A Godly Woman

**Proverbs 31:30,31: Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her in the gates.**

Another word for vain is “passing” meaning the beauty doesn’t last.

It’s important to note that the woman is praised because she fears the LORD. Fear here means reverence. The meaning is that she worshipfully reverences the LORD. She has a reverent trust in Him. *That* is what makes her praiseworthy. All that she did in the preceding verses is *because* of her trust in the LORD. So verse 31 calls it the fruit (result) of her labors, because she did what she did by trusting and relying on the LORD.

I can imagine many a Christian mother who at the start of the day and facing a very busy schedule and feeling overwhelmed, has cried out “Lord, help me!” or claimed Philippians 4:13.

Women have an important role in the Church as they have been used by God in every age.

No matter our place in the Body of Christ, everyone is of importance to God.

**I Corinthians 12:4-6: There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all.**

Positions may vary, ministries may differ, but all are equally important to God.

**Genesis 1:27: So God created man in his own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.** We are different but equal.

Scripture gives us many examples of women in important roles. Mary is a great example as the godly mother of our Lord when He came to earth in the flesh. **Luke 1:46-49: And Mary said: “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; for behold henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name.”**

In the Old Testament Deborah is a good example. **Judges 4:4: Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, was judging Israel at that time.** I’ll bet you’ve heard of her but I’d be surprised if you ever heard of Lapidoth. During this time the commander of the army of Israel’s enemy was Sisera, and the Israelites cried to the Lord for deliverance. Deborah told an Israelite named Barak that the Lord has commanded to deploy troops and pursue Sisera and the Lord would give him deliverance. But Barak said to Deborah “if you go with me I will go but if you don’t, I won’t go.” (4:8). So Deborah said she’d go but the glory of victory would not go to him but to a woman. In 4:17-22 we see Deborah’s prophecy came true when a woman named Jael, really nailed Sisera. In Judges 5 as they sing the song of victory, praise is given to Jael. (5:24).

The Book of Esther is the only book in the Bible where God’s name is not mentioned but His hand is evident. It was a time when Israel had forgotten God and though He still loved them, He hid His face from them as He said He would: “**I will surely hide my face in that day because of all the evil which they have done, in that they have turned to other gods.” Deuteronomy 31:18.**

But God never stops loving His people even when they sin against Him. God controls the affairs of men to bring about His plan for His people.

A beautiful young Jewish woman comes on the scene during the reign of the Persian Empire named Esther, an orphan who was adopted by an older cousin named Mordecai, who took her as his daughter.

It is through Mordecai’s counsel that Esther is brought before king Ahasuerus along with other young women; soon she is chosen to be the new queen. The king loved Esther dearly and he bestowed on her much favor. But upon the advice of Mordecai, Esther had never revealed that she was a Jew. Even in her new position, Esther still obeyed Mordecai as her father.

In time, the king advanced one of his most trusted advisors, Haman, above all his princes. He gave him great honor and authority. Haman was an Agagite, a people who hated the Jews, and Haman especially hated Mordecai who was often near the palace and would not bow to him. Mordecai’s relationship to Esther was not known by Haman nor the king.

In his hatred for Jews, and especially Mordecai, Haman convinced the king that the Jews were against him and they should be annihilated. Haman even offered to pay ten thousand talents of silver toward getting the job done. Therefore, the king made the decree and in chapter 3, verse 12, the king sealed it with his signet ring. According to the “Law of the Medes and Persians” this can never be changed or rescinded.

**Esther 3:13: And the letters were sent by couriers into all the king’s provinces, to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate all the Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar, and to plunder their possessions.**

Chapter 4 tells us that upon hearing the news Mordecai tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes and went to the front of the king’s gate mourning. In verse 3 it says that Jews in every province that heard the decree were also mourning in sackcloth and ashes and fasting and weeping and wailing. When Esther was told about Mordecai she sent him clothing to put on but he refused. Then Esther sent one of her attendants to him to find out why he was acting this way. Mordecai told Hathach, Esther’s attendant, about the decree, gave him a copy to give to Esther and a command to her to go before the king and plead before him for her people.

Esther sent Hathach back to Mordechai with the message recorded in verse 11: **Esther 4:11: “All the king’s servants and the people of the king’s provinces know that any man or woman who goes into the inner court to the king, who has not been called, he has but one law: put all to death, except the one to whom the king holds out the golden scepter, that he may live. Yet I myself have not been called to go in to the king these thirty days.**

Mordecai replies to Esther that she won’t be able to escape if she keeps silent, implying that it will be found out that she’s a Jew and then he says “deliverance will come from another place” which seems that he refers to God, though His name is not mentioned. The last part of verse 14 is very significant: **“Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”** Verse 16 is Esther’s obedient and brave reply.

**4:16: “Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me; neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will fast likewise. And so I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish.”**

Esther’s decision is one made with faith in God, for even the fasting would be the way the Jews approached God when returning to Him and seeking His favor. Chapter 5 tells us that on the third day Esther puts on her royal robes and went into the inner court knowing it could mean her death; but when the king saw her, she found grace in his sight as he held out the golden scepter.

The king offered to answer her request. Esther had to be careful because Haman was very close to the king. A banquet was arranged by Esther for the king and Haman, and then another at which time she would make her request known. In chapter 7 we read that at the banquet of wine she requests of the king her life and that of her people because someone wants to destroy them. The king asks her “who would dare such a thing?” Then Esther tells him it’s Haman.

Although Haman is hanged, the king has a dilemma, because the law of the Medes and Persians cannot be changed or rescinded! So the king called his scribes to write letters which he sealed with his signet. **Esther 8:10-12: And he wrote in the name of king Ahasuerus, sealed it with the king’s signet ring, and sent letters by couriers on horseback riding on royal horses bred from swift steeds. By these letters the king permitted the Jews who were in every city to gather together and protect their lives – to destroy, kill, and annihilate all the forces of any people or province that would assault them, both little children and women, and to plunder their possessions, on one day in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar.** Compare the similarity of this decree and Haman’s.

So the Jews had accomplished great victory in destroying their enemy and they celebrated their deliverance and made this a yearly celebration called “The Feast of Purim” remembering Queen Esther who risked her life for her people.

The Feast of Purim is still observed today as a very important celebration.

In Acts 16 we read of the Lord leading Paul and Silas to Macedonia as God is now opening up Europe to the Gospel. There He has them meet **Lydia** who receives Christ, is baptized and then opens up her home to Paul and Silas and is a helper in the ministry.

We can’t forget **Priscilla,** wife of Aquilla, both were a great help to Paul and other disciples in the ministry. In Acts 16:3 Paul calls them his “fellow workers in Christ Jesus who risked their own necks for my life.

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Nor can we forget **Phoebe**. In Acts 16:1,2 Paul calls her a servant of the church in Cenchrea. The word “servant” here is also the word for deacon or deaconess. She was entrusted to deliver the Book of Romans to Rome, and Paul said she has been a helper of many.

Remember how often Jesus found refuge and rest at the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus in Bethany. Recall that in the Gospel of Mark, chapter 14, Mary poured very costly ointment on Jesus’ feet and wiped them with her hair; she was criticized for not spending the money for the poor. Jesus rebuked the critics: **Mark 14:8,9: She has done what she could. She has come beforehand to anoint My body for burial. Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her.**

And certainly, any preacher of the Word has surely preached at least once, probably more, on this passage and what Mary did. We know that Mary put preference on sitting at Jesus’ feet and hearing Him; so she’s aware of His death, something even His apostles didn’t seem to get until after His resurrection.

The Scriptures are clear that every believer: men, women and children, have a service for Christ.

**I Peter 4:10: As everyone has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.**

***Pastor***

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