

**THE WOMEN
OF THE BIBLE**
Speak
WORKBOOK

*The Wisdom of 16 Women and
Their Lessons for Today*

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The Women of the Bible Speak Workbook

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Welcome



Women are central to some of the most critical events, powerful encounters, and transformative moments in the Bible. They change the course of history.

In the upcoming pages, you'll explore the stories of sixteen women and dig deep into their lives. You'll find that these aren't just characters from an ancient book. These are real people who lived and breathed and hoped and prayed. They cried and celebrated just like you.

They offered themselves as voices of truth and reason. They stepped boldly into impossible situations and played critical roles in saving countless lives and even nations.

We must remember that these aren't fictional superheroes. They faced challenges much like the ones we face today: the pangs of loneliness, the sting of rejection, and the quiet ache of the soul. They, too, battled the disappointment and depression that comes with unfulfilled expectations and personal loss. Yet these extraordinary women rose above because God was their refuge.

In Him, they found hope and healing.

In Him, they found power and provision.

In Him, they found strength and sustenance.

And the same God who worked mightily in their lives is at work in yours, too. May you find comfort and hope as we make this journey together.

* * *

How to Use This Workbook



This workbook is a companion to the #1 *New York Times* bestselling book, *The Women of the Bible Speak* by Shannon Bream, and it's designed to make your experience richer and deeper. In the upcoming sixteen lessons, you'll be challenged to consider the parallels between each woman's story and your own. You'll be asked to reflect on how God worked in their lives and how He's working in your own.

If you join with friends or neighbors to complete this workbook, consider answering the questions personally *before* you meet up. That way you'll be the most prepared with insights, reflections, and thoughts to share.

You'll notice that each lesson has four components:

REFLECT invites you to read key moments of each woman's life in the Bible and connect with their stories.

CONNECT asks you to consider how God in the Old Testament or Jesus in the New Testament responds to each woman and what this discloses about His character and how He responds to you.

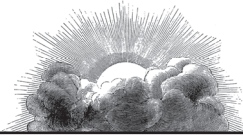
REVEAL provides an opportunity to identify specific character traits, responses to God, and acts of faith, as well as your similar traits, responses, and acts of faith.

PRAY asks you to prayerfully consider how the woman's story ties into the work God is doing in your life right now.

Every other lesson features a bonus section:

PAIRS reveals that individually, every woman's story is powerful. Here, you'll consider the women in pairs, finding the commonalities in their callings and challenges. Some of the women knew one another. Others were connected simply by a thread of common purpose, one that becomes clearer by studying the women side by side.

LESSON FIVE



TAMAR

Tamar is an outsider, not part of the family made up of Abraham's descendants who will become the nation of Israel. Nevertheless, she is part of both David and Jesus' family tree. She's also an example of bold choices and of God's redemptive power in the midst of our messy lives.

—From *The Women of the Bible Speak*, page 53



Some stories in the Bible, like Tamar's, are a little tricky to teach in kids' Sunday school. With a checkered past and some strange, uncomfortable decisions and details, Tamar's story can seem easier to skip over. She's an outsider without any power or protector. She's forced to rely on ill-advised tactics to survive. Yet her story reveals that God specializes in making outsiders into insiders and redeeming our messes.

REFLECT

The story of Tamar appears as a kind of interlude in Genesis 38. The previous chapter introduces the story of Joseph where he's betrayed by his brothers and sold to Potiphar. Immediately following Tamar's story, Genesis continues the story of Joseph, where he's betrayed by Potiphar's wife.

The Bible tells us the selling of Joseph was Judah's idea. Soon after, Judah leaves his brothers and settles among the Canaanites where he married Shua, and they have three sons.

Read Genesis 38:1–7. What does this passage reveal about Tamar's first husband, Er?

Though the Scripture does not specify, how do you think Er treated Tamar?

After Er's death, custom dictated that his wife marry his brother. This is known as a "leviratic" marriage—*levir* is Latin for "husband's brother"—and it was the custom among many Semitic peoples of the ancient Near East. Onan goes forward with the marriage, but he refuses to give Tamar a child. This may be because if Onan produces an heir for Er, it will decrease his inheritance.

Read Genesis 38:8–10. How does Onan treat Tamar?

What is God's response?

What does God's response reveal about how God sees and cares for Tamar?

Read Genesis 38:11. How does Judah see and respond to Tamar?

What do you think people whispered about Tamar after losing two husbands?

Tamar has no marriage, no future, no prospects of any kind of normal life. She's sent away as a dependent in her father's house until the day she dies. But she refuses to wallow in self-pity. Judah has done the wrong, and Tamar formulates a plan.

Read Genesis 38:12–23. How does Tamar trick Judah?

What does Tamar demand of Judah?

What is Judah most concerned with after the encounter? (Hint: v. 23)

Read Genesis 28:24–26. How does Judah respond to Tamar’s pregnancy?

How does Judah change his response?

What does it suggest about Tamar’s character that she chooses to send a message in private rather than publicly humiliate Judah?

Do you think you could have practiced such self-control? Why or why not?

Have you ever humiliated someone else in the process of pursuing justice? If so describe. What was the result?

Have you ever advocated for justice while avoiding a public humiliation of the offender? If so, describe. What was the result?

Read Genesis 38:27–30 and Matthew 1:2–3. What does it reveal about God that Tamar’s little boy—son of an outsider, son of a Canaanite woman—becomes part of the royal line of the kingdom of Israel and Christ?

Remember: Tamar’s story happens as an interlude in the middle of Joseph’s story. Joseph is thrown into prison before rising to second-in-command of Egypt under Pharaoh. When Jacob faces the possibility of sending his son, Benjamin, away, Judah steps forward and eventually offers his life to save his younger brother.

Read Genesis 43:8–9 and 44:33. How has Judah changed from the man who first suggested selling Joseph into slavery?

How do Tamar’s actions force Judah to confront his own wrongdoing and show him how to be a person who stands for right when no one else has the courage?

What role does Tamar play in changing the angry, vengeful young man at the beginning of the story to the mature, compassionate man at the end?

CONNECT

Now that you've read and reflected on Tamar's story, it's time to connect this woman of the Bible with your life. Fill out the chart below.

What do you see as Tamar's greatest character strengths?	
What do you see as Tamar's greatest character weaknesses?	
Which strengths do you relate to or long for?	
Which weaknesses do you relate to or long to overcome?	
How do you hope to be more like Tamar in your faith journey?	

REVEAL

Now that you've connected with this woman of the Bible, it's time to look at how God reveals His presence to Tamar and how God is doing the same for you.

<p>Where did you most see God show up in Tamar's life?</p>	
<p>What does God reveal about Himself and His character in the life of Tamar?</p>	
<p>Like Tamar, in what ways have you experienced God redeeming an impossible situation?</p>	
<p>How is God revealing Himself to you right now?</p>	

PRAY

Take a few minutes to ask the Holy Spirit to guide you as you respond to the following prayer prompts.

Lord, like Tamar, help me . . .

Lord, whom am I tempted to publicly shame for their wrongdoing? How can I pursue justice without public humiliation?

Lord, what's the injustice in which I most need Your wisdom in how to respond? How do You want me to respond?

Lord, how can I be as wise as a serpent and innocent as a dove (Matthew 10:16)?

Lord, considering Tamar's story, how are You calling me to live and respond to others differently?
