

WHAT THE WOMEN SAW

DISCOVERING JESUS THROUGH
THE EYES OF WOMEN

Leader's Guide





How to Study

WHAT THE WOMEN SAW

We are so glad you picked out this study! This six-week study guide was created for you to use on your own or in a group. Throughout the study, you will find reflection questions for your own personal time of study and you will find group questions as well. Use these to facilitate conversation within your small group and dig deeper into each week's topic.

STUDY COMPONENTS:

1. The PDF (or web page): This is where you will find the daily reading and reflection questions.

This can all be found in two places:

- In the PDF. This is the most effective format for groups. If you need one or more copies, head to shoppe.ifgathering.com.
- IFequip.com. This is our web-based version of the study. Each devotional is added daily. If you access the study through this site, your group members will need to keep journals to write down their answers each day, so they can refer to them during group discussion.

2. Videos: The videos are a tool to help unpack the weekly topic of the study. Watch the video at the start of each week. We encourage you to watch and discuss the videos as a small group before diving into the daily reading.

Note: If you are leading a group, it can be helpful to plan an “intro” group meeting to give an overview of the study format and schedule before diving in. This also gives your group members time to get to know one another.



How to Study

CONTINUED...

TYPICAL WEEKLY SCHEDULE:

1. Get together with your group to watch the video. After week one, review what you learned through the daily readings from the previous week before watching the video.
2. Go over the discussion questions in the Leader's Guide with your group.
3. Do the week's reading and questions on your own (there are five days of content for each week).

HOW TO ACCESS THE WEEKLY VIDEOS:

- **Watch on RightNow Media.**

1. Log in to your RightNow Media account and search "IF:Gathering" to find the *What the Women Saw* video series.
2. If you do not have a RightNow Media account, go to rightnowmedia.org/ifgathering to access the videos for free through an exclusive RightNow Media and IF:Gathering resource library. After creating an account, log in and search "What the Women Saw" to watch the series.

- **Watch on ifequip.com.**

WEEK
ONE

Jesus Equips the Ordinary

Do women matter to the kingdom of God?

Jesus was surrounded by both men and women during his ministry on earth. He saw, valued, and cared for women, and he still does today. Each one of us has a significant role.

Through this six-session study, you will discover who Jesus is through the unique perspective of women in the Bible. As you study the lives of Mary, Martha, Mary Magdalene and others you will learn from their faith and failures, and be reminded that Jesus cared for and valued the women he was surrounded by. He equipped them, listened to them, walked with them, healed them, and empowered them. And he does the same for you now.



Watch “***Jesus Equips the Ordinary***” with Jennie Allen, Bianca Juárez Olthoff, Jada Edwards, and Sadie Robertson Huff (20 minutes).

ACCESS THE SESSION ONE VIDEO AT
RIGHTNOWMEDIA.ORG/IFGATHERING



WEEK ONE

REVIEW



Jennie talked about Mary's surrender to God's call when Gabriel announced the coming of Jesus. In what ways was Mary's response an act of faith? What does surrender look like in your life?

Mary immediately went to visit Elizabeth, her older cousin who was also experiencing a miraculous pregnancy, and they celebrated together. Who is someone in your life you can count on to celebrate with? When have you celebrated God's goodness with that person?

Sadie reflected on Mary's influence with Jesus at the wedding in Cana. What clues did Sadie point out from the text about the warm relationship between Jesus and his mother?

DIG IN



Gabriel greeted Mary by calling her "highly favored" (Luke 1:28). Read the rest of their conversation in Luke 1:28–38. How would you describe Mary's attitude toward the angel's announcement?

Jennie summarized Mary's first words upon greeting Elizabeth in this way: "This prayer, it's full of Scripture. She actually knew God's words. She sat under them, she absorbed them." Read Luke 1:46–53. How well do you know Scripture? Which words would you use, which biblical stories would you tell, to describe the nature of God?

Read John 2:1–11. Sadie referenced Mary's boldness in asking Jesus to help and in her confidence that he would. What does this event tell us about Mary's character and her relationship with her son?



WEEK ONE CONTINUED...



MAKE IT MATTER

We are more likely to say “yes” to God when we know and trust him. Describe your Bible study and prayer habits. What are you doing to develop and strengthen your relationship with God?

Because Mary knew her son’s compassion and believed in his supernatural power, she didn’t ask Jesus to do something out of character. How well do you know the character of God? How can you know if your requests are in line with his will?

Following Mary’s example, we should not hesitate to put our requests in front of God, especially when we seek the good of others. How often do we pray expecting God to answer? When have you been surprised at God’s obvious answer?



REFLECT

Reflect on your perception of Mary up until now. How did you regard her before this study? What new insight about her have you learned? How can her life encourage yours?

Read the Magnificat (Mary’s prayer in Luke 1:46–53) this week. Write down what you learn about God. Then write out your own prayer of thanksgiving and praise.



WEEK
TWO

Jesus Enables the Faithful

REWIND & REFLECT

What stood out to you from last week's study on Mary and her relationship with Jesus?

Did you find yourself living differently this week, or praying differently, because of the example of faithfulness and obedience we saw in Mary?

In session two, we are going to study John 11 to see what we can learn from the friendship between Jesus, Martha, Mary, and Lazarus.



Watch “***Jesus Enables the Faithful***” with
Jennie Allen, Bianca Juárez Olthoff, Jada
Edwards, and Sadie Robertson Huff
(10 minutes).

ACCESS THE SESSION TWO VIDEO AT
RIGHTNOWMEDIA.ORG/IFGATHERING



WEEK TWO



REVIEW

Jada, Bianca, and Jennie talked about Jesus revealing his compassion when told of Lazarus's death, then displaying his power over death when he called Lazarus out of the tomb. How did his decision to delay going to Bethany bring glory to him and hope to all of us?

Bianca told the story of Martha's confrontation with Jesus when he finally arrived. When has God disappointed you? How have you dealt with those feelings?

What stood out to you from Bianca's teaching on Martha's and Mary's declarations of faith?



DIG IN

Read John 11:1–5, 11–44. Looking at verse 15, why did Jesus delay going to Lazarus? What reactions did he get from Mary and Martha?

Review Martha's statements of faith in John 11:21–27. What divine characteristics did she affirm, and what titles did she give Jesus?

WEEK TWO CONTINUED...



MAKE IT MATTER

Life brings disappointment to everyone at some point. Martha was upset with Jesus for not coming in time to heal her brother. What can you learn from her response to Jesus when she saw him?

Consider Mary's reaction when Jesus arrived, then think of a time when you have grieved deeply. How does her response help you worship God because he's good, even if he decides not to change your situation?



REFLECT

Mary and Martha were not afraid to express their pain and disappointment to Jesus. How do you tend to approach God in those situations—are you honest, or do you hold back? Consider how you can pray in full honesty to the God who loves you unconditionally.

Think of some “impossible” situations in which you need God to work. Now reflect on Mary and Martha's extraordinary faith in the wake of their brother's death. Which of them do you resemble more? Write out a statement of faith in your all-powerful yet compassionate God.

WEEK
THREE

Jesus Heals the Wounded

REWIND & REFLECT

What would it have been like to be waiting on Jesus to heal your friend or loved one? Have you ever been in that position?

What parts of this story can you hold onto the next time God does not answer your prayers the way you thought he would?

In session three, we are going to look at multiple stories throughout Scripture where Jesus healed women and discover what we can learn from the way he interacted with them.



Watch “**Jesus Heals the Wounded**” with Jennie Allen, Bianca Juárez Olthoff, Jada Edwards, and Sadie Robertson Huff (8 minutes).

ACCESS THE SESSION THREE VIDEO AT
[RIGHTNOWMEDIA.ORG/IFGATHERING](https://rightnowmedia.org/ifgathering)

WEEK THREE

REVIEW



In the opening scene, Jennie, Jada, Sadie, and Bianca marveled over the breadth of Jesus’s compassion—he healed the young and the old, men and women, insider and outsider. Which characters in Luke 8:40–56 were recipients of Jesus’s care? In what ways were the people alike, and how did their stories differ?

Jada emphasized how this passage teaches women that they are valued. In what ways do you see your church valuing the voice of women? How do you, personally, advocate for other women, whether relationally, professionally, or socially?

Jairus and the woman with the discharge of blood both exhibited hope—a conviction that Jesus could help them followed by action to seek that help. They didn’t give up. When have you shown hope in a difficult time? What or who helped you endure well?

DIG IN



Read Luke 8:40–56. Discuss the ways in which Jesus broke cultural boundaries. What caused the woman with the discharge of blood to ignore lifelong “rules of engagement” when Jesus came to town?

What parallels do you see in this passage? What do you learn about Jesus through his interactions with the woman, with Jairus, and with Jairus’s daughter?



WEEK THREE CONTINUED...



MAKE IT MATTER

Consider Jesus's care for the sick woman and Jairus's daughter. Neither of these people were prominent in that culture, yet he took time out of his schedule to meet their needs. Where in your church, or in your community, do you see needs? What sorts of needs?

Together, list five tangible ways you can express Jesus's love to your hurting, lonely, sick, needy neighbors. What steps could you and your group take to meet those needs this week?

This session encouraged us to stay hopeful no matter how long we've suffered. It reminded us to know our value to God. What does it look like to remember these truths through hard times?



REFLECT

Jada encouraged us not to give up hope: "That moment with Jesus is coming." Do a search in your Bible (or app) on the word hope. Write out several encouraging Scriptures and memorize them.

Sometimes our experience in the church doesn't match up to Jesus's ideal. Women have not always been valued the way he values us. Pray for your church leadership, for their hearts to be soft and ears open to God's view of women rather than the culture's or their tradition's. Be specific as you pray.

WEEK
FOUR

Jesus Sees the Marginalized

REWIND & REFLECT

What stood out to you the most from week three?

When have you felt like something was separating you from God?
Which parts of the last session reminded you that nothing can stop him
from loving you?

In session four, we are going to see the way Jesus broke down cultural
and societal boundaries to care for women.



Watch ***“Jesus Sees the Marginalized”***
with Jennie Allen, Bianca Juárez Olthoff,
Jada Edwards, and Sadie Robertson Huff
(10 minutes).

ACCESS THE SESSION FOUR VIDEO AT
[RIGHTNOWMEDIA.ORG/IFGATHERING](https://rightnowmedia.org/ifgathering)



WEEK FOUR

REVIEW



Jada, Jennie, Bianca, and Sadie discussed the way Jesus “busted through” cultural barriers to meet with the Samaritan woman. Which divides did he bridge by engaging in conversation with her at the well?

How did the Samaritan woman react after talking with Jesus?

Jennie talked about the reconciliation we experience through faith in Christ. His death and resurrection made the way for sinners to be forgiven and reconciled to God. If you have experienced that relational peace with God, when is the last time you shared it with someone? How did it go?

DIG IN



Read John 4:3–39. In this passage, we read the longest recorded conversation Jesus had with anyone. Why is knowing the location, as well as the sex, race, and religion, of the two who talked important for understanding the significance of this discussion? What made this event so unique?

How did Jesus identify himself to the woman? How did she then describe him to her town when she ran back to tell everyone?

Read 2 Corinthians 5:17–21. Jennie paraphrased its message: “We have been reconciled to reconcile.” In what ways have you been an ambassador for Christ, helping others become reconciled to God? What does it look like to pursue peace in your relationships?



WEEK FOUR CONTINUED...



MAKE IT MATTER

Jesus had a serious theological discussion with the woman at the well. In doing so, he honored her personhood and showed her respect. Think of women in your community who are seeking to know God better. How can you engage with them and encourage their yearning for God?

Our global community is more connected now than ever. Think of someone near you who is unlike you, whether ethnically, religiously, or otherwise. In what ways can you make a connection with them this week?



REFLECT

Jennie's daughter befriending a Rwandan girl gives us a concrete example of breaking down cultural barriers in the name of love. Spend time thinking through your circles of influence and how you can reach out to someone different than you.

Jesus revealed himself to the woman, telling her, "I am he" (the Messiah she'd been waiting for) in John 4: 25–26. When did you discover Jesus's true identity? Who could you share that good news with this week?

WEEK
FIVE

Jesus Gives Hope

REWIND & REFLECT

Did anything surprise you about Jesus from last week's lesson? If so, what?

How did the content from week four encourage you to love people differently?

This week, we're going to look at the life of Mary Magdalene to discover that Jesus never gives up on us.



Watch ***“Jesus Gives Hope”*** with Jennie Allen, Bianca Juárez Olthoff, Jada Edwards, and Sadie Robertson Huff (10 minutes).

ACCESS THE SESSION FIVE VIDEO AT
[RIGHTNOWMEDIA.ORG/IFGATHERING](https://rightnowmedia.org/ifgathering)



WEEK FIVE



REVIEW

Sadie reflected on how God gives us second, third, and countless chances to start over. None of us is defined by our worst moments in life. How do you respond to that statement? What feelings does it bring up in you?

Mary Magdalene went from a demon-possessed outcast to a trusted disciple after Jesus healed her. How has your life changed since Jesus came into it?

Bianca explored Mary's faithful friendship with Jesus from the day he saved her, through the months of support, to his crushing crucifixion and glorious resurrection. Who is a person in your life who has proven to be loyal over a long stretch of time?



DIG IN

Luke 8 describes Mary Magdalene as one "from whom seven demons had gone out." In verses 1–3 we see her among a group of women disciples who supported Jesus's ministry financially. Describe the contrast between her before-Jesus and after-Jesus life. How can her story speak into yours?

Read John 19:17–25. In these verses, we read how Mary loyally remained by Jesus during his trial, suffering, and crucifixion. In fact, her presence was noted in each of the four Gospel accounts. Think of a difficult time in your life. In what ways did a friend, or friends, show loyalty and love to you?



WEEK FIVE CONTINUED...



MAKE IT MATTER

This session reminds us that we are not defined by our worst choices or greatest shame. As Mary went from rejected to chosen, so do we—in Christ. In what ways have you experienced freedom? What does it look like to offer others second chances after they fail you?

Bianca focused on Mary's loyalty to Jesus. What sort of friend are you? How well can your friends count on you when things get tough?



REFLECT

Spend time thanking God for rescuing you. Name those hurts, sins, legacies that kept you far from him, and contrast them with the freedom and healing you now have.

Consider how you have responded to God's grace. Like Mary giving back to Jesus, what can you do to show your gratitude this week?

Think of a friend who has always been there for you. Do something to express your love and appreciation for him or her.

WEEK
SIX

Jesus Empowers

REWIND & REFLECT

What did you learn about Mary Magdalene that you didn't know before?

What area of your life has felt a little hopeless lately? What characteristics of Jesus remind you that he's still worth following?

In our final session, we're going to review what all this means for us. What did these women see in Jesus and what does it mean for our lives today?



Watch “**Jesus Empowers**” with Jennie Allen, Bianca Juárez Olthoff, Jada Edwards, and Sadie Robertson Huff (12 minutes).

ACCESS THE SESSION SIX VIDEO AT
RIGHTNOWMEDIA.ORG/IFGATHERING



WEEK SIX



REVIEW

Jennie, Jada, Bianca, and Sadie marveled at Jesus's choice to reveal himself post-resurrection to Mary Magdalene and send her to "go tell the disciples" that he was risen. How do you think he has called you to be a witness to your community?

By choosing a woman to be his first witness, Jesus was showing his people how he valued women. In what ways have you considered women—or yourself—less valuable to God than men are? How does the Resurrection narrative challenge your presuppositions?

Jesus's ministry happened in small towns, on hillsides, with everyday people. Most of us will live in a similarly inconspicuous manner. In what ways are you carrying on his mission day to day, moment by moment?



DIG IN

Read John 20:1, 11–18. What does the fact that Mary was the first person to deliver the gospel teach us about the value of women in the kingdom of God? How can you encourage women in your church or social circle to be bold when talking about their faith?

Read Acts 1:8, 12–14. From the Mount of Olives, Jesus empowered his followers to take his message across the world. How have you obeyed his call to go and make disciples?



WEEK SIX CONTINUED...



MAKE IT MATTER

Over the course of the series, what have you learned about women's participation in Jesus's ministry? What has God taught you about himself? What have you learned about God's love for you?

How do we live in the in-between, waiting for Jesus to come back? How are you trusting God with the outcomes in your life? What does loving people look like in your life?



REFLECT

Go back through this series and identify at least one woman whose story impacted you. What specific elements resonated with you from her story? In what way can she encourage, challenge, or inspire you?

Take some time to reflect on what God has taught you through this study. What's one takeaway you've gathered from this series? What could it look like for you to apply it to your life today?