

A 12-SESSION SERIES FOR PERSONAL OR GROUP STUDY

Having a Mary Spirit

Study Guide

Allowing God
to Change Us
from the Inside Out

JOANNA WEAVER

Best-Selling Author of *Having a Mary Heart in a Martha World*

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JOANNA WEAVER



WATERBROOK
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Letter from Joanna...

It is truly an honor that you've chosen to study my book *Having a Holy Spirit: Allowing God to Change Us from the Inside Out*.

When my publisher gave me the chance to expand and revise the original Bible study and add video sessions, I was thrilled. For I believe the message of sanctification (that is, the process of being made holy and more like Jesus) is one of the least-explored and under-experienced promises of God's Word.

If you're like me, you have a good idea of what you ought to be, of the things you ought to do. But unfortunately, the woman I see looking back at me in the mirror each morning rarely measures up to the woman I long to be. On our own, we are helpless to change what really needs to change: our hearts.

But that's exactly what Jesus came to do! One of my favorite promises of the New Covenant is recorded by the prophet Ezekiel and spoken by God: "And I will give them singleness of heart and put a new spirit within them. I will take away their stony, stubborn heart and give them a tender, responsive heart" (Ezekiel 11:19, NLT).

That verse sums up this study well. For as we look to Jesus to change us, placing ourselves completely in His hands, He gives us what we really need: a holy makeover! We are changed from the inside out.

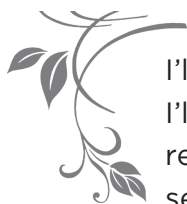
Over the next twelve weeks, we are going to allow God's Word and His Spirit to challenge and reshape the way we act and think. We're going to get honest with each other and with God. More important, we are going to get honest with ourselves. For until we give the Holy Spirit access to the hidden, secret corners of our hearts, we will never experience the transformation we long for. The change we need.

So are you ready, my friend? I know it's scary to consider such vulnerability, but let me remind you, God only reveals so He can heal!

I can't wait to see what He'll do in us as we make ourselves available to Him!

Becoming His,

Joanna Weaver



I'll give you a new heart, put a new spirit in you.
I'll remove the stone heart from your body and
replace it with a heart that's God-willed, not
self-willed. I'll put my Spirit in you and make it
possible for you to do what I tell you and live
by my commands.

EZEKIEL 36:26-27, MSG



How to Use This Study

Having a Mary Spirit—The Book

While you'll learn a great deal from watching the video sessions and completing the study guide homework, please be sure to read your assigned chapters in *Having a Mary Spirit* prior to each week's discussion. The book provides the framework of this study and is necessary to your getting the most out of our time together.

As early in the study week as possible, you'll want to complete your assigned reading with a pen or highlighter in hand. I encourage you to mark or underline things that really speak to you—verses, quotes, stories, or analogies. Make notes in the book margins of any thoughts, questions, or revelations you'd like to discuss or share in class. In order to finish the book in twelve weeks, at times you'll be asked to read two chapters instead of one. Be sure to plan enough time so that you get the most out of your reading.

The Study Guide

After you've read the assigned portion in the book, begin to work through the questions and exercises in this guide. They are designed to help you reflect on God's Word and apply it. (Please note that I quote primarily from the 1984 edition of the New International Version, and most questions are shaped around that translation.)

Each week's lesson also includes:

- a *"Tool Time" sidebar*. These tips are designed to help you apply the principles of God's Word as well as learn how to access the grace of God available to help us change. Corresponding videos will be shown in class if there is time. (Videos can be accessed at www.havingamaryspirit.com.)

- *a “Make a Plan” assignment.* Each week, you’ll be encouraged to come up with action steps to apply the truths you’ve learned as you follow through on that plan during the upcoming week.
- *a “Search Me, O God” journal prompt.* Part of transformation requires honesty before the Lord. You’ll be asked to respond prayerfully on paper as you allow the Holy Spirit to search your soul.
- *a memory verse.* Over the course of the study, you’ll be asked to memorize eleven verses. If that seems too overwhelming, choose two or three verses to focus on. Don’t worry; I’ll share some memorizing techniques that have helped me!
- *a video guide.* With fill-in-the-blank prompts, these pages help capture key points from the DVD session so that you can refer to them later.
- *a “Closing Time” reflection.* At the end of each lesson you’ll have a chance to respond to what the Lord has impressed on your heart throughout the week and in the teaching session.

Note to Leaders

You'll find a comprehensive Leader's Guide on the third DVD, designed to help you navigate the special features of this study as well as get the most out of your weekly time together. Just print the pages and place them in a three-ring binder for easy use. The Leader's Guide includes:

- practical advice for leading Bible studies
- a list of DVD content, including bonus features and how to use them
- session-by-session scripts to help you lead the discussion for a two-hour class (with modifications for a one-hour class); includes video prompts and other activities
- optional Retreat Guide providing the tools you'll need to create a special event, including promotional materials, suggested activities, and lots more

The Leader's Guide can also be downloaded at www.havingamaryspirit.com, where other study helps are available, including memory verses, promotional video, publicity pieces, and website graphics. You can explore my other books and video curriculums as well.

Note: We've posted all of the "Tool Time" videos at the website. You can stream or download the videos for viewing during class.

If you have any questions, please send me an e-mail by clicking on the "contact Joanna" link at www.havingamaryspirit.com. I hope you'll send me a note to let me know when your group will be doing the study. I'd treasure the opportunity to pray for you and inform you when any new products or study resources become available. I'd also love to hear about any creative ideas you're using, as well as what God is doing in your group.

Week One



Introduction

Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

PSALM 51:10, KJV

Transformation. If you're like me, you know you need it, but how do we get it? I've spent a lot of my life wanting to be different, trying to be changed. And yet, no matter how hard I tried, I seemed to fall back into the same ruts and defeating patterns over and over again. The Bible said I was a "new creation" (2 Corinthians 5:17), and yet I felt stuck in the "old," repeating the same sinful behaviors I'd repented of the day before. *Will I ever be what God wants me to be?* I wondered.

In this study, we're going to walk toward Christlikeness together, but let me be clear. This is not a self-help book you've chosen to study. Nor is it a do-it-yourself course in character development. This study has one purpose: to give God access to our lives!

So before you begin your study this week, ask the Holy Spirit to speak truth to the deepest part of your soul. Then read your assigned chapters in *Having a Mary Spirit*, and open your Bible to do the weekly study questions. I believe God is going to meet you in a special way, as He speaks to you through His Word.

Don't be surprised if your lower nature (I call her Flesh Woman) puts up a fight. She'll come up with a thousand reasons why you should quit. The questions will feel too personal; your schedule will look too busy to add a weekly study. But for every excuse Flesh Woman offers, I encourage you to simply reaffirm your commitment to the Lord and His Word.

For God has a holy makeover waiting for every one of us.



Theme Verse

Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

PSALM 51:10, KJV

TOOL TIME: Memorizing God's Word

Memorizing scripture doesn't come easily for most of us. But if we will make the investment required to hide God's Word in our hearts, it will begin to transform our minds. And as it transforms our minds, the living, active Word of God will inevitably begin to change our lives.

Here's a memorization method that has helped me:¹

- Say the reference of the verse and its first phrase together.
- Repeat three times.
- Learn the second phrase by saying it three times.
- Now, say the reference and phrases together three times.
- Continue to add additional phrases as needed.
- After reciting the passage, add the reference once again.
- Repeat the whole thing three times using this pattern:

REFERENCE—VERSE—REFERENCE

The secret to retaining the scripture you've memorized is review, review, review! Here are some additional tips:

1. Carry a copy of the verse(s) you are memorizing. Use spare moments to practice saying them aloud.
2. Ask someone to help you review. The goal is to say the verse correctly, word for word.
3. Keep reviewing. Quote your verses daily for the first couple of months. It is crucial to being able to recall them later.

Though scripture memorization is hard work, it provides great reward. For easy reference, you'll find all of the assigned memory verses on pages 139–40 and at www.havingamaryspirit.com.

When you walk, they will guide you; when you sleep, they will watch over you; when you awake, they will speak to you.

PROVERBS 6:22

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. With makeovers in mind, if you could change one thing about yourself, what would it be?
2. Read Galatians 5:22–23. Which fruit(s) of the Spirit would you like God to help you develop more fully, and why?

Opening Our Hearts to God

If you haven't already noticed, God is a gentleman. He only comes where He is invited. If you are willing to give God full access to your life, consider praying the following prayer each morning throughout this study. Amazing things happen when we submit our lives to God and welcome His work!

Lord Jesus, I give You my life.
 I invite You to have Your way in me.
 Take me and break me. Shake me and make me.
 Fill me and spill me. Change me and rearrange me.
 But whatever You do, Lord, don't leave me the same.
 Spirit of wisdom and revelation, I welcome Your work.
 Open my eyes so I can see...my ears so I can hear...
 I choose truth over comfort, challenge over complacency.
 Lord, make me forever Yours.
 And most of all, make me like You.
 Amen.

Session One Video

A Holy Makeover



For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age.

TITUS 2:11–12

The Beautiful Evidence, John 11

After receiving Jesus’s rebuke in Luke 10:38–42, we see a different woman:

1. Martha “sent _____,” not demands (verse 3).
2. Martha left her duties and ran to meet Jesus (verse 20).
3. Martha declared her faith over her fear (verses 21–22).
4. Martha pointed Mary to Jesus (verse 28).

The High Price of Change

We know we need the same kind of transformation, so why do we resist it so much?

- We secretly believe that we are _____ the way we are.
- We secretly believe that change is impossible.

The Incredible Power of Grace, Titus 2:11–12 and Philippians 2:13

Grace is the _____ and the desire to do God’s will.² To access it,

1. Receive rebuke and admit your need.
2. Believe that God will do what only _____ can do.
3. Be willing to do what only _____ can do.

The same grace that saves us is the grace that _____ us.

Notes

Closing Time

I sense the Lord saying...



Make a Plan

God desires to transform you by the power of His Holy Spirit. On a separate piece of paper, write down what you would like God to change in you over the course of this study, as well as a short prayer of commitment to His work. Place the paper in an envelope and seal it. Put it in a safe place, and leave it there until the end of the study.

Areas of Change:

Commitment to God's Work:

Prayer Requests

This Week's Assignment

- Follow through with your week 1 "Make a Plan" homework.
- Read chapters 1 and 2 in *Having a Mary Spirit*.
- Answer week 2 study questions.
- Memorize **Psalm 51:10**: "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me" (KJV).



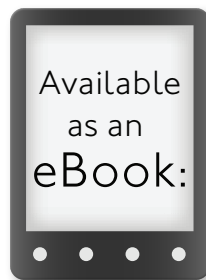
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