

The heart
of a
Woman
is
the
Garden
of God



Isaiah
54

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The heart of a

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Garden of

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Hello Friend,

Welcome to *The Heart of a Woman Bible Study*. You are not here by accident and I pray that the time you are spending in the Word of God and contemplation of His truths will be a catalyst for your own personal walk with the God who is actively tending the garden of your heart with a gentle but sure hand.

We are going to be spending the next 15 weeks reading and studying Isaiah 54. This chapter has been instrumental in my life as I have found myself drawn to it regularly for reflection and devotion. sometimes even on a weekly basis. I love how this chapter is written with the Heart of a Woman in mind. We all have areas of our life where we feel barren, hedged in, broken, and even neglected and the words of Isaiah are a balm to the heart of each woman in whatever stage of life you find yourself.

You may be walking through the early years of singleness seeking and looking, or the busy years as a young wife and mother that may seem to be a little overwhelming. Some of you may be coasting through on the train of schedules and appointments, married with a family or unmarried with a career that fills your time. There are those of you who are facing lonely years of children leaving home or widowhood, with anticipation. Many you have been thrust upon moments of chaos, loss, and devastation through sickness, change, divorce, or death and you are struggling to catch your breath in the midst of it all. Whatever the situation in which you find yourself, I want to encourage you that God has never left you nor forsaken you.

Isaiah 54 is full of promises for hope and eternal covenant with God as we meet Him right in the middle of our messes and the busy schedules of life. He speaks to us practically reminding us that he is the One we can trust to be our Rescuer, our Redeemer, and our Restorer. My prayer is that as we sift through the precious gems of His Word together, we will emerge from this study changed and prepared to produce abundant fruit, at whatever stage we are in, for His Glory alone.

I am excited to get started, so grab a cup of your favorite comfort drink, your pen, paper/journal, and your Bible and join me as we look to the Master Gardener as he tends the garden of the your heart.

Many Blessings,

Dawn

Tips to help you Study God's Word

As we dive into the book of Isaiah, we will look at the history and the context of God's Word as well as illustrations and applications to help us pull as much sweetness as we can out of the treasure hidden there for us.

Make the time to READ the Word of God.

It is so easy to start one thing and then get lost in the busy schedules awaiting us. I encourage you to take time to make time to study God's Word on a regular basis. I do want to encourage you to spend time at least once a week to read through the entire chapter of Isaiah 54, but then daily reflecting on the passage we are studying for that week. Usually it will be one or two verses, with some extra verses for reflection. You can take time each day during the week to think on those verses and then journal whatever the Lord has placed on your heart.

Meditate and Memorize

One of the goals of this study is spend so much time thinking and filling our heads and our hearts with God's Word (good seed planted in good soil) that we commit it to memory. As you go through the week, contemplate the verse we are focusing on and try to store it in the recesses of your mind. Memorizing His Word is medicine for our heart and mind. Hebrews 4:12 says, "For the Word of God is alive and full of power[making it active, operative, energizing, and effective]; it is sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating to the dividing line of the breath of life(soul) and [the immortal]spirit, and of joints and marrow[of the deepest parts of our nature], exposing and sifting and analyzing and judging the very thoughts and purposes of the heart. (amplified version)

Get a Journal

I would encourage you to get a journal and begin adding to it each week as you focus on the message God has for you while you are studying. Come with an expectant heart, fully open to the truths that are hidden in His word for us to find. Deuteronomy 29:29 says, " The secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but the things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all of the words of this law." So, let's approach His Word together as we are seeking fine treasure, hunting for all those gems buried in plain view.

Pray

The most effective tool I have come to know is using His Word as my prayer arsenal. At the end of each section I encourage you to write out a prayer of your heart. Prayer is the tool which cultivates the soil of

our hearts. It prepares the ground that His abundant fruit producing seed is planted in. Spend time in active communication with the Lord writing out the thoughts, hopes, and needs that arise as you unwrap the promises He is revealing to you through this time of study.

Suggestions to help you get the most of this study

This is a suggestion of how to approach the study each week.

1. Read the Word of God.
2. Copy the passage into your journal.
3. Read the same passage again focusing on the main idea.
4. Rewrite the main idea in your journal, or the thoughts that come to mind as you are studying and reflecting on the context, message, and application of His Word to your situation.
5. Pay attention to any extra verses that come to mind, or are listed in your concordance or the note section of your Bible.
6. Meditate on the message throughout the day/week. (sometimes I put it on a note card and slip it in my purse, book, pocket or whatever to reflect on it through my day.)
7. Pray about what you have learned and ask God to reveal more of His heart to you through this study.
8. Apply the tools we are learning about in the sections and actively build your garden.
9. After you have taken time each day to focus on removing those barren places in your life, do something positive for yourself. (ie: go on a walk, play with your kids, get an ice cream cone, ... whatever makes you smile)

- ❧ I want to encourage you to read Isaiah 54 once a week for the entire study. Ask the Lord to reveal any barren places within your heart.
- ❧ Meditate on the scripture passages for that week.
- ❧ Use the tools we are going to learn about (a prayer box, a prayer card, and a prayer journal) to literally give the barren places to the Lord as an offering of faith receiving His Word as seed planted in your heart.
- ❧ Make an effort to journal as often as you can about the journey you are taking with the Lord. Write out your prayers, your thoughts, hopes and goals and be willing to dare to believe for big things. We have a Big God!

The Heart of a Woman is the Garden of God

This study is designed to take you through Isaiah 54 through the course of 15 specific devotions. The devotions are going to be split up into 3 sections. We will look at the actual scripture, the history and context of Isaiah's message, and how it applies to us today. We will also meet with a few precious women in scripture that illustrate the principle that is lying in His Word for us to uncover. Finally, there will be some useful tools to employ, that hopefully you can use in all areas of your life, not just this study.

At the end of each section there will be a series of questions for you to consider and journal through. Take time to review the scripture you have worked through with each section. When we are done you will find a beautiful garden blooming with the fruits of His labor actively working within you to reach others.

Section One: **Speaking to the Barren Places in our Lives** Isaiah 54:1-4

This first 4 verses show us how God will use the tool of prayer to rescue our hearts reveal the barren places of our lives that he longs to fill. We will learn to cultivate the garden of our heart to receive God's Word through prayer and quiet reflection on the promises in His Word.

Section Two: **Revealing the Redeeming Grace of our Relationship to Christ** Isaiah 54:5-10

The next 6 verses of this chapter show us the promises that are ours when we obey the commands He has called us to walk in. Our hearts are continually redeemed as we plant the seed of His Word into the cultivated soil that prayer has prepared within us. His intimate desire to redeem us as a husband claims a bride is a covenant of eternal love and peace that is unbreakable.

Section Three: **Restoring your heart to the dwelling place of God.** Isaiah 54:11-17

These last 7 verses reveal the plan of God as he restores our heart and points to the harvest of fruitfulness that come as a result of the tender care He takes through the cultivation of prayer and the tending, planting and weeding that comes through time in His word. As we grow under His gentle care, nurtured by His constant love, we will produce a harvest that will draw others to His throne of grace and mercy.

Section 1

Speaking to the Barren Places in our Hearts

Isaiah 54:1-4

Introduction to Isaiah 54:1-4

Isaiah 54:1-4 introduces God as the one who rescues us from our barren places. It is significant because it reminds us not to despise small beginnings. Historically, the Jewish Church which returned from exile in Babylon was small and non-productive. It was not growing, but was in truth, barren. Yet, we see that the first 4 verses are also commands to act in faith and work with God. The church is compared to a woman, a bride who is barren and a widow who is reproached. Women in these circumstances have little to rejoice over, but she is told to Sing, Enlarge, Spread Out, and Fear Not. Here we see the prophecy revealing the inclusion of what would be the New Testament Church so the barren will now be enlarged and Isaiah is pronouncing the need to prepare for exponential growth. Isn't that just like God to multiply exponentially?

It seems fitting to stop and visit a faithful prayer warrior who experienced this place of barrenness and prepared the way for God to provide miraculously. Hannah was a woman of faith whose prayer ushered in a new era in Israel's history. Even more, her faith was rewarded and let me tell you it wasn't just the gift of a child that she was seeking. We will look at all that Hanna received as she came to the alter and cultivated a heart of prayer.

Outline for Section 1:

- Week 1: Introduction ; Isaiah 54:1
- Week 2: Isaiah 54:2-3 ;Prayer Box Activity
- Week 3: Isaiah 54:4
- Week 4: Barren Hannah 1 Samuel 1 & 2
- Week 5: The reality of a cultivated heart rescued by God, Review of verses 1-4 & Questions for Section 1.

Redeeming the Lost Dreams of our Hearts

Isaiah 54:5-10

Introduction to Isaiah 54:5-10

In these verses, God is seen as our husband and our redeemer. His love is both merciful and gracious and extended to us, His bride. During our times of barrenness and brokenness we feel as if we have been forgotten by God but verses 5-10 are an echo of the faith commands from the 1st 4 verses in our chapter. As you study the verses in this section make a note of each promise and reward that is guaranteed as a gift from the redeemer of your soul. Isaiah is continuing to reveal the path Israel will take from shame, to reproach, to acceptance and abundance.

God's quiet response sometimes seems like he's forgotten us. He is fully at work in our lives. His mercy comes like a flood of deliverance in our desperate situations. For a time we may endure hardship, shame, and reproach, but in the scope of eternity it is only a momentary experience. His kindness endures, lasts and is extensive in the magnitude of what He is offering to you. This section focuses on God's eternal covenant promise. It is here, in our trials, that the faith we exercised as we sang into our barren places, grows and becomes strong so that we can endure, grieve and heal through the storms of life.

Ruth's story of redemption echoes the beauty of these verses right down to the very same word for redeemer, ga'al. The pattern of redemption closely parallels the actions that Christ has performed for His redeemed bride. Ruth humbled herself and bowed, a foreigner not born into the chosen nation, yet she herself was chosen and ordained for inclusion of the harvest. Ruth's obedience opened the door to full redemption.

Outline for Section 2:

- Week 6: Overview of Isaiah 54:5, Prayer Cards Activity
- Week 7: Overview of Isaiah 54: 6-8
- Week 8: Overview of Isaiah 54:9-10
- Week 9: Redeemed Ruth, Ruth 1-4
- Week 10: The promise of a tended heart redeemed by God, Review verses 5-10 & Questions for Section 2

Section 3

Restoring His place in our Heart

Isaiah 54: 11-17

Introduction to Section 3

The last 6 verses of Isaiah 54 move from the image of a woman to that of a rebuilt city. How fitting that we exemplify the exponential growth from the earlier sections of this chapter. Here we are looking at the bounty which will exist in the life and heart of a woman who is fully rescued and redeemed by God. She is now restored for a purpose, on purpose, with a purpose; to sow into the lives of others.

We are encouraged in this section to look at result of being in a covenant relationship with a Holy God. The most significant revelation is the eternal nature of the covenant makes it both binding and productive and therefore we can be assured we will produce fruit that is consistent with a good harvest.

We are also reminded that God is our defender so we can take courage in that He will both prosper and protect our hearts and through His careful and steady hand, He will coax a harvest of life forth. A life that when it is given back will produce abundantly.

Our final illustrations take us to three women whose lives were transformed and restored radically. The Samaritan Woman at the Well has a faith that is child-like and full of hope, while the The Woman in Mark 5 who sought just the virtue of His Robe had active faith in even the presence of God with merely a touch, and finally Lydia in the book of Acts was a woman who purposed to serve with all she had been given faithfull, and as a result many came to Christ because of her. These women had radical faith and acted out of their desperation to meet with the God they knew could restore their lives. As we discuss their story, we will begin to see our own testimony play out and find ourselves writing an account of what He has done in us.

Outline of Section 3:

- Week 11: Overview of Isaiah 54:11-12; Prayer Journal Activity
- Week 12: Overview of Isaiah 54:13-14
- Week 13: Overview of Isaiah 54: 15-17
- Week 14: New Testament Women of Restoration: The Woman at the Well, The Woman with the Issue of Blood, & Lydia,
- Week 15: The glory of a heart restored by God, Review Questions for Section 3.

God Rescues us in our Barren Places

Lesson Day (Saturday): Read the Blog Post for that week that teaches the concept we are learning and the tool we are learning to use. Read through the entire chapter of Isaiah 54 , then focus on reading, copying, meditating and memorizing the verse for that week. During your journal time, add any additional scriptures that have encouraged you or deepened your study.

Try to devote 5 days a week to the study. Don't worry if you fall behind or you miss a day, all the materials will be available on Journeys In Grace in the download section.

Add any comments, scriptures and thoughts to the comments section of the post, The Soli Deo Gloria Sisterhood FB page, or the Journeys In Grace FB page.

☐ *Read the Word*

Isaiah 54:1 (amp) – Sing, O barren one, you who did not break forth into singing and cry aloud you who did not travail with child. For the spiritual children of the desolate one will be more than the children of the married wife, says the Lord.

☐ *Study and Reflect*

Scripture References to add depth to your study: Galatians 4:27, 1 Samuel 2:5, Luke 1:7-25

Word Study: Look up and define the word Barren and add it to your journal notes.

☐ *Answer the heart questions*

❧ What is the context of this verse?

- What is the command
- Who is it directed to?
- What are the barren places in your life that you need to sing into?

❧ Write out the Truth

- Copy the Verse into your journal

❧ Find the Truth for your Situation

- What does God's Word say, specifically, about your need?

Using a concordance and your Bible begin seeking His truth for your need.

❧ Pray the Truth

- Write out a prayer of your heart regarding the verses you have studied and the promises you have found.

The heart
My Prayer for you...

Heavenly Father,

Thank you for your love and your faithfulness to meet us right where we are, barren, broken, and needing mending. I ask you to fill each heart with the abundant love that flows from your own and meet each need in your abundant sufficiency. Draw each woman into the fold of your embrace and reveal the promises you have laid out to meet her every need. Establish your living Word as the truth which will release her from a place of barrenness to become fruitful and blessed. Thank you that in Christ all our answers are yes and amen when we seek your will. We are so thankful for your intimate care and consistent reminders that your heart is for us and your plan for us is good.

In the precious name of Jesus,

Amen.

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A place for you to write out a prayer of your own....

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