

GPS WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY
THE BONDS OF SISTERHOOD
Real Relationships for Real Life

September 25, 2012 Week 2 – Our Story and The Body of Christ

Review Scripture Memory – Proverbs 17:17, 1 Corinthians 12:25-27

Review Homework – 1 Corinthians 12:14-17 The Body of Christ & ODB “Extending Grace”

The importance of our story.

Just as in the human body no two parts are exactly the same, so too in the body of Christ no two people are exactly alike. That's God's design. He intentionally made us different. And we're exactly the way He knew we would be – with our likes, dislikes, interests, passions, hang-ups, family history, past experiences, relationships, achievements, failures, and circle of influence. No one knows everything that we know. No one has experienced exactly what we've experienced. No one has the same circle of family and friends that we have.

That makes us unique. One of a kind. Special. God's masterpiece.

Psalm 139:13-16 says:

¹³ *For you created my inmost being;*

you knit me together in my mother's womb.

¹⁴ *I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;*

your works are wonderful,

I know that full well.

¹⁵ *My frame was not hidden from you*

when I was made in the secret place,

when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.

¹⁶ *Your eyes saw my unformed body;*

all the days ordained for me were written in your book

before one of them came to be.

Ephesians 2:10 says:

For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

1. Does your uniqueness as a one-of-a-kind creation of God make you feel good, or do you wish you were more like others? Why?
2. Do you believe that your life story is significant? Why or why not?
3. How does your life story shape you? Shape those who are important to you?

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As individuals, we are different from each other. So too our life experiences are different. Let's embrace our stories as the lifelong tapestry God is creating in and through us. God will use our similarities and our differences to bind us together as we grow in sisterhood.

Components of our life map: READ

R – Relationships (red hearts)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

E – Memorable Experiences (green circles)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

A – Achievements (gold stars)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

D – Disappointments / Frustrations (blue clouds)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Permanent Markers – Put down as altars when the Lord spoke or acted on our behalf so that we will always remember what He said or did at that moment. And we can go back to it and remember the significance (like Jacob's altar in Genesis 28:10-19 and Israel's altar in Joshua 4:1-24).

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Consider journaling – Permanent Markers, Scripture, Thank You Journal, Letters to God

Please also consider sharing your story with me. It can remain confidential.

Scripture Memory:

1. Romans 15:13 – *May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*
2. Joshua 1:9 – *Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.*

Book Review: Grace Walk by Steve McVey

Each week's lesson will also be posted on the Rising Above Real Life website
www.RisingAboveRealLife.com – go to the Freebies page and scroll to the bottom

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PRAYER REQUESTS:

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September 25, 2012 Week 2 – Our Story and The Body of Christ

Homework:

1. Read Our Daily Bread “Thank God for Music” from 1/22/12 (handout or www.oddb.org)
 - a. How is music a metaphor for the church, i.e. the body of Christ?
 - b. How does this metaphor show that it's important for each of us to be ourselves, and not try to be someone else?
 - c. What is the result when we come together in sisterhood, playing the same song for Christ?

2. Read “Quilt of Holes” (attached)
 - a. What was your initial impression of the essay? What did you like or not like?
 - b. We all have holes in our life quilts, some more than others. Do the holes in your life quilt make you feel ragged and empty, or can you see how they allow Jesus to shine through?
 - c. How do we give our life, hardships and struggles over to the Lord so that they become His life, His hardships, and His struggles?

3. Read Job 1:1-2:13 (attached)
 - a. What were all of the things that happened to Job on that first day?
 - b. What was Job's response?
 - c. How would you have reacted/responded?
 - d. What happened to Job on the next occasion that Satan attacked?

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- e. What was Job's wife's response and what was Job's response?
 - f. Where was God in all of this?
 - g. What did Job's friends do initially?
 - h. Was this good or bad? Why?
 - i. What happened between Job and his friends in Chapters 3-31?
 - j. What does the story of Job teach us about helping others in their time of grief?
4. Read Job Chapters 38-42
- a. What was God's response to Job?
 - b. Why do you think He said this?
 - c. What was Job's response to God?
 - d. How would you have responded?
 - e. What happened at the end of the story of Job?
5. The Ministry of Presence (as displayed by Job's friends for 7 days before they spoke)
- a. What is an experience in your life when you were in need and someone helped you?
 - b. How did they help?
 - c. What is something you wish someone would have done for you?

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- d. How can we sit and listen if we don't fully understand what someone is going through, and don't know what to say?
- e. What are some ways that we can encourage and love others where they are?
- f. If we're the one struggling, why is it so important for us to get out of isolation?
- g. What are some tactics that we can use to fight Satan's attacks in our own life?
 - i. unravel fears
 - ii. allow truth to shine in our dark places
 - iii. live with no regret and no shame
 - iv. get connected with others
 - v.
 - vi.
 - vii.
- h. How can the Ministry of Presence help us grow in sisterhood?

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Quilt of Holes

Author: Unknown

As I faced my Maker at the last judgment, I knelt before the Lord along with all the other souls.

Before each of us laid our lives like the squares of a quilt in many piles; an angel sat before each of us sewing our quilt squares together into a tapestry that is our life.

But as my angel took each piece of cloth off the pile, I noticed how ragged and empty each of my squares was. They were filled with giant holes. Each square was labeled with a part of my life that had been difficult, the challenges and temptations I was faced with in everyday life. I saw hardships that I endured, which were the largest holes of all.

I glanced around me. Nobody else had such squares. Other than a tiny hole here and there, the other tapestries were filled with rich color and the bright hues of worldly fortune. I gazed upon my own life and was disheartened.

My angel was sewing the ragged pieces of cloth together, threadbare and empty, like binding air.

Finally the time came when each life was to be displayed, held up to the scrutiny of truth. The others rose; each in turn, holding up their tapestries. So filled their lives had been. My angel looked upon me, and nodded for me to rise.

My gaze dropped to the ground in shame. I hadn't had all the earthly fortunes. I had love in my life, and laughter. But there had also been trials of illness, and wealth, and false accusations that took from me my world, as I knew it. I had to start over many times. I often struggled with the temptation to quit, only to somehow muster the strength to pick up and begin again. I spent many nights on my knees in prayer, asking for help and guidance in my life. I had often been held up to ridicule, which I endured painfully, each time offering it up to the Father in hopes that I would not melt within my skin beneath the judgmental gaze of those who unfairly judged me.

And now, I had to face the truth. My life was what it was, and I had to accept it for what it was. I rose and slowly lifted the combined squares of my life to the light.

An awe-filled gasp filled the air. I gazed around at the others who stared at me with wide eyes.

Then, I looked upon the tapestry before me. Light flooded the many holes, creating an image, the face of Christ. Then our Lord stood before me, with warmth and love in His eyes. He said, "Every time you gave over your life to Me, it became My life, My hardships, and My struggles.

Each point of light in your life is when you stepped aside and let Me shine through, until there was more of Me than there was of you."

May all our quilts be threadbare and worn, allowing Christ to shine through!

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Job 1:1-2:13

Job 1

Prologue

¹ In the land of Uz there lived a man whose name was Job. This man was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil. ² He had seven sons and three daughters, ³ and he owned seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen and five hundred donkeys, and had a large number of servants. He was the greatest man among all the people of the East.

⁴ His sons used to hold feasts in their homes on their birthdays, and they would invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. ⁵ When a period of feasting had run its course, Job would make arrangements for them to be purified. Early in the morning he would sacrifice a burnt offering for each of them, thinking, "Perhaps my children have sinned and cursed God in their hearts." This was Job's regular custom.

⁶ One day the angels^[a] came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan^[b] also came with them. ⁷ The LORD said to Satan, "Where have you come from?"

Satan answered the LORD, "From roaming throughout the earth, going back and forth on it."

⁸ Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil."

⁹ "Does Job fear God for nothing?" Satan replied. ¹⁰ "Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. ¹¹ But now stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face."

¹² The LORD said to Satan, "Very well, then, everything he has is in your power, but on the man himself do not lay a finger."

Then Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.

¹³ One day when Job's sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother's house, ¹⁴ a messenger came to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys were grazing nearby, ¹⁵ and the Sabeans attacked and made off with them. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"

¹⁶ While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, "The fire of God fell from the heavens and burned up the sheep and the servants, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"

¹⁷ While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, "The Chaldeans formed three raiding parties and swept down on your camels and made off with them. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"

¹⁸ While he was still speaking, yet another messenger came and said, "Your sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother's house, ¹⁹ when suddenly a mighty wind swept in from the desert and struck the four corners of the house. It collapsed on them and they are dead, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"

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²⁰ At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship ²¹and said:

"Naked I came from my mother's womb,
and naked I will depart.^[c]
The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away;
may the name of the LORD be praised."

²² In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing.

Job 2

¹ On another day the angels^[c] came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came with them to present himself before him. ² And the LORD said to Satan, "Where have you come from?"

Satan answered the LORD, "From roaming throughout the earth, going back and forth on it."

³ Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil. And he still maintains his integrity, though you incited me against him to ruin him without any reason."

⁴ "Skin for skin!" Satan replied. "A man will give all he has for his own life. ⁵ But now stretch out your hand and strike his flesh and bones, and he will surely curse you to your face."

⁶ The LORD said to Satan, "Very well, then, he is in your hands; but you must spare his life."

⁷ So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and afflicted Job with painful sores from the soles of his feet to the crown of his head. ⁸ Then Job took a piece of broken pottery and scraped himself with it as he sat among the ashes.

⁹ His wife said to him, "Are you still maintaining your integrity? Curse God and die!"

¹⁰ He replied, "You are talking like a foolish^[e] woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?"

In all this, Job did not sin in what he said.

¹¹ When Job's three friends, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite, heard about all the troubles that had come upon him, they set out from their homes and met together by agreement to go and sympathize with him and comfort him. ¹² When they saw him from a distance, they could hardly recognize him; they began to weep aloud, and they tore their robes and sprinkled dust on their heads. ¹³ Then they sat on the ground with him for seven days and seven nights. No one said a word to him, because they saw how great his suffering was.

January 22
Sunday

THANK GOD FOR MUSIC

READ:
2 Chronicles 5:7-14

When the trumpeters and singers were as one, . . . the glory of the LORD filled the house of God.
—2 Chronicles 5:13-14

THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:
Exodus 21-24

notes at different times, but we all perform the same song. The better we know our parts, and the better we follow the conductor, the more beautiful the music.

One of the best uses for music is praise. When Solomon's temple was completed, the musicians praised and thanked God. As they did, "the glory of the LORD filled the house of God" (2 Chron. 5:14).

We thank God for beautiful music, for it's like a preview of heaven, where the glory of God will dwell forever and where praise for Him will never cease. —Julie Ackerman Link

*Bless the Lord and sing His praises,
Bless the Lord now, O my soul;
Join the song all heaven raises,
Let the anthem loudly roll!* —Peterson

**Those who praise God on earth
will feel at home in heaven.**

Music plays a big part in the Bible. From Genesis to Revelation, God enlists musicians to work on His behalf. He uses music to call people to worship and to send them to war, to soothe ragged emotions and to ignite spiritual passion, to celebrate victories and to mourn losses. Music is an all-occasion, all-inclusive art form. There are followers and leaders, simple songs and complex songs, easy instruments and difficult instruments, melodies and harmonies, fast rhythms and slow rhythms, high notes and low notes.

Music is a wonderful metaphor for the church because everyone participates by doing what he or she does best. We all sing or play different

Today's Bible Reading — 2 Chronicles 5:7-14

⁷ Then the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the LORD to its place, into the inner sanctuary of the temple, to the Most Holy Place, under the wings of the cherubim. ⁸ For the cherubim spread their wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubim overshadowed the ark and its poles. . . .

¹¹ And it came to pass when the priests came out of the Most Holy Place (for all the priests who were present had sanctified themselves, without keeping to their divisions), ¹² and the Levites who were the singers, all those of Asaph and Heman and Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, stood at the east end of the altar, clothed in white linen, having

cymbals, stringed instruments and harps, and with them one hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets— ¹³ indeed it came to pass, when the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD, and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the LORD, saying: "For He is good, for His mercy endures forever," that the house, the house of the LORD, was filled with a cloud, ¹⁴ so that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for the glory of the LORD filled the house of God.

► INSIGHT ◀

Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun (also called Ethan [1 Chron. 15:19]) were appointed by King David as chief musicians. They led the three levitical choirs and orchestras in tabernacle worship (15:16-17; 16:41-42; 25:1-7). Thirty-eight thousand Levites were involved in worship, with 4,000 serving as musicians praising "the LORD with musical instruments" (23:3-5).