

The Godly Woman as Christ's Representative *A Biblical Example – The Shunammite Woman*

Today we have the privilege of looking through a window and observing one of the great women of the Bible - whose name we don't even know. She is only called "The Shunammite woman" or "a woman from Shunam." I always enjoy taking a group of women through this study for several reasons: The Shunammite woman is easy for us to identify with; this story is a good picture of a Godly woman functioning in her home; it shows her heart response to people, joys, sorrows, God; she is also a good subject for someone to do a character study on.

So I trust, Teacher, that you will pray earnestly that you will be able, through the Holy Spirit's power, to bring the women in your class to a very personal application from this intimate glimpse at this remarkable woman.

A. Object Of The Lesson

1. To see the Shunammite woman as an ordinary woman committed to God, significantly used and blessed of God in her home.
2. To see how they can be used significantly and be greatly blessed in their own home if they likewise are sensitive and committed to Him.

B. Discussion Questions

1. Picture yourself as a next-door neighbor to the Shunammite woman. How would you describe her?
2. What indications do we have that she and her husband were wealthy? (verse 8 says she was "great" which means of a higher class. Some translations say she was "a prominent woman." Her husband was a landowner with servants.)
3. Often Christians are insensitive or indifferent to the needs of missionaries or Christian workers—such as their tiredness, self-denial, pinched economy, and unheralded heroism. What was the Shunammite woman's attitude toward Elisha? (She was very sensitive to his needs. She wanted to share the warmth and security of her home, to provide for his needs, and to make life a little easier for this servant of God.)
4. Such giving and sharing is never one way. What blessings or rewards did she receive as a result of her kindness? Can anyone in the class share a blessing which you and your family received as a result of sharing with one of God's servants?
5. What do you think motivated her? (Love for God; a sense of what a great privilege it was to have such a man of God in her home. She has no ulterior motive—desired nothing from Elisha.)
6. What are some wrong motives a person might have for doing good to another?
7. What do you think she meant when she said "I dwell among my own people"? (The Living Bible says "I am perfectly content." Berkeley's footnote says "My people will care of me should I need anything.")

8. From the brief account given, would you say she or her husband was more spiritually attuned? (The woman - she perceived Elisha as a man of God, she wanted to meet his needs, she thought to go to him when her son died, while the husband thought one might only go to see him on a “holy day,” etc.)
9. If a wife has more spiritual interest than her husband, what advice would you give her? (Be loving, submissive, and reverent. Don’t flaunt your spiritual interest, be quiet and pray, don’t make God a competitor for your affections and love in your husband’s eyes.)
10. What do you think the Shunammite’s response in verse 16 indicates? (Probably incredulity and sincere questioning in light of the circumstances—her barrenness all these years and her husband’s old age.)
11. What does verse 24 tell you of this woman? (Although a prominent lady, she saddled the donkey herself and didn’t need to be coddled or waited on.)
12. Why do you think she went to Elisha and would not be satisfied with anyone else or tell her problem to any other? (She wanted none other than the one she knew to be a real man of God, who was in constant touch with God, the one through whom God had blessed her with the son. She believed God would give Elisha the answer to her problem.)
13. What would you say is the leading lesson taught by her life?
14. What key insight about God did you discover while studying the life of the Woman of Shunam?

C. Suggestions For Conclusion

1. Have them share their applications. Be especially alert to any *vague* generalizations. If one is vague or general in her application, ask the others to give her suggestions as to how she might personalize it. (Sometimes a person will say “I was impressed with this verse (or quality) but I just can’t think of any way to apply it.”) Go back over the detailed explanation on page 30 of the *Godly Woman*. The application is the most important part of the study. So, week after week, be sure you keep very alert to the needs in this area.
2. Ask each lady to share the trait they saw in the Shunammite woman which she would most like to see in her own life. Ask each one to pray for this quality in her life as you have a time of prayer together.

D. Additional Scripture (Teacher, these are samples of cross references you might use)

1. Hospitable - I Peter 4:9 (Phillips); Romans 12:13
2. Contentment - 1 Timothy 6:6,8; Hebrews 13:5; Philippians 4:11
3. Trust - Psalm 37:5; Colossians 2:6
4. Capable - Proverbs 31:13-18
5. Persistence - Luke 18:1-8
6. Confidence - Romans 4:20-21
7. Gratitude - I Thessalonians 5:18; Philippians 4:6,7
8. Doubt - Genesis 18:12-14
9. Sought help of Godly counselors - Psalm 37;30,31; Psalm 16:3

E. Possible Projects

1. Choose one or two positive characteristics of the lady from Shunam that you desire in your own life? Using a concordance or a topical textbook (like Nave's Topical Bible) find verses on these characteristics. Answer:

- a. Is this characteristic important to God?
- b. Should it be important to me?
- c. What can I do to make it part of my life?

2. Make a project out of making your home a more hospitable place to be.

F. Extra Helps

Women Who Made Bible History by Harold J. Ockenga

MS. Means Myself by Gladys Hunt (Chapter 7)

God Speaks to Women Today by Eugenia Price

Audio 1206 - "Trusting God"

Audio 1279 - "Hospitality"

Latent Power of God by Carothers

Screwtape Letters by C. S. Lewis

The Liberty of Obedience, Elizabeth Elliott

The Disciplines of Life, W. Raymond Edman

A Serious Call to a Devout, Holy Life by William Law

Calvary Road by Roy Hession

We Would See Jesus by Roy Hession

Abraham, the Obedience of Faith by F. B. Myer

The Law of Faith, Norman Grubb