

FOR
TEACHERS
OF TEENS
AGES 15-17

SENIOR HIGH BIBLE TEACHER

SUMMER QUARTER | JUNE | JULY | AUGUST 2024



Senior High Bible Teacher

SUMMER QUARTER

June, July, August 2024

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LifeStone



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Edited and published quarterly by
LIFESTONE MINISTRIES
UNION GOSPEL PRESS DIVISION

Rev. W. B. Musselman, Founder

Price: \$4.09 per quarter*

**shipping and handling extra*

ISBN 978-1-64495-446-1

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The Weeks Ahead

This summer quarter, we will study a few of the women and young people in the Bible. Because the majority of biblical characters are men, it can unfortunately be easy for women and children to sometimes feel like they are treated as second class. We should work hard to avoid this, because women are created in the image of God and have equal worth as men. The same is true for children.

Unit I deals with women of faith. We will naturally begin with the creation of the first woman, Eve. In lesson 1, we see that she has equal dignity and worth as Adam, even though they are not identical. This provides a strong foundation for equal dignity and respect for women today. Lesson 2 deals with the prophetess Deborah. In a time when women had decidedly fewer rights than men, she spoke with divine authority.

Lessons 3, 4, and 5 are all focused on Ruth. Despite being a Moabite, she courageously displays her faith in God by leaving her native country, her family, and her old gods. We see many events in Ruth's life that seemingly "just happen," but they are guided by God's hand. He even places her in the line of Jesus' ancestors.

Hannah dedicates her son Samuel to the Lord in lesson 6, providing us with a good example of prayer in times of difficulty. Instead of becoming bitter and angry, she prays, and God answers. After God gives her the son she longed for, she faithfully keeps the promise she made and dedicates him to the Lord. God responds by giving her even more children.

Lessons 7 and 8 both deal with Esther. While living in exile in Persia, she is elevated to the position of queen! Though she could have simply relaxed in her new status, she instead risks her life to save God's people. Although the name of God never appears in the book, we see the main characters praying and fasting. Perhaps the author intentionally left God's name out so we would pay closer attention to how He is working behind the scenes.

Turning to the New Testament, we find lesson 9 focusing on an unnamed woman—a "sinner" who washes Jesus' feet; her sins, though many, are forgiven. Lesson 10 is about the raising of Tabitha from the dead, as well as her exemplary character.

Unit II provides several examples of God using young people. Lesson 11 is about David being anointed king as a boy. Here God teaches Samuel that He does not judge by outward appearances but by a person's heart.

In lesson 12, an unnamed servant girl in captivity remarkably repays good for the evil done to her by pointing Naaman to Elisha the prophet. In lesson 13, young Josiah is crowned king. We see how the Lord stirs his heart as a young man to begin a thorough reform of Israel's worship.

Regardless of gender, age, or ethnicity, all people are made in the image of God; accordingly, they deserve our full respect. None of us are identical, and we should not pretend our differences do not exist. But we should reject favoritism and not judge people based on their outward appearances or external characteristics.

—Tom Greene

PLEASE NOTE: Fundamental, sound doctrine is the objective of LifeStone Ministries, Union Gospel Press Division. The writers are prayerfully selected for their Bible knowledge and yieldedness to the Spirit of Truth, each writing in his own style as enlightened by the Holy Spirit. At best we know in part only. "They received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11).

God's Purpose for Women

TOM GREENE

Let's begin by addressing the elephant in the room: a lot of people today (especially young people) do not like what the Bible says about women, claiming it is sexist. However, many in our culture are not even able to explain what a woman is, and many who think they can are not reliable guides. Still, let's consider what they are saying. Is the Bible sexist? The answer is a resounding *NO!*

Let's try to construct a biblical view of womanhood, starting with Creation: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Gen. 1:27). This is incredibly important. God created both men and women in His image. Everyone, whether male or female, young or old, is equally worthy of respect.

When Eve was created, she was called a "help," or helper (2:18). However, this does not imply that women are inferior to men: David uses the same word to call the Lord his helper, and clearly no one would say God was David's inferior (cf. Pss. 30:10; 54:4; 89:19). We do begin to see a difference in *roles* in Genesis 2 but no difference in importance. When Adam says, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh" (vs. 23), he is saying Eve has the same essence that he does. Men and women are equally valuable and loved in the sight of God.

Throughout the Old Testament, we see that the roles of men and women were somewhat different: women could not be priests (Ex. 29:9), and a husband was considered the head of a household (cf. Num. 30:3-16). How-

ever, we also repeatedly see women held up as models to follow. Women such as Deborah and Huldah were prophetesses who spoke authoritatively for God. Others, like Abigail and Esther, were courageous and virtuous queens. Ruth and Rahab are both examples of non-Israelite women who demonstrated faith and became part of the line of Christ. Hannah's faithfulness in prayer through difficult circumstances is a model to us all.

In the New Testament, we clearly see that Jesus valued women. At that time, women sadly still had fewer legal rights and less social status than men. However, Jesus regularly and caringly spoke with women and allowed them to follow and support Him (Matt. 15:22-28; Luke 8:1-3; 10:38-42; John 4:7-26; 11:20-44). When He was crucified, it was primarily women who stayed near the cross, as it seems all the apostles but John deserted Him (John 19:25-27). All the Gospels record that women were the first witnesses of His resurrection.

Jesus clearly valued women. He was also willing to break social norms; if He had wanted to, He could have appointed a woman as one of His twelve disciples, but He did not. Men and women have somewhat distinct roles in churches in the New Testament, and women are not permitted to teach in the public gathering of the church (1 Tim. 2:11-14).

However, Paul was writing about the specific context of the public worship of the church in 1 Timothy 2, and his commands there should definitely not be taken beyond what he intended. In

Acts 18:26, we see both Priscilla and Aquila (a husband and wife) teaching a man in a private setting. This helps demonstrate that in settings outside of the church publicly gathering for worship, women are free to teach men. Paul also encourages older women to teach (cf. Titus 2:3-5).

Women are equally loved by God and are equally intelligent, valuable members of the church, who have gifts and wisdom to share (cf. Acts 2:17-18). We are worse off if we discourage women from exercising their gifts. For teens who are suspicious that the Bible may be sexist, it is wise to emphasize that women are equally valuable in the sight of God, without denying the distinctives between men and women.

In the New Testament, both men and women are valued and have personal rights. In I Corinthians 7:3-4, Paul talks about husbands and wives having rights to each other's bodies in a way that would have been absolutely unheard of in first-century Roman society. Roman law gave conjugal rights to the husband and not to the wife. Paul's teaching would have been a shocking idea. Emphasize to students how much more the biblical authors valued and respected women than did the culture around them. Like them, we should respect and value women more than our surrounding culture does, not less.

In the New Testament, as in the Old, we see the idea that men are the heads of households (Eph. 5:22-33; Col. 3:18-19; I Pet. 3:1-7). This does *not* mean that men and women are of differing value before God. Paul writes, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28). Obviously, Paul is not claiming that these categories do not exist, since he gives specific instructions to these specific groups elsewhere. Instead, he is teaching that we are all equal before God through

Jesus, regardless of our ethnicity, social status, or gender.

One important aside, which will be especially relevant to teens who are likely thinking (or perhaps obsessing) about relationships: we must not forget to teach that single women (and men) have value, dignity, and worth. Paul commends singleness (I Cor. 7:7-8), and Jesus Himself never married! Different people are called to different things, and we should not demean someone called to something different from us. Indeed, to the degree that the church values couples over singles, we risk making singles feel second-class, like they do not really fit in the church. We should warmly welcome everyone, including singles.

It is also important to point out that although wives are called to submit to husbands, and although both men and women are called to submit to church leadership, absolutely nowhere does the Bible teach that all women should submit to all men. This false teaching does a lot to perpetuate the myth that the Bible considers women inferior to men, and it can lead to serious problems and lasting hurt. It may surprise you how much simply mentioning this can help some young women relax, especially if they have been exposed to false teaching in this area.

Women are made in the image of God, are equally loved by God, and have equal dignity and worth as men, despite distinct callings in the home and church. Different women also have different gifts and callings from one another—we will study a queen, a wife, a judge, and a mother this quarter, among others. To demean any woman's calling is wrong, whether it be to marriage or singleness, to be a stay-at-home mom or to work in an office, to the limelight of politics or to anonymity. As Christians, we should respect and honor women more, not less, than the world around us.

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).

Studying the Text

Genesis is the book of beginnings. In addition to telling the story of Creation, it tells us about the first man, the first woman, and the first marriage.

One important truth we can learn from Genesis is that marriage is God's idea. God arranged for the first marriage in the Garden of Eden, and that first marriage was between one man and one woman.

It is important for us to understand that both marriage and the family are of divine origin, for even in the church the biblical plan for marriage is under serious attack.

GOD CREATED A MATCHED PAIR— Gen. 2:18-20

The need for companionship (Gen. 2:18). Everything God created was “very good” (1:31). However, there was one thing that was “not good” because it was still incomplete (2:18). The man He had created was made to be a social creature. However, initially Adam was the only human on earth. There was no one else like him. He had no one like himself to talk to and socialize with. He was isolated, and isolation is not healthy. He needed a companion.

Some people believe companionship is the primary reason for a man and a

woman to get married. Even if this is an overstatement, companionship is certainly an important human need. God Himself said, “It is not good that the man should be alone” (vs. 18).

Intimacy is also a vital part of marriage. Two people of the same sex can have a close friendship and can share many things, but it was never God's intention for two men or two women to share physical intimacy. That is reserved for the marriage relationship between a man and a woman.

Reproduction is part of God's plan for marriage. He gave the first married couple a specific mission: “Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth” (Gen. 1:28). That is not all they were called to do, but from the beginning, God's plan for reproduction has been a vital reason for marriage, the home, and the family.

When God established the first family, He made sex an integral part of the relationship between the first husband and the first wife. It is the way men and women reproduce. However, sex has value in and of itself. It is the way a husband and a wife unite physically with each other and share intimacy. According to God's plan, sex is a joy reserved for marriage.