



A Journey Through Psalm 103

Dear Leader,

Welcome! What a joy it is, sister of my heart, to know that you have been willing to serve the Body of Christ through leading a *Bless* study group. I'm praying for you, dear one. I'm asking the Father to give you all the grace, all the tenacity and tenderness, boldness and wisdom that you'll need to walk this calling for the next nine weeks. And I'm thanking Him that He has chosen *you*, because whatever you bring to the proverbial table is *exactly* what your group of women needs. Jesus equipped you long before you said *yes*, and I'm confident that your labor of love is a delight to His heart!

Bless is undoubtedly a unique study. Its format, tone and aesthetics will likely be different from most other women's studies which you've experienced, perhaps taking your group in to uncharted territory. From its inception, *Bless* was designed with a primary target demographic, the millennial generation. In its lack of structured "homework", its poetic, prose-y tone and inviting photos, it's a study meant to relate to the hearts of the younger generations, those which the Church is losing in unprecedented numbers. It's also designed to shift paradigms to make way for the Lord to do a new thing in His daughters in this new season. Let it be so, *Abba!*

As a result, be prepared to answer quite a few questions up front, because you'll likely find that your group will experience challenges with the technicalities of accessing the teaching videos or perhaps express confusion over the lack of blanks to fill as they go through their weekly "assignments". Those details aside, however, the primary vision for *Bless* is twofold: first, to articulate the Father's character in such a way that we grow deeper into uninhibited intimacy with Him, the true Lover of our souls. And second, to empower us to walk in our God-given identities, ditching every lie that the enemy has sold us about who we are in Christ.

I pray that as you walk this journey, you'll come to know your Father and His great love for you more deeply than ever before, and you'll powerfully share that love with the precious women whom you are leading.

With great thanksgiving,

Tiffany

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Format Overview

The vision for *Bless* came as a very specific package, and while I believe that entire package carries tremendous benefit, it may not be for everyone. That being said, let me state that at the very least, *Bless* was structured so that the focal point of the weekly gatherings would not be a teaching video but rather a sharing of hearts, a growing of genuine, *I-really-know-you* community. This is *best* facilitated by women watching the short fifteen minute teaching videos on their own and at their convenience during the week. **Be sure to reiterate to your group that the videos can be accessed digitally on their laptops, tablets or cell phones.** I've heard reports of girls watching the sessions in such mundane places as the dentist's office or school parking lot, and they've benefitted just as much as did those who watched in the quiet seclusion of their homes. While abandoning the formula of "we've always done it this way!" may be a mite uncomfortable for some, I would urge you to pray and ask the Lord to use this unique format to break old paradigms of what Bible study is "meant" to be, allowing Him to breathe fresh vision and passion for Himself and one another into your corporate time.

Proposed Schedule

When we launched the initial trial run of *Bless*, we structured it for full-throttle, maximum impact, and the results were powerful. Below is a recommended schedule in keeping with that original vision:

9:00 – 9:15 Greeting time, fellowship and refreshments

9:15 – 10:00 Three simultaneous, weekly options are offered, allowing women to choose where they feel the Lord is leading them on any given week:

1. **Prayer/prophetic ministry:** this is a place for women to be ministered to on a deep level. As needs are shared, a team of intercessors ministers in prayer/prophecy, allowing the Lord to encourage, strengthen and comfort (1 Corinthians 14:3). This is the perfect place for women who are wrestling through tough seasons or circumstances, or who feel that they meet Jesus best through powerful intercession.
2. **Soaking room:** this is a restorative place for women to rest in the presence of the Lord. As quiet worship creates a Christ-exalting atmosphere, women can journal, pray silently, worship privately, or just listen to the sweet voice of the Holy Spirit. This is a wonderful place for women who feel that they meet Jesus best in quiet, intimate encounters with His presence.
3. **Symposium:** this is a Latin word that carries the idea of *meeting together for the purpose of discussion*. Similar to a small group discussion, symposium begins with questions and comments openly shared, allowing women to wrestle with concepts from the previous week's study in an atmosphere of safe vulnerability. The discussion concludes with the leader guiding the group deeper into a related point which springboards from a scripture or insight from the previous week's lesson. This is a perfect place for women who feel that they meet Jesus best in analytical, thoughtful study of the Word.

10:05 – 10:15 Greeting, announcements, etc.

10:15 – 11:00 Small group time

11:00 – 11:30: Group worship

Format Specifics

A few notes regarding this proposed format. First, rotating leaders for symposium is a beautiful way to allow those in your group who have the gift of teaching to share their insights in a relaxed, non-threatening atmosphere. Second, be prepared for a flood of women seeking prayer/prophetic ministry during the first few weeks, knowing that as time goes by and spiritual cups are filled, the numbers may wane. Third, encourage women to experience all three options over the course of the study. Many ladies will find a choice with which they feel most comfortable and stick to it like glue — all the more reason for them to experience Jesus moving in their lives in a new and perhaps untried way!

It's also important to note that when the test run for *Bless* was launched, our home church sponsored a Wednesday morning study which was large and diverse, as well as a Monday evening study which was much smaller with a narrower demographic. Because the Monday evening group had limited numbers, it was impossible for the leaders to host the same type of format which the Wednesday morning group experienced. As a result, they rotated the format from week to week: the first week they engaged in symposium, the next, in soaking, the third in prayer ministry, and so on. They loved the diversity and gleaned much from the experience!

Video Access

Update: The Bless teaching videos no longer require registration, and are viewable online at bless.streamroots.com. Please visit the website to stream the videos on any device.

Group Interaction

In the process of writing *Bless*, the Lord made it very clear to me that this study was one which was intended to *open closed doors* in the hearts of women, doors which have been sealed tight, perhaps for decades. Because of the study's focus on the great goodness of God, strongly held beliefs which are contrary to the truth may begin to surface — beliefs that can be connected to deep, unresolved pain. This may also occur when discussing the scriptures that address our identity as daughters of the King. I encourage you to begin interceding now, preparing yourself to engage in spiritual battle for your group, as Satan does not easily give up his strongholds in our lives. However, simply speaking the name of Jesus is power enough to make any well-cherished lie crumble! We have already been made victorious through His blood, and no stronghold can withstand the force of His overwhelming love.

Take the time to really listen to the hearts of your women, pointing them back to the truth of the Word and reminding them of the power of the Spirit to transform their minds. And should it become obvious that a woman is in need of deeper counseling or discipleship, please don't hesitate to refer her to a trusted godly counselor or advisor who can meet with her one-on-one.

Discussion Overview

To facilitate the two primary goals of the study, I've included a list of questions that compliment each week's scriptures/topics. But the true longing of my heart is that the Holy Spirit will be given such pre-eminence in your time together that He'll lead you further into His truth, further into the heart of the Father than any simple query ever could.

These are Kingdom questions, and they run deep. Because they move far beyond a fill-in-the-blank, *yes* or *no* answer, you may want to consider distributing them to your group early, allowing them a week's time to process the concepts and challenges. However, posing them as on-the-spot questions can bring the powerful benefit of an unstudied, non-*religious* answer, offering a platform for women to share in a more transparent manner. No matter which option you choose, I'm confident that the Father will use these as a springboard into a more profound understanding of His passionate heart for His daughters.

The identity statements and questions are meant to provoke fresh consideration of who we are in Christ. Although at first glance they may seem rudimentary, because they are based on scriptural truth, they will likely conflict with long-held worldviews which spring from the lies of the world and the enemy. Confidently allow the Holy Spirit to use brave, loving communication within your group to declare the life-changing freedom of God's truth. Ask the Father for wisdom as you lead women through the process of going deeper into these truths, one layer at a time. And assure your group that when it comes to our new identities as daughters of God, there will always be more to uncover!

The calling/destiny statements and questions are meant to ignite a fire in the heart of every woman! As a leader, your goal will be to train and encourage your ladies that each of us has been given a unique calling and destiny in the Kingdom. While discussing these questions, you may discover that they lead to more questions than answers. That's OK! After your group session, women should be prompted to get alone with Jesus, asking Him for further wisdom and insight. These questions also provide wonderful opportunities for intentional training on spiritual gifts, our unique spheres of influence, and how to partner with Jesus in bringing His Kingdom to earth!

Discussion Questions

Week One

Identity: *I was created to bless the Lord with my entire being: body, soul and spirit.* How do I bless the Lord in this way? Are there lies which I have embraced that paint a different picture of my identity than that of an extravagant worshipper? What are the obstacles that hold me back from giving my *all that is within me* praise?

Calling/destiny: *I am called to shift atmospheres with my praise.* What obstacles in my life might be preventing me from carrying the transforming power of praise into my realm of influence? What are some ways in which I can release a spirit of praise into the spiritual territory which I have been given, especially the darkest of places?

Week Two

Identity: *I was created for uninhibited intimacy with the Father.* What might that uninhibited intimacy look like? Where are the tender points in my heart that hold me back from true vulnerability with Jesus? What fears have I falsely connected with this truth?

Calling/destiny: *I am called to carry an encounter with the intimacy of God's heart to my sphere of influence.* How do I actively demonstrate the power of intimacy with Jesus — what does that demonstration look like? How does intimacy with the Father change the way I view those around me?

Week Three

Identity: *I was created to be wholly satisfied in God's goodness.* What prevents my heart from being wholly satisfied in Him? With what other things have I attempted to satiate my soul hunger? Why have I exchanged His goodness for those lesser things?

Calling/destiny: *I am called to demonstrate the power of redemption to my world: to the lost, the broken, the forgotten, to the self-satisfied, the self-absorbed and the searching.* What does it look like to watch Jesus redeem? How do I release an encounter with His redemption to those around me?

Week Four

Identity: *I was created to wear a crown of His steadfast love.* Do I view myself as crowned with something other than steadfast love (perhaps I see myself as the queen of shame, foolishness, rejection, etc.)? If so, how does that supposed crown influence my life? How do I make the exchange?

Calling/destiny: *I am called to actively break oppression and champion justice.* How do I allow Jesus to use me to break oppression? To champion justice? What prevents me from carrying an encounter with God's freedom to those around me?

Week Five

Identity: *I was created to walk boldly in the fullness of my Holy Spirit-birthed identity.* What does that woman look like? Is there any way in which I'm fearful of that identity? Is there any place in which I don't feel worthy to live as that woman?

Calling/destiny: *I am called to relinquish control and live a life of uninhibited faith.* When I'm walking in that kind of yielded faith, what is the overflow in my life? How does it affect the way I interact with those around me? What holds me back from that place?

Week Six

Identity: *I was created to live liberated, fully freed from the power of sin.* Is there any place in my life in which I still see myself as a slave to sin? What are my excuses for living in bondage? How do I grab hold of the freedom that is already mine?

Calling/destiny: *I am called to carry an encounter with freedom for those who are bound by shame.* How do I release the power of God for freedom, breaking off that lie of shame? How does my vision need to change so that I can see those captives of shame more clearly? Who in my life needs this type of encounter?

Week Seven

Identity: *I was created to know the character of my Father, completely confident in His heart for me.* How deeply do I know the character of my Father? What does His heart for me look like? How does this influence the way in which I view myself?

Calling/destiny: *I am called to demolish strongholds and break lies off of those who are held captive.* How does calling out Kingdom identity break the power of lies? How willing am I to partner with Jesus in this way? What might be my first step into this calling?

Week Eight

Identity: *I was created to walk in wisdom, utilizing both my time and my gifts for the sake of the Kingdom.* Do I view myself as a woman of wisdom, especially in the use of my time? Do I live intentionally as a woman who has priceless gifts to be invested for the Kingdom? How do I walk in greater fruit in this area?

Calling/destiny: *I am called to invest wisely as a woman who will leave a legacy of righteousness to both my biological children and spiritual children.* How can I be more intentional in creating a legacy of righteousness for my children, my children's children and my spiritual children? Are there things which occupy my time which sidetrack me from this calling? In what ways am I thriving in this assignment?

Week Nine

Identity: *I was created for fearless praise, courageous worship and overwhelming gratitude.* Does this description fit my view of myself? Would others describe me in this way? If not, why? — what holds me back? How do I grab hold of this truth more deeply, allowing it to transform my life?

Calling/destiny: *I am called to actively release the favor and blessing of God into every circumstance in which I find myself.* Why is it important for me to be a carrier of the favor and blessing of God? What does it look like to release the Father's favor and blessing into my world? How have I already been equipped for this calling?

Proposed Symposium Topics

Because of the over-full lives of so many leaders, I realize that few of us have the time in which to prepare a symposium discussion. Therefore, I've included a list of possible discussion starters; however, I would strongly encourage you to lean first into the Holy Spirit, asking Him to speak a word specific for your group of women. Then lead from His prompting!

Week One

2 Chronicles 20:1-23; Acts 16:25-34

Our uninhibited, wholehearted praise, especially in the face of severe hardship or pain, breaks bonds, shifts atmospheres, and ushers in God's spirit for salvation. An excellent resource for this topic is chapters three and four of Edith Schaeffer's *Affliction*.

Week Two

Exodus 12:24-27; Joshua 4:6-7, 21-24; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

Memorial stones, which are tangible reminders of God's goodness on our behalf, have a significant role in our lives. When we actively remember His mighty works and great loving kindness, we proclaim His power to overcome the current impossibilities in our lives, ushering in fresh faith for the miraculous. There is a powerful Kingdom connection between remembrance and proclamation.

Week Three

Isaiah 62:2-5; Revelation 4:9-11

David declares that the *hesed* of the Lord, His great steadfast love, is as a crown on our heads. Isaiah goes even further to describe us as a glorious crown of beauty in the hand of our Lord. However, John's description of our abandoned worship is the mighty apex of our heavenly praise. How does it impact your heart to know that we, His bride, **are** His crown, we **wear** His crown, and we will **cast** our crowns at His feet?

Week Four

Exodus 33:12-23; Matthew 11:27-29; John 1:14-18; Hebrews 3 & 4

Moses' encounter with God has many outcomes, but two of the most powerful are Moses' soaking in the glory of God and receiving rest. However, Moses only sees in part. The full glory of God is revealed to us through Jesus... the law was given through Moses (part) but grace and truth were revealed through Jesus (whole). Through Him we understand all the ways of God, experiencing fully His glory and His rest.

Week Five

Isaiah 62:2; Revelation 2:17

So often our limited understanding of sin, justice and grace causes us to slap titles onto people that are the opposite of the Father's heart. But just as David declares, rather than dealing with us according to our sins or repaying us for our iniquities, Jesus instead redeems, lavishes and releases life. One of His declarations of this new life is the new name by which He calls you. What new name might Jesus be declaring over you? What old, improper titles might need to be trashed in order to embrace His fresh endearment of grace?

Week Six

Romans 4:16-18

God calls into existence the things that do not yet exist. When we are in Christ, He asks us to partner with Him in that process. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we can uncover in others what only Jesus can see: their original, God-given design that may not yet exist in the natural realm. We then have the privilege of tenaciously, lovingly speaking that truth over those with whom we come into contact.

Week Seven

Genesis 16:1-14; Exodus 5-6:8

God's great compassion for us causes Him to truly see us, even when we feel unseen or abandoned by Him. And it is in that moment, as He makes Himself known in our place of suffering, that He declares His name, His character and His promises in a fresh way. If we have eyes to see and a heart to receive, we can step into an encounter with His compassion and come away strengthened, encouraged and transformed.

Week Eight

Isaiah 44:1-5, 54:10-14; 2 Corinthians 1:19-22

What does it mean that *the Lord's righteousness is to our children's children*? How should this affect the way we as mothers and grandmothers pray? Too often we relinquish our Kingdom promises, discouraged and defeated by the enemy's blatant, destructive work in our families. However, God's promises are steadfast and sure! We need to stir our faith and proclaim the truth of what He has declared over our generations, reclaiming His righteousness for our families and the nations.

Week Nine

John 4:21-24; Romans 12:1,2

David understood the significance of worship through an old covenant lens. Therefore he declares, "Bless the Lord, O my *soul*!" However, as new covenant believers in Christ, we have the Spirit of the Living God indwelling us; our spirits have been re-born, made fully alive! As a result, we are called to bless the Lord not only with our souls, but also with our regenerated spirits. How should this impact our worship? What does that type of worship look like?

Wrapping Up

- Selah** As you finish the *Bless* study, you'll find an opportunity for your group to engage their creative praise! At the end of Week 9, there is space in the workbook to write a personal *selah*: a thoughtful, creative expression of who God is and what He's done, allowing each woman to pause and consider His great goodness on a deep level. Encourage your ladies that, even if they don't consider themselves writers, this moment is for them! It's their personal journal of responses to the truths which they've learned throughout *Bless*, giving themselves space to process in whatever way they choose. Then, let them know we'd be honored for them to share their *selahs* with us at www.selah.streamroots.com.
- Smile!** We'd also love to see your beautiful face! Snap a picture of yourself and your group with the *Bless* workbook and post it on Instagram, Facebook or Twitter (streamroots or @streamroots). Don't forget to tag us at #blessbiblestudy so we can rejoice to see what God is doing in His girls around the world!
- Share** Lastly, please take a moment to share your *Bless* experience with those you love. Your testimony is powerful — it's an open invitation for God to do in others the same mighty works which He's accomplished in you. And *you* are our greatest advocate — so, if you've been blessed by your journey through Psalm 103, share the joy!