

Introduction

If You Knew Her Story Bible study was written with the premise that every woman has a story that provides deep insight into the woman she has become. Many women have pages or chapters in their story they wish had never been written. These women are left wondering, “How can my story ever be right again?” *If You Knew Her Story* helps women answer this question by gently guiding them through the process of re-righting their story. The term “re-righting” is not a typo or error in word usage. The truth is, God does not go back in time and rewrite a woman’s story by editing out her pain, mistakes, naive choices, or the sins others have committed against her. He will, however, through much work, healthy support and prayer make her story right again if He is allowed to be the co-author and editor of the chapters that are yet to be written.

Through a unique and welcoming combination of Biblical teaching and storytelling, women are encouraged to identify their faulty thoughts, emotions, actions, and core beliefs. This is accomplished by exploring key stories of women in the Bible, their own story, and the interwoven story of one woman throughout the study.

Women who take part in this six-week study have the opportunity to experience three major takeaways. First, they feel the relief that occurs when they write their story. Second, they experience the power of learning to identify their thoughts, emotions and actions as they related to their story. Third, they feel the strength they receive when they do the work necessary to change their faulty core beliefs and begin the process of allowing God to help them re-right their story.

Jacqueline Shannon
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If You Knew Her Story

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“Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for....And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him.”

Hebrews 11:1 & 6

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith...”

Hebrews 12:2

We are embarking on a journey. We are reaching into the past in order to understand the present and to shape the future. Our goal is to come closer to experiencing the Kingdom and Righteousness of God:

Through His Word

Through Offering Our Story to Him

Through Surrender

Through hope for the rest of our Story

We will be learning how to write the rest of our story with Him, In Him, and For Him as we acknowledge Jesus as the Author and Finisher of our faith. We must begin by being confident not only of the existence of God, but we must also be confident that He is a Rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. That is the essence of faith. As you begin this study realize that God always rewards those who believe Him and desire to know Him and glorify Him in their life.

Please join us and see what God has for you.

Jackie and Bekah

Week 1- Introduction (Jackie & Bekah)

Whether you realize it or not, you have a story. Your story, like that of a novel has a plot, characters, scenery, conflict, and emotion. It has as many twists and turns as the stories in the novels penned by famous authors listed on the New York Times Best Sellers List. Your story is unique to you and provides deep insight into the woman you have become. Your story is important to you, those closest to you, and most importantly to God. This may be hard for some of you to believe, but God, more than any other, is fascinated with your story. He cares about every nuance and detail. He has seen its ups and downs, its days of victory and days of defeat. He is heavily invested in the outcome. Who you are, what happens to you, and how things turn out are all extremely important to the Almighty God. He like no other has been pulling for your success, healthy relationships, and happy endings.

For some of you, there are chapters in your story you wish had never been written. Perhaps you would like to go back and tear these chapters out or re-write them. You may wonder, **“How can my story ever be right again?”** As you work through *If You Knew Her Story* you will be gently guided to write and understand your story by considering your **thoughts, emotions** and **actions** with the goal of changing your **faulty core beliefs** and re-righting the parts of your story that need editing.

You may have done a double take when you read the word “re-righting” in that last sentence and thought that we should have used spell check or done a better job of editing our introduction. We chose that word purposefully. The truth is, God will not go back in time and undo the pain you have suffered, the mistakes you have made, or the sins others have sinned against you. He will not “re-write” your story in *that* way. But if you let him, He will help you re-right your story, and in the process make it right again. How does God re-right your story? To begin with, *you will have to allow him to be the co-author of the pages and chapters of your life that are yet to be written.*

With open arms we welcome you.

Jackie & Bekah

Plot A: Another’s Sin

Week 1 – Day 1 (Beka)

Long ago sin entered this world and every bad thing that has ever happened since came

with it. None is immune. The drama of our lives, the unfolding of our story, is not pre-determined. Many “pens” write on our pages. All of us sin and cause pain for ourselves, and others. And all of us are sinned against, bearing the burdens of another’s mistake. Some of the greatest sorrows of this life can be written with someone else’s pen as pain and brokenness come into our lives as a result of someone’s sin. All around the world people are struggling and trying to survive and recover from the evil somebody committed against them. They have broken lives, broken hearts, broken spirits, and broken dreams.

It is very easy to feel helpless and defeated. It is very easy to believe the lies that our enemies tell us: that we’re no good, that we deserve what happened to us, that we’ll never amount to anything, that there’s no way out, and so on. The enemy wants you to stay in that thought pattern. He wants you to stay broken and worst of all to believe that this is your fate, destiny -- your story.

Nothing, dear friends, could be further from the truth. Today you need to know that your pain, your brokenness, your hopes, your dreams, your desires, your needs, your sorrows, ***everything about you matters to God***. He sees and He cares. Although your story may have been interrupted, it may have been hijacked and penned with heartbreak and sorrow, I am confident that with much hard work, consistent striving, healthy support, and prayer God can help you to ***re-right*** it. Instead of taking my word for it - let’s take His as we learn about the story of Hagar a woman from the Old Testament and how God helped to re-right her story. Some of you may see bits of yourself as you read Hagar’s story.

The Story of Hagar

Read Genesis 16:1-4 then answer the following questions...

Who was Hagar?

Where was she from?

What was her title?

Why did Sara “give” Hagar to Abram?

How do you think Hagar felt about being “given” to Abram?

Hagar is a woman whose life can easily be overlooked in Bible study. The story she's involved in usually revolves around Sarah and Abraham and how God worked things out for them. But my heart breaks for this woman. I cannot imagine the pain she must have felt in her situation. The loss of her freedom is a tragedy. We don't know the exact circumstances of how she came to be Sarah's maidservant - but it is hard to believe that anyone who had another good option would chose to give up their freedom. If it was not her plight at birth, it was likely her only option out of another bad situation. Unfortunately a life of servitude is not the only heartbreak for Hagar.

Most people dream of falling in love and being married. Little boys and girls start thinking at a very young age about the type of person who will be their true loves. Surely Hagar had the same dream as a young girl. While that dream was likely diminished when she became a servant, it was shattered when her mistress Sara decided that she was to sleep with Abram in order to gain a child. Can you imagine how helpless Hagar felt being thrust into a relationship she didn't choose, and used as a means to an end so that another woman could have a baby through her?

Once Hagar found out that she was pregnant, she "looked with contempt upon her mistress and despised her." (Genesis 16:4, AMP). Did she despise Sarah because she'd been forced upon Abraham? Or was her attitude a contempt that comes from feeling suddenly superior now that she learned she was able to conceive when Sarah couldn't? If she felt that she had somehow won her freedom, or been elevated in the eyes of society, she would soon be faced with a devastating, painful reality

It is important for us to acknowledge that cultures were very different in Hagar's time. It is very likely that due to her culture this situation was not as abhorrent as it would be for us today. In fact, becoming Abraham's concubine and the mother of his, then, only son could have elevated Hagar's low estate. For a moment, perhaps she felt her life was improving. But she the truth, that she was still Sara's servant, that her life didn't belong to her, would come crashing down around her.

Read Genesis 16:5-6

Fill in the blanks: