

Mary

MAGDALENE

From Shame to Salvation

Becoming
Wis(h)er

S E R I E S

*Psalm 46:5 - "God is in the midst of her, she will not
be moved; God will help her when morning dawns."*

by Cherie Dickerson Hampton



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Murillo in the San Diego Museum.

PREFACE

Mary Magdalene: From Shame to Salvation

WHO SHOULD STUDY MARY MAGDALENE?

Christian women who struggle with past or present shame that profoundly affects their daily lives, mental health, and relationships with God and others. Christian women who want to minister to others who live with shame that affects their daily lives.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF SHAME IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS?

Over the last few years and especially since 2020 mental health issues have been at the forefront of research in universities, medical centers, businesses, and mental health sciences. One such study reports, "...research that investigated the association between shame, and shame induced behavioral and emotional reactions, as well as the following mental disorders: anxiety disorders... personality disorders, aggression, addictions... The results of the reviewed studies suggest that this excessive emotional state associated with negative self-esteem on global self plays a central role in mental disorders..."¹

- Each year, 1 in 5 women in the United States has a mental health problem such as depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), or an eating disorder.²
- In 2020, among the 52.9 million adults with Any Mental Illness (AMI), 24.3 million (46.2%) received mental health services in the past year.
- More females with AMI (51.2%) received mental health services than males with AMI (37.4%).³

Sisters, experiencing shame, even while professing to be a follower of Jesus, is widespread. Let's learn how one of the most loyal followers of Jesus Christ moved from Shame to Salvation.

"In you, O
LORD, do I take
refuge; let me
never be put to
shame; in your
righteousness
deliver me!"

Psalm 31:17a

- 1 'The role of shame in development of the mental disorders II. Measurement of shame and relationship]. Psychiatr Hung (Psychiatria Hungarica). 2015;30(3):278-96. Hungarian. PMID: 26471030. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/26471030/>
- 2 <https://www.psychiatry.org/File%20Library/Psychiatrists/Cultural-Competency/Mental-Health-Disparities/Mental-Health-Facts-for-Women.pdf>
- 3 <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/mental-illness>

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INTRODUCTION

Over the last few years, I have been digging deeper into the life of Mary of Magdala or Mary Magdalene as she is typically referred to in the New Testament and I find her fascinating. Several years ago, I was asked to teach a Ladies Bible Class at our church and given a list of names of women of the bible from which to choose. Skimming the list, I noticed the familiar women were there, Eve, Ruth, Sarah, Mary and Martha. I found myself thinking "what new and fresh idea can I glean from them to share with my sisters?" Since I like to challenge myself and others, I asked the organizer of the class if I would be allowed to make an alternative choice not on her list of distinguished women of the Bible. The answer was a resounding "yes"! (Sometimes you don't realize the full ramifications of what you are asking.) After that, I began to agonize for weeks over which woman of the bible I should choose.

So, I began my search for the perfect woman of the Bible to present to the class. The more I searched, the more I realized there was no "perfect" woman of the Bible for this study. There were many women, however, who though flawed in some way were still with Jesus in the end. After my exhaustive quest, I happened upon Mary Magdalene. Mind you, I have been a believer and follower of Jesus Christ since I gave my life to Him and was baptized at age 14. I was raised going to church three times a week (at least). But...I. Knew. Nothing. About. Mary Magdalene. That really piqued my interest. Why had I never heard a lesson or been in a Bible class with teaching specifically about Mary Magdalene? I was amazed. I was surprised. I was a little shocked. After I spent weeks (and now several years) studying the life of Mary of Magdala, I fully appreciate her imperfections. Mary had demons and more than likely shame from struggling with those demons. However, Mary was healed of her demons and after her dramatic healing, she became a devoted follower of Jesus. Now I realize what an amazing woman she was and why the Savior chose her to be one of His followers.

If you struggle with the secrets of your past life or your present life, you are not alone. Many Christian women struggle with family dysfunction, childhood abuse, addiction, depression, broken relationships and other metaphorical demons. How do you turn those demons of shame and secrecy to salvation on

a daily basis? Mary Magdalene provides us with a shining example of someone who bore dark secrets and had her life changed by following Jesus. We share with Mary the knowledge of the very same Jesus with whom she walked.

Journey alongside Mary as she struggles with her demons and shame to a life full of Jesus. Mary is witness to the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ! Following Jesus from a life of shame and secrets is "THE WAY" to salvation!

Sisters, I hope by the end of this study you will realize what we have been missing by not seeing and learning about this extraordinary woman. Open your Bibles and be amazed! Be surprised! Be shocked! Mary of Magdala is going to stir your heart and blow your mind!

How is this study guide set up?

Day 1: Read – scripture and specifically passages pertaining to Mary's life.
(However, we will read and meditate on scripture throughout the week.)

Day 2: Recall – to remember or retrieve information from the scriptures read.

Day 3: Relate – to show a relationship or connection to scripture for the week.

Day 4: Reason – to help us discover and analyze new knowledge.

Day 5: Reflect – to synthesize or make judgements and apply to our lives.