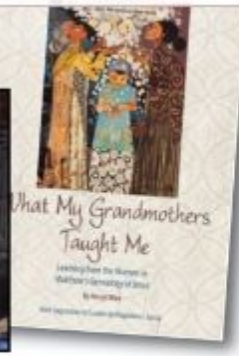


Honoring Our Roots

BY MELVA LOWRY

For use with Lesson One of the 2021–2022 PW/Horizons Bible study, *What My Grandmothers Taught Me: Learning from the Women in Matthew's Genealogy of Jesus* by Merryl Blair



Scripture: Matthew 1

As you read the genealogy of Jesus outlined in Matthew 1, you may feel led to seek out or write out your own family genealogy. What I see in this genealogy is a call not only to write out my lineage, but also to list and consider the qualities and characteristics these family members possessed. Matthew 1 does not go into detail about each person's character, so Zerah, Hezron, Aminadab and others in Jesus' lineage come to us in relative anonymity. You may be drawn to investigate whom each of the named individuals are. How would you introduce these members of your family? Name alone does not tell the story of their whole identity or how they influenced Jesus and Jesus' family tree.

When I think about my own genealogy I am inclined to think about how I introduce myself to other people. My middle name is the combination of my paternal and maternal grandmothers. Naomi Lowry and Lottie Belton are truly a part of my being. Not only do I carry them in name, but I have begun to see and appreciate the characteristics of theirs that come out in my personality. From being lovingly honest to being a lover of plants, my grandmothers show up in my life in many ways.

When asked about your family lineage what do you usually say? _____

Do you carry the name or image of one of your family members? If so, who and how do you tell the story of that family member?

List a few of the characteristics that describe your grandmothers. _____

Which of those characteristics do you share? Consider how those qualities have served you in your life. _____

Perhaps you were not raised by your blood relatives or you do or did not have a close relationship with your grandparents. You may wish to broaden your "family" definition also to include the stories and legacy of individuals who filled a grandparent role for you. It is

important to recognize that some of us will have stories and personalities in our family lineages that may not be easy to accept. Remember to keep the stories in proper context. Even the stories of Jesus' ancestors are filled with missteps and events that are considered unacceptable or scandalous. As we begin to introduce ourselves to our own genealogies, be mindful to give your ancestors and your emotions grace. Do not let the hard stories stop you from telling the story of your family tree.

What are some stories your family likes to tell about themselves? _____

What are some difficult or uncertain stories about your family? _____

How do you cope with the more difficult characteristics and narratives in your family? Consider behaviors and relationships that have grown in response to those trying ones.

Re-read Matthew 1. Delve further into the biblical stories you may not be familiar with or go back and

read the ones you know. As you investigate these stories, are there any that resonate with your family story? Write out which one(s) and how they relate to your family. _____

Now that you have looked deeper into your family genealogy, write out a new introduction for yourself. How would you introduce yourself to others including some of the characteristics and/or stories you wrote out? _____

Prayer

God of our beginnings, God of our ancestors, we thank you for bringing our family into being. We thank you for calling our foreparents to this life and for growing their legacy to this point in time. God of grace, you have been a loving and forgiving presence in the lives of our ancestors and we ask that your grace continues to surround us as we uncover the hard truths of our past. We know that joyous, troubling, unthinkable, mundane and mysterious moments shape each life, and that each of us is shaped by many people. We give thanks that you forgive us and teach us how to be better from generation to generation. We give thanks that we, too, are a part of the lineage of Jesus Christ. As we go through this Bible study and slowly return to gathering together with others, remind us about the importance of creating space, embracing all and journeying together as Christ's extended family. Amen.

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