

A 7 DAY DEVOTIONAL PRAYER WALK

INSPIRED BY THE FAITH
OF MARY OF MAGDALA



FEATURING EXCERPTS BY
MARY DEMUTH

INTRODUCTION

In *The Most Misunderstood Women of the Bible*, I had the privilege of studying some amazing women throughout the Old and New Testament. When I came to Mary of Magdala, I realized I didn't know much about her. Because of so many Marys, her identity blurred. In addition to her, there's Mary the mother of Jesus, of course, but there's also Mary of Bethany, Mary the mother of James and Joses, Mary of Clopas, Mary the mother of John Mark, and Mary of Rome. As one who is also named Mary, I found this fascinating.

As I plainly read the text about Mary of Magdala, I realized how important her role was in the life of Jesus—and even more so, his death and resurrection.

She is the first, besides the angels guarding the empty tomb, to see the resurrected Christ! And not only that, but she also encounters him, vibrantly alive. She is the first evangelist of this Gospel of the Resurrection as she runs to tell the male disciples of her world-rocking interaction.

Before we dive in to what her encounter with Christ means for you, let's read an excerpt from the book about Mary's interaction with Jesus:

...

This Son of God breathed no more.

What could Mary of Magdala do? Sabbath prevented any work, but the moment the sky dimmed that Saturday and sundown was assured, she joined Salome and Mary the mother of James and Joseph. Together they purchased burial spices so they could anoint the body of Jesus.

Sunday morning before daybreak, the motley group of women walked to Joseph of Arimathea's

tomb. On the way, they'd talked about how they would be able to roll away the enormous stone that blocked its entrance. But as they came near, Mary noticed the stone had already been rolled aside. They entered the tomb, one after the other, ducking through the doorway hewn from rock. A young man clothed in a white robe sat on the right side. Who was this? And why did he shine?

"Don't be alarmed. You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified," the man in white said. "He isn't here! He is risen from the dead! Look, this is where they laid his body."

Mary took note of the empty dais, the grave clothes undisturbed except for a folded bit of linen where Jesus's head once laid.

"Now go and tell his disciples, including Peter, that Jesus is going ahead of you to Galilee," the man said. "You will see him there, just as he told you before he died."

But she could not believe such words. They made no sense to her. Alive? This was impossible. She'd heard rumors from the religious elite that at the precise moment Jesus breathed his last, the curtain separating the holy place from the holy of holies in the middle of the Temple had been rent in two, from top to bottom, as if God Himself had torn it in anguish.

She ran, breathless, to find Peter and John, recounting what she had seen. "They have taken the Lord's body out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him," she told them.

Both men ran to the tomb, but John arrived first. Peter entered, then John. They, too, saw the perplexing wrappings and no body. They left. Because what could they do? What did any of this mean?

The events of the week's end settled in on Mary that moment. The weight of what she had watched. The trauma of losing a dear friend. The confusion of what this all meant. Wasn't Messiah supposed to be victorious? Shouldn't they all be delivered from Rome's strangling grip? All she knew was that she felt utterly alone.

She stepped again into the tomb, but now two men in white stood there—tall, broad-shouldered, and confident. “Dear woman, why are you crying?” The men asked this simultaneously, their voices echoing off the walls of the tomb.

“Because they have taken away my Lord,” she replied, “and I don’t know where they have put him.”

The men in white gave no response.

She turned to leave. Someone stood blocking her way. Was he the gardener sent to tend this garden tomb?

“Dear woman, why are you crying?” the gardener asked. “Who are you looking for?”

“Sir, if you have taken him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will go get him.”

“Mary!” the man said. Something about his voice arrested her attention.

Jesus?

How could it be?

“Rabboni!” she cried. She fell at his feet, noticing the healed scars at his ankles, and clung to him, weeping. How could she reconcile what she witnessed with who stood before her now?

“Don’t cling to me,” Jesus said, “for I haven’t yet ascended to the Father. But go find my brothers and tell them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’”

Before she could ask another question—what did he mean by ascending to the Father?—he was gone. Did she dream all this? No. Jesus was as real to her then as he had been when he delivered her of those seven terrible demons. She found her wits and ran to meet the disciples near Galilee. Breathless upon reaching them, she said, “I have seen the Lord!” Then she gave

them his message.

There are seven things we can learn from Mary of Magdala, seven principles that will empower you to walk even more closely with Jesus during this Easter season. I pray each insight will remind you of just how loved you are, and how Jesus deserves your worship and adoration in response.



DAY 1: REMAIN

*“Standing near the cross were Jesus’ mother, and his mother’s sister,
Mary (the wife of Clopas), and Mary Magdalene.”*

John 19:25

Mary of Magdala remained nearby when Jesus was crucified. She did not run away as many of the other disciples did, nor did she deny Jesus as Peter later regretted. She stayed. She experienced the trauma of her friend-and-savior's demise. No doubt she wept at the debacle. I can imagine her holding his gaze, willing him to breathe, and struggling when he pulled in breath.

Hers was a powerful demonstration of friendship at the direst moment in Jesus's life.

Truth is, we all need a Mary like this. Her dedication, come what may, exemplifies love. We can learn from her love-tenacity as we love people in our lives. Perhaps the most powerful thing we can give is not words (she said nothing below the cross) but presence. Presence is powerful. Presence changes a moment of despair into camaraderie. Presence is love in action. It sticks to others.

We see this kind of stick-to-it love in the lives of Elijah and Elisha: "And Elijah said to Elisha, 'Stay here, for the Lord has told me to go to Bethel.' But Elisha replied, 'As surely as the Lord lives and you yourself live, I will never leave you!'" So they went down together to Bethel" (2 Kings 2:2). Similarly, Ruth stuck to Naomi though Naomi told her to go back to her people. She retorted, "Don't ask me to leave you and turn back. Wherever you go, I will go: wherever you live, I will live" (Ruth 1:16).

In a world bent toward cancelling another for an online offense, where ghosting no longer means haunting (but abandonment), being there for others carries weight. It's unusual. It reveals our connection to the One who never leaves us, who comforts us in all our afflictions, and carries every heavy burden.

Thankfully, it doesn't take a degree to be present. It takes zero talent. You don't need to be famous or articulate. In fact, all you need to do is sit, like when Job's friends simply cried with him when he lost everything. "Then they sat on the ground with him for seven days and nights. No one said a word to Job, for they saw that his suffering was too great for words" (Job 2:13).

In reading this, you may recount two things:

- The times people sat with you in your grief.
- Or the times when you needed someone to be with you, but they were not.

Today, I encourage you to reach out to those who demonstrated presence to you. Send them a note. Leave them a message. Email them. We learn far better through demonstrated love than wordy love, so let those people know what they taught you from their presence. This will encourage them deeply, possibly on a day they need it most.

But if you're broken by #2, grieve how that felt. Tell Jesus how it hurt you when someone wasn't there for you. And then ask Him to make that moment a cautionary tale for you. Other people's difficult behavior can become a catalyst for good, after all, because the painful emotion reminds you that it hurts to be alone. Instead of staying tethered to the pain of the past event, let it serve you. May you decide, through the power of the Holy Spirit within you, to be a person of presence. What I've found is when I'm outwardly focused (even when I'm in the midst of my own pain), I find joy when I can be to someone what I didn't have. God has a beautiful way of salving a wound when I seek to help another.

Prayer:

Jesus, I want to learn to be present for others. Would you show me who to love that way today? I choose to give words to my grief when I needed someone, and they didn't show up for me. But please don't let me stay in that pain forever. Instead, would you show me who to sit alongside? In that place of presence, heal my heart. Amen.



DAY 2: GRIEVE

"Dear woman, why are you crying?"

John 20:15

Mary made no show of composure at the tomb. And because she was overtaken with grief then, it's likely she wept at the cross as well. She had lost the very person who set her gloriously free. No longer a slave to demonic voices and influences, she had been radically delivered, and her vocation during Jesus's ministry on earth was to care for His needs financially and follow him wherever He went. No doubt she knew him well, and he had become the deepest, most amazing friend she'd ever have.

When he left, the hole remained.

She was not stoic in her grief, but authentic and real.

We live in a world of stuffed grief. We're meant to keep that upper lip stiff, not emoting, moving on to the next task, even if our soul limps. There exists a prescribed time for grief in our culture, and that time period keeps shrinking. Maybe a month, maximum, after which we're supposed to "get over it."

I clearly remember the words of my fifth-grade bully of a teacher as she pulled me into the hallway. She accused me of cheating, something I had not done. I tried to explain my side of things to her, but she would not budge. Then she said, "I used to feel sorry for you because your dad died and all, but that was a month ago. You should be over it by now." What was a ten-year-old to say to that?

Our world hates grief, perhaps because it reminds us of our mortality. If we pretend death is unreal, perhaps it will be. But the truth is: grief exists. And it is difficult. And we must walk through it, or we'll have to revisit it later.

Thankfully, the Psalms are chock full of a beautiful way to process our grief rather than shove it down. We can read lament psalms, then write our own. I write about the process in *The Most Misunderstood Women of the Bible*, but here's a brief excerpt to get you started.

The lament structure is simple: "Complain. Ask God to intervene. Confess your tentative trust. Praise Him in the midst of your pain. Remind yourself that God remains in control. I have had the privilege of leading many through this exercise. It's amazing to me how much it

has helped to voice or write out our anger to the One who already knows what's in our hearts. This practice does not heal you, but it inaugurates the healing journey."

Take note of the simple structure (complain, ask, confess, praise, remind) in David's cries in Psalm 3:

O Lord, I have so many enemies;
so many are against me.
So many are saying,
"God will never rescue him!" *Interlude*
But you, O Lord, are a shield around me;
you are my glory, the one who holds my head high.
I cried out to the Lord,
and he answered me from his holy mountain. *Interlude*
I lay down and slept,
yet I woke up in safety,
for the Lord was watching over me.
I am not afraid of ten thousand enemies
who surround me on every side.
Arise, O Lord!
Rescue me, my God!
Slap all my enemies in the face!
Shatter the teeth of the wicked!
Victory comes from you, O Lord.
May you bless your people. *Interlude*

It's normative to grieve. It's necessary. It's biblical. Take some time today to write out your pain. The Lord is not surprised by your pain—in fact, He wants to shoulder it.

Prayer:

Jesus, I admit I have grief. I choose to recognize it and give vent to you. Thank you that You can handle my anger, fear, and pain. Help me to process it with you, to let it out, so I don't

have to keep revisiting it. Empower me to be sensitive to the people in my life walking through the valley of the shadow of grief. Amen.



DAY 3: ADVOCATE

"Sir," she said, "if you have taken him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and get him."

John 20:15

When Mary felt that Jesus's body had been stolen, she did not remain silent. Oddly, she negotiated with Jesus (before she realized it was Him) to return His body! Hers was a faith of action, of advocacy. She took note of injustice and did something about it.

Mary embodied the oft-quoted verse: "No, O people, the Lord has told you what is good, and this is what he requires of you: to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8). Similarly, she exemplifies Proverbs 31:8-9: "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves; ensure justice for those being crushed. Yes, speak for the poor and helpless, and see that they get justice." Her heart bent toward righting a wrong.

We are told to be doers of the Word, not merely hearers by James. He recommends, "But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves" (James 1:22). Mary advocated. She got involved. She did not sit idly by when she believed Jesus's body had been stolen.

Similarly, we can learn from Mary about how we are to live our lives. When confronted with someone else's pain, we can pray. When we see something wrong in the world, we can speak up. When a bully injures another person, we can stand up.

None of this is possible in our own strength. In fact, you may be stressed just reading this devotional. You may be thinking, *I'm afraid to stand up. I'm not the type of person who gets involved in these kinds of things. I'm not skilled at this. I'm not an extrovert.* The good news is this: You don't have to be strong in these areas; you simply need to be dependent on the One who loves to advocate for others. Your weakness, thankfully, is the ticket to His amazing strength.

We are called to be the hands and feet and body of Jesus here on this earth. That means we will do the very things Jesus did when He walked the earth.

What did He do?

- He noticed the broken.

- He dignified the marginalized.
- He stood up to the religious leaders who put heavy burdens on others.
- He intervened when a mob wanted to stone someone.
- He went into a racially charged area (Samaria) and had a long conversation with a broken woman.
- He fed those who were hungry.
- He listened to those who had been ignored.
- In short, he advocated for those who could not advocate for themselves.

The glory of your own insecurities is this: They are the avenue for Jesus to shine all the more brightly. Lean in to the beautiful, counterintuitive truth of 2 Corinthians 12:9-10. “Each time he said, ‘My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.’ So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me. That’s why I take pleasure in my weaknesses, and in the insults, hardships, persecutions, and troubles that I suffer for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong.” Do you see? Advocating doesn’t call for a strong, capable person—it comes from dependency upon a strong, capable savior.

Prayer:

Jesus, I’m afraid to help, to advocate, but I know You love to. So I’m asking for Your strength to love people this way. I’m so grateful I don’t have to have it all together to help others. I simply need to be surrendered to You, asking for Your supernatural strength. I thank You ahead of time for providing it for me. Amen.



DAY 4: LISTEN

"Mary!" Jesus said.

John 20:16

When Mary heard her name, the gardener was no longer a tiller of soil, but the Maker of all hearts. She listened to Jesus call her name, and she responded by turning toward him, then crying out the truth. (We'll look at these two actions in the following days).

To live a life full of abundance and joy, we must tune our ears to hear the voice of the One who created us. Consider the beauty and power of the voice of God, according to Psalm 29: 3-9:

The voice of the Lord echoes above the sea.
The God of glory thunders.
The Lord thunders over the mighty sea.
The voice of the Lord is powerful;
the voice of the Lord is majestic.
The voice of the Lord splits the mighty cedars;
the Lord shatters the cedars of Lebanon.
He makes Lebanon's mountains skip like a calf;
he makes Mount Hermon leap like a young wild ox.
The voice of the Lord strikes
with bolts of lightning.
The voice of the Lord makes the barren wilderness quake;
the Lord shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.
The voice of the Lord twists mighty oaks
and strips the forests bare.
In his Temple everyone shouts, "Glory!"

The voice of God is powerful. Hearing it utterly changed Mary of Magdala. When she heard her name, the entire cosmos shifted for her. No longer was Jesus crucified and dead, but He now stood before her, gloriously (confoundingly!) alive!

What's more profound is that Jesus calls us by name right now. He woos us to Himself, reminding us that we are now His beloved, cherished children. We simply need to quiet our crazy world (and turn off a few devices) to listen to his quiet wooing.

In the book, *The Most Misunderstood Women of the Bible*, I explore the life of Hagar. She names her son God hears (Ishmael), and she names God El Roi, the God who sees. She had profound encounters with God where she not only heard from Him, but she realized He heard her cries, too.

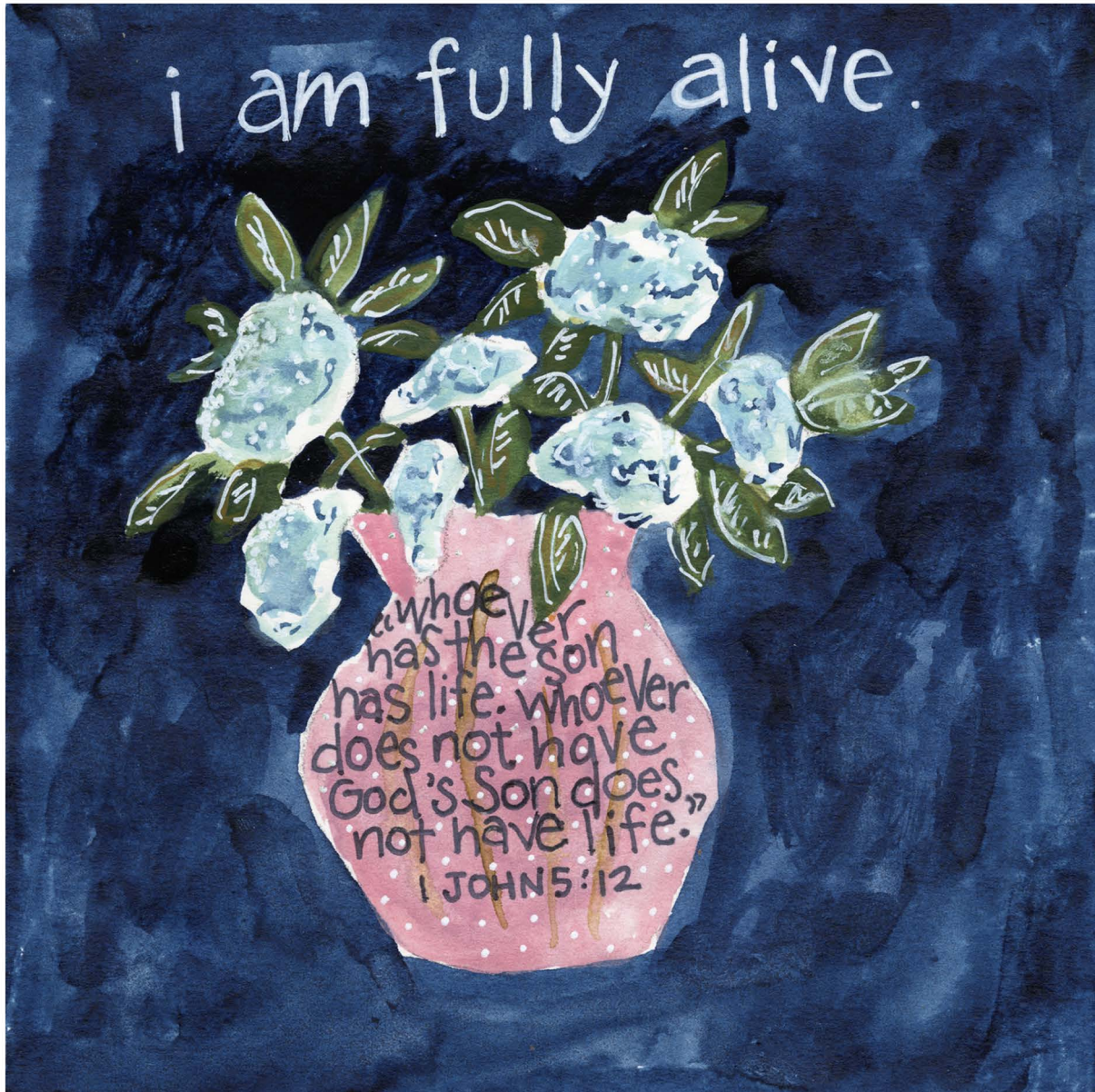
Here's an excerpt from the book:

“Hagar reminds us that God hears. The Psalms are full of God’s promises to hear our cries, including this one: ‘But God did listen! He paid attention to my prayer. Praise God, who did not ignore my prayer or withdraw his unfailing love from me.’ (Psalm 66:17–20). Proverbs 15:29 reminds us of this truth as well: ‘The Lord is far from the wicked, but he hears the prayers of the righteous.’ What a powerful truth, particularly when we look back at Hagar. God heard her desperate cry and answered her—which means that He saw her as righteous, as worthy of being answered. Jesus similarly reminds us, ‘We know that God doesn’t listen to sinners, but he is ready to hear those who worship him and do his will’ (John 9:31). When we face misunderstanding in our humanity (when we are dismissed, maligned, or relegated to the back seat of life), we can rest in knowing that God not only hears our cries, but sees our predicament. We are reminded of God’s eyes upon us in 2 Chronicles 16:9a, ‘The eyes of the Lord search the whole earth in order to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him.’”

What powerful truths for us. The God of the universe speaks to us, but He also listens to our cries. He longs to be in relationship with us, bearing our burdens, answering our prayers, and empowering us to love the people in our lives. Take a quiet moment today to listen for His voice; you won't regret it.

Prayer:

Jesus, I want to listen to You. I want to hear what You have to say. Thank you, too, for listening to me. In this moment, I bring all my worries and conundrums before You, trusting that You are capable of carrying all of me. Please help me eliminate the noise in my life so I can better hear Your voice. Amen.



DAY 5: TURN

"She turned to him"

John 20:16

When Jesus said Mary of Magdala's name, she did not run away. Instead, she turned toward Jesus, a beautiful act of faith and trust. She knew that voice. He had called her by name many times. No doubt the saying of her name reminded her of the moment she met Jesus, where He cast out seven demons from her life. No longer enslaved, His voice set her powerfully free, so much so that she followed Him wherever He went and sought to provide for His ministry.

To turn toward Jesus is to turn from the world. It's to repent, to change your mind, to veer from one path toward His narrow way. To be like Mary is to face Jesus, allowing Him to search our hearts. And, yes, welcoming His love for us.

We may be reticent to let Jesus love us. Perhaps our past has skewed our view of love, or maybe we had a parent who said the words, "I love you," but whose actions demonstrated the opposite. When the people we love let us down, we can project all that disappointment onto Jesus, thinking, *Well, He wouldn't want to love me. He'll eventually turn the other way and leave me.*

Friend, that kind of lie will prevent you from experiencing Jesus.

The truth comes in many facets:

- Jesus loves you.
- He is for you.
- He will not turn his back on you.
- He will not betray you.
- He died for you.
- He wants to pour out His Spirit upon you.
- He intercedes for you right now.
- He has forgiven you and will continue to forgive you.
- His grace covers you.
- He wants to spend time with you.
- He empathizes with your pain.
- He understands what it's like to be human.

- He is the best friend you've always longed for.
- He bears your burdens.
- He holds you together.
- He gives you gifts.
- He enables you to forgive and live without bitterness.
- He loves to heal you from past wounds.
- He enjoys you.
- He created you.

Taken that way, turning toward Jesus is simple. And profound. Because as you turn toward Him, as He calls your name, you're turning toward an utterly changed life. Like Mary of Magdala, you will no longer be enslaved to the evil systems of this world, but you'll be set free to serve Him in freedom and profound joy. When you turn, life will turn from mundane or burdened or sin-entrenched to adventure, freedom, and grace. Taken that way, what prevents you from turning toward the One who loves you so well?

Prayer:

Jesus, I choose today to turn toward you, knowing that You love me. I don't always understand the profound ways You love me, but I want to. I move away from my past life, embracing You in new ways today. Thank You for loving me, for never turning me away, for welcoming me into Your family. I'm utterly grateful. Amen.



DAY 6: DECLARE

She turned to him and cried out, "Rabboni!" (which is Hebrew for "Teacher").

John 20:16

Mary's response to Jesus after turning toward Him was to declare the truth about Him. He was her Rabbi, her teacher. In declaring Him such, she affirmed the resurrection. Her teacher had once been dead, but now He stood before her, breathing and alive.

When we encounter Jesus Christ, we cannot help but be changed so much from the inside out that we have to declare Him to others. When I met Jesus at age fifteen, I immediately went home from the camp (where I'd heard the Gospel and poured out my life to Jesus) and told a relative just how excited I was to meet Jesus. I had hoped she would fall in love with Jesus, too, but even forty years later, she has yet to do so. (I'm still praying!) Her pushback, thankfully, didn't deter me from telling everyone I knew about Jesus. I couldn't help but talk about how profoundly He affected my life.

We are called to declare Jesus to the whole, wide world. God's heart, if you look at the entire narrative of Scripture, was to woo all people to Himself. The nation of Israel had been tasked with such a mandate, but they often failed to do so, so much so that they fell into idolatry and suffered exile as a result. God's heart for them was to be His shining city on a hill, beckoning a dying world to Himself.

In the New Testament we see Jesus fulfilling this destiny. He left the boundaries of Israel to reach people outside the nation. He interacted with all sorts of folks. He died on a sinner's cross, bearing the weight of sinful humanity, to reconcile everyone to Himself. While still on the earth, He reminded His followers, "You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden" (Matthew 5:14). Later, post resurrection, he commanded his disciples to proclaim this good news everywhere. "Jesus came and told his disciples, 'I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age'" (Matthew 28:19-20).

What a humbling mandate! We, as the Body of Christ on the earth, are to declare the amazing news that God wants to have a relationship with His children. It's a privilege!

It's a joy!

But you may be reading this and feel insecure about your ability to talk about Jesus to others. In that case, simply follow Mary of Magdala's lead. She simply told the truth about who Jesus was to her. He was her teacher, her rabbi who had utterly changed her life. You don't have to have skilled words or beautifully spoken paragraphs to share about Christ. You simply need to have a story to tell, to recall at that Jesus has done in your life. Here are some questions to get you thinking:

- What has He taught you over the years?
- What has He set you free from?
- How are you different now that you know Jesus?
- What is your life like now that you chose to follow Him?
- How has He changed your relationships?
- How has His forgiveness changed you?
- How has He affected the way you work?
- Who are you now compared to who you were before you met Him?

Declaring is as simple as telling the story of Jesus in your life. It's a privilege and a profound joy!

Prayer: Jesus, I'm afraid. But I trust You to help me proclaim You to my circle of friends and family. Help me not to make it into some sort of formal presentation, but instead give me boldness to tell the story of how You have changed me, rescued me, and set me free. I love you, Jesus, and I'm so grateful for all You've done in my life. Amen.



DAY 7: OBEY

“Don’t cling to me,” Jesus said, “for I haven’t yet ascended to the Father. But go find my brothers and tell them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’” Mary Magdalene found the disciples and told them, “I have seen the Lord!” Then she gave them his message.

John 20:17-18

After the shock of the resurrection, Mary listened to the command of Jesus. And then she obeyed. She most likely didn't understand what in the world was going on, but she still chose to obey what the resurrected Christ asked of her.

He told her to testify of his resurrection to the people He poured His life into. How profound that Jesus's first messenger of the Gospel was a formerly demonized woman. In a society where women were un-elevated and not esteemed, this was a surprising choice.

We are called to a similar mandate, whether we're Jewish or Greek, enslaved or free, male or female (See Galatians 3:28). Peter calls us chosen. He writes, "But you are not like that, for you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light" (1 Peter 2:9).

Like Mary of Magdala, Jesus asks us to tell others of this wonderful, good, powerful news of the kingdom. And it is a privilege, not a burden. It's infused with hope, expectation, and undergirded by our profoundly changed lives.

God is not after a show. He's not interested in religious activity. We see this in the interaction with Samuel the prophet as he confronts King Saul about not obeying the clear command of God. Samuel tells him, "What is more pleasing to the Lord: your burnt offerings and sacrifices or your obedience to his voice? Listen! Obedience is better than sacrifice, and submission is better than offering the fat of rams" (1 Samuel 15:22). God is after our hearts, and He longs for us to trust Him enough to obey Him, even when it may not make sense.

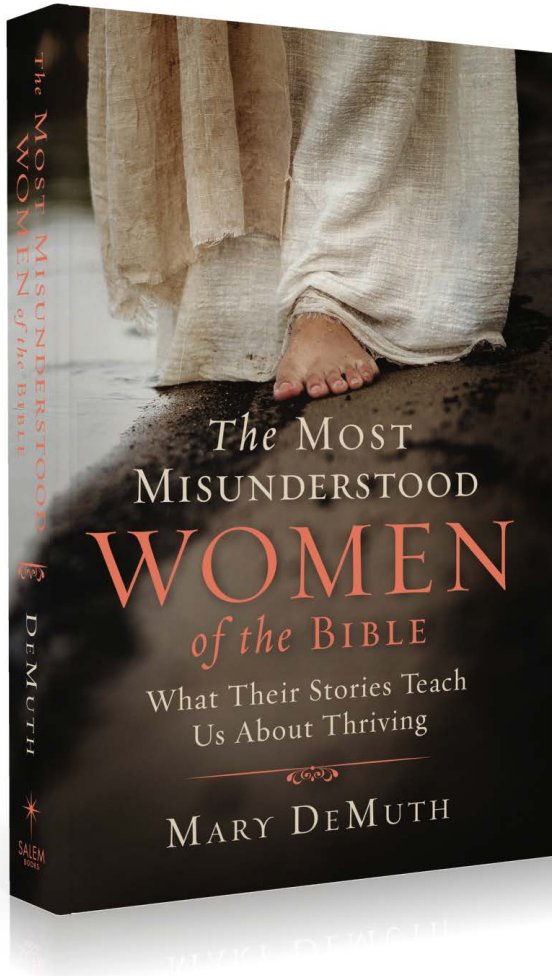
Jesus reminds us of two commandments several times in the New Testament—to love God and love others. All the Law and the Prophets are summed up in these simple sentences. To love God is to obey Him, to listen to His voice, and to carry out His desires for our lives. To love others is to prefer others more than ourselves, to serve them, to treat them the way we'd love to be treated.

This certainly hits us in our daily lives. We are wooed toward loving the world and the things in it (status, money, popularity, health, power), while Jesus wants us to forsake those in order to serve others. And we are constantly told to serve ourselves, be our best selves, treating ourselves in an endless cycle of self-care.

While it's not wrong to take care of ourselves, we may miss opportunities to serve others if all we think about is our own needs. The Apostle Paul reminds us, "Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too" (Philippians 2:2-4). There is joy found when we surrender, giving God our needs so He can fill them, then serving others out of that abundance. Jesus told his disciples, "Go and announce to them that the Kingdom of Heaven is near. Heal the sick, raise the dead, cure those with leprosy, and cast out demons. Give as freely as you have received!" (Matthew 10:7-8). Friend, you have been given so much. Like Mary of Magdala, you've been set free. From that overflowing joy, endeavor to worship God with abandon and serve those God puts in front of you.

Prayer:

Jesus, I understand how important it is for me to obey You. Give me the power to do so—with joy and the kind of gratitude that spills over into other people's lives. You have set me free. You have changed my life. In light of all that, empower me to worship You and serve those You've put in my life—not grudgingly but with deep joy. Amen.



*The Most Misunderstood Women
of the Bible*
by Mary DeMuth



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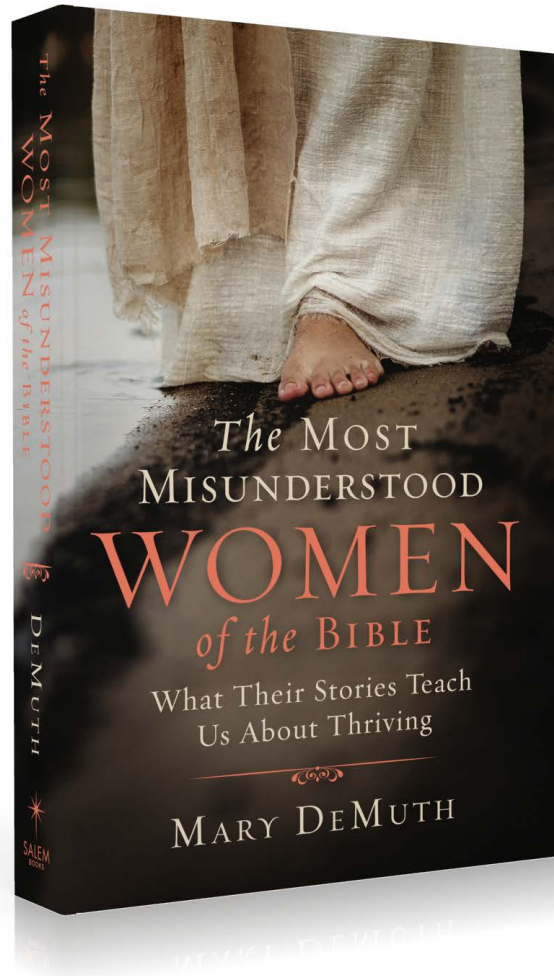
Mary DeMuth, the author of more than forty works of fiction and nonfiction, is an international speaker and host of the Pray Every Day podcast (prayeveryday.show), which has more than a million downloads. She and her husband live in Texas and are the parents of three adult children. Find out more at marydemuth.com.

UNDERSTANDING ISN'T OVERRATED.

Ask any woman—most of us know what it's like to be misheard, mischaracterized, or misrepresented by family, friends, or strangers. Few of us feel deeply known and understood all the time. Worse, many of us have endured long, painful seasons of misunderstanding in which the people around us have questioned—or worse, judged—our motives and actions. We have asked ourselves, *How do I correct these misperceptions? Do I try to defend myself—or does that only make me look guilty? How can I recover my joy even if someone believes something about me that isn't true?*

This problem—and your feelings and questions about it—is nothing new. In fact, women have faced it since the dawn of time. In this engaging book, Mary DeMuth tells the tales of ten women in the Bible who were misunderstood in their own time and often still are—bringing to each of them a deep humanity that makes her, and her problems, more relatable to twenty-first-century you. If you are struggling with feeling misunderstood, let these stories inspire you to grow and remind you that you are not alone. And remember: There is always One who understands you perfectly and stands ready to comfort, strengthen, and defend you through every situation you face.

> [Click to get the book by Mary DeMuth on Amazon](#)



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