

ADULT BIBLE SCHOOL:

A FULL FIVE WEEK STUDY OF
everyday ADULT PROBLEMS BROKEN
DOWN AND SOLVED BY OUR
FAVORITE BIBLE STORIES



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“I can’t just read only the Bible; It doesn’t make sense to me.” I hear this often. I remember when it was me. I also remember sitting in my first Sunday School class, all adult-like, and feeling small because I literally knew none of the stories from the Bible that everyone was discussing. Don’t laugh but I actually considered reading a children’s Bible bedtime story book to try and “catch up”. Okay, laugh. It’s fine. I did too, but then I thought... what if there is really something to this? God is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow, right? So, let’s make this fun! Inside this course you and I will walk through Old and New Testament stories in the Bible. We will break them down and roll them over in to our day-to-day lives. If you are in a season of I am tired or I am unsure, of but God or God why, and maybe even some of both with a little more of I just can’t anymore, please join me inside this five-week course. Let’s learn together with intentionality all God has for us in these seasons, what He has always had for us even some two thousand years ago. I’m so excited to dive into this series with you guys and not only learn all of the ‘Bible Stories’ but also weave them into the mundane so we can live out our purposes to their fullest! Can’t wait to know you, come on in!

Week One: God Still Does Miracles

Day One:

READ JOHN CHAPTER 2: 1-11

This story is Jesus' very first miracle. Here you see Mary come to Jesus with a problem. If you read other translations, it seems like Jesus isn't really interested in this issue she presents Him with. What does this have to do with me? Sometimes we feel the same way, maybe not at first.. but I know I have come to God with a problem before and waited.. and waited.. only to decide well He obviously don't care. Unlike me, Mary had not forgotten the faithfulness of Jesus. She brought Him a problem and immediately told those surrounding her to do just exactly what He said, assuming that Jesus was going to intervene anyway whether it doesn't seem important to Him or not. You see, sometimes we make a bigger deal out of some things than we probably should, things that are honestly 'small' things to Jesus, but while were busy caring about ourselves.. Jesus is busy caring for us. Jesus looked at what was around and gave instructions for what was already there. I couldn't count high enough to tell you how many ways Jesus could have performed this miracle. I don't know, snapped His fingers maybe? But instead He asked His servants to help. I'm learning this is often just what God expects of us also. The servants *fully* obeyed Jesus' instruction by filling the jars *all of the way up*. Half jars would have led to half blessings, but since they gave their all... you see where this is going? Our participation leads to His reciprocation. We can't receive what we don't believe in, and we shouldn't expect what we're not willing to work for. A lot of times we want the full glass but can't bring ourselves to carry it. God desires a partnership with us, He wants us to work *with* Him in order for Him to work *for* us. The jars overflowed with wine and after the people received this blessing, they believed *even* more. How typical is that behavior in ourselves? We believe in God always, but only when we are blessed by God is He really, really good. But do the biggest blessings make God more God?...or are we just more grateful? Try going back and reading those verses now paying close attention to the fine details and then ask yourself what God could do with your belief and obedience.

Is there something in your life you are asking from God that isn't exactly life or death, but feels super important to you?

Have you taken the time to hear what God needs from you or are you just praying to hear yourself talk without taking much time to listen?

After re-reading today's scripture, is there a big take away for you and how you maybe could apply to your prayers? or maybe your life?

Let's Pray.

God,

Thank You for caring about me enough to care about simple things. Make Your instructions known to me and my new friends in these areas of our lives so that You may be recognized greater by me and glorified higher by others. Thank you, God for Your love. Thank you, God, for You.

Amen,

Katie Sanders

Day Two:

READ JOHN CHAPTER 9: 1-11

I just love this story in the Bible. It shows so much of our culture today. As people we automatically assume someone in bad position must be living a bad life. If you study the scriptures for just a short period of time, you will see that Jesus seeks these people out. He doesn't pull from the pits because those people need saving more than you or me, but because the darker the place the more obvious the light. Sometimes good people do bad things; the same goes for the bad people. They are good once in a while too, but sometimes it is neither. Sometimes it is just time for us to grow a little and so God allows rain in order to grow. Evil furthers the work of God. Sometimes, like this one, the miracle is under the mud. It is never our responsibility or our business to wonder why a person is in such a place or condition. Today, we get so caught up in what others think that not only are we afraid of the mud in the other's eyes, we are also afraid of our own. I've learned so much about how people can interfere with our relationship with Jesus over the last few years, and it is only because we care so much about ourselves. Jesus will pull at this. He tests our faith not because He needs to grade it; He knows where we stand, but to reveal the spectrum to ourselves. How much are you really ready to surrender to let God handle fully? Can you wait like He has asked until He calls us to do more? Jesus sets the scene well here. This pitiful guy comes walking by and even the disciples whisper back and forth, "gosh, wonder what that guy did," and Jesus said it was never about the person, but it is all about Me. Then *Jesus* approaches the man, makes mud, and then gives instruction. Go wash off. I feel like Jesus has done the same for me. First came a *mess*, but *mercy* followed, and now it is time to live out the instructions. He calls all of you to do the same. This man's disability was so great that people couldn't even believe in the scale of the miracle. Lord, most days I even question my own. The way God can work with cooperation on our parts truly is amazing. The first steps to a washed and clean life conquer evil, but continuing to live in His instruction destroys it. We've learned that blessings come from obedience. They also come with consistency.

Start looking, as we begin this journey, for the dirty places in your life. God has promised you healing, but in order to receive from God, you must be willing to pursue Him... no matter what. Can you do it?

Let's Pray.

You First,

God, I am so sorry for my humanness. Please help me to see others as You do. Give me the strength to extend that same forgiveness to myself. Make me willing and make me clean. Please continue this work in me. God, thank you for healing. Thank You God, for You.

Amen,

Katie Sanders

Day Three:

READ JOHN CHAPTER 11 1-15; 32-44

Treasure this: a testing of faith is never a denial of His love. Jesus loved Martha, so when He heard of her brother's illness, He stayed where He was even longer. His delays always have a specific purpose. Doesn't God's timing make us feel unanswered or unheard? God assures us through His word that He will meet all of our needs according to His perfect, on-His-schedule timing. We're only supposed to wait (Philippians 4:19). I'd like to ask Him sometimes if He knows He is late. Here you see both Mary and Martha get a little frustrated. That's okay. Frustration does not mean faithless. When the sisters approached Jesus, they didn't specifically ask for healing. They just brought their problem to the Jesus' feet. I do the same thing, but I usually bring a solution to the problem with me to offer Him, but you don't see them running around digging for their own solutions. We probably shouldn't either. God, instead, wants us to come to Him with our need and to leave it there, trusting that He knows the best solution. Further in the chapter you see that Jesus wept. He hurt watching His people hurt... He still does. I think we get so caught up in watching the healing in other's that we forget that He is the same God to us. People sat in the very presence of Jesus and still doubted Him. Don't we do that, y'all?! The very hairs on our heads are numbered. This does not mean that God is a really good counter. It means He is close... and we still choose to ask Him where He is, what He is doing, and comparing our own blessings to hers. Again, you see God give instruction to Martha. You see her hesitancy, but then you also see her remember. She had to remind herself of who Jesus is and what He has promised... and she believed. Another miracle was then before her. Death cannot kill a believer.

Are you in a season of silence from the lord? What are some solutions you have mapped out for the things you are praying over?

When things get quiet, do you begin to compare your walk and it's fruits to other believers?

Look up the verses Romans 8:28 and Genesis 50:20. I encourage you to put one of these to memory to pull out in a time of unanswered prayer.

Let's Pray.

God,

Thank You for Your patience. I am so sorry that I try to get ahead of Your provision by trying to dig up solutions to things You have already made perfect plans for. Bring our souls rest, that we may find the glory and purposefulness in what You are doing in all seasons. Thank You, God, for having the best plan for me. Thank you, God, for You.

Amen,


Katie Sanders

Martha

Day Four:

Let's put this in context a little more. Read Luke 10: 38-42 and re-read John 11:17-45. The most applicable verse to the character of Martha is shown in Luke 10:40.

"but Martha was distracted by all of the preparations that had to be made. She came to Him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work for myself? Tell her to help me."

Mary is the older sister of Lazarus and Mary. This probably set her at a predisposition to 'care' about the order of things, but Martha's greatest flaw was worrying about the details, something I'm sure all of us are guilty of. We get caught up in the details. So did Martha.

When I think about Martha, I always go to the story in Luke. I see myself shuffling around my house trying to get things ready for company or for a dinner, and if you've ever been to myself or know my family, this is basically a joke in and of itself... but I try. I've also been guilty of Martha's attitude of why aren't y'all helping.

Martha gets so preoccupied getting the appearance together, that she forgets about the company, and while this is often true of anything we try to organize event wise... how does this apply to our hearts? The Lord laid a conviction on my heart not terribly long ago. He told me "it doesn't matter, be me."

I'll explain.

We are all surrounded with difficult relationships. I truly believe that we've all got 'that' person in our lives. He or she is no more guilty than you and I, but it doesn't feel this way to us. I get in these situations that admittedly, I probably stir up myself... and then I want to run to God and say DO YOU NOT SEE THIS? I want to demand things from Him like Martha, only seeing the surface. God, do something, but He had a different answer for me. "Katie, I don't care what the situation, warranted or not, be Me."

Y'all. For me, this took me and the 90's bracelet W.W.J.D to a new level.

Someone lied on you. Don't defend yourself; what would Jesus do? You were deliberately hurt by someone and now they need something from you? Don't take the opportunity to stick your tongue out at them and wave your fingers by your ears (literally felt like this before); what would Jesus do? This one is a hard one. You're given (by Satan) the perfect opportunity to plead your case, or even tell people just how bad so-and-so did you. Don't. What would Jesus do?

And so to the best of my human ability, I tried to give the Lord what He asked of me. I've fallen short, of course. I can say with certainty I will again, however, when I had reached a suitable place of obedience... God gave me more.

"Now mean it."

I wish my keyboard allowed emojis; I could give you a few. I was blown down because I thought I was making great efforts and strides in my previous instructions.

There will always be more with Jesus, but He will never ask too much. I think that's why I was given a step and a heavy amount of time to re-route myself in His directions... He gave me so many miles to walk that way before calling out my next turn. My own personal GPS. "Follow the words I say, and when it's time I will tell you when to turn so you don't get lost. If you pay close enough attention, I'll also re-route you if you do."

Here is the Martha in this. I was paying attention to the details of the task, instead of the task itself. God never called us to look like Christians. He called us to be them. It was better of me to *look* like I was trying to live the life I was called to, but what about actually meaning it? God wants our hearts. If we can fully give Him our *hearts*, through them, He will rebuild our lives. That is the goal. Jesus is the Goal.

"Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed- or indeed **only one**. Mary has chose what is better, and it will not be taken away from her." That verse, put in this perspective, is fire, ladies. God says I am all

that matters. Sitting at My feet and hearing what I say, learning what I say, is the single most right choice we can make in our lives. I worry about friendships where I live, for my babies, I want them included. I fear them not being. God says I'm worried and upset, but choose My feet over friendships. I get upset when I hear things louder than I hear God's truths. God says it doesn't matter, I do.

I get worried about the details of my past, things real to me and things real to others about me, and God says You made the right choice. Satan will certainly try to steal your joy, but the choice you've made, you will always have. It's all you'll ever need. There are so many little details in our lives we want to clean up, that we want to make better, and y'all we wear ourselves out for appearances. This results in us being too tired for the Lord.

We're doing all the things, going all the places, and when we make it to our beds to say our prayers... we have the nerve to ask God to do something when we've taken no initiative to read anything. God has already spoken. He still speaks... but we're *too tired* or *too busy* to read it. Maybe *I just don't understand it, The Bible*, I can't. When you pursue God and His word with all of your heart, with your plans and intentions set aside, He will absolutely reveal Himself to you. I promise. The problem is, we approach God with our problems, like Martha, and we also come with answers. God do you see her? Tell her to help me. God do you see how they treat me; make them stop. God, do you see how bad we're struggling in our marriage; fix my husband. God, my dad will not quit drinking, make him go to rehab. God doesn't need our help running the universe; He only needs our cooperation. Few things are needed, in fact only one.

Give Him your heart. Not the one you post on Facebook, the real one without all of the fake details. That is the one He can fix. If we are going to get real with God, We've got to get real with ourselves.

Week 2: The Enemy Will Fall.

Day One:

READ 1 SAMUEL 17: 4-9 THEN 26-50

It is our second week so let's talk about what has stood out to you the most while reading this particular scripture?

How did people treat David? How did it affect him?

What significant things did you notice about David as he prepared for battle?

These are the kinds of things I want us to learn how to observe in scripture, the little details. Where God is in this story. What is He doing? Why? Looking at the characteristics of the Lord as they apply to every setting will teach us more about what the Lord wants for us... and more importantly- the things He doesn't want.

If you translate the measurements of Goliath, he was about 9'9" tall. Just his armor alone weighed 125lbs. Saul told David he wasn't ready; even Daniel's brother had a few choice words to share about David. Criticism isn't a new idea for our generation. What hurts does not have to hinder us. There comes a point in our faith that we have to be more concerned with God's call on our lives than our feelings themselves. David responded in confidence because of what God had already done in David's life before. God never calls us without also equipping us. This means that we will never experience things like pain or fear that cannot be repurposed in our lives. evil promotes the works of God, remember? Everything is on purpose with the Lord. David has fought lions and bears and it would be easy to assume that maybe you have fought your own beasts too. Our giants. We find ourselves in unfamiliar places. Saul gave David his approval as well as a bunch of other stuff David did not need. People never want to fight the giant themselves, but they do not mind telling you how they would do it. If you don't need their approval, you also do not need their opinions. Instead David told Saul thanks but no thanks. I am going to use what I know. He grabs some rocks and faces the philistine and by all outward appearance, David looks like a straight fool to both his people and his enemy. Goliath demoralized David. Of course people do this

today too. Planting seeds of uncertainty or worthlessness into the heart of your opponent is a quick way to illicit fear even before the battle begins. Satan uses the same strategy for us. A lot of times we never make it to battling the people Satan uses because his manipulation of our thoughts are enough to leave us stranded. You are not good enough. This is too hard. I'm tired of being patient. This will not end. This is Satan's sugar. Goliath sprinkled some too. What he didn't realize is he may have been fighting a little boy with some rocks, but he was also fighting God. By the power of the Lord and the toss of one rock, the enemy fell. David never had to pick up a sword. This battle was easily fought because it was commissioned by the Lord. Satan will push us to fight the battles the Lord has asked us to surrender. It is up to us to discern between the two. Leave the criticism behind. Put down all of the knives, the weapons, the gossip, the whatever you use to retaliate against your giant. Set aside the advice of others. It will be just fine to set aside their criticism too. God only created one plan for our lives because we do not need a plan B. Adding to what He has already made perfect is saying that He Himself is not enough. We can't pray that God will come through, but have a plan for when He doesn't. There is a faith that says Goliath is too big, I can't take Him or there is a faith that says he is so big I can't miss and we get to choose which one we desire to have authority over our lives. God wants our complete participation. To give Him this we have to devote our full attention to what He is trying to accomplish instead of being distracted by the giants Satan tries to set in our way.

Let's pray.

God,

I know I let the enemy distract me. I'm learning all of the things that he can dress up as to fool me into looking another direction. Instead help me to only look to You. We want to recognize Satan for what he is upfront. We realize we, ourselves, are no match for Satan, help us to surrender that to You so You may remind us that You are. Thank you, God, for already winning this victory over evil. Thank you, God, for You. Amen,


Katie Sanders

Day Two:

READ EXODUS 14: 1-14

Leading up to this chapter in Exodus, Pharaoh had enslaved the Israelites in Egypt. Moses instructed Pharaoh to let God's people go but he refused. As punishment, God sent ten plagues on Egypt. These were prophecies from Moses that Pharaoh hardened his heart to. The devastation was so great that Pharaoh called Moses up in chapter 12 and told him to take him and his people and get out, finally. He eventually changes his mind and sends all of the people out after the people of God, and in chapter 14, God speaks His plan. He tells Moses to essentially back his people in a corner so they will look weak and confused. Of course Pharaoh will attack. Ever found yourself in a corner like this? We let Satan stack sin in our lives that there feels like there is not a painless escape on either side, and God allows this. Verse 4 tells of God's purpose. "I will gain glory, and people will know that I am God." Just as the Lord had planned, Pharaoh came charging in. They had an army on one side and a sea on the other, and with no obvious escape Pharaoh thought he had won. Sin and Satan set the same snares for us. It's not until we get backed into a corner, in a place of despair, that we want to call out to the Lord. The Israelites did just this. Not only did they cry out to God, though, they also blamed someone else for how they ended up there in the first place. When we see that our only help left is God, we are more likely to trust Him. Why is it that we use God as our last resort when really He is our forever rescue. God is always the same and always safe; you will never go wrong running to God. It's what we are structured for. Despair will cast you down, fear will tell you to run, and impatience will tell you to do something now. Don't be presumptive or rash in your decisions. Be still and let God reveal His plan. When there seemed like no other way out but devastation, God parted the sea. The same path that led God's people to safety devoured the enemies that chased them. Today God continues to make a way- sometimes we are just too busy fighting our own battles and escapes to see the path.

How often do you run to people instead of God? Do you spend more time talking about your problems instead of praying over them?

Identify what you feel is your greatest flaw when you are trying to fight your way out of a corner, whether it be waiting on God's plan or just running away all together.

Write down one small step you can take towards getting away from this barrier and getting closer to God.

Let's pray.

God,

Sometimes life is hard. I realize that most times I make it harder than it should be. I pray that during this week you will move in big ways and tear down bigger barriers. Help propel us into stillness and prayer rather than cheap talk and quick actions. Help us to trust You first. Thank you, God, for being so understanding of our flaws. Thank You, God, for you.

Amen,

Katie Sanders

Day Three:

READ JOSHUA 6: 1-21

Joshua was leading Israel to the promise land. Jericho was the first city to fall. Joshua knows there's an ultimate end-game promise because the Lord had already promised His people this land. If you read carefully though, at the very beginning, Jesus also promised victory in the battle. Look, I have delivered them to you. God gave them the craziest instructions. Walk around these Walls; do not scream or make a bunch of noise; just walk. At my appointed time, on the 7th day, on the 7th round, the walls will fall. To make these instructions sound even more ridiculous, some of these walls are as high as 25 feet and an estimated 20feet thick. Has God ever asked you to walk around something like that? Something seemingly big and impossible? Quietly walking round and round, circles around the same ole stuff over and over. The walls do not seem to change and the directions don't seem to either. Wears you out, don't it? God, how long am I supposed to walk through this around this? How long am I supposed to just stay silent as I walk and not have a voice at all? You've told us we are going to win as Your people, so what's this for? It's always for glory. The enemy is watching you. They watched the Israelites too. The stood atop those walls as God's people walked round and round, and it made no sense to them... until it did. It didn't make sense to God's people either, for what it's worth. A lot of times God's instructions don't, but we must never get too tired to climb the valley the Lord has set before us. The view is best from the top of the mountain, and if you never get there.. you will never know. The enemy's presence in your life may never complete leave, but neither will God's. Sometimes what we are given is hard and hard is made even harder by the wait. Keep your focus straight and your heart set on the Lord that is beside you and not the difficulty in front of you. God promised that in the end everything would be okay. If it doesn't feel okay, it is not the end.

Has God asked things of you that do not really make sense? Like what?

Has He asked you do stay in the same season for what feels like ever without any new instructions or all of the same things? Explain.

What about in the past? Like David, can you look back on a time that God was faithful to you in similar ways? Are you able to use that experience with God to sustain your hope that God is in fact good and on your side?

Look up Romans 5:3-5. Write it Below.

Let us pray.

God,

I do not understand what you are doing in this season of my life. Help me to know that I do not have to. Please make your instructions to us clear and your will for us known as we continue to study and grow in your world. Thank you, God for your guidance, even when we cannot see the path. Thank you, God, for you.

Amen,

Katie Sanders

David

Day Four:

David was one of the greatest kings of Israel. When people think of David, they think of David as king, David as a shepherd, David that killed the giant Goliath, David the psalmist, but when I see David... I see hope. Alongside David's noble list of qualities falls more qualities: betrayer, liar, adulterer, murderer, yet God Himself called David a man after His own heart.

David made some big mistakes. David saw another man's wife, lusted after her, slept with her, and she conceived a child. Sometimes our first big mistakes aren't enough to get our attention, and David was no different. When he finds out this woman is pregnant, he calls her husband out from war to send him home for some time, assuming he would sleep with his wife, but the man slept at the gates with all the master's servants because he couldn't bring himself to go eat and drink and make love to his wife while others were sleeping out of tents. He tried a couple of more things in order to lure this man back in bed with his wife and when they didn't work, David planned his murder. He told the chief commanding officer of his army to take him back and put him in the front lines of battle then withdraw from him so he will be struck down and die. David ended up taking in the widow, helping her raise her child. (See 2nd Samuel for the full story) He appeared like the hero in his own horror story. What we can cover up to the world around us doesn't cover up the damage inside us. David certainly reaped the consequences of his sin in the difficult dynamics that grew from his children.

But David was still great. Big mistakes don't debilitate a person so much as it just disrupts the course. We cannot intercede God's plans for our lives, but we can run from them. The terrain outside the path depends on how far off course we run. David sinned greatly, but he did not sin repeatedly. He was quick to confess and carried a repentant heart with him. This is all God wants from us. He never asked that we be perfect; He only asked that we be sorry. David experienced the joy of forgiveness even when he had to suffer to consequences of his sin, and he learned from his mistakes because he accepted the suffering they brought. I have much rather walk through hot coals with some protection, than try to hop across them on my own, and this is God's desire for us, to *help* us.

The Bible makes no attempt to hide David's sin; it also makes no hesitations to promote him. This is because what you did is not who you are in the Kingdom of Christ. The enemy manipulates this. He still uses my past to demoralize me into thinking my voice is not worthy enough to do the Lord's work. Sin does not disqualify you, fear does.

God sent David into one of the biggest fights of his life with two stones, and not only did he give him victory, he also gave him a crown. David learned to show up for God and to trust Him. If we are not willing to trust the Lord to take care of us, even after we have rejected Him, we need to be willing to lose. Willingness to honestly admit our mistakes is the first step in dealing with them.

Week Three: And If Not, God is Still Good.

Day One:

READ DANIEL CHAPTER 3

In life, people only have the control over us that we let them have. I learn this over and over. The king builds this huge idol of himself and commanded all to worship him... and out of fear, most everybody did...except God's people. Idols are Satan's nutrients. It is how he feeds us sin. He has learned that Christians will ball up a solid lie and throw it back at him, but will find fulfillment and satisfaction with half-truths. Anything we put before God is an idol. They are not all gold, polished, and settled on an altar of some kind. Idols come in the form of jobs, children, maybe even your closet. I get it, I love boots too, but the value of things and of people should never proceed the value of God in our lives. "I'm too busy, how do you make time for it." We make time for the things we care about the most, and those things we don't care about.. we don't prioritize. I bet you have time to go to work, but have you made time for God? Idol. "but I have to go to work to make a living." But you don't need God to? I get it. It is hard sometimes. The King told these people to worship his idol or else. People will demand you do things too, but ordered to does not mean the same as ordained. Sometimes we are *ordered* by society to do this or that to fit in, but God has *ordained* us to come out and be separate. We have made a habit to answering to people before we answer to God, but not these three in this story. They did not cause a big scene or make a protest or big deal out of what they didn't do; they didn't even belittle the ones that did, but they were noticed for their differences. This is because calling Jesus Lord means nothing if it doesn't make a difference in how you live your life. Salvation in its purest forms never go unnoticed. Having attention turned to them now, the king gave them a second chance. Do this or you will surely be punished. Satan extends the same invitation to us. It may be hard enough to resist him the first time, because he will likely tempt you with your weakness, but then he will come back angry. Maybe he will wait until a stressful day or maybe just a long one, but he will strike again and it will be harder. He will push that same button, almost demanding sin. and then what? What we do not surrender to sin, God will sustain in strength but it calls for a sacrifice. This time that sacrifice was life itself; ours are rarely that big. We often fail in obedience because we wait for opportunities like these to test our faith before we begin to obey. Instead, we accept these half-truths fill our lives with small compromises and our "big day" never comes because we have been too busy going around and around with Satan over the little ones. These three told the King I know God has my back. He will save us from your hands. They were also confident that even if God didn't God was still good. Just as the king said, the devil's participants tied them up and through them in the fire. This is the point that we get to in our own lives that we feel like it is over, but God was so faithful to His servants that not only did He rescue them from the fire, He also destroyed those that bound them up and tossed them to death by the very fire they had put them in. This promise still exists for us. Romans 12 says vengeance is for the Lord. Our God

is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Do not doubt His ability and do not presume His will. Another miracle won more souls because three servants were sustained in the fire rather than running from it. I'd ask for what, but by now I think you guys are seeing a pattern. God's glory. God will always be good, even when He doesn't feel good. The mountain looks best from the top, right? John 1:5 says the darkness has not overcome the Light. God says It never will. I'd rather be safe in the shadows than clueless in the fire.

Look up the full verse John 1:5. Write it here.

Putting idols in a different perspective, can you admit to having any? Can you commit to rearranging them?

I think we could all agree that if faced with a life or death decision to follow God or not to... and the immediate result would be heaven, we would all suffer that consequence for that reward... you know, the big stuff, but what about the little decisions to follow Him. Can you think of a few compromises you've made in your personal life for sake of convenience? or pleasure alone? The white lie to get you out of that dinner party or the TV show that isn't really "all that bad"? List a few here.

Now that we have identified some problems, what can we do to change them?

Let us pray. You first.

God,

I am sorry for prioritizing You around my day instead of my day around You. Help us to set nothing before You and everything bad behind us. Little by little, shape us in to the designs you've created for us, letting us not compromise one piece of Your creation. We acknowledge that You are best and know best. Thank You God, for Your protection. Thank You God, for You.

Amen,

Katie Sanders



Day Two:

READ DANIEL 6: 1-24

I'm learning that you don't necessarily have to be a bad person to be placed in a bad season. Daniel made enemies doing a good job. I am sure we all have people that not only look for ways to poke you, but would also buy a cake to celebrate your crash. You will not ever get rid of these kinds of people; there will always be someone weak enough to let Satan manipulate them. Jesus cannot always save us from the bruises, but He will always honor us for our submission. A relationship with God does not mean we are excused from hard times. We just have a fluffier cushion for them. Let me be clear, God will not love you any more or less for your obedience. God does not operate off of a scale of bad or worse; He runs off love and we cannot thwart that. Some of you are thinking well then what's the point? Trust me, I know. Sin separated us from God. That is why Jesus was sent for our restoration; there was no other way for us to be with Him. Jesus is our mediator. That principle has not changed because God hasn't. Sin still creates distance between us and Jesus and in order to draw from His abundance, you have to be near Him. Closer to God means further from sin; trust me I've been at both ends. Just like the story before, Daniel knew that the righteous choice didn't necessarily mean the choice less painful, but it is still the right one. To be comfortable with God means to be uncomfortable with people. The scriptures say to love Christ is to hate the other, and to be honest, straddling the fence is probably more dangerous than either. Daniel committed to God and stood in that promise, knowing how uncomfortable the consequences. He was thrown into the lion's den to be devoured by the lions. Now this isn't a reality for us, but have you ever been backed into a corner or felt like you've been cast into some bottomless pit? Me too. I hope by now you are beginning to notice a pattern. I don't imagine Daniel was the most comfortable, and we shouldn't expect to be either... but he was safe. The stuff that frustrates us the most, even the stuff that happens because of another person's carelessness or mistakes, will not override the intentionality of God's purpose for you. You are untouchable until God's appointed time... and all these stories? They all end the same: with the enemy torn to pieces.

Why do you think it is that we carry the do good, get good attitude? What can we do to change our expectation?

What are some of the characteristics of David, what about of the King? What were the result of both?

Do you often let people influence your behavior despite what you know is right? Let's get honest with ourselves about our position and readjust where necessary to line ourselves up with Jesus' expectations, and not just for His protection, but also for Him.

Let us pray.

God,

I'm sorry for doing wrong, even when I know it is not right. Help us to position ourselves to look past others' opinions of our actions and instead look to You. We are a fallen people, and we recognize that we will never get it all right, but we come to You asking for a heart of conviction so we can better serve and honor You, no matter what everyone else is doing. Thank you, God, for Your forgiveness. Thank you, God, for You.

Amen,

Katie Sanders

Day Three:

READ ACTS 16: 16-34

The foundations were shaken, the chains broke. People read these Bible stories and think now what am I supposed to do with this? I want to teach you how to really tap into this vessel. Every one of us are sitting in chains. We are not wandering around in the wilderness without food or water. We are not fleeing to literal caves running from our enemies either, but maybe something in our lives is holding us so far down that we do feel captive to it. Maybe were not starving but you're struggling to buy groceries and meet bill deadlines, and maybe you are not hiding in caves from your enemies but I'd bet you have a few. Paul and Silas were in jail, in the middle of the night just singing- other prisoners just watching them, y'all. Testimony build when we learn to be unaffected by tough circumstances. All for God's glory, right? Why would God use His people in prison? Heck, why would God use me?? Months into my ministry it dawned on me that God positioned me to help people *because* of my filthy past, not in spite of it. The way you live your life will sometimes be the only Bible people ever read. Sinners are made different by one thing- a saved sinner or a lost one. And this story? It is told over and over. Just like this jailer, we make one relatively big mistake and assume it is over. We label things... sin. With no authority, we have managed to create a sin scale. Some sin we feel can just skate by... the white lie that gets us out of girl's night, pre-marital sex, the Saturday night party before the Sunday morning service. We justify these because, well, everybody does it; it's fine. But then there are those super sinners- the addict that lost her child, the thief, the adulterer... these sins are the big ones, the ones that *really* count. What we do not realize is God does not hold us to the same standard scale we hold others to. None of us are good enough but all of us are equal. The chains were opened and no one moved. Some times our circumstances will tell us to run and faith will command us to stay... even if we have options that suggest otherwise. Satan will always provide another option, usually an easier one, but in our obedience, glory shows up. Paul and Silas did not need to find lovely in their circumstances, they knew they could find lovely in their God. We all have chains, but we do not necessarily all have God. He is the only one that can turn a dark 1st century prison into a sanctuary. Have a joy that contradicts your circumstances, it will not only save strangers, it will also save you. Are you guilty of holding judgement to one wrong vs another in someone else's life? what about in your own?

Do you make room for some sin because culture says those are excusable? What does God say?

Has Satan ever tempted you in a bad situation? Gave you an easier option to run away from a problem when God has asked you to sit with it? Do you think now you will be more equipped to recognize Satan for what he is and instead, trust God to do what He does?

Let us pray,

God,

I want to recognize you in the dark, cold prisons my sin has set me in. Hold us accountable for our attitudes when they begin to chase our circumstances. Remind us there is joy in You alone. Let us honor You and Your word by acting accordingly, do not let us be pulled from that desire. Thank you, God, for being the light in the dark and cold places of our lives. Thank You, God, for You.

Amen,


Katie Sanders

Week Four: God's Plan Not Our Way

Day One:

READ GENESIS CHAPTER 16; CHAPTER 17: 15-21

Early in chapter 12, God made Abraham a promise- your offspring will be more than the stars. Chapter 16 starts verse 1: his wife had bore him no children. This was ten years after being promised a son and 15 years before the birth of Isaac. Have you ever been worn out waiting for God to reveal a blessing? Did you wait 25 years? Sarah grows weary and begins to make some plans of her own. I wish this were not familiar to me but it is. Customs then said it was okay to give a female servant to your husband for the purpose of children. She had been unable to conceive and so she just knew God must have meant she would have children another way. She gave her maid to Abraham and Hagar, the servant, conceived. Hagar gave birth to a baby boy and Sarah created something also; heartache, for more than just her. This is inevitable when we take over for God, when we try to help Him. Most all of you would agree with the statement 'God knows best'. Now why we don't act like we agree with that? I wish I knew. We are broken, just like Sarah. Our desire for the perfect family wells inside of us all; we are women. It is why we take that picture 12 times to get it just right before we share it. It is why we run around in the mornings frantic- baby, do not get that on your shirt; baby, those shoes are not on the right feet; baby, it is 90 degrees outside, you cannot wear that today. Pay attention to the details, anybody else step over toys and a dirty cup for three days straight and then find out someone is coming over and scramble to get it all at least somewhat together? We could rationalize these behaviors ten million ways but what I am finding is it all comes down to pride. Wait, clean houses are pride? God knows best. He also knows worst because he knows everything. He does not mind that three-day old chocolate milk that your neighbor may find the grossest, but He does mind your heart. I am learning that the wait is usually for no other reason than for ourselves. Looking ready and being ready are not the same. Switching that baby's shoes to the 'right way' made her look ready. Cleaning that house for the messes to be out of the way made it look ready. That picture you took 12 times made it look like you didn't just tell your kids to look at that camera and smiles or no candy. What we look like and what we are not the same. Everyone else sees what is put together and God sees the pieces. If only we had no set our own standard so high; if only we were not so dependent on ourselves- maybe we wouldn't be so much like Sarah. Maybe we could grow into our blessings rather than pushing over them, always looking for the next put-together thing. I put together a hot wheels track for my son last week. It took my brother-in-law and I hours. My son squirmed and whined the entire time, but because, as a parent, I made him wait- he was able to enjoy it fully. Had I thrown it together enough to just make it look ready- it would have all came crashing down half way through the track. Some present, right? God's plans for us are the same. If God says wait, He is making time to connect part A to part B. If He says not yet, He is working on the safety features that protect us. If He says no, He does not mean maybe if I did this... We look at tomorrow and He looks at forever. Sarah couldn't wait and the impatience gave birth to Egypt. The rushed blessing still fights the chosen one, Isaac and Israel, to this day. Chapter 17 tells Abraham My promise is still coming because Jesus' plan is ordained, but that does not erase our interventions. We've got to learn to quit demanding what we are not ready for so we do not live in pieces, but instead peace. God didn't need Sarah's help and He also does not need ours. Let God be God.

I can't even ask if you have ever tried to get in front of God; I think we all have... but now can you recognize the importance of being still like Moses in Exodus 14?

What is hardest thing for you when you have been praying over something and maybe God is asking you to wait but Satan whispers you could probably do — instead and get it that way?

I don't have your answers to my questions but I can give you an answer. God reveals Himself through scripture more than He reveals Himself in any other way. If you are praying over something and looking for His answers over your own, spend time in prayer and then GO. TO. HIS. WORD. It's called the living word for a reason; It lives with us in every season and what a passage meant today will mean something totally different two years from now when you read it in a different season. God is good; God is faithful; and God is thorough. If He is calling You to move, I promise you, He will confirm it.

God,

Thank you for telling me I am enough. I am sorry that sometimes I do not show You that you are also. We apologize for adding to your plans, maybe even trying to remake them all-together. Please open our eyes to Your word. Give Us the wisdom necessary to discern what our hearts require to be faithful and just let You be You. Thank you, God, for Your plans for our lives. Thank You, God, for You.

Amen,



Katie Sanders

Day Two:

READ JEREMIAH 32

God has given Jeremiah instructions. Buy this land. This city had been under attack for a year and soldiers were occupying the land Jeremiah was to buy. God not only asked him to purchase it, but do it publicly. Already a prisoner in the palace, he bought land that had already been taken by Babylon. Doesn't sound like it makes a lot of sense now; it probably did not then either, especially knowing Babylon. Babylon was the single most powerful empire at the time. Undefeatable. God told Jeremiah put these deeds in a clay jar so they will last a long time; there will come a time when all these things will be bought again. This is God's promise of restoration. Jeremiah answers, "You have made both heaven and Earth- nothing is too hard for You." Doesn't that roll off the tongue so easy? We have no problem trusting that God made everything. Why is it so easy to put our trust in the biggest of creations, but finding faith in the smaller ones? The Bible claims God as Lord of this entire world, yet we find doubt in Him as Lord over our lives? Learn this early- nothing is by coincidence. God's purposes are in all things, even the little ones and especially the big ones. Great are His purposes; mighty are His deeds; open are His eyes. Things in our lives will step in to rule us. Babylons. Big things. Early in this chapter the Lord says if you fight against Babylon, you will not succeed. Isn't that hard to hear from our God? Evil will come after you and if you fight, you will lose. Bet you try anyway. I have. A member of your family is an addict- you try to fight that. Your marriage is crumbling- you try to fight that. Your child is terminally ill- you try to fight that. and don't all of these things feel hopeless? Babylons, they feel hopeless and undefeatable. God says I've given you good promises- promises that are flowing with milk and honey, but is has been over taken by evil... So have our lives. We recognize this and we move to do something but I am learning that I am no match for Satan, not even a little bit. You will never have victory over evil alone. His tricks are too many; his deception is too great. We are unable to recognize our powerlessness because his attacks are so personal. He comes after things, people, that are ours, and it allows us to think that because it is ours we can fight and take it back. So we try. Over and over, we fight, we argue, and we lose... it is a cycle that feels like it never ends, and truth is, it feels this way because it doesn't. Sin brings wrath and we bring sin and while sin was conquered at the cross- it was Jesus that was crucified, not Satan. He is alive and he is busy and just like us, he will not win but that hasn't kept him from trying. Instead of turning to God for guidance we turn from Him to ourselves. Over and over He tries to bring us back with gentle correction and still we cannot hear Him to listen. A war was never won with hugs, at least not in the movies, and so we don't fight with love even though the Bible says it is the only thing that will ever save us. He has given us simple instructions to fight complicated battles and we run so far from His presence with our sin that we cannot hear them. This gives Satan the opportunity to convince us to act on our own. So we do and it hurts but God says I will run after them and I will bring them back. We are no match for Satan but God has already beat him. "I'll make them a forever promise, I will never stop doing good for them." Thank God He is faithful when we aren't. He will ask of us things that do not make sense- He is doing good for us. The enemy will not slow down; put down the

knife anyway because the promise is clear and so are the instructions. You cannot enjoy one without being willing to sacrifice the other.

What is your first instinct when you or someone close to you feels like they are under attack?

How do you react when someone you do not like throws some kind of punch at you? Wait for the right time to get them back or?

Why is it, do you think, that God calls us to love one another over and over in the Bible? What does it take to do it?

Let's pray.

God,

Remind me that I am not You. I control nothing but what I let control me. Give us the wisdom to recognize things for what they are, the strength to disregard what I cannot control, and the patience to let You be You. I recognize that Babylons will sometimes chase after me and You will ask me to publicly do things that do not make sense. Help me do them anyway. Thank You God for the victory you've provided that I cannot give myself. Thank You, God, for You.

Amen,

Katie Sanders

READ HEBREWS 11: 24-29

Moses was born in a time that Pharaoh had issued a “kill all” for Hebrew boys. His mother kept him for three months and when he could no longer be hidden, she wrapped him up, placed him in a basket on the Nile river, and he was found by the Pharaoh’s daughter where he was kept and raised in the palace. Hebrews 11 cuts the story short, but basically God positioned Moses in a place that would allow him to be a good spokesperson for His people. Israel was in captivity under Pharaoh and God instructed Moses to tell Pharaoh to let His people go. We learned of this earlier. God used Moses and sent the plagues until Israel was released. The red sea was parted and Israel escaped by the same waters Egypt was devoured by. What is important here is to recognize what is on the other side of the victory. The Lord had a plan to rescue Israel. He did, but on the other side of that parted sea was wilderness and our victories today can be much the same. God shows up for us in miraculous ways, but sometimes there is darkness on the other side of glory. We all want the victory of heaven without any battle of hell. It took faith for Moses to give up his place in the palace, but he was able to because he saw the temporary nature of wealth and social status. Satan deceives us with what the world call value blinding us to the long-range benefits of God’s kingdom. They spent 40 years in the wilderness; sometimes it only takes us 4 days of darkness before, like Sarah, we make other plans. God does not always work in the way that seems best to us. This is because He can see the end of our journey from the beginning while we’re only given a few steps at a time. I’ve learned this is the best way to receive instruction from the Lord: one day at a time; a few feet at a time. Any more than that and I get ahead of myself and try to get in front of God too. There will always be times in your plan when God allows suffering while you feel like you deserve sunshine. I’ll tell you again- there are no coincidences with Jesus. He is too busy to be anything but purposeful so I encourage you to only look straight, never ahead. His plan is to provide for you, to take care of you, and even when that looks different than you would imagine, it is still always right. I think God places us in the dark most often because if we knew where we were we wouldn’t depend on Him to get where we are going, and scripture makes it clear that there is only one way to heaven. That way is not ours. By faith Moses left Egypt; he preserved because he saw Him who is invisible... and Gosh, I know sometimes God really does feel invisible. I’ve looked for Him in the same place more than once without any idea where He may be, but that’s faith. Faith is a belief in something real that cannot be seen, and just because our eyes aren’t able to physically see the work of His hands does not mean they are not on us. A victory today may mean the wilderness tomorrow, but neither require intervention by us. The more we position ourselves to learn to fix nothing, the more opportunity we give God to fix everything. My prayer is that each of us learn to only want that.

Have you ever failed to follow through on something that you felt God was calling you to do because maybe you were more comfortable somewhere else?

When you cannot physically fix your eyes to see what God is doing, is it harder for your heart to trust Him. What do you think you can do to fix this?

Let us pray.

God,

I've maneuvered around your plan to create comfort in my life. I do not live in a palace, but I recognize that I have let culture make me comfortable in my sin. I apologize for that. Just like Moses, I know You have created each of us for a specific purpose. I also know that any detours you have paved for us were not created by accident. Help us to walk through the parted seas, and also find joy in what is on the other side. Thank You, God, for being a Good and purposeful God. Thank You, God, for You.

Amen,


Katie Sanders

Week Five: God is Faithful, Even When We Are Not

Day One:

JONAH CHAPTERS 1 AND 2

This was one of the only stories in the Bible I knew as a child and before I came to *really* know Jesus. I knew Jonah was swallowed up by a fish; I had no idea why. Little did I know, one day I would live out Jonah's story for myself. Maybe you have too. God gave Jonah simple instructions. Jonah wasn't up for the challenge and took off in the opposite direction. He jumped on a boat and things got rough. It didn't get better until Jonah owned up to what he did and surrendered himself. God had a plan for that surrender. Verse 17 chapter 1 says God appointed a great fish to swallow him up. I believe he does the same to us. I've found that it is not the big things that turn us around in our obedience to God, it is the little ones. We want to pick and choose areas of our lives to obey God, the ones that fit our convenience. Maybe it's the simple something like that show that is 'not so bad' or maybe it is what we would call a bigger compromise like pornography, but we make our choices and it's the little things like these that pull us away. Satan can carry you much further if he convinces you to take just one little step at a time. The beauty in this story is it took Jonah a little time to run and no time to travel home. Jonah spent three days in the belly of that fish and came to his senses. It only took me 20-ish something years. We sit in the dark until we ask for the light. It may have taken us a lifetime to get lost, but it takes two seconds, one word, to be saved. Sorry. Jonah repents, taking responsibility for what he did, willing to take what he deserved, and right then God said, "good, spit him out. Now let's try this again." You see, we will always be sinners. This means that God doesn't give us a second change, He just gives us another one. The next chapters tell how Jonah did exactly what God asking this time and because of his faithfulness, a whole people were saved from the wrath of God. The scripture says when God saw that they changed their evil ways, He let go of the disaster He said He would do and He did not do it. We are offered the same promise; our obedience brings the same rewards. God does not promise us exemption from hard times but He does provide us immunity. Jonah was asked to face a horrible leader. This was a scary task and we can expect the same. Sometimes your instruction will be simple- watch your mouth- and other times it will feel like He has asked you to run into a blazing fire- actually He has done that before. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. If you will remember right, though, three were thrown into the fire and four were dancing around in it. We have to surrender us for Him to sustain us; obedience is our job, outcome is His. Good people make bad choices all the time, but it has been my experience that if you are running from God, He will chase you until you either slow down or crash. How He finds you is up to you. If He will chase Jonah out of a fish's belly, He will certainly chase you through your dark place too. Thank God He is faithful, even when we are not.

Are you like Jonah? Intimidated by something God is asking you to do so you just take off the opposite direction?

Has this landed you in a gunky dark place? Maybe not a fish belly but somewhere about as uncomfortable?

Do you think if you could be honest with yourself and admit your wrong, God could command a better set of circumstances for you?

Let's go back to week one... and do you *believe* that He will?

God,

Sometimes your instructions are scary. We forget when we are faced with a big job that you've already conquered the greatest one. Help us to see past temporary discomfort in order for us to further the works that bring us forever satisfaction. We want to be loyal to You. Thank you, God, for chasing us through the dark we ran too ourselves. Thank you, God, for You.

Amen,

Katie Sanders

Day Two:

READ LUKE 15: 11-32

God loves us all the same. That's easy for me to say, but in the right situations, it's hard for me to understand. I tell myself over and over, Katie, God hates the sin, not the person. God hates the sin, not the person. I find myself being the oldest son more than I'd like to admit, wanting to ask God why 'that' person has it so much easier than I feel like I do. God, that is not fair. God, that's not either. Early in my faith, I had to realize do good does not mean get good. For what it is worth, do bad does not always mean get bad either, but both bad and good get grace. I want to focus more on the younger son today. We will talk more about the second son in our next reading, but his behavior here is just as significant so place close attention to the detail of his pieces of the story.

God has to care for us all differently. The younger son wanted his inheritance, and I'd imagine his dad knew giving it to him before he was ready probably wasn't the best idea, but he let him have it anyway. Go ahead then. Have you found yourself asking for God to do something for you over and over and you keep not getting an answer or maybe you do... it's just not the one you want? I've made things fit before. Just because things were never supposed to be does not mean we cannot manipulate them into existence. And we do. Of course, God controls this. It's called handing us over into our sin. Go-ahead-then grace sounds much friendlier though, doesn't it? You see, God will eventually let us have the thing He knows we do not need all for the purpose of us realizing the very thing we do. The son got his money; sure, have it, and he went and wasted it on awful things. Reckless living. Doesn't sound like anything we would do, does it? The youngest son finds himself at the very bottom. He has absolutely nothing left. The scripture says he was hungry, and the people gave him nothing... but then he came to himself and he said I'll go home. You may have never reached this place in your life, but I certainly have. I'd trade nothing in this world for that place of nothingness. The son was working this great speech up; I'm going to go home and I'm going to tell them...and he works up this big speech... kind of like we do when we feel like we're caught being wrong. But while he was a long way off, his father saw him, and went running to him. God does this for us too, y'all, because from the very moment we leave His presence, He is waiting for us to come back. We get ourselves so far from God with sin. We've talked about how far Satan can drag us from the presence of God by just asking us to take a few steps at a time, and then a few more, and then a few more. The further away we walk, the harder it is to hear His voice guide us. This is why God will leave the 99 to come after the 1. God finds the sinner more than the sinner finds God, and this is because we don't typically search for conviction, we look for comfort, and God is the last place we go. We look for it in people, in things, in ourselves. We are much more likely to run to people with our problems than we are to first, or even only, run to God. The misery of this man's choices sent him back to the father, and so should ours. In his clear thinking, he didn't make plans to improve his conditions and he didn't even place any blame; he recognized his misery without *focusing* on it, and instead focused on God himself. The next time you find yourself in a place of 'God, why' remember God only allows the pain necessary to turn us around. Some take more than another. Lord knows, it took me a lot, it

took me enough. Two requests came from this son; one was Father, give me and the other Father, make me... and only one request brought joy.

Can you think of a time in your life when you feel like the Lord gave you a Go-Ahead-Then grace?

When you find yourself in a mess, what is your first instinct? Taking it to a person, or taking it to God. We've got to learn to position ourselves in prayer more than conversation.

What do you ask of God more: God please answer my pray for ——— or God, please make my heart align with your will, not my own.

Let us pray.

God,

I know I have asked you for things I do not need. I've even tried to twist your will around my own in ways that make it sound like it aligns with You. I am sorry. Thank you for loving us enough to give us up to the things that will devour us. Thank You, for chasing us down when they do. I am so grateful for your Go-Ahead-Then grace, God. I am also so grateful, God, for You.

Amen,


Katie Sanders

Day Three:

While reading this, ask yourself some questions. This is how I have learned to study and really pull things from Old Testament Scripture.

What is going on with the chapter? What is the mood? Why?

What characteristics do you see in the people?

How does God respond?

Does it end with a promise? What?

I'll set the scene in a more now-a-days setting.

There is a dirty woman present. She's having a hard time and makes poor, adulterous decisions. She feels empty so, she chases after something that will make her smile, maybe not for long, but enough to get through the day. She finds herself in the same bed with a new man that is not her husband. Her choices crash down on her, and she is back in a bad place. She hides from her husband, but he finds her at *his* house. He doesn't invite himself in, but he knocks on the door and the man that has his wife answers. The husband takes no time to confront him, he just says, "hey, I know she is in here. I brought her a change of clothes, and her favorite pillow; she drinks her coffee with cream, and I also left 100 dollars in there for y'all to eat. I love her and I want her taken care of, no matter what." The wife

didn't acknowledge this display of love, so the husband shut it off and so did so-and-so she shared that bed with. Now what?

Stuck in the belly of a fish, ran off to a foreign land and wasted everything good, turned on the one that loved you the most?

Getting it?

The Husband is God; the woman is you. Even though we are consistently deceitful, disloyal, and devious, God follows us. The scripture says "*I will go after my lovers, who give me my food and my water, my wool and my linen, my olive and my drink*". Truth is, we all chase these things. Every day we hear the call of our false loves and everyday the one that made love calls us. We go after things that we think will make us complete and whole and are disappointed when we are only happy for a day or two and are right back where we started.

I found myself right here when I got saved and completely sold out to God. When I got re-married, I knew I had the one. I was and still am so happy in my marriage. I adore all five of my beautiful children. I lived in a big 4000 square foot house with an inground pool and marbled bathroom floors, all I needed was the perfect dog and I got him too. I had everything I had ever wanted. I still literally hit rock bottom. Got married at a Starbucks in Memphis, tickled to death; blended a family that gets along so well, so happy; buy the dream home, gosh that felt good (until I had to clean it); given my perfect Ben, the doodle, I had it all, but I didn't. I won't go into the rest of the testimony that tells you what the straw was that sent me to the feet of Jesus, but I will tell you that I've been there. "*Therefore I will block her path with thorn bushes; I will wall her in so that she cannot find her way. She will chase after her lovers but will not catch them. She will look for them but not find them.*"

God promises to set a hedge of thorns on the sides of our paths so it hurts when we get off the correct trail. God did not choose my choices that set me on my knees in a bucket of tears more than once, but He did plan my return. At all costs necessary God will chase you down. He would rather give you bruises than to give you up.

Our idols always seem attractive until God exposes them. When God allows the fleeting pleasures of sin to pass, we often then see just how good it was to stay with God in the 1st place. We have regrets sometimes, but God has redemption. Satan will follow close behind you with a bag, sacking up all of the things of your past that you put down and exchange for grace. He plans to use them against you, and he will. You do not live in yesterday. Satan wants to remember; God wants to restore. Jesus always makes it easy to come back because He never quits inviting you. The welcome mat is clean; so is forgiveness.

Let us pray,

God,

I cannot count the times I've ran away, but I promise to make the time I ran back count. I want to share you as intimately as I know you; I want the same for this group of women. Expose our hearts, crush our idols, and restore what is Yours. God, I welcome the thorns You have placed to protect me, please keep our feet behind the one that loves us most. Let us not confuse this love with anything else. God, thank You for Your faithfulness. Thank You, God, for You.

Amen,

Katie Sanders



Gomer:

Day four:

Gomer had a reputation.

Some of you may have never been labeled for your sin; other's sin may have been public enough to get branded with an entirely new name. The cost is the same. My sin and her sin, it's paid for the same way.

I want to save you some heartache, and try to teach you from my mistake. Making a commitment to God, a real one, will not excuse you from the damage of the world around you; it will only assist you in becoming immune to it. People will still hurt you. Do not expect opinions to change because your heart has. They won't. A change of heart does not mean a change of circumstances, and Jesus isn't a spare tire. There is a great difference in what we need and what we desire.

I *desire* for some things to be easier in my life; maybe they aren't because it keeps me humbled and obedient to the Lord.

You may *want* your marriage to be fixed quickly; maybe it's taking much more time to restore each of you separately to grow that commitment into a forever one.
but we are guilty of giving up on God.

Have I ever told you guys that I had made my mind up to quit praying the very week I was saved? I had given up on my requests. and can I tell you something? If you don't lay your requests down, you're going to give up too. Not give me, God, but make me. Scripture often gets taken out of context.

The bible says anything you ask shall be given to you. People tell you that. but here is the rest of the story: God *absolutely* wants to give us everything we ask for, in accordance with His will. More than anything, He wants to give us Himself, and He wants us to accept Him as enough. I had to challenge myself to see the other side. I needed to look at things from *their side* too and then I had to make myself look at things from God's. When you look up and find yourself in an

affair with your faith, don't run from it, and do not throw dirt on top of it to cover it either; instead ask God, "Lord, reveal to me what you are trying to teach me about myself in this season, then show me what you are trying to teach me about You." A lot of times when we have found ourselves in trial, it will expose one of two things: our selfishness or our pride. Mine is usually the latter of the two.

I learned early to lay down much of myself but for whatever reason I have a tight grasp on that last piece. I don't have to win, but I want to be right, and the two are not the same.

I would about give anyone whatever it is they are asking for, at whatever expense to me it takes, so long as they say... but you are right or you done right or you acted right. Acknowledge to me that I took the right path, and whatever you want... have it. Pride.

The husband in this story gave everything away. He walked his wife over clean clothes and some money and carried his pride with him. God stood sinless in an arena full of people will no ill claim against Him. The religious leaders asked Him questions, gave Him opportunities to speak up for Himself, to justify His actions or even Himself and He stood there and gave no answer. The King of both Heaven and Earth humbly submitted Himself unto us not only with all He had, but also all He was, and we crucified Him. The full and complete wrath of God fell on the sinless Man and He died knowing He was right and worthy in His actions, while the world thought the same. Jesus' job was to submit to the will of His Father; It was God's job to fulfill it.

Gomer had a reputation. Maybe you do too. Her name didn't change and yours probably will not either, but what the people crucified rose from the dead. There was a moment in the garden of Gethsemane that Jesus asked God if there were any other way to complete His mission to please, let it be that; there was a moment on the cross when Jesus, Son of God, cried out Abba, Father, why have you forsaken Me; and there was a moment three days later when Jesus rose and it all made sense. Sometimes the mission we are given is hard, most times we will not understand it, but always in the end, God is glory and His plans are good. Let yourself do only His will, nothing extra from you; ask Him questions if you need to, Jesus even cried tears of blood in his perfectness, and let people crucify whatever pieces of you they please, because there will be a time when God as Lord will reign because the enemy will fall and God is faithful, even when we are not... and everything you stood for, even with weak knees, will be forever and eternally worth it.

You did it, y'all.

You made it to the end of five FULL weeks of Bible school the adult way. When the Lord gave me this project, I had an outline of every week with every story and all of the scripture in between in an hour's time. My fingers could hardly keep up with my heart and I LOVE when God does that. I was so pumped because that is just God's way of verifying to me that I heard Him correctly. God moves when He does things like that and I couldn't wait to deliver it to y'all and reach the heart He planned it for, even if it was just that one heart. What I didn't know then was... that heart was mine. I've read these stories over and over. They are some of my most favorites, like, ever, but God has an amazing way of revealing Himself differently every time I approach His word in the same places, and for that, I am so thankful. I have cried over these pages and cried over these pages. I even spent some nights sleeping on this keyboard, and if it wasn't worth it for your hearts, it was certainly worth it for mine.

God is so cool, y'all. I know the bible is intimidating sometimes. Ask my mama. She was super concerned about me in the early stages of my faith. I heard God speak in the most tangible way on January 11th 2016. I felt it in my bones and it set me on fire for the Lord and I went running to my bible. And I dug... and dug and dug; for hours and hours I would read and would try to decipher what it meant and I'll be honest, I didn't get it either. There are some things I still don't, but I know God put those words there so I know that they're important and I dig until I do get it. God wants you to want Him. Seek and find, knock and he will answer, ask and you will receive. That is biblical. It is scripture. He wants you to search for Him, to try. Sometimes that will look hard, and feel unrewarding, but HEAR ME; you will never approach God with good intentions and get bad results. He loves you.

I want you to come to this living, breathing Word, just like I have, just like I do, and get something new every single time. If this hasn't taught you how to do it, I need to know. We will try again. God has given me the mission to bring others to His word and teach them how to use it. I'm committed to that mission and I am committed to you. My contact information will be below; reach out to me on any platform. I do not have a big ministry, but I do have a determined one.

Thank you, guys, for supporting this ministry and thank you all for supporting me.

Let us pray.

God,

Thank you for an opportunity to present you and your word in a fresh light. I pray that you will minister to the specific needs of each and every woman that has crossed these pages. Give us all the boldness to share You to the fullest. Help us to know you can use just what is here now,

and you can use it no matter our location or proximity to you. I know you are doing big things in big ways. Thank you, God, for each of these women. Thank you, God, for You.

Amen,

A large, stylized signature of "Katie Sanders" in a black cursive font. The signature is overlaid on a large, light orange, semi-transparent watermark of the same signature.

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