

Face to Face

with

Mary Magdalene

First Day

Her Story

“But all of us who are Christians have no veils on our faces, but reflect like mirrors the glory of the Lord. We are transformed in ever-increasing splendor into His own image, and this is the work of the Lord who is the Spirit.” (II Corinthians 3:18 PHILLIPS)

This week we will be studying the life of Mary Magdalene. Perhaps the first thing we notice as we begin to look at her life is that Mary *loved* Jesus! Other than one verse that tells of her condition and what Jesus did for her, every other mention of her name is in connection with being a follower and servant of her Lord, especially in regard to the Cross. What a great friend of Jesus she must have been, especially in His darkest hour. We will begin today by looking at what Scripture tells us about Mary Magdalene. *This is her story.*

Each gospel gives us a glimpse of Mary Magdalene. Read the following verses and share what you learn about her. Several passages are about the same points in time, but give different details. Look carefully for the things that are mentioned about her and her service to Jesus.

Mary

Luke 8:1-3 _____

At the Cross

Matthew 27:55-56 _____

John 19:25 _____

At the Grave

Mark 15:46-47 _____

Mark 16:1-10 _____

Matthew 28:1-10 _____

John 20:1-2, 11-18 _____

What was Mary Magdalene's *sorrow*? _____

What was her *joy*? _____

What did she *learn*? _____

Second Day

Her Manner

Who is She?

"...Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love." (II Peter 1:5-7)

Mary's name means "bitterness." Magdala, Mary's place of birth, means "tower," or "castle."

Today we will be looking at the *character* of Mary of Magdalene. Consider the Scripture you have read on her life and use the following words to describe her:

- *Her strength*

- *Her weakness*

- *Her love*

- *Her courage*

Look at Matthew 27:55-56 and Mark 15:40-41. What do you notice about Mary's name? (You may also see Matthew 27:61 and Mark 15:47; 16:1.) What does that tell you about her? _____

The Luke 8 passage is also informative. We see in verse 1 that as Jesus went through the towns and villages, preaching the good news, the twelve disciples were with Him. But there were others that went with Him on His mission – and Mary Magdalene was one of them! She traveled with Jesus and the disciples throughout the ministry of Jesus. We often think of the disciples as being the ones closest to Him, we see here that there were many women – including this precious Mary – who were in that same holy company.

- According to this Luke passage, what did these women do for Him?

- How does Matthew 27:55-56 say what they did for Him? What might this mean?

From all the Scriptures you have studied on Mary's life this week, list as many things as you can recall that Mary did for Jesus. _____

- Why did she do these things?

One of the sad things that comes out in a deeper study on Mary Magdalene is that history has associated her with the sin of prostitution, although there is nothing in Scripture that supports this. It seems that some have mistakenly assumed that Mary Magdalene is the sinful woman spoken of in Luke 7:36-50. Luke mentions no name in that passage, but mentions Mary *specifically by name* in the Luke 8 passage. Although Mary would have been a sinner in the sense that we are all sinners saved by grace, there is no mention of her sin in the Bible, only of her miraculous deliverance from 7 demons and her resulting love and ministry to the One who delivered her.

Third Day

Her Hope

“And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what had been spoken to her by the Lord.” (Luke 1:45 NASB)

Today we will focus on Mary Magdalene’s *hope*. From what you have studied about her this week:

What was her *need*? _____

What was her *hope*? _____

What was God’s *promise*? _____

Before she met Jesus, Mary lived the tragic life of a woman possessed by evil. As Christians we cannot be *possessed* by Satan, but he can still have an affect on our lives. He is a liar. He can deceive us into believing the wrong things. He can keep us confused as to right and wrong and keep us uncertain of our relationship with the Lord. If he gains a stronghold in our lives through his lies, then we too need deliverance.

Is there an area in your life in which you feel you need deliverance? Perhaps an area in which Satan has gotten a stronghold? Here is a list of possible areas the enemy may have gotten a stronghold:

<i>Pride</i>	<i>Unbelief</i>	<i>Addiction</i>
<i>Fear</i>	<i>Guilt</i>	<i>Depression</i>
<i>Idolatry</i>	<i>Food</i>	<i>Unforgiveness</i>

Do you believe it’s the Lord’s will for you to be delivered from this stronghold? What does Galatians 5:1 tell you? _____

What does Psalm 34:19 say? _____

In requesting healing for his tormented, demon possessed son, a father said to Jesus, “*But if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.*” Jesus replied, “*If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes*” (Mark 9:23).

Ask God *today* to deliver you from the thing the enemy has used to keep you in bondage. Look for Scriptures like the ones above that tell you of His intentions for you in the area of your need and begin today to pray the truth of those Scriptures, *believing* that it is His will that you be free in that area.

Memory Verse:

“It is for freedom that Christ has set us free” (Galatians 5:1 NIV). This is our memory verse this week – begin memorizing it today!

Fourth Day

Her Gifts

What is the one quality you desire most in your Christian walk? When thinking about that question does the word *faithfulness* come to mind? Could it be that you, as a child of God, desire more than anything to be as close to Jesus as possible and to please Him in all you do? When we think of Mary Magdalene, two words come easily to mind: *faithful* and *evangelist*. Looking at her life, these two appear inseparably linked and perhaps the Lord intends for it to be that way. Mary remained close enough to Jesus to be the first one sent to bear the gospel tidings. Certainly, the closer we come to Christ, the greater our desire for others to know about Him; and the more we love Him the more apt we are to speak out about His unfailing love and His transforming power.

Although not a great deal is said about Mary Magdalene in Scripture, we can't help but notice that her *example* by itself speaks volumes. She was among a small group of women who were devoted to Christ, serving Him and His disciples at their own expense. These women were passionate followers, giving sacrificially of their time, talents, and energy to the Lord's work. Conditions had to be challenging at best, but the difficulty of missionary travel and ministering must have been eased by the efforts of these diligent women who were on call day in and day out.

Mary was tenacious in her efforts to remain with Jesus. After His arrest, when nearly everyone else fled, Mary followed. When those closest to Jesus forsook Him, Mary stood at the foot of the Cross, suffering with Him. After others had given up hope, Mary remained faithful in hope. While the disciples mourned their loss in seclusion, Mary returned to the tomb in the predawn hours to prepare the Lord's body for burial. Even in His death she was faithful to Him, and the Lord richly rewarded her – she came face to face with the risen Christ in the garden. The climax of that encounter resulted in Mary becoming the first to share the glorious good news of the gospel: *"I have seen the Lord!"* This female became the first *evangelist*, proclaiming the announcement of Christ's victory over death to the small band of hopeless disciples (Mark 6:11).

- How close are you to Jesus today? Have you made a commitment in your own heart to remain as close to Him as you can? Are you aware that *you* are the one who chooses how close you will be? Considering your current circumstances, have you made the choice to remain faithful to Jesus no matter what? Please share your thoughts.

- Mary is an example of how an encounter with Christ can change a life forever. Briefly state how your encounter with Christ this year has changed your life forever.

When Jesus gave the Great Commission to His followers (Matthew 28:18-20), He did not consider gender. Neither does the Holy Spirit when He gives spiritual gifts - He gives them to both men and women. God has not chosen every woman believer to *evangelize* the nations; but He has called every believing woman to carry His message of salvation to her sphere of influence, wherever that may be. Her only requirement is to be filled and controlled by the Holy Spirit, anointed and equipped with His power. This is not exclusive to some, but available to all: *the wife, mother, grandmother, single woman, widow*, all are called to go into the world and take the message. The call to *go* does not necessarily mean leaving home, family, and country, but it does mean making yourself available wherever you happen to be.

There are certain “helps” to soul-winning available to God’s messengers. Below those are mentioned for you. Look up each Scripture and determine whether or not you can say your life lines up with what the Bible says you need to be successful. Make note of what the Lord shows you and be ready to make adjustments where necessary.

- II Corinthians 6:17 *A Separated Life*

- II Timothy 2:15 *A Prepared Mind*

- Psalm 126:5-6 *A Praying Heart*

- I Peter 3:15 *A Ready Heart*

- Psalm 51:10-13 *A Cleansed Heart and A Renewed Spirit*

Many times the most effective position in fulfilling the Great Commission is not a public or visible one. The most powerful influence a woman can have is with her husband and children in her own home. The greatest satisfaction we will ever know is found as we discover in our life in Christ and our sharing of that fact with those around us.

No matter what your position in life or your circumstance, you can *evangelize* wherever and whenever God directs. No place or effort is insignificant when God is in it!

Fifth Day

Her Legacy

“For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.” (Romans 15:4)

How will you be remembered? How would you like to be remembered? What will you leave behind of benefit for others? What you do and say today will leave imprints for others to view tomorrow.

Taking a closer look...

- What impression did Mary Magdalene leave with you this week?

- How might her example impact women in today’s world?

Taking a personal look....

- What did the Lord show you about carrying the message of salvation?

- What did you learn this week about your role in taking the message out?

Passing it on....

- What lesson from Mary Magdalene’s life do you consider worthy of passing on to someone else?

Sixth Day

Your Prayer

Each day this week you have examined up close – face to face – a woman of the Bible: her *story and manner; her promise and hope; her gifts and legacy*. Throughout the process, as you learned about her, you also learned about yourself.

Now the focus shifts to *Your Prayer*. Each week during your group time you will have the opportunity to pray in agreement with the other ladies for the things you write down on this personalized page. Keep an updated account in the *Praise* list each week as God answers your petitions. This year let's come boldly to His throne and learn to pray the **BIG PRAYER** with expectancy! The only prerequisite for such boldness is being *humble* and *real* in His presence.

Prayer: Write out your prayer for each of the following...

I praise God for (an aspect of His marvelous character) _____

I confess to God _____

I thank God for _____

I ask God for _____

Promise: Write out this week's *promise* in the space provided...and learn to pray this promise from Scripture.

Praise: If God has answered a prayer request for you this week or fulfilled a desire of your heart, please write it out and date it as a stone of remembrance.
