

#1 *New York Times* Bestselling Author

SHANNON BREAM



THE WOMEN OF THE BIBLE *Speak*

WORKBOOK

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



THE WOMEN OF THE BIBLE *Speak* WORKBOOK

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Their Lessons for Today*

SHANNON BREAM

The Women of the Bible Speak Workbook

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Contents



Welcome	5
How to Use This Workbook	7
Lesson 1 Sarah	9
Lesson 2 Hagar	21
Lesson 3 Rachel	33
Lesson 4 Leah	43
Lesson 5 Tamar	55
Lesson 6 Ruth	65
Lesson 7 Deborah	77
Lesson 8 Jael	85
Lesson 9 Hannah	95
Lesson 10 Miriam	107
Lesson 11 Esther	119
Lesson 12 Rahab	131
Lesson 13 Mary of Bethany	141
Lesson 14 Martha	151
Lesson 15 Mary, Mother of Jesus	161
Lesson 16 Mary Magdalene	171
Bonus: Jesus and the Women	181
About the Author	190

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.

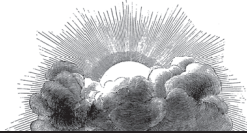
CONNECT asks you to consider how God in the Old Testament or Jesus in the New Testament responds to each woman and what this discloses about His character and how He responds to you.

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.



SARAH

The facts of Sarah's life sound like an adventure story, full of twists and turns: She was settled into her life when her husband suddenly announced they'd be upending everything they knew to move way out of their comfort zone. She managed a wealthy household with a very complicated blended family—and that's not all. She bore no child of her own, and even when God made her a specific promise, she laughed it off as impossible. How surprised she must have been when the wildly unthinkable finally came true for her—but oh, how far off track she'd already gotten by taking matters into her own hands.

—From *The Women of the Bible Speak*, page 1



In looking at women of the Bible, it's easy to think we'll find stunning portraits of perfection, flawless creatures of valor. More often, we find people—just like us—with strengths and weaknesses, people who can make great sacrifices and yet exhibit great selfishness.

Sarah, the wife of Abraham, demonstrates that despite our flaws, we can be used by our Heavenly Father to weave together His highest purposes. Sarah is the perfect illustration of this beautiful, complex truth.

REFLECT

One of the most important details to pay attention to when studying the Bible is the first moment a person is introduced. This often reveals something profound or insightful about the person's story or character.

Read Genesis 11:27–32. What details about Sarah's life are revealed at her introduction? (Hint: v. 29–30) Why is this important to know early on?

If you were being introduced in the Bible, what detail about your life would be listed first?

Read Genesis 12:1, 4–6. What does God call Abraham to do?

What impact did this have on Sarah?

If you were Sarah, how would you have responded?

Which of the following best describes how you would feel? Circle each that apply.

Excited	Angry	Joyful	Confused	Anxious	Hopeful
Fearful	Irked	Sorrowful	Leery	Eager	Worried

Which of the following best describes Sarah's response? Circle each that apply.

Cooperative	Whiny	Brave	Willing	Surprised
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God's call for Abraham and Sarah to leave everything is also accompanied by powerful promises.

Read Genesis 12:2–3 and Genesis 17:15 and fill in the chart below.

Details of God’s Promise to Abraham	Details of God’s Promise to Sarah

What do the promises have in common? How do they differ?

What stands out to you about God’s promise to Sarah?

Though Abraham and Sarah are a power couple, they also share deep flaws and weaknesses. Both are sometimes fearful and tempted to take matters into their own hands.

Read Genesis 12:9–20. How do you think Sarah felt being placed in potential danger because of Abraham’s decision to lie?

How did God protect Sarah? (Hint: v. 17)

Read Genesis 20:1–18. How do you think Sarah felt being placed in potential danger because of Abraham’s decision to lie again?

How did God protect Sarah? (Hint: v. 3)

What do these two parallel stories reveal about the following:

- ✿ The character of Abraham:

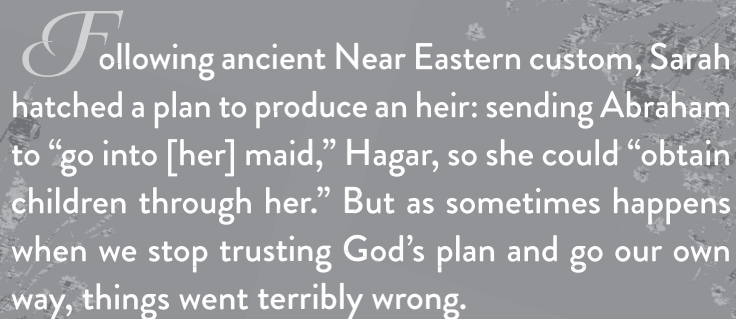
- ✿ The character of Sarah:

- ✿ The character of God:

Sarah remains voiceless until chapter 16 of Genesis when, for the first time, she has something to say, and it's a gamechanger.

Read Genesis 16:1–6. How does Sarah respond to her infertility?

What situation in your life are you most tempted to take control of rather than trust God?



*F*ollowing ancient Near Eastern custom, Sarah hatched a plan to produce an heir: sending Abraham to “go into [her] maid,” Hagar, so she could “obtain children through her.” But as sometimes happens when we stop trusting God’s plan and go our own way, things went terribly wrong.

—From *The Women of the Bible Speak*, page 4

Read Genesis 17:15–19 and Genesis 18:1–15. How does Abraham respond to the promise of a child?


How does Sarah respond to the promise of a child?

What compels Sarah to lie (v. 15)?

Describe a recent situation that tempted or caused you to lie. What motivated you to not tell the truth?

Read Genesis 21:1–7. How does Sarah respond to the miraculous birth?

What has been your biggest joy come true?



The Bible tells us that Sarah “dealt harshly” with Hagar (Genesis 16:6). It’s the same wording the Bible uses for the way the Egyptians treat their Jewish slaves in Exodus, meaning with oppression and forced labor. Abraham gave Sarah complete authority over Hagar, knowing what it would mean for the servant woman, and he stood by while Sarah abused the pregnant woman with impunity.

*—From *The Women of the Bible Speak*, page 5*

Read Genesis 21:8–21. What does Sarah’s refusal to use the name of her servant or her servant’s child suggest about Sarah’s attitude toward them?

Did Sarah go too far this time in asking Abraham to end his relationship with his eldest son, to send him away so that he may never see him again? Why or why not?

We do not hear Sarah’s voice again, though other voices in Scripture refer to her. Yet she’s mentioned and heralded in the New Testament because God worked through her.

Read Hebrews 11:11 and 1 Peter 3:5–6. What do these passages commend Sarah for doing?

CONNECT

Now that you've read and reflected on much of Sarah's story and various mentions of her throughout the Bible, it's time to connect this woman of the Bible with your own life. Fill out the chart below.

What do you see as Sarah's greatest character strengths?	
What do you see as Sarah'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 Sarah in your faith journey?	

REVEAL

Now that you've connected this woman of the Bible with your own life, it's time to look at how God reveals His character and faithfulness to Sarah and how God does the same for you.

Where did you see God show up in Sarah's life and what does that reveal about God?

What does God reveal about Himself and His character through the life of Sarah?

Like Sarah, in what ways have you experienced the faithfulness of God in the past and present?

PRAY

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

Lord, like Sarah, help me . . .

Lord, toward whom am I being harsh and hard-hearted? How can I show Your kindness and love toward those people?

Lord, where am I most tempted to take matters into my own hands? How can I trust You more?

Lord, considering Sarah's story, how are You calling me to live differently?



HAGAR

Hagar was a person, a vulnerable woman without any real protectors in the world, an enslaved woman who was never given any choices, a mother who wanted life and happiness for her son. If we can separate Hagar from the layers of symbolism heaped on her by later generations, we can recover some sense of who she was and what she might have to say to us today.

—From *The Women of the Bible Speak*, page 16



Of all the women we're studying, Hagar is the only one who's the property of her owner. While she's identified as a trusted servant of Sarah in Genesis 16, as her story progresses, the language reveals that Hagar was seen and treated as a slave.

It's hard to read Hagar's story without feeling compassion. She experienced great unfairness throughout life. Yet Hagar reminds us that there's no place we can go where God's eyes are not on us.

REFLECT

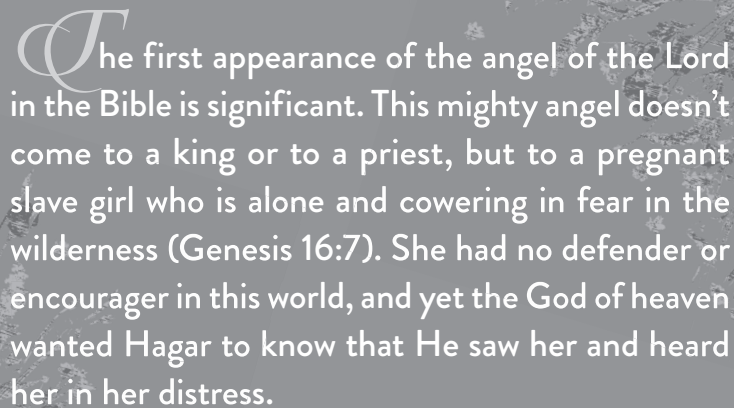
In antiquity, fertility was incredibly significant in the ways you saw yourself and how others viewed you. Giving birth provided women a way to gain status and security. For Abraham and Sarah, the birth of a son would fulfill God's promises.

Read Genesis 16:1–3. What decisions do Sarah and Abraham make in this passage?

What decisions is Hagar permitted to make in this passage?

Describe a time when decisions were made for you. How did you feel? Respond? Act?

Read Genesis 16:4–6. How does Sarah treat Hagar?



The first appearance of the angel of the Lord in the Bible is significant. This mighty angel doesn't come to a king or to a priest, but to a pregnant slave girl who is alone and cowering in fear in the wilderness (Genesis 16:7). She had no defender or encourager in this world, and yet the God of heaven wanted Hagar to know that He saw her and heard her in her distress.

—From *The Women of the Bible Speak*, page 18

Read Genesis 16:7–9. What surprises you most about how God responds to Hagar?

What does God's response reveal about His character?

What does the angel of the Lord instruct Sarah to do in verse 9?

On a scale of one to ten, how hard do you think it was for Hagar to hear and obey this?

Describe a time you've sensed God nudging you into an impossible situation. How did you respond?

Read Genesis 16:10–12. What's most comforting in what the angel told Hagar?

What's the hardest thing the angel told Hagar?

How would you have responded?

Hagar then becomes the first person in the Bible to give God a name: "El Roi," which means, literally, "the God who sees me." God had seen her perfectly the whole time, and now she had seen God.

Read Genesis 16:13–16. Why was it so important that Hagar felt seen by God?

Where do you feel most invisible to God?

In Genesis 21, the long-awaited promise is fulfilled when Sarah conceives and gives birth to Isaac. Yet rather than grow tender, Sarah's heart becomes harder toward Hagar.

Read Genesis 21:9–11. Which of the following best describes Sarah's attitude and response to Hagar? Circle all that apply.

Which of the following best describe Abraham's attitude and response to Sarah? Underline all that apply.

Cruel	Selfish	Jealous	Patient	Hard-hearted
Excited	Angry	Apologetic	Fearful	Distressed
Harsh	Cold	Shocked	Gracious	Other _____

What do you suspect fueled Sarah's response?

When have you wrestled with these same feelings and responses?

Read Genesis 21:12–21. Where do you see the faithfulness and kindness of God in this passage?

What does this reveal about how God speaks to you and what He does for you in your distress?

Where do you most need to be reminded of this now?

CONNECT

Now that you've read and reflected on much of Hagar's story and various mentions of her throughout the Bible, it's time to connect this woman of the Bible with your own life. Fill out the chart below.

What do you see as Hagar's greatest character strengths?	
What do you see as Hagar'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 Hagar in your faith journey?	

REVEAL

Now that you've connected this woman of the Bible with your own life, it's time to look at how God reveals His character and faithfulness to Hagar and how God is doing the same for you.

Where did you most see God show up in Hagar's life?	
What does God reveal about Himself and His character in the life of Hagar?	
Like Hagar, in what ways have you experienced God truly seeing you?	
What's the wilderness where God most wants to meet you and rescue you from now?	

PRAY

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

Lord, like Hagar, help me . . .

Lord, how well do You really see me? How well do You really know me?

Lord, show me where I'm feeling most out of control and how my responses are hurting others. Will You give me the compassion and kindness toward difficult people?

Lord, show me where I'm hurting and feel most isolated and abandoned right now. I know You see me, but how are You going to meet me and lead me in this?

PAIRS

We often look at women in the Bible on their own. By looking at them in pairs according to their relationships and life situations, we can better understand ourselves, God, and others.

The Apostle Paul later contrasts Sarah and Hagar. In Galatians, he explains that these women represent two different covenants. Sarah and her son, Isaac, represent a covenant of freedom. Hagar and her son, Ishmael, represent a covenant of bondage. He leveraged this comparison to show how the Jewish law brought religious bondage. Though the law was good, it could never free people from the slavery of sin. Meanwhile the covenant of freedom, demonstrated through Sarah and Isaac, would eventually bring freedom in Christ.

Read Galatians 4:21–31. How does Paul use these women’s stories as symbols for the work of Christ?

How have you experienced Sarah and Hagar as more than symbols and instead as real, living women through your study?

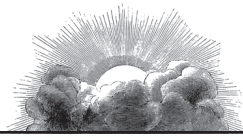
How might Hagar’s and Sarah’s stories be different if they had found a way to connect with each other, to forgive each other, to understand each other’s grief?

With whom in your life do you have a Sarah-Hagar relationship?

What creative steps can you take to find connection with that person?

What would it look like for you to practice forgiveness, extend kindness, and understand the other person's pain?

What do you suspect could be the outcome of such generous compassion?



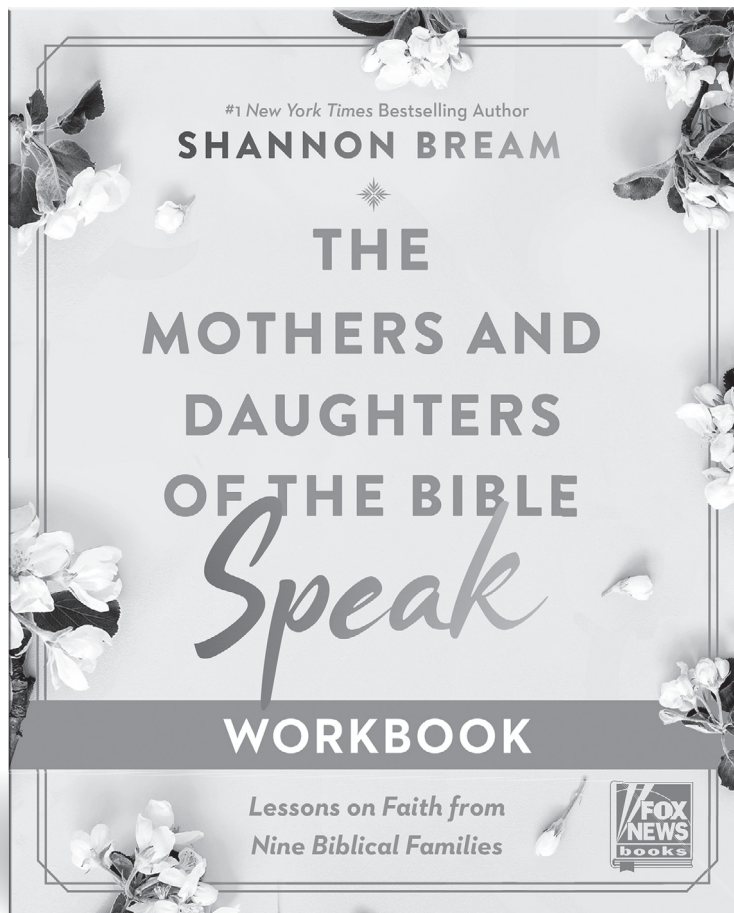
ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Shannon Bream is the author of the #1 New York Times bestsellers *The Women of the Bible Speak* and *The Mothers and Daughters of the Bible Speak*, the anchor of *Fox News @ Night*, and the chief legal correspondent for Fox News Channel. She has covered landmark cases at the Supreme Court and heated political campaigns and policy battles from the White House to Capitol Hill.

**ALSO AVAILABLE
FROM SHANNON BREAM**

***The Mothers and Daughters
of the Bible Speak Workbook***



November 2022

GOD CAN MEET YOUR NEEDS AS HE DID FOR WOMEN OF THE BIBLE

Women are central to some of the most critical events, powerful encounters, and transformative moments in the Bible. They change the course of history. These extraordinary women rose above because God was their refuge, and now you can join them.

Based on the #1 *New York Times* bestseller, *The Women of the Bible Speak*, this workbook connects the stories of old to each of our modern experiences. In these 16 lessons, you'll be challenged to consider the parallels between each woman's story and your own. You'll reflect on how God worked in their lives and uncover how He's working in yours, today.

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BONUS SECTIONS: PAIRS where you'll be asked to 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.



SHANNON BREAM is the author of the #1 *New York Times* bestsellers *The Women of the Bible Speak* and *The Mothers and Daughters of the Bible Speak*, the anchor of *Fox News @ Night*, and the chief legal correspondent for Fox News Channel. She has covered landmark cases at the Supreme Court and heated political campaigns and policy battles from the White House to Capitol Hill.

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