



From His Hands
MINISTRIES

The Women in Christ's Life: Mary Magdalene
by Kris Swiatocho

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EDITOR'S NOTE: The following article is part of the The Women in Christ's Life series.

My mother is only one example of a woman who has impacted my life as a result of her relationship with Christ. Over the next several months in this series, I want to share with you about some of the other women who have impacted my life solely because of their relationship with Jesus. I believe as I share, you too will connect with them and discover for yourself how God has always had a plan for you, is working it out in your life and will never leave you.

Mary Magdalene, a True Follower and Friend to Jesus

You have got to be joking! Mary Magdalene is a woman with a past. Who knows what she has done? And on top of that, she is a single woman. As you know, singles cause marriages to fail. Do we really want her traveling with us? With Jesus? I mean, can she really be trusted with the knowledge of Christ? Can she really be trusted as woman? Wouldn't she be better staying here, finding a husband and having children? Can't she serve Christ by staying here?

Does any of the above sound familiar with your life? It does with mine. Would it have been better for Mary Magdalene to not travel with Jesus and the disciples? Maybe, but that wasn't what she was called to do. Just like Mary, I have had to face that same decision. I could stay here in Raleigh, North Carolina and serve him (and I have all these years and it has been where God has had me), but God has called me beyond my borders just like Mary Magdalene, who was called beyond her borders, her comfort zone. Jesus has also equipped me, inspired and challenged me. He has given me what I need. I just need to be available.

Mary Magdalene is a woman who is surrounded by much controversy today. People simply cannot believe that a woman could have been a close friend to Jesus. Not every friendship leads to a physical relationship. Not every friendship leads to marriage. Sometimes it just leads to a deeper friendship. I believe this is what Mary Magdalene had with Jesus, a very deep and special friendship -- a friendship that I can only try to achieve not only with Jesus but with others using Jesus as my example.

Mary Magdalene was a woman who had seven demons. Some scholars say these demons were past sins or existing relationships that were sinful, that her demons were the result of being a prostitute. I personally do not find anything to support this other than she simply was possessed by seven demons. We know from other parts of Scripture that people were often possessed by demons and evil spirits and that they manifested themselves in odd and self-destructive behavior. Perhaps Mary Magdalene also had such behavior -- day after day tormented by demons, telling her to do and say horrible things. Having her family and friends see her in this way, it must have been the loneliest time in her life. Nevertheless, we do know for sure that Jesus healed her by casting them out. And as a result of this healing, she chose to follow him.

Not long afterward Jesus began a tour of the nearby cities and villages to announce the Good News concerning the Kingdom of God. He took his twelve disciples with him, along with some women he had healed and from whom he had cast out evil spirits. Among them were Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons. ...

— Luke 8:1-2

Mary Magdalene followed Jesus and served alongside him. She did what most women did who followed Jesus: helped take care of Jesus and the disciples. But Mary did something more. Mary became a disciple of Jesus by spending time with him, listening to him, and watching him. She built a relationship with him that grew from admiration and respect to a loving friendship. Mary Magdalene proved this by continuing to follow and serve. Mary was obedient even to the end and beyond.



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Mary was there at the Crucifixion when others hid in fear.

Standing near the cross were Jesus' mother, and his mother's sister, Mary (the wife of Clopas), and Mary Magdalene.
— John 19:25

Jesus also proved his mutual respect for Mary Magdalene by entrusting her with the news of his rising from the dead, just as he prophesied. She was one of the first to hear from the angel that Christ had risen and to go tell the disciples. She was the first one to actually see the risen Christ. Jesus gave this awesome responsibility of his message to a single, a woman, a lady with a past. Mary Magdalene had proven to Christ her commitment to Him. She had done this by her hard work, dedication, faithfulness and obedience. Mary had produced fruit in her life that was overflowing. This fruit would go on to bear more even more fruit.

The next evening, when the Sabbath ended, Mary Magdalene and Salome and Mary the mother of James went out and purchased burial spices to put on Jesus' body. Very early on Sunday morning, just at sunrise, they came to the tomb. On the way they were discussing who would roll the stone away from the entrance to the tomb. But when they arrived, they looked up and saw that the stone - a very large one - had already been rolled aside. So they entered the tomb, and there on the right sat a young man clothed in a white robe. The women were startled, but the angel said, "Do not be so surprised. You are looking for Jesus, the Nazarene, who was crucified. He isn't here! He has been raised from the dead! Look, this is where they laid his body. Now go and give this message to his disciples, including Peter: Jesus is going ahead of you to Galilee. You will see him there, just as he told you before he died!" The women fled from the tomb, trembling and bewildered, saying nothing to anyone because they were too frightened to talk. It was early on Sunday morning when Jesus rose from the dead, and the first person who saw him was Mary Magdalene, the woman from whom he had cast out seven demons. She went and found the disciples, who were grieving and weeping. But when she told them that Jesus was alive and she had seen him, they didn't believe her.

— Mark 16:1-11

What I've Learned From Mary Magdalene

I would have loved to have known Mary Magdalene - to have spent time with her, hearing about her journey before and after Christ and to find out what she learned and how her life was transformed.

1. She was willing to sit at Jesus' feet.

Sometimes we are healed and God says to go now and tell others and sometimes we are healed and we are to sit at His feet for awhile. Some scholars believe Mary Magdalene was Martha's sister who sat at Jesus' feet to learn. Whether or not this is true, we do know that she followed him and spent time with him. Only through our growing relationship with Christ do we experience a more joyful, abundant life.

For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.

— Colossians 1:9-12

2. She was obedient.

Mary Magdalene was obedient without asking any questions. We have no Scripture that supports that she complained, ran away, asked to get some things done prior to following him, tell him she needed to fix herself before she could follow him, try to do things with her own ability, etc. ... She simply did whatever it took. I think as Christians we get hung up on all the excuses of why we can't do what God wants us to do. We end up in the same place, just spinning and going nowhere. Mary's life changed because she was obedient and did what was asked of her.



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Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do;

— 1 Peter 1:13-15

3. She was faithful.

She was willing to follow Him wherever He went, no matter the circumstances. Mary Magdalene didn't leave His presence because she was hungry at noon on Sunday morning. She didn't leave his presence because her job was more important, because she wanted to watch the game on television or spend time on the phone. God doesn't expect us to live in a hut and become a hermit 24 hours a days, but he does expect us to pray without ceasing. To be in a constant mindset of seeking Him first in all things.

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

— Matthew 6:33

4. She was courageous.

When all the other disciples except John hid in fear, Mary Magdalene was there. By being there she was saying out loud, "I believe in this man named Jesus" and "I am a follower." Are we willing to do the same, no matter the cost, no matter if our lives are at stake? I think most people might say this - but when it comes down to the wire would they choose God? You can always test this with even the smallest of issues such as what you watch on TV in front of others or movie choices, how you spend your money, what you say about others behind their backs or political issues. These are all situations that test who we trust more, God or ourselves. It's so easy to fall back into sin. When we choose God we are saying we believe His way is best, even if it doesn't fit into the norm.

Simon Peter asked him, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus replied, "Where I am going, you cannot follow now, but you will follow later." Peter asked, "Lord, why can't I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you." Then Jesus answered, "Will you really lay down your life for me? I tell you the truth, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times!"

— John 13:36-38

5. She showed fear.

Mary Magdalene expected to go to Jesus' tomb and find his body. When she got there, he wasn't there and she saw an angel. She became afraid and wondered what had happened to Jesus' body. She was told what to do by the angel, but she was still afraid and confused. Mary Magdalene of all people should have known what was going to happen. She had spent enough time with Jesus and the disciples to know Christ would rise from the dead. However, she still seemed surprised and confused when it happened. Aren't we like this? God has told us over and over and over about his promises for our lives, and yet we still do not trust. We still do the opposite. Even though Mary made this mistake, she followed through and did what she was told. Sometimes, the journey is as much a part of "getting it" as getting there.

I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."

— Genesis 28:15

7. She was a great friend of the opposite sex.

Mary Magdalene proves to us all that you can be very close to the opposite sex, and it doesn't have to lead to anything other than a deeper friendship. Personally, I have a deep friendship with a man named Ralph. I call him my "agape love friend." Why? Because I want the best for Him even if that doesn't include me - and it doesn't. I love him beyond anything or anyone I have ever loved. How did we get here? Through spending time together, learning from each other, talking and caring for each other. I believe Mary Magdalene spent time with Christ. Only through their relationship could they get to such a place of trust. He trusted her with being the first to tell the news he had risen and she had seen him. Do



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you have friendships like this? Friendships that you would trust your life to? Your future to? Friendships that may not lead to marriage, and it's OK?

So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God - all because of what our Lord Jesus Christ has done for us in making us friends of God.

— Romans 5:11

8. She was committed.

Mary Magdalene was there until the end - even if the end wasn't what she wanted. I think in life that we look at our paying jobs as our priority occupation versus ministry. I believe ministry needs to be our priority with our work as secondary. It's so easy to commit to being on leadership at your church and then quit when it's not convenient. You would never do this in your paying job would you? Mary Magdalene stayed till the end, no matter the cost to herself.

He gave his life to free us from every kind of sin, to cleanse us, and to make us his very own people, totally committed to doing what is right.

— Titus 2:14

9. She left a legacy.

Mary Magdalene's life, controversial or not, shows us what it takes to walk with God. She is an inspiration to everyone. Her life is a legacy that inspires others to live in the same way.

I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit - fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. This is my command: Love each other.

— John 15:15-17

What an incredible woman! No doubt, Mary Magdalene was special to Christ. Yes, I believe she was one of his closest friends. Probably his closest female friend. She proves you can be friends with the opposite sex. Did they both practice boundaries? Yes! Did she know what his future entailed? Yes! Was she still very sad when he died? Yes! Why yes? Because she was human. And as we know, relationships are very difficult. Jesus had healed her, saved her and gave her not only a new direction but a purpose. Her purpose would be to go and tell others about Him. Would you want to follow Him? Are you following Him?

When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

— Acts 1:13-14

Read about Mary Magdalene - her real life - and not someone's made up "code." Kris Swiatocho is the President and Director of TheSinglesNetwork.org Ministries and FromHisHands.com Ministries. Kris has served in ministry in various capacities for the last 20 years. An accomplished trainer and mentor, Kris has a heart to reach and grow leaders so they will in turn reach and grow others. She is currently working on her third Bible study, *From the Manger to the Cross: The Men in Jesus' Life*. Her second Bible study, *From the Manger to the Cross: The Women in Jesus' Life*, was published last fall and is available on her websites. Her first book, *Singles and Relationships: A 31-Day Experiment*, was co-authored with Dick Purnell of Single Life Resources.

TheSinglesNetwork.org Ministries helps churches, pastors and single adult leaders evaluate, develop and support their single adult ministries through high-energy speaking engagements, results-oriented consulting and training and leadership



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development conferences and seminars. [Click here](#) to request a FREE "How to Start a Single Adult Ministry" guide.

FromHisHands.com Ministries is Kris's speaking ministry. If you've ever heard her speak, you know that Kris is the kind of speaker who keeps the crowd captivated, shares great information and motivates people to make a difference in the lives of those around them! She speaks to all church audiences on everything from "first impression" ministry to women's topics to singles and young adults. She can speak on a Sunday morning, at a woman's retreat or for a single adults conference. Bring Kris to your church today!

Singles and Relationships by Kris Swiatocho and Dick Purnell

Many singles are Christians who wonder if God will ever bring a mate their way or if they should just stop focusing on a future with a marriage partner and live the single life to the fullest. Kris Swiatocho and Dick Purnell offer solid biblical answers for singles in this newest title in Dick's popular 31-Day Experiment Bible study.