

Tamar: Unveiled

"...she is more righteous than I."

Summer Book Study

We're looking further into who God is and how we can know Him by reading "Unveiled" – a novel based on the life of Tamar from Genesis chapter 38.

Each session we'll meet to discuss two chapters from the novel along with the Scripture that connects with those chapter and have a time of teaching and reflection.

We update, post resources, and share prayer requests in the group, so be sure to get the church app and set your notifications so you can keep in touch.

♥ You can also connect with Pastor Jennifer any time, jennifer@LaMiradaChurch.com / 562.755.4964

Session One - Wednesday, June 8

Grace Groups... Welcome

Teaching... Jennifer Richmond

Reading for next "Unveiled" ch. 1-2
time... Genesis 37:1-36; 38:1-11

Session Two - Wednesday, June 22

Grace Groups... Today we'll discuss:
• "Unveiled" ch. 1-2
• Genesis 37:1-36; 38:1-11

Teaching... Cathy Wells

Reading for next "Unveiled" ch. 3-4
time... Genesis 38:7-30

Session Three - Wednesday, July 6

Grace Groups... Today we'll discuss:
• "Unveiled" ch. 3-4
• Genesis 38:7-30

Teaching... Ruth Carter

Reading for next "Unveiled" ch. 5-Epilogue
time... Genesis 38:1-30; 44:1-34; 45:1-15; 49:8-12

Session Four - Wednesday, July 20

Grace Groups... Today we'll discuss:
• Unveiled" ch. 5-Epilogue
• Genesis 38:1-30; 44:1-34; 45:1-15, 49:8-12

Teaching... Rachel Barsha

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Grace Group Discussion – Introduction

Meet Tamar, one of the five women in the lineage of Christ. She risked her life and her reputation to be the woman she was called to be. Her story serves as an example of how God uses our circumstances and our steps toward Him, however faltering, to fulfill His plan.

1. Hi, my name is..._____, the most delicious/memorable meal I've ever had was...
2. If you could take anyone in the Bible out for dinner, who would it be? Where would you go?
3. Which one of these would you be most/least likely to try:
 - Dress up and give a speech about Mother Teresa in costume
 - Parachuting
 - Live off the grid by yourself in a cabin in Alaska for a year
 - Cater a 5-course meal for the 200 most wealthy people in America
4. Naming only parents/grandparents/great-grandparents (not aunts, uncles, cousins, etc.) on your mom's or dad's side, how far back can you name each one? What is something interesting you know about the life of one of your grandparents or anyone further back?
5. How do you see cultural expectations for women have changed since the time your grandmother was a young woman? Do you think these changes have been good or bad or a mix?
6. Which story in Genesis do you think is the most scandalous or troubling for you personally? Why?
7. When you think of this woman from Genesis, what character trait, personality style, or scene in her life comes to mind first?
 - Eve
 - Sarah
 - Hagar
 - Rebekah
 - Rachel
 - Leah
 - Dinah
 - Tamar
8. What belief or misunderstanding about who God is do you think hurts people the most these days? What do you think the church or Christians can do about this?
9. Which of these do you think impacts your spiritual growth (or lack of it) more – Why?
 - *circumstances* that happen in your life or...
 - your *thoughts* about life?
10. If you've been treated unfairly, what is something helpful you learned through that experience?
11. What got you interested in joining this book study?



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Grace Group Discussion – Ch. 1-2

1. When you were a child, what did you want to be when you grew up and why?
2. (From Genesis 37) What part did Judah play in this sibling rivalry story? What do you think motivated Judah to treat his brother Joseph the way he did?
3. Have you ever felt ashamed of a way you behaved that affected others? Were you fearful of being found out? What choices did you make?
4. How do you handle jealousy? conflict?
5. Read Proverbs 6:16-19. According to this passage, what does God hate?
6. Where do you turn to during struggles – yourself? To family and friends? To comfortable patterns? To God?
7. Do you feel like there are sins that run in your family?
8. Describe how the author is filling in details about (1) Tamar, (2) Judah (3) Er. Share ways that her writing is helping or not helping you when you think back to this biblical account.
9. Do you identify with Judah? Tamar? How so or not?
10. What kind of son was Er? How did this characterization by the author impact your view of Tamar? Judah? Do you think it was realistic based on the brief information we read in Genesis 38 about Er?
11. In the novel, the author portrayed Judah as grieving over the past as well as the present. She also imagined him as gripped with fear of the future. Do you find yourself ever gripped by fears? How so? Or, if not, why do you think you don't?
12. How are you feeling about the book so far? It can be challenging to separate Biblical fiction from actual Scripture, and continually remind yourself that what you are reading is fiction and did not actually happen. Did you find that challenging as well? Why?



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Grace Group Discussion – Ch. 3-4

READ: *Genesis 38:1-11 and Deuteronomy 25:5-10*

NOTE: *Book chapter and page references are from the "Lineage of Grace" complete series*

1. Growing up, how did your family's religious expressions or lack of it impact you positively or negatively? Have you had to unlearn anything from your upbringing to become a healthier person? How so?
2. Consider the culture of Tamar's day. What kind of choices (if any) did Tamar have for marriage? Children? What kind of expectations were on Tamar as a wife? How does her culture differ from today? How is it similar?
3. Read ch. 3, pg 37 from: *"Her emotions were so confused..."* to *"...Only a son could deliver her!"* How does Rivers describe Tamar's emotions? Do you think the author's description rings true considering we don't have a biblical account of Tamar's thoughts? Why so or not?
4. Francine Rivers portrays Judah as not wanting "to talk about the God of his father" (ch 3, pg 38) Considering what we do know from the Bible about Judah and his past decisions, why do you think this could be a realistic characterization? What about you - do you think your own past actions could impact your willingness to talk about God? Why or why not?
5. Read Genesis 38:7 and 38:10. What was Er's sin? What was Onan's? Why do you think the biblical account gives details about why God put Onan to death but not why He took Er's life? How would it have impacted your understanding of the account if we didn't know about Onan's sin?
6. The author assumes that Tamar has a longing or curiosity for Judah's God. Do you think this is a biblically accurate way to portray Tamar? Why or why not?
7. When Tamar was sent back to her father's house, do you think she expected to ever return to her father-in-law Judah's house? Why or why not?
8. Read the opening paragraph from chapter 4, pg 51. What are Tamar's questions about her situation? What do her thoughts reveal to you about her understanding of how life works? How is she accurate or off-base in her thoughts about life?
9. What decision does Judah make about his third son? Why do you think Judah does this? What does his decision say to you about his priorities? his understanding of God? (Consider Genesis 38:11)
10. Read ch. 4, pg 59 from *"His calves and lambs..."* to *"...the earth was iron!"* and then read pg 60 from *"Her father prospered..."* to *"...forgave her presence."* What contrast do you see Rivers making in her portrayal of Tamar and of Judah and how their lives are moving along? What biblical principle do you think she's illustrating?

(continued on back)



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11. Rivers portrays Tamar as experiencing a great deal of abuse and turmoil at the hands of her in-laws and even her own family. Have you been treated unfairly by difficult in-laws? Hurtful family members? How have you handled these situations? How has that challenged or encouraged your faith in God?
12. In what ways, if any, do you identify with Tamar or Judah at this point in the account?

...Notes...



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Grace Group Discussion – Ch. 5-Epilogue

1. Six years into living her widow's life, Tamar had the overwhelming sense that she was "born for more than this." Describe the emptiness and sense of longing we can feel when we are not living out God's purpose for us. Have you ever been in that situation?
2. When Tamar saw Shelah in the marketplace and realized that Judah never intended to keep his promise, she had a "punch to the gut" moment. Have you ever had your hopes for future plans taken from you? As Christians, how should we respond to situations like that? Now read Isaiah 55:8-13. How did your responses line up with Scripture? Do you need to tighten your theology in any way in light of what God's Word says?
3. Tamar disguising herself as a prostitute to seduce Judah was extreme and could have cost her life. Was she in the right by doing that? Has God ever called you to do something that was extreme or risky, in which others thought you were crazy?
4. When Judah realized that Tamar's baby was his, he was overwhelmed by shame and guilt, and realized that nothing is hidden from God. What thoughts and circumstances do you think were flooding his mind in that moment? What does that Bible say about unconfessed sin? Now read Proverbs 28:13, Psalm 69:5 and Jeremiah 23:24. How did your responses line up with Scripture? Do you need to tighten your theology in any way in light of what God's Word says?
5. How can unconfessed sin, as well as unresolved relationships, impact our relationship with God and the way we engage with others?
6. First read Genesis 44:30-34. In what ways has Judah changed? How do you think his experience with Tamar influenced those changes?
7. Begin here: Ruth 4:12. How was Tamar remembered by her descendants? How do you want to be remembered? Are you living in such a way?

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8. Read Genesis 49:10-12 and Matthew 1:1-3, then respond: Despite Judah's ungodly behavior and Tamar's pagan background, God uses their less-than-ideal union to eventually bring the Messiah. What does this tell you about the nature of God?
9. How have you enjoyed this book?

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Women's Bible study is on break through August.

Join us in the fall for the exciting new study through Corinthians.

Save the Dates: Tuesday, September 6 or Wednesday, September 7, 6pm.

Registration opens August 21