



MARKED

BIBLE STUDY



B I B L E S T U D Y

The Bible says that when you believed, God MARKED you with His promised Holy Spirit. It also says that you've been MARKED by Him from the beginning of time. He formed you in your mother's womb. He designed the universe so that you would be here at this exact time and place. He has a race MARKED out for you.

But the prince of this fallen world has tried to leave his own mark on you. He's attempted to mark you with lies, insecurity and unbelief in an effort to destroy your identity in Christ. He's on a mission to kill any hope you have of a future.

This 12-week course will help you discover what marks you; both your uniqueness and your weaknesses. You will learn to defend your identity as a believer while you glean perspective from the stories of Biblical characters who—like you—were MARKED by God. Embrace your distinctive purpose and God's ultimate plan for you, and become equipped to make your mark on this world!

DEFINITION**PAIN****/PĀN/**

Physical suffering or discomfort caused by illness or injury; mental suffering or distress.

SCRIPTURE

Ruth 1:20 LB “But she told them, “Don’t call me Naomi. Call me Mara,” (Naomi means “pleasant”; Mara means “bitter”) “for Almighty God has dealt me bitter blows. I went out full and the Lord has brought me home empty; why should you call me Naomi when the Lord has turned his back on me and sent such calamity!”

1 Peter 4:16 “But it is no shame to suffer for being a Christian. Praise God for the privilege of being called by his name!”

BIG IDEA

Many of us, like Naomi, have been marked by pain or grief in our lives. Many have suffered a bitter blow to our heart and soul. Whether it was the loss of a friend, family member, or a broken marriage or a fractured relationship. Perhaps it's the pain of failed hopes and dreams, or a physical pain that cripples your body. Each of us is marked by scars from painful experiences, past hurts, deep wounds, and broken dreams. But pain doesn't have to be something we dread; we can reframe the way we look at pain and use it to define our purpose. The mark that pain leaves on you doesn't have to be negative.

Even Jesus, who is fully God and fully man, suffered unimaginable pain. As if the physical torture of crucifixion wasn't enough, the sheer emotional torment of bearing our sins upon himself (murder, rape, perversion, pride, etc) without the presence of His father was excruciating. How did Jesus push past the pain and persevere? He kept his eye on His purpose. He focused on you!

The pain that Jesus suffered was repurposed into the promise of our redemption. God is always looking at the bigger picture. When we examine the story about Naomi, we see that God was there in the midst of her suffering.

He was at work orchestrating the beautiful redemption story for generations to come by weaving the story of Naomi and Ruth into the story of the birth of His Son, the Savior of the world.

Pain is our indicator that something needs to change; the sign that there is something in our lives we need to bring before the Father. Jesus, in his agony, was real and raw before God, and he cried out pleading, "if it is your will, take this cup from me." When our pain breaks our backs and brings us to our knees, we need to do what Jesus did and bow our heads. We can shamelessly cry out to God from our place of brokenness just like Jesus did. God is not intimidated by our "whys." He meets us in our suffering and helps examine our hearts and find the things that need to change. Don't let your pain make you bitter, let it make you better. Bring it to God, allow Him to heal you, and watch him turn it for good.

CONVERSATION

Let's dig deeper. We learned from Naomi's example that pain can cause us to get bitter or get better. We learned from Jesus' life that pain can be a catalyst to progress and purpose. But pain can also cause us to have compassion and sympathy towards others.

1. What pain are you carrying today? Bring it to the Father. How can you, with the help of the Holy Spirit, reframe and repurpose that pain?

2. Find a story of someone in the Bible who suffered that same pain. Leah (rejection), Hannah (barrenness), Tamar (rape), Hagar (domestic violence), David (many chapters in the book of Psalms), Joseph (imprisonment), Mary (sorrow), Job (all the things) and Jesus are some good places to start. Ponder or discuss the ways God redeemed their pain.

3. How has your pain changed you? How have you grown?

TAKE AWAY

Think about your most painful experience, and the suffering you're going through right now. Now, imagine you met someone who is going through that exact same pain. How would you minister to them? What would you say to encourage them? What advice would you give them?

Pain can be the very thing that compels us to make different choices. Naomi was consumed in her well of sorrow and couldn't seem to find the light of day. In her raw emotion, she took on a label--Mara--that was not God's heart or plan for her. She could only see the here and now, but God was looking through the lens of eternity. It's the same with us, friend. His plan and purpose stretch beyond our understanding, and when we're swallowed whole in sorrow and suffering, we can chose to trust that God is at work in our midst. Miraculous joy, resurrection power, and redemption await us on the other side of suffering. "Pain is a part of progress. Anything that grows experiences some pain. If I avoid all pain, I'm avoiding growth." (Samuel Chand, [Leadership Pain](#))

Today, God can turn your pain into praise!
