

# ***Women of the Covenant***

DISCOVERING GOD'S  
FAITHFULNESS *to* WOMEN *in a*  
BROKEN *and* HURTING WORLD

***Jazmin N. Frank***



## Beautifully Devoted

RESOURCES

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story. You are loved. You are valued. You are cherished. You matter.*

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# Introduction



If you were to take a quick survey of the Bible you'd find a collection of two testaments, sixty-six books, several genres, multiple authors, and varied audiences. Sometimes it can be hard to see how all of these writings fit together, but the more I study Scripture, the more clearly I see how the thread of covenant connects everything.

Covenant is a word we don't use often in our modern language, but it is one of the most important words in the biblical narrative.

Even though the Bible is literarily diverse, every book of Scripture tells the story of God's covenant love for humanity, and His faithful promise to restore and redeem this broken world. From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible is the story of God's covenant faithfulness.

Covenant is a human word with roots in Ancient Middle Eastern tradition. A covenant involved two individuals, nations, or families entering into a binding contract. Often a covenant included an exchange of things like protection, military help, or some kind of tangible provision. If broken, the covenant-offender could face some dire consequences.<sup>1</sup>

In our modern culture, the most familiar context for covenant is in marriage. Two people commit their lives to each other. They promise to care for each other, put the other person's needs before their own, and to remain faithful to their relationship. The expectation is that nothing but death is to break their partnership.

Covenant in Scripture isn't very different from these two human examples. God uses this human institution of covenant to relate with His people. He promises protection, blessing, and eternal relationship; He asks only for His people to be faithful to their relationship with Him.

Covenant in the Bible is a word that points to God's faithfulness despite human failure.

Traditionally in Scripture, covenant is discussed through the eyes of the Patriarchs and

famed leaders of the Jewish faith—men like Noah, Abraham, Moses, and David. While the majority of our study will focus on women and their experience with God’s covenant faithfulness, it is impossible to study covenant without first looking at the stories of these men. We’ll spend the first few days of our study getting an overview of the four Old Testament covenants God made with four men.

It may be tempting to view covenant as a male-dominated word, but women are not exempt from the covenant. Through these men, God’s covenant blessing and faithfulness extends to others—first their families, and eventually to all of humanity through Jesus.

After we’ve got a firm grasp on the covenants themselves, we’ll turn our attention to several standout women through whom God extended His covenant faithfulness. These are women like you and me who knew great joy and great heartache—women who were taken advantage of, overlooked, and undervalued. These are women who were mistreated, suffered through hard seasons, and struggled to trust God’s faithfulness.

My hope in studying these women is that we will come to see ourselves as part of God’s covenant story just like they are. The beauty of the Bible, if we read it through the right lens, is that it paints the picture of a God who is crazy about His creation and desperately wants to restore relationship with humanity. Women and men are equally important to Him. Both are made in His image and testify to His character. Together, we are coheirs with Christ, both equal recipients of God’s amazing grace and covenant faithfulness.

May you be blessed in the journey, dear heart. And whatever doubts you have about your place in God’s story or His love for you, may those be washed away by the grace of His covenant faithfulness.

>>jazmin



# Bible Study Skills



Every Bible study is an opportunity not only to learn about the Bible, but also to learn skills that will allow you to dig deeper into Scripture on your own. My goal in every Bible study I create is to provide you with the resources you need, not only to study the pages of this book well, but to also take what you learn and apply it to your own devoted time.

So let's talk about some of the skills we'll be building in this study:

## THEMATIC STUDY

*Women of the Covenant* came about when I started noticing a word repeated in Scripture: covenant. I took notes on that word, did searches to find other places it was used throughout the Bible, all the while trying to understand why this word was so important.

This kind of study is what we call a thematic study.

A thematic study is where you trace a theme in a particular book or through the entire Bible. This type of study can be very beneficial in helping you see how the different parts of Scripture connect to tell the same story. Everything builds on what came before it.

Covenant is a word we're going to be tracing throughout this study. We'll look at instances when the word is used, but we'll also spend time studying the theme of God's promises through Scripture.

Days 1 and 2 of our study will walk you through a thematic study on the use of covenant in the Old Testament, but for the sake of easy reference, here is the main flow of a thematic study:

1. Start by finding passages where your word or theme appears in Scripture by using a Bible search tool like a concordance or online resource like BibleGateway.com.

2. Make a list of the passage references that appear in your search. Be sure to include variations of the word. When I began researching for this study, in addition to looking at the word “covenant” I also looked at passages with words like “promise”, “faithful”, “faithfulness”, and “new covenant.”
3. Look up each passage about your word or theme and make note of how that word is used or how that theme is revealed through that passage. Also be sure to look at the larger context in which that passage is found. Context is super important in making sure you are interpreting a particular verse or passage correctly.
4. Consult commentaries, handbooks, or other resources. Some of the words you search may not have a clear meaning at first. Consulting other trusted resources can help fill in some gaps in understanding biblical, historical, or cultural context.
5. Prayerfully draw conclusions. After all the searching and researching, it’s important to sit down with the information you’ve gathered and draw some conclusions. I find it helpful to get into a quiet place, look back over my notes, and ask God to help me see how it all connects. What truth does it reveal about Him? What action does this word call me to take?

I’ve created a Bible study guide to lead you through your own word or thematic study. This guide is available on my website for you to download and use in your own word studies. You can download that guide at: [jazminnfrank.com/free-resource-library-sign-up/](http://jazminnfrank.com/free-resource-library-sign-up/)

## UNDERSTANDING CONTEXT

When we’re talking about context in Bible study, there are three different kinds of context we need to be aware of:

1. Literary
2. Historical
3. Cultural

Each book of the Bible was written at a particular time, to a certain group of people, with a specific purpose. Whether we’re studying an entire book or tracing themes throughout several different books of Scripture, we have to keep context in mind so that we’re reading, interpreting, and applying God’s word the way it was intended.

While we will touch on all three types of context throughout this study, there is one I really want us to grasp before we get started, and that is cultural context.

The women we'll be studying lived in the Ancient Near East and life was much different for them. Their rights were limited and in their patriarchal society, their identity was tied to the men in their lives. Sandra L. Richter explains a woman's situation well:

"A woman's identity in Israel—and her link to its economy and civil structure—was always tracked through the men in her life. She was first her father's daughter, then her husband's wife and then her son's mother. The resources and protection of the clan came to her through the male members of her family. This is why it was critical for a woman to marry and to bear children."<sup>2</sup>

To our modern ears this perhaps makes us a little uncomfortable. Maybe you even feel a little bit of fight rising up in you because it just doesn't seem fair. But this is the world these women lived in. Understanding the situation and position of women during Bible times will help us better understand their stories and God's character.

Throughout Scripture we see a God who goes after the underdog, the overlooked, and the outcast. Though women were often treated as the lesser gender, we see God advocating for the women and valuing them even when society did not. He welcomes them into His family and gives them important roles in His story. Everyone matters and no one is getting left behind in His covenant story. It can be tempting to read Scripture through the eyes of our western culture, but we will better understand what the biblical authors are communicating when we're able to slip into the sandals of that culture.

In addition to recognizing the cultural and historical context of these women, it is also important that, as we trace this thread of covenant throughout the Bible, we recognize that these passages function within the larger context of the books they are written in. The authors were very intentional in what they did and did not include. They wrote to a particular group of people for a specific purpose, and we need to keep the larger literary context of these passages in mind.

## ACTIVE READING

Active reading is one of the simplest Bible study skills we can develop because it simply means that you are being intentional about interacting with the text as you read.

When we passively read Scripture, we run the risk of getting distracted or going through the motions of reading without actually encountering God through His word. Active reading provides us a way to actively engage with Scripture. There are several different ways to put this skill into action—color coding, underlining, journaling, asking questions, using symbols.

In this study, we'll practice active reading by using guided questions in our Scripture reading.

Before we get into the nitty gritty of each day's teaching, I want to give you the opportunity to encounter Scripture for yourself. To help you read a little more actively, each lesson begins with two questions based on the assigned passage. These questions will give you something to pay attention to as you read and help you stay focused. They will also set the stage for each lesson.

Now that you've got a few tools in your belt, let's tug on that covenant thread and get to know the God who is faithful to women, even in a broken and hurting world.

*Day 1*

## *Covenant Beginnings*



Look back at the definition of covenant provided in the introduction and summarize it in your own words.

What examples of covenant can you think of that still exist in our modern context?

These first two days are going to function a little differently from the rest of the study. Our goal is to explore how women throughout Scripture are included in God's covenant story, while also learning how to see ourselves in God's covenant story. If we're going to talk about covenant, then it's important to recognize where the covenant thread begins. In the Old Testament, covenant began with a few key men and then extended to others, including the women in their lives.

So before we dive into the stories about women, let's take a look at a few men through whom these covenants began.

In the Ancient Near East, covenants were a way for two parties to initiate a partnership.

It was similar to a contract, but carried with it some heavy risks and consequences. This familiar idea of committed partnerships was a symbol God used in relationship with humanity, and in the Old Testament specifically, covenant was a defining aspect in His relationship with one family—the family of Israel.

We find the first mention of covenant in the opening book of the Bible—Genesis.

In the first several chapters of the book of Genesis, a lot happens:

- God creates the world and it is good and perfect, but humans distrust God's goodness, disobey His commands, and sin enters the world. (Gen. 1-3)
- Humanity is exiled from the Garden, and all of creation is cursed by the presence of sin and death. Human relationships are broken and so is their relationship with God. (Gen. 3:8-24)
- Sin and death rampage the earth and people become very evil. Brother kills brother (Gen. 4:1-16). Jealousy, murder, deception—all of it festers as humanity becomes more and more evil.

In Genesis 6, we're given a good summary of the state of the world at that point.

**Read Genesis 6:1-7. Describe the state of humanity as well as God's thoughts and feelings.**

The world was broken beyond repair and God was grieved deeply to the point of regretting that He had ever created humanity. That's heavy stuff, and if I'm honest, it sounds like the end of the story. Does God leave humanity to its own devices and let them destroy themselves? Does He step back from that relationship because it's just a lost cause at this point?

Is there any hope?

Yes. Because we find out in verse 8 that not every human was evil: "Noah, however, found favor with the Lord."

That word we translate into English as "favor" can also mean "grace."

Noah found *grace* with God.

Favor in our culture carries with it a meaning that is often connected with performance. We seek to win someone's favor or we ask for a favor; but here the favor or grace Noah finds in God has more to do with the type of person Noah is, not with his accomplishments.

**In verses 9-10 how is Noah described? What kind of guy is he?**

Not since Adam and Eve and their days in the Garden of Eden have we heard about another human walking with God. Adam and Eve spent the evenings walking with God in the Garden, and now that same kind of intimate relationship with God is attributed to Noah. He's got something special with the Lord, something that sets him apart from the rest of the population.

The presence of this man who is described as being righteous—of having a right relationship with God—allows for a turn in the story. God isn't going to walk away and leave humanity. He has a plan to deal with the sin problem and Noah is going to help Him.

## NOAHIC COVENANT

**Read the rest of Genesis 6:11-22. What does God reveal about His plans, and what is Noah's role?**

## How does Noah respond to the job God gives him?

While Noah's Ark is a beloved Sunday school story and a common theme for baby nurseries, the story itself is quite dark. Humanity is corrupt, and God puts a plan into motion to set things right again. At first it might seem like the Flood is the answer—get rid of all the evil and corrupt people and start again with righteous Noah and his family. If that was the answer, the Bible would end after the flood waters receded and Noah's family came out on dry ground. But that isn't where the story ends. Instead, this is where the thread of covenant begins because after Noah and his family leave the ark, God makes a covenant with Noah.

**Read Genesis 9:1-17. What covenant does God make with Noah?**

**Covenants are often partnered with a physical sign or symbol, a reminder of the promises and commitments made. What sign does God give Noah to affirm His covenant?**

God doesn't require anything from Noah. God simply makes a promise not to flood the earth again, and He places a rainbow in the clouds as a reminder of that promise. In future covenants we'll see God asking something of the individuals He makes a covenant with, but here at this covenant beginning, God simply makes a promise. The world won't experience another flood like that again, but Noah's family becomes a foreshadowing of what is to come—of how God will invite one family to be part of His great redemption plan.



## ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

The next covenant we encounter comes several generations after Noah. Humanity again did evil in the sight of God and He dispersed them across the land (Gen. 11). A few more generations later, God calls a man named Abram to follow Him. He promises to bless Abram, to make him a great nation and to give him land. He also promises that “all the peoples on earth will be blessed through [him]” (Gen. 12:3).

That’s quite a promise and one of the beautiful things about covenant! Though the blessing comes through one person, it extends to everyone.

Abram follows God, leaving his home, and believing the promise God has made. He lives as a nomad for a couple of decades, then God comes and makes a covenant with Abram.

**Read Genesis 15:1-21. What covenant does God make with Abram?**

We see another righteous man with whom God enters into a covenant. God affirms His previous promise to give Abram descendants and land. Abram believes God’s promises and it is “credited to him as righteousness” (Gen. 15:6).

Tim Mackie, one of the creators of The BibleProject, gave a fantastic sermon about this odd chapter of Scripture. One of the points that he makes is about Abram’s posture of faith: “The fundamental thing God wants for humans, one crucial thing, is just a posture of trust in the radical generosity of God.”<sup>3</sup>

Covenant is founded in relationship. It’s about the relationship between the two committed parties making the covenant. In the covenants God enters into, His desire for relationship stretches far beyond a certain individual. This covenant isn’t just for Abram. Abram is going to have a family, a big family—a family so big it will outnumber the stars—and through that family God will bless the whole world and restore covenant relationship between Him and all of humanity.

In this covenant God makes with Abram, we see God’s character. He is a generous God who desires to live in relationship with His creation. But we also see a God who is willing to bear the responsibility and consequences of this covenant Himself.

Normally, both parties entering into the covenant would walk between the animal halves described in verse 10; but that isn't what happens here. God puts Abram into a deep sleep and walks down the bloody aisle Himself, claiming both roles in the covenant relationship as the promise maker and the commitment keeper. It is both a protective act toward Abram's family who will most certainly fail to keep their side of the covenant, and a determination that the covenant God is entering into will not fail. The people He is inviting to participate in His covenant story will fail, but God will not.<sup>4</sup>

This covenant with Abram is confirmed two chapters later with the sign of circumcision.

While in chapter 15 God simply offers a promise and asks Abram to trust Him, in chapter 17 God partners His promise with some instructions.

**Read Genesis 17:1-14. What is the purpose of the sign of circumcision?**

Along with a name change, Abram, who has now become Abraham, was given a physical sign of God's covenant. Every male in Abraham's household would be circumcised on the eighth day. Every generation from that point on would bear the physical reminder of God's commitment to be with them, to make them fruitful, and to bless the nations through their family.

What began as a covenant with a single man has now been extended to include his family. Already we see God's covenant faithfulness expanding beyond the individual.

If the men carry the sign of the covenant through circumcision, perhaps you're beginning to wonder how the women fit into this whole covenant thing.

Remember, in that culture a woman's identity was traced through the men in her life. While Abraham and all the males in his household carried the *physical* sign of the covenant through circumcision, the *blessing* of the covenant was extended to his wife Sarah and the other women in the household.

The Zondervan Handbook explains this concept well:

“Although women were not circumcised, there is no hint that they were to be inferior members of the covenant because of this. And the New Testament

recognizes faith, not circumcision, as having always been the biblical basis of acceptance with God. The new rite of baptism includes both men and women in the Christian church.”<sup>5</sup>

Though the women are not the ones to carry the physical sign of the covenant, they are still recipients of God’s covenant faithfulness and participants in His promise.

For the next few generations after God’s initial covenant with Abraham, God reaffirms His covenant with Abraham by passing it on to the next descendent. In Genesis 26:1-5, God makes the same promise to Isaac to be with him, multiply his offspring, and make him a blessing (Gen. 26:23-24). Isaac’s youngest son Jacob is also included in the direct line of the covenant (Gen. 28:13-15).

Each time God makes a covenant, He promises His presence and blessing. In return, all He asks is for faith, trust, and that each individual would remember God’s faithfulness.

Here in this first book of the Bible, God establishes a strong base of covenant faithfulness. He invites individuals into personal relationship with Him and includes them in His covenant story. He offers Himself first, knowing humans will fail. But even in our failure, God is faithful.

This is where the covenant story begins: looking into the eyes of a loving and faithful God whose goal is redemption and who is willing to shoulder the weight and invite imperfect people on the journey with Him as He seeks to set all the broken things right.

**How might seeing God’s faithfulness in this first book of the Bible change how you read the rest of Scripture?**

*Day 2*

## ***Covenant Kingdom***



What is a covenant and how has that word been used in Scripture so far?

What was the most impactful idea about covenant that we discussed in yesterday's lesson?

After God's initial covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, things take a difficult turn. Jacob's sons sell their brother Joseph into slavery, but God uses Joseph's situation to place him in a position of power in Egypt. He becomes second in command and when a great famine sweeps through the land, Joseph is able to save his family. Because Joseph is in Egypt, Jacob moves the rest of his family there. As their family continues to grow, so does Egypt's fear of being overrun and overthrown by the Hebrews. With the memory of Joseph's legacy forgotten, the Egyptians act on their fear and make life miserable for Israel.

**Read Exodus 1:1-14. What were things like for Israel in Egypt?**

Things feel backward and upside down for Israel. The family God promised to bless is living as slaves far from the land He had promised them. I can imagine that the people felt abandoned and hopeless. What had happened to God's covenant faithfulness? Had He forgotten about them?

Though things are dark and desperate, God hasn't forgotten about Abraham's family.

**Read Exodus 2:23-25. What does this passage show us about God's heart for His people and His covenant with them?**

This is one of my favorite passages in Scripture. It's a reminder that no matter how dark things get, God is not blind or deaf to the prayers of His people. He hears, and He has already been setting things in motion.

He calls a man named Moses. Moses was born under the rule of a Pharaoh so threatened by the Hebrew people that he ordered the murder of every Hebrew baby boy. Moses, however, survived because of the bravery of his birth-mother, Jochebed—we'll talk more about her in a future lesson—and the covenant faithfulness of God. Years later, while he is living in the wilderness, Moses encounters God at a burning bush.

**Read Exodus 3:4-10. What does God reveal to Moses in this conversation?**

Back in Genesis 15 when God made His covenant with Abraham, God said that Abraham's family would be slaves in a foreign land, but that God would bring them out and lead them back to the land God had promised Abraham's descendants (Gen. 15:13-16). Now, through Moses, God is making good on that promise. Even when things get difficult, God continues to affirm His promises and assure Moses and Israel that He will be faithful.

**Read Exodus 6:2-8. List all the promises God affirms in this passage.**

Pharaoh is resistant to God's instructions to let His people go, but after a series of plagues that end in the death of every firstborn son in Egypt, Pharaoh finally relents and lets Israel leave. Moses leads Israel across the Red Sea and into the wilderness where God instructs them to camp at Mount Sinai. It is here that we learn about the third covenant of the Old Testament.

## MOSAIC COVENANT

**Read Exodus 19:1-6. What is different about this covenant than the previous two we've studied?**

God's covenant with Noah was one-sided. It was based solely on God's promise never to flood the earth again. With Abraham God affirmed His character and promised His presence, but He also commanded Abraham that all the male members of his household were to carry a physical reminder of God's covenant through circumcision.

Now, at the base of Mount Sinai, God asks for Israel's faithfulness and in return, He not only promises His presence, but He promises a new identity: "Now if you will carefully listen to me and keep my covenant, you will be my own possession...and you will be my kingdom of priests and my holy nation" (Exod. 19:5-6).

The rest of the book of Exodus outlines what it looks like to be God's kingdom and His holy nation. He gives Israel laws to guide them in working, resting, and dealing with social issues. God also draws up plans for a tabernacle—a central meeting place that would be a physical sign of His presence among them, a reminder of His covenant promise, and an affirmation of their identity as His people.

The covenant at Sinai isn't with an individual, but an entire nation.

## DAVIDIC COVENANT

The final Old Testament covenant is found in 2 Samuel.

Many years have passed since God initiated the covenant at Sinai. After 40 years of wandering in the desert due to their fear and distrust of God, Israel finally entered the land God had promised to Abraham. At that point, Israel entered a dark period of rebellion. They did evil in the sight of the Lord, and their enemies rose up to oppress them. Israel would cry out for help and God would raise up judges to guide them and help them defeat the enemies in their land. The people would be faithful for a little while, but then they would repeat the cycle and return to disobedience.

One of Israel's acts of rebellion was to ask for a king (1 Sam. 8). God gave the people what they wanted and Saul was anointed as the first king of Israel. While he started out as a decent leader, Saul made some bad choices along the way and God anointed a shepherd named David as the next king (1 Sam. 16).

It was several years before David claimed the throne, but once he did, God made a covenant with David.

**Read 2 Samuel 7:1-29. What covenant does God make with David?**

I find this interaction between God and David so fascinating. David comes before the Lord and offers his idea to build a permanent temple for Him, but God takes that idea and flips it around. He enters into a covenant with David, assuring him that his family line will never end as long as David's descendants remain faithful to God. He also promises that one day a descendant of David would rule forever.

From Genesis through this passage in 2 Samuel, God enters into covenants that extend blessings beyond the individuals He originally entered into covenant with. These covenants reveal the far-reaching faithfulness of God. Through these covenants God establishes a plan for redemption and invites humanity to partner with Him in the restoration of the world He created. None of these people were perfect. If you go back and read their full stories, you'll find they have their flaws and doubts and they make mistakes. They have moments when they fail, and sometimes those failures are colossal, but God's faithfulness remains.

Now that we know the origins of these four covenants and we've caught glimpses of God's faithfulness to the people He invited to partner with Him, let's revisit and reexamine this theme of covenant through the eyes of the women in these stories. As we do, let's pay close attention to how God remained faithful to these women.

Let's study the women of the covenant.

Briefly summarize the four Old Testament covenants.

**Noahic:**

**Abrahamic:**



**Mosaic:**

**Davidic:**

## *Day 3*

# ***Eve: A Woman Deceived***

READ GENESIS 2-3



What sticks out to you from Eve's story?

How do you see God's covenant faithfulness in her life?

Most of the time when we talk about Eve, it's with disdain and blame. She's the one who ate the fruit and is blamed for Adam's choices too, even though he definitely made the decision to eat the fruit himself. We see Eve as the girl who messed everything up for us. We smother her with shame and place the weight of this world's condition on her shoulders. She should have known better. She should have chosen differently. But when I look at Eve, I see a woman not much different from me and you. She was a woman deceived and a woman who made a bad choice.

We've all been there right? We've all faced a moment of decision, a fork in our road where we went down the wrong path.

The main difference between Eve and us is that, up to the moment that scheming serpent slithered into her life, she had no knowledge of sin or any idea how to handle temptation because neither existed. She knew only paradise and a world untainted by death and destruction.

So when Satan whispered questions about God's intentions, Eve must have paused for a moment. *Did God really say...*? For her entire life she had known nothing but God's presence, love, and rest. She walked with Him in the cool of the evening and worked with her husband Adam to tend to the land God had given them. The only boundary God had drawn for them in that Garden Paradise was that they were not to eat from the tree in the center of the Garden (Gen. 2:16-17), not-so-coincidentally the same tree the serpent was questioning her about.

When Eve answers the serpent's question by saying that God did indeed tell them not to eat from that particular tree, she adds her own secondary boundary that they aren't even supposed to look at it. We're not given any insight into how Eve reached the conclusion that she couldn't look at the forbidden tree. Perhaps it was her way of keeping herself in line. If that tree and its fruit are off limits, then maybe this second boundary was added pressure on herself to avoid disobeying God. Or maybe the pressure came from Adam. We can't be certain, but at this point Eve is engaged in conversation, and Satan pulls the trigger on his deception.

**What does the serpent tell Eve in Genesis 3:4-5?**

**What does Eve do in response to this misinformation?**

He's crafty, that snake. His goal is to upset the perfection God had created, to break God's heart, to hurt Him. Satan wants to rule, and that starts by planting seeds of doubt and rebellion. He wants Eve to question God's heart toward her, His love for her, and His care of her. But Satan knows that an outright assault on God's character will be met with opposition. Adam and Eve love God, and they believe He loves them. The only way to make Eve think that God is holding out on her, is to make her believe that God had deceived her.

I imagine the next few moments of the story playing out in slow motion.

The serpent settles onto a branch in the tree, eye-level with Eve. Her eyes shift from the snake to the low-hanging fruit. The sunlight breaks through the leaves and the smooth skin of the fruit glistens and gleams. It looks warm and appetizing. Eve's mouth begins to water. There is something suddenly enticing and magnetic about the fruit as she begins to reach for it, slowly. The serpent's words replay in her mind: *"You will not die...you will be like God..."* The thought is as appealing as the fruit.

Her stomach rumbles as she breaks the stem, separating the fruit from the branch. As she pulls it toward her mouth, does she question her actions? Does she second guess the choice she's about to make? Or is there zero hesitation? Is she so enticed by the web this serpent has woven, so intent on being like God that she gives in and eats the fruit without another thought?

With the juice dribbling down her chin, she turns and hands the fruit to her husband, who is standing only a step or two behind her. He looks at the fruit, glances up at her. She nods, smiles, licks the juice from her lips, and watches as he takes a bite too.

If this story had played out on the big screen, I imagine the director would insert a storm or an earthquake or some sort of natural disaster to visually mark the shift that happened then; but according to Scripture, no such thing happened. Eve and her husband ate and then everything inside of them and between them shifted. All at once Eve knew things she had never known before. She suddenly felt exposed, vulnerable, at risk. She needed to cover herself, cover her shame, and hide.

And that's exactly what she and Adam did.

**Has there ever been a time that you tried to hide from God or to cover up your shame?**

It was near evening, the usual time God came for their stroll through the Garden. Perhaps they heard His footsteps or sensed His familiar presence, but they hightailed it to the nearest tall plant and ducked down low, holding their breaths, hoping He would pass on without noticing.

Hidden in the plants, Eve's heart must have been pounding. Did she feel fear for the first time? Shame? Sadness? Anger? All of them at once? Did she know those swirling emotions inside of her even had names—names her Creator never intended for her to know or experience?

“Where are you?” God called to them.

The familiar voice of Love she had anticipated and adored every day of her life now struck a cold fear in her heart. Her body shook and she fought back tears.

The silence stretched on as Eve looked to her husband, both of them wondering what to do, but it was a silence too heavy for Adam to bear. “We’re here!” he finally called out, slowly rising to reveal their hiding spot. Eve followed suit, her shoulders slightly hunched, trying to keep herself covered behind the plants.

Adam spoke again: “I heard you in the garden and I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid.”

Eve raised her gaze and saw God's face. Surprise or shock weren't emotions that covered His features. Instead His eyes were filled with a deep sadness. A sadness she had caused because of her decision to eat that fruit—a decision she made because she had believed what the serpent had said—that God was holding something back from her.

But that didn't stop her from passing the blame when God asked how Adam knew he was naked. Adam blamed Eve, and Eve just as quickly pointed back at the serpent. “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

She glanced back toward the tree to where the serpent remained in his spot, grinning cruelly, satisfied to be watching his scheme play out ever so nicely. Eve narrowed her gaze

on that snake, wishing he would fall down dead. But just as quickly as that thought came, another followed close behind: *You have no one to blame but yourself.*

When God spoke again and made them aware of the consequences of their actions, Eve's heart sank. The serpent had told a half truth. Death would not be immediate, but her future would be colored by it. With that deep sadness still filling His eyes, a few tears pooling over the brims of His lower lids, God banished them.

This is the part of Eve's story we focus on, but there is more here than sin and shame.

While the word "covenant" is never used in the opening chapters of Genesis, the idea of a partnership relationship between God and humanity began the day God created man and woman.

**Read Genesis 1:26-30. In what way were humans created to partner with God?**

When Eve gave in to the serpent's deception, that partnership was broken. No specific covenant was made because our very existence was meant to be lived out in partnership with God. We were never meant to be separated from Him, never meant to live apart from Him.

The world broke that day, and for all of history we've blamed Eve. We place the weight of our broken world on her shoulders. Yes, Eve had a choice, and she chose poorly. She and the rest of humanity have had to deal with the consequences of that choice. But that didn't stop God from extending grace and showing Himself faithful. Instead of immediate death, He clothed her and sent her into exile. But she was also given a promise.

**Look again at Genesis 3:15. What promise does God make?**

Through Eve, sin and death entered the world, but it is also through Eve's line and from the body of a woman that redemption would come. The first woman in Scripture—and

the first woman in history—becomes the first person to carry God’s promise with her. Eve, the mother of all the living, becomes part of the first chapter in God’s covenant story.

There is a beautiful piece of art called “Mary and Eve” that depicts this promise of redemption and restoration. In this image, Eve has the serpent wrapped around her leg, her head bowed in sorrow, the fruit in her hands. Mary is pregnant, her heel crushing the head of the serpent as she reaches out to comfort Eve. The baby Mary gives birth to, Jesus, is the fulfillment of the promise God makes to Eve at Scripture’s beginning.

Eve is a woman of the covenant who knows the weight of sin, but also the grace of God’s covenant faithfulness.

**Is there anything in this familiar story that surprised you or stuck out to you?**

**How do you view God differently after studying Eve’s story?**

***Did you enjoy this preview?***

Purchase the full version of *Women of the Covenant* from  
Amazon.com or your favorite retailer.



# Recommended Reading List



Interested in learning more about the stories of women in Scripture and the world they lived in? Check out these great fiction and nonfiction reads!

## FICTION

*Bread of Angels* by Tessa Afshar

*Chronicles of the Kings Series* by Lynn Austin

*Cities of Refuge Series* by Connilyn Cossette

*Dangerous Beauty Series* by Angela Hunt

*Daughter of Rome* by Tessa Afshar

*Daughters of the Promised Land Series* by Jill Eileen Smith

*Harvest of Gold* by Tessa Afshar

*Harvest of Rubies* by Tessa Afshar

*In the Field of Grace* by Tessa Afshar

*Jerusalem Road Series* by Angela Hunt

*Land of Silence* by Tessa Afshar

*Legacy of Grace Series* by Francine Rivers

*Love Amid Ashes* by Mesu Andrews

*Love in a Broken Vessel* by Mesu Andrews

*Love's Sacred Song* by Mesu Andrews

*Miriam* by Mesu Andrews

*Miriam's Song* by Jill Eileen Smith

*Out of Exodus Series* by Connilyn Cossette

*Pearl in the Sand* by Tessa Afshar

*Pricilla and Aquila* by Lois T. Henderson

*Redeeming Love* by Francine Rivers

*Restoration Chronicles Series* by Lynn Austin

*Star of Persia* by Jill Eileen Smith

*The Pharaoh's Daughter* by Mesu Andrews

*The Silent Years Series* by Angela Hunt

*The Wives of David Series* by Jill Eileen Smith

*Wives of the Patriarchs* by Jill Eileen Smith

## NONFICTION

*Bad Women of the Bible* by Liz Curtis Higgs

*Dynamic Women of the Bible* by Ruth A. Tucker

*Really Bad Women of the Bible* by Liz Curtis Higgs

*She Walked Before Us* by Jill Eileen Smith

*Slightly Bad Women of the Bible* by Liz Curtis Higgs

*This Girl's Still Got It* by Liz Curtis Higgs

*Unveiling Mary Magdalene* by Liz Curtis Higgs

*Victim of Grace* by Robin Jones Gunn

*When Your Life Doesn't Match Your Dreams* by Jill Eileen Smith

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# *About the Author*



Jazmin N. Frank is a Bible teacher and faith mentor. With a focus on building relationship with God through spiritual rhythms, Jazmin equips and encourages ordinary people to love God, love His story, and live devoted. She is the author of several Bible studies including *Finally Free*, *In the Waiting*, and *Name Above All Names*. Jazmin loves creating content that helps people dive deep into Scripture, while also teaching Bible study skills. Learn more and connect with Jazmin online @jazminnfrank or on her website [jazminnfrank.com](http://jazminnfrank.com).