

A Studybook for



The Mature Woman

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May**

**BECOMING A
WOMAN OF
IMPACT**

OUTLINE

PART I a girl Chaos becomes Order	PART II a woman Order is Established	PART III a matriarch Maturity is Developed
 <p>LESSON ONE a girl learns responsibility</p> <p>LESSON TWO a girl learns discernment</p> <p>LESSON THREE a girl learns self-control</p> <p>LESSON FOUR a girl learns submission</p>	 <p>LESSON FIVE a woman submits to her husband</p>  <p>LESSON SIX a woman mothers her children</p> <p>LESSON SEVEN a woman stops mothering her children</p>  <p>LESSON EIGHT a woman serves her family</p>	 <p>LESSON NINE a matriarch develops her love for God</p> <p>LESSON TEN a matriarch develops the discipleship of her extended family</p> <p>LESSON ELEVEN a matriarch develops creative leadership</p> <p>LESSON TWELVE a matriarch develops a heart for giving</p>

INTRODUCTION

Prior to learning the twelve lessons of a female's development, it is essential that we understand our purpose revealed through creation.

in His image

When God created humans, He made them superior to everything else created because He made them in His own image. When fully captured, that image is represented in man as male and female (Genesis 1:27); that is, the image of God is equally present in both males and females.

order of creation

In Genesis 2:20-25 we find the detailed account of the creation of woman. Two points can be made with regard to Genesis 2: (1) the man was created prior to woman and (2) the man named the woman. Although his name for her was much like his own, having much respect for her as a fellow heir in the image of God, his naming her is a sign of his headship over her.

female's first sin

The nature of the male/female relationship became more detailed after sin destroyed the hierarchical structure which God intended to exist at creation. For the woman, Genesis 3:16 reveals there will be pain associated with the bearing of children and that "your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you." The precise reason the woman needs the man to rule over her can be found in the word "desire". The word "desire" (Hebrew: *teshuqa*) used in Genesis 3 is the same word used in Genesis 4:7 where Cain is told that his sin's *desire is for you but you must master it*. In other words, "desire" in Genesis 3 means to control or be a master over your husband. Therefore, as a result of the female's sin, she will tend to reject the leadership God established for her in the garden. In her rebellion, she will desire to rule over her husband, yet God will not allow it, for it is now God's decision that the man should rule over the woman. *The development of the female will be presented here in a manner consistent with and in full agreement with the biblically designated role for females in relation to men; that being female submission to male headship.*

THE GOAL OF A FEMALE

What is a mature woman? For that matter, what is a woman? Society today is filled with women, or perhaps I should say 'girls,' who struggle to achieve positions, fight for recognition, and passionately pursue higher status. Whether in the home or climbing the corporate ladder, this relentless drive leaves them not only unsatisfied but creates a destructive path which others eagerly follow.

A woman is an increasingly hard thing to find. We live at a time when mothers without careers are seen as unmotivated or even lazy; females with careers make it their priority to constantly fight the stereotype, "a woman's place is in the home." As the families are broken, maturity is forgotten because the recently divorced mother must now look for a man who will be more sensitive to her needs and more supportive of her career while retrieving her children from drowning in their rebellion.

WAKE UP LADIES! Is this how God created women to live?

definitions

A *girl* is a female who is emotionally **chaotic**; not yet having personally established order for her life. A female of any age might be a girl in her development. There is an abundance of 40, 50, even 80-year-old girls.

A *woman* is a female who has taken on the responsibility for establishing **order** for herself and for her immediate family. [We will not use the word "woman" in the general sense of an adult female but in the specific stage described here.]

A *matriarch* is a female who has taken on the responsibility for establishing **maturity** for herself and the discipleship of her extended family. [We will not be using the word "maturity" in the general sense of "good" but in the technical sense of what a matriarch becomes.]

A matriarch is not a retired grandmother who spends her days clipping coupons, watching soaps, and criticizing her children for never coming to see her. A matriarch is not a female who complains about the appearance of her grandchildren, focuses on how little she has, how things were different

when she was growing up, or whose goal of the week is to get her regular seat in church on Sunday morning.

A matriarch is a woman who is working at something vital, plugged into her culture, a model of leadership to her grandchildren, keenly aware of life's changes, inventive, alert, and a servant to her husband, children, grandchildren, and the extended family around her as she grows in the wisdom and knowledge of the Lord.

The Bible tells us of many women who were matriarchs: Deborah, Naomi, the Shunamite woman, Anna, Priscilla, and many others.

If the goal of every female is to become a matriarch (as well it should be), then there is no better way to achieve this than by studying the lives of these and other biblical women who have accepted the challenge of their creation and embraced their role as a blessing bringing honor to themselves, their family, and most importantly to God.

decisions

The matriarchy, as crucial as it is, must be a girl's long-term goal, not her first one. Her first goal should be to become a woman. I have emphasized the matriarch because it is the desire to be a matriarch that motivates a girl to become a woman.

There are three major stages in the development of a female: (1) girl, (2) woman, and (3) matriarch. This means there are two major transitions she must make if she is to fulfill her desire to become mature. As a girl, she must decide to be a woman, and as a woman, she must decide to be matriarch. Once a girl has decided to become a woman there are two decisions available to her as a woman: (1) she must decide to be a wife and (2) she must decide to be a mother.* But a mother must first be a wife and a wife must first be a woman.

**This studybook deals with females becoming matriarchs. This is a specific form of leadership which requires 'wif-ing' and 'mothering.' A single woman may certainly qualify as a mature spiritual leader, but that form of leadership is not addressed here.*

THE GOAL OF A FEMALE

It is very hard to become a wife (spiritually speaking) if I have not become a woman. It is very hard to be a mother (spiritually speaking) if I have not first become a wife, and so forth. So a "single parent" is usually a contradiction in terms. The Bible knows of no such designation. The basis of parenting for a woman is being a wife, not singleness. Can single-parenting be done? Of course it *can* be done, but only with great difficulty and a limited likelihood of success. Since female development usually follows this pattern, failure at any level requires development at the next lower level. What a woman must do to help her marriage is to ask herself, "What is lacking in me as a woman?" It will do little good to deal with her marriage relationship with her husband until she is a woman (in other words, no longer a "girl"). In the same way, mothers who have trouble with their children have to go back and work on their marriage, and matriarch problems reflect the need to ask, "How can I be a better mother?"

Each stage of development requires a decision be made to take on the next life-role. If this decision is not made, the female will physically progress to the place where she looks like she ought to be a woman or matriarch, but actually she will be spiritually back where she made her last decision. If she never made any decisions, then she is in all spiritual reality still a girl.

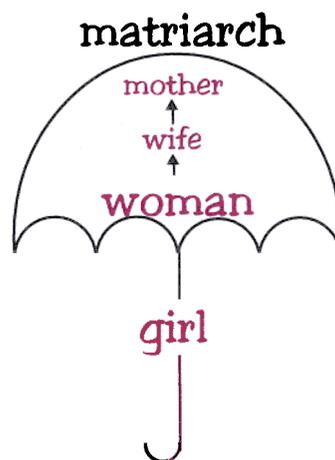
development

A girl is very different from a woman, and a woman is very different from a matriarch. The three have different ways of looking at life. Their jobs are different. Because of this, the transition from a girl to a woman is very different than from a woman to a matriarch.

Several principles must be considered as we progress:

#1: *It is always good to move toward being a matriarch, and it is never good to regress back toward being a girl.* It is not bad for a girl to act like a girl. However, it is bad to remain a girl or revert back to being a girl when it is time to move on to being a woman. Movement from left to right is always good, whereas movement from right to left is always bad.

chaos —→ order —→ maturity



#2: *It is possible for a girl to become a woman and it is possible for a woman to become a matriarch, but it is not possible for a girl to become a matriarch.* All movement toward matriarchy is good, but it must be done one phase at a time. The more womanly one is, the more likely she is to become a matriarch.

#3: *A girl is in chaos, a woman establishes order, and a matriarch pursues maturity.* What makes a girl a girl is that she is in emotional chaos. She has not ordered her life. Her life is not yet headed in a direction. She lacks discipline to accomplish tasks. She has not taken significant ownership of values or virtues. And she has not voluntarily chosen to place herself in submission to her father. **She is chaotic.**

A woman has pursued order. She has established herself as a responsible adult. She has learned to discern and understand submission. She has disciplined herself to follow God. When she marries, she chooses to obey her husband and mother her children. **She is orderly.**

A matriarch is not disorderly (disorder is chaos), but she is no longer motivated by order. A matriarch is expanding beyond order, creating new avenues for life and ministry, and challenging the horizons of her extended family. **She is mature.**

#4: *We all have girlish, womanly, and matriarchal tendencies.* Girls will usually act like girls. Unfortunately, it is also true that in some areas of their lives, women will act like girls too. Although all females can be either a girl, or a woman, or a matriarch, we are not 100 percent any one of them. In some areas we are still girls, in other areas we are women, and in some things we are or are becoming matriarchs.

LESSON #1

A GIRL LEARNS RESPONSIBILITY

It is essential for a girl, whose priority is to become a woman, to learn responsibility. The very thing which keeps a girl in chaos is she does not take ownership of tasks. We will, therefore, define responsibility as *willfully adopting and completing tasks for the purpose of serving others*.

It is important to distinguish between responsibility and work. Work is an *activity in which one exerts strength of faculties to do or perform something* (“Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary,” page 1358). Work is part of being responsible. But work is simply a goal directed activity which requires energy—intellectual, emotional, physical, or mental. Responsibility, however, is more than the completion of a task. It is the attitude of the heart.

Responsibility involves both obedience and service. As a girl moves from chaos to order, she must learn responsibility by obeying her parents and serving others.

obedience

Chaos exists by refusing to complete a task. Order is achieved through obedience.

Every young girl is told by her parents to complete particular tasks. The key to learning responsibility is completing the task parents assign. It doesn’t matter if she doesn’t want to do it, or doesn’t feel like doing it. She was given a task and told to obey. It is completing the assigned task which is the first step in learning responsibility. To disobey or rebel from parents’ instructions would keep her from becoming a woman, that is, she would remain in chaos.

Read 1 Samuel 9:11-13. Here two girls, while obeying their family, served God by informing Saul and his companion where Samuel could be found. The young girls did not simply tell Saul what direction to go to find Samuel, they gave him detailed instructions of exactly where Samuel was located and why he would find him there. Their willingness to draw water to meet the needs of their family is consistent with their willingness to direct Saul.

The act of simply drawing water is significant because it allowed them to be in a position to serve God. Because of obedience, they were able to contribute to the anointing of Israel’s first king.

Obedience not only gives you an opportunity to please your family, with it you also participate in what God is doing, an opportunity you would not have without being responsible by acting in obedience to the requests of your parents.

service

Chaos exists when tasks are completed exclusively for your own purposes. Order exists when tasks are willfully adopted and completed for the purpose of serving others.

A girl will walk past a sink full of dirty dishes, ignore a floor which needs vacuuming, or avoid laundry needing to be washed. It’s not that she is being disobedient because no one asked her to do those jobs. It is, however, not being responsible to the extent in which she would need to be in order to leave chaos behind. Responsibility, while requiring obedience, is not limited to obedience. It demands service. Rather than avoiding tasks we have not been told to complete, women eagerly complete them, not because it is fun or easy, but because serving others is being responsible.

In Genesis 24:15-28 a young girl named Rebekah exhibits responsibility by meeting the needs of a stranger. Not only did she willfully adopt the task of bringing water to serve this man, she offered water to his 10 thirsty camels. This is no easy job since camels are capable of water losses up to 25% of their body weight, and they can weigh up to 1500 pounds (1993, “Grolier Encyclopedia”, Electronic Publishing). Serving is rarely easy, but it is necessary if responsibility is to be achieved. Evidence of Rebekah’s responsibility continues as she responds eagerly and positively to the stranger’s request for food and lodging. Responsibility not only gives us a way to please God, it also gives us the opportunity to become partners with God by putting His truth to practice in our lives, an opportunity we will not have unless we are willing to adopt and complete tasks for the purpose of serving others.

A GIRL LEARNS RESPONSIBILITY



1. What is the definition of responsibility?
2. Why is it important to distinguish between responsibility and work?

obedience

3. What is the key to learning responsibility?
4. What are the benefits to obedience?

service

5. Define order?
6. Why should a girl learn to serve?
7. What is the difference between obedience and service?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- *How would you encourage a girl to be obedient? How would you encourage a girl to serve?*
- *Do you think God wants us to obey, even if we obey with a bad attitude?*
- *Why would a girl want to go beyond obedience to serving others?*
- *Read Genesis 24:15-28. Compare Rebekah's responsibility with that of young girls today. What would it take for girls to understand responsibility and become that responsible?*

LESSON #2

A GIRL LEARNS DISCERNMENT

Discernment has typically been referred to as a personality trait, that is, something an individual is born with. Discernment, however, is not a characteristic limited to those who exhibit a certain personality, it can and must be learned by all girls who want to become women. Psalms 119:66 says, *Teach me good discernment and knowledge, For I believe in Thy commandments.* Learning discernment involves having understanding, wisdom, and prudence. Understanding is acquiring and assimilating a knowledge of God. Wisdom is the use of knowledge in a godly way. Prudence is governing and disciplining by applying wisdom and understanding.

understanding

God commands that you *Incline your heart to understanding; For if you cry for discernment, lift your voice for understanding; if you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasures; then you will discern the fear of the Lord, and discover the knowledge of God. For the Lord gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding* (Proverbs 2:4-6).

It is important that a girl acquire a knowledge of God if she is to have the understanding necessary to learn discernment. The only way to know who God is, is to know what He does through the study of His Word. 2 Peter 3:18 tells us to, *...grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.* Taking ownership of God's Word by establishing a personal study of the Bible will provide the order needed for a girl to become a woman. *Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you...* (Colossians 3:16). Mary, the sister of Martha, provides a good example of understanding. While Martha was making preparations, Mary was attentive to the words of Christ. Christ responded to Martha saying, *but only one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her* (Luke 10:42).

wisdom

To learn discernment, your goal must be *to know wisdom and instruction... to receive instruction in wise behavior... knowledge and discretion* (Proverbs 1:2). Where understanding is acquiring a knowledge of God, wisdom is the use of that knowledge in a morally successful way. When David was being pursued

by Absalom, a maidservant gave valuable information to David's friend Jonathan who told David about the army waiting to destroy him (2 Samuel 17:16-17). While you may not experience the exact circumstances that this young girl did, being in the midst of a war, you can respond with wisdom in whatever circumstances you might face. The maidservant knew David was God's anointed king, whereas Absalom was not. She would not have been able to act wisely if she did not already have an understanding of what God was like. Knowing God's Word enabled her to know godliness and respond to what she knew.

The same is true of Rahab the harlot who saved the Israelite spies by hiding them from the authorities. She knew the God of Israel would defeat Jericho and acted wisely based on what she knew (Joshua 2:1-24; 6:1-27).

prudence

O naive ones, discern prudence... (Proverbs 8:5). Proverbs encourages you to not be naive but rather to discern prudence or to discipline yourself by the use of sound judgement. One young girl who exhibited prudence was named Miriam. When her mother bore a son, she was forced to hide him because Pharaoh commanded all baby boys be killed. When she could no longer hide him she placed him in a basket and floated him down the Nile. When Pharaoh's daughter discovered the baby, it was Miriam who suggested finding a Hebrew nurse for the boy, reuniting the baby with his mother (Exodus 2:7-8). That child was Moses and because Miriam used sound judgement she was able to contribute to the care of the man God used to free the nation of Israel from slavery under Pharaoh.

Mary of Bethany also exhibited prudence when she anointed Christ with costly perfume despite the comments of those gathered who did not have wisdom and understanding. Because of her prudence Christ said of Mary, *wherever the gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be spoken in memory of her* (Mark 14:9). Prudence is a valuable part of learning discernment. As Miriam and Mary demonstrated, practicing prudence not only contributes to a girl becoming a woman, it also contributes to the work God is doing on earth.

A GIRL LEARNS DISCERNMENT



PART I

a girl

Chaos becomes Order



PART II

a woman

Order is Established



PART III

a matriarch

Maturity is Developed

1. Define the following words.

- Understanding:
- Wisdom:
- Prudence:

understanding

2. How can a girl know God?

3. What three things are associated with Mary's choice to be attentive to the words of Christ (Luke 10:42)?

wisdom

4. What gave the maidservant the wisdom to inform Jonathan?

prudence

5. What attribute describes girls who do not exercise prudence (Proverbs 8:5)?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- *A lack of discernment in girls exists because one of the three aspects of discernment is missing. Which part of discernment: understanding, wisdom, or prudence is lacking in most girls today?*
- *Identify area's in your own life where you have exhibited these character qualities and discuss how they have contributed to your spiritual growth.*
- *Why do you think many women are challenged in this area? When is it something girls should be dealing with?*

Would you say the majority of girls are more concerned with being a Mary or a Martha?

LESSON #3

A GIRL LEARNS SELF-CONTROL

This is a crucial stage in the spiritual development of a female. It will provide the evidence of whether a girl is able to move on to become a woman or whether she will remain a girl. Until a girl can learn self-control, there can and will be no growth. From lesson #2 we learned what it meant to recognize sin and discern righteousness. Yet, if self-control does not exist, the skill of discernment is useless.

moral weakness

2 Timothy 2:22 says, *Now flee from youthful lusts, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.* We can learn from Paul's warning to Timothy. We all have moral weaknesses. There are certain areas where we are more likely to sin than in others. And these areas usually become apparent in our youth, while we are still girls. To learn self-control we must not only recognize those areas but we must flee from them. Be in control of your lusts. Don't let sin gain control, because if it does, it will reign. In our running from sin, we shouldn't just run without direction and purpose. We should pursue other things rather than our lusts. Paul makes a great suggestion, *pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace*, that is, purity of heart, a result of self-control.

To learn self-control it is helpful for a girl to establish a moral boundary. Compare righteousness to a yard in which it is safe to play. Building a fence surrounding the yard provides the boundary. Self-control is the ability to stay within the limits of the yard, that is, to not climb over the fence. Establishing a moral boundary identifies specific areas where self-control is needed and puts up a fence before we're even in the situation where we have to contemplate sin. By building a fence, it is harder to sin because we cannot just walk out into the street from the yard, we have to climb the fence to get there. The recognition of harm and the response of putting up a fence helps us to use self-control when it is needed most.

Someone who recognized she needed a fence and responded to that need was the Shunammite, Solomon's girlfriend. She had established a boundary with reference to her own moral purity. *...I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, that you not arouse or awaken my love until she pleases* (Song of Solomon 2:7 & 3:5). Twice she makes this plea to the other single girls to not encourage her to do anything improper with her fiance.

Two daughters who did not recognize the need for a fence and therefore established no moral boundary, are the daughters of Lot. According to Genesis 19, after fleeing the city of Sodom as the Lord rained down fire and brimstone, they stayed with their father in the mountains in a cave. Fearing they would die childless, the older sister encouraged the younger sister that they should attempt to conceive by their father, claiming, *there is not a man {left} on earth.* Clearly, the two daughters of Lot had no self-control for they established no moral boundary to keep them in any way from committing this sin. Their lack of self-control was most likely a result of the environment in which they lived in Sodom. Yet this does not excuse their behavior, and it is all the more reason why they should have established moral boundaries.

moral excellence

Being able to stay within the limits of our own moral boundaries allows us to be able to pursue moral excellence, which is not possible without self-control. And having accomplished self-control, we have the ability to be productive in the true knowledge of Christ, an ability we would not have without self-control. Consider Peter's words on the subject.

For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become partakers of {the} divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in {your} moral excellence, knowledge; and in {your} knowledge, self-control, and in {your} self-control, perseverance, and in {your} perseverance, godliness; and in {your} godliness, brotherly kindness, and in {your} brotherly kindness, love. For if these {qualities} are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these {qualities} is blind {or} short-sighted, having forgotten {his} purification from his former sins (2 Peter 1:4-9).

Finally, remember that *the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit* (Galatians 5:22-25).

A GIRL LEARNS SELF-CONTROL



moral weakness

1. What will happen if sin gains control in our lives?
2. What is the benefit of establishing a moral boundary?

moral excellence

3. What is the benefit of staying within the limits of our own moral boundaries?
4. List the qualities Paul gives with reference to moral excellence?
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5. Why is it important that we have these qualities and that they be increasing?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- Explain this statement, “if self-control does not exist, the skill of discernment is useless.
- Why do you think both examples of self-control deal with the issue of sexual-immorality?
- What are some practical ways to build a moral boundary?
- What does it mean to “crucify the flesh” as Galatians 5:22-25 refers to?
- Do you agree that the difference between a girl who exhibits moral weakness and a girl who exhibits moral excellence is the degree to which they have self-control?

LESSON #4

A GIRL LEARNS SUBMISSION

Submission is probably the most debated issue among men and women when studying the subject of the role of women. The specific aspect of submission which most women (and men, occasionally, as well) have trouble with is in relation to their husbands. That particular application of submission will be dealt with in detail in Lesson 5: *A Woman Submits to Her Husband*. In this lesson we will discuss other ways in which the Bible commands submission and how understanding submission will help prepare us for the command to submit to our husbands.

All believers are commanded to submit throughout their lives; and all females are commanded to submit to a male throughout their lives. The word translated 'submit' is the Greek word *hupotasso*, meaning "to place or rank under, to subject, to obey." Submission for a woman doesn't begin with marriage, it begins when she is born a female. At marriage, her submission is simply transferred from her father to her husband. But there is never a time when she is not in submission to a male.

submit to God

Both as a girl and a woman, we are commanded to submit to God (James 4:7). As a member of the church, we are commanded to submit to Christ (Ephesians 5:24). As recipients of discipline, we are commanded to submit to the Father (Hebrews. 12:9). Jephthah, the ninth judge of Israel, made a public vow to God in the midst of battle saying, *If Thou wilt indeed give the sons of Ammon into my hand, then it shall be that whatever comes out of the doors of my house to meet me when I return in peace from the sons of Ammon, it shall be the LORD'S, and I will offer it up as a burnt offering* (Judges 11:30-31). Tragically for Jephthah, his daughter, his only child, met him as he returned home. When he reveals to his daughter the promise he made to God, she responded, *My father, you have given your word to the LORD; do to me as you have said, since the LORD has avenged you of your enemies, the sons of Ammon* (Judges 11:36). Jephthah's daughter is one of the greatest examples of a young girl who understood submission and the necessity of submitting to God.

submit to government

In Romans 13:1 Paul commands, *...be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God* (see also 1 Peter 2:13-15 and Titus 3:1). [The Greek word for subjection, *hupеiko*, means to yield, to retire,

withdraw, submit.] Consider Abishag, a young virgin from the town of Shunem, who was taken from her home to Jerusalem to care for king David when he was old. Of Abishag it was said, *the girl was very beautiful, a young virgin, and she became the king's nurse and served him...* (1 Kings 1:1-3). When called into service for her government, Abishag submitted.

submit to leaders

We are commanded to obey our leaders (Hebrews 13:17) and to submit to men who have *devoted themselves for ministry to the saints* as well as to *everyone who helps in the work and labors* (1 Corinthians 16:15-16). This does not mean that those who are in ministry have authority over our life as the Bible does. When men ask us to submit to a command they give which cannot be found in the Bible, we are not required to obey. And if they give a command which is in direct contradiction to the Bible, then we should not submit.

submit to parents

As a child, a girl is commanded to submit to her parents and specifically to the discipline of her father since he is the head of the family (Ephesians 6:1-4, Colossians 3:20). [The Greek word for obey is *hupakouo* meaning 'to listen and attend to.' The word for obey and the word for submit both come from the root *hupo* meaning 'under']. Consider Esther who became a daughter to her cousin Mordecai after the death of her parents. She could have easily rejected his authority over her as her father, especially after she entered the king's palace, yet she repeatedly obeyed him. *Esther had not yet made known her kindred or her people, even as Mordecai had commanded her, for Esther did what Mordecai told her as she had done when under his care* (Esther 2:20). Later, when Mordecai revealed to Esther the plot against the Jews, he told her to *go in to the king to implore his favor and to plead with him for her people* (Esther 4:8). But Esther replied to Mordecai that according to the law she could be put to death for making a request of the king if he had not summoned her. Still, Mordecai told Esther these powerful words, *Do not imagine that you in the king's palace can escape any more than all the Jews. For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place and you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?* (Esther 4:13-14). Even though faced with death, Esther submitted to her father and petitioned the king on behalf of her people.

A GIRL LEARNS SUBMISSION



PART I

a girl

Chaos becomes Order

PART II

a woman

Order is Established



PART III

a matriarch

Maturity is Developed

1. What does the word submit mean?
2. When will submission end for females?

submit to God

3. Why did Jephthah's daughter insist that she be offered to the LORD?

submit to government

4. What does subjection mean?

submit to leaders

5. What does it mean to submit to leaders?

submit to parents

6. What is the meaning of the root word from which we get subject, submit, and obey?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- *Why do you think each of the girls given as examples were faced with such serious circumstances when they were called to submit?*
- *What are some reasons girls give for not submitting to God, government, leaders, or their parents?*
- *Do you agree with the statement, "understanding submission will help prepare us for the command to submit to our husbands?"*
- *What are some commands given by church leaders which are not given in the Bible?*

LESSON #5

A WOMAN SUBMITS TO HER HUSBAND

As we have learned from Lesson #4, to submit means to *place or rank under, to subject, or simply to obey*. The Bible says that a woman should submit to her husband (Ephesians 5:22). This may be the command which is most difficult for women to accept and obey. There are three reasons why I believe women feel this way about submission: (1) They do not understand submission, (2) they see submission as demeaning to women rather than a privilege for women, and (3) they are still girls, not women, and haven't grown up spiritually.

understanding submission

First, part of understanding submission is knowing that it is not something which exists within a husband-wife relationship only. In Lesson #4, we learned that there are many other ways females are commanded to submit prior to entering marriage. A girl who understands submission and all its applications early in life will not find submission to her husband difficult to accept.

Second, part of understanding submission is knowing that our position of being in a rank under our husbands is not something we must endure because of Eve's sin. As was stated in the introduction, Adam was created with a higher rank than Eve. Eve's obedience to Adam was not a problem for her until she sinned. It was then that God revealed to Eve that Adam would "rule over" her because her desire now is to upset the hierarchy God sovereignly created (Genesis 3:16).

applying submission

One of the biggest differences between a girl and a woman is how they view the commands of God. A girl is growing spiritually if she understands right and wrong (as it's revealed in the Bible) and simply attempts to do right, even if she hates doing it. A woman, however, does what is right because she loves doing what is right. That in no way means it is always easy to do what is right, in fact it rarely is. But the attitude taken when pursuing righteousness and avoiding sin is positive, and that is what distinguishes a woman from a girl. That is why this particular lesson is the transition from a girl to a woman; not only is it essential, it is foundational. Because submission is something commanded by God, we should view our obedience to our husbands in relation to God. Our husbands really have nothing to do with it other than the fact that they are the recipients of our pursuing a right relationship with God. Consider the context with which submission is commanded.

submission reflects virtue

And whatever you do in word or deed, {do} all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father. Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord (Colossians 3:17-18). Not only are we to submit, we are to be thankful for the opportunity God has given us to be obedient to Him. According to 1 Peter 3:1-2, submitting to our husbands gives us an opportunity to reveal a virtuous and respectful character, attributes clearly missing from a wife who does not submit.

submission reflects quality

And let not your adornment be {merely} external —braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; but {let it be} the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God. For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands (1 Peter 3:3-5). Peter describes here how submission is an adornment to women, reflecting the quality of their spirit, and that those who practice submission are synonymous with those whose hope is in God.

submission reflects strength

Thus Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord... (1 Peter 3:6). Sarah provides us with the best example of submission because she understood the meaning and significance of submission. Rather than shying away from her responsibility to her husband, she emphasized it, by calling him her master. This is not something weak women can do. It takes strength to give up the desire we all have to rule our husbands. And it can be a scary thing as well, to obey rather than control, to submit rather than rule. That is why Peter says, *...you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear (1 Peter 3:6).*

submission reflects honor

Not only are we to submit to our husbands, we should encourage other women to submit to their husbands (Titus 2:3-5). While there are many other commands specifically for women, and many other examples of righteous behavior of women, none is emphasized as much as submission. There is likely two reasons for this: (1) God knew we would have a problem with it and (2) it is the most important command for women. Why? *...so the word of God will not be dishonored (Titus 2:5).*

A WOMAN SUBMITS TO HER HUSBAND

PART I

a girl

Chaos becomes Order



PART II

a woman

Order is Established



PART III

a matriarch

Maturity is Developed



understanding submission

1. What will make submission to our husbands easier to accept?
2. When did the hierarchy become a problem for women?

applying submission

3. What distinguishes a woman from a girl?

submission reflects virtue

4. How should we respond to God, since He is the one who commanded us to submit?

submission reflects quality

5. What is synonymous with those who practice submission?

submission reflects strength

6. Why does submission reflect strength?

submission reflects honor

7. What are two likely reasons for submission being emphasized in the Bible?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- *Do you agree with the three given for why submission is difficult for*
- *How will understanding the command to submit as something vertical (in relation to God) rather than horizontal (in relation to our husbands) help us to love submitting?*
- *How is submission an adornment?*
- *Do you agree that submission is the most important command for women. If no, what is more important?*

LESSON #6

A WOMAN MOTHERS HER CHILDREN

Besides being a wife, the most significant thing a woman can do is be a mother. We have important requirements as a Christian. Choosing to be a wife adds to our obligations, and becoming a mother increases our responsibilities all the more.

Before we discuss mothering principles, we need to know how to prepare to become a mother. Elizabeth prepared her character to become a mother. Of her it is said she was *righteous in the sight of God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and requirement of the Lord* (Luke 1:6). When she became pregnant, she recognized God's great mercy towards her, and when given a specific command with regard to her son, she obeyed. *And it came about that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to call him Zacharias, after his father. And his mother answered and said, "No indeed; but he shall be called John"* (Luke 1:59-60).

prayer

Consider the words of Hannah, *For this boy I prayed, and the LORD has given me my petition which I asked of Him. So I have also dedicated him to the LORD; as long as he lives he is dedicated to the LORD* (1 Samuel 1:27-28a). Hannah provides a great model for wives who want to become mothers. She wanted a child, so she prayed and asked God for a baby. After she had a son, she dedicated him to God, as well as thanking Him for making her a mother.

training

Once we have become mothers, the most important thing we can do for our kids is teach them. Proverbs 22:6 says, *Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it.* Training a child in righteousness while they are young will greatly influence what kind of adults they will become. This benefits them, obviously, but it will benefit you as well. What a blessing if as a matriarch you can look at your children and say, *I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth* (3 John 4).

discipline

One of the greatest ways we can display our love for our children is by disciplining them. While the job of disciplining children resides primarily with the father, a mother must support his job by carrying on the discipline when

he is not present. Proverbs 13:24 says, *He who spares his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him diligently.* The reason discipline is so important is because, *Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child, the rod of discipline will remove it far from him* (Proverbs 22:15). So if you hate your children and you want them to grow up to become fools, then don't discipline them. But, if you love them, and you want them to grow up to be wise, then discipline them diligently.

goal

In a world that encourages mothers to de-emphasize gender differences, it is not surprising that the Bible says to emphasize them. As Psalm 144:12 explains, *Let our sons in their youth be as grown-up plants, And our daughters as corner pillars fashioned as for a palace...* . Speaking metaphorically of course, we are to help our sons to have strong roots so they will produce fruit and be able to survive even the most turbulent conditions. Our daughters, on the other hand, should learn to be strong, so that they can support their own home one day. They should focus on their beauty (internal and external like Abigail who was both beautiful and discerning in 1 Samuel 25) as they are the focal point of the home, the first thing people see as they approach.

trials

There most likely is no greater trial than a mother who endures the suffering of her child. How should we deal with such tribulation? Consider the unique example of the Syrophenician woman who asked Christ to heal her daughter; *she came and {began} to bow down before Him, saying, "Lord, help me!" And He answered and said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." But she said, "Yes, Lord; but even the dogs feed on the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." Then Jesus answered and said to her, "O woman, your faith is great; be it done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed at once* (Matthew 15:25-28). There are many things we can learn from the Syrophenician woman. First, she humbled herself before Christ, recognizing she needed His help. Second, she asked Him for help with her child. Third, she knew Christ which helped her respond rightly to Him. Fourth and finally, she trusted Christ at His word. While we cannot converse with Christ, we can humble ourselves, pray, study God's Word, and trust what He says in it.

A WOMAN MOTHERS HER CHILDREN



PART I

a girl

Chaos becomes Order



PART II

a woman

Order is Established



PART III

a matriarch

Maturity is Developed

1. How did Elizabeth prepare her character to become a mother?

prayer

2. What three things can we learn from Hannah's example?

training

3. What is the most important thing a mother can do for her children?

discipline

4. Why is discipline important?

goal

5. According to Psalm 144:12 what is the difference between sons and daughters?

trials

6. What four things can we learn from the Syrophonician woman with regard to suffering when our children suffer?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- *While we will not receive individual special revelation from God, as Elizabeth did, how can we obey as specifically as she did?*
- *Do you agree that the most important thing a mother can do for her child is train him in righteousness? Is that more important than love or discipline?*
- *Make a list, based on the description given in Psalm 144:12, of the similarities and differences between how we are to raise sons and how we are to raise daughters.*

LESSON #7

A WOMAN STOPS MOTHERING HER CHILDREN

As you read the title of this lesson, you may be thinking that it is a misprint. After all, how can a woman who has been a mother stop being a mother? The answer to that question is this: she doesn't stop being a mother, she just stops "mothering." This may be the most difficult stage a female goes through. And she must go through it if she is to progress on to maturity.

responsibilities

The world is full of women who have not stopped mothering. If you are not one yourself, I know you can think of a few. They continue to want to make decisions for their grown children. They remind them of how to live their lives. They question their actions and motives. They are overflowing with advice when they call or visit. They worry. They complain.

We have learned from society that we shouldn't blame our mothers for this behavior. Since it is in their nature to care for their children, to love them and help them through good and bad times, to be intimately involved with every aspect of their lives, it is, therefore, seen as the children's responsibility to deal with their mothers rather than expect their mothers to change.

While many of the attributes of a mother need not be thrown out (as we will discuss in Lesson #8), it is still necessary that the mother change. Maturity demands that a mother change; not that children accommodate an unchanging mother. Not only is it necessary that a mother change and stop mothering, it is right.

examples

Mary

After Jesus had grown, left home, and begun His ministry, He attended a wedding at Cana of Galilee. According to John 2:1-4, Mary the mother of Jesus was there. She must have been involved with the preparations for the party because when they ran out of wine, she approached her Son with the problem. You can probably visualize the panic in her voice as she hurried over to Jesus, probably interrupting a conversation He was in the middle of with some other guests. She then blurted out loudly, "They have no wine." She did not need to say more, Jesus knew

exactly what she was asking of Him. After all, who knew Jesus more intimately than His mother? And who else would have known that He was capable of miraculously creating new wine? Jesus' response to His mother was *Woman what do I have to do with you? My hour has not yet come*. In other words, it was as though Jesus was saying, "I didn't come here for you so that your agenda could be accomplished through Me. I, not you, will decide when to reveal My miraculous capabilities as the Son of God. And that time hasn't come." Mary's assumption was that Jesus was hers, that He was part of her plans.

Rebekah

The Bible gives another example of a woman who did not stop mothering. In her case, she continued with her agenda until her desires were accomplished. The woman is Rebekah. She devised a plan so that the son of her choice, Jacob, would receive the blessing of his father, rather than his older brother Esau. She heard her husband's intentions and she told Jacob what to do. She prepared the meal for Jacob to give his father, and she told him how to disguise himself so that her plan would be successful. When Jacob questioned his mother's plan, explaining that their discovery might bring about a cursing rather than a blessing, she simply responded, "Your curse be on me, my son; only obey my voice..." (Genesis 6:13). Her involvement in her son's life led him to deceive his father.

Salome

Also, there is the account in Matthew 20:17-28 of Salome, the mother of disciples James and John. Her sons were men of God, chosen by Christ. Clearly they were old enough to be making their own decisions, no longer needing their mother as an intermediary. Yet Salome allowed herself to continue to mother her sons. Her request of Christ that James and John have a superior position in His Kingdom was an area in which they, not she, should have been responsible. Christ responded, *You do not know what you are asking*.

As with Mary and Rebekah, Salome spoke out of place, something a mother will inevitably do if she doesn't stop mothering her children.

A WOMAN STOPS MOTHERING HER CHILDREN



PART I

a girl

Chaos becomes Order



PART II

a woman

Order is Established



PART III

a matriarch

Maturity is Developed

responsibilities

1. In what ways will a woman not stop mothering?
2. Why is it necessary for the mother to change?

examples

Mary

3. What was Mary's assumption with respect to her son?

Rebekah

4. What was the result of Rebekah's over involvement in her son's life?

Salome

5. Why was what Salome did wrong?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- Do you think the Bible teaches that a woman, at some point, should stop mothering?
- How does society teach that the children are responsible to change rather than the mother?
- Read the story of Mary in John 2:1-4. Why do you think Christ made wine for His mother, even though her actions were out of line?
- Rebekah continues to mother Jacob, telling him to obey her. When do you think a mother loses her right to demand the obedience of her son or daughter?

LESSON #8

A WOMAN SERVES HER FAMILY

defining service

While it is important that a woman stop mothering, it is equally important that she continue to take care of her family. Her role as decision-maker for her children is removed, but her responsibility as a servant is magnified. The maturity of the woman is challenged at this stage of her development because she must constantly remind herself that while her children's lives are not hers anymore, they still need her love, support, and provision. She is still a mother, she just isn't "mothering."

defining excellence

The best passage I can find describing the woman who serves her family is Proverbs 31:10-31. These verses typically are used to challenge and encourage young women regarding their roles as new wives and/or mothers. Proverbs lists 31 attributes of a godly wife, hardly something which can be accomplished in the midst of inexperience and immaturity. It is profitable to know what God considers to be the characteristics of a godly wife early. In fact, she should be aware of those characteristics while she is still a girl. However, she should not expect to be able to achieve the high standards revealed in Proverbs 31 until she has become a woman, who is submitting to her husband and has mothered and stopped mothering her children. It is then that she can go beyond simply knowing what God expects of a wife, to actually achieving and even mastering those high standards of godliness.

Proverbs 31:10 An excellent wife, who can find? For her worth is far above jewels. 11 The heart of her husband trusts in her, And he will have no lack of gain. 12 She does him good and not evil All the days of her life. 13 She looks for wool and flax, And works with her hands in delight. 14 She is like merchant ships; She brings her food from afar. 15 She rises also while it is still night, And gives food to her household, And portions to her maidens. 16 She considers a field and buys it; From her earnings she plants a vineyard. 17 She girds herself with strength, And makes her arms strong. 18 She senses that her gain is good; Her lamp does not go out at night. 19 She stretches out her hands to the distaff, And her hands grasp the spindle. 20 She extends her hand to the poor; And she stretches out her hands to the needy. 21 She is not afraid of the snow for her household, For all her household are clothed with scarlet. 22 She makes

coverings for herself; Her clothing is fine linen and purple. 23 Her husband is known in the gates, When he sits among the elders of the land. 24 She makes linen garments and sells {them,} And supplies belts to the tradesmen. 25 Strength and dignity are her clothing, And she smiles at the future. 26 She opens her mouth in wisdom, And the teaching of kindness is on her tongue. 27 She looks well to the ways of her household, And does not eat the bread of idleness. 28 Her children rise up and bless her; Her husband {also,} and he praises her, {saying:} 29 "Many daughters have done nobly, But you excel them all." 30 Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, {But} a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised. 31 Give her the product of her hands, And let her works praise her in the gates.

Proverbs lists about 31 principles, not merely as qualities which would be nice to possess or nice to have been born with, but as responsibilities, your responsibilities as a Christian woman. You must be trustworthy, good, kind, a shopper, a worker and not be lazy. You must feed your family, conduct business, while being strong, sensible, pure, dignified, cheerful, and optimistic. It is when these things are accomplished that the lives of your husband and children will be a testimony of your faithfulness.

Many women today think that when their kids leave home, it is their time to enjoy life for themselves. This kind of thinking goes directly contrary to the Word of God. When your kids leave home your responsibilities increase and your enjoyment of life comes through obedience to God not through selfishness. Do not be deceived, a woman who serves herself is a disgrace, *but a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised (Proverbs 31:31).*

When Christ was in Galilee in the city of Capernaum, He healed a woman who provides a simple yet accurate example of serving her family. *And He arose and left the synagogue, and entered Simon's home. Now Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever; and they made request of Him on her behalf. And standing over her, He rebuked the fever, and it left her; and she immediately arose and waited on them (Luke 4:38-39).* While it is Christ who gave Peter's mother-in-law the ability to serve, she still had the desire within herself to serve; and she did so as soon as she was physically able. As you can see from the example of Peter's mother-in-law and Proverbs 31, even if it is no longer your duty as a woman to mother, it's still your obligation as a woman to serve.

A WOMAN SERVES HER FAMILY



1. Why is a woman's maturity challenged at this stage of her development?
2. Why is Proverbs 31 good advice for a woman at this stage of her development?
3. List, in your own words, 31 characteristics of an excellent wife listed in Proverbs.

- | | | |
|-----|-----|-----|
| 1. | 11. | 21. |
| 2. | 12. | 22. |
| 3. | 13. | 23. |
| 4. | 14. | 24. |
| 5. | 15. | 25. |
| 6. | 16. | 26. |
| 7. | 17. | 27. |
| 8. | 18. | 28. |
| 9. | 19. | 29. |
| 10. | 20. | 30. |
| | | 31. |

4. How should a woman view her responsibilities and her enjoyment of life?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- Do you think it is possible to be a mother without “mothering?”
- The Bible says nothing about retirement or a retirement age for men. God expects men to lead productive lives as long as they are physically able and to not retire from work. Work (a job outside the home) is not a command for women, yet many women retire from their responsibilities as a woman. A biblical argument can be made for men not retiring. Could a similar argument be made for women with regard to their jobs within the home? What argument would you make and how would you defend it biblically?
- Discuss various ways women can serve their children without mothering them?

LESSON #9

A MATRIARCH DEVELOPS HER LOVE FOR GOD

There are three important ways a matriarch can develop and prove her love for God. While there may be attributes or objectives we could add to this list, we should be careful not to remove any of these.

a matriarch has a long term relationship with God-because matriarchs are finishers.

It is easy to start something. I may decide to start a diet, to start exercising, start studying the Bible more or praying more. It merely takes a statement of intent and a single accomplishment to start something. But six months from now how are we doing on those things we said we'd do; or one month from now; or even one week from now. In other words, starting something is easy compared to finishing something. And matriarchs are finishers.

Consider Anna, who after being married only seven years, lived as a widow to the age of eighty-four. It is said of her that, *she never left the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers* (Luke 2:37). Anna was present when baby Jesus was presented to the Lord in Jerusalem. At the very moment that she saw the Child, *she came up and began giving thanks to God, and continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem* (Luke 2:38). Anna had a long-term relationship with God. She developed her love for God in worship and service both before and after she saw Christ. She was a finisher.

a matriarch gets God's attention -because a matriarch's attention is on God.

Notice what God says about the patriarch Job. *And the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil"* (Job 1:8). Clearly, God was paying attention to Job and Job's focus was God.

We might wonder, however, why God's challenge to Satan was not put forth with respect to Job's wife. It is clear from the book that she was a believer in God, yet apparently she had not developed a love for God as had her husband. That is why she was not up for the challenge. Job 2:7-8 says that Satan left the presence of the Lord and afflicted Job's entire body with painful boils. Then, because his wife's attention was on Job rather than on God, she said, *Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die!* Her selfish advice played right into the hands of Satan, who claimed to God that Job would say those very words (Job 2:5). Job then responds to his wife, *You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?* (Job 2:10). Job's wife had not fully developed her love for God because her attention was not on God, and thus she spoke foolishly.

a matriarch is accountable to God-because her accountability to people is limited.

Webster defines accountability as being *subject to, or giving an account: answerable and reckoning*. So to be accountable to someone is to submit to them for the purpose of reckoning actions or behavior. As a girl and even a woman, it is good to have someone you are accountable to, someone who knows your weaknesses and will hold you to a high standard of moral purity. Accountability to other women is great for helping chaotic people become orderly. But by itself, it will never produce maturity. While accountability may be essential for a woman, it will not make her into a matriarch. For a woman to grow to the next level of maturity, she must be able to deal with sin on her own, without dependance on another to hold her to the standards God expects her to keep. Remember, *we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds, in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad* (2 Corinthians 5:10, emphasis mine).

A MATRIARCH DEVELOPS HER LOVE FOR GOD



PART I

a girl

Chaos becomes Order



PART II

a woman

Order is Established



PART III

a matriarch

Maturity is Developed

1. Complete these three statements about a matriarch.

a matriarch has a long term relationship with God...

because _____

a matriarch gets God's attention...

because _____

a matriarch is accountable to God...

because _____

2. How was Anna a finisher?

3. Why was God's attention NOT on Job's wife?

4. Why is accountability to other women limited?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- Think about your own relationship with God and consider different ways to make it long term.
- Discuss the attributes of women who were or are strong finishers and the attributes of those who were or are weak finishers.
- What is the danger of life-long accountability to women?
- Discuss whether the biblical requirements of a wife to submit to her husband includes her being accountable to him.

LESSON #10

A MATRIARCH DEVELOPS THE DISCIPLESHIP OF HER EXTENDED FAMILY

defining discipleship

To be a disciple is to be a follower and a learner. Mary Magdalene (although not yet a matriarch) was a disciple of Christ, that is, she followed Him and learned from Him. To follow is not to occasionally hang out with someone. To learn does not simply mean to hear the teaching of another. Following is consistent and long term, learning is constant and life-changing. So to say a matriarch develops the discipleship of her extended family, is to say she develops followers and learners. Her goal will always be to create follows and learners of Christ, followers being those who pursue godliness by modeling Christ in their lives and learners being those whose lives are conformed to the teaching of Christ through His Word. But in the process of developing disciples of Christ, she will inevitably create disciples of herself in that she herself is a disciple of Christ worthy to be modeled. As Paul says, *Therefore I exhort you, be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ* (1 Corinthians 4:16; 11:1). Paul's specific exhortation to the believers in Corinth is a statement a matriarch should be able and eager to make to her extended family.

developing discipleship

While discipleship, whether male or female, involves following and learning from Christ, there are specific attitudes and actions women are commanded to both adopt and teach as matriarchs. Titus 2:3-5 commands, *Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips, nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, {to be} sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be dishonored.*

In other words, the matriarch is to always show respect in what she does and says. She should be trustworthy, of sound mind, teaching the truths of Scripture, so that her disciples will be motivated to be

sensible, pure and kind, workers at home who love their children, and who love and submit to their husbands. WHY? That the word of God may not be dishonored. This is the mark of a true disciple. For if you say you follow Christ and profess to be learning God's Word, then your actions should reflect those given in Titus 2:3-5. You bring honor to God's Word by obeying God's Word. That is the responsibility of every disciple of Christ. And that is the goal of every matriarch who is developing the discipleship of her extended family.

In the book of Ruth, Naomi takes on the discipleship of her daughter-in-law Ruth. Naomi, being an old, grieved and bitter woman, having lost her husband and her sons, could have easily rejected Ruth when she said, *Do not urge me to leave you {or} turn back from following you; for where you go I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge, your people {shall be} my people, and your God, my God. Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. Thus may the LORD do to me, and worse, if {anything but} death parts you and me* (Ruth 1:16-17). It must have been at that moment that Naomi knew Ruth's faithfulness to the one true God of Israel, and having heard her statement of faith, Naomi allows Ruth to follow and learn. *Then Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, "My daughter, shall I not seek security for you, that it may be well with you? And {Ruth} said to her, "All that you say I will do"* (Ruth 3:1-5).

In Paul's second letter to his disciple Timothy, his beloved son, he writes, *For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois, and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that {it is} in you as well* (2 Timothy 1:5). The attributes which Paul knows and remembers of Timothy, that is, his sincere faith, came from his mother and his grandmother. And this faith was not inherited by Timothy, it was learned by Timothy, because he was discipled by his mother and grandmother, Eunice and Lois, who were matriarchs.

A MATRIARCH DEVELOPS THE DISCIPLESHIP OF HER EXTENDED FAMILY



PART I

a girl

Chaos becomes Order



PART II

a woman

Order is Established



PART III

a matriarch

Maturity is Developed

defining discipleship

1. What is the goal of a matriarch who wants to disciple her extended family?
2. What does it mean to be a follower?
3. What does it mean to be a learner?

developing discipleship

4. What is the responsibility of a disciple of Christ?
5. What is the difference between what Ruth did as a disciple and what Naomi did as a matriarch?
6. How did Timothy become a disciple with sincere faith?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- Discuss some reasons why some older women would want to be followed and modeled by younger women and why they would not.
- Evaluate each of the five requirements of a disciple maker as given in Titus 2:3-5. Why do you think these particular tasks are required for matriarchs to disciple their extended family?
- Read the book of Ruth. How could Naomi be a leader to Ruth with such a bad attitude?
- It is interesting to note that the only thing we know of Lois and Eunice is how their lives impacted Timothy's life. If our only goal was to be remembered for what our family has accomplished because of our example and teaching, how would that help us better develop the discipleship of our extended family?

LESSON #11

A MATRIARCH DEVELOPS CREATIVE LEADERSHIP

You might think this is an inappropriate title for a lesson on women since women are not to hold positions of leadership over men within the body of Christ (1 Timothy 3:1-7). However, leadership, as we are using the word here, is not defined by a woman's position, it is displayed in a woman's character. She is not satisfied with merely pursuing her own godliness, but she sees it is necessary to motivate others to godliness. This usually involves some amount of risk. And that is what makes the matriarch a creative leader.

qualities of creative leaders

#1 Creative leaders expand orderly situations. A creative leader will not encourage someone to be a doctor, a lawyer, or a teacher. A creative leader will encourage them to be a woman of God. A woman is not defined by her career or her roles but by her commitment to the kingdom of God.

#2 Creative leaders have integrity. A creative leader does not merely have the ability to make sound choices, she is motivated to be more accurately sound. She is not only usefully righteous, but personally righteous. That is, her godliness is important to her.

#3 Creative leaders are coaches, not critics. Here are some differences:

A CRITIC

- thinks about exposing problems
- tries to impress people
- is issue-oriented
- sees problem people as a hassle
- makes problems a wall between herself and others

A COACH

- thinks about attending to problems
- tries to impact people
- is people-oriented
- sees problem people as a challenge
- makes problems a wall to be climbed with others, from the same side

#4 Creative leaders encourage people to be successful. Women can help others to not be bad. But other women will never be motivated to matriarchal maturity by only not being bad. Creative

leadership gets women excited about impacting women to be good in new and fascinating ways.

#5 Creative leaders think process, not product. Whatever good you choose to do in life is not as important as how you choose to do it. Creative leaders motivate others beyond product to process.

#6 Creative leaders are people, not positions. Matriarchs are always bigger than any definition of them. They may hold a position and do a job, but they are more than a position and they work beyond the limits of their job.

creative leaders

Consider Judges chapters 4 and 5. Deborah was a prophetess of Israel at the time of the judges. She is not characterized by her position but rather by her desire to impact those around her. For it is said that, *the sons of Israel came up to her for judgment.* By coaching Barak into a position of leadership, she gave him the opportunity to be remembered for his *acts of righteousness* (Hebrews 11:32).

The same story in Judges speaks of another creative leader who most definitely was a risk taker. Her integrity was evident when she drove a tent peg through the temple of Sisera, leader of the Canaanite army, and killed him. She risked her own life by attacking Sisera, and she risked her relationship with her husband who had established peace with Sisera. She was not only personally righteous but usefully righteous. Her godliness was not only important to her, it was impacting in that it destroyed the enemy of Israel.

Consider also the wise woman in 2 Samuel 20:16-22. Notice the leadership qualities she exhibits in reasoning with Joab about the destruction of her city. She humbly yet confidently presents her case, initiating a creative solution to Joab's problem. Not only does she propose a solution, she sees that it is accomplished. Because of the leadership of this wise woman, not only was the city spared, but the lives of those whose homes were there were saved.

A MATRIARCH DEVELOPS CREATIVE LEADERSHIP



PART I

a girl

Chaos becomes Order



PART II

a woman

Order is Established



PART III

a matriarch

Maturity is Developed

qualities of creative leaders

1. How is leadership being defined here?
2. How is a woman defined?
3. How does a creative leader have integrity?
4. What do creative leaders get other women excited about?

creative leaders

5. How did Deborah impact those around her?
6. How was Jael a risk taker?
7. What leadership qualities did the wise woman in 2 Samuel 20:16-22 exhibit?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- Discuss the six qualities of creative leaders. What would you add to or take away from the list?
- Discuss the advantages of having a character of leadership rather than a position of leadership?
- Read Judges 4-5. How did Deborah NOT violate any of the New Testament requirements which say men should have the positions of leadership?
- Discuss the similarities between Jael and the wise woman in 2 Samuel 20:16-22.

LESSON #12

A MATRIARCH DEVELOPS A HEART FOR GIVING

to love is to give

For God so loved the world that he gave... (John 3:16a). Giving means expecting nothing in return. Love, real love, can pretty much be defined by the word “give.” If there is one word that is a synonym for a matriarch, it is giver. A woman gives to herself, a wife gives to her husband, a mother gives to her children, but a matriarch gives to everybody in the sphere of her extended family. Consider Phoebe, who we know little about, except that she exhibits true love through giving:

I (Paul) commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a servant of the church... and that you help her in whatever matter she may have need of you; for she herself has also been a helper of many, and of myself as well (Romans 16:1-2).

giving is support of the saints

Now, brethren, we {wish to} make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia, that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality. For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability {they gave} of their own accord, begging us with much entreaty for the favor of participation in the support of the saints, and {this,} not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God (2 Corinthians 8:1-5). Here we notice several attitudes involved in New Testament giving:

- #1 *Giving to His work is something God allows us to do by His grace.* God does not need our money. Giving is a gift from God before it is a gift from us to God (v. 1).
- #2 *Giving can be done out of “deep poverty” as well as from abundance* (v. 2).
- #3 *Giving can go beyond our calculated ability of what we can afford to give* (v. 3).
- #4 *Giving should be something we givers beg to do, not something receivers beg us to do* (v. 4).
- #5 *Giving begins not with money but with giving ourselves to God* (v. 5).

Consider an unnamed widow in Mark 12:41-44 who gave at the temple. She gave all she had and because of her love for God provided a lesson for His disciples that mature believers are givers.

giving is an opportunity to participate in what God is doing

The biggest challenges life puts to a woman include: (1) learning how to give, (2) increasing her ability to give as she gets older, and (3) increasing her ability to give without limiting it to material wealth. Consider Tabitha, a woman who made an impact by her giving to the believers around her.

Now in Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha (which translated {in Greek} is called Dorcas); this woman was abounding with deeds of kindness and charity, which she continually did. And it came about at that time that she fell sick and died; and when they had washed her body, they laid it in an upper room. ...And Peter arose and went with them. And when he had come, they brought him into the upper room; and all the widows stood beside him weeping, and showing all the tunics and garments that Dorcas used to make while she was with them. But Peter sent them all out and knelt down and prayed, and turning to the body, he said, “Tabitha, arise.” And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter, she sat up. And he gave her his hand and raised her up; and calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive. And it became known all over Joppa, and many believed in the Lord (Acts 9:36-42).

we cannot outgive God

Biblically, all your money belongs to God, you’re just a steward of whatever He has given you. *The silver is Mine, declares the LORD of hosts* (Haggai 2:8). Believers are meant to function as channels, not reservoirs or lakes. Matriarchs are to be channels of God’s wealth in distributing God’s possessions to God’s work. We give, God gives. When we start gathering and collecting, God gives to someone else who will distribute His wealth. God is always more generous than we are. The pattern seems to be: (1) God gives us more than we need, (2) if we gather it, collect it, buy more with it, or spend it on ourselves, then God stops giving, but (3) if we distribute it to the work of the Kingdom of God, then God gives us more to distribute (Luke 6:38, Luke 16:10-11; 2 Corinthians 9:6-8; Galatians 6:6-10; Philippians 4:15-19).

A MATRIARCH DEVELOPS A HEART FOR GIVING



PART I

a girl

Chaos becomes Order



PART II

a woman

Order is Established



PART III

a matriarch

Maturity is Developed

to love is to give

1. What is the definition of giving?
2. What is the definition of love?

giving is support of the saints

3. Is it possible to be too poor to give?

giving is an opportunity to participate in what God is doing

4. What are the three biggest challenges life put to a woman?

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-

we cannot "outgive" God

5. How much of my money is God's and how much is mine?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- *What evidence do we have that Phoebe was a giver?*
- *How much should we give? As much as the poor woman in Mark 12:41-44?*
- *Make a list of the ways in which Tabitha had a heart for giving?*
- *Read Luke 8:1-3. What evidence do we have from these verses that the women mentioned were matriarchs?*