

## Understanding Women

Discussion Notes- February 8, 2026

1. What's one small thing that instantly makes you feel appreciated or noticed?

Leah's story in Genesis 29 reveals a deep longing to be seen, heard, and attached, expressed through the names she gives her sons; Reuben, Simeon, and Levi. Though she desperately desired Jacob's love and attention, she remained overlooked and rejected, even while God clearly saw her pain. Over time, Leah's focus shifted from seeking validation from her husband to finding security in the Lord, culminating in her praise of God with the birth of her fourth son. Scripture shows that God consistently draws near to the rejected and honors those the world overlooks. Through Leah's lineage came King David and ultimately Jesus Christ, reminding us that God redeems broken stories and brings His greatest purposes through unexpected people.

### **Read Genesis 29:31-35**

*"When the LORD saw that Leah was hated, he opened her womb, but Rachel was barren. And Leah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Reuben, for she said, "Because the LORD has looked upon my affliction; for now my husband will love me." She conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Because the LORD has heard that I am hated, he has given me this son also." And she called his name Simeon. Again she conceived and bore a son, and said, "Now this time my husband will be attached to me, because I have borne him three sons." Therefore his name was called Levi. And she conceived again and bore a son, and said, "This time I will praise the LORD." Therefore she called his name Judah. Then she ceased bearing."*

In Genesis 29:31–35, we see Leah's deep pain and longing unfold. Each name reflects her desire to be seen, heard, and emotionally connected to her husband, while God consistently responds by opening her womb and drawing near to her suffering. Even when Jacob fails to notice her, the Lord clearly does. By the birth of her fourth son, Leah's focus shifts from seeking Jacob's love to praising God, revealing a quiet but powerful spiritual transformation.

2. What do we learn about God's character from the way He sees, hears, and responds to Leah's pain?

### **Read Psalm 139:1-5**

*"O Lord, you have searched me and known me! You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, you know it altogether. You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it."*

We are reminded that God sees every part of us. He sees our actions, knows our thoughts, and even understands the words we haven't spoken. Nothing about us is hidden from His gaze. God created us to desire connection, because relationships only work when we are seen, heard, and truly connected. While earthly relationships may sometimes fail us, God never will. At the same

time, He calls us to do the same for others—to see them, listen to them, and connect with them. When we grasp that we are fully known and fully valued by Him, it can transform how we see ourselves and how we relate to the people around us.

3. How does understanding that God sees, hears, and values you change the way you view your own worth or the worth of others?

### **Read Ephesians 5:25-30**

*“Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body.”*

In Ephesians 5, Paul first reminds wives to respect and honor their husbands (v. 22–24), showing that mutual respect is a key part of healthy, God-designed relationships. He then calls husbands to love their wives sacrificially, just as Christ loved the church, giving Himself up for her (v. 25–30). This passage highlights a two-way dynamic of connection with respect and love working together to build closeness, trust, and security. It reminds us that men and women are wired differently in how they experience love and connection, but God calls both to actively engage in the relationship.

4. How do men and women sometimes experience connection differently, and what can we learn from each other?

### **Read Colossians 3:12-14**

*“Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.”*

As God's chosen and beloved children, we are called to put on compassion, kindness, humility, patience, and forgiveness in our relationships. Love is the thread that ties all these qualities together, creating harmony and connection with those around us. When we actively choose to see, hear, and value others, we reflect God's love and bring His presence into our everyday relationships.

5. This week, who in your life could you intentionally see, hear, or connect with in a deeper way? How can you take one practical step to show them that they matter and are valued by God?

### Prayer/Closing:

- For women: Pray for confidence and peace in being fully seen, heard, and valued by God.
- Pray for all members to grow in compassion, patience, and intentional connection in their relationships.
- Pray for the ability to reflect God's love through actions that honor, encourage, and support others.

### **Deep Diver: Leah's Story and God's Redemptive Plan**

Leah was the first daughter of Laban and sister to Rachel. Jacob came to work for Laban and agreed to marry Rachel, whom he loved. However, Laban deceived Jacob by giving him Leah first, under the cover of night (Genesis 29:23-25). This act set the stage for Leah's life of feeling unseen, unheard, and disconnected, as Jacob's affections were clearly for Rachel. Yet God honored Leah by opening her womb, blessing her with children who would play a central role in Israel's history. Her lineage ultimately became the bloodline of King David and, ultimately, Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:1-16). Leah's story reminds us that God sees the overlooked and can bring His greater plan through unexpected and sometimes painful circumstances.

### **Read Genesis 29:15-30**

*"Then Laban said to Jacob, "Because you are my kinsman, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what shall your wages be?" Now Laban had two daughters. The name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. Leah's eyes were weak, but Rachel was beautiful in form and appearance. Jacob loved Rachel. And he said, "I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel." Laban said, "It is better that I give her to you than that I should give her to any other man; stay with me." So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days because of the love he had for her.*

*Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife that I may go in to her, for my time is completed." So Laban gathered together all the people of the place and made a feast. But in the evening he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob, and he went in to her. (Laban gave his female servant Zilpah to his daughter Leah to be her servant.) And in the morning, behold, it was Leah! And Jacob said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? Did I not serve with you for Rachel? Why then have you deceived me?" Laban said, "It is not so done in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn. Complete the week of this one, and we will give you the other also in return for serving me another seven years." Jacob did so, and completed her week. Then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel to be his wife. (Laban gave his female servant Bilhah to his daughter Rachel to be her servant.) So Jacob went in to Rachel also, and he loved Rachel more than Leah, and served Laban for another seven years."*

This passage explains the root of Leah's feelings of being unseen and unloved. Jacob's affection was clearly for Rachel, leaving Leah in a position where she was married but not loved in the way she longed to be. Laban's deception compounded her pain, making her feel

overlooked and disconnected. Yet God's intervention—opening Leah's womb—shows that her value and significance were not determined by human approval but by God's purposes.

**Read Matthew 1:1-6,16**

*(1-6) "The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram, and Ram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king... (16) and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ."*

Despite Leah's painful experience of being overlooked in her marriage, God used her life to advance His redemptive plan. In Scripture, genealogies are not just lists of names; they point us to God's faithfulness across generations and reveal how He fulfills His promises through real people and real stories. Through Leah's children—specifically the line of Judah—came King David and ultimately the Messiah, Jesus Christ. Leah's significance, then, lies not only in her personal story of rejection and perseverance, but in her place within God's larger story of redemption. Her life reminds us that God often works through pain, rejection, and unexpected circumstances to accomplish eternal purposes.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. How does understanding Leah's emotional experience with Jacob deepen your perspective on God's care for those who feel unseen or unloved?
2. In what ways does Leah's story challenge our assumptions about value, significance, and how God works through imperfect circumstances?
3. How does seeing Leah's place in the genealogy of Jesus influence the way we view God's ability to bring redemption and purpose from rejection and struggle?