



## ***LIFE LESSONS FROM THE LADIES***

### **MORE COOL MOMS: LESSON 12**

Last week we looked at three great examples of mothers in the Bible; a mom, a mother-in-law, and a “like a mom” kind of mom. We’re going to continue reading about a few more women and the amazing qualities that cause them to stand out, not because they are great moms, but great women!

I feel like I need to remind and encourage you wonderful women who are not moms to still look at these women as examples of faith and not be discouraged or feel like they are unrelatable for you. So not true! I relate to all the men in Scripture and I’m not a man! Look at their character, faith, and obedience and learn all you can. At the beginning of our series I shared that I have often felt that the “church” has inadvertently made us believe that women are somehow second class citizens if they are single and/or have no children. It’s not worded like that, but if we are taught that the “end all” goal of every woman is to be married and have kids, we are left believing that we have, in some way, not played by the rules or been faithful enough. We are left feeling that we have no purpose. Who are we, as women, and what is our purpose in life if we never marry or have kids? Honestly, the question should be, what does it mean to be a Christian woman? Custis James wrote, “Is there a right way and a wrong way (or best way) for a woman to walk with God? What are we supposed to do when our lives don’t follow the map, either because we march to a different drummer, or, as in my case, things simply don’t work out? Do we, as one woman put it, ‘miss the best life has to offer a woman?’ Or, what if we marry and have children and then something goes wrong – we lose our husband or our children don’t turn out right? What then? Has our womanhood fallen short?”

James goes on to say, “It is not often noted, but many stories of women in the Bible make no mention of a husband or children. Although singleness was exceedingly rare in the ancient Hebrew culture, no one knows if Miriam, Mary and Martha, or Mary Magdalene ever married. In a jarring break from the culture (and without diminishing the family), the New



We are told they all “fell together” and were hanged on a hill. They hung there for about 6 months, from the barley harvest in April until the rains arrived and the drought ended at the end of October. Wiersbe wrote, “To hang up a corpse was to disgrace the person and put him under a curse (Deut. 21:22-23).” According to the law, the bodies should have been taken down and buried by sundown. This was definitely NOT God’s way! The Gibeonites wanted revenge and David allowed it. And God was clear that human bodies, even those of their enemies, must be treated with dignity and buried properly. Perhaps David allowed the bodies to stay there until the rains came as a sign that the famine was over and the Lord was blessing His people again. Hmmm ...

3. According to verse 10, what did Rizpah do? Why did she do it?
  
4. What emotions do you think Rizpah must have been feeling? Were her sons responsible for killing the Gibeonites?
  
5. Rizpah was devoted to the care of her dead sons. What does this tell us about her character?
  
6. What are your first thoughts as you read this story?

This is such an odd story, isn’t it? We’ll take a closer look at Rizpah’s actions tomorrow. Our hearts go out to this grieving mom. I can’t imagine the pain she must have been feeling.

**Memory Verse of the Week:** “Every wise woman builds her house, but the foolish pulls it down with her hands.” Proverbs 14:1

### **Second Day**

**Review your memory verse. What does it mean to “build your house?”**

1. Review the story again. What is she protecting the bodies from? Why?
2. Why do you think Rizpah's actions required courage and bravery?
3. Random question ... do you think she ate during this time? Did she take care of herself?

Remember that Rizpah was a widow, since Saul had been dead for almost 30 years at that point. I wonder if she felt guilty that it was her husband (sort of) that broke the oath in the first place, bringing all this trouble to God's people. Then, her own sons had to pay the price for their father's sin. Yes, they were men, but these were her boys. Does it get any worse than that? This appears to have been an act of revengeful men doing something in God's name rather than divine retribution. Herbert Lockyer wrote, "What a ghastly scene that must have been during barley harvest with those seven blood-covered bodies hanging on the respective trees, and noble Rizpah protecting them from the vultures waiting to gorge themselves on the corpses. Through the days and weeks she watched those broken bodies gradually blacken, decay and wither, and never relaxed her vigil. She had no power to prevent the gruesome murder of her two sons, but none could stay her from the act of mercy in caring for their mangled bodies on the gallows-tree. Leaving those bodies to hang unburied testified to the vengeance being of man and not of God, for the law demanded that anyone hanged on a tree must be buried before sunset of the same day."

4. What did David do when he heard about Rizpah's actions? Why? How was he influenced by Rizpah?

Virginia Stem Owens wrote, "Never did the Lord order David to accede to the Gibeonites' wishes for human sacrifice. Nor, for that matter, did David ask. Only later, after David heard of Rizpah's pitifully desperate measures, did it occur to him to follow suit and give his old enemy

Saul and his heirs a 'decent burial.' And because of the long-delayed display for mercy, the land was healed." Finally David had compassion on Rizpah and the house of Saul, burying the family all together in one tomb which was the desire of every Israelite. I believe David finally realized how dishonoring he had been to both God, and the house of Saul.

5. What character traits and qualities do we see in Rizpah as she protected her sons' bodies, wanting to bring them honor rather than shame?
  
6. No matter what, this mom did not want her sons to be dishonored and she did whatever it took, for as long as it took, until David would make it right. I think this was an act of "speaking up for someone who couldn't," don't you? Are you willing to take a risk, be spent, be put out, and do "whatever it takes" to see God's will accomplished?
  
7. Is God calling you to be persistent in something you're seeking after, praying for, waiting for, or waiting on? How does patience play into it?
  
8. Rizpah waited until David showed mercy and did the right thing. Her wait must have felt like an eternity as she weathered the cold, the elements, and the wild animals. Are you waiting for something? How would you describe your "waiting"? Are you being patient? Impatient? Are you being faithful as you wait?
  
9. This story is a good example of how our own personal sin can affect the lives of so many. Are you flirting with some type of sin? Who else would it affect? Have you previously seen the sin in your life affect the life of another? Has someone else's sin ever affected you?



3. What was Samson's purpose in life, according to verse 5? (Can you imagine if you knew the exact purpose of your children's lives before they were born?)
  
4. How did she respond to the angel? Did her response differ from her husband's? (Why was she such a privileged woman to receive this pre-incarnate appearance of the Messiah?) Did she argue with the angel?
  
5. What was she supposed to teach her son? (Read Numbers 6 for a more detailed description of the Nazarite vow. A man or woman could take it, but it didn't usually last their entire lifetime, as Samson's was supposed to.)
  
6. This woman's son was going to be "different" than the rest of the kids. She had to raise him differently. Did that seem to deter her? Could this have caused any ridicule or criticisms from the others?
  
7. Samson's mom only appears a few more times after Samson is grown. Read Judges 14:1-5. What is she protesting? Why?

8. Do you think Samson's mom and dad could have stopped him from marrying the girl from Timnath, a daughter of the Philistines? Should they have tried harder? Write your thoughts. How do you think she must have felt by Samson choosing an enemy of Israel for a wife?
  
9. Have you ever had a child make a decision that goes totally against Scripture and all you taught them? How did you feel? What did you do? What SHOULD you do?

Although Samson was weak where women were concerned, and his encounter with Delilah was deadly, in the end, he tore the pillars from the walls and brought the roof down upon the Philistines, killing many of Israel's mighty foes (Read Judges 15-16.) Even though his character was weak, the writer of Hebrews names him as one of the heroes of faith (Hebrews 11:32). Many believe he inherited the godliness that he showed at the end of his life, as well as his faith in God, from his mom.

Samson's mom was an example of a loving, prayerful, faithful, godly, and dedicated mom. I wonder if she ever had thoughts like, "After all I've done for you!" etc., etc. Her heart must have been sad much of the time as she watched Samson make horrible choices. Samson's name meant "strength of the sun," carrying the idea of splendor, yet his actions were anything but splendid. We'll pick up this discussion tomorrow.

#### **Fourth Day**

**Work on your memory verse.**

I want to ask you a few more random questions about Samson's mom. I pray that the Holy Spirit will open your eyes and heart to the truths He has for you to learn today!

1. Do you think Manoah respected his wife? What would suggest that?





6. It's cool that some moms, like Samson's, Mary's and Elizabeth, knew what God was calling their kids to do. We don't know the "specifics" of our children's journey, but we are told the path they should take. What does Proverbs 22:6 tell us?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. Take the rest of the time today to pray for your kids or grandkids, if you have any. If not, pray for nieces, nephews, or children that are close to your heart. Beg God to keep them close to His heart, to draw them to Himself, to mold their character into the images of His Son, and to protect their "going out and coming in." (Psalm 121:8)

### **Fifth Day**

**Write out your verse from memory.**

1. Let me introduce you to one more obscure woman in the Bible with a semi well-known son. (Read 1 Chronicles 4:7-10.) Who is she?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Do we know why she named her son Jabez?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. We know more about her son than we know about her. What do we know about him?

4. Jabez means “sorrow” or “one who brings sorrow,” so he was obviously trying to overcome the stigma of his name. (Did he?) List the things he prayed for.

It’s interesting that the author of Chronicles takes a short detour in his writings of the genealogies of Judah, because when he gets to Jabez’ name, he expounds a bit. He affirms that God answered Jabez’ prayer. (God granted him what he requested.) The author must have thought Jabez was worthy of some sort of “atta boy” as he continued on.

5. Jabez asks God to “enlarge his territory, or his border.” What do you think that means?
6. He then prays that “God’s hand will be on him and that He would keep him from evil.” Is this something you pray for yourself, each day? Do you think that was a prayer of his mother as well?
7. Finally, he prays he wouldn’t cause pain. No one knows exactly what kind of pain he was brought forth in, or what kind of pain he was talking about here in this context. Let’s speculate a bit. What do you think he could have meant?
8. Do you tend to cause pain or bring pain into the lives of others? Emotional pain? Mental pain? Even physical pain? Through your words? Through your actions? Through your warped or tainted perspectives or attitudes? Search your heart on this one.

9. It's unknown whether or not his mom lived to see God answer his prayer, but I think she may have been the one that influenced him to even pray a prayer like this. Perhaps he heard her prayers every day? What do you think?
  
10. Who in your life has been the most influential to your prayer life? Was it your mom? A friend? A pastor? How can you influence others by your prayers?
  
11. What "territory" has God given you to minister in? Do you get overwhelmed by it or do you ask God to enlarge it? What motivates and drives a prayer like this?
  
12. Many of you might still feel that you are "bearing a son in pain" as he brings you much sorrow. Can you ask God to enlarge your territory and "expand your borders" as you pray for him, searching the Scripture for deep truths to pray over him? Don't lose hope! Keep praying for God to pursue him and keep him from evil!

**We don't know much about her, but Jabez' mom, at least I believe, was a godly example to her son, and he thrived because of it. May we all have sons and daughters to whom God is revealing Himself in wonderful ways! See you next week, ladies!**