



CALVARY MURRIETA WOMEN'S MINISTRY

LIFE LESSONS FROM THE LADIES

R&R BIBLE STUDY 2017-2018



LIFE LESSONS FROM THE LADIES

Friends of Paul: Lesson 22

In our lessons over the last 21 weeks we've looked at many women in the Bible, both named and unnamed. Each has spoken volumes to my heart and I pray they did to yours as well. It's with sadness that I'm writing this last lesson of our series, but I'm excited to have been able to study with you. I pray these women have become your friends and mentors. This week I decided to touch briefly on a few of Paul's "friends" and co-laborers in Christ. Some have a few lines, while others a more significant amount. But Paul appreciated each and every one of them. He embraced Jesus' teaching that we are one body, whether Jew or Gentile, male or female. Paul valued women as partners in his battle and in his ministry. I like how Paul will randomly mention women in his writings because I think he was emphasizing the fact that his letters were written for both men and women. Perhaps he wanted them to understand that Christianity was the same for women as it was for men, valuing them as partners in the laboring of the Gospel. He held them responsible for protecting and maintaining the unity of the church as we'll see through our first women, Euodia and Syntyche.

First Day

1. Read Philippians 4:2-3. First of all, who is Paul writing this letter to, according to Philippians 1:1-2? Now, what do we know about these two women?

2. What seems to be the problem?

3. How does Paul handle it? Does he come across as harsh, or does he use affectionate language?

4. For what reason does Paul want this issue resolved?

So often, writers are very mean and critical when they discuss these two women. I find that really strange since Paul himself is not. Paul's letter to the Philippians has been short and sweet, with nothing but encouragement and exhortation. He handles this dispute in the same manner, calling them fellow workers and co-laborers. They had helped him in the ministry he had established there and he seemed to value them incredibly. I love what Liz Custis Higgs writes, "You might think having your name show up in the Bible because you were having a quarrel to be a permanent source of embarrassment or, worse, to give evidence, as some have surmised, to the false notion that women are naturally more inclined to be quarrelsome than men. While Paul intended to correct and restore, he also meant to honor his two friends. His concern reflects their significance to him and their profound influence on the whole church." He speaks of them with the utmost respect, declaring them essential for ministry. He simply wants them to work together to advance the Gospel!

5. What favor was he asking the true companion in verse 3?

6. When believers have a dispute within the church, what are some of the things that can happen? Why is this so dangerous?

7. Do you think women are more apt to quarrel than men? Write your thoughts.

8. Are you at odds with someone else in the ministry? Is it something that can be resolved? Is there mercy to be shown? Forgiveness to be given? Truth to be shared? Can you "fix it" for the sake of the Gospel and the body of Christ? Do you need a mediator, like they did, to bring peace to the situation?

Elizabeth George points out how well Paul handled the rift between the women. "First, he spoke directly to them, imploring them to live in harmony. He based his appeal on the cause of

Christ rather than his own wishes or opinions. He asked that they be of the same mind in the Lord, that they keep peace and live in love. He directed them to the bigger picture: the Lord, the Lord's church, and the progress of the Lord's work. He began by praising the two women, and then he calls upon others in the church to help them solve their problem. Paul was very wise."

9. What can you learn from Paul regarding how to handle a dispute? How do you usually attempt to do it?

I also think it's interesting that just because they need to resolve an "issue" of some sort, they aren't "disqualified" from ministry. They weren't kicked out of the church. I like that because it's a reminder that we ALL have conflicts now and again, but the point is to resolve them, not ignore them or hold on to them.

10. How does the story of these two women encourage, challenge, or convict you?

Memory Verse of the Week: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Galatians 3:28

Second Day

Work on your verse. I love it!

1. Our next friend of Paul is found in Romans 16:1-2. As Paul wraps up his letter to the Romans, he sends his love and greetings to those who have ministered with him. Who does he mention, and what do we know about her?

Most believe she was a "deaconess" or a leader of some sort in the Church at Cenchrea. (She is called a servant which, in the Greek, means deacon.) Cenchrea was a port of Corinth, an important commercial city in ancient Greece. She appeared to give liberally out of her substance to Christians there. It's said that while she was on a business trip, she delivered the letter from Paul to the church at Rome. This would cause us to believe she is a prosperous and successful businesswoman.

Priscilla and Aquila seem to be the power-team of the New Testament! They worked tirelessly for the furtherance of the Gospel. We know they became involved in Paul's ministry while they were at Corinth. They were living in Corinth because Claudius had expelled all the Jews from Rome. They share a common occupation with Paul; they are tentmakers, and he lives in their home for eighteen months. They begin Paul's journey with him to Ephesus, and he leaves them there as he continues to travel on. Paul said they "risked their lives" for his own safety and benefit. Sounds like an amazing couple.

9. We read in Acts that they took Apollos under their wing. How did they exhort him?

10. Was it right to correct his theology? How did they do it?

11. According to Romans 16:5, they appeared to have a church meeting in their home. What are your thoughts about this couple?

12. If you are married to a believer, how does their life encourage you?

See you tomorrow, ladies!

Third Day

Work on your memory verse.

Paul writes 2 Timothy from prison to encourage young Timothy with his love and prayers, as well as to exhort him in his ministry responsibilities. Timothy seems to have become a convert of Paul when he was in Lystra on his first missionary journey. (1 Cor. 4:17; 1 Tim. 1:2;

2 Tim. 1:2; Acts 14:8-20) When Paul was on his second missionary journey to Lystra, he decided to take Timothy with him and circumcised him because of the Jews. Timothy was ordained to the ministry and served as a loyal assistant and companion to Paul. He later supervised Paul's work in Ephesus for years until he was summoned to Rome.

1. Read 2 Timothy 1:1-5 and Acts 16:1. What two women are named? What does it say about them?
2. Why do you think it's so significant that Paul mentions them?
3. Read what Paul said to Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:14-17. How is Lois and Eunice's influence evident in his life from these verses?
4. According to Acts 16:1, although his mother was a Jewish woman who had become a believer, his father was a Greek. Many moms who are married to unbelievers worry about their husband's influence on the kids. How does this story encourage you?
5. When Paul talks about what they had instilled in him since he was a child, we don't see him talk about money, or prestige, or success. He talks about faith in Christ and knowing the Scriptures. What perspective does this bring to our priorities as a parent?

6. Are you, or did you, do the same in your children? (If not, it's never too late!) Parenting adult children and trying to encourage them in their faith looks much different. What are some ways we can still instill genuine faith into our adult kids?

**I read a few good quotes on parenting this week, but I can't remember who said them.
(Sorry!)**

"The joys of parents are secret; so are their griefs and fears."

"I pray your children will be clutching the baton of faith the way a three year old grasps her first cotton candy at the country air!"

"Our children make us grow up."

"God help us to be honest so our children will learn honesty. Help us to be kind so our children will learn kindness. Help us to be faithful so our children will learn faith. Help us to love so our children will learn to be loving. Our children are the future. We must teach them by example. We must teach them now!"

7. I love that Paul singles out a grandmother and a mother to salute. Not only does he show how much he values women again, but how important the role of motherhood is as well, esteeming it of high importance! If you are a stay-at-home mom or a work-outside-the home mom, do you value that role as well? Do you truly understand the importance of it and how you can impact the world by impacting your children, as you pass on the baton of faith?

Perhaps you didn't have a mom who was a believer or who passed on a baton of faith, and you don't really know how to do it. I challenge you to pray and seek His Word to find answers and direction as you continue to raise your kids. There's nothing more important!

8. To end, let's write a prayer for our children, as well as for ourselves, to rightly parent them in His ways. Ask for His grace, strength, and wisdom to accomplish this!

Fourth and Fifth Days

Can you write out your last verse from memory?

1. I have only two questions left for this wee's' lesson, and I hope they challenge you! I have done all the writing up to this point, and now it's your turn! Choose a woman we **DID NOT** study this year. Do a little research and learn as much about her as you can. Then for your homework, write a short summary or character sketch about her, including the facts we know about her, what she's a good or bad example of, and what you learned from her life. She can be a "good" or "bad" lady, from either the New or Old Testament! Go for it, ladies! Come to your study next week prepared to share about her! Have fun! (Use additional paper as needed!)

2. For the last day, please answer the following:
 - a. Of all the women we studied, which one spoke to your heart the most? Why?

 - b. What did you enjoy the most about studying women in the Bible?

 - c. Have your attitudes, perspective, actions, or life changed in any way as a result of your time in the Word this year?

Thanks for joining us, ladies. Thank you for participating, fellowshiping, and digging into the Word. May each of our lives be transformed by His Spirit!

