

# Becoming A Woman of Courage

4 - WEEK BIBLE  
STUDY SERIES



*Living Encouraged*

ILEEN BOCANEGRA

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***Becoming A Woman of Courage***

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[www.IleenBocanegra.com](http://www.IleenBocanegra.com)

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*[Ileen@IleenBocanegra.com](mailto:Ileen@IleenBocanegra.com)*

# Introduction

*“For God has not given us a spirit of timidity,  
but of power and love and discipline.”*

*2 Timothy 1:7*

Have you ever faced a season in your life when you felt everything crashing down around you? You felt afraid, discouraged, broken, and lost. The only words that are uttered are, “*God, I just can’t do this anymore.*” It’s in these very moments that we find ourselves afraid and unable to breath. Unable to move forward.

Grief, hurt, and pain can cause us to spiral into a place of discontentment, brokenness, feeling lost, and for some depressed. We often hear how easy it is to praise God during the good times, but what happens when we are facing those storms that rock us out of our boat?

## **What then?**

*How do we find our courage amidst the brokenness?*

*How do we find strength during our weakest moments?*

*How can we believe in ourselves, when all we see is failure, loss, and only hear all those pretty little lies that scream we aren’t good enough?*

## ABOUT THIS BIBLE STUDY

I love this series! When I began writing *Becoming A Woman Of Courage*, God was revealing to me just how strong I actually was. He showed me those moments of courage that brought me to where I am today. God kept reminding me of His truths and what His truths said about who I was. Who I am! And I believe He placed this series deep in my heart to share with you.

It's time we begin to magnify the voice of God and listen for His truths over our lives. Girlfriend, God wants you to pick up your armor and always be prepared for what lies ahead. And in doing so, He wants you armed with courage, bravery, and strength.

Through this Bible study series, you will learn about four incredible women in the Bible that exemplified what it means to become a woman of courage. These four women stepped out in faith, trusting wholeheartedly in God. Relying on Him amidst the tragedies and hardships they faced. These women turned their lives around by not allowing their pain and suffering to determine their fate.

Every week we will spend time studying the lives of each of these bold and courageous women. During the study we will dig deep into the Word and learn how to:

- WK 1: EMBRACE WHO YOU ARE
- WK 2: REMOVE THE LABELS
- WK 3: STEP INTO YOUR SEASON
- WK 4: AWAKEN THE WARRIOR WITHIN

My beautiful sister, I pray that through this Bible study, you will discover God's truths about who you are and who He destined you to be. God will not only give you great wisdom, He will equip you in His full armor giving you great strength, courage, and bravery. Take up your sword girlfriend and prepare for your victory!

***So let's get started and jump in together into God's truths.***

WEEK 2

**REMOVE  
THE  
LABELS**



# Week Two

## Remove The Labels

*“Don’t call me Naomi,” she told them. “Call me Mara because the Almighty has made my life very bitter.”*  
*Ruth 1:20*

*If you could choose one word to describe who you are, what would that be?*

*Is this word a positive or negative reflection of yourself?*

For some the word would be the obvious - mom, wife, daughter, sister. For others, they label themselves based off their career – entrepreneur, writer, beautician, singer, ministry leader, pastor, accountant, teacher, and the list goes on and on. But there are those that have a self-imposed label that has a negative impact on their lives – depressed, miserable, overweight, bitter, lonely, unattractive, and so on.

*Have you ever labeled yourself in a negative way?*

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*If so, what label(s) have you imposed on yourself?*

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*How has this self-imposed label impacted your life?*

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Let's start with understanding the true meaning of **Self-Imposed Labels**.

When I looked up the word **Self-Imposed**, the meaning just really set a fire in me. Here goes.

**Done, made, or give with one's own free will.**

Self-imposed pretty much means something we take on ourselves. We do this to ourselves **willingly**. Before I get deeper into this, I want to clarify the meaning of the word **Label**.

**A slip (as of paper or cloth) inscribed and affixed to something for identification or description.**

**A descriptive or identifying word or phrase.**

Ok now let's bring a bit of clarity to when we self-impose a negative label on ourselves. We are pretty much affixing an identification, an unfavorable description on ourselves willingly. Of free will. No one is

forcing us to talk down to ourselves and see ourselves as less than. We alone have been known to contaminate our mind when we do this very thing. Of our own free will, we describe ourselves in such a way bearing great weight on our self-esteem, how others will view us, and more. We virtually are telling others to view us in the same clouded manner we have viewed ourselves. As nothing worthy of more than what we have claimed to be. And with this very same identification we pretty much have labeled ourselves with, we hinder our ability to living the life we have been purposed for.

The truth is, self-imposed labels can at times be painfully hurtful and cause us to see ourselves in a different light. We are unable to see the true beauty that God created us to be. Instead we see through the lens of hurt, pain, grief, anger, and disappointment. We identify who we are based on how we are feeling. By doing so, we essentially are creating a limitation for ourselves.

**Limit** means:

**Something that bounds, restrains, or confines.**

**The utmost extent.**

Labeling ourselves in such a negative way pretty much creates limitations that we willingly set. We have created restraints, prohibiting our ability from moving forward. From living the life God gifted to us.

***JUST CALL ME BITTER...***

This week we will be studying the book of Ruth more in depth, as we learn about Naomi. A woman that labeled herself ***BITTER***.



## Let's jump in.

In our first week we discussed Ruth. A young woman that was so bold and courageous in her actions to care for her mother-in-law Naomi. Ruth taught us what it means to embrace who we are. The woman God created us to be. But Naomi was a different story.

Naomi had been married to a man named Elimelek and was the mother of two sons. A famine had struck their land that caused her and her family to pack up everything they could carry with them and uproot their lives.

I can't imagine having to do this very thing. To leave everyone and everything I have ever known, and take what little I can with me, and just move far away. I am reminded of the year we lost nearly everything in a flood. We packed the few black trash bags with whatever we could save before the boat came and rescued us. The pain of watching everything just gone in a matter of minutes was shattering. But I had my family to turn to. We were whole in my eyes despite losing everything we had worked so hard for.

And here is Naomi having to move with her little family to save themselves from starvation. They were doing this for a good reason. But regardless I am sure this was devastating for her.

### Let's read Ruth 1: 1-5

In Ruth 1:3-5 we learn of the heartbreak that struck Naomi.

***“Now Elimelek, Naomi’s husband, died, and she was left with her two sons. They married Moabite women, one named Orpah and the other Ruth. After they had lived there about ten years, both Mahlon and Kilion also died, and Naomi was left without her two sons and her husband.”***

Naomi's life just turned for the worse. Her entire life drastically changed. Everything near and dear to her gone. She had been uprooted and relocated from her family and friends in Bethlehem and moved to Moab. Her husband of many years and her two boys all just gone. All she had left now were her two daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth.

At this point, I am positive grief set in hard. And not only grief, but she most likely began going through the stages of what comes with grief. Anger, hurt, resentment, confusion, and disconnect.

Naomi had become so bitter in her grief and pleaded with both girls to return to their families, feeling she had nothing more to offer them. She was ready to just disconnect from everything she knew in Moab and just leave.

*What comes to mind when you hear the word bitter?*

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*Have you ever just wanted to just disconnect from everyone?  
If so, why?*

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It's so easy to fall into this self-pity, miserable, and just bitter like Naomi.

Let's read through Ruth 1:12-13 (NIV)

*“Return home, my daughters; I am too old to have another husband. Even if I thought there was still hope for me – even if I had a husband tonight and then gave birth to sons – would you wait until they grew up? Would you remain unmarried for them? No, my daughters. **It is more bitter for me than for you, because the Lord’s hand has turned against me!**”*

*Have you ever felt a pain so immense, that it consumed you to a point of bitterness and anger?*

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In her grief, Naomi had become **bitter**, feeling as though God had brought misfortune against her. Naomi believed that God had punished her. Maybe she felt her suffering was a result of a wrongdoing of her own. She was so sure that God’s hand had turned against her. We see here that Naomi had no hope for a better future for any of them if they remained together.

Let's visit the definition of the word **BITTER**.

**Afflicted; distressed; mournful; distressing; expressive of misery.**

I remember feeling just like Naomi when I lost my grandfather. Just like her, I became angry and bitter to the core. My misery was very much expressed in every word I uttered, every action I took, and in my appearance. I didn't have to wear a big scarlet letter B on my chest, so everyone would know I was hurting and bitter. Pain was knitted into the fabric of my being. I felt wronged by God on so many levels and couldn't understand WHY.

It's an ugly feeling when we fall into a state of depression and bitterness. Our emotions get the better part of us by consuming us to our inner core. So how do we get past it all? How do we allow ourselves to no longer grieve? To no longer feel bitter and empty inside?

*Can you remember ever feeling as though the difficulties you faced were a result of a wrong you committed?*

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*Have you ever felt as though God was punishing you?*

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*Do you recall how you felt in that moment of anguish?*

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Ruth made a decision to never leave Naomi's side. She insisted to stay with Naomi and together they went on to Bethlehem, where Naomi knew the famine had already passed. She knew by returning to Bethlehem she would once again be united with those she knew, and she would no longer lack in food. Even in her brokenness, after facing so much misfortune, Naomi proved to have inner strength when she became determined to keep pressing forward. But Naomi didn't see herself as strong.

Naomi had already, willingly adhered a label to her own identity. She was quick to tell anyone and everyone she saw. Naomi wore her pain on her sleeves for everyone to see and it didn't matter to her one bit.

*“Don’t call me Naomi,” she told them. “Call me Mara, because the Almighty has made my life very bitter. I went away full, but the Lord has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi? The Lord afflicted me; the Almighty has brought misfortune upon me.”*  
*Ruth 1:20-21 (NIV)*

*What can we learn here about what Naomi was feeling?*

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Here is where we see the self-imposed label Naomi had placed on herself. In her grief all she saw was bitterness within herself. She felt she didn’t deserve a name as Naomi, but instead Mara, meaning “bitter”.

Complete this verse. Ruth 1:21 (NIV)

“I \_\_\_\_\_ away \_\_\_\_\_, but the  
\_\_\_\_\_ has \_\_\_\_\_ me  
back \_\_\_\_\_.”

In her anguish, Naomi allowed her pain to overcome the beautiful woman she was. She was hurting, and in her suffering began to blame God for her affliction.

She goes on to say

*“Why call me Naomi? The Lord has afflicted me; the Almighty has brought misfortune upon me.”*

Isn't it just like us to turn and blame God in our moment of suffering. To believe we somehow caused all this misfortune to come upon us. We see here that Naomi wasn't always a bitter woman. She tells how she once led a full life. A life complete and fulfilled. We know this because she says, *“I went away full.”* But Naomi now begins saying that God took it all away from her. Her family. Her life. Her peace.

Naomi's focus was all on what she had lost.

*Ever have a moment like this? Where you just seem to focus on what you don't have instead of what you do have?*

In order for Naomi to see beyond her grief, she needed to direct her focus onto something else. In chapter 2, we begin to see a shift in Naomi's focus the moment she learns of Boaz.

*“The Lord bless him!” Naomi said to her daughter-in-law “He has not stopped showing his kindness to the living and the dead.” She added, “That man is our close relative; he is one of our guardian-redeemers.”*

**Ruth 2:20**

Right here we see a glimmer of hope sparking a flame within Naomi. A flame of hope for redemption. Hope for a future. As we continue reading through the book of Ruth, we see in verse 3:1 where Naomi's attention is now on Ruth's future and not so much her own misery.

*One day Ruth's mother-in-law Naomi said to her,  
"My daughter, **I must** find a home for you,  
where you will be well provided for."*

Clearly Naomi felt it an obligation to find Ruth a husband. A home where she can build a future and a family. Naomi's focus was now directed on something else aside from her pain and suffering.

Yes! The tides are turning now. The sun is peeking through in Naomi's life. She was struggling in her anguish, lost in her misery, yet in a brief moment her mind was focused on Ruth. Naomi became determined, exuding her inner strength and begins grooming Ruth on how to conduct herself around Boaz. She began orchestrating every single detail of Ruth's communication with Boaz. Naomi wanted to ensure that any opportunity Ruth had to be before Boaz was seized.

And at that very precise moment, Ruth lands at the feet of Boaz.

*"I am your servant Ruth," she said. "Spread the corner  
of your garment over me, since you are a  
guardian-redeemer of our family."  
(Ruth 3:9)*

Because of Naomi's creative and courageous acts, Ruth found herself in the same room with Boaz, resting at his feet. The perfect opportunity had been presented before Ruth because she followed through with

Naomi's instructions. Ruth and Boaz eventually married (*read Ruth 4:13-16*) and she gave birth to their son Obed. As a result of the courageous acts of Naomi, Ruth became part of the lineage of Jesus Christ.

You see, Naomi suffered in agony and had initially focused only on the negative. She could not see anything beyond everything she had lost. She could not see the good in her life. All Naomi could see was how her daughter-in-law gave up everything to be by her side. She could not see God's good plans.

We begin to see Naomi's focus shift from herself to Ruth as she began grooming her. It's right here where we see Naomi's sense of hope return. We see that even amidst her own tragedy, Naomi stood out courageously with a hope greater than her grief. She was determined to find Ruth a proper home and she did more than just that.

## **Take a look at Ruth 4:14-15.**

*Who are the women talking about in this scripture?*

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*The women said to Naomi: "Praise be to the Lord, who this day has not left you without a guardian-redeemer. May he become famous throughout Israel! He will renew your life and sustain you in your old age. For your daughter-in-law, who loves you and is better to you than seven sons, has given him birth."*

*Ruth 4:14-15*



*List three occasions where Ruth's focus changed:*

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Can you relate to Naomi? If so, in what way?*

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*Describe how your focus can affect you in your life?*

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*When we steer our focus onto God, we build:*

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## ***Lessons Learned:***

- We learn how sometimes in our deepest grief, we pull away and fall into a state of bitterness, even depression.
- We tend to focus all our energy on the pain we have suffered because it's too difficult for us to even see the light at the end of the tunnel.
- When we are hurting, we only see the pain inflicted by others and no longer see anything positive that can come from this.
- Our eyes are covered by a veil at times, preventing us from seeing the truth. God's Truths!
- We willingly choose to create negative labels that have a detrimental impact on our lives.

## **GOD'S TRUTHS!**

### ***What are God's truths saying about us?***

God's truths reveal to us who we truly are and who we are destined to be. By removing the negative labels, we are removing the veil from our eyes. We no longer focus on the hurt and suffering, we now focus on our inner strength that's renewed by God each and every day.

***“He gives strength to the weary and  
increases the power of the weak.”  
Isaiah 40:29***

*How can you focus on God's truths?*

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*What are God's truths saying to you?*

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*What label do you need to remove so you can see God's truths?*

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*List three of God's truths being revealed to you now:*

1. 

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2. 

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3. 

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I want you to hold onto God's truths about who you are. Remove the label you have self-imposed and allow God to reveal to you who you truly are. It takes courage to see beyond our pain. Know this my dear sister, God will give you strength. Strength to overcome the negative thoughts that lie within your spirit.

# *Becoming A Woman of Courage*

Bible Study

## *Remove The Labels*

NOTES

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