describe the two and how they prayed to God.
- How do you think the Pharisee and the tax collector each viewed himself before God?
- Which of the two men went home "justified," or made right before God? Why?
- What does Jesus teach us about humility and about those who exalt themselves in this parable?
- As an athlete, can you be humble and confident? Why or why not?
- How are athletes viewed who exalt themselves versus athletes who display humility?
- As a female athlete, how can you display humility toward your team and during competition?
- What does this story teach you about God? Women? How can you apply these truths to your life?
- **What is one thing I learned from this story that I can apply to my life before the next lesson?**

Training for Godliness

What is the first word you think of when you think of a famous athlete? Fierce? Strong? Tough? It is probably not humble (although there are a few out there!). In the story from today's lesson, we see Jesus forgive the humble woman who sees her need for Him but oppose the pride of the Pharisee. Remember, Luke 18:14 says, "For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted." What are some character traits you can work on that will ensure a spirit of humility when you compete? Here are a few ideas to get you started: Be open to correction. Encourage teammates for the things they do well. Don't be a sore loser or gloat as a winner. Recognize your limitations. Respect coaches and officials. Give glory to God for all your athletic accomplishments but most especially for His gift of salvation.

Core Truths:

- ▶ God doesn't need what we can do for Him. We need what He can do for us.
- ▶ Pride separates us from God. Humility brings us near to God.
- ▶ Our own righteousness cannot save us. Only by humbly seeking God can we experience forgiveness, faith, and peace.

Memory Verse: *"In her hand she holds the distaff and grasps the spindle with her fingers."* Proverbs 31:19

Scripture Readings: Luke 7:36-50; Luke 18:9-14**Jesus Anointed by a Sinful Woman: Luke 7:36-50**

³⁶When one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. ³⁷A woman in that town who lived a sinful life learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, so she came there with an alabaster jar of perfume. ³⁸As she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them. ³⁹When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner." ⁴⁰Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to tell you." "Tell me, teacher," he said. ⁴¹"Two people owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. ⁴²Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he forgave the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?" ⁴³Simon replied, "I suppose the one who had the bigger debt forgiven." "You have judged correctly," Jesus said.

⁴⁴Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. ⁴⁵You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. ⁴⁶You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. ⁴⁷Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little."

⁴⁸Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

⁴⁹The other guests began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?"

⁵⁰Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector: Luke 18:9-14

⁹To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: ¹⁰"Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. ¹²I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.'

¹³"But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.'

¹⁴"I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."



COMPASSION

SESSION 5

Purpose: To encourage women to live their life with an awareness of the hardships of others and a willingness to help them so that they might know Christ.

Character Goal: To encourage women to live their life with an awareness of the hardships of others and a willingness to help them so that they might know Christ.

Biblical Character: Tabitha

Scripture Readings: Acts 9:36–438

Discussion Questions:

- The passage refers to Tabitha as a “disciple.” Considering what you know about Jesus’ other disciples, what can we assume about this woman?
- What does the passage say about how Tabitha lived her life?
- What happened to her? Who did the disciples send for?
- Describe the widows’ response to Tabitha’s death. Why do you think they responded in this way?
- During that time, widows were dependent on God and the compassion of others to meet their needs. In what way did Tabitha meet the needs of the widows?
- Who are the needy people around you? In what ways can you show compassion and use your resources to meet their physical or emotional needs?
- How did Tabitha’s life reflect the heart of Jesus toward others?
- As a female athlete, what kind of impression do you want your life to have on the lives of others? What can you do in order to leave this kind of legacy?
- Proverbs 31:20 says, “She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy.” Reflect on a time when someone reached out to you in a time of physical or emotional need. What did they do? How did this make you feel?
- How did God use Peter in the life of Tabitha, the widows, and the other believers? What does this tell us about God?
- How did the people of Joppa respond to Tabitha’s miracle?
- According to 1 Timothy 2:9–10, what does Paul say should be the women’s main and most prominent adornment? Why?
- Which of your teammates best displays compassion? What traits stand out about her? How does she make others feel?
- As a female athlete, how can you show compassion to your teammates and while you compete?
- What does this story teach you about God? Women? How can you apply these truths to your life?
- **What is one thing I learned from this story that I can apply to my life before the next lesson?**

Training for Godliness

Compassion is not often something people think about when they think of an athlete. How do you think compassion and athletics might fit together? Many times we are quick to judge others for how we see them act, dress, or speak. Rather than judging, what if we got to know the person better (“walk a mile in their shoes”) to better understand why they do what they do? Has anyone ever judged you for the way you look, dress, or play your sport? How did this make you feel? How can you avoid judging others and instead be compassionate toward them and try to better understand their struggles? If you did this with a teammate, could it change some unhealthy dynamics that might exist on your team?

Core Truths:

- ▶ God desires us to be compassionate toward others because He has been compassionate toward us.
- ▶ God has equipped each of us uniquely to display compassion to those in need, whether their needs be physical, emotional, or spiritual in nature.
- ▶ Compassionate people leave lasting impressions on others.

Memory Verse: *“She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy.” Proverbs 31:20*

Scripture Reading: Acts 9:36–43**Peter Heals Dorcas: Acts 9:36–43**

³⁶ In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (in Greek her name is Dorcas); she was always doing good and helping the poor. ³⁷ About that time she became sick and died, and her body was washed and placed in an upstairs room. ³⁸ Lydda was near Joppa; so when the disciples heard that Peter was in Lydda, they sent two men to him and urged him, "Please come at once!"

³⁹ Peter went with them, and when he arrived he was taken upstairs to the room. All the widows stood around him, crying and showing him the robes and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was still with them.

⁴⁰ Peter sent them all out of the room; then he got down on his knees and prayed. Turning toward the dead woman, he said, "Tabitha, get up." She opened her eyes, and seeing Peter she sat up. ⁴¹ He took her by the hand and helped her to her feet. Then he called for the believers, especially the widows, and presented her to them alive. ⁴² This became known all over Joppa, and many people believed in the Lord. ⁴³ Peter stayed in Joppa for some time with a tanner named Simon.

1 Timothy 2:9

I also want the women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, adorning themselves, not with elaborate hairstyles or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, ¹⁰ but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God.



COURAGE

SESSION 6

Purpose: To encourage women to face difficulty in life with confidence in God.

Character Goal: **Courage** is the state of mind or spirit that enables one to face difficulty in spite of fear because we trust in God.

Biblical Character: Shiphrah and Puah

Scripture Readings: Exodus 1:1–22

Discussion Questions:

- Where were the Israelites living? How numerous were they?
- What did the new king of Egypt decide to do to the Israelites? Why?
- What happened as a result of the king's treatment of the Israelites? Did his plan work?
- After realizing that the Israelites were continuing to multiply, what did he command the Hebrew midwives to do?
- Did the midwives carry out the king's order? Why?
- Based on this passage, what do you think it means to fear God?
- What do you think the midwives knew and believed about God?
- How can your past victories help you and your team overcome a difficult situation (e.g., losing streak, injuries, team division)? What are some things you can do to remember those victories?
- Thinking creatively, what do you think the king could do to the midwives as a result of their disobedience? What gave them the courage not to follow through with what he commanded?
- It takes courage to try new things to improve your performance. As an athlete, how do you react when your coach tells you to change the way you are executing a technique or skill?
- How can the fear of God give us courage to do what pleases Him even when we may be afraid of the outcome?
- We are often faced with the choice to either please people or please God. As a daughter of the King of kings, who should we seek to please and obey? How does obeying God in the face of opposition and pressure display courage?
- Who are some courageous people you know? Maybe there are some athletes who have acted courageously by helping others, speaking up for what is right, or coming back after a serious injury. What kind of effects do courageous people have on those around them?
- What did God do for the midwives as a result of their courage and obedience to Him? What does this teach us about God?
- What does this story teach you about God? Women? How can you apply these truths to your life?
- **What is one thing I learned from this story that I can apply to my life before the next lesson?**

Training for Godliness

Shiphrah and Puah experienced pressure from the Egyptian Pharaoh to go against God and what they knew to be right. As a woman and athlete, in what ways have you been pressured to go against what you know to be right? What things can you do or read to help give you courage to make the right decision despite fear? Here are a few ideas to get you thinking: Talk to other godly people for wisdom and encouragement. Pray for boldness to do the right thing. Find accountability and encouragement by being a part of a small group at church. Read Scripture to be encouraged to trust God and walk in His ways.

Core Truths:

- ▶ Courage comes from a knowledge of who God is and trust and faith in Him.
- ▶ Courage is costly.
- ▶ We experience God's blessing when we act in courageous obedience to His Word.

Memory Verse: *"When it snows, she has no fear for her household; for all of them are clothed in scarlet."*
Proverbs 31:212

Scripture Reading: Exodus 1:1–22

The Israelites Oppressed: Exodus 1:1–22

¹ These are the names of the sons of Israel who went to Egypt with Jacob, each with his family: ² Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah; ³ Issachar, Zebulun and Benjamin; ⁴ Dan and Naphtali; Gad and Asher. ⁵ The descendants of Jacob numbered seventy in all; Joseph was already in Egypt.

⁶ Now Joseph and all his brothers and all that generation died, ⁷ but the Israelites were exceedingly fruitful; they multiplied greatly, increased in numbers and became so numerous that the land was filled with them.

⁸ Then a new king, to whom Joseph meant nothing, came to power in Egypt. ⁹ “Look,” he said to his people, “the Israelites have become far too numerous for us. ¹⁰ Come, we must deal shrewdly with them or they will become even more numerous and, if war breaks out, will join our enemies, fight against us and leave the country.”

¹¹ So they put slave masters over them to oppress them with forced labor, and they built Pithom and Rameses as store cities for Pharaoh. ¹² But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread; so the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites ¹³ and worked them ruthlessly. ¹⁴ They made their lives bitter with harsh labor in brick and mortar and with all kinds of work in the fields; in all their harsh labor the Egyptians worked them ruthlessly.

¹⁵ The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, whose names were Shiphrah and Puah, ¹⁶ “When you are helping the Hebrew women during childbirth on the delivery stool, if you see that the baby is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, let her live.” ¹⁷ The midwives, however, feared God and did not do what the king of Egypt had told them to do; they let the boys live. ¹⁸ Then the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and asked them, “Why have you done this? Why have you let the boys live?”

¹⁹ The midwives answered Pharaoh, “Hebrew women are not like Egyptian women; they are vigorous and give birth before the midwives arrive.”

²⁰ So God was kind to the midwives and the people increased and became even more numerous. ²¹ And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families of their own.

²² Then Pharaoh gave this order to all his people: “Every Hebrew boy that is born you must throw into the Nile, but let every girl live.”



CONFIDENCE

SESSION 5

Purpose: To encourage women to fully trust God.

Character Goal: Confidence is full trust that God is who He says, will do what He promises, and that His Word is true.

Bible Characters: Elizabeth and Mary

Scripture Readings: Luke 1:5–25, 35–45

Discussion Questions:

- What does the passage tell us about Zechariah and Elizabeth?
- Who appeared to Zechariah when he entered the temple to burn incense before the Lord?
- What did Gabriel say when he appeared? What does this tell us about God?
- How did Zechariah respond to Gabriel's message? Why do you think he responded in this way?
- When have you experienced doubt while you were competing? How did you handle it?
- What did the angel say would happen to Zechariah as a result of his unbelief?
- What kinds of things tempt us to not believe God or have confidence in God and His Word?
- How can we learn to put our confidence in God and what He says, regardless of our circumstances or discouragement from others?
- To be successful in your sport, you must be confident in your purpose and ability. How can you be confident without being cocky?
- What happened to Elizabeth and when? What does this teach us about God's Word?
- What does Elizabeth say in response to the miracle that has occurred in her life? What does this tell us about her faith and relationship with God?
- What does Gabriel tell Mary after giving her the news that she would be the virgin mother of the Son of God? Why do you think that he shares this with her?
- What does the angel say about the Word of God? How can believing this affect our confidence in God?
- As women and athletes, what other things do we often choose to put our confidence in? What frequently happens as a result?
- How has placing confidence in the wrong things, ideas, or people affected you and your team?
- What do Elizabeth and Mary have in common? How can their stories of confidence in God encourage us in our seemingly impossible or difficult situations?
- What does this story teach you about God? His Word?
- What does this story teach you about God? Women? How can you apply these truths to your life?
- **What is one thing I learned from this story that I can apply to my life before the next lesson?**

Training for Godliness

We often put our confidence in the wrong things: wins, physical strength, talented teammate, coaches. What happens when we become injured? Lose the big game? Have a losing season? The strongest player moves? A beloved coach transfers schools? We feel dejected, desperate, and lost, right? That is usually the point at which we realize we have put our confidence in the wrong things! God can be trusted as the person in whom we put our confidence. He will never disappoint us, never leave us, and never forget us. What are some ways you can know this truth for yourself? Find a Bible verse you can memorize to remind you where your true confidence can be found. One place to start is Psalm 20:7. What does this verse tell you about God? What does this verse tell you about where some place their trust? How does this verse encourage you to trust in God and not in things? Things go away, but God is forever! Find your own verse and apply it to your life.

Core Truths:

- ▶ No word of God will ever fail!
- ▶ Confidence in God is a moment-by-moment choice regardless of your circumstances.
- ▶ Seemingly impossible or difficult circumstances do not limit God's activity in our lives. With God, all things are possible!

Memory Verse: *"When it snows, she has no fear for her household; for all of them are clothed in scarlet."*
Proverbs 31:21

Scripture Reading: Luke 1:5–25, 35–45

The Birth of John the Baptist Foretold: Luke 1:5–25

⁵ In the time of Herod king of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah; his wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron. ⁶ Both of them were righteous in the sight of God, observing all the Lord's commands and decrees blamelessly. ⁷ But they were childless because Elizabeth was not able to conceive, and they were both very old. ⁸ Once when Zechariah's division was on duty and he was serving as priest before God, ⁹ he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense. ¹⁰ And when the time for the burning of incense came, all the assembled worshipers were praying outside.

¹¹ Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. ¹² When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear. ¹³ But the angel said to him: "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to call him John. ¹⁴ He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, ¹⁵ for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. ¹⁸ Zechariah asked the angel, "How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years." ¹⁹ The angel said to him, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. ²⁰ And now you will be silent and not able to speak until the day this happens, because you did not believe my words, which will come true at their appointed time."

²¹ Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah and wondering why he stayed so long in the temple. ²² When he came out, he could not speak to them. They realized he had seen a vision in the temple, for he kept making signs to them but remained unable to speak. ²³ When his time of service was completed, he returned home. ²⁴ After this his wife Elizabeth became pregnant and for five months remained in seclusion. ²⁵ "The Lord has done this for me," she said. "In these days he has shown his favor and taken away my disgrace among the people."

The Birth of Jesus Foretold: Luke 1:35–38

(In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary to give her the message that she would be the mother of Jesus Christ, the long-awaited Messiah. When she asked how this would occur, being that she was a virgin, Gabriel answered her, saying ...)

³⁵ "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. ³⁶ Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. ³⁷ For no word from God will ever fail." ³⁸ Then Mary said, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her

Mary Visits Elizabeth: Luke 1:39–45

³⁹ At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, ⁴⁰ where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴² In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! ⁴³ But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴ As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!"



BEAUTY

SESSION 8

Purpose: To encourage women to grow their inner and outer beauty through a greater understanding of God.

Character Goal: **Beauty** is the inner quality of unfading faith and trust in God that leads to a quiet and gentle spirit.

Biblical Characters: Sarai

Scripture Readings: Genesis 12:1, 4–5, 10–20; 1 Peter 3:3–6

Discussion Questions:

- How is Sarai described?
- What does Abram ask Sarai to do after they enter Egypt? Why?
- How did Pharaoh and his officials respond when they saw Sarai? What happened to her?
- What did the Lord do to Pharaoh and his officials because he had taken Sarai into his palace? What does this tell us about God?
- What did Pharaoh realize as a result of the disease God inflicted on them? What did he do?
- Read 1 Peter 3:3–6. What kind of influence can godly behavior have on people who do not obey the Word?
- Where should our beauty come from?
- How have you seen beauty demonstrated on the court or playing field?
- What kind of beauty does God value?
- The passage does not say that we cannot wear jewelry, fine clothes, gold, or ornate hairstyles, but that those things should not be the things that make us beautiful. How does this differ from where the world tells us our beauty should come from?
- Which women of the past adorned themselves with inner beauty?
- Who does Scripture point to as an example of this type of beauty?
- What characteristics did she possess? Why do you think these things made her beautiful?
- Men may initially recognize physical beauty, but, from this passage, what is it that continues to endear them to their wives over time?
- Although inner beauty is what is most important, God does desire for us to take care of our outward appearance as well. As female athletes, how can we incorporate both inner and outer beauty into our lives? How can it influence those around us?
- What does this story teach you about God? His Word? Women? How can you apply these truths to your life?
- What does story teach us about God? Women? How can I apply these truths to my life before the next lesson?

Training for Godliness

We don't always look very beautiful when we are competing. We pull our hair back, wear no makeup, and get sweaty. While our outside may not look all that great during games and practices, remember the story is talking about an inner beauty. What are some attributes of women you know who have an inner beauty? Write three of those attributes down and ask God to help you seek out ways you can incorporate them into your life. Find evidence of those attributes in Scripture and commit them to memory so you will remember what is most important. When you think of the women you know who possess those attributes, do you appreciate them more for what they look like or who they are? How does this apply to you?

Core Truths:

- ▶ True beauty stems from a godly attitude.
- ▶ The only beauty that continues to increase over time is inner beauty.
- ▶ God desires for us to glorify Him in both our inner and outer beauty.

Memory Verse: *"She makes coverings for her bed; she is clothed in fine linen and purple."* Proverbs 31:2

Scripture Reading: Genesis 12:1, 4-5, 10-20; 1 Peter 3:3-6**The Call of Abram: Genesis 12:1, 4-5, 10-20**

¹ The LORD had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. ... ⁴ So Abram went, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Harran. ⁵ He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Harran, and they set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived there. ...

¹⁰ Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to live there for a while because the famine was severe. ¹¹ As he was about to enter Egypt, he said to his wife Sarai, "I know what a beautiful woman you are.

¹² When the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife.' Then they will kill me but will let you live. ¹³ Say you are my sister, so that I will be treated well for your sake and my life will be spared because of you."

¹⁴ When Abram came to Egypt, the Egyptians saw that Sarai was a very beautiful woman. ¹⁵ And when Pharaoh's officials saw her, they praised her to Pharaoh, and she was taken into his palace. ¹⁶ He treated Abram well for her sake, and Abram acquired sheep and cattle, male and female donkeys, male and female servants, and camels.

¹⁷ But the LORD inflicted serious diseases on Pharaoh and his household because of Abram's wife Sarai. ¹⁸ So Pharaoh summoned Abram. "What have you done to me?" he said. "Why didn't you tell me she was your wife? ¹⁹ Why did you say, 'She is my sister,' so that I took her to be my wife? Now then, here is your wife. Take her and go!" ²⁰ Then Pharaoh gave orders about Abram to his men, and they sent him on his way, with his wife and everything he had.

True Beauty: 1 Peter 3:3-6

¹ Wives, in the same way submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, ² when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. ³ Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes. ⁴ Rather, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. ⁵ For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to adorn themselves. They submitted themselves to their own husbands, ⁶ like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her lord. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear.



INFLUENCE

SESSION 9

Purpose: To encourage young women to use their influence to glorify God.

Character Goal: **Influence** is the ability to have an effect on the character, development, or behavior of another person.

Biblical Character: Miriam

Scripture Readings: Exodus 2:1–10; 14:10, 13–16, 21; 15:19–21

Discussion Questions:

- Who is Miriam?
- Who is Moses? What does his mother do with him?
- As teammates, what are some ways you can look out for one another?
- Who finds Moses?
- What does Miriam suggest to Pharaoh's daughter? How does she respond?
- Who does Miriam get to fill this position? What does this tell us about Miriam?
- What ultimately happens with Moses and his mom? Why?
- What does this story teach us about God and the role we can play in the lives of others and/or our teammates?
- Who does God use to lead the Israelite people out of Egypt?
- How does He deliver them from the Egyptian army?
- What is Miriam's role in Israel?
- What does her relationship to Moses give her?
- How does she use this influence? What does she lead the women to do?
- Who has been a good influence on you as a woman and an athlete? What traits do you admire about this person? How can you incorporate some of those admirable traits into your own life?
- What is Miriam's view of God? What all has she seen God do firsthand?
- Would you consider Miriam someone worthy of following? Why? What character traits are evident in her life?
- What does Miriam's life tell us about how God views women?
- What does this story teach you about God? His Word? How can you apply these truths to your life?
- **What is one thing I learned from this story that I can apply to my life before the next lesson?**

Training for Godliness

As a student athlete, you are often looked up to as a role model by younger students, peers, and even total strangers. Regardless of whether you see yourself as a role model, someone is always watching. You can influence those you are around—both negatively and positively. As a female athlete, how can you use your position and influence to glorify God, advance His Kingdom, and have a positive impact on others?

Core Truths:

- ▶ We can play a role in others' lives by looking out for their well being.
- ▶ God desires for young women to use their influence for His glory and the good of others.

Memory Verse: *"Her husband is respected at the city gate, where he takes his seat among the elders of the land."* Proverbs 31:2

Scripture Reading: Exodus 2:1–10; 14:10, 13–16, 21; 15:19–21**The Birth of Moses: Exodus 2:1–10**

¹ Now a man of the tribe of Levi married a Levite woman, ² and she became pregnant and gave birth to a son. When she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him for three months. ³ But when she could hide him no longer, she got a papyrus basket for him and coated it with tar and pitch. Then she placed the child in it and put it among the reeds along the bank of the Nile. ⁴ His sister stood at a distance to see what would happen to him. ⁵ Then Pharaoh's daughter went down to the Nile to bathe, and her attendants were walking along the riverbank. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her female slave to get it. ⁶ She opened it and saw the baby. He was crying, and she felt sorry for him. "This is one of the Hebrew babies," she said. ⁷ Then his sister asked Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and get one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?" ⁸ "Yes, go," she answered. So the girl went and got the baby's mother. ⁹ Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this baby and nurse him for me, and I will pay you." So the woman took the baby and nursed him. ¹⁰ When the child grew older, she took him to Pharaoh's daughter and he became her son. She named him Moses, saying, "I drew him out of the water."

(Moses grows up, and when he's around the age of 80, God speaks to Moses from a burning bush, calling him to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. God performs ¹⁰ miraculous signs on the Egyptian people and finally they are released. After they leave, Pharaoh gets angry again and decides to pursue the Israelites and bring them back to Egypt to enslave them.)

¹⁰ As Pharaoh approached, the Israelites looked up, and there were the Egyptians, marching after them. They were terrified and cried out to the LORD. ... ¹³ Moses answered the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the LORD will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. ¹⁴ The LORD will fight for you; you need only be still." ¹⁵ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Tell the Israelites to move on." ¹⁶ Raise your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea to divide the water so that the Israelites can go through the sea on dry ground. ... ²¹ Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and all that night the LORD drove the sea back with a strong east wind and turned it into dry land.

¹⁹ When Pharaoh's horses, chariots and horsemen went into the sea, the LORD brought the waters of the sea back over them, but the Israelites walked through the sea on dry ground. ²⁰ Then Miriam the prophet, Aaron's sister, took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women followed her, with timbrels and dancing. ²¹ Miriam sang to them:

"Sing to the LORD,
for he is highly exalted.
Both horse and driver
he has hurled into the sea."



LEADERSHIP

SESSION 10

Purpose: To encourage women to be servant leaders
in their areas of influence

Character Goal: **Leadership** is the ability to humbly guide others by being a godly influence, serving and leading by example.

Biblical Character: Miriam

Scripture Readings: Numbers 12:1–16

Discussion Questions:

- What do we know about Moses and Miriam? What are their roles?
- What do Aaron and Miriam do against Moses? Why?
- Have you ever spoken against someone in leadership (e.g. coach, team captain)? Why? What was the result? How could you have handled it differently? Would a different response have changed the result?
- What character flaws are revealed in Aaron and Miriam? What does this tell us about the dangers of leadership and position?
- Who heard Aaron and Miriam speaking against Moses? What does this tell us about God?
- Sometimes, we think we deserve to be something bigger for our team, play more, or even think we know more than the coach. What if everyone on your team thought that about themselves? What would be the result? How can you keep this from happening?
- Who does God defend? Why? What does this tell us about God and how He responds when those in leadership positions begin to act out of pride?
- Have you ever spoken against your coaches or someone in a leadership position above you? How does God feel about this? How should we act toward them?
- God places people in authority over us for our protection. Grumbling or complaining against someone in leadership (coach, teacher, parent, team captain, etc.) is really grumbling against God (v. 8). How does that change the way you think about complaining?
- What happened to Miriam? How does Aaron describe leprosy?
- What does Moses do? What does this tell us about him? Read and discuss Matthew 5:44–45.
- How does God respond to Moses' prayer? When we speak against those in leadership, who are we ultimately speaking against?
- What is Miriam's punishment? How does this affect the people of Israel? Miriam? What does this tell you about sin and pride?
- What do you think led Miriam to act in this way? How can we avoid some of the pitfalls of influence and position?
- In regards to those in leadership, how can we use our influence to glorify God?
- What does this story teach you about God? His Word? How can you apply these truths to your life?
- **What is one thing I learned from this story that I can apply to my life before the next lesson?**

Training for Godliness

In the story, Miriam takes her leadership role outside of the boundaries she has been given by God. Because she is successfully leading others in one area of her life, it seems she feels as if she might be able to take on some other responsibilities as well. Has this ever happened to you as a leader or as someone who is being led? How did you handle it? Are you influencing those you come into contact with for God, or are you influencing them to try and get something out of it for yourself? Give specific examples of godly leaders or character traits of godly leaders that influence others positively. How can you incorporate some of these same character traits into your own life and allow God to begin growing you in those areas until He is ready to increase your influence? Be certain that God will increase your influence in His time and by His methods for His glory!

Core Truths:

- ▶ Pride can creep into the hearts of leaders if they do not seek to remain humble.
- ▶ God hears us and is displeased when we speak against those in leadership positions.

Memory Verse: *"Her husband is respected at the city gate, where he takes his seat among the elders of the land."* Proverbs 31:23

Scripture Reading: Numbers 12:1–16

Miriam and Aaron Oppose Moses: Numbers 12:1–16

¹ Miriam and Aaron began to talk against Moses because of his Cushite wife, for he had married a Cushite.

² “Has the LORD spoken only through Moses?” they asked. “Hasn’t he also spoken through us?” And the LORD heard this.

³ (Now Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth.)

⁴ At once the LORD said to Moses, Aaron and Miriam, “Come out to the tent of meeting, all three of you.” So the three of them went out. ⁵ Then the LORD came down in a pillar of cloud; he stood at the entrance to the tent and summoned Aaron and Miriam. When the two of them stepped forward, ⁶ he said, “Listen to my words:

“When there is a prophet among you,
I, the LORD, reveal myself to them in visions,
I speak to them in dreams.

⁷ But this is not true of my servant Moses;
he is faithful in all my house.

⁸ With him I speak face to face,
clearly and not in riddles;
he sees the form of the LORD.

Why then were you not afraid
to speak against my servant Moses?”

⁹ The anger of the LORD burned against them, and he left them.

¹⁰ When the cloud lifted from above the tent, Miriam’s skin was leprous—it became as white as snow. Aaron turned toward her and saw that she had a defiling skin disease, ¹¹ and he said to Moses, “Please, my lord, I ask you not to hold against us the sin we have so foolishly committed. ¹² Do not let her be like a stillborn infant coming from its mother’s womb with its flesh half eaten away.”

¹³ So Moses cried out to the LORD, “Please, God, heal her!”

¹⁴ The LORD replied to Moses, “If her father had spit in her face, would she not have been in disgrace for seven days? Confine her outside the camp for seven days; after that she can be brought back.” ¹⁵ So Miriam was confined outside the camp for seven days, and the people did not move on till she was brought back.

¹⁶ After that, the people left Hazeroth and encamped in the Desert of Paran.

Love for Enemies: Matthew 5:44–45

⁴⁴ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

Session	Memory Verse	Trait	Character	Personal Application	Team Application
	Introduction	Serving & Teamwork	Jesus		
1	v. 17: She sets about her work vigorously; her arms are strong for her tasks.	Strength	Jael & Deborah		
2	v. 18: She perceives that her trading is profitable,	Knowledge	Huldah		
3	and her lamp does not go out at night.	Perserverance	Canaanite Woman & Persistent Widow		
4	v. 19: In her hand she holds the distaff and grasps the spindle with her fingers.	Humility	A Sinful Wife		
5	v. 20: She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy.	Compassion	Tabitha		
6	v. 20: She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy.	Courage	Hagar		
7	for all of them are clothed in scarlet.	Confidence	Elizabeth & Mary		
8	v. 22: She makes coverings for her bed; she is clothed in fine linen and purple	Beauty	Sarai		
9	v. 23: Her husband is respected at the city gate,	Influence	Miriam, Part I		
10	where he takes his seat among the elders of the land.	Leadership	Miriam, Part II		
	Review				

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