

For Adults Ages 18 and Up

Adult Bible Class



Summer Quarter
June | July | August 2024

Large-Print Edition

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SUMMER QUARTER

June, July, August 2024

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Editor in Chief: James M. Leonard, Ph.D.

Managing Editor: Michelle Birtasevic

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God's Strength in Human Weakness

BY MATTHEW ROBINSON

Have you ever felt unequipped for the ministry God has given you to do? Have you wondered why He doesn't give you greater spiritual giftings for discipling, evangelizing, or serving in the church?

There is a reason we so often feel this way, and it is not because our ministry is somehow deficient. It is because God, in His eternal wisdom, intentionally chooses the "foolish" and "weak" things of the world to accomplish His purposes (I Cor. 1:27). Why? So that no one will be boastful in His presence (vs. 29) but instead that all will "glory in the Lord" (vs. 31).

This quarter we will study some amazing examples of how God has displayed His greatness and glory through unexpected people—in particular through women (unit I) and youths (unit II).

From the very beginning, God gave woman an exalted place in His creation. In fact, the initial absence of woman was the only thing declared "not good" when He created the world (Gen. 2:18-25; lesson 1). Together, man and woman were intended to worship and serve their Creator by spreading His glory throughout the world (1:27-28).

After Adam and Eve fell into sin, their relationship with God and with each other was broken (cf. Gen. 3:16). Nevertheless, God gave hope for reconciliation, both to Him and to each other, when He declared that the offspring ("seed") of the woman would one day crush the head of the deceiving serpent (vs. 15).

The Lord continually reinforced that "seed of the woman" promise through-

out the Old Testament by using women as His instruments of deliverance at several key points in Israel's history.

The prophetess Deborah, one of the judges of Israel, mobilized Barak and the army of Israel to deliver God's people from the Canaanites (lesson 2).

Ruth was not an Israelite, but God demonstrated His faithfulness to His people through her commitment to her mother-in-law, Naomi, and through Boaz's protection of Ruth (lessons 3—5). Ruth also became the great grandmother of King David, whose offspring would receive the victory promised in Genesis 3:15.

Hannah's life exemplified the truth of I Corinthians 1:27: "God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty." As she struggled with infertility, she endured years of scorn from her rival, not to mention the stigma associated with barrenness in those days.

Hannah overcame this difficult trial, not through retaliation or her own willpower, but through *prayer*. What weaker instrument is there from a human perspective? And yet what stronger instrument is there in the hands of God? The Lord put her enemies to shame through her prayers, and He received the glory because of it (lesson 6).

Perhaps the most dramatic deliverance of God's people by a woman came when the Jews were living in exile. The book of Esther never mentions God by name, but God's providence in history is evident in every detail of the story.

God placed Esther in the perfect



place at the perfect time to influence the king of Persia and spare the Jews from being massacred. Esther acted at the risk of her own life, reminding us that we too must act in obedience to the One who has placed us in our own unique circumstances “for such a time as this” (lesson 7; Esth. 3:2-3, 5-6a; 4:7-16). Through Esther’s bold faith, God granted Israel victory over their enemies, once again reminding them of His promise to Eve (lesson 8).

Finally, complete deliverance from the curse of the Fall came through Jesus the Messiah. God has crushed all His enemies under Jesus’ feet (I Cor. 15:27), and He is now crushing those same enemies under *our* feet (Rom. 16:20).

The cross was the ultimate victory through weakness (cf. I Cor. 1:18-25), thereby giving God alone the glory. So it should not surprise us that, in the New Testament era, God continues to work through unexpected means that are regarded by the world as weak or unimportant.

Two New Testament women show how God delights to bestow honor on seemingly weak ministers of the gospel. In Luke 7:36-50 (lesson 9), a sinful woman anoints, kisses, and washes Christ’s feet. A horrified Pharisee concludes that Jesus must not be a prophet, or else He would have discerned what sort of woman she was and sent her away immediately. Instead, Jesus proclaims the forgiveness of this woman’s sins and praises her acts of reverent love.

When Dorcas dies in Acts 9:36-43 (lesson 10), the impact of her quiet ministry to widows becomes evident. God raises her from the dead in response to Peter’s prayers, causing those same widows to glorify God all the more.

Women are not the only unexpected people God uses to accomplish His purposes. He also uses young people—even children (unit II). As the Spirit says through David, “Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies” (Ps. 8:2).

David was only a boy when Samuel anointed him to be the next king of Israel (lesson 11). God did not choose him based on outward appearances but based on the godly heart He had given him.

God gave a foretaste of the far-reaching power of the gospel when He used the witness of a young servant girl to make Himself known to Naaman, a foreign military commander (lesson 12).

Finally, the greatest king in Judah’s history, Josiah, inherited the throne at age eight, began to seek the Lord at age sixteen, and purged the nation of idolatrous practices at age twenty-six (lesson 13).

As we study these stories of God’s strength in the weakness of His servants, let us take courage in our own ministries. God wants to work through our weaknesses so that His name will be glorified.

SCRIPTURE LESSON TEXT

GEN. 2:18 And the LORD God said, *It is* not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.

19 And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought *them* unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that *was* the name thereof.

20 And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.

21 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and

he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof;

22 And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.

23 And Adam said, *This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.*

24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

NOTES

The Creation of Woman

Lesson Text: Genesis 2:18-25

Related Scriptures: Genesis 1:26-31; 3:9-21; 5:1-2; I Timothy 2:12-15

TIME: unknown

PLACE: Garden of Eden

GOLDEN TEXT—“The Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him” (Genesis 2:18).

Lesson Exposition

ADAM BY HIMSELF—Gen. 2:18-20

Adam’s need (Gen. 2:18). Creation occurred in six days, followed by the day on which God rested. Genesis 1 repeatedly states that what God did was good (cf. vss. 4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25). In summary, verse 31 says, “And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good.” We would expect nothing less, since He is God and is Himself good in every way (Pss. 34:8; 135:3).

When we come to Genesis 2:18, however, we suddenly read, “And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone.” Both men and women understand this statement. Men often feel incomplete and inadequate to handle many of the things they face in life. Women know that if it were not for their assistance, men would sometimes fail and fall apart when trying to accomplish certain tasks! God made a good and valid observation here and followed it with a good decision to “make him an help meet for him.”

The key word is “meet.” It translates the Hebrew word *neged*, which means “in front of” or “counterpart.” God did not make someone of lesser quality to be with Adam. He made someone

comparable to him. The person God knew Adam needed was someone equal and compatible.

Matthew Henry wrote, “The woman was made of a rib out of the side of Adam; not made out of his head to rule over him, nor out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved” (*Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible*, Hendrickson).

In God’s plan, the woman was absolutely necessary. While many cultures today devalue women and treat them as owned objects or worse, in God’s eyes they have always been valuable and loved and deserving of consideration and respect from the opposite sex.

Adam’s decisions (Gen. 2:19). It might be that Adam’s assignment from God as described in this verse led to his realization that he was not complete. One of God’s creative acts had been to make animals and birds out of the ground. At some point He brought these creatures to Adam and told him to name them. When God decided to create man, He determined that He would give him dominion over the animal world (1:26). So He allowed Adam