

The virtuous woman (the noble woman)

I. Virtuous woman

Define virtuous:

Is virtuous the same as noble?

II. Proverbs 31: 10-31

Vocabulary:

passage: verses of scripture from the bible

encouragement: to give someone positive comments

quality: the best

invests: to put money into banks or stocks to get a profit

industrious: works hard

supportive: to give support (help, caring, listening)

characteristics: behaviors and attitudes

enticed: past tense of entice – to tempt someone

Proverbs 31 was written by King Lemuel. His mother gave him these important teachings. But who was King Lemuel? Many people believe that King Lemuel was really King Solomon. If so, then his mother was Bathsheba. Whoever wrote this, it is a passage of wisdom.

A virtuous woman is trustworthy. A virtuous woman cares for others. She gives her husband encouragement. She takes care of her family. She gives to the poor and needy. A virtuous woman is wise. She chooses quality goods and food. She invests money wisely. A virtuous woman is industrious. She gets up early in the morning and goes to bed late. She works hard and is busy all the time.

A virtuous woman uses her talents. She makes clothes for herself and her family. She sells what she makes. A virtuous woman is supportive. She gives her husband support. A virtuous woman is honorable. A virtuous woman is respected by others. Her children and her husband praise her. A virtuous woman respects and fears God.

Read Proverbs 31: 10-31 (pg 706)

In this study, we will look at the characteristics of the virtuous woman. We will use examples of women in the bible. Their stories show the characteristics found in Proverbs 31.

III. Characteristics of a virtuous woman

A. Trustworthy – verse 11

A virtuous woman is trustworthy. Proverbs 31 says that this woman's husband trusts her completely. In Genesis, there is a story about a woman who was not trustworthy. God told Adam and Eve that they should not eat from a special tree. The fruit of this tree would give knowledge of good and evil. Satan came to Eve in the form of a snake. He told Eve, "If you eat this fruit, you will be like God." Eve looked at the fruit. She thought, "It will make me wise." Eve decided to eat the fruit. She also gave a piece of fruit to her husband. Instead of being trustworthy, Eve enticed her husband into eating forbidden fruit. Adam could have refused but he chose to eat the fruit.

Read Genesis 3: 1-6 (page 3)

In I Kings, there is a story about a wife who was trustworthy. She was married to a man named Jeroboam. Jeroboam became King of the Northern part of Israel after Solomon died. However, he refused to follow God. He set up golden calves to worship.

Jeroboam's son became ill. Jeroboam told his wife to go to the prophet Ahijah. He told her to change her appearance and take food to the prophet. She must go in secret. Ahijah would tell her what would happen to their son. Jeroboam's wife did exactly what he said. But God told Ahijah that Jeroboam's wife was coming. God said that she would ask about her son.

Read I Kings 14: 1-5 (page 372)

Ahijah gave Jeroboam's wife a message from God. Ahijah said, "Tell Jeroboam this: I chose you to lead my people. I gave you David's kingdom. But you are not like David. You have done evil things. You have

made false gods. I will destroy your family. Ahijah told Jeroboam's wife to return home. He said, "When you enter the city, your son will die."

Read I Kings 14: 6-9, 12-13

Jeroboam was not faithful to God. But he trusted his wife to go to the prophet Ahijah. Jeroboam's wife was trustworthy. She went to Ahijah and listened to God's message. Imagine how difficult this message was for her to hear! Her son was going to die, her family would be destroyed, and her house would burn down.

The book of 2 Samuel tells the story of Absalom and King David. Absalom was King David's son. Absalom wanted to kill his father David. Absalom hated his father and wanted to be king of Israel. Many people of Israel began to follow Absalom. King David knew that Absalom wanted to kill him. King David and his followers left Jerusalem to get away from Absalom. In 2 Samuel 17, Hushai wants to warn King David. Hushai sent two men (Jonathan and Ahimaaz) to give King David a message.

Read 2 Samuel 17: 15-16 (page 338)

The trustworthy woman in this story has no name. She is simply called "the man's wife". Jonathan and Ahimaaz tried to enter Jerusalem quietly. They needed to get the message for King David. But they didn't want to get captured. Someone saw Jonathan and Ahimaaz. Jonathan and Ahimaaz hurried to a man's house. This man had a well on his property. Jonathan and Ahimaaz climbed down into the well. The man's wife placed a covering over the well. She then scattered grain on the covering. No one could tell that the men were hiding there.

Read 2 Samuel 17: 17-19

Absalom's men came to the house. They asked the woman, "Where are Jonathan and Ahimaaz?" The woman said, "They went across the stream." The men left to look for Jonathan and Ahimaaz. Jonathan and Ahimaaz climbed out of the well. They left to find King David. They told him to leave and cross the Jordan River right away.

Read 2 Samuel 17: 20-22 (page 339)

The man's wife was trustworthy. Her husband trusted her to take care of the men. Jonathan and Ahimaaz trusted her to keep them safe. Not only was she trustworthy, but she also showed wisdom. She covered up the well and scattered grain. God used her to keep the men safe until they found King David.

Questions

1. What are the nine characteristics of a virtuous woman?
2. What did Eve do that showed she was not trustworthy?
3. Who was Jeroboam?
4. What did Jeroboam's wife do that was trustworthy?
5. What was the sad message that Jeroboam's wife took to her husband?
6. In the third story, how was the man's wife trustworthy? What did she do?

For Discussion:

What does it mean to be trustworthy today? Can you give examples of how you or someone in your family has been trustworthy?

B. Cares for others

Vocabulary:

ministers: to care for and take care of

barren: could not have children

tease: make fun of

condemn: to say you are guilty or wrong

compassion: to feel sorry for

bathe: take a bath

demonstrated: showed

gratitude: to be grateful

seek: look for

A virtuous woman cares for others. Proverbs 31 verse 12 tells us that the virtuous woman brings only good to her husband. She cares for her family and the people who work for her. In verse 15, the virtuous woman shows that she cares by providing food for the people in her house. In verse 20, the Bible tells us that the virtuous woman cares for people who are in need. She ministers to the poor.

In I Samuel, there is a story about a woman who did not care about other people. The woman's name is Peninnah. She was married to Elkanah. Elkanah also had a second wife, Hannah. Peninnah had children but Hannah was barren. Elkanah loved Hannah very much. Peninnah used to tease Hannah. She made fun of her because Hannah couldn't have children. When the family would go to worship, Peninnah would tease Hannah. She teased her so much that Hannah would cry.

Read I Samuel 1: 2-7

Peninnah did not care about Hannah. But God did! Hannah prayed to God. She promised that, if God gave her a son, Hannah would give him to God. God answered her prayer and gave her a son. His name was Samuel and he became an important prophet.

Read I Samuel 1: 8-11, 19-20

In the Gospel of Matthew, there is a story about a mother who cared for her sons. Her sons were James and John, the sons of Zebedee. This mother came to Jesus. She asked him if her sons could sit beside Jesus in

heaven. This seems like a strange request. We may think that this question was wrong but Jesus didn't condemn her. Did the sons ask her to make this request? Maybe, we don't know. We do know that James and John were standing there when she asked the question. She wanted the best for her sons.

Read Matthew 20: 20-23

In the next story, we see a woman who has compassion for a baby. Pharaoh's daughter came to the Nile River to bathe. She found a basket floating on the River in the tall grasses. When Pharaoh's daughter opened the basket, she saw a Hebrew baby. Pharaoh (her father) had commanded that all Hebrew male babies were to be drowned. Pharaoh's daughter had compassion for this baby. She didn't want him to die. She rescued the baby from the river and called him Moses.

Pharaoh's daughter showed that she cared for others. She demonstrated this by caring about a baby. This baby was not hers and he was not an Egyptian. In fact, Pharaoh's daughter went against her father's orders to help this baby.

Read Exodus 2: 5-10

Mary Magdalene was a follower of Jesus. She demonstrated that she cared about other people. Mary Magdalene was one of the women who ministered to Jesus. In Mark 15, Mary Magdalene is with some other women. They were watching as Jesus died on the cross. The scripture says that these women had taken care of Jesus.

Read Mark 15: 37-41

After Jesus died, Mary Magdalene was with the women who went to the tomb. Mary and the other women went there to put spices on Jesus' body. Mary Magdalene was also the first person Jesus appeared to after He rose from the tomb. Mary Magdalene was a follower of Jesus. Jesus had done a special miracle in Mary's life. He drove out the demons that controlled her. She showed her love and gratitude by caring for Jesus.

Read Mark 16: 1-3, 9

In the Gospel of Mark, there is another wonderful example of a woman who served others. Jesus taught about God and helped many people. One day, Jesus went to Simon Peter's home. Simon's mother-in-law was sick with a fever. Jesus touched her hand and the fever left her. The scripture then says that she began to serve Jesus and his followers. She didn't complain about being sick. She didn't say that she needed to rest. Instead, Simon's mother-in-law immediately began to serve those in her house. She probably made food for them and served them drinks.

Read Mark 1: 29-31

In 2 Kings, there is a story about a woman who was very kind. She offered a room and food to a prophet but didn't seek a reward. We do not know her name. The scripture calls her a Shunammite woman. The prophet Elisha went to the town of Shunem. One Shunammite woman asked Elisha to come to her home for a meal. Every time Elisha was in Shunem, he went to her house. She asked her husband to make a special room for Elisha. She knew that he was a holy man of God. One day, Elisha asked the Shunammite woman if he could do anything for her and her family. She said that she had all that she needed.

Read 2 Kings 4: 8-13

The Shunammite woman did not ask for anything from Elisha. But Elisha learned that she did not have a son. He told her that she would get pregnant and have a son. Even though she didn't ask, God blessed her for her kindness to Elisha. This is a wonderful story of a woman who took care of someone else's needs with no expectations of a reward.

Questions

1. What did Peninnah do that showed that she was not a caring person?
2. What did the mother of James and John ask Jesus? Why?

3. What did Pharaoh's daughter do to show that she cared about others?

4. What did Mary Magdalene do that showed that she cared for Jesus?

5. The last two stories were about women who served others. How did the women serve others?

For Discussion:

What are some ways that we can show that we care about our family?

How can we show that we care about people in need?

Give some examples for your life.

C. Industrious

Vocabulary:

physically: refers to our body

accomplish: finish

indicated: showed

accomplishments: what someone has done

unique: special

founded: to establish or begin something (a corporation/building)

differ: can be different

A virtuous woman is industrious. Proverbs 31 verses 15 and 27 tell us that the virtuous woman works hard in her home. She gets up early and is busy all day long. She is physically fit so that she can accomplish all the things she needs to do (verse 17). Proverbs 31 verse 18 shows that the virtuous woman sells what she makes and earns good money.

In the book of Acts, there is a story about a woman named Lydia. God had told Paul to go to Macedonia. He and his companions were visiting the city Phillipi. One Sabbath day, Paul and his friends went outside of the city to pray by the river. While they were there, Paul met some women who were at the river. Lydia was one of the women at the river. We know two things about Lydia. First, she was a businesswoman who sold purple cloth. Purple cloth was important in this society. It was worn on special occasions and also indicated wealth. Secondly, Lydia was a worshipper of God. This means that Lydia was a Gentile who practiced Jewish beliefs. She knew about God but had not heard about Jesus. Paul told her about Jesus and she became a believer.

Read Acts 16:11-15

Lydia was an industrious woman. She lived in a different city and traveled to Phillipi to sell her cloth. But Lydia also had time to worship God. God honored Lydia's worship by opening her heart to believe in Jesus.

The next story is a very short one. It is about a very industrious woman named Sheerah. This story is found in I Chronicles. Most of the information in these chapters consists of lists of people and their relationships. All that we know about this woman is found in one verse. But her accomplishments are amazing. Usually, when there are lists of

people who are related, the bible mentions the men only. If a woman is listed, there is something unique or important about her. Sheerah was the daughter of Ephraim who was one of Joseph's sons. In I Chronicles 7:24, the bible says that Sheerah built three cities!! The word "built" could mean physically built or it could mean founded the cities. In this scripture, it probably means that Sheerah was responsible for having these cities built. In fact, one of the cities was named after her.

Read I Chronicles 7:24

Sheerah was industrious. She was responsible for the building of three cities. To honor her, one of the cities was named after her.

A woman can be industrious as she works for the Lord. One woman who worked for the Lord was Phoebe. Paul wrote about her in his letter to the Roman Christians. Phoebe was going to Rome. Paul wanted the church there to welcome her. Paul told them that Phoebe had been a great help to him. In this letter, Paul also sends his greetings to other women who work hard for the Lord.

Read Romans 16: 1-2, 12

In the letter to the Philippians, Paul wrote about Euodia and Syntyche. These two women worked with Paul in his ministry. These women were having a disagreement. Paul asked the Christians in the Church of Philippi to help Euodia and Syntyche. He wanted these women to agree in the Lord.

Read Philippians 4: 2-3

A virtuous woman is industrious. The type of work that a woman does can differ. A woman can work in the home by taking care of her children or by having a home-based business. She may work outside the home. A woman can also work for the Lord in some kind of ministry. Regardless of what she does, a woman should be busy.

Questions

1. Based on Proverbs 31, what kinds of things does a woman do that shows that she is industrious?

2. What kind of job did Lydia have? Did she know about Jesus?

3. What did Sheerah do? What was so amazing about Sheerah's accomplishments?

4. What kind of work did Phoebe, Euodia, and Syntyche do?

For discussion:

How do you spend your time each day? Is it okay to relax? In what ways can we be industrious each day?

D. Wise

Vocabulary:

reinvests: to invest money again

cruelly: very badly

conflict: difficulty between people

come before: appear before

settle: stop the conflict by deciding the best outcome

disputes: conflict

midwives: women who help other women during childbirth

wander: go travel aimlessly (not direct)

provisions: to provide for

allotted: set aside

in opposition: to be against

shearing: to cut wool off sheep

imply: suggest

A virtuous woman is wise. She is wise in her choice of food. In Proverbs 31: 14, a virtuous woman brings food from far away. She searches for the best location to provide a variety of food for her family. Verse 16 tells us that a virtuous woman is wise in her purchase of land. She also reinvests her money wisely. A virtuous woman is wise in her speech. Proverbs 31: 26 says that a virtuous woman speaks wisely and teaches faithfully.

A virtuous woman uses wisdom as she works. An example of this can be seen in a story about Deborah. Deborah was a prophetess of the Lord. During this time, Israel was being ruled by Jabin, King of Canaan. King Jabin treated the people of Israel cruelly.

Deborah served as a judge over Israel. When the people of Israel had conflict, they would come before Deborah. She would settle the conflict. God told Deborah that Israel would go into battle against the army of Canaan. Deborah contacted Barak. God wanted him to be in command.

Read Judges 4: 4-7 (page 258)

Deborah was a wise woman. She trusted God to give her wisdom. Deborah used this wisdom to solve disputes between the people of Israel. She also wise in following God's command.

A virtuous woman chooses the wisdom of God, not man. In the next three stories, the women chose God's wisdom over authority and culture. In Exodus 1, Pharaoh King of Egypt was afraid of the Israelites. They were growing in numbers.

Shiphrah and Puah were two Hebrew midwives. Their job was to help Jewish women during childbirth. Pharaoh told them to kill the baby boys as they were being delivered. Shiphrah and Puah wanted to obey God. They did not kill the boy babies. When Pharaoh asked why they didn't kill the babies, the women replied very wisely. They said that the Hebrew women were very strong and delivered their babies too quickly. God rewarded Shiphrah and Puah with families of their own.

Read Exodus 1: 15-21 (page 55)

The next story is about the daughters of Zelophehad. The people of Israel were about to enter the promised land – the land of Canaan. The people escaped from Egypt. But because of sin and disobedience, God made them wander in the desert for 40 years. During this time, the generation of Israelites that sinned died. Now, the next generation was ready to go into the land that God had promised.

It was Jewish tradition that only male children could inherit wealth and property from their parents. But Zelophehad did not have any male children. His daughters bravely approached Moses. They said, "Our father died in the desert. He was not one of the men who turned against God. But our father had no sons. Should his name disappear? Give us property with our father's relatives."

Read Numbers 27:1-4 (page 171)

Moses brought this problem before God. The Lord said, "Zelophehad's daughters are correct. They should have property. Give them a share of their relatives property and give Zelophehad's property to them." The Lord made provisions for families with no sons and families without children.

Read Numbers 27: 5-11

These daughters were wise in their thinking. The property allotted to their father would have been lost to them and to all the relatives in their group. God honored their wisdom and bravery. It was very difficult for the daughters to go against their culture.

The last story is about Abigail. The bible tells us that she was a wise and beautiful woman. Her wisdom (and God's) put her in opposition with her husband. Abigail was married to a man named Nabal. Nabal was a very ill-tempered and cruel man. At this time, King Saul was at the end of his rule over Israel. He was in conflict with David, the future King. Saul wanted to kill David. To get away from Saul, David was traveling with his army.

David and his army were in Carmel where Nabal lived. Nabal's shepherds were sharing their fields with David's army. In fact, David's army was protecting Nabal's flocks and property. Later, David heard that Nabal was shearing his sheep. David sent word to Nabal to ask for hospitality.

Read I Samuel 25: 2-9 (page 312)

Nabal said, "Who is this David? Why should I give my food to strangers?" In addition, Nabal made fun of David and his army. When David heard what Nabal said, he was very angry. He gathered his army and went to attack Nabal. One of Nabal's servants went to Abigail. He told Abigail what had happened. The servant asked for Abigail's help. He knew that he couldn't talk to Nabal. As the passage says, "He's such an evil man that no one can talk to him".

Read I Samuel 25: 10-17

Immediately, Abigail went into action. She gathered bread, wine, sheep, grain, cakes, and figs. Abigail loaded all of this food on donkeys. She sent the food on ahead of her and then followed on a donkey. Abigail didn't tell her husband what she had done.

Read I Samuel 25: 18-19

David was planning to destroy Nabal, his family, and servants. Abigail rode up to David. She bowed down before David. Abigail said that

it was her fault that she didn't get the message from David's servants. She told David not to pay attention to her husband. Abigail wisely counseled David to reconsider killing Nabal and his men. She did this in a very clever way to imply that David had already decided this.

Read I Samuel 25: 20-28

A virtuous woman is wise. But her wisdom comes from God. It may conflict with the world's view of wisdom. Deborah was able to make wise decisions when handling disputes. Shiphrah and Puah made a godly decision to save Hebrew baby boys from death. The women could have been put to death because of what they did. Zelophehad's daughters showed wisdom in their decision to ask for their inheritance. Because of this, God made provisions for them and for other special situations. Abigail used God's wisdom to keep David from killing Nabal and his men.

Questions

1. Based on Proverbs 31, what are the three ways the virtuous woman showed wisdom?
2. How did Deborah show that she was wise?
3. How did Shiphrah and Puah save the Hebrew babies from death?

4. What did Zelophehad's daughters do that was wise?

5. Abigail was able to keep David from killing Nabal. What did she do that was wise?

For discussion:

How do we get wisdom? Who is the source of our wisdom? Talk about some wise choices that you have made.

E. Uses talents

Vocabulary:

flax: fibers from the stem of a flax plant

The virtuous woman uses her talents. God has given each of us talents and abilities. Our talents are natural things that we enjoy doing and that we do well. In Proverbs 31 verse 13, the virtuous woman chooses her wool and flax. This means that she examines and chooses the best material for her crafts. Verse 13 also says that the virtuous woman loves to work with her hands. When we use the talents that God gives us, we really begin to love what we are doing.

Read Proverbs 31:13 (page 706)

In Proverbs 31 verse 22, the virtuous woman uses her talents to make things for her home. The verse also says that she is dressed in fine linen. The clothing that she makes for her family and herself is high quality. The bible says that we are to “do everything as to the Lord”. This means that when we use our talents, we must use them as if we are making or doing things for God.

Read Proverbs 31: 22

The virtuous woman in Proverbs 31 uses her talents to make clothing and belts. She then sells what she makes as a source of income. Sometimes God gives us talents that we can use to provide an income. But the types of talents and abilities that God gives us are different for each person.

Read Proverbs 31: 24

Questions

1. A virtuous woman uses her talents. What are talents?

2. When we use the talents that God gives us, how do we feel?

3. What does it mean to “do everything as to the Lord”?

Discussion: What talent or talents has God given you? Share your experiences with us.

F. Honorable

Vocabulary:

honorable: having strong moral and ethical principles

conscious: to be aware or intentional about something

Philistines: people who occupied the Southern coast of Canaan

millstone: big wheels of stone used to grind wheat

A virtuous woman is honorable. In Proverbs 31 verse 25, the virtuous woman puts on strength and honor as if they were clothes. Every day, we choose what to wear. It is something that we think about. It is the same with strength and honor. Each day we must pray for God's strength. We must make conscious decisions to be honorable each day.

In Judges 16, we find a woman who was not honorable. Her name was Delilah and she was a Philistine. At this time, the people of Israel were being ruled by the Philistines. God had a plan to deliver Israel from the Philistines. God gifted a man named Samson with great strength. Unfortunately, Samson did not always make the best choices in women. He fell in love with Delilah. The leaders of the Philistines asked Delilah to find the secret of Samson's strength. They offered to pay her money to get the secret. Delilah asked Samson many times to tell the secret of his strength. Finally, Samson told her and the Philistines captured him.

Read Judges 16: 4-22 (page 273)

In Judges 9, there is a woman who showed that she was honorable. In this story, Abimelech was the son of Gideon who was a judge. After Gideon died, Abimelech wanted to be king of Shechem. To be king, Abimelech killed all of his brothers except Jotham.

Read Judges 9: 1-5

Abimelech ruled over Israel for 3 years. God caused the people to turn against Abimelech. God made the people of Israel turned against Abimelech because he had killed his brothers. The people didn't want to be ruled by Abimelech any more.

Read Judges 9: 22-28

Abimelech gathered his army and began to fight against the people of Shechem. He killed 1000 men and women. Then he went on to Thebez to attack and capture it. As Abimelech approached the tower, a woman dropped a millstone onto his head. He didn't want people to know that a woman killed him so he asked his servant to kill him. Although her actions seem harsh, the woman followed God's plan when she dropped the millstone.

Read Judges 9: 49-57

Joshua 2 tells a story about an honorable woman named Rahab. Rahab was not what we think of as an honorable woman. She was a prostitute who lived in Jericho. Jericho was a city in the land of Canaan. This was the land that God was giving to the people of Israel for their home. Joshua was leading the people of Israel into Canaan. He sent two spies into Jericho to look at the land. The spies went to Jericho and stayed at the home of Rahab. The king of Jericho heard about the spies. He knew that they were at Rahab's home. He commanded Rahab to turn over the spies. Rahab said, "They were here but they have left. You should go after them."

Read Joshua 2: 1-5

In fact, the spies were still in Rahab's house. She had hidden them on the roof under some flax. The king's men went to look for the spies. Afterwards, Rahab went to talk with the spies. She told them, "I know that God has given you this land. Everyone here is afraid of you. We know that your God is strong. We heard about what He did in Egypt and also to the Amorite kings." She said, "Your God is the God who rules both heaven and earth. Now, promise me that you will take care of my family and me. The spies said that they promised. They told Rahab not to tell anyone what the Israelites were doing. Rahab did exactly what the spies told her to do. She and her family were saved.

Read Joshua 2: 6-16

The virtuous woman is honorable. She has high moral standards. Delilah was not an honorable woman. She gave up Samson for money. The woman with the millstone was honorable and courageous. Rahab did not have an honorable life style but her action toward the spies was honorable. Rahab was honorable to God.

Questions

1. What did Delilah do that shows that she was not an honorable woman?
2. Who was Abimelech and what did he do?
3. What did the woman do to Abimelech? Why was this honorable?
4. Who was Rahab? What did she do to help the spies?

Discussion: How can we show that we are honorable? How can we “put on” honor every day?

G. Supportive

Vocabulary:

affirming: to give affirmation (giving a positive response)

inference: conclusion based on evidence or reasoning

indicate: show

A virtuous woman is supportive. Proverbs 31: 11 says that she provides for her husband by giving him all the important things that he needs. In addition, she brings him good, not harm (verse 12). We can bring our husbands and family good by being positive. We can be encouraging in our words and actions. By being positive and affirming, we give our husbands confidence. In Proverbs 31:23, it says that her husband is respected. This respect may come from the confidence we give.

Proverbs 31: 11,12,23 (page 706)

The first example of a supportive woman is a little unusual. In Genesis 2, we learn what God intended us to be. Eve was made to be a helper. Our purpose as women and wives is to be a helper. As a helper, we are to support, aid, and work with our husbands.

Read Genesis 2:18-25 (page 2-3)

Our second example is Noah's wife. We have no direct information about her but we can make some inferences. Noah was a godly man. When God asked him to build an ark, he was obedient and did everything God commanded. Although we are not specifically told this, we can assume that his wife supported him in this task. The references below indicate that she was there with Noah. There is no indication that she disagreed with Noah but rather that she followed his lead.

Read Genesis 6:18; 7:1,7, 13-16; 8:15-19

In I Samuel 19, there is a story about a supportive wife. However, as she supports her husband, she must oppose her father. Michal was the daughter of King Saul. She was in love with David and became his wife. King Saul planned this as a trick to get David. Saul was very jealous of David's success in battle. Saul became so angry and jealous that he wanted to kill David.

Saul sent some men to spy on David. He was planning to kill David the next morning. However, Michal found out what her father was planning. She warned David and helped him escape during the night. After David left, Michal placed a statue on David's bed. She put clothes over the statue and added some goat hair. Saul sent some men to get David. When they arrived, Michal said that David was sick. Saul wanted David whether he was sick or not. So the men went into David's bedroom. They found the statue. Saul asked his daughter (Michal) why she had tricked Saul. She said that David forced her to help him.

Read I Samuel 19: 11-17

God designed women to be supportive of their husbands. In Genesis, we see that we are to be helpers. Noah's wife did not complain when her husband began to build an ark. It appears that she simply trusted Noah to do what God commanded. Michal showed that she was a supportive wife. She helped David when her own father tried to kill him.

Questions

1. How can we bring our husbands "good"?
2. What is God's purpose for us?
3. What can we infer about Noah's wife?
4. Who was Michal?
5. Why did Saul want to kill David?

6. How did Michal show her support for David?

Discussion:

How can we show our husbands support? Make a list of supportive characteristics and a list of characteristics that are not supportive.

H. Honors God

Vocabulary:

charm: the power to delight and attract people

fade: will become less

plead: to beg

crumbs: little pieces of bread

descendent: children, grandchildren, etc.

rebuked: scolded

The virtuous woman honors God. She shows respect for God in all she says and does. Proverbs 31:30 says that charm may not be real and beauty may fade. But a woman who respects and honors God will be praised.

A wonderful example of a woman who respected and honored God can be found in Matthew 15. This is a story about a Canaanite woman. A Canaanite woman came to Jesus. Her daughter was being controlled by a demon. At first, Jesus did not respond to her. When he did, Jesus said that he had only come for Jewish people. The Canaanite woman continued to plead with Jesus to help her daughter. Jesus responded by saying that you cannot take bread from the children and give it to dogs. The Canaanite woman said that even the dogs get to eat crumbs from the floor of their master's table. Jesus said, "Woman, you have great faith. Your daughter will be healed".

Read Matthew 15: 21-28

There is another story of a woman who honored God in Mark chapter 5. Jesus was walking through a crowd. A woman was in the crowd who was very sick. She had been suffering with a bleeding problem for 12 years. This woman didn't want to bother Jesus. She knew that all she had to do was to touch Jesus' clothing. The woman believed in Jesus' healing power and knew that only Jesus could help her. After the woman touched Jesus, Jesus knew what had happened. He looked for the woman. When he located her, he said, "Your faith has healed you."

Read Mark 5: 24-34

Elizabeth was a godly woman who worshiped God faithfully. She and her husband Zechariah obeyed God's commandments. Zechariah was a priest. It was his turn to go into the temple. While Zechariah was in the temple, an angel of the Lord appeared to him. The angel said, "Don't be afraid. God has heard your prayers. Your wife will become pregnant and bear a son and he will be called John. John will be a very important man for God. He will bring many people to God and will prepare the way for the Lord." When Elizabeth became pregnant, she gave honor to God. She knew that God made it possible for her to have a son.

Read Luke 1: 5-17, 23-25

Another very special woman who honored God was Mary, the mother of Jesus. Mary was a descendent of king David. When Mary was a young woman, God sent an angel to her. The angel said, "Don't be afraid. You have found favor with God. You will become pregnant and have a son. You will call him Jesus and He will be the Son of God." Mary said, "How can this be? I'm a virgin." The angel said, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you and God's power will cover you. Your relative Elizabeth is old but she is going to have a child. With God, nothing is impossible." Mary said, "I serve the Lord." In a prayer, Mary said, "My soul glorifies the Lord. My spirit delights in God my Savior."

Read Luke 1: 26-38, 46-47

The last story is about a woman who poured perfume on Jesus. It was nearing the time of Jesus' death. This woman wanted to honor Jesus. Jesus was staying at the home of Simon. A woman entered the house and began to pour perfume on the head of Jesus. The disciples rebuked her for wasting money. This type of perfume was very expensive. The disciples said that this money could have been used to feed the poor. But Jesus said what she did was a beautiful act. Jesus knew that He would die soon. This dear woman was preparing Jesus for His burial. Jesus praised her for what she did.

Read Matthew 26: 6-13

A virtuous woman has respect for and honors God. The Canaanite woman had such respect and honor that she believed only Jesus could heal her daughter. The woman with the blood disease had such respect and faith

that she only needed to touch Jesus' garment. Elizabeth honored God for giving her a son. Mary, the mother of Jesus, was a willing servant. She honored God for the privilege of being the mother of the Son of God. The woman with the perfume honored God as she prepared Jesus for His burial.

Questions

1. What does Proverbs say about charm and beauty?
2. Why didn't Jesus respond to the Canaanite woman?
3. What did the Canaanite woman mean about the "crumbs"? How did she show faith?
4. What did the woman with the blood problem do that showed her faith?
5. How did Elizabeth honor God?

6. How did Mary show that she honored God?

7. Why did the woman pour perfume on Jesus' head?