

MAGDALENA TODAY

... making a difference

One Size Doesn't Fit All

by Glynis Whitner



I grew up a freckle-faced brunette in a neighborhood of blonds—13 of them. To say I stood out in the crowd was an understatement. Normally it didn't matter, except when we played "Big Valley."

In my childhood, *The Big Valley* was a popular television show. As little kids we would reenact the various episodes and inevitably, there was an argument over who would get to play Audra Barkley.

Audra was the beautiful, longhaired daughter, loved and pampered by her mama and three handsome brothers. As much as I would have liked to play Audra, that was never an option. You see, Audra had long, blond hair. With my brown hair, I wasn't even considered for Audra. I did, however, get a part. I was Nick. Not Heath, the blond handsome younger brother—Johnny got to play him. But Nick—the hotheaded, troublemaker. When I didn't play Nick, I played a horse. It's true.

No matter one's age, it hurts to feel like everyone else plays the great roles while you are "stuck" playing the "horse." Sadly, playing *Big Valley* wasn't the only time I've felt out of place. It even happened in ministry.

In 1998 my family moved to Charlotte, North Carolina, from Phoenix, Arizona. It was a culture shock to be sure. But God had already prepared a place of welcome for me at Proverbs 31 Ministries. Even knowing God directed me there, I felt out of place in many ways.

It seemed that all the Southern women I met were petite, perfectly dressed, and spoke with the most adorable accents. And they all shopped at Stein Mart! I, on the other hand, towered above them, wore clothes from Target and spoke in a very flat "newscaster" voice. But that wasn't all. They had impressive ministry resumés compared to me.

In the years that followed, the differences were magnified as my friends got book contracts and spoke at arena events. Each time I compared my gifts and talents to theirs, the distance left me feeling insignificant. I wondered how God could use someone like me, a palm tree, when there were so many beautiful magnolias around.

At the same time, God was working in my heart. Through the move, God was teaching me that my value wasn't connected with my performance. It didn't matter what my "resumé" looked like. What mattered was that I was a beloved child of His. This truth seems simple now, but back then, it meant freedom to an achievement-based woman like me.

Slowly, like the rising of the sun, I turned my eyes from my outward performance to the condition of my heart. Little by little, the comparisons diminished. I realized God wasn't comparing me to anyone. He wasn't counting numbers or gauging my impact. He was simply interested in what I did with what He entrusted to me, and what my heart looked like in the process.

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MAGDALENA TODAY

www.MagdalenaToday.com

The JESUS Film Project®
A Ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ
100 Lake Hart Drive, #3100
Orlando, FL 32832



Do people you know need a fresh perspective on God's love?

Discover the impact *Magdalena: Through Her Eyes* could make in your life or your ministry. Audiences all over the world are deeply touched by Jesus' intensely personal interactions of healing and forgiveness. In *Magdalena*, Mary Magdalene narrates the true story of Jesus from her unique perspective as a woman. As she follows Jesus and tells the stories of the woman at the well and others, she reminds viewers of His compassion for women and men alike. People feel God's love deeply while watching the movie and have a new sense of personal worth.

We invite you to host a movie night with a purpose in your city, church or home, and then to dig deeper into God's word through the companion Bible study, *Reflections of Hope*.

"Who better than Mary Magdalene to show us the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus through a woman's eyes and heart? Guiding us gently on a life-changing journey to the cross, to the grave, to the morning of all mornings... this moving story will touch women's hearts around the world. A brilliant concept, beautifully rendered!"

Liz Curtis Higgs
Best-selling author of *Bad Girls of the Bible* and
Unveiling Mary Magdalene



"The movie made me realize that women have had the same issues and struggles forever. And God loves us when we don't love ourselves and we think no one else does either."

Anonymous



Scan to view video.

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From the inside out, God started changing my life. I released many of the expectations I'd put on myself, and settled in to His unique design of me. I was learning to accept how God made me, quirks and all, and see His purpose for my ministry.

God calls each of us to serve Him in a wonderfully unique way. He gives skills, talents, personalities and temperaments on purpose. Once we accept our gifts, God fine-tunes our skills and increases them according to our faithfulness in using them. Sadly, many women doubt their unique gifts and abilities.

They compare their brown hair to her blond hair and come up lacking. They size up their speaking ability to hers, and wish they had stayed home. They compare the numbers of women attending their retreat to the big church down the street, and consider theirs a failure.

What I've learned through years of comparison, and disqualifying myself, is that God created me unique for a reason. The more I invest in how God made me, the greater He is glorified, and the more fruitful my ministry.

Although my days of the *Big Valley* and playing Nick are past, I'll never forget feeling out of place and longing to play another role. I'm so glad God had the ideal role in mind for me. I just had to accept it.

Glynnis Whitwer is a writer and senior editor with Proverbs 31 Ministries. Her next book, *I Used to Be So Organized*, will be released in August. Visit www.GlynnisWhitwer.com to learn more.



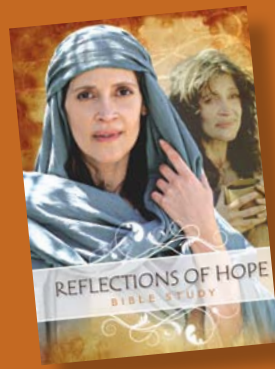
Connect to women around the world without leaving home!

Women around the world ultimately face the same heart issues that we do. Magdalena USA/Americas and Global Media Outreach have partnered to create an inviting strategy that connects women from 195 countries with the gospel. Women seeking spiritual answers via the Internet are often directed to www.JesusForWomen.com, where they are given an opportunity to accept Jesus into their lives as they watch Sharon Jaynes, author and JESUS film ministry partner, share her personal story including a clear and compelling gospel presentation.

ANY woman with computer access who desires to spread the love of Jesus can become a missionary from the comfort and convenience of home. Simple video training will prepare you for answering email questions with either standard template responses, your personal response, or choose from several online helps.

Ellen, an "easy chair" missionary, shared this story: "Recently I received an email from Kenya: 'Pray for me. What should I do? I have sinned.' What a privilege to pray for her and share scriptural truths of confession and forgiveness with her. This small investment of my time has eternal value."

To take advantage of this opportunity, go to www.tinyurl.com/gmojfw and apply to become an online missionary. You will be more in love with Jesus as you share about Him with inquisitive hearts from around the globe.



The Journey

As I read the Bible study, I had tears in my eyes. It is beautifully written and addresses the basic question every woman asks herself: "Do I have value?" The questions whisper gently into the deep places of the heart, allowing God's truth to enter, and healing to begin.

Glynnis Whitwer
Proverbs 31 Ministry

Even though I've never led a Bible study before, I felt the Lord nudge me to facilitate the *Magdalena* follow-up Bible study, *Reflections of Hope*. The dynamics in our group of 20 women were wonderful and challenging. All of the women loved being open, real and transparent with one another. One evening was particularly difficult as one of the participants shared her struggle with drug addiction. Remembering how God answered so many prayers throughout the weeks that we met together, we all are continuing to pray for her. Another woman, an unbeliever, completed the study and has come to church twice since! It was sobering to have the responsibility of leading this group, but I'm so glad that God gave me this privilege.

Emily
Xenia, OH



A Movie Night With a Purpose

University Carillon United Methodist Church
Oviedo, FL



Results:

- 150 attended *Magdalena: Through Her Eyes* movie night.
- 6 want to join the follow-up Bible study, *Reflections of Hope*.
- 2 plan to host *Magdalena* showings, one at home and one at church.



"In this film Jesus shows both women and men the right way to live and treat each other."

Joan, Orlando

MAGDALENA in Action



After seeing an ad for *Magdalena* in *Worldwide Challenge* magazine, our plans for our annual women's kick-off event changed. Sensing God's leading, it all came together quickly and easily by using the great resources provided on MagdalenaToday.com. In only two weeks our event was planned, and God amazingly blew us away with the response. We were expecting the normal 35-50 of our "faithful ones" to attend, but 90 came, and of those, 28 were visitors!



When the *Magdalena* movie ended no one moved. We could sense the Holy Spirit's presence as everyone sat quietly allowing Him to minister to them personally. What a tender moment it was! One woman came up and wept on my shoulder. Another woman thanked me three times for having the event. The evening ended with a challenge to share His love and acceptance with women in their neighborhoods, workplaces and communities.

Not only was the response exciting but the results are exciting as well. Three women made recommitments and another woman accepted Christ several days later. More than \$600 was given to support an organization that works with women who have been victims of human trafficking. A few women plan to host their own movie nights and two *Reflections of Hope* groups have started. The leaders of both groups told me that they've had times of great intimacy with the Lord as the women have shared struggles and are finding peace over their pasts. We feel like this is just the beginning of what the Lord is guiding us to do with *Magdalena*.

Ava
Church of the Good Shepherd, MS



Last fall a friend and I, nervously approached the manager of a federally funded women's homeless shelter and asked for permission to show *Magdalena* and follow up with the Bible study, *Reflections of Hope*. The manager readily approved our request and made it mandatory that all six women attend.

These women had been sexually and/or physically abused at some point in their lives, and most had attempted suicide at least once. Each had a long history of drugs and alcohol.

One of the women, Sherry, a 45-year-old half-Cherokee and half-Choctaw Indian has been married three times and has spent most of her adult life in prison for drugs, alcohol, assault and robbery. When we first met she was very tough with a wall around herself that you did not dare to try and break. Once I asked how she coped with life and she shared some of the Indian spiritual rituals that she had learned from the tribal elders.

All six of the women were touched by *Magdalena* and their view of how they were to be treated and the value that God placed on them changed. In reference to how they had been treated by men, one commented, "I just thought that was the way it was suppose to be. I didn't know women had any value."

Sherry is now a Christian and attends church with me weekly. Her countenance has changed, and she is constantly smiling with a very gentle spirit. At a recent growth session, the psychologist told Sherry that before she had opened her mouth he could tell that she had changed. He kept telling her throughout the session that she was a completely different person! Sherry is now in her own apartment, rebuilding damaged relationships, and doing well.

Nancy, OK