

Ladies, in Lesson Ten, we studied Salome, the mother of James and John, who were apostles of Jesus, and we studied the Proverbs 31 woman. We can relate to Salome both as a mother, and as a follower of Jesus. We can also relate to the Proverbs 31 woman because we desire to have her virtues. We also saw that the godly characteristics shown in Titus Chapter Two are similar to the virtues of the Proverbs 31 woman. Let's review what we learned about Salome, then we will look at the Proverbs 31 woman. First, the Word of the Week is **Home**.

1. **Our introduction to Salome begins when Jesus called her sons, James and John, to follow him and be his apostles.** They were mending their nets in a ship by the Sea of Galilee with Zebedee, their father, when Jesus called them (Matthew 4:21-22). They immediately left their father to follow Jesus.

**What does this suggest to us about the faith of Zebedee and Salome?**

- A. Because their **father** didn't object to their sudden departure suggests that these sons had already spoken to him about Jesus and their desire to follow him. James and John, as good Jewish sons would have went to their father seeking his approval of their decision. We can assume they had already done so, and had received his approval. They were **prepared** to leave that day when Jesus came.
- B. Their father's response suggests that he had also placed his faith in Jesus, whom most likely would have been a topic of discussion in this Jewish family. Jesus was now preaching "Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 4:17). It is reasonable to assume that Salome, as wife and mother, would have also listened to Jesus and most likely had also placed her faith in him as well.

2. **We know that Salome's husband had a prosperous fishing business,** so can assume he had some degree of **wealth**. We gain insight into the family **fishing** business in Mark's account that we don't read in Matthew's account:

"And when he had gone a little further thence, he saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship mending their nets. And straightway he called them: and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him" (Mark 1:19-20).

- A. James and John didn't have to be concerned that their father's fishing business would suffer after they left to follow Jesus, because he had servants to take on their duties. This suggests their father Zebedee was a man of some wealth.

We've established that James, John, and their parents Zebedee and Salome, were all followers of Jesus and that they had a prosperous family fishing business enabling them to support Jesus in his ministry. Now we can look closely at Salome, their mother and wife of Zebedee.

"There were also women looking on afar off: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome; (Who also, when he was in Galilee, followed him, and ministered unto him;) and many other women which came up with him unto Jerusalem" (Mark 15:40-41).

You may be wondering about the other women mentioned with Salome in Mark 15:40-41. So before we continue looking at Salome, let's cover all three of these women now. In Mark's account the women present were: (1) Mary Magdalene, (2) Mary (wife of Alphaeus) and the mother of James the less and of Joses, (3) Salome (wife of Zebedee) and the mother of James and John who were both two of the 12 apostles. Now two of the 12 apostles were named James: James, son of Alphaeus, and James son of Zebedee. A third James was the half-brother of Jesus who wasn't one of the 12 apostles, but whom later became the bishop of the Jerusalem church in Acts.

As we continue in our study of Salome we know that...

- 3. Because of her husband's wealth Salome may have financially supported Jesus' ministry.** Salome followed Jesus when he was in Galilee and showed her love and loyalty by watching Jesus as he hung on the cross. Salome was one of the woman who bought spices to anoint the body of Jesus. While his body had already been prepared for burial by Joseph of Arimathea, these women were going to add additional cloths soaked with the expensive spices of myrrh and aloes.

"And when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him" (Mark 16:1).

We see how...

- 4. Salome was blessed for her faithfulness to Jesus** by what she saw and heard when she and the other two women arrived at his sepulcher to anoint his body.
- A.** When this group of women arrived at his sepulcher they saw that the stone had been rolled away from the opening. They walked into the sepulcher and saw an angel sitting there. The angel told them that Jesus was risen and he told them to look at the place where Jesus had been laid.
- B.** The angel then told them to leave and tell Peter and the rest of the disciples to go to Galilee where they will see Jesus, just as he had told them. The three women left quickly and were amazed. (Mark 16:1-8) These women were blessed for their faithfulness to Jesus by hearing these words from the angel!

**Now we'll examine the event by which Salome is most known for: when she asks Jesus to give her sons the two most prominent positions in his kingdom.**

"Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him" (Matthew 20:20).

- 5. Salome approached Jesus worshipping him, yet she had something on her mind.** She desired a certain thing of him.

Perhaps her worship was falling before him at his feet and humbling herself. We may wonder if her worship was totally focused upon Jesus or was it divided on the certain thing she desired of him? We can also ask ourselves the same question when we go to the Lord with our requests. Is our praise totally focused on him just for who He is, or is it divided upon what we are getting ready to ask him?

"And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom" (Matthew 20:21).

6. **Salome pops the question! She asked Jesus for the two most favorable positions in his Kingdom.** She puts her sons **first**, ahead of the other apostles who have given all for Jesus as well. Her only concern was her two sons and ensuring that they got the very **best**.

"But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with with? They say to him, We are able" (Matthew 20:22).

7. **Jesus knew that she had no idea what was involved with her request.** Notice that it is her sons, who are there with her, who answer they **can** do it. This suggests that they knew what their mother was going to ask and they wanted it as well.

In response to James and John's reply, Jesus said:

"And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father" (Matthew 20:23).

8. **Salome stood there with her sons** while Jesus **graciously** told them that they are asking for something they do not understand and that it isn't his decision to make but it is his **Father's** decision. He let them know that they would suffer for him without divulging how or when.
- A. Jesus gives us an example of how to handle an outlandish request from someone who is sincere in their heart, yet they are ignorant about what they are asking.

**Questions come to mind – was Salome pushing her sons into asking? Or was she simply their mouthpiece because they weren't brave enough to ask?**

"And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren" (Matthew 20:24).

- B. **Salome's request, given in front of the other 10 apostles, created division between her two sons and his ten brethren.** Even though the rift was later mended it did create a **problem**.
- C. **Even if her request is considered a valid one, her timing of it wasn't.** The other ten apostles likely assumed that James and John considered themselves more worthy than the rest of them and this would hardly go over well.
- D. **Perhaps Salome was seizing a moment** when Jesus was available and made a **rash** decision. Her decision to do so was not sober (sensible) or discreet (discerning). She did not **discern** the impact of her actions upon the ten apostles who were also there. She was being inconsiderate of these ten apostles. She was not being **sensible** in the timing of her question – or even the question itself.

E. **Salome wasn't humble in her request.** First, she should have asked Jesus what **HIS** plans were for his 12 apostles before telling him what **SHE** thought was best for her sons (and ignoring the other 10 apostles) with her request.

F. **Salome obviously knew little about his Kingdom** so she asked for the special positions for her sons without first learning what these positions would entail. She also didn't know what plans Jesus may have already had for his Kingdom. Perhaps it was their eagerness to closely serve Jesus in his kingdom that she and her sons **didn't** use sound judgment. But what we do know is that...

**9. Salome loved her children and wanted the very best for them.**

A. Perhaps she had been encouraging them to ask Jesus for these positions but they didn't have the courage to do it. So, being a mother **concerned** that her children have the best, she took them to Jesus and did the asking for them.

B. She was **proud** of her sons and believed they deserved to be rewarded with the best.

C. She didn't want a **golden** opportunity to pass them by. She may have thought that someone would have those positions and it might as well be her two sons! What this does show us is...

D. She obviously believed Jesus was the Messiah and she believed he would rule in his Kingdom.

**10. What godly characteristics did Salome possess?**

A. Salome was sound in **faith**. Salome did not turn her back on Jesus when it appeared all was lost. Even though she didn't understand why he was dying on the cross she was with the other woman watching from afar. This shows her devotion to him and that she believed he was Israel's Messiah. She must have been troubled by how he was being treated, and maybe even a little fearful because of his persecution, yet she remained **loyal**.

B. Salome had **charity** toward Jesus. When he was alive she was one of the women who ministered to his needs. After his death she was one of the women who went to his sepulcher to anoint his body.

C. Salome did **good** works. She supported Jesus in his ministry and attended to his needs. She supported her son's ministry as two of his twelve apostles.

D. Salome **loved** her children and wanted the best for them. She was willing to help them achieve it.

**However...**

E. Salome did not use **sober** thinking (sensible) nor was she discreet (discerning) when she approached Jesus with her request for her two sons in his Kingdom. This shows us that...

a. She did not think her request through **before** taking action. She didn't seek Jesus' thoughts on the matter before asking that these positions be given to her sons.

b. Salome was **rash**. She was thoughtless of the ten apostles who were present when she approached Jesus.

c. So while she loved her children, she needed to **temper** that love with sober thinking, discerning all that was involved, and considering the needs of others.

**11. What can we apply from Salome's example to our lives?**

A. From Salome's example we can learn to be **sound** in faith and **remain** loyal to Jesus in the face of adversity. She believed Jesus was the Messiah and she didn't turn away from him as he died on

the Cross, she watched from afar. She was one of the women who went to the tomb to anoint his body.

- B. We can learn to **care** for the needs of those who minister God's word to us today and to show **charity** to those in the Body of Christ. As a follower of Jesus, she undoubtedly helped Jesus with his ministry needs as he preached in Galilee.
- C. We can learn to love our children in a way that wants the best for them and be willing to help them achieve it. However, we must also learn from her mistakes: we must **temper** that love for our children and grandchildren, with **sober** thinking, **discerning** all that is involved, and **considering** the needs of others.
- D. In our zeal to see our children succeed we must realize that it should be accomplished **God's** way and at his timing. If we're trying too hard to make "good things" happen for our children we may be walking in the **flesh** and not following the **Spirit**. Be aware.
- E. **Pray** for God's wisdom to discern the line between encouraging our children and pushing them.

**Ladies, we're now ready to look at the fourth and final woman of our Study: the Proverbs 31 woman.** Let's review what scripture tells us about the background and authorship of Proverbs 31. Proverbs 31 was written during the time of Solomon who reigned as King of Israel during 960-922 B.C. His peaceful reign was built upon his father David's military victories.

### 1. Who wrote the book of Proverbs? Why was it written?

The beginning of Proverbs tells us who wrote it and what to expect from this book. The purpose of learning Proverbs is to teach us how to be wise and understanding in our **life**.

"The proverbs of Solomon, the son of David, king of Israel; to know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding" (Proverbs 1:1-2).

### 2. Did Solomon also write Proverbs chapter 31?

"The words of king Lemuel, the prophecy that his mother taught him" (Proverbs 31:1).

- a. A certain king Lemuel is given credit for writing Proverbs 31. His name Lemuel means "devoted to God" and while we don't know much about him, many have surmised that Lemuel is actually King Solomon. His mother would have been Bathsheba. If so, Lemuel could have been a **pet** name for Solomon and he wrote her advice as he thought she would have expressed it.
- b. Proverbs 31 begins with advice on how to be a righteous **king**. In verse 10 it changes to "Who can find a virtuous woman for her price is far above rubies" and continues to verse 31 "Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates". In between verses 10 – 31 we find our example of the Proverbs 31 woman. She provides an example of behavior and characteristics for all women to follow. Isn't this the kind of woman a godly mother would want for her son?

- 3. **Have you seen the many similarities** between the godly characteristics shown in Titus Chapter Two and the virtuous characteristics of the Proverbs 31 woman? Let's consider those similarities now, but don't forget – this is not a daily "to do" list for a godly woman. Rather it is a list of the many things she may do on any given day.

First, let's recall the list of godly behaviors Paul gave Titus in chapter two. Titus used this as his guide to help him establish order in the churches of Crete. We learn that it is sound doctrine which produces these godly behaviors or characteristics. Paul writes in Titus 2:1-5:

"But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine: That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. The aged **women likewise**, that they be in behavior as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed" (Titus 2:1-5).

The following list of the godly characteristics shown in Titus 2:1-5 is paired with a godly virtue from Proverbs 31:10-31:

1. **Sober (sensible-minded) & Grave (serious) Discreet (discernment):** "She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard" (Proverbs 31:16).  
 "She maketh fine linen, and selleth it; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant" (Proverbs 31:24).  
 "She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night" (Proverbs 31:18).  
 "She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness" (Proverbs 31:26).

Summary: She has a good head-on-her-shoulders and is **sensible**. She can discern if a certain thing is a good business opportunity and has set aside the money to invest in it. She also is clever and handy at making things that she can sell for money. She is willing to work until a task is done. She is always kind in how she speaks, and what she says is wise and helpful to others. Because she is a keeper at home she invests her profits into her family.

2. **Temperate (slow to anger) Not false accusers & Teachers of good things:** "She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness" (Proverbs 31:26).

Summary: She is careful not to gossip or slander others. With her wise and kind **words** she teaches good things that help others and lifts them up. She is slow to get angry because she is level-headed and isn't swayed by her emotions.

3. **Sound in faith & holiness:** "Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised" (Proverbs 31:30). "Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all" (Proverbs 31:29).

Summary: Her faith is sound because she worships God and places Him **above** everything else. She is holy because she has set her life apart for God's purpose.

4. **Charity & good:** "She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy" (Proverbs 31:20).

Summary: She does not **over**look the needs of others and shows them charity. She spends her time on things that are good. She is a good citizen.

5. **Patience:** "She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands" (Proverbs 31:13).

Summary: She knows what her family needs and she **looks** for it until she finds it. She realizes

that it takes time to find the best materials and to make something. This applies to anything that she is doing or someone else is doing. She waits with a pleasant attitude.

6. **Love their husbands, obedient to their own husbands, not given to much wine:** "The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil" (Proverbs 31:11).  
 "She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life" (Proverbs 31:12).  
 "Her husband is known in the gates, where he sitteth among the elders of the land" (Prov. 31:23).

Summary: The good things she does for her husband has earned his **trust**. Her love for him is shown by her respect and obedience to him as the head of their family. He can trust that her behavior will honor him in part because she isn't given to much wine. He sits among the elders of the land because her good behavior and support has contributed to his upright standing in their community.

7. **Chaste:** "Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies" (Proverbs 31:10).  
 "She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life" (Proverbs 31:12).  
 "Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come" (Proverbs 31:25).

Summary: She lives a life of **purity** in her behavior, dress, and in her speech. This gives her strength and honor because will not reap the consequences of an immoral life. Instead, she will have reason to rejoice!

8. **Love their children:** "Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her" (Proverbs 31:28).

Summary: Because she has **faithfully** cared and provided for her children and her husband they see her as a blessing. She shows her love for her family by attending to all their needs at home. She provides a clean home, and clean clothes in the closet for them to wear. She is a good manager of her home. She shops for her family and makes sure the refrigerator and pantry are well stocked with good food. She has earned their praise as a mother and a wife.

9. **Keepers at home:** "She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness" (Proverbs 31:27).  
 "She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet" (Proverbs 31:21).  
 "She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar: (Proverbs 31:14).  
 "She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens" (Proverbs 31:15).  
 "She girdeth her loins with strength, and stregtheneth her arms" (Proverbs 31:17).  
 "She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff" (Proverbs 31:19).  
 "She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple" (Proverbs 31:22).

Summary: She keeps **busy** at home. She works hard to provide the best for her family.

She is willing to shop at different stores in order to find the best food and products at the best price. When needed she gets up before her family rises in order to provide breakfast and prepare them to start their day. When needed, she will provide food and drink for hired help at her home. She puts all her effort into doing her housework. No task is too menial for her. She wants to provide her family with a comfortable and attractive home, so she makes and shops for the best home furnishings that she can afford.

**10. What is our definition of a virtuous woman? What examples do we have of a virtuous woman?**

- A. A virtuous woman has moral excellence, goodness of character, and is chaste. A virtuous woman has the understanding that perfection is not her standard but the earnest **desire** to cultivate these qualities.
- B. **Ruth** is an example of a virtuous woman. She was devoted to God and she was **loyal** to her mother-in-law, Naomi. When Ruth's husband died (Naomi's son) she chose to remain with Ruth caring for her needs. Throughout her life she had a strong work ethic, and in humility she listened to instruction.

Naomi speaking to Ruth:

"And now, my daughter, fear not; I will do to thee all that thou requires: for all the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman" Ruth 3:11).

- C. **Sarah** is an example of a virtuous woman for her **submission** to her husband given with a "meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price" (1Peter 3:4-6).

"But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement" (1Peter 3:4-6).

**11. What one thing makes a woman more valuable than rubies?**



It is her **fear** of the Lord. Because she fears the Lord she will believe by faith Paul's gospel of grace. She hungers after God's word and applies it in her daily life. Her good works will bring her praise from her husband and family.

Others will praise her for being a good wife and mother, and the good testimony she has been for the Lord. Her value is far above **rubies!**

"Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies" (Proverbs 31:10)

"Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised" (Proverbs 31:30).



**12. Ladies, let's see what has stood out to us in our study of these four women with a quiz!**

- A. My husband had insulted David by refusing his request for food. David was planning to pay my husband back for his insult. However, I used discernment and sober thinking by arriving at a plan which saved our household. Who am I?

Answer: **Abigail**

- B. I loved my two sons so I wanted the best positions for them in the Kingdom. But I didn't use discernment and sober thinking in the way I asked, or when I gave my request. Who am I?

Answer: **Salome**

- C. My husband is a fool who doesn't love the Lord. It's hard being unequally yoked. Who am I?

Answer: **Abigail**

- D. Even though I am very old I serve the Lord faithfully. Who am I?

Answer: **Anna**

- E. I was a virgin before I was married, and I lived a chaste life after I was widowed. Who am I?

Answer: **Anna**

- F. I provide for the needs of my family and support my husband. My husband says I'm more valuable than rubies. Who am I?

Answer: **Proverbs 31 woman**

- G. I was sound in my faith. I attended to the needs of Jesus during his ministry, and I didn't desert him as he died on the cross, but I watched from afar. I brought spices to anoint his body. Who am I?

Answer: **Salome**

- H. I understand that what is most attractive about a woman is her heart for God. I love the LORD and I have placed Him first in my life. I am praised because I fear the LORD. Who am I?

Answer: **Proverbs 31 woman**

Ladies, Thank you for studying Titus and these four women of the Bible with me. It's been my joy to study God's word with you; knowing that it effectually works within us. Let's praise God for His word.

Some closing thoughts....

Ladies, I want to take this opportunity to cover two items with you:

**Evaluation forms:**

1. Because we are not meeting at church right now we do not have an evaluation form for you to complete and return. But we are interested in how effective this Study has been for you, so I am asking you to let us know your response to the following two questions:

How has this Study increased your understanding of God's Word?

Do you have any comments or suggestions?

Please email or text your leader, or me, with your response. Or you can drop a note in the mail. Whichever way is easiest for you. If you are doing an independent study or you don't go to our church, please contact our church office with your response.

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**Fall 2020/Spring 2021 Bible Study**

2. Our Bible Study for next year will be the book of Daniel. It will be our Study for Fall 2020 and Spring 2021. The tentative Start and End dates for the Fall Study are:  
Start: Wednesday, September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020  
End: Wednesday, November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020.  
I don't have the date yet for the Fall Break.

**Other notes of interest:**

- a. For our next Study we will pass out the Study materials on the first day of class. It shortens the time I have to prepare the Lessons when we give the Study materials at registration. I have learned that I need this time to work on our Study. However, it is likely that I will have a one page sheet with some discussion questions on Daniel for your first day of class. You will receive this when you register.
- b. We will probably have early registration. It would be helpful for your leaders if we could begin establishing discussion groups as early as possible. So be thinking about this. Information will be in the church bulletin this Summer.

**What can I study until the Fall Study begins?**

I suggest studying the book of Daniel. Read about the history of Israel. You can also read about the history of the Babylonians, Assyrians, Medes, Persians, and Romans. Get familiar with the time period when Daniel was written. It will be fun getting familiar with the history of this time period. The times we are living in makes the study of Daniel especially appropriate don't you agree? I look forward to studying Daniel with you this Fall and next Spring.

God bless you all!

Debbie Eads