

Unbeaten

How biblical heroes rose above
their pain... and you can too.

LINDSEY BELL

UNBEATEN: HOW BIBLICAL HEROES ROSE ABOVE THEIR PAIN... AND YOU CAN TOO.

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For more information on Lindsey Bell, please visit — www.LindseyMBell.com

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To Keith.

Our life hasn't turned out exactly as I planned it,
but I wouldn't want to do life with anyone else.

We are unbeaten... together.

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Most importantly, to *God*, for making me whole again. I might not be the same person I was when I first lost a baby, but I'm not broken anymore... all because of You.

Introduction

Boxing gloves on the cover of a devotional and Bible study? Sure, it might seem a little odd at first. But if you think about it, it makes sense.

There is nothing our enemy enjoys more than throwing punches at us. These punches often come in the form of health crises, marriage conflicts, job loss, death, abandonment, divorce, and a variety of other painful life circumstances.

The battle we face is real. Many of us have scars to prove it. But the fight isn't over yet. Because you've picked up this book, I know you've still got fight in you. One of the best ways to fight the enemy is by doing what Jesus did in Matthew 4. When Satan tempted Jesus, Jesus used Scripture to block the punches. That's what we'll do in this study.

Romans 15:4 says "everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope."

For the next ten weeks, we'll dig into the Scriptures together and use what was written in the past to help us with today. Like Jesus did in the desert, we'll block Satan's punches using the Words of God and the hope they provide.

This ten-week Bible study and devotional is designed for you to use alone or with a small group. Each week contains five daily devotionals for you to read throughout the week by yourself. These devotionals include:

- Questions for reflection
- A prayer
- Scriptures for further meditation
- A journal activity to complete each day

At the back of the book is a study guide that can be used in a group setting at the end of each week.

To prepare for this study, purchase a journal (or grab one you already own) to use as you read. In your journal, record everything God teaches you. Record the answers to the questions for reflection as well as anything else God brings to mind as you read.

If you're doing this study with a group of friends or family members, plan to get together at the end of each week to watch a short video and discuss the study guide questions at the back of this book.

Are you ready to pick up your boxing gloves and get started?
Let's do this.

WEEK ONE

When Difficulties Come

In this world you will have trouble.” Jesus knew what He was talking about in John 16:33, didn’t He? If you’re reading this book, my guess is, you’re going through something. Something that possibly makes you wonder where God is in your mess. Maybe you wonder why a God who claims to adore you is allowing this trial into your life. Or maybe you doubt He’s really able to help because if He were able, He would, right?

There are no easy answers to these questions, and this book won’t pretend there are. But it will do something else. It will remind you of what biblical heroes did in the past when they faced difficulties, and it will challenge you to follow in their footsteps.

You don’t have to allow your pain to swallow your joy. You, too, can be unbeaten. You can, like Paul did in 2 Corinthians 4:9, say with confidence, “I might be struck down, but I am *not* destroyed.”

For week one, we’ll look at what several biblical heroes did when difficulties came their way. We’ll start with Adam and Eve, the very first people who faced pain. Then we’ll move on to Naomi, Job, Peter, Paul, and Silas.

After you complete this week’s lessons, please watch the video at...

www.crossrivermedia.com/portfolio/unbeaten-week-one

Adam and Eve

Scripture reading: Genesis 4:1–12

“Now Cain said to his brother Abel, ‘Let’s go out to the field.’ While they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.” — Genesis 4:8

My husband and I prayed and believed God would step in and help. We had faith He was not only capable of fixing our problem, but also willing.

For whatever reason, though, God didn’t. He didn’t come to our rescue when we needed Him most, or more accurately, He didn’t show up in the way we thought He would.

Have you been there? Maybe it was after a heated argument with your spouse. You prayed God would soften his heart toward you and instead got divorce papers and a letter telling you he was done.

Or maybe it was after an appointment with your doctor. You felt confident God would heal the cancer, but instead received bad news. The cancer had spread. Quite possibly it was after a job loss, death in the family, health crisis, or relationship strain.

For my husband and me, it was after a long and painful struggle with secondary infertility.¹ We endured four miscarriages in two years and walked away from each of these more and more discouraged. We struggled to understand why a God who was able to help chose not to.

In our minds, we were the only ones facing such a difficult trial. After all, when we talked with friends at church or at work, their lives seemed much easier than ours. We knew no one who had gone through as many miscarriages as we had. In contrast, most people we knew had no problem getting — or staying — pregnant. We felt alone, like no one else could possibly understand our pain.

WHEN DIFFICULTIES COME | DAY ONE

It was this feeling of aloneness that led me to search God's Word. I knew there had to be something in there to help me know what to do to move forward with my life in the midst of heartache.

The first people I read about in the book of Genesis were Adam and Eve. On the sixth day of creation, after God fashioned the sun, earth, plants, and animals, He then made man and woman. Everything went well for a time, but then Adam and Eve chose to disobey God. Their disobedience flung them into a much more difficult world.

In Genesis 4, they faced one of the most difficult trials a parent can ever face: the death of a child. What's worse, their son Cain caused the death. He murdered his brother Abel because he was jealous God liked Abel's offering more than his own. Adam and Eve, in essence, lost two children that day: Abel, who was murdered, but also Cain, who was banished because of his sin.

As I read this story, I realized something. Pain has been around for a long time. In fact, it has been around since the very first people walked on earth. Though my trials are different than theirs (and I am sure most of yours are too), we are not alone in our pain. There are others who have walked before us who are familiar with tears, just as we are.

In this devotional, we'll look at many of these people. In the pages ahead, we'll study the lives of Job, Peter, Jesus, Hannah, Paul, Daniel, David, and Joseph to name a few. Some of these biblical heroes faced death. Others faced imprisonment or torture. All of them faced heartache. Suffering didn't begin with us. It began with Adam and Eve and will continue until Jesus comes back again.

Yes, pain is inevitable, but defeat is not. As you read this book, one thing you'll see over and over again is that most of the biblical figures were eventually victorious over their trials. Sometimes that victory came on this side of heaven. Other times, it came after they passed through heaven's gates.

In Romans, Paul describes those who endure hardships with their faith intact. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: 'For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.' No, in all these things we

are more than conquerors through him who loved us.” (Rom. 8:35-37)

That is my hope for you and me... that we would be more than conquerors through Him who saved us. That we would be victorious over our pain and triumphant in the end. That we would — no matter what comes our way — be unbeaten.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. What difficult circumstance(s) led you to this book?
2. How do you think Adam and Eve were able to continue with their lives after such a painful event?
3. What other biblical figures went through painful circumstances? (We'll look at many of these in the pages ahead!)

SCRIPTURES FOR FURTHER MEDITATION

Hebrews 11:32–40, Romans 8:22–23, 1 Peter 5:8–9

PRAYER

Pray God would use this study to minister to your heart. Ask Him to remind you of things and guide you as you dig into His Word.

JOURNAL ACTIVITY

Write in your journal the answer to the following question: What is your goal for reading this book?

TAKEAWAY

When difficulties come, know you're not alone.