

A time of little things

12 Stories Of Women In The Bible and One Woman Today



NOT THE FORMER THINGS | DIFFERENT BY DESIGN

Shawna Wingert Barnhart

I'm glad you're here.

I have wanted to do this for a long time. Years, maybe even decades.
I have always had a soft spot for the women in the bible that more closely resemble me.

Broken

Abused

Depressed

And also...

Strong

Capable

Brave

The 12 women we will study together this year are all a mess of pain and beauty. Despite what we may think, or have been told, or what we see in the culture around us, God loves them so much, just as they are.

He loves them and He strengthens them, cares for them, and works things together for their good.

He loves me, too. He strengthens me, cares for me, and works things together for my good.

I believe with all my heart that He loves you too. He strengthens you, cares for you, and works things together for your good.

In studying these women, I hope we all see glimmers of ourselves and how the Divine permeates our day to day lives.

I am so glad you're here.

Shawna

JANUARY

Hagar



FEBURARY

Moses' Mom



MARCH

Rahab



APRIL

Abigail



MAY

Ruth



JUNE

Naomi



JULY

Esther



AUGUST

Woman at the Well



SEPTEMBER

Mary Magdalene 1



OCTOBER

Mary and Martha



NOVEMBER

Mary Magdalene 2



DECEMBER

Mary Mother Of Jesus





INTRODUCTION

Before we get started, I want to acknowledge something important. I think it is quite possible that I need this study more than you do.

You see, for years, I studied the bible through the lens of marriage.

When my husband and I began dating, he was the most conservative man I had ever met. While I found myself questioning his fundamentalist and, at times, extreme beliefs, I absolutely loved his conviction, his passion, and his theological knowledge.

To me, it felt like safety and security.

He is truly a man of God. He will never leave me. God hates divorce. He is committed to me and my children, as to the Lord. You get the picture.

We spent hours talking about our beliefs, how we wanted to create a marriage and a family that honored the Lord, even gently debating aspects of the bible.

I fell in love with him in the context of our shared beliefs.

*The task of theology is linking our individual story to
the biggest story we can imagine.*

Joshua Mobley

My husband's strong convictions and church background deeply impressed me because my own experience, especially in church, has been wildly different. I didn't live as a Christian until I was 29 and had what I can only describe as a deeply personal encounter with what (who) I just knew to be God. **I had faith before I had a church, and everything that came along with it.**

Because of this, I was often the outsider, and frankly, the outcast in church settings. I was a single mom with a past. I didn't know the "rules" and even the ones I thought I knew from the Bible (love your neighbor as yourself) were not as important in practice as the ones most talked about in church and women's bible studies (submit to your husband and spank your kids).

At times, it felt like without a husband, I couldn't really be a full participant in the church.

So, once I had one, I fully embraced the idea that marriage was God's absolute best for all of us, no matter what the circumstances.

In 2016, my husband began questioning everything about his faith. I welcomed it. I was not as conservative as he was, and often struggled to "honor" him in our home, especially with my children and their care. His staunch fundamentalist worldview began to soften and I hoped that we might grow closer together, united in a shared understanding and grace.

That's not at all what happened.

Over our last years together, his commitment to church and faith, or lack thereof, paralleled his commitment to me, my children and our marriage, or lack thereof.

This is one of the heaviest realities I've had to untangle.

*The willingness
to change comes
when the pain
of staying where
you are is too
great.*

Anne Lamott

A TIME OF LITTLE THINGS

As my husband grew more and more detached from God and from me, I had no idea what to do with all the verses I'd stored up about marriage and family. No matter how hard I tried, I couldn't save my marriage.

I was forced to reconsider everything I believed about marriage, divorce, the church and being a family.

It has been a brutal struggle to let go of what I thought, no, was convinced, my marriage would be. It has been a battle to let go of the deeply held image of my of my husband as the hero who wanted to save and protect me and my children.

Another battle was letting go of my erroneous, marriage focused theology - and to really consider what the bible says about me, as a woman, without the "headship" of a man.

To not feel little and less than, alone in my faith.

There is a passage in Zechariah about how seemingly small beginnings can be significant with the continuous, loving support and guidance of The Divine. Zechariah 4:10 encourages the people not to despise the small work they are doing because God will bring it to completion through His power. Not our own.

My bible translation refers to this small work as *A Time Of Little Things*.

It's exactly right.

But I do this one thing: Forget about what the things behind me and reach out for the things ahead of me.

Philippians 13:13

A TIME OF LITTLE THINGS: STUDY OVERVIEW

My plans for this study are quite simple.

Each month will be devoted to one woman, one story in the bible. I will share what I have learned in my deeper dives about the story itself. I will also share how I am connecting my own, small story to the larger story of the bible.

I will invite you to do the same through a post and printable resource available the Sunday prior to the first of each month, personal interaction via email, and possibly monthly online get togethers.

A caveat...

I have been in way too many women's bible studies that have sucked the life out of me, with rules and judgement.

We will not be doing that here.

My goal is to make this as accessible and interesting as possible for any woman, no matter what she believes. My hope is that you would feel seen. I want you to take time to process and consider how you really feel about the bible and God.



I see the ridiculous goodness of God toward women.

SARAH BESSY

Ultimately, this study is about being a woman and somehow connecting with the divine in the sometimes devastating, sometimes brilliant realities of our lives.

I am not a bible scholar or theologian. **I am simply a woman who is learning how to trust herself and the Spirit that dwells within her. Studying the bible helps me do this.**

If you are looking for someone with more expertise and understanding, Beth Moore has so many wonderful bible studies you can do from the comfort of your own home. I highly recommend them!

This study will most certainly be messier. Of course it will be. My life is a mess.

It is a time of little things in my own life. Little, precious, fragile things. What I am beginning to understand and want to explore this year is how the seemingly small is actually quite magnificent.



Thank you for joining me.

I'm looking forward to each month with you!