

Inspiring Women

A 30 DAY DEVOTION SERIES

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Day 1

What better woman to begin our inspiring women devotion series than the lovely Louisa May Alcott?

Louisa was a suffragette and a civil war nurse, but she is best known for penning the iconic novel, *Little Women*. Unfortunately I did not have the opportunity to read this masterpiece until I was 28 years old. Don't ask me why no one suggested it to me sooner.

My favorite quote from *Little Women* is actually from my least favorite character, Amy. While speaking about her brief experience as a married woman Amy says, "I am not afraid of storms, for I am learning how to sail my ship."

The first time I read *Little Women* I found myself hovering over that line and thinking about a story in the Book of Mark; the story of Christ calming the storm. Jesus was using a harrowing moment on the water to teach his disciples "how to sail." Jesus knew he would not always be with them. The disciples needed to have faith even without his physical presence.

"And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke him and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm." – Mark 4:37-39

In Mark 4:40 after calming the storm Jesus says, "Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?" In other words, "Have you learned nothing of me during our time together?" Jesus would never have let the disciples drown. He had control the entire time. The reality is, storms are inevitable, but we need not fear bad weather, for is in our moments of greatest struggle that Jesus is teaching us how to sail.

If we know how to sail in the middle of a hurricane, then we will know how to sail when there's nothing but clear skies on the horizon.

Application:

How can you view your latest storm as an opportunity for growth?

What other lessons can we learn from Jesus calming the storm in Mark 4?

Who do you know that might be living through a storm right now? Take time to pray for them today.



Day 2

Jochebed was just a mother who loved her child. In spite of the ruling given by Pharaoh, she hid her child for three months. She watched him grow, and with each day her love grew deeper. Then the time came when Jochebed could no longer hide her precious child, and she had to trust him into God's hand.

We are not told why she chooses to build a basket and place Moses into the reeds by the riverside. It seems a strange choice. Perhaps she received a revelation from the Lord or maybe an angel appeared to her and explained what she should do. All I know is her actions took a level of bravery and faith that is absolutely inspiring.

Hebrews 11:23 says, *“By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw that the child was beautiful, and they were not afraid of the king's edict.”*

Jochebed was not afraid of Pharaoh, because she feared God over man. Greater is the one who saved us than he who is in the world. Pharaoh could have killed her and her entire family, but she trusted God had a plan for her son, and she was more than right about that!

Application:

How does the story of Jochebed inspire you?

Read Hebrews 11, otherwise known as the Hall of Faith. Write down three other inspiring figures that stand out to you.

Jochebed's actions might have seemed small at the time, but she is named in the Hall of Faith. What small actions of faith can you make today that could make a big impact in the future?



Day 3

Abigail was a beautiful woman of discernment with a hot-tempered husband named Nabal. We meet her in 1 Samuel 25 when David (the anointed king of Israel) asks Nabal for aid. Rather than helping David and his men, Nabal chooses to be rude and turn them away. David is just about to retaliate when Abigail steps in.

1 Samuel 25:23 says, *“When Abigail saw David, she hurried and got down from the donkey and fell before David on her face and bowed to the ground...”* She then proceeded to beg for the forgiveness of her husband and present David with the aid he had requested.

“Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me!” David says. *“Blessed be your discretion, and blessed be you, who have kept me this day from bloodguilt and from working salvation with my own hand!”* (v32)

Abigail’s quick actions saved her household from destruction.

Romans 14:9 says *“So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.”* I am inspired by Abigail, because she pursues things which make for peace, not war. She knew what needed to be done for the conflict between David and her husband to be resolved, and she did not hesitate to step in and raise the white flag.

Application:

How can you pursue peace today?

With whom is it most difficult to make peace?

How can we keep a level head when dealing with hot tempered people?



Day 4

Amelia Earhart was an aviation pioneer and author. She was also the first female aviator to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean. My fascination with her began at a young age most likely because she grew up just a few hours away from me in Atchison, KS.

I hate to fly, but I think a flight with Amelia Earhart would have been an absolute thrill. Her passion for aviation was a true inspiration.

Earhart used that passion to promote opportunities for women in aviation. She is quoted as saying, “My ambition is to have this wonderful gift produce practical results for the future of commercial flying and for the women who may want to fly tomorrow’s planes.”

Amelia used her gifts not for personal gain, but to improve the lives of those around her. She saw her platform as an opportunity.

1 Peter 4:10-11 says, “*As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.*”

We have been given gifts in order to honor and glorify our Father in heaven. No one was made the same, and that is all part of the grand design.

Application:

What talents can you use to impact this world and God’s kingdom today?

Can you name your spiritual gifts? If not, take some time today to discover them. You can find spiritual gift tests online or through your local church.

Are you being a good steward of your gifts?



Day 5

Rosa Parks was an activist in the American civil rights movement. She is best known for her role in the Montgomery bus boycott when she refused to give her seat in the “colored section” to a white passenger. Though she was not the only person to refuse giving up their seat, Rosa became an important symbol of the movement.

When asked about that iconic day on the bus, Rosa said this: “I had given up my seat before, but this day, I was especially tired. Tired from my work as a seamstress, and tired from **the ache in my heart.**”

What I find most inspiring about Rosa is that her act of defiance was simple. She did not scream, wail, or punch someone in the face. She chose to stay seated. Simple, and yet profound.

One woman chose to stay in her seat and a nation heard. They didn’t hear because she blasted people on social media. They didn’t hear because of a violent outburst. They heard, because she chose to stand for what is right in the most peaceful way possible.

I am inspired by those who live a simple yet intentional life.

“Better one handful with tranquility than two handfuls with toil and chasing the wind.”
- Ecclesiastes 4:6

Application:

In the age of social media and a constant stream of news and noise, how can you choose to stand for what’s right in a peaceful way like Rosa? How can you choose tranquility over turmoil?

Do you find social media to be overwhelming? Does it have a negative effect on how you treat others? Consider taking a fast from those outlets.

What causes your heart to ache like Rosa’s?



Day 6

The Inspiring Women series could not continue without talking about my girl Rahab. Of all the stories of women in scripture, hers might very well be my favorite.

Rahab was a prostitute that helped two Israelite men escape capture while they were spying on the City of Jericho. As a woman, a Canaanite and a prostitute, Rahab was culturally the lowest of the low. Can you imagine how many men mistreated her? For her to have trusted anyone at all is a miracle.

You can read her full story in the book of Joshua, chapters two and six primarily.

Now, what I find most inspiring about Rahab is that in spite of her history, she holds the honor of being a part of the lineage of Jesus Christ.

God can take any life, no matter how sinful and broken, and use it for His glory. I've made many mistakes in my 28 years on this earth. Goodness, when I think of the dramatic and selfish girl I was in high school... I cringe. There's nothing I can do to erase the sins from the past, but I am grateful that God does not hold my old self against me.

To the world, Rahab was nothing, but to God... Rahab was family.

Application:

How are you inspired by the story of Rahab? What does it mean to be a part of God's family?

Read Joshua 2 & 6. Write down something new you learn from this Bible story.

What mistakes from your past do you allow to haunt your future? Take some time to pray over them today and ask God to help you leave them where they belong, in the past.



Day 7

Bonnie Wright is best known for her role as Ginny Weasley in the Harry Potter movie franchise. However, since portraying that iconic role Bonnie has taken on another that is even more inspiring: Activist.

During a recent listen to the Chickpeeps podcast I was totally blown away by the work Wright has done to help the environment. Among many other accomplishments, Bonnie partnered with Greenpeace in 2019 to raise awareness about plastics that pollute our oceans.

I'm sure you are tired of hearing about straws and turtles and recycling, but the reality is taking care of the earth is the first job we were given.

Genesis 1:28 says: *“And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”*

God desires us to care for the earth. It's our home. He gave us this beautiful planet to tend, not to destroy. We cannot control the actions of others, but we can do our part to care for the home we were given. If you'd like to learn about ways to do so, or learn more about the inspiring Bonnie Wright, check out the Chickpeeps Podcast episode.

Application:

What responsibilities have we been given by God, especially in the book of Genesis?

How can you tend to the earth today?

Caring for people is part of caring for the planet. How can you love others as Christ loves you?



Day 8

A holy interruption.

I heard Beth Moore use that phrase in reference to this story, and it just fits. The interaction with Jesus and the Woman at the Well is in fact a holy interruption. Jesus was on his way through Samaria. He wasn't staying for long, but everything Jesus did was intentional.

He passed through Samaria on purpose. But why?

We never learn the name of the Woman in John 4. Though, we do learn many other things about her, including her cringe-worthy history with men. Personally, I think her name was left out so that we might be able to place ourselves into the story.

The Woman had a messy history. She was an outcast drawing water in the middle of the day, which was a sign that she was not accepted by the women in her area. Typically women drew water in the morning. It was a social activity. She was a woman, and therefore Jesus should not be speaking to her. Culturally men did not speak to women unless they were family. Yet Jesus shared with her his true identity and the truth of salvation.

God has a plan for our lives, just as he had a plan for the Woman at the Well. It may not feel like He has a plan on days when your car breaks down, you can't pay the bills or you fight with your best friend. You might be feeling utterly empty like the Woman did that day at the well.

But remember, God is still writing your story.

Application:

Read John 4:1-42. What inspiration do you draw from the Woman at the Well?

Jesus knows everything about you. How can you find comfort in this intimate knowledge?



Day 9

Gertrude Ederle was the first woman to swim the English Channel in 1926. Not only did she accomplish that feat, but she beat the men's record for the swim by 1 hour and 59 minutes. To me, Elderle is not only inspiring because of her record-breaking swim, but because of what she did after the fact.

Her hearing was permanently impaired by the English Channel triumph, so in the years that followed Elderle became a swimming instructor for deaf children. I love that she used her gifts.

After successfully swimming the English Channel Gertrude is quoted as saying "I just knew if it could be done, it had to be done, and I did it." Her quote reminded me of a verse in 2 Timothy 4:7, "*I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.*"

That verse is something I aspire to say when my time here on earth comes to an end.

Elderle didn't complete her swim of the English Channel on the first try. Her accomplishment took work, practice, dedication. It is with that same level of determination we must approach our faith each day. Being Christ-like is not easy, but it will be worth it one day when our fight is at an end. May we all be able to say we kept the faith.

Application:

Read 1 Corinthians 9:24-27. Write your initial thoughts below.

How is keeping the faith a work of exercise?

On days where you grow tired of running, how can you find new strength?



Day 10

In our passage for today we see Hannah in deep distress. She's broken, bullied, and struggling to believe. Eli, a priest in the church, finds her crying and her wails are so intense he assumes she must be drunk. My heart aches for Hannah, because I have felt the deep anguish of a broken heart.

Hannah is inspiring to me for many reasons. First, she goes to the Lord with her distress. She doesn't just sit around complaining to her girlfriends or eat cake. She goes to God in prayer, intense and passionate prayer.

Second, Hannah did not allow her bully to destroy her faith. Rather than retaliate or despair, Hannah give it up to God in prayer. She is faithful.

Third, Hannah is true to her word. When God answered her prayers, Hannah could have easily gone back on her promise to God, but as soon as her son was old enough Hannah took him to live and work in the temple. She was faithful, and God blessed her faithfulness.

I know you have likely felt the anguish that Hannah felt that day in the temple, but remember that pain does not last forever. Keep the faith, give it all to God and continue your passionate prayers. He is listening. He understands the deepest ache in your heart.

Application:

Read 1 Samuel. Write your initial thoughts below.

Have you felt the anguish of a broken heart? In what way can you sympathize with Hannah?

What is your first step when feeling that anguish? Do you run to God in prayer?



Day 11

Fun fact: My nickname as a toddler was Shirley Temple. I was a sassy little thing with a head of tight curls. For that reason I feel a special connection to today's inspiring woman.

Shirley Temple is best known for being Hollywood's top child actress in the 1930s. However, it is her work as an adult that inspires me the most. Temple was named United States Ambassador to Ghana and to Czechoslovakia. She also served as Chief of Protocol of the United States and overcame breast cancer.

What a resume!

Throughout her life, Shirley Temple was known for her infectious optimism. Nothing could stop that smile. As Christians we have every reason to be positive. God is King, Jesus is returning someday and we will be reunited with Him. Optimism should run in our veins.

Colossians 3:16 says *"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God."*

Shirley Temple's resume is astounding, but her positive attitude is what people remember most. Christ in us should be our legacy, and that glorious optimism that comes with knowing the Creator. May the word of Christ dwell richly in us today and radiate His goodness, grace, and love.

Application:

How might your positive attitude impact the kingdom?

Who can you pray for and encourage today? Who do you know that needs positivity?



Day 12

It is impossible not to be inspired by Queen Esther. There is an entire book of the Bible about her heroic tale. When the King's advisor Haman plotted to murder the Israelite people, Queen Esther risked her life to save her people.

However, before she approached the King, the Queen does something I find particularly inspiring.

In Esther 4:16, she says "Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my young women will also fast as you do. Then I will go to the king, though it is against the law, and if I perish, I perish."

She agreed to approach the King and ask him to spare her people from Haman's plot, but first Esther asked her uncle Mordecai to hold a fast. Why a fast?

Esther knows that without God, her plan will fail.

It's like when people say "but first, coffee." It's the Christian equivalent to "but first, God."

I am inspired by Esther, because she was brave enough to approach a powerful leader to plead for the safety and the well-being of her people, but she did it in a peaceful manner and she chose to put God first in her pursuit of justice.

Application:

How does Esther inspire you? If you could describe her character in three words, what words would you choose?

Have you read the book of Esther recently? If not, set aside time this week to read through the story and highlight the verses that stand out to you.

Do you prioritize your time with the Lord?



Day 13

Eleanor Roosevelt was the first lady and wife to Franklin D. Roosevelt, the US president from 1933 to 1945. She was also involved in several humanitarian causes throughout her life, including Civil Rights activism.

Eleanor fought for the rights of all people amidst a very trying time for the American people. For all her efforts she became known as “First Lady to the World.”

Our inspiring woman of the day is quoted as saying: *“It is better to light a candle than curse the darkness.”* It might be easy to complain about the world; to be negative and stew on everything that you find wrong with it. Or, we can choose to shine the light.

“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”
- Matthew 5:14-16

We shine the light of Christ when we choose to live as he would live. Eleanor Roosevelt used her voice and influence to speak for others. Even as a private citizen she continued to do good works. Her light made an impact, and yours can too. A positive attitude and work ethic go much farther than a sea of complaints.

Application:

What is the difference between lighting a candle and curing the darkness? Can you think of a real-world example?

How can you shine the light of Christ this week?

How might a change in attitude affect those around you?



Day 14

Has anyone else been called “a Martha?” If so you are in good company. We learn about the dear friend of Jesus in Luke 10. Scripture says:

“And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, “Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me.” But the Lord answered her, “Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her.”

-Luke 10:38-42 ESV

I love that Jesus says her name twice. “Martha, Martha.” She was probably so busy working that Martha didn’t hear him the first time. I know I often don’t hear God over the hum of my busy schedule.

This year I am learning about the Danish practice of hygge. I am working to find that balance between work and play, chaos and contentment. Martha has a fantastic work ethic, but she needed to learn balance. I find her imperfection inspiring.

Application:

In what area of your life do you need balance? Work, spiritual, family, friendships, etc?

What steps can you take toward finding that balance today?

Hygge is a Danish word that means encompasses a feeling of coziness, contentment and well-being by enjoying the simple things in life. Take time today to enjoy the simple things.



Day 15

Jessica Alba began her career as an actress, but in recent years she added businesswoman to her resume. Alba founded The Honest Company after becoming a mother and desiring a natural, non-toxic life for her family. She has also been involved with several charities and humanitarian organizations. Girl does it all!

With such an outstanding resume, it is hard not to find Alba inspiring. She is quoted as saying, "No matter how different women are, we all seem to share the guilt that we're not doing enough. If anything, I would say that as long as you're doing your best, it's more than enough."

Have you ever felt like you are not enough?

The enemy wants us to feel that way. He wants us to feel alienated and small, but what does God say? In 1 Peter 2:9 we discover we "*are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession.*" And in 2 Corinthians 12:9-10 we are told God's power is made perfect in our weakness.

The truth is, we are not enough, but God is. God lives in us, and therefore we are enough. We are more than enough in Him, so take a stand today. Do not allow the enemy to belittle the powerful creation God made you to be. As long as you are doing your best and allowing God to work, you are more than enough.

Application:

In what area of your life do you feel the most inadequate?

How can you choose to rise above those feelings of inadequacy today?

You are chosen by God. Write your response to that statement below. What does it mean to you?



Day 16

You might be surprised by today's inspiring woman of the Bible. Lot's Wife is not someone to admire based on her actions in Genesis 19.

Lot and his family are warned around God's imminent destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. The only warning given by the angels was: "*Do not look back or stop anywhere in the valley* (vs 17)." However, Lot's wife decided to look back at the destruction and was turned into a pillar of salt.

Wait, so why is Lot's Wife an inspiration?

The truth is, I can relate to Lot's Wife. She turned around, because she longed for what lay behind her. There are times when I find myself doing the same thing. My eyes are locked on the past, rather than focusing on the future.

I am inspired by Lot's Wife, because she is a reminder to me of what NOT to do. When our eyes are focused on the past and what we cannot change, we remain stuck. We are trapped as a pillar of salt rather than sprinting toward the abundant life God has in store.

Application:

Has God ever given you a direction you did not follow? What was the result?

What is causing you to look back today?

How can you choose to look ahead, rather than getting stuck?



Day 17

Clara Barton is known as one of the most honored women in American history. She risked her life to bring supplies to soldiers in the field during the Civil War. Then in 1881 at age 59 she founded the American Red Cross and led it for the next 23 years. Her nickname was the “Angel of the Battlefield.”

Inspiring is an understatement.

When I was a little girl I came across a small book about Clara which I must have read a dozen times. Her heart for others moved me more than I can put into words. Clara Barton once said, *“This conflict is one thing I’ve been waiting for. I’m well and strong and young – young enough to go to the front. If I can’t be a soldier, I’ll help soldiers.”*

Though we cannot all be full time missionaries, we can help those who are able to serve. Maybe you don’t feel called to go and teach the nations, but you can do your part from your own home, whether that be contributing financially, praying for missionaries or sending a letter of encouragement.

“Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.”

-1 Corinthians 15:58

Application:

Clara served bravely by using the talents and resources at her disposal. How can you serve well today?

You might not be a full time missionary, but we all have been given a Great Commission. How can you spread the Gospel in your career field or school?

The life of a missionary is not necessarily a comfortable one. In what area of your life are you perhaps too comfortable?



Day 18

Priscilla inspires me, because she is a beautiful example of a Godly wife. She and her husband Aquila were known for their powerful ministry and generosity to those in need. They are always mentioned as a pair, a team running the race of Christ together.

I am blessed to be married to my best friend, my team mate, and my other half.

There is something beautiful about working together toward a common goal no matter what comes our way. It was what brought us together in the first place. Colton and I started as prayer partners and quickly realized God made us the perfect match. Working together is not always easy, but he compliments the areas I lack, and I do the same for him.

“Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken.”

- Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Two are better than one.

Application:

How can you be more like Priscilla in your marriage, relationship, or friendships?

Make a list of friends, family, and other relationships you want to cultivate this year.

Who can you thank today who runs the race with you every day? (spouse, parents, friends, grandparents, etc)



Day 19

Audrey Hepburn is best known for being an actress, fashion icon, and philanthropist. She was a talented performer known for her beauty and grace. However, what I find most inspiring about Audrey Hepburn was her later work as an ambassador for UNICEF. In the late 1980s it became her mission to raise awareness for children in need. She even won a special Academy Award for her humanitarian work in 1993, though she died before being able to receive it.

Hepburn's beauty shone from the inside. The actress is quoted as saying: "For beautiful eyes, look for the good in others; for beautiful lips, speak only words of kindness; and for poise, walk with the knowledge that you are never alone."

You've probably heard the scripture in Proverbs 31:30, "*Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.*" Scripture encourages us to seek inner beauty, rather than focusing on outer beauty.

"Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things." – Philippians 4:8

When we choose to focus on these things, our natural beauty shines through. It doesn't matter how beautiful you are on the outside if your insides are ugly.

Application:

What honorable, true, just, pure, lovely things can you focus your attention on today?

Who do you know that possesses profound inner beauty?

Write Philippians 4:8 on a notecard and place it somewhere you will see it every day.



Day 20

Leah was the wife Jacob never wanted. He worked for seven years in order to marry Rachel, Leah's younger and fairer sister. He loved Rachel, and was tricked into marrying Leah. Can you imagine your husband waking up in disgust the day after your wedding, wishing you weren't his bride?

Jacob wasn't just upset about being married to Leah. Scripture says in Genesis 29:31 that "*the LORD saw that Leah was hated.*" Other translations say that she was "unloved."

It becomes apparent in the naming of her first few children that Leah is striving for the love of her husband, but by boy #4 we see a change in her attitude. Child four is named Judah, which means "*This time I will praise the LORD.*"

Leah may not have been wanted by Jacob. She may have been the less attractive or appealing sister, but what I find inspiring about this woman is her decision to make the most of it. She turned her eyes to God, rather than the approval of her family.

It isn't easy to praise God in the middle of a tragedy. When nothing is going right, often the last thing on our minds is praise. It should be the first. No matter what, God is good. No matter what, God's plan is better than my own.

Application:

How can you praise God in spite of your circumstance today?

Read the story of Jacob, Rachel and Leah in Genesis 29. Highlight any verses that stand out to you.

What other inspiration can you draw from the story of Leah today?



Day 21

“She was fearless — so fearless that she paid to have a volume of poems by her and her younger sisters published under pseudonyms, an unusually ambitious act for a woman of her era.” – Susan Dominus, NY Times

Charlotte Brontë is best known for her novel, *Jane Eyre*, which became a classic installation in English Literature. As a writer I find Charlotte’s work very inspiring. She and her sisters all used pseudonyms in order for their work to be published. As a woman in that era, I can imagine the road to becoming an author would have been a difficult one. Their perseverance and commitment to their craft is what I find most inspirational.

Charlotte Brontë once said, “*What you want to ignite in others must first burn inside yourself.*”

This quote always inspires me to check myself as a leader, writer, and teacher. If I am going to teach scripture to others, I need to be spending time in the Bible. Scripture is God breathed and deserves to be treated with respect. I cannot expect to ignite a fire in the soul of others for Jesus if I am not tending to the fire in my own heart.

Application:

How have you tended to your own fire this week? Is spending time with God a priority for you?

Read Psalm 118:6. Why can we live without fear?

Who do you lead? Do you take that role seriously?



Day 22

I could talk about the Woman in the Crowd for days. She is more than inspiring to me. I feel as though she is me, or am I she? Now I'm starting to rhyme. The Woman in the Crowd suffered for twelve years, bleeding and suffering until one day she received a miracle. Jesus walked into town. Just the sound of His name, and she knew He would be her salvation.

In faith the Woman in the Crowd pushed against the sea of people surrounding Jesus. Touching anyone when you are diseased was a risk, but to touch the Messiah?

Just a touch to the hem of his garment and the woman was healed. Jesus felt her healing, her presence. He knew this woman. Though the crowd around him pushed and shoved, he stopped to find her. He wanted to look her into her eyes and acknowledge her faith.

There are days when I feel so spiritually unclean, as though I will never be enough. I am this outcast woman, shunned by my people and empty of hope, just trying to brush the hem of Jesus' garment.

Even on my absolute worst day Jesus still sees me. No matter how many hundreds of thousands of people surround my Savior, He sees me. He knows me. He looks me in the eyes and tells me my faith has made me well.

Application:

No matter what you've done or where you're at, God still sees you and knows you personally. How can you reach out in faith today?

Are you suffering from a physical ailment or know someone who is? Spend some time in prayer today, lifting up that illness to the healing hands of our God.



Day 23

Dr. Jane Goodall is an English primatologist and anthropologist who is known as the world's foremost expert on chimpanzees. Her ground-breaking discoveries include discovering that chimpanzees make tools, eat and hunt for meat, and have similar social behavior to humans.

Though I don't agree completely with Goodall on the origin of humanity, I am fascinated and inspired by her work. Her reverence for the animal kingdom is something to be admired. As I mentioned in a previous devotion, the first job we were given by God is to tend to the earth and all its inhabitants.

Jane once said, "There is still so much in the world worth fighting for. So much that is beautiful, so many wonderful people working to reverse the harm, to help alleviate the suffering...it is not too late to turn things around is we all do our part."

The world can seem a hopeless place or a lost cause, but the truth is there is always hope. Don't give up. Continue to share the Gospel, to shine the light of Christ. Continue to care for the earth we were given. There is still so much in this world worth the fight.

"And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ." – Philippians 1:6

Application:

Make a list of everything on this earth worth the fight. For what or whom are you most thankful?

How can you care for the earth today? For others?

If you find the news, social media, or other outlets to cause you a loss of hope, consider fasting from those outlets for a week or more. You may find your hope renewed.



Day 24

Miriam is quite possibly the bravest women in the Bible. However, it is not her bravery that inspires me most. It is her humility.

If you've seen the Prince of Egypt movie or read the story of the Exodus you know Miriam as Moses' sister and one of the leaders of her people. Both are true. However, there is a story about Miriam in Numbers 12 that is not often discussed.

Miriam is caught gossiping about her brother. She doesn't agree with who he has married, and envies his role as leader of the Israelite people. The Lord hears her complaints and sees the truth in her heart. Miriam is given leprosy and sent out of the camp for seven days.

Does that seem a bit harsh? Maybe, but it is important to remember that God is our Father. He knew Miriam to be a strong leader, but her envious heart was keeping her from leading well. Good parents discipline their children not out of spite, but to help them grow. The same is true with Miriam.

Miriam accepted the discipline of God with humility, and that is what I find most inspiring about her. Perhaps those seven days away from camp were just what she needed to clear her mind and center her heart back on the Lord. Often we view hardship as punishment when we should view it as an opportunity for growth. Before the rainbow must come the rain.

Application:

Can you think of a difficult season that helped you grow?

Do you struggle with gossip? What lessons can you learn from Miriam in regards to gossip?

How can we think of discipline in a positive light?



Day 25

Puah and Shiphrah are the two midwives that chose to save Moses and countless other infant boys in spite of Pharaoh's decree. Their fear of God over man is something I find very inspiring.

Proverbs 1:7 says, *“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.”* And Job 28:28 says, *“Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to turn away from evil is understanding.”*

Wait, so we are to be afraid of God and that is the beginning of knowledge? No, not really. Fearing God is another way to say we are to be reverent of Him. God is a loving Father, but He is also just and powerful. He is the Creator of all things, and therefore deserves a healthy level of fear.

Puah and Shiphrah are perfect examples of this reverence. They knew that Pharaoh's decree, that every male son should die, was wrong. The midwives risked their lives in order to save innocent children. No matter what Pharaoh decided, God's Word was more important.

Application:

How can you honor the Word of God today? What does fearing the Lord mean to you?

Read about Puah and Shiphrah in Exodus 1. What do we learn from their story? How does God bless their faith?

Our God has many names: Lord of Lords, King of Kings, Emmanuel, Alpha and Omega, Creator, Father, etc... Which name impacts you most in this season of life?



Day 26

Dian Fossey was an American primatologist and conservationist best known for her work with mountain gorillas in Rwanda. She actively supported conservation efforts as well as opposed poaching and tourism in wildlife habitats. Dian's life was tragically cut short in 1985 when she was brutally murdered in her remote camp in Rwanda, most likely by a poacher.

Dian's dedication to the animal kingdom and especially the population of mountain gorillas is astounding. It's difficult not to be inspired by such a brave woman. Dian once said "Active conservation [of gorillas] involves simply going out into the forest, on foot, day after day after day..."

It is that kind of work ethic and passion (as well as humility) that inspires my life as a Christian. Living for Christ every day is not easy. There are days I want to be selfish and lazy. I want to be mean to people who are mean to me and spend my money on only me.

Active Christianity, like active conservation, means work. It means going out to the mission field day after day on foot and walking the walk. It means discipline and obedience and not knowing if you will see the reward on this side of heaven. And yet, every single step taken is worth it.

Application:

Do you feel exhausted in your walk with Christ?

How can we find rest and refreshment in His presence?

Spend some time today speaking with God. Tell him about your areas of struggle and be honest about your exhaustion. Pray for your pastor and the leaders of your church as well.



Day 27

Lois is not often spoken of as an inspiring woman in the Bible, perhaps because she is only mentioned in one verse. That one verse, however, packs quite a punch of meaning. Paul writes to Timothy in 1 Timothy 1:5, *“I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well.”*

Lois had a legacy. She passed her faith on from generation to generation by example. She may only be mentioned in one verse, but that legacy of faith carried through hundreds if not thousands of people through the teaching and leadership of her grandson Timothy.

Before my grandmother passed away she wrote me a letter. In that letter she urged me to keep the faith, saying “sometimes it is harder than you think it will be... but the Spirit holds me tight. God is merciful, almighty and awesome in power.”

When I think of my grandmother, I think of her unwavering and rock solid faith in God. Her legacy of faith is one that radiates through generations, and will no doubt, like Lois, impact hundreds and thousands of others.

Application:

What will your legacy be?

The faith of our parents and grandparents cannot save us, because each of us have our own relationship with God. Still, how does their faith impact our own? How can your love of God change the lives of your family and friends?



Day 28

Marie Curie was a Polish physicist and chemist who conducted ground-breaking research on radioactivity. She became the first woman to win the Nobel Prize and to my knowledge is the only woman to win it twice. Curie is most famous for the discovery of two elements: polonium and radium.

Her research contributed to the development of x-rays and she even helped equip ambulances with x-ray equipment during the First World War. Can you say inspiring? Curie once said, *“I have frequently been questioned, especially by women, of how I could reconcile family life with a scientific career. Well, it has not been easy.”*

Balance is never easy.

How can we learn to balance our relationship with God with work, family, emotional and physical health as well as the various other things that invade our precious time? The truth is, it is a process. I’m learning right along with you. The good news is, God knows we are not perfect. The important thing is we try.

Philippians 1:6 says, *“And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.”* The work he began in us is a part of a long process. I don’t know about you, but I am learning to be okay with imperfection. As Marie Curie once said, *“the way of progress is neither swift nor easy.”*

Application:

Do you struggle with the idea of imperfection?

How can we reconcile our imperfect world with the concept of hard work and the pursuit of Christ?

Balance is not easy. In what area of life do you feel the most unbalanced? Who can you reach out to for help?



Day 29

Achsah is another lesser-known woman in the Bible. Her story inspires me, because it is a perfect example of the Grace of God. In Joshua 15, Caleb's daughter Achsah is given in marriage to Othniel. Achsah comes to her father to ask him for a special blessing.

“When she came to him, she urged him to ask her father for a field. And she got off her donkey, and Caleb said to her, “What do you want?” She said to him, “Give me a blessing. Since you have given me the land of the Negeb, give me also springs of water.” And he gave her the upper springs and the lower springs.”

– Joshua 15:18-19

This interaction might seem a strange one, but allow me to explain. The land of the Negeb is an arid one. When Caleb gave his daughter the upper and lower springs, he was giving her a very valuable gift. In addition, throughout scripture we see springs of water (living water) used as a metaphor for the Holy Spirit.

Here, tucked within a seemingly useless bit of information in Joshua 15 we find a picture of the trinity: the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Our God is a good Father who desires good things for his children, just like Caleb.

Application:

Achsah asked her father for a blessing and was given living water. How is this moment a picture of our relationship with Christ?

What other parallels to our relationship with Christ can you find in the story of Achsah in Joshua 15?

Water is easily found today, but it was precious in Biblical times. Every time you drink a glass of water this week, I encourage you to remember the story of Achsah and the blessings we are given by God.



Day 30

I was trying to think about one more woman who truly inspires me before wrapping up this series, but the truth is all I could think about was the women in my family. They may not be famous or have cured a disease, saved a species or founded a world-renowned charity, but these ladies here are some of the most inspiring women in the world.

Each of them cares deeply about others, the impact they are making and the legacy they will leave. Their love is fierce and they don't know the meaning of the word quit.

Proverbs 27:17 says "*As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.*"

Thank you to my mother and sisters for keeping me sharp, for encouraging me to pursue my dreams and for shining your light to others. You make more of an impact every day than you could possibly know. I wouldn't be the woman I am without the squad of sisters that surround me and the beautiful woman who raised me.

A special thank you to my Grandmother for being the shining example of what a God-fearing woman should be. Miss you always, love you forever.

Thank you for being a part of this 30 day study. I hope it has encouraged strengthened, inspired and fortified you as a woman of God.

Application:

What woman in this series did you find most inspiring?

Who can you thank today for helping you grow and become the woman you are today?

How can we leave a legacy of faith for future generations?

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