

Characters in the Bible : notes

Characters in the Bible, despite their distance from us in time and culture, were everyday people, recorded in history and rooted in their society. The people we read about in the Bible sometimes struggled to follow God against the trends in their culture. Some of them led other people who were not always appreciative of what the leader did! Some fought the temptations that were all around them or dealt with some kind of loss. Sometimes people in the Bible found it difficult to understand what was happening in their lives, making it hard for them to hold on to their faith.

All this probably sounds familiar and, like us, they faced many other issues as well, which makes it easier for us to relate to them. Also the Bible does not shy away from presenting the weaknesses as well as the strengths of the people it mentions. So we can learn much from their successes and failures.

There are simple methods which can help us begin to understand these people and discover the crucial messages their lives have for us today.

Getting started

Once you have decided whose life you are going to think about, find all the references in the Bible where they are mentioned. A good Bible dictionary or a search on internet sites will help.

There is a list of helpful websites listed on our 'Bible discussion resources' webpage.

Some people in the Bible have little written about them, and you will want to include all the references to them. Other people will have so much written about them you will need to select only the most significant references.