

ΚΟΣΜΕΩ

The Beauty of a Gentle Spirit

Study Guide

The Courage of Esther,
the Devotion of Ruth, and *you!*



*“...your inner self,
the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit,
...is of great worth in God’s sight.”
1 Peter 3:4 (NIV)*

by Deborah Jean Armstrong

The Beauty of a Gentle Spirit

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Thou Art Come

The Courage of Esther

“...who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”

Esther 4:14b (KJV)

As Esther conquered her bondage to fear, she became the Queen our Abba had purposed her to be from Eternity. We, too, are given authority and created to serve with our Bridegroom King, Yeshua, for He *“loves us and has freed us from our sins by His Blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve His God and Father—to Him be glory and power forever and ever! Amen.”*¹

“What Wilt Thou?”

“Then said the king unto her, What wilt thou, Queen Esther?

And what is thy request?

It shall be even given thee to the half of the kingdom.”

Esther 5:3 (KJV)

It is as though each morning the King of Kings, our Bridegroom, tenderly asks us, “What wilt thou?” We serve with a Bridegroom King Who wants to see us, Who wants us to stay continually in His Presence, who wants us to abide in Him so that He may bless us.

¹ Revelation 1:5b-6 (NIV)

Esther's Assignments

1. Esther's first task was to take care of her beauty – physically, emotionally, and spiritually – not to behave in any way that would detract from the beauty of who she was.
2. Esther's second task was to speak wisdom. In her role as the king's wife, she had the ear and the trust of the king, and became an unofficial adviser to the king in times of danger.
3. Esther's third task was to choose her timing. When she learned of the plot against her people, she chose to fast for three days before approaching the king, and saved their lives.

*“There is a time for everything...
a time to be silent,
and a time to speak.”
Ecclesiastes 3:1a, 7b (NIV)*

Yeshuah Adonai HaMashiach, Lord Jesus Christ, we worship You for the privilege and honor that You give us, as parts of Your Bride, to come to You directly at any time. We do not need to wait to be called, for it is Your desire that we remain in ongoing communion with You and with Your Abba.

Strengthen us by Your Holy Spirit, Your Ruach HaKodesh, to live in that place of communion with You, that we may say with King David, “One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of

the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the Beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in His temple.” Psalm 27:4 (KJV)

We worship You for the Power You give us to humble ourselves and pray and seek Your Face and turn from our wicked ways, that You may “hear from Heaven,” and forgive our sin, and heal our land.² Abba, send revival to us and to the nations, and bring all Your ancient people Israel to know and love Messiah. In Your Holy Name we pray. Amen.

Consider:

What were the secrets to Esther’s success?

² II Chronicles 7:14 (KJV)

How is the King of Kings, our Bridegroom, ready to help us excel?

Intreat Me Not To Leave Thee

The Devotion of Ruth

*“And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee...
thy people shall be my people,
and thy God my God.”
Ruth 1:16 (KJV)*

Oh, Yeshua, Your command is still, “Follow Me.” May we be as faithful in following You as Ruth was in following Naomi. You Rest “in the bosom of the Father” and You desire each of us to abide there with You.³

Thank You, Abba, that loving You includes learning to rest in You, to receive the sweet sleep in which You refresh, restore, and heal us, as well as to keep watch with You.⁴ Thank You that You desire me to live and work from a place of Deep, Eternal Rest in You.

*“Then said Boaz unto Ruth, Hearest thou not, my daughter?
Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence,
but abide here fast by my maidens.”
Ruth 2:8 (KJV)*

³ John 1:18 (KJV)

⁴ Psalm 127: 2

Oh, Yeshua, King of Kings, and my King, I want to abide moment by moment in You, Forever, starting Now. May I yield utterly to You and to Your Abba and to Your Holy Spirit, Who seals me as part of Your Bride. I want to live in the Light of Your Countenance shining upon me.

Thank You that I can treasure who I am becoming in You, for You treasure me. Thank You that I can take Joy in who I am becoming in You, for You take Joy in me. Thank You that I can love who I am becoming in You, for You love me.

Ruth's circumstances were temporary. Temporarily, she was widowed, separated from her family-of-origin, impoverished, on what we might call public assistance, living hand-to-mouth, and supporting a depressed, bitter, and dependent elder.

But Ruth's temporary circumstances were not her future. Her future was to serve as the wife of a loving, attentive, and godly man, the mother of Obed, a great-grandmother of King David, a great-great-grandmother of King Solomon, and a forebear of Messiah.

“...He hath made us accepted in the Beloved...”

Ephesians 1:6b (KJV)

The word translated “accepted” is the Greek word *charistóo*, and also means graceful, lovely, agreeable, honored with blessings.

Oh, Abba, thank You that in Messiah You accept me as a citizen of Israel, as part of the Bride of Messiah. Thank You that You are making me Lovely and

Graceful in Your Beloved Messiah. Thank You for making me Agree with Messiah as I capture every thought and make it submit to Him and His thinking.⁵ Thank You for honoring me with the Mind of Messiah.⁶

Consider:

What price was Ruth willing to pay because of her love for Naomi?

⁵ II Corinthians 10:5

⁶ I Corinthians 2:16

How may I enter into Rest with my own Beloved Redeemer?

Won Without Words

The Obedience of Sarah

*“Your beauty should not come from outward adornment,
such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes.*

*Rather, it should be that of your inner self,
the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit,
which is of great worth in God’s sight.”*

I Peter 3:3-4 (NIV)

The word translated “inner” is the Greek word *kruptós*, and also means secret. Yeshua uses this word when He tells His followers to **give in secret, pray in secret, and fast in secret**, that Abba may reward them openly.⁷ Secret giving, secret prayer, and secret fasting, visible only to God, appear to be a Secret of the Beauty of the Bride.

*“For this is the way the holy women of the past
who put their hope in God
used to adorn themselves.”*

I Peter 3:5a (NIV)

The word translated “adorn” is the Greek word *kosméo*. *Kosméo* means to make ready, to prepare. It also means to trim a wick so that the flame will burn longer

⁷ Matthew 6:4, 6, 18

and more steadily. So we each need to cut off those behaviors that are causing our lights to burn unevenly, or consuming our energies in a way that risks burnout.

The word translated “holy” is the Greek word *hágios*, and also means consecrated, pure. These women devoted themselves to following God and His Word.

Abba, Yeshua, I commit to seeking Your “Highest Calling on my life,” and “to all that is needed to fulfill it.”⁸ How I worship that You are the Husband of Israel, a Perfect Bridegroom! Thank You that You work all things together for my good as I love You and follow You and obey You and seek to fulfill Your purpose and Your calling in my life.⁹

*“They submitted themselves to their own husbands,
like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her lord.”*

I Peter 3:5b-6a (NIV)

The word translated “submitted” also means cooperate. We are invited to voluntarily consecrate and yield ourselves to follow Yeshua, our Heavenly Bridegroom.

Messiah, You are my LORD.

What do *You* want me to do together with *You* today?

I want to fit in with *Your* plans!

⁸ These phrases come from the guidelines for service as a commissioned minister with Beth Israel.

⁹ John 3:29; Isaiah 54:5; Romans 8:28

Oh, Abba, may I conform to *Your* Will.

**May I let Your Word transform my heart and my mind and my life,
and refresh and revive my soul, my psyche.**

May my life bring You Joy and benefit Your children.

Consider:

What made Sarah beautiful?

How may I keep myself beautiful for my Beloved?

I Arose, A Mother In Israel

The Song of Deborah

“Then sang Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam on that day, saying,

Praise ye the LORD

for the avenging of Israel,

when the people willingly offered themselves.

Judges 5:1-2 (KJV)

People cry out to God for help, but He sometimes waits for their cooperation. In this case, He worked a mighty deliverance for Israel after the people offered themselves “willingly” and risked their lives to protect themselves, their families, and their brothers. Victory came through divine-human cooperation.

“The mountains melted

from before the LORD,

even that Sinai

from before the LORD God of Israel.”

Judges 5:5 (KJV)

The word translated “Sinai” is the Hebrew word *sina’i*, which means “thorny.” Sometimes we face thorny problems and mountains in our lives that require a two-step process to resolve – first removing the thorns, then leveling the mountain.

Oh, LORD, consume in my life the thorns of old ways of doing things that choke out Your Way. Make straight in the desert of my life a highway for my God. Where I have felt low, fill me up with You. Let me know who I am in You, and Whose I am.

*“They that are delivered from the noise of archers
in the places of drawing water,
there shall they rehearse
the righteous acts of the LORD,
even the righteous acts
toward the inhabitants of His villages in Israel:
then shall the people of the LORD
go down to the gates.”
Judges 5:11 (KJV)*

Isaiah foretells that Zion shall draw Water with Joy *“from the Wells of Salvation.”*¹⁰ One of the adversary’s strategies is to interfere, like the archers, when God’s people seek Him, the fountain of Living Water, and the Water of His Word. But as with Deborah and Jael and Barak’s men, the LORD gives the Victory to those who follow Him.

*“Awake, awake, Deborah: awake, awake, utter a song...”
Judges 5:12a (KJV)*

¹⁰ Isaiah 12:3 (KJV)

The word translated “awake” is the Hebrew word *ur*. It means to arise, to stir oneself up, to be ardent, alert, and watchful. It is a call to battle and to great, supernatural victory.

Abba, how I worship You that as I arise and sing and praise You, the adversary is cast out, shot down! Singing Your praises is a mighty weapon! Thank You that I can start with celebration, for the battle belongs to the LORD!¹¹

Consider:

What was the secret to Israel’s victory over the oppressor?

¹¹ II Chronicles 20:15

How may I be delivered from old ways that choke out God's Way?

A More Perfect Understanding

The Precision of Priscilla

*“...Aquila and Priscilla...
took him (Apollos) unto them,
and expounded unto him
the way of God
more perfectly.”
Acts 18:26b (KJV)*

The word translated “expounded” is the Greek word *ektíthemi*, which also means set out, exhibit. In other words, Priscilla and Aquila privately laid out the Word of God for Apollos with examples, brought him up to speed on the things he didn’t know yet, and filled him in on the rest of the story.

The word “expounded,” *ektíthemi*, is used in the New Testament of a type of teaching that moves chronologically through the data and highlights the fulfillment of prophecy in current or recent events.¹²

The word translated “more perfectly” is the Greek word *akribésteron*, which also means exact, careful. It is used of those who are rigorous and who pay attention to small details.¹³

¹² Acts 11:4; 28:23

¹³ <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=G197&t=KJV>

Priscilla contributed to the effectiveness of the spread of the Word of God through Apollos. We know Apollos' teaching was effective in bringing many people to faith in Yeshua as Messiah because Apollos is mentioned as one of three leading teachers of the early church, along with Peter and Paul.¹⁴

Clearly, Priscilla was a student of the Word of God, a woman of the Word, careful to handle the Word of God with precision. Priscilla had made diligent study of the Word of God her business.

Oh, Abba, may we like Priscilla become women of the Word, as we immerse ourselves in Your Word day by day, seeking the leading of Your Spirit through Your Word, and obeying Your Word.

“A wise teacher makes learning a joy...”

Proverbs 15:2a (TLB)

¹⁴ I Corinthians 1:12; 3:4-6, 22; 4:6

Consider:

What was the secret of Priscilla's effectiveness as a teacher?

How may I become a woman of the Word?

“I Will Go”

The Yielding of Rebekah

*“And they called Rebekah, and said unto her,
Wilt thou go with this man?
And she said, I will go.”
Genesis 24:58 (KJV)*

Rebekah’s willingness to go with Abraham’s servant made possible her marriage to Isaac. Your will, your ability to choose, determines your destiny. You can override mixed feelings and conflicting thoughts with your will to choose to do what you know is right.

Oh, Abba, may I yield utterly, moment by moment, to Your Holy Spirit, Your *Ruach*, that You may cleanse me and prepare me for my Bridegroom Yeshua. Thank You that You already see me without spot or wrinkle, that You say, “*Umum en bakh*; there is no spot in thee.”¹⁵

Please fill me with Your Holy Spirit of wisdom and understanding, counsel and strength, reverence and obedient fear of the LORD, the Spirit of sonship whereby we call, Abba, Father.

¹⁵ Song of Songs 4:7 (KJV)

*“And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came....
And the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known
her:
and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up.”*

Genesis 24:15-16 (KJV)

The word translated “went down” is the Hebrew word *yarad*’, meaning descend, march down. So Yeshua committed Himself to laying aside His Glory and coming down to earth to save us.

Yarad’ can also mean lay prostrate, be brought down, be taken down. So Yeshua laid Himself down in prayer in the Garden, then on the cross to be nailed to it, and was taken down from the cross after His death, and laid prostrate in the tomb.

Oh, Abba, it is only as I prostrate myself before You and say, “Thy Will be done,” that You can raise me up by Your Holy Spirit to walk in Newness of Life with Yeshua. May I bring You Glory by my obedience to Your Will and to Your Word. May I do only and always those things that please You. May I be able to say with Yeshua, “I do always those things that please Him.”¹⁶

The word translated “came up” is the Hebrew word *alah*’, meaning ascend, climb, and is related to the Hebrew word *Aliyah*’, which refers to Going Up to Jerusalem. Because protective mountains surround Jerusalem, reaching Jerusalem always requires going up.

¹⁶ John 8:29b (KJV)

Oh, Yeshua, how I worship You that You have created and called and chosen me to be part of Your Bride! Thank You that You have brought me to Your Banqueting House. Thank You for Protecting me with Your Love.¹⁷

Oh, Abba, how I look forward to the day when You will take me up and into the New *Yerushalayim*, the New Jerusalem! How I look forward to the Day, Yeshua, when You will return to deliver Israel and reign from Jerusalem! Help me to look continually to You and to my Destination in You. May every step I take lead me higher in Your Perfect Will for me, and into Your Highest Calling on my life. May Your Living Water flow through me unimpeded. In Yeshua's Name I ask this. Amen.

Consider:

What steps did Rebekah take to set her on the path toward her destiny?

¹⁷ Song of Songs 2:4

How may I stay on track toward my destiny in God and my Heavenly Bridegroom?

Be It Unto Me According to Thy Word

The Consecration of Mary

*“And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord;
be it unto me according to thy word.”*

Luke 1:38a (KJV)

The word translated “handmaid” is the Greek word *doúle*, and means bondmaid, slave. *Doúle* also means one who serves voluntarily, who submits to and yields authority to another.

Oh, Abba, may I serve You with my whole heart, and yield moment by moment to Your Authority in my life. May I abide in Your Word, and in obedience to You, and Treasure Your Presence and Your Love.

Whose words are you allowing to shape your life? Mary’s actual shape changed as she became pregnant with the Son of God.

Choose Whose words you put yourself under. Yeshua said,

“If you love me, keep My commands.”

John 14:15 (NIV)

Put yourself under the Word and the Living Word (Yeshua) by your obedience to all He says.

“They looked to Him and were radiant...”

Psalm 34:5a (NKJV)

Abba, I worship You for the brightness of Your Glory on our faces as we look to You and abide in You.

“And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord.”

Luke 1:46 (KJV)

Oh, LORD, we celebrate Your Name! You are our Salvation, our Yeshua! We draw water today from the Wells of Salvation, the Wells of Yeshua, the Wells of Your Word made Alive to us in Your Spirit.

“For He that is Mighty hath done to me great things;

and Holy is His Name.

Luke 1:49 (KJV)

The word translated “mighty” is the Greek word *dunatós*, and means strong, able, the One with Whom all things are possible. The word *dunatós* is related to the word *dúnamis*, from which we get the English word dynamite.

Oh, Abba, how we worship You that all things are possible with You! Thank You that You are about to do wonders in us as we yield to You, that You are willing to accelerate our progress and growth in Messiah beyond anything we have seen before for the Glory of Your Name!

“He hath shewed strength with His arm...”

Luke 1:51a (KJV)

What strength Yeshua showed with His Arms, as He spread them on an execution stake for us!

Consider:

Whose words did Mary allow to shape her life?

What about Mary would I want to imitate?

My Master

The Heart of Mary Magdalene

“Jesus saith unto her, Mary.

She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni...”

John 20:16a (KJV)

Oh, Abba, how I worship You for drawing me to Yourself by Your Word, and for turning me to Yeshua! Thank You that when I see You, Yeshua, my tears stop. May my conduct bring Great Glory to You.

The word translated “Rabboni” is from the Aramaic, *rabbouní*, and also means master.

Oh, Yeshua, may I, like Mary Magdalene, seek You continually. May I yield to You always in reverence, honoring You as my Master. May I obey You immediately and completely.

*“...the twelve were with Him, and certain women,
which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities,
Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils,
and Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward,
and Susanna, and many others,
which ministered unto Him of their substance.”*

Luke 8:1b-3 (KJV)

The women who followed Yeshua most closely, and who ministered to His needs from what they had, were those who had been healed of sickness and delivered from demons. Yeshua did not despise to be followed and served by those with a broken past, as long as they had turned to Him and were now adhering to Him.

From these women we learn the following steps to growing deeper in relationship with Yeshua:

- 1. Hear Yeshua's call to us through His Word to us.**
- 2. Respond by turning to Yeshua.**
- 3. Receive His deliverance and healing.**
- 4. Follow Him.**
- 5. Serve Him.**

How did seven devils get into Mary Magdalene? We are not told, but we do know that anger that is held overnight can give the devil a foothold.

*“In your anger do not sin:
do not let the sun go down while you are still angry,
and do not give the devil a foothold.”
Ephesians 4:26-27 (NIV)*

Abba, I need to repent of all anger every day before sundown. It seems to me that the best way to do that is to talk with You about the anger and release it to You right away, because sundown can come quickly in the winter, even before I am done with work. I know that You want to give me, Your Beloved,

restful and restoring sleep, and in order for You to be able to do that, I need to have acknowledged and released all anger to You.

Consider:

How did Mary Magdalene grow deeper in her love for her Lord?

How may I grow deeper in my relationship with Him?

It is written in Psalm 4:4-5 that David said,

*“Tremble and do not sin
(or, In your anger do not sin);
when you are on your beds,
search your hearts and be silent.
Offer the sacrifices of the righteous
and trust in the LORD.” (NIV)*

What is the sequence that David recommends?

1. Don't sin, even if you are shaking with anger. Let the Fear of the LORD keep you from responding to an evil situation in an evil way.
2. Pause instead of reacting or rushing to take action. The word translated “bed” is the Hebrew word *mishkav*'. While *mishkav*' can mean couch, it primarily means a place for lying down, a bed. *Mishkav*' is also used as a euphemism for intimate contact between a husband and wife. So **our first response to a difficult situation needs to be to seek our LORD in the Secret Place, to get alone with Him.** It is as if He says, **“The only response that I Am interested in is the one that grows out of intimacy with Me.”**
3. Search my heart. What am I feeling? What do I want to see happen?

4. Be still and quiet myself.
5. Lift up and lay any desire to react on the LORD's altar.
6. Do the right thing.
7. Rely on the LORD.

Abba, I worship You that in every circumstance, even those over which I have become the most angry, You have been working for my good, because I love You and because I am called to fulfill Your Purpose for me.¹⁸ I worship You that You Are working through every circumstance to draw me closer to You as I yield to You.

In Yeshua's Name, I repent of being angry at You for allowing and ordaining circumstances that I did not want. Your Ways are Higher than my ways, and many of the things I thought I wanted at the time I can see now would have been extremely difficult for me, and would have brought me great hardship, and would have detoured me away from fulfilling my life's Purpose in You, and away from all the good works that You have ordained in advance for me to do.¹⁹

Thank You for protecting me, so many times, from things that I thought I wanted. Thank You that You give only good gifts to those who ask You!²⁰ Thank You for filling me up more and more with the Fragrant Oil of Your Holy Spirit as I seek You, like filling up the gas tank of a

¹⁸ Romans 8:28

¹⁹ Ephesians 2:10

²⁰ Matthew 7:11; Luke 11:13

car, so that I may do everything in the way that Yeshua would, and bring You Joy.

Yeshua, You said, “My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His Work.”²¹ I find lasting satisfaction and fulfillment only in following and obeying You. May I do ONLY and ALWAYS “those things that please” You.²² In Your Precious Name. Amen.

²¹ John 4:34 (KJV)

²² John 8:29 (KJV)

