

Her Story Silhouette by Shari House

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Silhouette:

Sophronia Emeline "Emma" Cobb was born in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, on January 28, 1835. Her parents, Hiram and Emeline Cobb, passed away when she was still quite young. Emma was adopted and raised by her aunt and uncle, John and Lucinda Dryer who lived in Victor, New York. They taught her sound doctrine from the Bible, and she received Christ at an early age. She went on to study at the LeRoy Female Seminary and graduated with highest honors. In 1858, Emma graduated from Ingham University, a women's college in New York. Upon her graduation, she took up a position at the university teaching astronomy and mathematics. After two years in this position, at the age of 25, she accepted a job as principal for the newly chartered Ewing Female University in Knoxville, Illinois. Emma oversaw their 105 female students and stayed there until a year before the Civil War ended. In the Fall of 1864, she moved to Bloomington-Normal, Illinois where she taught grammar and drawing at the Illinois State Normal University, now known as Illinois State University. Emma was an excellent teacher and excelled at administrative skills. She quickly advanced to the position of principal and dean of woman's faculty at the university, which had an enrollment of more than 300 students. Emma became known as one of the most distinguished educators in the west and was well-known even by the President at the time. She was also a deeply committed Christian, and often spent her summers participating in Christian relief work, evangelization, and discipleship.

In the Spring of 1870, Emma became gravely ill with typhoid fever. She traveled to Chicago to stay with friends during her illness in the hopes of recovering. Neither the doctors nor Emma herself thought she would get well, and so she prepared herself to die. God had other plans, though, and Emma made a miraculous recovery. With renewed hope that the Lord had a purpose for her life, she prayed earnestly for His will. Although Emma was previously aware of all that D.L. Moody was doing in missions work in the city of Chicago with his Sunday Schools and other evangelistic outreaches, it wasn't until that summer that their paths crossed for the first time. Emma found out that Moody had heard about her and wanted to meet with her to discuss his desire to have schools where women could be taught the Bible by other women. She eventually met Moody and his wife, Emma, and the three became fast friends. Emma was impressed with Moody's fervor in the pulpit and on the streets to help people, especially those who were poor or minorities. Moody was impressed with Emma's high intelligence, superb teaching skills, and her deep practical knowledge of the Scriptures. They shared a common burden of reaching the masses in the big city of Chicago that had approximately 300,000 residents at the time. Before the summer was up, Moody challenged Emma to not return to teaching, but rather stay in Chicago and minister there. After much prayer, Emma made the decision to give up her well-paying position of prestige and instead continue in Christian work. Giving up the security of salary and position at the university was no light decision, but Emma knew the sacrifice was worth it to follow the Lord's leading. So, at the age of 35, she handed in her resignation at the university and moved to Chicago to take a position that offered no salary and no worldly recognition.

In December of that year, Emma joined the urban inner-city work of the YMCA. With the zeal of a missionary, she set out on a pathway to educate and evangelize the poor and homeless, the prisoners, the hospitalized, prostitutes and wayward women – a calling to Chicago that she would stay faithful to her entire life. October 8, 1871, the night of the Great Chicago Fire, was a night that changed both the lives of Emma and D.L. Moody forever. Emma immediately threw herself into relief work, and Moody, who also had a desire to help those who were hurting spiritually, emotionally, and physically because of the fire, opened the doors of his church to the city. He held numerous services throughout the day, and asked Emma to teach Bible study classes to the masses of women that came through the church doors looking for aide. Emma became the head of the Chicago's Women's Aid Society and the superintendent of the YWCA. She led mother's meetings and organized sewing schools for girls. As Emma's presence and work in Chicago spread, she became known as a heroic woman who spent her life meeting the needs of others in any way she could. Emma's leadership and teaching ability were invaluable to the thousands she ministered to as she walked alongside Moody, and many others, as they sought to rebuild the city.

In 1872, Emma became a representative agent of the Christian Union magazine, and in May of that same year, Moody's church, then called the Chicago Avenue Church, hired her to direct a program called the Bible Work of Chicago. Emma developed the curriculum and served as the Bible teacher and superintendent for the program, which was devoted to prayer meetings, Bible studies, and personal evangelism. She led many workers in canvassing the whole of Chicago in order to evangelize and get Bibles into every home. Recognizing that Emma had embraced his vision, and that she was willing to be a servant leader on his behalf, in the summer of 1873, Moody left the Bible Work organization in Emma's capable hands and took his evangelism efforts for an extended period of time to England where he had started to see great revival on an earlier trip the year before. Emma continued to work and head up the missionary work in Chicago while Moody traveled back and forth across the globe.



As the organization grew bigger and farther reaching, Emma's desire to start a Bible institute in Chicago for the sole purpose of training people for the ministry grew stronger and stronger. In a personal letter she said, "I hope that we may, within a few years, see our city filled with live missions, doing a great work for Christ, and hastening the Coming of His dear Kingdom." Emma spoke often to D.L. Moody about how she felt the Lord was going to use him to lead this great work she was praying for. In a personal letter to him, she stated, "Through loneliness and trouble, and constraint, wearing work, then I held on. When others shuddered, I believed. When others hurried away, I prayed on and worked on. When others said you were never meant to come here, I believed that God had made you speak The Truth, in preaching and planned purposes. And I prayed on." In 1883, Moody granted Emma permission to start the "May Institute" which was a prayer group that met on Saturday mornings for the sole purpose of praying that the Lord would establish a school in Chicago for the training of missionaries for home and foreign fields. Emma kept those prayer meetings going until 1886, when her prayers were finally answered and the Chicago Evangelization Society (now known as Moody Bible Institute) was founded. It has been said by many, including D.L. Moody himself, that if there had never been an Emma Dryer, there would never have been a Moody Bible Institute. Over the years countless thousands have been trained and sent out to do the Lord's work from this place.

Eventually Emma went on to work with many different organizations and people groups ever desiring to reach each and every person with the Gospel of Christ. She had great success implementing her Bible Work program in the Irish, Jewish, and Italian communities, and eventually her ministry boasted connections with over 21 people groups of different nationalities in the city of Chicago. Everywhere Emma served she used her great organizational and leadership skills and her unwavering knowledge of the Scriptures and she made a difference.

By 1901, Emma's health would no longer allow her to lead the Bible Work ministry that she had developed, managed, and sustained by God's grace for so many years. Upon her retirement, she was awarded Superintendent Emeritus status, and she continued to have a part in Christian work as her health allowed. Emma spent much of her time in her later years in correspondence encouraging and spurring others on in the great work of reaching the world with the Gospel through systematic education. On April 16, 1925, at the age of 90, Emma suffered a stroke and passed away. It has been said of her that she was "a woman of faith, whose persistence shook D.L. Moody and whose prayers shook the world." She is truly a woman of whom it could be said, "**She hath done what she could**"!

Her Story/My Story:

It is true that D.L. Moody was first impressed with Emma's educational qualifications and experience, but he soon became more impressed with her knowledge and understanding of the Scriptures. It is a well-known fact that he considered her to be "the best teacher of the Word of God in the United States" during his lifetime. Emma had an insatiable desire to not only know and understand the Scriptures, but to also spur others on to know the Word for themselves. Emma was a woman in love with the Word of God, and she believed strongly that the Bible was the solution to society's problems. It was her dream to get a copy of the Bible into the hands of every person who lived in Chicago and to train them in spiritual things so that they might be able to raise their children in the knowledge of the Lord and so that they might be equipped to hold their own Bible studies and train others. This was not only her hope, but her life's vision, her life's focus, her life's work.

I'm not sure when my love of studying the Scriptures began. If my journals are anything to go on, it appears it took well into my college years before I got serious about this matter of having a personal time with the Lord every day. Now, it is like life's blood to me . . . something I cannot do without. My most often prayed prayer outside of asking for forgiveness for sin would be, "Lord, please give me wisdom as I study Your Word." I love it. I love finding promises and nuggets of truth. It might be the mathematician in me, but I love analyzing patterns and dissecting verses. Often when I'm listening to a sermon, a thought or word the preacher says will jump out at me, and I make sure to write it down on my "Possible Future Studies" list. Over the years I've done so many different studies, but here are a few I've done that might pique your own interest in studying God's Word:

1. **Alphabet Attributes of the Lord** – The Lord is . . . able, accessible, advisor, avenger, angry, boss, buckler, beauty, counsellor, comforting, door, defender, deliverer, eternal, foundation, etc.
2. **If . . . Then** – all the times in the Bible God says if you do this then I'll do that.
3. **Fear Not** – the situations surrounding the times God said to "fear not" or "be not afraid."
4. **He Delights** – what causes God to be delighted.
5. **Be Courageous** – When does God say we need to "be of good courage" and how will He help us with it.
6. **The Better Things in Life** – verses that say "it is better for _____ than for _____."
7. **Jesus' Miracles** – cross-referenced between the Gospels and separated into categories like health-related miracles, demon possession miracles, provision miracles, and nature-related miracles.
8. **Prayer** – the 542 times the word prayer or some form of it are mentioned separated into categories like commands to pray, what to pray for, where to pray, how to pray, why pray, when to pray, etc.
9. **Fasting** – the Who, Where, Why, What, How long, and Result of people who fasted in the Bible.

Bible Study: Digging Deep

Hulda was another lady known for her deep knowledge of the Scriptures. We find her story in 2 Kings 22:1-14. Her story is not very long, but she played a part in changing her nation's religious habits. She was married to Shallum, the keeper of the king's wardrobe, and she lived in the 2nd Quarter of Jerusalem. It is interesting to note that the name of this area where she lived means "a place of repetition or education." It was an area of scholars, librarians, and teachers. God names her as a prophetess, someone who could discern the Scriptures and transfer that knowledge to others. In 622 B.C. the 18-year old king, Josiah, started repairs on the temple. A segment of scroll was discovered within the temple walls which foretold of the judgment that would befall the people for forsaking God and His laws. King Josiah wanted to have a better understanding of the things that had been read to him from the scroll, so he sent his staff including the High Priest to inquire of the Lord. They went to Hulda. They must have had great confidence in her knowledge of the Scriptures and her ability to discern them and speak on the Lord's behalf. When they came to her, she confirmed that the words contained in the scroll were in fact true and that the wrath of God would surely come to pass, but that mercy was still attainable if the people would change their heart and their rebellious ways. The Lord spoke through Hulda, and the words she said helped her king to take a stand in his nation and make the changes necessary so they once again would be following the laws of God and escape His wrath and judgment.

Every Christian has a duty to know the Scriptures, not only for themselves but also, so that they can be used of God to help others discern what He is saying to them. There are many ways to study the Bible if you truly want to know and understand it, but here are three simple ways to dig deeper into the Scriptures so that you can know them better.

Let me preface these methods with two caveats:

- It is extremely important to study Scripture within context. Much wrong doctrine has been devised, taught, and believed by pulling a verse out of context.
- We must always study Scripture from the point of trying to discover what God is teaching us, not to discover Scriptural backing for something we want to believe or do.

Method #1 – Definitions – Take a verse and pick it apart word by word.

Psalm 18:2 "The Lord is my **rock**, and my **fortress**, and my **deliverer**; my **God**, my **strength**, in whom I will trust; my **buckler**, and the **horn of my salvation**, and my **high tower**."

The context: David wrote this psalm on the day that the Lord delivered him from the hand of Saul and all his enemies.

1. Define each of the 8 things David says the Lord "is."
2. Expand on each of these 8 things by listing what they represent to David.
 - Example: "**rock**" – used to refer to someone or something that is extremely strong, reliable, or hard.
 - God is extremely reliable. He is the One David drew strength from in the time of trouble.
3. Ask yourself questions or make statements about these 8 words.
 - Example: "If God is my deliverer, what does He deliver me from?"
 - "In order for God to be my strength, I must realize I am spiritually, physically, or emotionally weak and need to rely on Him."

Method #2 –Topics – Pick out a particular word (like faithfulness or obedience) or a topic (like names of God or Jesus' miracles) that you want to learn about.

1. Define it by using a dictionary.
2. Study verses in the Bible that use this word.
3. Look for ways to apply the verses to your own life.

Example: **Content** – in a state of peaceful happiness, in a state of satisfaction

Here are 4 verses that speak about being content.

1. I Timothy 6:8 "And **having food and raiment** let us be therewith **content**."
2. Luke 3:14 "And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be **content with your wages**."
3. Hebrews 13:5 "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be **content with such things as ye have**: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."
4. I Timothy 6:6 "But godliness with **contentment** is **great gain**."

Method #3 – Patterns – Look for patterns in a verse or group of verses like all the nouns, all the verbs, all the commands, or all the promises.

Example: **Psalms 100**

Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands.

Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing.

Know ye that the **Lord he is God**: it is **he that hath made us**, and not we ourselves;

we are his people, and **the sheep of his pasture**.

Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and **into his courts with praise: be thankful** unto him, and **bless his name**.

For the **Lord is good**; **his mercy is everlasting**; and **his truth endureth** to all generations.

1. What are the 6 imperative commands given in this passage? (Answers marked in blue)

- Make a noise
- Enter into His gates and courts
- Serve the Lord
- Be thankful
- Come before His presence
- Bless His name

2. What are the 5 ways we are instructed to do these commands? (Answers marked in green)

- Joyfully
- With thanksgiving
- With gladness
- With praise
- With singing

3. Why should we do these things? (answers marked in red)

- The Lord is God
- He is good
- He is our Creator
- His mercy is everlasting
- He is our Shepherd
- His truth endureth

Resources:

<https://library.moody.edu/archives/biographies/emma-dryer/>

<https://www.todayintheword.org/issues/2017/5/from-the-editors/>

<http://insidemoody125.blogspot.com/2011/08/emma-dryer-and-her-unrelenting-prayer.html>

<http://www.historyswomen.com/womenoffaith/EmelineDryer.html>