



**Our mission is to assist Pastors
and Women's Ministry Directors
to start and maintain an
effective Women's Ministry**

www.wowintl.net

INTRODUCTION

When my fun-loving husband, Louie, died last year, I began asking the Lord, "What's next?" We had enjoyed a ten-year loving relationship and I was devastated. Then, shortly after his death, my youngest daughter died of cancer. My health was not good, I was 78 years old and totally alone. Then the Lord led me to these scriptures: "My health fails, my spirits droop, but God remains, You are the strength of my heart, You are mine forever." Psalms 73:26. I thought, "How does an old woman make her way pure?" ... the same way a young man does! By living according to the Word of God, as found in Psalms 119:9

The Founder of Women of Worth, Marilyn Orton, asked me to write a series of Bible Studies just for women and I think that became my "what's next?!" Am I saying that God took the life of my husband so I would do this? No! But feverishly studying and digging into God's Word was therapy for my hurting soul. Women of Worth www.wowintl.net is a wonderful ministry extending into more than 70 countries.

It is my prayer that the Bible studies will not only benefit the special category of humans for which they were intended ... "Women;" but that

God's words will bless any reader who will hear and do them. God's words are living and active in the life of any who will implement them into their daily life.

I dedicate these studies to Jesus who loved me enough to die for me and to Louie who loved me with all his heart.

Becky Oswald

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Lesson #1:

The Worth of a Woman

As a general rule, women feel worthy when loved, respected and appreciated. It is great when those around us express their admiration of our abilities and talents. In reality, though, many women struggle with a sense of worth and acceptance because of their past or present circumstances.

To accomplish any worthwhile goal requires a plan; we can be encouraged because God is a Master Planner and is ever at work in your life. His unseen hand is ever at work to bring about His purpose for you ... it's called the Providence of God. He loves you and has a divine purpose and plan for your life.

It is awesome to know that "For when He but spoke, the world began! It appeared at His command! And with His breath he can scatter the plans of all the nations who oppose Him, yet His own plan stands forever" (Psalms 33: 9-11). This is the same God who structures your life. VS. 13: continues with "The Lord gazes down upon mankind from heaven where He lives. He has made our hearts and closely watches everything we do." We have a God who cares about every detail of our lives; if a matter concerns you, it concerns Him.

This unseen hand is ever at work to bring about His purpose for you. He is the One who made your heart and closely watches everything you do; wouldn't you like to know what He has in mind for you?

Jeremiah 9:23-24, "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom; let not the great man glory in his greatness; let not the rich man glory in his riches but let him who glories, glory in this, that he understands and knows Me. I am the Lord who exercises loving kindness, judgment and righteousness in all the earth and in these things I delight, declares the Lord."

To know and understand the Lord God, can you do that?

You can never ever in this lifetime know and understand the Lord, truly know His plan for your life if you have a distant/faint relationship with Him. When you study, don't just study to gain information or even to glean wisdom, but study for intimacy. Tell Him you just want to know Him, to be close to Him, to have fellowship ... to know Him better. One man said, "Lord, I want to be so close that I feel your breath." Sadly, so many times we only make those statements in times of stress or danger; God would love it if we just wanted to love on Him as He does on us.

Message Bible Ephesians 5:1-2, "Watch what God does and then you do it ... mostly what

God does is love you. Keep company with Him and learn a life of love. Observe how Christ loved us. His love is not cautious but extravagant. He didn't love in order to get something from us but to give everything of Himself to us. Love like that." Women feel worthy when they are loved. You can recover faster from a physical blow than you can from a wound of words. When someone sears your soul with verbal abuse, your sense of worth temporarily disappears, even when you know it is far from the truth. That's when you wrap "Mostly what God does is love you and He doesn't love you in order to get anything from you but to give everything of Himself to you" around yourself and realize of all the things the God of this universe could be doing, at this moment, He shuts down shop to give your sense of wholeness, worth and well-being back to you. You are so important to Him ... God's favorite thing to do is to love you.

Worthy women look for God's plan and find out what they are good at. Discover the gifts God has placed in you and then you develop them. You can go to school and have specialized training in high technology, but if God didn't put that capability in place in you, you'll be ill-fitted in your performance. When God puts a quality or talent inside of you, as you develop it for Him, He enhances and embellishes it and spruces you up until you hardly recognize you. All talents get polished through training, through discipline

and through experience. Some of us paint, teach, preach, sing, organize, administrate ... while others provide. And please know this, if you're the one doing the providing, then you get to get in on whatever blessing comes from that provision. The bottom line is God increases talents and qualities when we use what He's put inside of us. Using God's gifts to glorify Him gives us an immeasurable sense of worth.

It's up to you to add to what He has placed within you. What God does, you cannot do; but God will not do what we can do! God gives you salvation because you cannot save yourself. But God does not give you good habits. That's up to you! Stop asking the way when you know perfectly well what to do. You have to begin where you are; you can't begin where you are not. God placed seeds and abilities within you but He expects you to nourish their growth. You go into a dark room to "develop" film, but you don't stay there. When you find yourself in the dark, keep walking as He will always lead you to the light. "To Him the night shines as bright as the day. Darkness and light are both alike to Him" Psalms 139:12.

God specializes in impossibilities. He knows a thousand ways to make a way for you. He always has a working plan in place for you, even before you know you have a problem, He has a plan. His unseen power controls

everything for His purpose. Our problem lies in wanting to see it.

God never promised to give you explanations but He did promise to keep His promises and we need to believe Him.

Mostly we live our lives in seasons and seasons have beginnings and endings. We have a very hard time understanding this as we think because one season is over, we have nothing left. God always has a plan in place and He always gives us something ... some seed to sow for what's next. Don't be discouraged or defeated when you fail, it could be the beginning of a new season. A fresh touch of God can give you new hope, new insight. Rely on the unseen power that controls everything for His purpose, i.e., His better plan! It will always include some insights of your value as a woman of great worth!

Study notes:

1. God's unseen hand working to bring about His purpose and plan for your life is called the Providence of God. Relate a situation recently when you experienced this:

2. Read Psalms 33:15 again and write down your response:

3. Jeremiah 9:24 tells you that God is delighted when you try to know and understand Him. Write your own statement back to God of your intent to do it:

4. Mostly what God does is_____ you...He doesn't love you in order to_____ something from you, but to give everything of Himself to you. Message Bible Ephesians 5: 1-2

5. Knowing that you are worthy and God placed some gifts and talents in you, list what you believe them to be:

6. Lord, please help me in breaking the following habit(s):

7. From your last "season", what seed do you believe God has left within you to begin something new?

God is ever at work within us to bring about His plan and purpose for our well-being and His glory. Being a woman makes you a woman of worth to Him. He made you differently than any other creation and His crowning ornament of love equips you to be a wonderful woman of value and worth to Him and to others!

Lesson #2:

God's Choice for the Woman of Worth

Did you know that “Long ago, even before He made the world, God chose you to be His very own?” (Ephesians 1:4 Living Bible) Before He formed the world, He was thinking of you. God chooses His people to accomplish multi-functional tasks and He has a divine purpose for each one. When God was uniquely putting you together, He put “stuff” in you that would enable you to do everything He asks of you. You will always operate well in what He has already equipped you to do.

An Allen wrench has one purpose and that is to turn a screw that has certain aspects in its head, that's it! Otherwise, it is mostly useless. Surprisingly, though, an Allen wrench is multi-functional as it is useful in assembling bicycles, bookcases, swings and a lot of other things. You are like that, once you get matched up with what you were designed to do, you'll find you are a perfect fit. If you try to use an Allen wrench on any other screw than that for which it was designed, nothing happens. If indeed, God chose you before He founded the world, we can believe He had a purpose in making you just the way you are and you are a perfect fit in His plan.

Of one thing you can be sure, God has a purpose in everything He does and for everyone He makes. How sad that there are some who live and die without ever knowing or living out that purpose. God doesn't love anyone more than He loves you. He may be more intimate with some, but that's because that is *their* desire!

God had a purpose for His own Hebrew people in Egypt. Exodus 5:1-3, "Moses and Aaron went in and told Pharaoh, "Thus says the Lord God of Israel: Let My people go, that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness." And Pharaoh said, "Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the Lord, nor will I let Israel go." So, they said, "The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Please, let us go three days journey into the desert and sacrifice to the Lord our God, lest he fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword."

Before appearing before Pharaoh, Moses had an encounter with God in the burning bush in the wilderness and he was not a willing subject. He came up with a lot of reasons as to why he was ill equipped to do what God asked but he made the choice to be obedient. Later, he met with his brother Aaron to relate to him what God had instructed the two of them to do. God had chosen and

empowered them to accomplish what He desired.

It is totally incredible that Moses and Aaron could just “go in and speak with the King of Egypt!” Why would the king of the power-people of that day grant them an audience, as Moses and Aaron represented the despised and oppressed slaves?! So noteworthy is the fact that Moses didn’t start out with giving his opinion on anything (as we are so prone to do), but simply states, “This is what the Lord, the God of Israel says.” In our own situations, we would be so wise so many times to just present Him or quote Him, instead of ourselves. Most of us, if given the chance, start with “You know, we’ve got a problem and this is what I think you should do.” Not! Moses does none of it, but it’s clear Pharaoh is not on the same page.

He may as well have asked for the moon as Pharaoh’s response was, “No way.” Pharaoh was his own god and he had no need of another; he had no doubt whatsoever that he was in charge that he had complete and total control of these people. Pharaoh made a choice, but the wrong one.

Perhaps a lesson for us here is that getting out from under oppression enables worship. We all have times of feeling the weight of our problems and we may be “hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed,

but not in despair knocked down, but not out.”
2 Cor. 4:8-9 God’s word is a constant reminder
that He is our source of help in troubling times.

Pharaoh made another wrong choice with his
conclusion. If the Hebrews had time for a
holiday, they definitely had too much time on
their hands. So he increased their work load
and gave the orders the Hebrew’s were to be
beaten if they didn’t meet their new
quotas. This brought a hostile mob to Moses
and Aaron and in devastation, Moses sought
the Lord.

Most of us do just what Moses did, when we
get pushed, we push; only he picked on the
wrong One. He blamed God; but rather than
rebuke him, the Lord calmly exhorted Moses to
be patient. Think about the last time when
your best efforts to do something for the Lord
didn’t go well? Today, do you know the reason
why? Did you learn anything?

Moses whines and complains and then outright
says, “I came to Pharaoh and spoke in Your
name and he’s done nothing but evil to the
people; neither have You delivered
them!” Then God chose to speak and how
quickly circumstances can change when He
speaks! Moses had to get God’s words back in
his mouth, and that’s exactly what you have to
do.

Exodus 6:6-8

God is speaking, pick out the promises in VS. 6 and 7:

- I will bring you out from under your burdens
- I will rescue you
- I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and great acts of judgment
- I will take you as My people
- I will be your God
- You will know that I am Yahweh your God who delivered you from forced labor!

When God intervenes in our lives, we experience Him, His Presence and then His power unfolds.

In VS: 8, He goes over His covenant promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to give the land of Canaan to them. If someone tells you he/she is going to give you a whole bunch of land, you should come to attention! God is promising to bring them to the covenant land He promised four centuries ago, but his redemptive purpose in it was to bring them to a covenant relationship with Him. Belonging to a strip of land is good; but belonging to the Lord and living in a right relationship with Him should be our paramount concern.

Learn something from Moses' choice at this point. He chooses a pity-party; he's exhausted, feels inadequate and defeated, but

God refuses to come to his party. He simply gives him his next encounter with Pharaoh. He commands him to return and demand His people to be released. Moses is not a happy camper; if his own people won't listen to him, how in the world will the greatest superpower at that time submit to him? Moses promptly discounts God's choice. Paul says in I Corinthians 1:27, "But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty."

God informs Moses that His choice is to harden Pharaoh's heart in order to process His purpose in bringing deliverance to His people. God's purpose in everything that happens in our life is so God can show Himself strong. Had Pharaoh chosen to give in at the onset, none of the ensuing miracles would have taken place and look at all the fun Pharaoh would have missed: The hordes of frogs invading their houses ... in their cookware and ovens; swarms of gnats or mosquitoes with poisonous bites; swarms of insects; killing of Egyptian livestock; soot all over Egypt causing boils to develop; devastating hail storms to destroy crops; swarms of locust that ate up the crops not destroyed by the hail (God doesn't overlook any detail); thick darkness for three days (this really got the goat of the Egyptians as they worshiped the sun god). In all of this, God was making choices to show Himself

strong and none of their gods could prevent any of it. This was what He meant when He said in Exodus. 7:4, "I will multiply My signs and wonders in the land of Egypt. Pharaoh will not listen to you, but I will put My hand on Egypt and bring the ranks of My people out of Egypt by great acts and judgment." Psalms 73:23-24, "I am continually with You; You hold me by my right hand. You will guide me with Your counsel, and afterward receive me to glory." The Israelites were living practically under the same roofs and were unaffected by any of the plagues. Egypt was Pharaoh's domain and the Israelites did not belong there. God's choice was they would live in the land He had prepared for them. It's so important for us to realize we are to live where God has intended, both here and hereafter.

Moses was 80 years old and Aaron was 83 when they spoke to Pharaoh. Do you think because someone is 80-90+ years old that God needs to look to the younger set? God is the same yesterday, today and forever and He can strengthen you to do anything He asks you to do. If He was finished with you, you wouldn't be here. What can I do, you ask? "Watch what God does and then you do it! Mostly what He does is to love you. Keep company with Him and learn a life of love. Observe how God loves. His love is not cautious but extravagant. He doesn't love you to get something from you; He loves you that He may give everything of Himself to you. Love

like that." Message Bible Ephesians 5:1-2. What can you do? You can bear witness to the Lord in your attitudes and actions as you relate to others and in your own home. God will lead you just as surely as He led the Israelites, but you have to be willing to follow.

God's choice was to relieve the suffering of His people. He stretched out His hand and brought them out. They were unworthy, ungrateful and disobedient, which should give you hope! God's love for you is extravagant and He's always so pleased when we finally get it right! We can show Him that we're hanging in there when we study His word, when we show up for worship services. We can live in right relationship with Him and others when "we study to show ourselves approved, as a workman that needs not be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth." 2 Timothy 2:15. We can live like redeemed women of worth because we are! Just as surely as God chose to save Israel from Pharaoh, He has chosen to save you from the pits of hell. How do you plan this week to demonstrate you believe in His divine purpose in your life? Be committed to fulfill God's purpose in leaving you here. No one can give evidence of your belief but you. You belong to an awesome God and you need to bear witness of how important He is to you by living in obedience and allowing Him to show you His choices are to "give you a future and a hope." Jeremiah 29:11, "I know the plans I have for you says the Lord; plans

for good and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope." Make the choice to "learn to love like God loves" and to know that you are "continually with Him; He holds your right hand and guides you with His counsel." Psalms 73:23

Study notes:

1. We said, "God is more intimate with some because that is *their* desire." God created you and desires an intimate relationship with you. He waits for you to come to Him. I choose this week to:
2. God empowered Moses and Aaron to speak His Word to Pharaoh. He will empower you also when we use His word to address your concerns. What situation are you facing this week that you need to apply His word?
3. Moses wisely did not give his opinion when addressing Pharaoh but spoke what God had said. Can you recall a time when you chose to do the same? Writing it down will help remind you to do in the future:

4. God waited four centuries before giving them the land of Canaan. More than the land, His redemptive purpose was to bring them into what?

5. Reread Exodus 6:6-8 and write down the promises most meaningful to you:

Speaking God's Word and accepting the hand He stretches out can bring about your deliverance as well. God's choices for you are always for your good. Let's choose to speak His Word as it brings us life.

Lesson #3:

To Finish Strong as Women of Worth

Today, right now, how are you contributing to the kingdom's work ... been there, done that? Is that what you think?

In talking with Marilyn Orton recently, one of her statements was, "I want to finish strong; I want to accomplish everything God has for me! I want those crowns, all of them I can get, to lay at Jesus' feet." *To finish strong* had really been impressed on my own heart as well, and her statement only reinforced it. As we get older, new oddities seem to crop up daily in our bodies; many of which would not substantiate a strong finish! But, as Job said in 23:10, "God knows the way that I take and when He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold. My foot has held fast to His steps; I have kept His way and have not turned back; I have not departed from the commandments of His lips; I have treasured in my bosom the words of His mouth. VS. 13-14: He is unchangeable and who can turn Him? What He desires, that He does. He will complete what He appoints for me and many such things are in His mind." Whatever God wants and has designed beforehand for me to do as a contribution to Him, I believe He will see to completion. I don't care how old you are or what your body

tries to dictate; God works in you as long as you have life!

My dear husband, Louie, died March 31, 2010 and a few days after his death, I found lying on top of his Bible material a little booklet, "Transformed Lives" by Ray C. Stedman. In reading through it, I found the following: "A few years ago a group of Southern California **pastors** met in small groups to discuss and share with one another how we keep ourselves vibrant and spiritually alive. One of the pastors particularly intrigued me. Only 35 yrs. old, this man ministers to more than 10,000 people every Sunday morning. I was interested in what he had to say about maintaining his spiritual vitality. Every morning he sits at his desk and writes across the top of a sheet of paper, these letters: A -C -T -S.

A- Adoration: Find a way to express the majesty, greatness and glory of God or begin with "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name and think on just His being; the love of His heart; the mercy He has manifested to you. "Bless the Lord O my soul and all that is within me, bless His holy name." Psalms 103:1

C- Confession: Write down all the sins you committed yesterday! He said if it's Monday morning, I think about my sermon

Sunday when I exaggerated: I said something about a 9 - car pileup, when it was really only 6. Don't say, "I exaggerated," but say, "I lied" because that's what I did. If someone gave me too much change and I put it in my pocket, don't say, "I kept some money I shouldn't have;" say "I stole" because that's exactly what I did.

T- Thanksgiving: Give thanks for being forgiven for my sins and write them out, one by one. And then after each one write forgiven; that is, if you've confessed and asked to be forgiven!

S- Supplication: Pray and ask God for the strength not to do it again but to be honest, careful and thoughtful."

Why am I repeating all this to you...because if you want to make a contribution in this life, you need it; I know I do. Let's make a concerted effort of getting what's left of our life, right! This is a guideline that will help me and YOU.

To finish strong, don't be too low in your expectations. God is able to do abundantly more, generously able, with infinite resources to keep His promises. "He is able to do immeasurably more than we can ask or imagine according to His power that works within us." Ephesians 3:20. Stop looking for

outer manifestations; look for Jesus within you; He is here! Renew me; regenerate me to respond rightly to you. God help me, is my plea. Psalms 18:24, "God rewrote the text of my life when I opened the book of my heart to his eyes."

Laughter de-stresses and strengthens your immune system. A cheerful heart is good medicine. A positive attitude will bring you favor and cooperation. Looking on the down side causes people to lose hope. When things are falling apart, find appreciation for what is still right in your life. Message Bible Hebrews 3:1, "Take a long hard look at Jesus; He's the centerpiece of everything we believe in." Look at how life fell apart for Him and He finished strong!

On our way to the finish line, we need to consider others.

If I say, "What are some things that have been *offered* to you, what comes to your mind?" (Other than money):

- **A job?**
- **A second chance?**
- **Advice?**
- **A helping hand?**

What we normally do is think of things that are offered to us; but we also need to think of how we can offer something to someone else. We

should freely give to God our money and time, plus be willing to share whatever gifts He has already placed within us. Freely you have received, freely give. God gave each of us talents/abilities, and has never charged anyone a cent for them yet. He's the one who said I gave them to you, now you share them with someone else.

Everything good that flows into you should flow out of you to someone else! God fills you with His Spirit and gives you a passion, as well as a commitment you would not otherwise have. It is so important for you to use what God has already gifted within you as you serve. When you do this, He not only strengthens you but other lives are encouraged and enhanced. The bottom line is that God uses every person who is willing to contribute.

Here's a verse of scripture you can take to the bank: Message Bible Romans 12:1-2, Paul says, "So here's what I want you to do, God helping you. Take your everyday, ordinary life, your sleeping, eating, going-to work, walking around life and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for Him Fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what He wants from you and quickly respond to it." You can do that right now, right where you're sitting. God brings a lot of "living" into our life span; some of it is so enjoyable and some of

what He allows is very difficult. He is the Lord God Almighty and the same God who richly blesses is the same One who seems to remove the blessing at times. He will work it all for our good if we will believe His Word and not give in to the feelings that can choke our faith.

Most of us are not fully satisfied with our relationship with the Lord, we would like for it to be better and if certain aspects of our life were different (we say) then we'd be different. You start where you are; you'll never start where you are not. Stop waiting for your husband to change; your job to be better (or maybe you have no job); your kids to love and appreciate you. The above scripture says that He'll change YOU from the inside out when you embrace what He is doing in your life. God is always working in your life ... you don't see it? Fix your attention on Him.

Romans 4:18-21: "Abraham without hope, in hope, believed God and so became the father of many nations just as it had been promised him. He faced the fact that his body was as good as dead since he was almost 100 years old and that Sarah's womb also was dead. He didn't waiver in unbelief regarding God's promises but was fully persuaded that God was able to do what He had promised." Ephesians 3:20: "God is able to do immeasurably more than we can imagine." God is for you; He wants you to finish strong.

Mark 5:3, "Don't be afraid, just believe." We can't wait for God to answer our prayers. Once prayed, we expect God to "hop to" – when in reality, sometimes it takes years for what we've prayed for "to be prepared." We want to walk with God but we need to realize sometimes God walks slowly. Ever think about the fact that sometimes God waits for us; the answer is ready but we aren't. Neither are we moving with Him; so it's missed. Sometimes we over-wait because we don't have the confidence to move forward. The promise is "The Lord will guide you continually" Psalms 73:23.

We lag behind; run ahead, when the goal is to walk with Him, so we're available when everything else is in sync and the timing is right. God requires obedience. Blessings come when we do what is right, when we do what God requires. Not only walk and go forward in obedience but have faith in God. Stop believing your doubts. You have no problem whatsoever believing your doubt ... why is it so hard to believe what God says? We have to enter the conflict in order to win. When we enter, He comes to fight by our side. We are more than conquerors through Him who loves us ... why not believe that? He helps us in our ignorance; He delivers us from our lethargy; He strengthens us in our weakness. He delivers us in His determined time. God has a fixed time and an ordained purpose for everything. He who controls the

limits of our life also determines the time of our deliverance. "Don't be afraid, just believe!"

"Some days you fly, some you run, and some you only walk. If you fly, remember it's not from you. If you run, thank God you're still in the race. Don't look at the fliers or you'll be discouraged; don't compare yourself with the walkers or you'll become proud. You just keep running. If you're a walker, just keep putting one foot in front of the other and don't look at the fliers or the runners. Give yourself permission to be where you are." Taken from *The Word for You Today*. The goal is to finish strong as God has empowered YOU.

God doesn't respond to what you do, you respond always to what God does! Let Him set the pace. You never see two eagles flying together, they fly alone. God seeks for eagle people. The best thing is to learn how to walk before you take flight. God will encourage you at every turn when we seek to follow hard after Him. He's already at the finish line, cheering us on. If you really want to be used of Him, find out what He's up to and get in on it! It's my reason for wanting to become a part of Women of Worth.

Be open. The Message Bible Hebrews 3:14, "Today, please listen! If we can only get a firm grip on the sure thing we started out with, we're in this with Christ for the long

haul.” Then too, Revelation 3:22: “Listen to the Wind Words. Listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches.” Be open to anything the Lord speaks into your heart. Be supportive and an encouragement to someone; be prayerful for those who have healthier bodies and do serve ... then whatever they accomplish, you’re a part of it.

To finish strong is my prayer. It is the desire of my heart and I know how He responds to that!!

Study notes:

1. Are there some issues in your life right now that would hinder your finishing strong? Write them down and commit yourself to prayer:
2. Job 23:14, “He will complete what He appoints for me and many such things are on His mind.” Do you have an assignment that is pending, not yet finished? If the Lord gave it to you, He will enable you to finish it.
3. Ephesians 2:10, “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” We were created for a lifetime of

good works which He has already prepared for us to do. When God created you, He “prepared beforehand” what you are to do. Do you know what that is and are you doing it?

4. Everything good that flows into your life should flow out of you to someone else. Give an example of what you’ve done this week that shows “a river runs through you”:
5. “Readily recognize what God wants from you and respond to it quickly.” Not responding quickly shortens the chance of doing it. Your adversary will give you ten reasons “quickly” why you should not do it. Don’t dwell on missed opportunities, look forward to new ones. What do you recognize as something God wants from you?

God has a fixed time and an ordained purpose for everything. He not only determines the limits of our life but the time of our deliverance. He sees our finish line just ahead. Women of Worth, let’s run our race well and finish strong together!

Lesson #4:

The Word of the Lord to Women of Worth

God's word is powerful and for the believer, the strength of our life. To the world, it's an offense. It has been said, "You lay a newspaper on a table and no one will give you a second glance, but you lay a Bible there and they'll stare at you, watch you chew your food and maybe take down your license plate! It causes reaction in the hearts of men." The Word of God is full of living power. The good news is "The Word of the Lord endures forever" 1 Peter: 1:25.

Message Bible John 6:63b, "The words that I speak to you, are spirit and they are life. Every word I have spoken to you is a Spirit-word, and so it is life-making."

We need to speak God's word into our own lives and over our ill-functioning body parts. The spirit is life-giving; the flesh does no benefit at all! 1 Thessalonians 2:13 says, "The Word of God which effectually works within you who believe." As a Woman of Worth, you need to realize that God's Word coming out of your mouth powerfully works in your life and in your body. You speak God's Word in the Name of Jesus, all the authority of heaven gets involved. Speak what you

need. Doesn't God know what I need? Yes! He wants that exchange; He cares about what concerns you and He loves for you to come to Him. So, we just "name it and claim it?" No! You speak God's Word and believe it. Proverbs 18:21, "Death and life are in the power of the tongue." When you speak the Word of God, it goes out of your mouth, back into your ear and down into your Spirit/soul. Every time you say it, you make another little layer of truth inside you as the Spirit-word is life-making. If you want to make your life strong, enforce it with God's Word! A real plus is the Devil won't stay anywhere near you!

Be a real Woman of Worth and get the Word inside of you. When you exercise, i.e., walk, swim, ride your bike, or whatever you do for exercise, go over scripture you're trying to memorize. Don't do any of that? Your body needs some kind of organized movement (flipping the remote only involves one finger)! God gave us bodies with the intent of them functioning; we need to strengthen them just as surely as your mind needs to be used to stay strong. My daughter takes her prayer list with her as she walks. You can pray for the people living in the houses you pass by; put scripture on cards and go over them as you walk. I handed my scripture card to a bank teller one day by mistake instead of my deposit slip. When she asked, "What's this?" I glanced at it and said, "Oh, that's a really good

one" and read it to her! She wasn't impressed but it gave me some practice. While stopped at a lengthy light recently, I could see the face of the woman ahead of me in her side mirror, and felt led to pray for her. God prompted me to do so; thus I believe it filled some need of her life.

Isaiah 44:26: "God confirms the words of His servants and performs the counsel of His messengers." If God "confirms" **your** words, think of how much more of an impression it makes when you speak **His** Word!

Isaiah 44:24-25, "Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, and He who formed you from the womb: I am the Lord, who makes all things, Who stretches out the heavens all alone, Who spreads abroad the earth by Myself... Who turns wise men backward, and makes their knowledge foolishness..."

Isaiah 45:2-7, "I will go before you and make the crooked places straight ... I will give you treasures of darkness and hidden riches of secret places that you may know that I, the Lord, Who call you by your name am the God of Israel ... I have even called you by your name; I have named you though you have not known Me. I am the Lord and there is no other, there is no God besides Me. I will gird you though you have not known Me. That they may know from the rising of the sun to its setting that there is none besides Me. I am

the Lord and there is no other; I form the light and create darkness, I make peace and create calamity; I, the Lord, do all these things!" VS. 11: "Ask Me of things to come concerning My sons and concerning the work of My hands, you command Me."

We are the work of His hands ... and He invites us to ask Him of things to come and actually says the work of My hands, **you** command me. God responds to us. The God who made the universe and stretched out the heavens all alone is the same God who shaped and formed us in the womb. There is none like our God, yet He has named us, even before we knew Him.

The God of Jacob is our God. Jacob wrestled with God until God blessed him. From that time forward, he was a changed man. We all have times of crisis; a time when we're stripped and our resources fail and we either face ruin or we *face something better*. Before we receive either, we surrender completely to Him; we quit striving in our own wisdom, strength and self-righteousness and rely solely on Him. We cling to His mercy and trust what He has promised! He knows how to lead us to crisis and He knows how to lead us through! "I simply cast me at your feet Jesus, throw your loving arms around me and save me, use, help me, Lord! Let me rise above where I am and know your victory! I go with you, Jesus" is my prayer!

You are a Woman of Worth and we read in Isaiah 48:10, "I have chosen you in the furnace of affliction." We have to know that God's Word is like an armor fireproofing us against the heat of affliction. Pain may come; but God has already been there. Poverty may come through my door, but God lives here. Sickness may consume my body but God preserves my soul. He hides me in His quiver. God, manifest Yourself in me. Disclose Yourself to me in whatever form you deem best. You have chosen me. "The weight of suffering seems to be a tombstone hung around your neck but actually it's what is necessary to hold the diver down while searching for pearls." *Julius Richter*

God's Word in my mouth is mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. Everything the Father has, He has given to Jesus; and Jesus has given it to you. The Holy Spirit will stick with us until we get it. He helps us translate it into personal victory. The life in Christ – same life; same everything that God gave Jesus is for us; we are made alive to Him when we take our place in Christ. He's already won our victory. Silence does not indicate He is absent; a delay is not denial; we have access to the kingdom of God.

In Mark 11:23-24, Jesus says to "speak or say" three times and to "believe" one time with regard to praying for something. We need to

Speak and we need to *declare* and *use* the authority of speech! "My Word in your mouth is just as powerful as My Word is in My mouth." It was spoken before it was written. It was written so that it could be spoken!" Taken from "Paul's System of Truth" by *Mark Hankins*.

Women, is it so important that we know and speak God's Word into our families. It is so important for us to remain true to the truth of it. Your life may be the only Bible in your family and in your network of friends. My mother loved God's Word, always, and loved older people ... now I am one! But she did give me that heritage, as I love His Word and I do love older people. I urge you to be an example to those around you, i.e., to love and to verbally speak His Word. It has the power to change your life, your health, your finances and all those sticky relationships you just can't seem to get right. God's Word inside of you has the power to establish you and give you new growth. If you will allow it, it will empower every part of your heart, mind and will. If we fill our minds with His Word, there isn't room for even a scrap of any part of "us."

Women of Worth are obedient and faithful to the things you know He's spoken into your life. God will faithfully keep what **He has spoken to you**.

Study notes:

1. "The Words that I speak to you, they are spirit and they are life" John 6:63b. What word has God spoken to you this week that you need to write down in order to enforce it?
2. Why does God want you to tell Him what you need when He already knows?
3. God loved you enough to die for you; He's chosen you; He's named you when you didn't know Him. What one thing would you desire most from Him?
4. Mark 11:23-24 Jesus is speaking and He tells you three times to "say" and one time to "believe" for your whatever's What is it you need to ask for?

5. We all have times when we need a little fireproofing from the heat of affliction, what are you facing right now that you need that protection?

This lesson was taken from my own daily journal entirely and I'm still quoting: "Fill my mind with your Word; renew it within my spirit, help me to grasp what is from You is my prayer."

Psalms 145:1, "I will lift You high in praise my God, O my King and I will bless Your Name in all eternity."

Lesson #5:

God Has a Plan for Women of Worth

"A woman entered an ice cream store in Kansas City, Mo, and purchased an ice cream cone. She paid for it and as she turned around, she found herself face to face with Paul Neumann who was in town filming a movie. She was totally mesmerized as she gazed into those incredibly blue eyes when she heard him say, "Hello!" She was totally speechless but she did manage to stumble out of the store, when she discovered she didn't have her ice cream cone. As she turned to go back into the store, again she is face to face with Paul Neumann who said, "Are you looking for your ice cream cone?" She managed to nod her head. "You put it in your purse with your change!" Taken from *The Word for you Today*.

I seem to relate well to that bit of humor as I am frequently amazed at my own displacement of personal items. Sometimes we are so overwhelmed, we don't know if we have ice cream in our purse or if we're in our purse, and that's when we're glad God always has a delivery plan in place for us!

A Woman of Worth may be confused and experience times of being completely overwhelmed and so it's comforting to know this: "God has examined my heart and knows

everything about me. He knows when I sit or stand. When far away, He knows my every thought. He charts the path ahead of me and tells me where to stop and rest. Every moment, He knows where I am. He knows what I am going to say before I even say it. He both precedes and follows me and places His hand of blessing on my head...He saw me before I was born and scheduled every day of my life before I began to breathe. Every day was recorded in His book. How precious it is Lord, to realize you're thinking about me constantly. I can't even count how many times a day your thoughts turn toward me and when I waken in the morning, you are still thinking of me!" Living Bible Psalm 139: 1-5; 16-18

God never stops thinking about you. The Lord God Almighty scheduled every day of your life before you were. Every day was recorded in His book before you ever left the womb. Regardless of how you view your life, God's plan for you is good and He's already been in your tomorrow. Eugene Peterson said in his introduction to the Book of Matthew, "Every day we wake up in the middle of something that is already going on, that has been going on for a long time; not only was everything previous to us completed in Jesus, we are completed in Jesus!"

Your life is a prize, is that how you view it? Is that how you would describe it? Maybe you

need to start saying what God says about it and He says it's a prize. Jeremiah tells us that at least three times. Life is something you will never be without; you will never stop living. When God breathed into man the breath of life, it was for keeps and it never quits. The best news I can give you is that God not only breathed life into you but He has a structured plan in place. Where we get into trouble is when that plan seems to go awry, we want to straighten it up and get it back on track. We want to help God out.

Jeremiah 45:4-5, "Behold what I have built, I will break down, and what I have planted, I will pluck up...do you seek great things for yourself? Do not seek them for behold I will bring adversity on all flesh, says the Lord, but I will give your life to you as a prize in all places, wherever you go." In this particular instance, Baruch had been Jeremiah's friend more than once and Baruch was hoping because of that friendship, a portion of Jeremiah's power and distinction would befall him. But because of just his association with Jeremiah, all those dreams were lost! What Jeremiah was telling him was "all these people will be destroyed but you will be given life...it's your prize". It was his booty from the battle that was about to take place. Baruch was seeking recognition, a place of prominence; instead, God granted him life when a whole nation of people faced death. When God said to Baruch, "Are you seeking greatness; don't do it," God knew in

Baruch's eyes that was to have the recognition and distinction God had placed in Jeremiah. And, usually that's the emphasis we would place on greatness for an individual. True greatness is better exemplified in serving others.

As a Woman of Worth, you are worthy; your life is a prize, it may not be what you would hope for but God's plan for you is always good. 2 Peter 1:3 "His divine power has given to you all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of Him." When your finances, relationships, health or whatever seem to be deteriorating, concentrate on knowing Him better. We can trust Him to meet our needs in all things through the knowledge of Him. The Living Bible says it this way: "Do you want more and more of God's kindness and peace? Then learn to know him better and better. For as you know Him better, He will give you, through His great power, everything you need for living a truly good life." 2 Peter 2:2-3. God's plan is to show His power working in you to accomplish His purpose in it all. Don't look to someone else for your purpose. Develop your relationship with the One who created you because He has a plan.

Living Bible 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12, "God will make you the kind of children He wants to have—will make you as good as you wish you could be!—rewarding your faith with His

power." Feed the seeds He's placed within you and Voilà! - watch you grow; Miracle Grow could go out of business!

Message Bible Psalms 91:1, "You who sit down in the High God's Presence, spend the night in Shaddai's shadow, say this: God is my refuge, I trust in Him and I'm safe. ...Fear nothing, not disease that prowls through the darkness, (doesn't sickness always seem so much worse in the dead of night?), nor disasters that erupt at high noon." It's not uncommon to awake in the middle of the night with some devastation going on in our bodies but we're not as prone to be prepared for disasters that erupt at high noon. About two years ago, my husband I traveled from Fort Myers, FL to Pittsburgh, PA, to attend our daughter's wedding that was to take place the next day in New Castle, Pa. Another daughter and her husband picked us up at the airport and we were well on our way when I discovered my purse was missing. As soon as we could exit, we turned around and hurried back to the terminal as I was certain I had left it in the Ladies Restroom. It was not there. It contained my credit cards, blank checks, our return tickets, and cell phone, etc. I was devastated that I had done such a thing. My daughter helped check every possible place; my husband was out in the trash cans digging through who knows what. "Fear nothing, not disaster that erupts at high noon;" it was exactly noon when we had arrived at the airport; I wasn't fearful,

I was terrorized!! God always makes a way for us. It was 7 hours later but my son-in-law was gracious enough to make the long drive back to downtown Pittsburgh to make contact with the woman who had found my purse. She had done the same thing once and the person picking up her purse delivered it to her door; she had said if she had the opportunity, she would see that the owner was the receiver. She had called the numbers on my cell phone until someone knew how to contact me. Did God have a rescue operation in place, a plan for me that morning? God can handle disasters that erupt at high noon!

It's okay if you stick your ice cream cone in your purse when you are overwhelmed! God knows how to preserve it and He knows how to preserve you ... He has a plan!!

Study notes:

1. Read Psalms 119:1-16 and write down what is most meaningful to you:

2. In Jeremiah 45, God told Baruch that his life was a prize. In what way do you view your life as being a prize?

3. God has a power plan in place for your life. Write down 2 Peter 1:2-3 and memorize it:

In Jeremiah 45:5, God said, "I will give your life to you as a prize in all places wherever you go." The devil wants to steal your prize. Read the verse until you believe it!

Lesson #6:

Women of Worth are In

You may at this moment be **in** your house or you may be **in** your car; you may be dressed **in** your best or **in** rags; you may be **in** love or **in** tears! You may be **in** a mess and you may be **in** a state of ecstasy; all of which are subject to change! We'll talk about an "in group" that is for always!

Oswald Chambers offers this: "... our whole strength lies **in** the fact that here you are put **into** soak before God. You have no idea where God is going to engineer your circumstances, no knowledge of what strain is going to be put on you; and if you waste your time **in** overactive energies instead of getting **into** soak on the great fundamental truths of God's Redemption, you will snap when the strain comes; but if this time of soaking before God is being spent **in** getting rooted and grounded **in** God, you will remain true to Him whatever happens." I loved this.

Mom used to put the clothes into soak before washing them to get the dirt out. If we are put into soak before God, the same could happen to us; it could be means of getting rid of a lot of the dirt, as well as so many other benefits! A good long soaking in God's Word is what we need. Mom soaked stubborn stains overnight!

As worthy women, we are a part of the “in group” that is forever, just as these verses outline:

Ephesians 1:3, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places **in Christ.**”

This verse tells us that we are **in** Christ; in fact Paul uses the phrase 160 times in his letters and 30 times in the Book of Ephesians. Not only do we have faith **in** Jesus, our lives are **in** Him. A fish lives **in** the water and a plant is **in** the soil and neither can live without being joined to the other. So it is with us; we are spiritually **in Him** and our spirit life will not survive without Him.

It is more than surviving; it’s a living union **in** Him.

- Romans 8:1, “We are not condemned when we are **in** Christ.”
- Romans 6:11, “We are made alive **in** Him ...
- 2 Corinthians 5:17, We are made new **in** Him ...
- Ephesians 2:10, “As His new creation, we were created in Him to serve Him.”

Each of these verses enforce being “in Him.” It’s easy to believe all the benefits we receive from being in Christ. What does God get out of it? He created us for fellowship and

to have a close relationship with Him; how's it going?

Ephesians 1:4-6, "Just as He chose us **in** Him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame before Him **in** love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted **in** the Beloved."

If you ever want to know what you are in Christ, here's the answer... mostly you are loved and you are blessed. Because of the above verses, here's what you need to do each day: remind Satan every morning, "Do your best, Devil, but I am:

- blessed with all spiritual blessings **in** heavenly places **in Christ**
- chosen **in Him** before the foundation of the world; destined to be holy and blameless
- predestined to be an adopted child
- accepted **in** the Beloved."

You are accepted...you don't have to have the approval of others even though you long really want it. Romans 15:7, "Christ accepts you." Psalms 27:10b, "when my father and mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up." Someone has said regarding his parents: "I never know if I'm gonna be hugged or

slugged!" Your Heavenly Father gives good hugs!

You are valuable...According to the latest medical statistics you are a \$6 million dollar person. That's because everything computes to dollars in our world, but God said "You are precious in My sight, you have been honored and I love you" Isaiah 43:4.

You are loveable...God really does loves you unconditionally and consistently. "The mountains and the hills may crumble but my love for you will never end so says the Lord who loves you" Isaiah 54:10.

You are forgivable... Isaiah 43:25, "I forgive you your sins and will not hold them against you." Living Bible Ephesians 1:4, "We stand before Him without a single fault, we who stand before Him covered with His love."

You are capable...What happened that scars your confidence? Was it rejection from your peers, partners, or parents? Jesus was perfect and He was rejected, as we read in Isaiah 53:3. We all experience hurts and get scared. Broken bones will heal before a broken spirit. And thoughtless words can wound as deeply as a sword as stated in Proverbs 12:18. What can heal your confidence? God heals the brokenhearted and binds up your wounds. Just have a little talk with Jesus. Marilyn Orton sent out a video this

week of two empty chairs; put yourself in one and Jesus in the other; have a little talk with Him and ask Him how you're doing; it's a very moving video. Message Bible Romans 12:1-5, "So here's what I want you to do, God helping you, take your everyday ordinary life, your sleeping, eating, going-to-work and walking around life and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for Him. Fix your attention on God; it will change you from the inside out. Readily recognize what He wants from you and quickly respond to it." Put Jesus in a chair beside you and talk it all over with Him; He made you loveable, forgivable and capable!

Paul says in Ephesians 1 that we are blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavens, in the supernatural realm; i.e., that which is just beyond what our natural eye can see. In five translations, every one of them said, "Who **has** blessed with either *every* or *all* spiritual blessing **in** heaven—that's not "going to" but "has!" "So overflowing is His love for us that He took away all of our sins by the blood of His Son by whom we are saved." Some would say, "Aren't we lucky? "Luck has nothing to do with God's plan, it's His favor.

In going over that favor every morning, you can add Ephesians 1:7-12 to your list and just in case Satan sticks around long enough to

listen, tell him, "Do your best, but here is how it is:"

- I am redeemed through His blood (Revised Standard)
- He has lavished me with wisdom and insight (Revised Standard)
- He has purposed me **in** Himself (King James)
- I have obtained an inheritance (King James)
- I am sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise (King James)

We are the apple of His eye; we are His inheritance, through adoption and redemption, we are His family. We are His special possession. The redeemed are His special treasure. Every last one of us could be labeled "Teacher's pet." He is the Sovereign Almighty God and He is the One who works out everything in agreement with the decision of His will for you. Why would He do this? That we might bring praise to His glory.

How many of you women have experienced changes in the last few months in your health, emotions, or finances? God doesn't shift when your circumstances change; He isn't like that. You cannot become unredeemed. You are sealed with the promise of the Holy Spirit. The very same power that raised Jesus Christ from the grave lives within you.

God has given you the Holy Spirit to **enjoy now** and we don't have to wait for the redemption for the possession. We know now that we have a future inheritance, a time in eternity when it is complete. We are **in Christ now**. We may not understand all the theological terms but we can understand that God says that we're **in "The In Group!"**

A pastor by the name of David Albertson says he had a dream in which God allowed him to go to heaven briefly which was wonderful but before returning him to earth, he spent some time in hell. He said in his dream he experienced the pains of fire and saw the faces of torment all around him. When he awoke, he knew God had given him an experience and the fire he felt in his body is now a fire within him to try to lead as many as he possibly can to Christ. Women, heaven is real and so is hell. The time for us to warn others is short. God help us to take advantage of the opportunities He gives us today.

Study notes:

1. You get dressed **in** layers of clothing; not everything shows but it all serves a purpose. What is one thing that hinders you from getting dressed right **in Christ** each morning and what is your solution?

2. Which should influence you the most ... the physical or spiritual realities **in** which you live?

3. Ephesians 1:3 tells us that God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing **in** heaven; are you living as if that's true **in** your life?

4. God has lavished His love upon us, given us His favor and blessing and He's done this because He wanted to and so we might bring praise and glory to Him. Write a response to Him of the love He has lavished on you:

Lesson #7:

Women of Worth, Speak to Your Mountain

When Jesus walked this earth, He spoke to the sea and calmed a storm; He spoke to a fig tree and it withered away; and in teaching his disciples, He encouraged them in their faith to say to a mountain, "Move from here to there!" It's okay to do anything that Jesus did, right?

Removing mountains in your own life is totally an act of God's grace and is just as possible for you as it was for the prophets of old. Revised Standard Bible Zechariah 4:5-7, "Then the angel who talked with me answered and said to me, "Do you not know what these are?" And I said, "No, my lord." So he answered and said to me: "This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might not by power, but by My Spirit,' says the Lord of Hosts. 'Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain! And he shall bring forth the capstone with shouts of "Grace, grace to it!" Message Bible VS 7: "So big mountain, who do you think you are? Next to Zerubbabel, you're nothing but a molehill!"

The Israelites were returning from exile to Jerusalem and faced the ruins of what had

once been a splendid city and a glorious temple and Zechariah encouraged them to rebuild the temple which would be accomplished not by human strength but by the power of God's Spirit. Zechariah (God's prophet) and Zerubbabel (Governor of Judah) stirred the people to rebuild the ruined temple and to set in place the capstone which would mark the completion of the building. This was done with shouts of thanksgiving, declaring it was all done by grace, grace! An understanding heart will note these shouts regarding the capstone being in place were uttered before the building was finished. They were thanking God for His favor of a newly built temple before completion! You can make the same application in your life, if you are doing what God has spoken into your life to do! You can thank Him at the time of your request for what is as good as done! This building is far from complete, but they are seeing it with the capstone in place.

The "mountain" was a figurative reference to the obstacles the people would face in the work ahead of them. We need to address, i.e., "speak to our mountains" in the power and Spirit of the Lord and tell them to become as "plains", to be brought low, ground into sand, and then believe God will level them. "Who are you, O great mountain, who do you think you are?" Some of them are nothing but a figment of your imagination; they exist only as you've concocted them and you need to speak

to them in the Name of Jesus to become nothing.

This entire chapter is so worthy of study; it is a vision in which the eyes of the Lord are over the hands of Zerubbabel, as he holds the plumb line to not only lay the foundation, but to finish the work, (VS. 10). Those same “eyes of the Lord which scan to and fro throughout the whole earth” are over the work of your hands as you respond to the work He’s given you to do. Don’t miss VS. 10 as He says, “Who has despised the day of small things.” God delights in showing Himself strong! He is the God of All Mountains; and your mountain could be nothing but a molehill.

John Maxwell says “Don’t just change your life enough to get away from your problems. Change enough to solve them. Don’t change your circumstances to improve your life—change yourself to improve your circumstances. You can’t do the same ole things and expect different results; get different results by doing something new. Don’t look at it as something painful that must be done—look at it as something helpful that can be done. There is an immediate price tag for change – pay it! Or else you’ll pay the ultimate price of never changing or improving. “When your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow for when endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete.” James 1:3-4, “Building

character is a day by day process; don't try shortcuts, it only delays growth. Be open to change and pursue it."

Could I encourage you to try "speaking to your mountain" and say: "So, big mountain, who do you think you are?" John Maxwell says you can't do the same ole things and expect different results; get results by doing something new. Jesus spoke to water, trees and stones. Billy Graham preached to tree stumps. The Mountain Mover is the Title Holder of the Whole Earth. Go for it! He is not only the sum of it all, He is **the all**; the resource to any "whatever" you have! I say, "I count it all but loss; neither count my life dear to myself, keep going, baby, until you're gone!" I want to finish strong, don't you? Speak to those things that come against you; no one knows better than you what they are, so you do it, in the Name of Jesus!

Are you one of those women who think that once Jesus left this earth and ascended to heaven and God sent the Holy Spirit to aid and assist us that His work was done? Except, of course, to prepare a place for us? Jesus worked while here on earth to influence as many people as He could but now that He's in heaven, His efforts are even greater. I believe He is using every power and strategy available, dispatching angels with all kinds of plans for winning everyone who will respond to Him before He comes back. It seems to me that

when He dispatches messengers with a new strategy for touching lives and they come back shaking their heads, He quickly puts out a new approach and they speedily dispatch it. God loves the sinner so much and He stops at nothing short of sin to win the lost. God is putting up with all this sin a little longer in order for as many as possible to be saved. I have been so amiss in saying, "I'm glad I'm as old as I am, maybe I'll be outa here before long." Never again! My prayer is God will leave me here as long as I can possibly be used to influence anyone for Christ. With His help, the last years to be the best years! "What are you, O great mountain? Not by might, nor by power; but by My Spirit says the Lord of Hosts!" Zechariah 4:6. Address your mountain and be free to serve Him!

Study notes:

1. What looms as a mountain in front of you right now?

2. In Zechariah 4:6, what was the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel?

3. In Zechariah 4:7 what did the angel say the mountain would become?

The rebuilding of the temple wasn't accomplished by human strength but by the power of God's Spirit. Rebuilding the temple was God's will and He brought it to pass. He will accomplish the rebuilding and structuring of your life as well by the same power. NKJV Jer. 31:3-4: "The Lord has appeared of old to me saying: Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with loving kindness I have drawn you. Again I will build you, and you shall be rebuilt."

"So big mountain, who do you think you are? You're nothing but a molehill!"

Lesson # 8:

Women of Worth, Be Encouraged!!

We all have times when we need to be encouraged; when we just need His word spoken into our hearts to lift us up.

Living Bible Psalms 18:1-3 "Lord, how I love you! For you have done such tremendous things for me. The Lord is my fort where I can enter and be safe; no one can follow me in and slay me. He is a rugged mountain where I hide; He is my Savior, a rock where none can reach me, and a tower of safety. He is my shield. (*This is my favorite part*)... He is like the strong horn of a mighty fighting bull. All I need to do is cry to him—oh praise the Lord—and I am saved from all my enemies! VS. 28-33: "You have turned on my light! The Lord my God has made my darkness turn to light. Now in your strength I can scale any wall ... What a God He is! How perfect in every way! All his promises prove true. He is a shield for everyone who hides behind him. For who is God except our Lord? Who but He is a rock? He fills me with strength and protects me wherever I go. He gives me the surefootedness of a mountain goat upon the crags. He leads me safely along the top of the cliffs."

I am a changed person when I sharpen my focus to believe the Bible was written for

me! Psalms 20:4: "May He grant you your heart's desire and fulfill all your plans." II Kings 19:27 "I know everything about you, all your plans and where you are going next." As Women of Worth, we all want God to bless our lives and give us direction in living. Be encouraged that God wants you to have a blessed and fruitful life more than you do! We serve an awesome God who closely watches everything we do. Ps 37:23-24: "The steps of good men are directed by the Lord. He delights in each step they take. If they fall it isn't fatal, for the Lord holds them with His hand."

I run to the Rock; He is my shield and tower of safety; He is like the strong horn of a mighty fighting bull; He turns on my light; He gives me strength to scale any wall; He is perfect in every way and all His promises are true; He fills me with strength and protects me wherever I go; He gives me hinds' feet and sets me secure on the heights. What do I want from God's Word? I want all He wants to give me (every word)!

Psalms 19:7 "The law (word) of the Lord is perfect reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure." The law or the Word of the Lord is His instructions, guidelines and they are flawless, complete and trustworthy in every way, bringing newness in our soul and spirit. What God says is the way it is. VS. 8: "The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing

the heart, the commandment of the Lord is pure enlightening the eyes." All of the statutes/commandments and requirements of the Lord give you a lighter heart and will provide a radiant light to your spirit eyes. His Word provides a light in our path. VS. 10: "More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb." VS. 14: "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord my rock and my redeemer." What do I want from God's Word? I want everything He has promised in these verses! I go to the Bible for Him to revive my soul, instruct me, direct, counsel, comfort, convict, stabilize and encourage me! God's word is better than gold, even fine gold!

No one is perfect; we would like to live our life without regrets but we all have them. What do we do with our guilt; the things from the past that try to haunt us in our present life? Psalms 32:1 "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." What happiness in knowing our sins are carried away, covered by the blood and cancelled from the ledger. The more we read, the more we appreciate what God has done for us. We all rationalize with "everybody does it;" we neutralize the sting of the past; we minimize it with "it's not so bad"; and it is so easy to compromise! The person who refuses to admit

his/her mistakes can never be successful. But if you confess, admit and forsake your sin, then you get another chance. Don't blame others. We can so readily accuse our own brothers (Psalms 50:20) and find fault with them. We try to pass the buck, make accusations to balance our own guilt. Or sometimes, we go to the other extreme and never quit beating up on ourselves. Stop beating a horse that's been dead a long time! Women, when God forgives you, forgive yourself, and take encouragement that God has a good life for you now. Go with Him! Psalms 18:46 "The Lord lives; and blessed be my rock and exalted be the God of my salvation." "It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord and to sing praise to the Lord most high! To declare His loving kindness in the morning and His faithfulness at night." Psalms 92:1-2

Edgar Guest says: "Stop talking about something and do it! I'd rather see a sermon than hear one any day. I'd rather one would walk with me than merely show me the way. I may misunderstand you and the high advice you give; but there's no misunderstanding of how you act and how you live!"

Women, be encouraged! God sees and knows and understands what you need. He doesn't deal with us in the masses, but comes to us individually. He stayed on the cross until every one of your sins were paid for. He will stay

with you until you recognize His glory and Presence in your life's circumstances. He loves you!

Study notes:

1. God encourages and comforts us in His Word; in turn we can encourage and comfort someone else. Has God laid someone on your heart you can encourage? Write down a scripture verse you can share with them:

2. How much of an encouragement is it to you to know 2 Kings 19:27? (These words were actually spoken to an evil king; so be encouraged God knows where we're all going next!) Write your comment regarding this verse:

3. Read the verses again in Psalms 19 and be encouraged that even though we are faulty, His Word is perfect. Write the verse in it that is most meaningful to you:

Run to God, flee to Him, take refuge under His wings; you will always find more there than you have ever before seen or known. Psalms 37:5: "Commit everything you do to the Lord. Trust him to help you do it and He will." (The verses given in this study were taken from the Living Bible).

Lesson # 9:

Women of Worth, Be a Good Mother!

Hannah, a true woman of God was willing to give and because of that gave her only son; isn't that what God did?

We read about Hannah in I Samuel 1; she was married to Elkanah who had two wives. The first was Hannah and the second was Peninnah. Peninnah had several children and Hannah had none. In the home, everything centered around the children and Hannah was left out. When they attended a simple church service, Peninnah can easily fill the pew with her children while Hannah had no one. I Samuel 1:6 "Peninnah made matters worse by taunting Hannah because of her barrenness." Her rival wife treated her cruelly, rubbing it in and never letting her forget that God had not given her children. This went on year after year.

Each year Elkanah and his family journeyed to the Tabernacle at Shiloh to worship the Lord of the heavens and to sacrifice to God. Elkanah would celebrate the happy occasion by giving presents to Peninnah and her children, but although he loved Hannah very much, he could give her only one present, for the Lord had sealed her womb; so she had no children to give presents to. The Bible says every time

she went to Shiloh she could expect to be taunted; she was continually reduced to tears and had no appetite. VS. 8: "What's the matter, Hannah?" Elkanah would exclaim, "Why aren't you eating? Why make such a fuss over having no children? Isn't having me better than having ten sons?" Perhaps he's expressing a little inflated ego, but he loved his wife and wanted her to feel loved.

VS. 9-11: "One evening after supper, when they were at Shiloh, Hannah went over to the Tabernacle. Eli the priest was sitting at his customary place beside the entrance. She was in deep anguish and was crying bitterly as she prayed to the Lord. And, she made this vow: O, Lord of heaven, if you will look down upon my sorrow and answer my prayer and give me a son, then I will give him back to you, he'll be yours for his entire lifetime and his hair shall never be cut." (True Israelite women dedicated their first born to the Lord in reverent remembrance of their deliverance from Egypt).

Eli had been watching her and he saw Hannah's mouth moving as she was praying silently and when he heard no sound, he thought she had been drinking. What Hannah was doing was praying from her heart. Did you know those are the prayers that are registered in heaven ... the ones that come from your heart, not so much as those from your lips? Hannah began her prayer alone but

found that Eli joined in with her, in faith, too! She tells him: "I'm so very sad and I was pouring out my heart to the Lord." Eli tells her, "In that case, cheer up, May the Lord of Israel grant you your petition, whatever it is." This made Hannah very happy and the Bible tells us that "the Lord remembered her petition and in the process of time, a baby boy was born to her. She named him Samuel (meaning "asked of God") because she said, "I asked the Lord for him." VS.17-20 Every time Hannah even said her baby's name, she remembered she had him because she had asked of God. What are you asking God for today? If He granted you your request, would you be willing to give it all in exchange for a better relationship with Him? Hannah wanted this baby more than anything else in the world.

Hannah held her baby's finger, but God who made the baby, held Hannah's heart. Now she knew and loved the Lord better than she knew and loved her baby. Message Bible Psalms 18:24, "God rewrote the text of my life when I opened the book of my heart to His eyes." The same words are repeated in 2 Samuel 22:25. What part of your life would you like the Lord to rewrite?

The next year Peninnah trekked with her children and Elkanah to the Tabernacle but Hannah remained at home, telling her husband that she would go the next year when the baby was weaned and at that time, she would leave

him there. Hannah was Elkanah's first choice of a wife and I'm sure she was his favorite. Peninnah was probably delighted with her decision to stay home.

What do you do with the sticky situations and people in your life? In our society today, many homes are made up of children from other marriages and raising them to honor and love the Lord is a challenge. As mothers, we have to learn to live out a "God-willed life, not a self-willed one." It's all incorporated with God's desire to take the heart of stone out of us and give us a new heart and a new spirit as found in Ezekiel 36:26-27, I love how the Message Bible puts it, "I'll give you a new heart, and put a new spirit in you. I'll remove the stone heart from your body and replace it with a heart that is God-willed, not self-willed. I'll put my Spirit in you and make it possible for you to do what I tell you and live by my commands." God loves to do that for you. He will do it when your heart wants it to happen. Hannah's heart was right before the Lord. God will answer the cry of your heart; He did it for Hannah, He'll do it for you. Being a good Mom is hard but we serve a good God!

The next year, Hannah went to the Tabernacle with Samuel and confronted Eli. She said in I Samuel 1:26, "Do you remember me? I asked the Lord to give me this child and he has given me my request and now I am giving him to the Lord for as long as he lives." I don't know

about you, but I dedicated my children to the Lord, one at the age of six weeks and one at the age of 3 months, but after the service, I took them home with me! The Bible says "So she left him there at the Tabernacle for the Lord to use." She gave up the pleasure of raising him at home, and this was her only son.

After she has given him up, her prayer in 1 Samuel 2 is one of the strongest prayers ever recorded: "How I rejoice in the Lord!" How he has blessed me! Now I have an answer for my enemies, for the Lord has solved my problem. How I rejoice! No one is as holy as the Lord! There is no other God, nor any Rock like our God." Has anything changed at home? No! The only one changed is Hannah; she now loves the Lord more than she loved the child. Her desire for the Lord was stronger than her desire for a son.

VS. 11 "So they returned home without Samuel; and the child became the Lord's helper." Vs. 18-19: "Samuel wore a little linen robe just like the priest's. Each year his mother made a little coat for him and brought it to him when she came with her husband." Hannah was blessed in her heart. She overcame Peninnah's stinging words; she's still living with her but no longer *listening* to her.

VS. 20-21: "Before they returned home, Eli would bless Elkanah and Hannah and ask God to give them other children to take the place of this one they had given to the Lord. And the Lord gave Hannah three sons and two daughters.

Meanwhile Samuel grew up in the service of the Lord." Samuel became the redeeming prophet during the closing days of the judges. Hannah's prayer and desire for a son affected the entire nation of Israel. Women, maybe you need to utter the cry of your heart to the Lord, it just could be that He will cause it to reach beyond your request!

Study Notes:

- 1 Hannah was loved by her husband but she allowed Peninnah to make her life miserable. Someone may be "mowing you down"; tell the Lord on 'em! Hannah, "Asked of the Lord" ... what do you need to be asking?
- 2 Hannah gave her only son. That's what God did; He gave His only Son and then watched Him die for our sins. Maybe your son today is a big disappointment, don't give up; God is still in the raising up business!

- 3 In Hannah's prayer in I Sam 2:7: "The Lord sends poverty and wealth; He humbles and He exalts;" mostly we experience both processes. What relationship do you need to focus on right now in order for Him to be exalted?

As a mother, you may feel a sense of failure or not being adequate. I raised four girls and I can tell you, I didn't do it all right. I did do a lot of what Hannah did, I "asked of the Lord!"

"All changes come from Him who never changes. When we come down in the world, it is of the Lord and so we may take it patiently; when we rise in the world, it is of the Lord and we may accept it thankfully. In any case, the Lord has done it and it is well. It seems it is Jehovah's way to lower those whom He means to raise and to strip those whom He intends to clothe. If it is His way, it is the wisest and best way. If I am now *enduring the bringing low*, I may well rejoice because I see in it the preface to *the lifting up*. The more we are humbled by grace, the more we shall be exalted in glory." *Charles H. Spurgeon*

Lesson # 10:

Women of Worth God Speaks to You

Today, do you sense God speaking to you? God speaks all the time! If you are not aware of this, then consider the list below as being some of the ways in which He does speak to you: for His response. His response

1. **Circumstances** - God is speaking to you in your circumstances right now. Maybe your circumstances are very painful, difficult and seemingly impossible; God knows all about it, talk to Him and listen for His response.
2. **Counsel** - God can speak to you through Godly counsel. Psalms 73:23: "God always guides you with His counsel." Much can be gained through those who give wise counsel.
3. **Peace** - God can speak peace into your troubled life. Col. 3:15 "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts ... and be thankful."
4. **People** - God speaks through prophets or ordinary people. You can be talking in just an ordinary conversation and someone will unknowingly say the very thing God has earlier pointed out to you -

that's God speaking through that person. He/she doesn't realize it, but you do instantly! God uses people to speak truth into your life. In Acts 21:10-11, the prophet Agabus took Paul's belt and bound his own hands and feet and said, "Thus saith the Holy Spirit, so shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles." God didn't speak to Paul but the Holy Spirit revealed His message to His prophet to let Paul know. God still has prophets today who speak as the Holy Spirit leads them.

5. **Dreams and Visions** - Solomon, Peter and Joseph and many others had dreams and visions. Joseph had two dreams, one recorded in Genesis 37:5-7. He foolishly repeated the first one to his brothers, causing them to hate him; the second one caused his father to rebuke him. It would seem that he bragged and did this in a prideful manner. God never gave him another one. Ever! However, after years of discipline, God gave him the ability to interpret dreams (how gracious is our God)! He used the very thing that brought Joseph to near destruction to catapult him to a position of power and command in all the land of Egypt...second only to the King. Women, God will forgive you when you truly repent. It's comforting to know:

He's so pleased when we finally get it right! If Joseph had quit because he blew it, He would never been a Ruler in Egypt. God always has something new for you, women, when you want to please Him! Be receptive to whatever dream He puts in your heart.

6. Thoughts - Amos 4:13 "He declares to man what his thought is; He who forms mountains (Mountain Shaper); creates the winds (Wind Maker); the One who makes the morning darkness; Who treads the high places of the earth" declares our thoughts! The Lord of Hosts is His Name." How awesome is that?!!

7. Supernatural Manifestations – God speaks through the elements the wind, thunder, storms, clouds, rain, snow, blizzards and lightening as well as the stars and sun that shines so brightly. God speaks through these, women, as well as the storms and disasters we experience ... including our countless blessings. God's voice rings throughout our land, are we listening? He still speaks today through supernatural manifestations just as he spoke supernaturally to Paul on the Road to Damascus; Moses from the burning bush; Abraham as he raised the knife to slay his only son! God supernaturally intervenes in your life today, rescuing

you from accidents, touching and healing your bodies, sparing you from all sorts of disasters and destruction of finances. There is no other explanation sometimes except the fact “The Lord rescued you!” Message Bible Psalms 91:2, “That’s right—He rescues you from hidden traps, shields you from deadly hazards.” His rescue operation is sometimes natural, and sometimes, supernatural! We just need to realize it is God’s manifestation.

8. **Bible** - God speaks loud and clear in His Word. Read it expecting Him to speak to your heart. It is God’s message for your life. There is nothing you will experience that He has not; it is your roadmap for life now and hereafter.
9. **Whispers** - God whispers in that still small voice. We want Him to shout; rarely does that happen. 1 Kings 19:11, “God wasn’t in the wind, in the earthquake or the fire, but He was in a still small voice.” God was in all of it but not for Elijah. Women, that’s what we all have to learn: how to discern “what is God saying to me?” God speaks ALL the time, but only ears that are listening will hear. “He, who has ears to hear, let him hear.” Revelation Chapters 2 and 3 tell you those words seven times in these two chapters. Jeremiah 7:13, “I spoke

to you, but you did not hear." God was telling Jeremiah He had spoken to His people but because of their wickedness they were not listening.

Romans 10:17, "Faith comes by hearing the Word of God." Satan whispers to you too, but it is all lies. He'll tell you to look at your track record. He'll throw in your face every fault you have, every failure. He whispers it all to God, accuses you night and day. When you've asked for forgiveness, God doesn't know what he's blabbing about. When Satan jumps back on you, you do not need to live it out all over again! Women, learn to listen to the still small voice of the Holy Spirit and you do that by staying each day in the Word so you learn to recognize His voice.

- 10. Humility -** If there's pride in your life, God stops speaking. James 4:6 "God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble." Don't every try to use God's Word to make yourself look better. Mark 4:12 "... seeing they may see and not perceive, and hearing they may hear and not understand." Be a Woman of Worth, a woman who seeks for what to know. Luke 8:18 "Therefore take heed how you hear. For whoever has, to him more will be given;

and whoever does not have, even what he seems to have will be taken from him." The Mountain Maker and Earth Shaker owns it all! Therefore humble yourself before the Lord God Almighty. Open His Word and let your heart and ear hear what He is speaking right now into your spirit. Notes taken from a sermon by *Robert Morris*, in part.

As The Good Shepherd speaks in your life, He will always lead you forward. It's not in your best interest to leave you in a comfortable place. "The shepherd moves the fold up steep mountain slopes but it's always for far better pasture. If God moves us forward, it's always for the best. Eventually it will mean green pastures, quiet waters and mountain heights. "He goes ahead of us." So whatever we encounter, His Presence has been there first. He has already experienced anything He asks you to endure. He already knows the path is not too difficult or strenuous for you. Don't be overly anxious that you can't see too far ahead or that you don't get to choose the path or be weighed down with responsibilities of the future. Follow the One who leads you, one step at a time, as you listen for Him to speak." *Streams in the Desert*

How is God speaking to you? When you don't hear His voice or you're not listening, He may

Speak through your circumstances. Be assured God is always speaking; you need to be attuned and be on His channel. He speaks clearly in His Word. Spend time with Him in it and listen with your ears but more with your heart. "Let Him declare your thoughts" Amos 4:13. Can't change your thoughts? Sure you can. The Maker of the morning darkness and Creator of the wind will help you!

Study Notes:

What circumstance are you experiencing right now that you sense the Lord wants to speak to you about?

Lesson #11:

Women of Worth are Women of Prayer

Most of us could learn a lot about prayer. I love it when God points out to me, (as He recently has done) an overlooked truth in His word. Let's begin with Luke 2:36-37: "Now there was one, Anna, a prophetess. She was of great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity; and this was a widow of about eighty-four years who did not depart from the temple, but served God with fasting and prayers night and day."

"Great power is in prayer but we have to work to obtain it. God would never have listened to Abraham regarding Sodom if Abraham had not communed with Him through the previous years of his life. When Jacob wrested all night at Peniel, it wasn't his first encounter for sure. Even Jesus as He poured out His heart in the garden before the crucifixion was the fruit of many nights of devotion and His often rising before daybreak to pray. Elijah's mighty prayer that stopped the rain from heaven and later opened up the floodgates of heaven was only one of many pleadings with God. Anna never left the temple ... we may never do that, but we need to realize how important it is to persevere in prayer if we want answers and victory in what we're pleading for and to bring

glory to God. We have to pray, pray, and continue to pray." *Charles H. Spurgeon*

Jesus gave to us a perfect model for praying and it is composed of six requests. The first three ask for the kingdom to come and the last three are for God to meet the needs of His people until the kingdom arrives. In Matthew 6:9: "In this manner therefore pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name." When He says, "in this manner," doesn't mean to pray using only these words, but to pray in this way. People so often reduce this to an empty recitation, exactly what the Lord said not to do in VS. 7: "And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do for they think that they will be heard for their many words." Begin with recognizing Him as your heavenly Father and all that entails. "Hallowed be Your name" is to offer Him your highest praise; He is the holy, true, righteous, magnificent, glorious, sovereign God of the entire world which He has spoken into existence. All power belongs to the great Creator. As you openly worship and offer Him your highest praise, just think of the angels in heaven standing before Him day and night who never cease to lift their hands and proclaim "holy, holy, holy is our God!" There is such a need for Hallowing the name of Jesus today. In Ezek. 36:25-32, the prophet says that Israel has profaned God's name among the nations. One day God will gather His people from the nations, cleanse them, and by

this means vindicate the holiness of His great name. The hallowing of the Father's name means the arrival of God's kingdom.

The next request of the prayer is: "Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." How differently even the air we breathe would be if God's will was being done here on earth as it is being done in heaven right now. How wonderful - kingdom living now?! He tells us to pray about it ... it can begin in you, you know! Live, walk, breathe Jesus ... you're infectious!

"How do we pray when we follow the desires of our own hearts?" We say, "Lord, bless me, my family/friends, my church, my city, my country. We start with those closest to us and then move outward, ultimately praying for the expansion of God's kingdom throughout the world. When Jesus prayed, He started totally differently. He began with the whole earth and THEN began with "give us this day our daily bread." His prayer began where ours ends. Only after our prayer has reached every continent, every remote island of the sea, every person in the last hidden tribe and every desire and purpose of God for the world are we taught to ask for a piece of bread for ourselves. Jesus gave Himself to us and for us. *None of us will ever amount to anything in God's kingdom or ever experience His power until we learn how to pray right and realize the business of Christ is the supreme concern of*

life. All of our own personal considerations, no matter how important and precious to us, are secondary." Streams in the Desert

Jesus Himself gave some good instruction prior to the model prayer when He said: "But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly." Matt 6:6 I have an older sister who followed that totally. She had a family issue that was breaking her heart ... she went into her clothes closet, pushed the hangers of clothes aside, shut the door, got down on her hands and knees and prayed until the Lord gave her peace.

Women, we all have situations and circumstances that drive us into our closets of prayer. God will never examine us for medals, diplomas or degrees but for our battle scars. We're in warfare and we will win. Don't clinch your teeth waiting for the pain to pass, but be determined to receive everything from it; not just for you but for the sake of those you're praying for. Jesus asked, "Can't you watch with me for one hour?" When life seems to go south for you, do you think of Jesus' suffering on the cross or do you wallow in your own concerns? Ask yourself: Can I show Jesus' love in my own humiliation? Psalms 37:5: "Commit your way to the Lord; trust also in Him and He shall bring it to pass." Trust is a

language of the heart. Trust in Him through all the delays; in spite of all the difficulties; in the face of all rejections you encounter and in spite of the evidence to the contrary. When you can't understand your way or situation, "trust also in Him for He shall bring it to pass." Believe in His desire to guide and direct your life. Message Bible Ephesians 4:16, "His very breath and blood flow through us, nourishing us so that we will grow up healthy in God." Vs. 30: "Don't grieve God; don't break His heart. His Holy Spirit moving and breathing in you is the most intimate part of your life, making you fit for Himself."

In Luke 2:36 regarding the age of Anna, it's not clear whether she was 84 years of age or it was how long she'd been a widow. What a testimony of this pious older woman as she worked as a prophetess in the temple court, probably addressing all who would listen to her. The bible says she never left the temple but served God with fasting and prayers night and day. Women throughout the Bible: Miriam in Ex 15:20; Deborah in Judges 4:4; Huldah in 2 Kings 22:15 and Phillip's daughters in Acts 21:9 are all very interesting to read about as they lived out their God-given roles of life using the talents and energy that had been placed within them. He has a purpose and a plan for your life and you find it as you talk with Him through prayer! Pour out of yourself to Him; be honest before Him; trust Him;

speak from your heart and wait for God to bring it to pass.

Study Notes:

1. I am an old woman (not as old as Anna) but prior to this study had always begun praying for family and friends and pressing issues in our lives before praying for "His will to be done on earth." What changes do you need to make in prioritizing your next time in prayer?
2. Abraham, Jacob, Elijah and even Jesus agonized in prayer; so don't give up and don't quit praying. Trust God and believe in His faithfulness. I journal and write out prayers every day; it's a good way to see how God does answer us. Write a prayer here:

It is in praise that God gets involved; and it is in His Word that fears are dispelled. Message Bible Psalms 56:3, "Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in you." That is just one of His promises ... there are more than 32,000 promises in the Bible; read them and find some answers for your life. Have faith that God is true to His Word. Have faith in God and have faith in His Word. We have all eternity to enjoy our victories, but only one life in which to win them.

Lesson #12:

Women of Worth, Let Jesus Be

As Women of Worth, what do we let Jesus be?

Do we **Let Jesus Be** first in our lives every morning as we start our day?

Women, every day of our lives, we are living in Ephesians 6:12-13 "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places. Therefore, take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."

Before your feet touch the floor, your thoughts should be about Him; thanking and praising Him for His goodness and protection throughout the night ... asking Him to help you to get dressed right. First, "to stand" (some need help to do that!) "to gird your waist with truth, put on the breastplate of righteousness, shod your feet with the gospel of peace, above all to take the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one; take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God; continue to pray in the Spirit ... be watchful and persevere ..." Ephesians 6:14-18

As you stand there, you may not know the exact words, but you do know your body parts and they need direction and protection before you take one step in the day ahead of you. What you do is ask for truth as you speak; the breastplate of righteousness to cover your heart (your spirit and soul); your feet to walk in peace with the gospel; knowing that your faith is going to be a shield against the attacks of the enemy; the helmet will cover your head (your thoughts and thinking); and then take up the sword of the Spirit which is God's Word. Without prayer, all the armor in the world would be of no use. Pray always! Don't know the entire Bible? Not to worry, neither does anyone else! The sword of the Spirit is the only offensive weapon in the believer's armor. Know enough to speak the truth in love and pray the Spirit will help you speak a specific word in a specific situation...you can do this!

Truth is so crucial because a dishonest woman cannot hope to withstand the father of lies himself. Truth means to live a life of integrity and honesty and that becomes difficult for worthy women when life seems to go south. I recently read this and recorded in my journal: "My Father controls this universe. In acceptance, I find peace ... not in resignation. Resignation is to surrender, give in. Acceptance is to surrender to God. Resignation lies down and says, 'I can't'. Acceptance rises up to meet God and says, 'I

can.' Resignation says, 'it's all over for me.' Acceptance says 'Now that I'm here, what's next?' Resignation says, 'I'm all alone.' Acceptance says, 'I belong to the Lord.' In acceptance of the twists and turns of our life, we do experience peace with the Father who controls the universe and directs our lives as well. God forgives, heals and restores when we walk in truth before Him." **Let Jesus be truth** ... what He says is the way it is!

Women, we want *Jesus to be directing* our feet as we start our day. You may have the best intentions as you move away from the bed each morning but the busyness and cares of the household can easily distract you from sorting out what is priority. The scripture in Eph. 6 says "to prepare to take the gospel" and that's exactly what you have to do. Make plans, i.e., prepare and then direct your feet to carry it out. If left alone, your feet will take you to a host of household chores rather than your devotional time; be resolved that time in Bible study and prayer is first. **Let Jesus be your feet.**

Let Jesus be your shield of faith. Eph. 6:16 says "above all" indicating the shield can be used against everything. A Roman soldier's shield was huge, mostly covering the whole body. The Christian's shield is huge, offering protection against ALL the fiery darts of the

wicked one. Flaming arrows could not penetrate the fireproof shield of the Roman soldier; nor can the assaults of Satan penetrate the woman who places her faith in God.

The Roman soldier's helmet was intricately designed to protect his head and it also made him look taller and more impressive. There is a tremendous amount of warfare going on in your head and battles are won and lost in the power of the way you think. You need the helmet of salvation! Your heart responds to the thoughts you put there, so do your hands and feet. Your words are your thoughts expressed, so it is so important that you have the protection and God's control over your thinking.

What you speak not only determines how your day will go, but can affect everyone else around you. Message Bible Romans 2:2-11: "Every time you criticize someone, you condemn yourself. It takes one to know one. Judgmental criticism of others is a well-known way of escaping detection in your own crimes and misdemeanors. But God isn't so easily diverted. He sees right through all such smoke screens and holds you to what you've done. You didn't think, did you that just by pointing your finger at others you would distract God from seeing all your misdoings and from coming down on you hard? Or did you think that because he's such a nice God, he'd let you

off the hook? Better think this one through from the beginning. God is kind, but he's not soft. In kindness he takes us firmly by the hand and leads us into radical life-change. You're not getting by with anything. Every refusal and avoidance of God adds fuel to the fire. The day is coming when it's going to blaze hot and high, God's fiery and righteous judgment. Make no mistake: In the end you get what's coming to you—real life for those who work on God's side, but to those who insist on getting their own way and take the path of least resistance, fire! If you go against the grain you get splinters, regardless of which neighborhood you're from, what your parents taught you, what schools you attended. But if you embrace the way God does things, there are wonderful payoffs.." This is probably more than you wanted to hear but is a great example of how right thinking helps you embrace the way God does things and how wrongful thinking results in harm to others as well as yourself. You *need* Jesus to be your helmet of salvation, that covering over you as you process your thoughts each day.

Without prayer (Eph.6: 18), all the other armor in place is of little use. Be in a spirit of prayer all the time. Paul tells us to pray always! Pray scripture, you can never pray amiss if you pray God's Word; pray for yourself, your family, and friends that are going through special trials. Pray for your Pastor and church staff,

for missionaries and their needs. Pray about everything, persevere and be patient. Message Bible Philippians 4:6-7 "Don't fret or worry. Instead of worrying, pray. Let petitions and praises shape your worries into prayers, letting God know your concerns. Before you know it, a sense of God's wholeness, everything coming together for good, will come and settle you down. It's wonderful what happens when Christ displaces worry at the center of your life!" Paul says in in VS 19 to, "Pray for me that I may open my mouth boldly ... that I may speak as I ought to speak!" Finally, as we pray, **let Jesus be** the editor of our prayer, as He has promised to intercede, i.e., to intercept, remove any wrongful parts and then present to the Father the good of it. He knows the will of God and He knows what we were trying to say. He does that when we pray from our heart. Our mouth may not get it right, but He looks at what is in our heart.

Study notes:

1. Our lesson has been "**Let Jesus Be.**" Are you just letting Him be, setting Him aside, and working Him in when it's convenient? What part of the process of getting right do you need to be most concerned?

2. As we face each day, we are wrestling against evil and powers of darkness and we need to have our spiritual armor in place. You wouldn't think of leaving the house without pieces of clothing in place, so list the spiritual garments (armor) you need as given in Ephesians 6:14-18:

3. Most of our battles are won and lost in our minds. Stinkin' thinkin' can ruin your day. Renew your thoughts every day in God's Word and be encouraged, you are His child and He loves you. Let Jesus Be Lord of your _____. There's nothing you can do that will make Him love you less or love you more. He just loves!

When I get up and sometimes before I get up, I start with my head and ask God to clean out any leftovers of wrongful thoughts and to renew my mind and bring every thought captive. I ask him to touch my eyes (macular degeneration); to open my ears (morning by morning He opens my ears to hear as the learned, Isa 50:4b); to keep my teeth healthy

and keep me out of the dentist office; to let me continue to smell/ taste. I ask Him to keep my heart strong (I've had a heart attack); to keep vital organs functioning, blood moving through those miles of veins/arteries; to bless my hands and feet to be obedient in moving to do what will best benefit me and others. Every one of you needs to get dressed right before leaving the side of your bed. We need to let Jesus to be in our body parts, moving and speaking to them to function in order that we may please, honor and live for Him.

Lesson #13:

Women of Worth “Today, Please Listen”

What are you listening to today? Are you listening to the cries of despair and discouragement all around you or are you listening to what the Word says. The book of Hebrews in the Message Bible tells us several times, “Today, please listen.” We are to listen to what the Holy Spirit is speaking to us and to the churches. Hebrews 3:12-14, “So watch your step, friends. Make sure there’s no evil unbelief lying around that will trip you up and throw you off course, diverting you from the living God. For as long as it’s still God’s Today, keep each other on your toes so sin doesn’t slow down your reflexes. If we can only keep our grip on the sure thing we started out with, we’re in this with Christ for the long haul. These words keep ringing in our ears: Today, please listen.” Three times in this chapter, we read: “don’t turn a deaf ear, today please listen.”

We listen to ill advice from well-meaning friends; we listen to bad reports from the doctor; we listen to political schemes that threaten our very existence when we need to be listening to the One who can make a difference in our life. If we listen to what God is saying and spend enough time in His Word, the Holy Spirit will enable what is inside of us

to be lived out of us. Ephesians 4:30, Ephesians “Your Holy Spirit moving and breathing in me is the most intimate part of my life, making me fit for You.” I guess the question is, do you believe that - do you sense “His breath and blood flowing through you” as stated in Ephesians 4:16? “Today, don’t turn a deaf ear, please listen!”

Have you been asking God what He’s going to do? He will seldom tell you! God doesn’t usually tell you what He’s going to do. But, He will reveal to you Who He is! What do you expect Him to do? You don’t even know what you’re going to do; the only thing you know is that God knows what He is doing. All we can do is live in a perpetual state and attitude of “going towards” God; a “going out” of everything in us to a state of entirely trusting in Him. We have no idea of what God will do next—each morning we wake up with a “going out” confidence in God and our dependence on Him and a going out of ourselves to live in and through Him. “Today, please listen.”

“Every difficult time, everything you would just rather not do; the thing that takes the most out of you and causes you the most pain and be the greatest struggle, will bring a blessing if we hold and hang in there. Refusing to do it costs you a missed blessing. Jesus leads us and leaves His footprints along the way that we are to follow. If we refuse, we lose. The steep thorny path we need to receive if we

want the rich blessings in our lives. Every heavy burden hides within itself a miraculous secret of strength." *J .R. Miller*

Most of us would just as soon skip some of the "rich blessings" and forego the "miraculous secret strength" if that's how we obtain them! Over and over Jesus taught about the value of suffering and certainly lived and died proving it. We will do almost anything to avoid pain but there is no way you can deny its benefits. Whether it's in the body, relationships or finances, if you're a Christian, it will always strengthen your relationship with Jesus. One day when you stand before Him, it will be the only thing that will matter. Joel 1:13 "Turn to me while there is time. Give me all your heart." "Today, don't turn a deaf ear, please listen!"

Peter, James and John went with Jesus; the others were left behind. Jesus Himself told them, "sit here." If He tells you to sit awhile, don't fret; it's a place of waiting. God has selected it for you for now. It may vex your soul but if He wants you to wait, He is delighted and He is the One to give you direction. Sometimes we are appointed for sickness, delays, and disappointments, to be inconvenienced, and even disgraced. Our natural response is resentment, even anger; so how do I respond? We need not complain ... "The most intimate part of our life is His Holy Spirit moving and breathing in us ... His breath

and blood flow through us.” Ephesians 4:16 and 30: Instead of murmuring, embrace what He does for you. He gave everything of Himself for you. Embracing what He brings into your life will help you grow up healthy in Him. If He says to “sit here” for a while, learn and draw up nourishment from Him while you sit. Today, please listen.

“When God wants to produce more power in your life, He creates more friction. He uses pressure to generate spiritual power. Some people can’t handle it and run from it instead of using and receiving it. It is the propelling action coupled with the repelling counteraction that keeps the earth in orbit around the sun or else it would be flung out into space. God guides our lives in much the same way. We need a propelling force coupled with a repelling force and that’s why God lets the pressures of testing ordeals come against us to further our progress and strengthen our souls and bodies. Thank Him for the weights and the wings that are produced when we are divinely propelled.”
A. B. Simpson

God used eleven unemployed Jews and one devil in order to establish His Kingdom. God will always use a force to come against you to strengthen you.

Jesus, You are Lord and Master! Do I believe that; do I think that? God help me! There are whole tracts of my life that have not yet been

brought into subjection, Spirit of God, claim Your territory for Yourself! I want my soul developed by You. I want to listen to You, Lord.

Study notes:

1. God is still giving us “today” in which to get on tract with Him, what do you sense is your area of needed change?

2. Write down what you believe is something God is saying to you today:

Hurting people will not always hear/receive scripture; but isn't that what will help them? Yes, but when you're devastated, you're not functioning or thinking clearly. It's like pouring salt in an open wound. Prov. 25:20: “As he that taketh away a garment in cold weather and as vinegar upon soda, so is he that sings songs to a heavy heart.” Hurting people are sometimes angry and won't listen to a sermon but they will listen when they sense someone really cares. They need to see you extend Jesus' hand. Will you reach out to someone today?

“Don't turn a deaf ear; today, please listen!”

ENDORSEMENTS:

“As a Christian writer and professional speaker for 25 years and as a student of the Bible for many years, I’ve listened to and read the teachings of hundreds of Christian authors and speakers. I can tell you that these Bible lessons from Becky Oswald are among the very best I’ve ever come across. They’re filled with passion, clarity, and the first-hand experience of someone who has walked and talked with the Lord throughout her life. You cannot read these lessons without strengthening your walk with the Lord as well.”

Dr. Alan Zimmerman, Prior Lake, MN

www.DrZimmerman.com

Biography for Becky Oswald:

The author was born and raised in rural Oklahoma. At age 3, she moved into a small 4-room house (without water or electricity) built by her Dad, and was part of a family of 6. She lived there until leaving for College at age 17.

She was saved at a very early age but did not seriously serve the Lord until the age of 20. She is the mother of 4 gifted, God-loving daughters. She served as Music Director and Sunday School teacher for 39 years in four different churches in Indiana. She and her family were charter members and helped start a church in Indiana. Her grandfather was a Pastor and perhaps from that legacy, Becky finds teaching and studying the Word of God absolutely thrilling; she has been doing it the last 59 years.