



LEADER
GUIDE

VIRTUOUS WOMANTM EXCELLENCE

THE FELLOWSHIP OF CHRISTIAN ATHLETES

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FCA Virtuous Woman

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We offer special thanks to the Memphis FCA boards and Female Ministry Team for their encouragement and prayer.

We would like to dedicate this work to the women who have invested spiritually in us throughout our lives, the Memphis area coaches and the precious girls in Memphis whom we serve.

The purpose of this study is to present key character traits using examples of women in the Bible.

The goal of the FCA Virtuous Woman Curriculum is to present to women in the arena of athletics the privilege and challenge of learning and living out Biblical Womanhood in all areas of life. This goal is accomplished by introducing character traits found in female biblical characters that they can model in their own personal life. This is a question-driven small group Bible study which promotes discussion and guides participants to discover truth for themselves as they process questions and answers from the group. The question set created for each session seeks to reveal God as He truly is, discover how He has revealed Himself in Scripture, correct inaccurate ideas about God, and address worldview issues with which women struggle today.

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The goal of the FCA Virtuous Woman Curriculum is to present to women in the arena of athletics the privilege and challenge of learning and living out Biblical Womanhood in all areas of life. This goal is accomplished by introducing character traits found in female biblical characters that they can model in their own personal life. The virtuous woman in Proverbs 31 is described as having more value than earthly wealth. She is no ordinary woman and sets the standard for not only knowing how to be godly, but also living it out in her everyday life.

The FCA Virtuous Woman curriculum is segmented into four unique, yet related, components:

Part I: FCA Virtuous Woman

This 11-session study centers on an overview of the virtuous woman found in Proverbs 31. The acronym of VIRTUOUS is used to describe her character traits: **V**alor, **I**ntegrity, **R**esourcefulness, **T**rust in God, **U**niqueness, **O**bedience, **U**nity, and **S**ervice.

Part II: FCA Virtuous Woman: Integrity

This 12-session study focuses on one of the four key values of FCA: Integrity. FCA defines integrity as being able to walk with God in such a way that our lives "demonstrate Christ-like wholeness, privately and publicly." The primary text for Part II is Proverbs 31:10-16, and the passages illustrate how this woman displays integrity in her private and public life.

Part III: FCA Virtuous Woman: Serving and Teamwork

This 12-session study focuses on two more of the four key FCA values. Serving is "modeling Jesus' example of serving" and Teamwork is defined by FCA as "expressing our unity in Christ." The primary text for Part III is Proverbs 31:17-23. For each session, a character trait is paired with a woman's story found in the Bible to demonstrate how a virtuous woman expresses herself through serving and teamwork.

Part IV: FCA Virtuous Woman: Excellence

This 12-session study focuses on the last of four core values of FCA: Excellence. Excellence is not only an attitude but also an attribute. It is "honoring and glorifying God in all we do." A virtuous woman goes the extra mile and takes the time to do it right because she desires to honor God by, "...work(ing) at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord..." (Colossians 3:23). The primary text of Part IV is Proverbs 31:24-31.

To help the girls further understand Part IV of the FCA Virtuous Woman: Excellence, the verses in Proverbs 31:24-31 have been broken down and associated with a character trait that is found in that verse. The Scripture references, traits, and characters of a virtuous woman with excellence are on the following page.

FCA Virtuous Woman Part 4- Excellence (Prov 31:24-31)			
Intro		Excellence	Jesus
1	24 She makes linen garments and sells them, And supplies sashes for the merchants	Stewardship	Lydia
2	25 Strength and honor are her clothing; She shall rejoice in time to come.	Dignity	Hagar
3	26 She opens her mouth with wisdom, And on her tongue is the law of kindness.	Wisdom	Abigail
4	27 She watches over the ways of her household, And does not eat the bread of idleness.	Attentiveness	The Servant Girl
5	28 Her children rise up and call her blessed;	Legacy	Eunice & Lois
6	Her husband also, and he praises her:	Value	Caleb's Daughter
7	29 "Many daughters have done well, But you excel them all."	Faithfulness	Anna
8	30 Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing,	Power	Jezebel
9	But a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised.	Faith	The Widow
10	31 Give her of the fruit of her hands, And let her own works praise her in the gates.	Fruitfulness	The Bride of Christ
Review			

There are 12 total sessions in Part IV of FCA Virtuous Woman: Excellence. Each one focuses on a female biblical character who exhibits the character trait taken from the selected passages of Proverbs 31:24-31. The small group time is based on Scripture reading and group discussion.

Before meeting with the girls, you will need to prepare to lead the discussion.

1. You will need a Bible and the FCA Virtuous Woman Leader's Guide.
2. Pray before you begin that God would open your heart and mind as you open His Word.
3. Work through the background, Scripture reading, and answer the questions. (This should take approximately one hour.) The more time you spend in preparation, the more fluid the discussion will be and the more opportunities the girls will have to share.
4. Pray for wisdom as you lead the girls through the discussion.

During the group time, you will want to:

1. Make sure the girls have their handout on the corresponding questions. These are the same Character Goals, Scripture Readings, and Discussion Questions as the Leader's Guide—but without answers.
2. Introduce the lesson by giving the Story Background found on the Group Leader Background sheet.
3. Pray and commit the time you have with the girls to the Lord.
4. Have a girl read the Character Goal.
5. Ask the Lead Questions and allow a few minutes for answers.
6. Read the corresponding Scripture Readings noted at the top of the Discussion Guide. (The participants have copies of the Scripture Readings on the back of their handouts in case a Bible is not available to them.)
7. Ask the Discussion Questions on the Guide and allow enough time for the girls to answer and discuss. Some answers are provided but they are by no means an exhaustive list of responses. Think of other answers yourself and encourage the girls to give examples and draw application from the Scriptures to their lives.
8. Each week encourage the girls to work on the Memory Verse. (You may want to have some candy close by for an incentive!) Spend a minute or two each week reviewing and connecting the verses. If they do a little work each week, they will have memorized Proverbs 31:24-31 by the end of the 12 sessions!
9. Close in prayer and incorporate some of their discussion into that prayer

A highlighted section, Training for Godliness, is found at the end of each lesson. This section can be used to further enhance the lesson for that day after completing all the questions, or it can be used as a stand-alone discussion question in the event that time is short. After either reading or summarizing the Scripture corresponding to that lesson, the leader can then use the Training for Godliness discussion question to address the character trait."

You can use the questions as they are printed, make adjustments to the number of questions based on your time available, or add your own questions to personalize the discussion to your group. Our only prayer is that you are able to engage in relationship with the girls so that they might know the risen Christ through His Living Word. By working through questions and allowing them time to discuss, you catch glimpses into their struggles and situations so that you can speak healing words into their lives through Scripture.



EXCELLENCE

INTRO SESSION

Purpose: To encourage women to pursue excellence by dedicating themselves fully to everything God has given them to do, as working for the Lord.

Jesus is coming towards the end of His life on the earth. He has fully dedicated Himself to the mission for which God the Father sent Him to accomplish. He was clear about His purpose on earth to save sinners, and left nothing undone of what God gave Him to do in seeing this mission fulfilled. A big part of Christ's ministry and means to see His desire accomplished was the discipleship of 12 men who would be entrusted to carry the gospel to the ends of the earth. Christ left them an example of what to do in the lives of other men and women who would believe, and right before His departure gave them this command. "Go therefore and make disciples..."- Matthew 28:18-20. We are partakers of the disciples faithfulness and excellence to God's mission and in like manner, God desires for us to give ourselves to the mission of making disciples. This we can pursue, as the spirit empowers us so that we also can be partakers of the grace of God in seeing lives transformed and His Kingdom advanced on the earth.

Participant: Story Intro

Jesus is approaching the end of His life and ministry on the earth. As He prepares to depart, He prays to His heavenly Father for the disciples as they continue His mission on earth.

Directions for Small Group:

- Introduce lesson using the story background of "Participant Story Intro."
- Pray and commit the time you have with the girls to the Lord
- Have one of the group members read the Character Goal.
- Ask lead questions:
 1. When you hear the word excellence, what thoughts come to mind?
 2. Can you use these words to describe your effort in the classroom and in your sport? Why or why not?
- Let's look at how Jesus displayed excellence in His life on earth.

Character Goal: Excellence is glorifying God by working whole heartedly towards all He has given you to do.

Biblical Character: Jesus

Scripture Readings: John 17:1-18 & John 19:17-18 & 28-30

Discussion Questions

- What does Jesus do as He prepares to depart this earth and go back to His heavenly Father? *He prays.*
- What does Jesus say is eternal life? Have you viewed "eternal life" in this way & according to this definition would you say you have eternal life? *To know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom God has sent is eternal life.*
- How does Jesus say He brought God glory on the earth? What does this tell us about His character? *He glorified God on the earth by accomplishing the work God gave Him to do. It tells us that He was faithful and committed to what God gave Him to do.*
- In this passage Jesus tells us some specific things God gave Him to do and what He accomplished. Name a few. (Hint, They begin with "I") *v.6 He revealed God to the disciples, v. 14 He gave them God's word v. 12 He protected them and kept them safe, v. 18 He sent them into the world*

- What are some specific things God has given you to do in your life and on your team? What would it look like for you to accomplish these things and glorify God?
- Who exactly is Jesus praying for? What does this tell us about His heart for them? *He loves them and is concerned for them as they continue His mission to the world.*
- What are some specific things He is praying for them? *He Prays that the Father would continue to keep them from the evil one, they would be sanctified (set apart) by the truth, and would be unified as one.*
- If you are a follower of Christ, Jesus also prayed these things for you. How does this make you feel, impact the way you live and relate to teammates?
- As Jesus was dying on the cross, He muttered the words, "It is finished." What was He referring to? *Jesus was referring to the work of salvation God sent Him to accomplish for the world. He lived the life we could not live and died the death we deserved to die as a result of our sin. For those who believe in His work of salvation will be saved.*
- Jesus's excellence to carry out God's purpose for His life has eternally affected all mankind. Those who believe in His finished work on the cross will receive eternal life. Those who do not believe will experience eternal death and separation from Him. In what way has Jesus's finished work affected your life?
- What does this story teach you about God? How can you apply these truths to your life?
- **What is one thing I learned from this story that I can apply to my life before the next lesson?**

Core Truths:

- ▶ Jesus is the only person who was perfectly excellent in all things.
- ▶ We bring God glory when we pursue excellence by seeking to whole heartily accomplish what God has given us to do.
- ▶ Our pursuit of excellence or lack there of affects ourselves and others.

Training for Godliness

As an athlete, it is easy to believe that our main purpose is to score goals, build stats, win the championship or possibly live up to a coach's expectations. Have you ever considered that there is more to life than your sport? What do you see as "bigger" than your sport—things, beliefs or attitudes that go beyond the court or field? According to the lesson on Jesus' excellence, what is our ultimate purpose on this earth? How might your excellence in what God has given you to do affect someone else's life? How might your lack to pursue excellence affect others and yourself? Give examples.

Memory Verse: John 17:4- I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do.



STEWARDSHIP

SESSION 1

Purpose: To encourage women to wisely steward the things entrusted to them by God.

"And the Lord said, Who then is the faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall set over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will set him over all that he hath." Luke 12:42-44

Like the woman in Proverbs 31, God has given us all time, talent, treasure, gifts, relationships, and even difficulties to steward. Whether we have little or much, we can use these things to glorify God and advance His kingdom. Lydia was a woman that had obtained wealth through her business of selling purple cloth. After hearing the Gospel preached through Paul, she put her faith in Jesus Christ and immediately sought ways to use what had been given to her to be a blessing to God's people. She had experienced the grace of God in her life and was freely welcomed into His family. This hospitality extended to her, she earnestly desired to extend to her new brothers and begged them saying, "If you consider me a believer in the Lord, come and stay at my house. And she persuaded us.." (Acts 16:15) Lydia's conversion is a great example of how we as women can use the grace of God extended towards us to be a blessing in the lives of others. Not only does God seek to use our possessions and gifts for His glory, but also our trials. After being falsely accused, beaten, and thrown in prison, Paul and Silas used their circumstances as an opportunity to exalt Jesus and give the other prisoners in jail with them a chance to respond to the Gospel. As a result of their faithfulness in the midst of difficult circumstances, a jailer and his entire household were saved. What has God given you to steward? Is it a group of young women, a home, a difficult relationship? Ask God how you can be a faithful and wise steward of these things and that He would find you so doing when He comes.

Leader: Story Background

As Paul and Silas were traveling through Macedonia, they went to the riverside on the Sabbath to pray. While there, they met some women and Paul preached the Gospel to them. A woman named Lydia received the message and became a believer. Her faith was immediately evidenced in her desire to welcome Paul and Silas into her home.

Participant: Story Intro.

As Paul and Silas continued on their missionary journey, they decided to go outside the city to the riverside to pray. While there, they meet a group of women and used that opportunity to share the Good News about Jesus with them.

Directions for Small Group:

- Introduce the lesson using the story background of "Participant Story Intro."
- Pray and commit the time you have with the girls to the Lord.
- Have one of the group members read the Character Goal.
- Ask lead questions:
 1. What do you think stewardship means?
 2. What has God given you to steward?
- Let's look at a story of a woman who served and glorified God through her resources.

Character Goal: Stewardship is being faithful in managing the things entrusted to you by God.

Biblical Character: Lydia

Scripture Readings: Acts 16:13-34, 40

Discussion Questions:

- Who does the passage point out as one of the women who listened as Paul and his travel companions shared the Gospel with them? *Lydia*
- What does verse 14 tell us about her? Which of these two descriptions is most important? Why? (Her occupation or her faith) *She was a dealer in purple cloth and a worshiper of God. Worshiper of God because it described WHO she was, not WHAT she did.*
- How do people describe you? What type of woman would you like to be described as? What is one goal you can set in order to become the woman you want to be?
- What did the Lord do for Lydia after she heard Paul's message? What does this tell us about God and the work of salvation in our lives? *He opened her heart to respond. God uses people to share the Gospel and His Spirit does the work in our hearts.*
- What message can we assume that Lydia heard from God? Have you responded to this message? If so, how has your life changed as a result? *That she was a sinner and that God sent Jesus into the world to save us from our sins and reconcile us to Him.*
- After hearing and believing in the Gospel, Lydia responds to the message in what two ways? She was baptized (v. 15) and exhibited hospitality toward others who loved God (v. 15).
- Lydia was a businesswoman, head of her household, and most importantly, a believer in Jesus Christ. In what ways do we see her stewarding these aspects of her life for God's glory? *As a businessperson, she used the money she received from her work to further God's kingdom. As head of her household, she used her resources to bless God's people. As a believer, in the same way God welcomed her into His kingdom, she welcomed others into her home.*
- Lydia is a great example of how the Gospel motivates us to be good stewards of the resources God has given us. God has given you the ability to play your sport. How can you steward this ability to serve others and bring Him glory?
- What happened as Paul and Silas were on their way to pray? How did Paul respond to the female slave possessed by the evil spirit? *They were met by a female possessed with an evil spirit that kept calling out to them. He commanded the spirit to come out of her and it left.*
- How did her owners respond? How were Paul and Silas treated by the authorities and the crowd? Where did they end up? *Her owners became angry that their way of making money was gone so they took them to the authorities to be tried. Paul and Silas were stripped, beaten, and severely flogged. They ended up in prison.*
- What were Paul and Silas doing at midnight? Who was listening to them? What do you think they thought about these two men? *Praying and singing hymns to God. The other prisoners and the guards. They were strange.*
- What miracle happened in the jail as they praised God? Who witnessed this miracle? *An earthquake violently shook the foundation of the prison. The prison doors were opened and the chains became loosed.*
- How did the jailer respond to this miracle and the message that Paul and Silas gave him? *He asked how he could be saved.*
- What did Paul and Silas choose to do in the midst of their suffering? *Praise and worship God and focus their attention on Him rather than on their circumstances.*

- Paul and Silas were entrusted with a trial and used their time in prison to glorify God. As a result of their faithfulness, even in the midst of hardship, God saved a jailer and his whole household. What does this teach us about the trials and hardships God allows in our lives and how our response to them can influence others? How can we steward hardships well? *God sometimes allows difficult circumstances in our own lives so that others might know Him and His salvation. We can trust God and focus our attention toward His character rather than our difficult circumstances.*
- Whose house does Paul and Silas return to after they get out of prison? What took place among the believers in her home? *Lydia's house. The brothers and sisters were encouraged.*
- As a female athlete, what are some difficulties you have faced or are currently facing? How can you steward the things God has entrusted to you and use them for His glory in the midst of your circumstances?
- What does this story teach you about God? Women? How can you apply these truths to your life?
- **What is one thing I learned from this story that I can apply to my life before the next lesson?**

Core Truths:

- ▶ God desires for us to express the love we have received from Him towards others.
- ▶ The relationships, position, resources, and character traits we have been given are not for us but are to be used freely for the advancement of His kingdom.
- ▶ Faithfulness to God during times of difficulty can result in the salvation of others.

Training for Godliness

Athletes often get confused about their identity. They begin to evaluate their success as a person based on their success (or failure) as an athlete. They mistakenly equate "what they do" (point guard, golfer, center, pitcher, etc.) with "who they are" (God's creation who is loved, forgiven, and cherished). Lydia sold purple cloth in her city but most importantly she was a follower of Christ—that is WHO she was. Do you struggle with finding your identity in your sport? What are some ways you can remember who you are in Christ vs. what you do on the court or field? How can you use what you have been given and steward that to be who you are in Christ?

Memory Verse:

"She makes linen garments and sells them, and supplies sashes for the merchants." Proverbs 31:25



DIGNITY

SESSION 2

Purpose: To encourage women to value themselves as God values them.

Dignity is the state or quality of being worthy of honor, respect, and value in the sight of God.

In *“Lost Women of the Bible,”* by Carolyn Custus James, she gives us a startling reality of Hagar’s life in context of her culture. James writes:

Utterly alone in the world, with no one to speak out for her or to protect her from harm, Hagar faced a life sentence of catering to the biddings of others, caring for the wealthy, and serving their whims... Hagar was human property and did not even have rights over her own body.”

If this stark picture accurately represents Hagar’s life, then how can Hagar—a woman, a foreigner and a slave—have any dignity? Dignity is not dependent on a person, position, culture, gender, or appearance. Dignity is given to us by God. He created us in His image, sent His son to die as a substitute so that we might be reconciled to Him, and displays His love toward us even though we do not deserve His favor. To Sarah and the other Hebrews, Hagar was property with no rights and no dignity. But to the Angel of God who appeared to her in the wilderness, she was God’s image bearer with great value, dignity, and purpose.

Hagar returned to her difficult circumstances with new purpose out of obedience to God’s Word. She returned with promises from God regarding her yet-to-be-born son as well as an accurate view of herself in God’s sight. When she returned in her servitude to Sarah, she understood that she was not just serving Sarah, but serving God. God was also sending her back to the two people, Abram and Sarai, who were most equipped at the time to teach her more about Him. There was purpose in her being there with them and it wasn’t just to cater to their whims. He was teaching her things about Him that she could only learn through difficulty. God acts similarly in our lives today. Often we are tempted to pray and ask for a life of ease, but what if we learn things about God in our suffering that we otherwise would not have known had we not suffered? The test of prosperity is not easily passed. God uses suffering redemptively in the lives of those who trust Him. Praise God we do not suffer purposelessly!

Special Note: Please be sure that the girls understand the difference between returning to a difficult situation or relationship where conflict arose because of a difference in preference and returning to an abusive relationship. This passage does NOT support returning to a situation of extreme neglect or abuse. Abusive relationships oppress the victim as a captive and distinguish the captor as surly, mean, and cruelly dominant. This is not a picture of our relationship with God and is not what He desires to be displayed in the lives of His children.

Leader: Story Background

When Abram and Sarai were cast out from Pharaoh’s presence (Genesis 12), they left with great wealth, menservants, and maidservants. Many scholars believe this is when Hagar came onto the scene. It had been ten years since God promised Abram many descendants and he had not even one. Sarai acted out of her unbelief in the promise and introduced Hagar into the relationship thinking she could get the family she had been promised. God does not want what man can do but wants to produce something in man that only He can do.

Participant: Story Intro.

Sarai had been barren for 75 years but longed for a family of her own. In her desperation, she offered her slave, Hagar, to her husband, Abram, thinking it would give her the family she had always dreamed of. Rather than her actions producing joy, happiness, and contentment, they only bred resentment, anger, and frustration.

Directions for Small Group:

- Introduce the lesson using the story background of “Participant Story Intro.”
- Pray and commit the time you have with the girls to the Lord.
- Have one of the group members read the Character Goal.
- Ask lead questions:
 1. What does it mean to have dignity?
 2. What is the evidence in a person’s life who knows they have value?

- Let's look at a story of a woman who many see as the least of society but then she has an encounter with the living God and is reminded by Him that she has value and worth in His sight. Her position doesn't change but her purpose does.

Character Goal: **Dignity** is the state or quality of being worthy of honor, respect, and value in the sight of God.

Biblical Character: Hagar

Scripture Readings: Genesis 16:1-11, 13-16

Discussion Questions:

- Who was Hagar? What did both Abram and Sarai refer to her as? *An Egyptian (foreigner) female slave. A "slave"*
- What did Sarai want to use her for? What does this tell us about Sarai's view of Hagar and her worth? *She wanted to use her to have children. Sarai just used Hagar to get what she wanted—a family of her own. She had no value or regard for Hagar as an individual.*
- Did the actions of Abram and Sarai dignify Hagar or demean her? Give examples. *Their actions demeaned Hagar because they treated her like a thing to be possessed and used rather than a person who is valued by God.*
- Did Abram listen to Sarai's plan? What happened? *Yes. Hagar was given to Abram to sleep with and she became pregnant with his child.*
- How did Hagar feel towards Sarai after realizing she was pregnant? *How did Sarai treat Hagar as a result? Hagar despised Sarai and Sarai mistreated her.*
- What did Hagar do in response to Sarai's mistreatment of her? Describe how you think Hagar might have felt. *She fled from Sarai into the desert. Scared, didn't know where to go, alone, rejected, not valued, used.*
- Who found Hagar at her lowest point? Was she looking for Him? What does this tell us about God? *God. No. He is drawn to the broken-hearted and offers himself to them for relationship.*
- What was the first word the Angel of the Lord said when speaking to her? What does this tell us about God and how He views us? *"Hagar..." (He called her by name.) He knows us by name and views us as precious and valuable even if others don't.*
- What did the Angel of the Lord ask Hagar? Do you think He already knew the answers to His questions? If so, why do you think He asked? *"Where have you come from? Where are you going?" Yes, He already knew. Questions require a response and His desire is for us to respond in relationship to Him.*
- How did Hagar respond to Him? *She told Him what was going on in her life and responded in relationship to His care for her.*
- What did He tell her to do? Why do you think He wanted her to do this? *"Go back." He wanted her to trust Him and His care for her even in the midst of her difficult situation. She was returning to that difficult situation with her own personal view of God. She didn't have to just go off of what God was saying to Abram, but now He had spoken to her and she had a personal relationship with Him. (Leader: EXPLAIN the difference between preference and an abusive situation.)*
- What did the Angel of the Lord tell Hagar concerning her future? What do you think this did for her? *She was pregnant with a son and He would bless her descendants. This gave her hope and encouraged her.*
- Who named her son? What is the meaning of this name? How do you think this name and its meaning would comfort her in the future? What does this tell us about how God cares for us? *God. "God hears" (NKJV). Each time she said her son's name she would be reminded that God hears. He hears our cries when we are going through difficult circumstances.*

- What name did Hagar give to God? Why? "The God who sees me." Because God saw her in her misery and reached out to her in care.
- Based on Abram and Sarai's actions, how did they view Hagar? Based on God's actions, how do you think God viewed Hagar? They demeaned Hagar and did not treat her as a person of value. God dignified Hagar and showed she was of great worth in His sight.
- Should God's or others' views of us define our dignity? Why? As a female athlete, how can the knowledge of God and knowing how He views you impact the way you live? How you treat your teammates? God's view should define our dignity. He created us in His image, loves and values us, and desires to bless us.
- What does this story teach you about God? Women? How can you apply these truths to your life?
- **What is one thing I learned from this story that I can apply to my life before the next lesson?**

Core Truths:

- ▶ Even though others may see us as something to be used, God sees us as a person of great value.
- ▶ God's view of us should be what defines our worth.
- ▶ God hears the prayers of and is near to the broken hearted.

Training for Godliness

Have you ever felt "used" by a coach or teammate to accomplish what they wanted—a statistic, championship, popularity, etc? How did that affect you and the way you played? How can you, like Hagar, change your attitude even if you can't change your circumstances? Looking in Scripture to see whom God sees us to be—blessed, forgiven, dearly loved. This will help give us a right understanding regarding ourselves, regardless of our circumstances.

Memory Verse: "She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come." Proverbs 31:25



WISDOM

SESSION 3

Purpose: To encourage women to display God's wisdom in their daily life and decisions.

Wisdom comes from God and is displayed as knowledge of what is true or right coupled with good judgment used in action.

Leader: Story Background

"Abigail: Walking in Wisdom" by Susan Curry (<https://bible.org/seriespage/6-abigail-walking-wisdom>)

"Abigail displayed wisdom as she dealt both with her foolish husband Nabal and with David who was very angry and ready to take revenge. Dealing with difficult people is a great challenge. Abigail shows us the value of learning and applying God's wisdom in relationships and in making an appeal. Too often, we value human wisdom rather than God's wisdom when navigating tough situations. Our first instinct in problem solving may be to call a friend for advice, look on the internet, or find an expert. While these are valid methods for acquiring information, we need to recognize that the Lord is the source of true wisdom. We can research and gain information but then we need to filter everything through the truth of Scripture. God's wisdom is relevant and practical. His word will provide guidance when we are facing a serious problem.

Abigail gives us insight into her theology in the appeal she made to David. She told David that it was the LORD who kept him from shedding blood and taking matters into his own hands (1 Samuel 25:26). She reassured David that the LORD would establish David's house (1 Samuel 25:28). She used a beautiful word picture to remind David that his life was held securely by the LORD (1 Samuel 25:29). And she reminded him that the LORD would do everything that he had promised David and that He would make David a leader over Israel (1 Samuel 25:29).

In her haste to gather food and make the preparations to meet David, Abigail did not have time to brush up on her theology or on her relationship with the LORD. Her appeal flowed out of her strong belief in God's sovereignty and His faithfulness. David did not have to take matters into his own hands because it was the LORD who would establish his house, protect his life, and do everything He had promised David. The LORD would make David a leader over Israel.

How many times have I taken matters into my own hands when I should have trusted the LORD to work things out? How many times have I turned a situation over to Him only to take it back when He did not "fix" it on my timetable? Abigail took action but she knew the outcome was in the LORD's hands.

The LORD has not changed. He is still the one who will do everything He has promised us. He is in control, He is establishing us, and He is protecting us. Just as the LORD fulfilled His promise to make David a leader over Israel, He will fulfill His promises to us as believers."

Participant: Story Intro.

Abigail was a woman with beauty and brains. She used her wisdom, which flowed out of her knowledge of God and His word, to intercede for her family and remind Israel's future king of God's promises and faithfulness.

Directions for Small Group:

- Introduce lesson using the story background of "Participant Story Intro."
- Pray and commit the time you have with the girls to the Lord.
- Have one of the group members read the Character Goal.
- Ask lead questions:
 1. How do you know a person is wise?
 2. Who in your life has displayed wisdom? What are some ways you can spend more time with the wise people in your life?
- Let's look at a story of a woman who displayed wisdom by knowing God, His promises, and His desire to see us live rightly toward others.

Character Goal: **Wisdom** comes from God and is displayed as knowledge of what is true or right coupled with good judgment used in action.

Biblical Character: Abigail

Scripture Readings: 1 Samuel 25:1-19, 23-42

Discussion Questions:

- How is Nabal described? How is Abigail described? *Nabal was very wealthy but was surly and mean in his dealings. Abigail was a wise and beautiful woman.*
- David requested that Nabal provide food for him and his men in exchange for the protection they had provided Nabal's servants. What was Nabal's response to David's request? *He chose not to provide David and his servants with the food they needed and insulted him in the process.*
- What did David decide to do about how Nabal treated him? Is this the right response? Why or why not? *David decided to take matters in his own hands and avenge himself by killing every male in Nabal's household. No. People's insults or mistreatment of us does not give us the right to pursue evil toward them.*
- Describe a situation where a friend, teammate, or relative has mistreated you. What would be an unwise response to that situation? What would be a wise response? What would be the result or outcome of each of those responses? *See Proverbs 15:1.*
- What did the servant tell Abigail? What did she decide to do? *The servant told Abigail that David and his men were going to destroy the men of Nabal's household because of his harsh response to David's reasonable request. She went and met David with the provisions he originally requested in order to turn away his wrath.*
- How did her reaction to the situation display wisdom? *She put her good judgment to action and provided the food needed for David's servants in order to turn away his anger.*
- Describe how Abigail approached and spoke to David. *She approached him humbly.*
- What truths did Abigail remind David of concerning God and himself? What does this tell us that Abigail believed about God? *She reminded David of God's sovereignty and protection. Abigail reminded David of God's promises to make him a success and a lasting dynasty of his family. She believed that God was real, He had spoken promises regarding David and his family, and He would act to fulfill those promises.*
- How did David respond to her wisdom? How do you think this impacted David's future as king over Israel? *David responded with gratitude to God that He had sent her to him to keep him from sinning. "Not have on his conscientious the staggering burden of needless bloodshed or having (wrongfully) avenged himself." (v. 31)*
- As a female student-athlete, what decisions do you face on a daily basis? How can you make wise decisions that would positively impact your future? *Peer group, going to class, alcohol, sex, smoking, working hard at practice, listening to the coach. Read God's Word, pray, seek wisdom from older, godly women. Think about the future you desire and make decisions every day that glorify God and lead you to that future.*
- Who did David acknowledge as being behind Abigail's actions? What does this teach us about God? *God was behind her actions. God can put wise people in our life to help us make the right decisions and turn us away from wrong paths.*
- What did David do after he heard of Nabal's death? Why do you think he wanted to marry her? What does this tell us about being a woman of wisdom? *David sent for Abigail to become his wife. He recognized the value that she had and could bring to his life by being a godly and wise woman. Others desire to be in relationship with those who are wise.*
- What does this story teach you about God? Women? How can you apply these truths to your life?
- **What is one thing I learned from this story that I can apply to my life before the next lesson?**

Core Truths:

- ▶ True wisdom comes from God and knowing His Word, and is displayed in good judgment.
- ▶ People's lives are positively affected by godly wisdom.
- ▶ Wisdom is a valuable trait and women who possess it can add value to others.

Training for Godliness

It is easy to get caught up in a winning streak, strong individual stats, a starting position, or a championship. Often when we are successful, we begin to take pride in ourselves to the degree to which we act haughty, mean, and look down on others. How can you as an athlete and leader at your school display the memory verse this week?

Memory Verse: *"She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue."* Proverbs 31:26



ATTENTIVENESS

SESSION 4

Purpose: To encourage women to consider others needs before their own.

Attentiveness is being aware of others and their needs in order to serve them in a way that brings God glory.

At the core of a virtuous woman who lives with excellence is attentiveness. In Scripture, God gives us a picture of what that looks like in everyday life. Philippians 2:3-4 says:

“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.”

Christ was the ultimate example of this in that “...**he humbled himself** by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!” (Philippians 2:8) He did this because He was attentive to our need for a Savior. He knew He had the ability to pay the debt we could not pay and satisfy that debt fully.

Just as Christ has been attentive to us, so as His reflection in this world, we are to be attentive to others. We are instructed as believers to value others above ourselves and serve them out of humility. This is the mark of a true believer who has determined in their heart to read God’s Word, obey it, and teach it to others. We teach it not necessarily by reading the verse to others, but living the verse out toward others.

Leader: Story Background

After a military coup just after Solomon’s death, the nation of Israel divided into the Northern (Israel) and Southern (Judah) Kingdoms. The Northern Kingdom of Israel lasted about 250 years, had 20 kings, and all of them were wicked. Each king was more wicked than his predecessor, causing Israel to fall deep into idolatry and sexual immorality. Eventually they were taken into captivity by the Assyrians and exiled from the land.

A little over 75 years into the Northern Kingdom’s history, God sent the prophets Elijah and Elisha to call the people to repentance because of their disobedience to God’s commands. During this time there was a servant girl who had been enslaved by a family that lived in Aram. The head of that family, Naaman, was a mighty man who was revered and respected by many, but Scripture says that “he had leprosy” (2 Kings 5:1). He had everything but his health and no matter what he had tried (probably many painful treatments and lots of isolation), he was plagued with leprosy.

But God had a different plan for this man’s life. God wanted to show Himself to be healer, not giving the glory to a local diviner, doctor, or king. In order for Naaman to be healed, it took the attentiveness of a young servant girl to consider his needs above her own comfort and safety. We do not know her name, but she was very brave and showed faithfulness to God in her testimony that He was a God who could heal.

Participant: Story Intro.

The life of a slave was no picnic. She had no rights, no rest, and no opinion that she could express. She was there to do the bidding of her mistress, but she served a greater purpose. The attentiveness to the needs of her master over her own made way for God to heal a great man, Naaman, in a foreign country. Because of that healing, Naaman took God with him back to his country and lived a faithful life before others.

Directions for Small Group:

- Introduce lesson using the story background of “Participant Story Intro.”
- Pray and commit the time you have with the girls to the Lord.
- Have one of the group members read the Character Goal.
- Ask lead questions:
 1. Who on your team is most attentive towards the needs of others on the team?
 2. What kind of effect does this have on those around her?
- Let’s look at a story of a young girl who was attentive of others even though she was experiencing difficult circumstances herself.

Character Goal: Attentiveness is being aware of others and their needs in order to serve them in a way that brings God glory.

Biblical Character: The Servant Girl

Scripture Readings: 2 Kings 5:1-15

Discussion Questions:

- Who is Naaman and how is he described? *The commander of king Aram's army. He was a great man because of the victories the Lord has given. He is described as having leprosy.*
- What do we know about the servant girl from this passage? *She was young, an Israelite, and served Naaman's wife.*
- What did she suggest to Naaman's wife? What does this tell us about her faith in God? *She suggested that Naaman go see the prophet in Samaria (Israel) so that he could be healed from his leprosy. She was aware of Naaman's need for healing and was faithful to tell her mistress that the God of Israel could heal him.*
- Considering her role as a servant and the high position of her mistress, do you think she might have been hesitant or intimidated of telling Naaman's wife how her husband could be healed? What do you think helped her move beyond her fears or doubts? *Yes. Because of her belief that God was all-powerful and could heal him, she was compelled to tell her mistress even though there was risk to speaking out and not knowing what the outcome would be.*
- As an athlete or a friend, have you been in an intimidating situation where you knew something that could help someone else but were afraid to say anything? What happened?
- The slave girl was taken captive against her will and put in a situation that wasn't ideal, but she still had concern for the needs around her. Hard circumstances often cause us to focus on our own needs rather than the needs of others. What circumstances has God allowed you to be in and how can you be attentive to those around you in order that they may experience God in their lives?
- Because of the servant girl's faith in God, she was able to impact another family for eternity. How can your faith and attentiveness to your teammates' needs impact them spiritually?
- What did Naaman decide to do? *He decided to go to the prophet in Samaria (Israel) to seek healing.*
- When he arrived at Elisha's house, what did the messenger say to him? *Go wash himself seven times in the Jordan River.*
- Why did Naaman become angry? *He was expecting the prophet, Elisha, to do all the work by calling on God and waving his hand over the spot. Instead, the prophet's instructions required Naaman to humble himself and be obedient to ALL of the instructions and do it just the way it was prescribed by Elisha.*
- How did Naaman's attendants encourage him? *After he first refused to do what was required, they encouraged him to go back and submit to the prophet's instructions.*
- What happened to Naaman's body after he did what Elisha had told him? What does this teach us about faith and obedience? *His flesh was restored and became clean like that of a young boy (v. 14). Both faith AND obedience are important to experience God's full healing.*
- What did he proclaim when he returned to the prophet's house? *"Now I know there is not God in all the world except in Israel!" (v. 15)*
- How do you usually react when being told to do something to improve your skills or fitness? What can you learn from this story that would encourage you to take the advice of someone wanting to help you?
- Naaman's life was transformed as a result of the miracle that God performed in his body. Who played a vital role in this valiant soldier's life? *The young servant girl played a vital role in this great man's life by being faithful to share what she knew was true about God.*
- The servant girl is only mentioned in one sentence in all of Scripture, but because of her faithfulness to be attentive to those around her, she had a huge impact for the glory of God. What does this tell us about the responsibility we have as believers to be attentive to the spiritual and physical needs of those around us and how it can impact God's kingdom?
- What does this story teach you about God? Women? How can you apply these truths to your life?
- **What is one thing I learned from this story that I can apply to my life before the next lesson?**

Core Truths:

- ▶ We are to share with others what we know to be true about God.
- ▶ Our faith in God greatly impacts the lives of others.
- ▶ In order to be attentive to the needs of others, we must be intentional to serve them in a way that brings glory to God.

Training for Godliness

As athletes, it is easy for us to get wrapped up in our own needs. It is easy to think only about MY training, MY statistics, MY position, MY plan, MY reputation—but what about the rest of the team? How can you improve team dynamics, cohesion, and maybe even records by not just thinking of yourself but noticing other's needs and helping to meet some of those? You can't be everything for every person but Andy Stanley, American pastor and teacher, has said, "Do for one what you wish you could do for everyone." Start small, focus on just one teammate and watch God work! Report back to the group at the next FCA meeting and tell others how you helped one person who you noticed had a need. By acting on your faith, you will be like the little servant girl who had the courage to tell the family how great God is!

Memory Verse: *"She watches over the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness."*
Proverbs 31:27



LEGACY

SESSION 5

Purpose: To encourage women to leave an impact on others that will far outlive their own life.

Legacy is a godly influence and impact that is passed on to future generations.

Leaving a godly legacy is not only the focus of parents but also anyone who is in a position of influence over the next generation. God's desire is that we outlive ourselves by leaving a legacy that will outlive us—a legacy of eternal value, not just temporal worth. Bank accounts run dry, cars break down, jewelry gets lost, but a godly legacy lives for all eternity. Moses knew a godly legacy began with God's Word that "endures forever" (Isaiah 40:8). Because he knew this truth, he commanded the Israelites:

"These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates." Deuteronomy 6:6-9

Everyone is different. Some have a long history of godly people in their life while others have only brokenness. We are not bound to our history—either good or bad—each generation must choose for themselves. We may not have been left a godly legacy, but if we place our faith in Jesus, read His Word, and order our lives according to Scripture, we can leave a godly legacy. It may not be a legacy just with our biological family, but it may be a legacy with spiritual daughters and granddaughters who will in turn pass it to the next generation.

The truth of the matter is that we all leave a legacy. The question is what will we leave with those who come behind us? If our desire is to leave a godly legacy, then we must live out godly principles from Scripture in our own life, be intentional about teaching them to our children (physical or spiritual), and pray for natural opportunities to share eternal Truths with others.

*"I have **no greater joy** than to hear that my children are walking in the truth."* 3 John 1:4

Our hearts would be glad if we knew this to be true for our children, how much more does it make the heart of God glad to know this about us? A legacy is not something we take, but something we are given. Legacy starts with **you**.

Leader: Story Background

Paul was a faithful follower of Jesus Christ. Everywhere he went he preached righteousness, not by the law, but by grace through faith. In his journeys, Paul met Timothy, Eunice, and Lois. Timothy was also a faithful follower of Christ and Paul decided to take him along on his journey. Paul points us to the source of Timothy's great faith. The source is the intentionality of his mother and grandmother to teach Timothy the Holy Scriptures. They left a great legacy for Timothy; but they also left a legacy to us, even today, that reminds us to teach our children God's ways so that they may walk in Truth.

Participant: Story Intro.

Paul took Timothy to be his assistant after meeting him in Lystra. He trained Timothy to be a leader, and then wrote letters to encourage him to continue in what he had learned and been taught by his mother and grandmother since infancy.

Directions for Small Group:

- Introduce lesson using the story background of "Participant Story Intro."
- Pray and commit the time you have with the girls to the Lord.
- Have one of the group members read the Character Goal.
- Ask lead questions:
 1. What is a legacy?
 2. What types of legacies have been left that you know of?
- Let's look at a story of two women who impacted future generations (even us today!) with their sincere faith in God.

Character Goal: Legacy is a godly influence and impact that is passed on to future generations.

Biblical Character: Eunice and Lois

Scripture Readings: Acts 16:1-5; 2 Timothy 1:1-5; 3:10-15

Discussion Questions:**Acts 16:1-5**

- Who was Timothy and what do we know about his mother and father? *He was a disciple of Christ, his mother was Jewish (follower of God) but his father was a Greek.*
- What was Timothy's reputation among the other believers in Lystra and Iconium? *They spoke well of him.*
- What was Paul's desire for Timothy? *Paul desired to take Timothy along on the journey with him because of his testimony among other believers.*
- What did they do as they traveled throughout that area? What happened as a result? *They delivered the decisions reached by those who walked with Jesus for the people to obey. The church was strengthened in faith and grew daily in numbers (v. 5).*

2 Timothy 1:1-5

- What did Paul call Timothy in his letter to him? What does this tell us about their relationship? Paul called Timothy "My dear son..." *They had deep affection and love for one another founded on their relationship with Christ. They were close like a parent to a child.*
- Whose faith did Paul commend? How did he describe their faith? What does this tell us about these particular women's relationships with God? *Timothy's grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice. He described their faith as sincere. They each had a personal and real relationship with God.*
- According to Paul's statement in verse 4, what kind of impact did their faith have on Timothy? What does this teach us about "sincere" faith and how it can affect future generations? *He was influenced by what he saw in them and that shaped his faith in God. What began as their faith in God became his own and it was real. Sincere faith is when what we say and what we do are consistent with what is true about God. Insincere faith is when what we do does not match what we say. Sincere faith is the kind of faith that leaves a godly legacy for future generations.*
- As an athlete, you are in a position to leave a lasting legacy on your campus that goes beyond stats. Influencing others for God is a legacy that impacts others for all eternity. Would people be able to describe your faith as being sincere? Why or why not?

2 Timothy 3:10-15

- Paul, wrote this last letter to Timothy while imprisoned and awaiting his death. What did Timothy observe in Paul's life during their time together? How do you think this influenced him? *Timothy observed his teaching, way of life, purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions, and sufferings (v. 10). He also witnessed how God rescued Paul from those trials. When he would suffer for the Lord's sake, he would know how to persevere, trusting God to act on his behalf also.*
- What did Paul tell Timothy to continue in and why? *He told Timothy to continue in what he had already learned and become convinced of because those who taught him were trustworthy and their faith was sincere.*
- When did Timothy begin to learn the Holy Scriptures? Who can we assume taught him these things? What does this tell us about God's Word as it relates to children? *He began to learn the Scriptures as an infant from his mother and grandmother. It is important and can influence even from infancy.*
- Timothy was blessed to have godly influences in his life that spoke to him about Jesus and lived a godly life before him. Do you have godly people in your life? How can you take advantage of these relationships for your own spiritual growth?
- What type of legacy has been left for you—either good or bad? *Even if you do not have a godly legacy, you can choose to live a life for Jesus that impacts future generations.*
- What type of legacy do you want to leave for future generations? What steps can you take in order for this to happen?
- What does this story teach you about God? Women? How can you apply these truths to your life?
- **What is one thing I learned from this story that I can apply to my life before the next lesson?**

Core Truths:

- ▶ We all leave a legacy.
- ▶ Our faith, or lack of faith, in God will determine whether the legacy we leave will be for good or evil.
- ▶ Sincere faith leaves legacies that impact future generations.

Training for Godliness

Legacy is usually thought of as the lasting mark one leaves after their career or life is over. We typically talk about it when a great athlete retires or maybe when someone dies. Just like Timothy's mother and grandmother, passing down a legacy doesn't happen overnight—it is something that takes a lifetime of dedication. Someone can have a legacy of wins, homeruns, points per game, or championships. Others leave a legacy of hurt, haughtiness, or addiction because of the negative way they lived their life. Think ahead—maybe 10 years—what kind of a person do you want to be known for when you are in your 20s? Maybe wise, generous, godly? We don't typically choose addict, liar, vindictive, or manipulative; but yet people live their lives that way every day. Set three goals for your life today: Educational, Athletic, and Spiritual. Write down one way you are going to accomplish them in the next year, five years, ten years. Share some of those with the group so they can encourage you!

Memory Verse: *"Her children arise and call her blessed."* Proverbs 31:28



VALUE

SESSION 6

Purpose: To encourage women to value themselves as God values them.

Value is the recognition of a person's worth, importance, and meaning to God and others.

Another way to denote value is to look at our worth in terms of self-esteem—not just how we subjectively accentuate our positives, but how God sees us. John Clark wrote an interesting online article in 2011 about the idea of godly self-esteem:

"Many people, including Christians, struggle with self-esteem. Christian teaching regarding spirituality can often times lead people to believe that it is not spiritual to think too highly of themselves, yet one of Christ's two Great Commandments is to love our neighbors as ourselves. The Bible has much to say about this subject.

First, we must realize that God loves each and every one of us. We are precious enough that Jesus died on a cross for us. We should view ourselves as God sees us. (John 3:16)

In contrast to this is our sin nature. We are helpless. (Romans 5:6) We stumble in many ways. (James 3:2) We all must acknowledge our weaknesses. (2 Corinthians 12:5, 7-10) We are all vulnerable to Satan's tactics. (1 Peter 5:8) So, we must see ourselves as lovable by God but also as helpless, weak, and stumbling sinners.

Proper self-esteem will be evident in our attitudes and actions toward ourselves. In Romans 12:3 each of us is told "not to think more highly of yourself than you ought to." What is interesting about this verse is that it does not say that you should not think highly of yourself, just do not think TOO highly. ...We are each a person of value, to be used by God in His kingdom. (As believers) We each have a spiritual gift given by the Holy Spirit. God expects us to employ it. Step forward with confidence. Do not hold back by thinking too little of yourself.

Biblical self-esteem can be summarized by humility balanced with a healthy self-love. By a helpless sin nature, but which by God's grace is still useful to Him. By regarding others as God sees them, but not thinking too lowly of ourselves."

If we allow ourselves to determine our value by what others think, what we think about ourselves or what the culture says is valuable, we will miss the mark every time. We will either think too highly of ourselves and become judgmental of others' actions or think so poorly of ourselves that we will allow others to use and abuse us. Both views are incorrect. The only view that is accurate and that matters is how God values us. He loves us, cares for us, and desires a relationship with us!

Leader: Story Background:

Just a short time after the Israelites had been released from captivity in Egypt, Moses sent twelve spies to the Promised Land. They came back and reported to Moses that, in fact, the land was good and had plenty of room and produce to sustain the millions of Israelite sojourners. But, they also reported that the people there were like giants and they felt like grasshoppers. They did not believe they would be able to overcome such a strong foe, and ten of the twelve spies said they should not try and take the land. Two holdouts, Joshua and Caleb, testified to God's ability and said they could take the land not because they were able, but because the Lord had promised it to them. The ten spies persuaded the fearful Israelites and they did not take the land at that time. Because of their unbelief, God caused them to wander in the desert for 40 years.

Moses died at the end of that 40 years and Joshua was instructed by God to lead the people into the land He had promised to the Israelites. Caleb did not change at all in those 40 years. In fact, he only became more convinced of God's ability to give them the land. At 85, he asked for the hardest area to conquer and was granted his request. Through this conquest, Caleb sought a husband of strength, valor, and faithfulness for his daughter.

Participant: Story Intro.

Caleb was a man who believed God wholeheartedly, followed him, and reminded others of God's promises. Because of his love for his daughter, he desired her husband to have some of those same qualities. Through a difficult battle, a brave warrior named Othniel was raised up to be a husband for Caleb's daughter, Aksah. She must have been a woman of great value and respect for such a brave man to be willing to lay down his life to have her as his wife.

Directions for Small Group:

- Introduce lesson using the story background of "Participant Story Intro."
- Pray and commit the time you have with the girls to the Lord.
- Have one of the group members read the Character Goal.
- Ask lead questions:
 1. What do you think it means to be a woman of value?
 2. What does it mean to be a valuable team member?
- Let's look at a story of a woman who was valued so much that her future husband was willing to lay down his life for her just as Christ laid down His life so that we might live with Him forever.

Character Goal: **Value** is the recognition of a person's worth, importance, and meaning to God and others.

Biblical Character: Aksah

Scripture Readings: Joshua 14:6-15; Judges 1:1-2, 12-13; Ephesians 5:24b-33

Discussion Questions:

- Describe Caleb and how he followed God. *He was a strong man who trusted in God and followed Him wholeheartedly.*
- What do you think it means to follow God wholeheartedly? Do you know anyone that follows God in this way? *To live a life that displays who God is and what He is able to do.*
- How did the other men who spied out the land cause the people to feel about the inheritance promised to them? *Because they brought back a bad report, they made the hearts of the people melt in fear.*
- What did Moses swear to Caleb and why? *He swore that the land which Caleb walked on would be his and his children's inheritance forever.*
- Describe Caleb at 85 years old. Who was he still confident in 45 years later? How do we know this? *He was just as strong and vigorous as the day Moses sent him to spy out the land at 40 years old (v. 11). He was confident in God. At 85, he was still proclaiming God's promises and trusting that He was able to do what he promised many years before.*
- After God chose the tribe of Judah to go first in taking the land, what challenge did Caleb present to the young men concerning his daughter, Aksah? *He promised to give his daughter to the man who captured Kiriath Sepher.*
- Why do you think Caleb went this route to choose a husband for his daughter, Aksah? What kind of man was he looking for to be her husband? *Caleb trusted God would chose her husband and he also knew it would take a man who was strong and willing to lay his life down to have her. Caleb was looking for a man to be her husband who would trust God's promise and character to win the battle.*

- Who rose to the challenge to take Kiriath Sepher? How was he related to Caleb? What does this tell you about what his family valued? *Othniel rose to the challenge. He was Caleb's nephew. They trusted in God's character and promises, bravery, and sacrifice.*
- Who rose to the challenge to take Kiriath Sepher? How was he related to Caleb? What does Othniel's actions show us about how he might have valued Aksah? *Because he was willing to lay down his life and fight to have her as his wife, she must have been a woman of great worth.*
- What are some of the things you value about yourself? About your teammates?
- Caleb was a father that cared deeply about who his daughter would marry. He wanted her to marry someone that trusted God and would lay his life down for her, and he had a plan to weed out those that would not. How do Othniel's actions relate to what Christ did for us on the cross? *Because God values us greatly, He sent His son Jesus to lay down His life for us so that we could be His.*
- According to the passage in Ephesians 5, how are husbands to love their wives? *Husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved the Church. God calls them to lay down their lives for their wives. (v. 25-28)*
- What does this tell us about the kind of husband our Heavenly Father desires for us?
- Who is the Church? What did Christ's sacrifice do for the Church? *The Church isn't a particular denomination or building, but is made up of those who believe Jesus died on the cross for their sins. (v. 26-27) Made us holy, cleansed us, washed us through the Word and presented us to God as radiant, without blame.*
- As you consider the guys you have dated or are dating, would they be men God would see as worthy of the value God has placed on you? Why or why not? Do their actions toward you reflect the actions of Christ toward the Church?
- What does this story teach you about God? Women? How can you apply these truths to your life?
- What is one thing I learned from this story that I can apply to my life before the next lesson?

Core Truths:

- ▶ God values us so much that He sacrificed His own Son so that we might be in relationship with Him.
- ▶ God desires for the man who will be our husband to reflect the worth He has placed on us.
- ▶ Women who trust in the value God places on them influence the way others treat them.

Training for Godliness

Have you ever had a winning streak, breakout season, or back-to-back high scores? Did you begin to think highly of yourself? Your value is not tied up in numbers. Records can be broken, streaks come to an end, but the value God places on your life does not change. Proper self-esteem, or value, is evident in our attitudes and actions towards others. What is your attitude towards others? Do you see the value that ALL people bring or do you believe you are more valuable than anyone else? What are some ways you can properly see yourself in light of who God sees you to be?

Memory Verse: "Her husband also...he praises her." Proverbs 31:28



FAITHFULNESS

SESSION 7

Purpose: To encourage women to be faithful to God in their sport and relationships.

Faithfulness is having or showing true and consistent allegiance or loyalty to God.

John Piper, Pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, MN, shares good insight on the faithfulness of Simeon and Anna as found in Luke 2:22-39.

"Preparing to Receive Christ: Looking for the Consolation of Israel" – December 21, 1986, by John Piper.

At the beginning of this text we meet an old man named Simeon and at the end of the text we meet an old woman named Anna.

According to verse 26, it had been revealed to Simeon that he would not die before he had seen the Messiah, the Lord's Christ. And so when Jesus was brought to the temple at eight days of age, Simeon was moved by the Spirit to come also. And he recognized the child and took him into his arms and blessed God.

According to verse 38, at that very hour Anna came near also and recognized the child and began to thank God and speak about the babe.

So here we have two old Jewish saints, representing as it were the very best of the old covenant which is now giving way to the new with the coming of the Messiah. And the question I have asked is, Why these two? Of all the Jews that might have been chosen to recognize the child-Messiah and take him into their arms and speak of his coming, why these?

I think Luke wants us to ask that question because he takes the time to tell us some of the qualities of these two people. Simeon is righteous and devout, with the Holy Spirit upon him (v. 25). Anna scarcely departs from the temple worshiping God with fasting and prayer night and day (v. 37). They are both very God-centered people.

But the thought that jumps off the page because of its similarity in verse 25 and verse 38 is that both were looking and hoping for God to do something for Israel. Verse 25: Simeon was righteous and devout, "looking for the consolation of Israel." Verse 38: Anna spoke of the child "to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem."

I assume that Anna herself was among those who were "looking for the redemption of Jerusalem." And I assume that the reason she spoke to those in particular who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem was that they were open to her testimony about the Christ. So it seems to me that Luke wants to emphasize by this repetition in verses 25 and 38 that what made Simeon and Anna especially fit to recognize and receive the Christ was their longing for God to break into history again to console and redeem his people by sending the Christ...God prepares a person to receive Christ by stirring up a longing for consolation and redemption that can come only from Christ...

Consolation probably speaks to those longings for healing and restoration from all the past losses and miseries of life. In Isaiah the people had experienced judgment and exile with all its guilt and fear and loneliness and death. Consolation is when God comes to heal and restore and revive all that has been thrown away or lost.

Redemption probably speaks to our need to be delivered from powers that still hold us bondage. Redemption is a work of power to save from enemies that still threaten us.

Simeon and Anna were faithful people who were looking for the Messiah to console them in healing and redeem them in salvation. We, too, can be faithful to hope and look solely to God for the work only He can do!

Leader: Story Background

The promised Messiah, Jesus, had just been born into the world after thousands of years of prophecy that God would one day send One who would make all things right and offer true forgiveness of sins. Mary and Joseph were faithful to bring Jesus to the temple, just as Jewish law commanded, and their faithfulness to God's Word gave room for God to work in the lives of faithful servants, Simeon and Anna.

Participant: Story Intro.

Anna and Simeon were faithful servants of God whose everyday activities and priorities showed their loyalty to God. Simeon served in the temple and Anna never left the temple where she continually worshipped, fasted, and prayed for the redemption of Israel that would come through God's promises.

Directions for Small Group:

- Introduce lesson using the story background of "Participant Story Intro."
- Pray and commit the time you have with the girls to the Lord.
- Have one of the group members read the Character Goal.
- Ask lead questions:
 1. What does it mean to be faithful to your team, school, God, boyfriend, or in marriage?
 2. Who is a person you know who displays faithfulness in these areas?
- Let's look at a story of a man and woman who spent their life and time faithfully seeking God and waiting on Him to fulfill His promises.

Character Goal: Faithfulness is having or showing true and consistent allegiance or loyalty to God.

Biblical Character: Anna

Scripture Readings: Luke 2:1-7, 21-32, 36-38

Discussion Questions:

- Where did Mary and Joseph go to present Jesus before the Lord? *They went to the temple in Jerusalem.*
- Who was Simeon and what was he waiting to see? *He was righteous and devout. He was waiting to see the coming of the promised Messiah to Israel.*
- After he took Jesus in his arms, Simeon praised God. What did his words tell us about whom he believed Jesus to be? *He believed that Jesus was the salvation, light, and glory that had been promised through the Old Testament prophets.*
- Who else was in the temple courts? *Anna*
- How does the passage describe her? *A prophet of Israel (of the tribe of Asher), she was very old and a widow for almost all of her life.*
- As a single woman, where and how did Anna spend her time? What does this tell us about what she believed about God and her relationship with Him? *She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. She believed that being in God's presence was satisfying, He heard her prayers, and her relationship with God was the priority in her life.*
- Anna was faithful to prioritize her time growing her relationship with God and advancing His kingdom through prayer. As a single woman, where and how does <Insert your Name> spend her time? What changes do you need to make in order to be consistently growing in your relationship with God and advancing His kingdom?

- Who did Anna also get to see? Why do you think God revealed Jesus to her? What does this tell us about whom God reveals Himself to? *Anna saw Jesus, the promised Messiah—because she was faithful to God and had been waiting expectantly through prayer to see God fulfill His promises. God reveals Himself to those who faithfully seek Him and expectantly wait for Him.*
- How did God act on behalf of Simeon and Anna? According to Isaiah 64:4-5, why did God do this? According to the verses in Isaiah, what three things should we be faithful to do in our waiting? *He acted on their behalf by revealing the long-awaited Messiah to them. In 64:4 God acts on behalf of those who wait for Him. In 64:5 He helps those who gladly do right. He helps those who remember His ways. We should wait, gladly do right and remember His ways.*
- After Anna had a personal encounter with Jesus, what two things was she faithful to do? *She gave thanks to God and was faithful to speak about the child to others.*
- Anna was one of the first evangelists, sharing the hope of Christ with the people around her. In what ways can you be faithful to share about the hope we have in Jesus with those God has placed in your life, like your teammates, peers and family members?
- Compare Simeon and Anna. What did they have in common? *They were both in the temple, both believed in God, and were waiting expectantly to bring the promised Messiah.*
- What characterizes faithful people? How do the examples of these two people encourage you as you think about living and leading a life marked by faithfulness? *Consistency, loyalty, hope in God*
- What kind of woman do you want to be at the age of 84? What can you be faithful to begin today that would put you on the path of becoming that type of woman?
- What does this story teach you about God? Women? How can you apply these truths to your life?
- **What is one thing I learned from this story that I can apply to my life before the next lesson?**

Core Truths:

- ▶ The way you spend your time directly reflects who or what you are faithful to.
- ▶ God reveals Himself to those who wait for Him, gladly do right, and remember His ways.
- ▶ Faithfulness to God and His kingdom puts us in a place to receive God's blessing in our lives.
- ▶ A life of faithfulness begins with decisions we make today.

Training for Godliness

One of the many great things about sports is that it teaches us things about life outside of sports, such as dedication, self-control, discipline, consistency, and loyalty (or faithfulness) to a particular team. It is clear to see how these character traits translate into growing athletically but what about how they translate into growing us spiritually? Take a minute to discuss each one of the character traits above. (You can also add your own!) What do they look like in an athletic context (i.e. loyalty to my team means I cheer for them over other competitors, do my part to win, and take pride in my school) and in a spiritual context (i.e. I am loyal to Jesus, forsaking all others)? How do these character traits help a team? (That team may be your sports team but could also be God's Team!)

Memory Verse: *"Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all."* Proverbs 31:29



POWER

SESSION 8

Purpose: To encourage women to use their power of influence for God's glory.

Power, in terms of athletics, can be defined a couple of different ways. In terms of a physical measurement, athletes can be physically strong, fast, or explosive at the starting line. In terms of a social measurement, powerful athletes have influence. Well-known athletes at any level influence sportsmanship, language, clothing, and nutrition—just to name a few. It is difficult to doubt the powerful influence of a professional athlete and their ability to sell shoes, sports drinks, workout routines, or athletic attire. If an athlete can influence social behavior as a consumer, why can't they influence others for God? They can!

While a very small percentage of athletes will ever achieve the highest level of athleticism as a professional player, the athletes on campuses are still some of the most influential groups. High school students show up on Friday nights to see the same 40-60 guys play football or 15 girls play basketball. Those few players are the focus of their high school community and are known by their peers for what they do (or don't do) on and off the court.

In the context of this study, power is the ability to direct or influence the behavior of others either for evil or for God's glory. Through FCA we are encouraging the athletes on campuses across the world to be a powerful influence for God!

Leader: Story Background

After a military coup following the reign of Solomon, the nation of Israel divided into ten northern tribes (Israel) and two southern tribes (Judah). Ahab was the seventh king of the northern tribe of Israel. His reign lasted 22 years and during his time as king, the prophets Jehu, Elijah, and Micaiah were the spokespeople for God.

To get an idea of his reign, one only has to read the description from 1 Kings 16:30-31: *"Ahab son of Omri did more evil in the eyes of the Lord than any of those before him. He not only considered it trivial to commit the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, but he also married Jezebel daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and began to serve Baal and worship him."*

He was a wicked leader that did not follow God's ways and was so easily influenced by the powerful woman Jezebel, it eventually led to his death. 1 Kings 21:25 says, *"There was never anyone like Ahab, who sold himself to do evil in the eyes of the Lord, urged on by Jezebel his wife."*

WOW! That statement is a powerful reminder of the influence we, as women, have over others. Do we use that power for God's glory or do we use it to urge others "to do evil in the eyes of the Lord"?

Participant: Story Intro.

Jezebel was the wife of the King of Israel. She was powerful, shrewd, murderous, manipulative, and demanding of loyalty—even to death.

Directions for Small Group:

- Introduce lesson using the story background of "Participant Story Intro."
- Pray and commit the time you have with the girls to the Lord.
- Have one of the group members read the Character Goal.
- Ask lead questions:
 1. Have you ever heard of a woman in the Bible named Jezebel?
 2. What is she known for or what does it mean when someone says, "She's a Jezebel!"
- Let's look at a story of a woman who used her power to negatively influence others.

Character Goal: Power is the ability to direct or influence the behavior of others either for evil or for God's glory.

Biblical Character: Jezebel

Scripture Readings: 1 Kings 16:29-33; 21:1-7, 15-25

Discussion Questions:

- How is Ahab described? *King over Israel who did more evil in the eyes of the Lord than any of those before him.*
- On top of his other sins, whom did Ahab marry? *Jezebel*
- After Ahab married Jezebel, what did he begin to do? *Though Ahab was an Israelite and of the people of God, He began to worship false idols (Baal, Asherah).*
- How is Ahab described before his marriage? After his marriage? *Evil...even more evil.*
- What does this tell us about how Jezebel used her power to influence Ahab? *Rather than pointing him to God so that he could live out God's purpose for his life as king, she encouraged him to be selfish, uncaring, spoiled, discontent, and a weak leader who forgot God and worshipped false gods.*
- What did Ahab want from Naboth? *How did Naboth respond to his request? His vineyard (as if Ahab didn't have many other vineyards!). He refused to give him the land because it belonged to his ancestors.*
- Describe Ahab's response to Naboth's refusal. *He went home and laid in his bed sulking (unhappy and couldn't be comforted) and refusing to eat. Even though he was an adult and a powerful king, he acted very childishly.*
- How did Jezebel respond to Ahab's unhappiness? *She challenged his authority and decided to take matters into her own hands. She wanted to show him that she had the power to get him what he thought he wanted.*
- As a teammate, how do you respond to another teammate's unhappiness? Do you walk off irritated and angry or encourage them with a hug and a word from the Lord? What is the result of each of these scenarios?
- What do Jezebel's actions tell us about her view of God? Men? *God was not part of the equation at all. She did not revere Him and considered herself to be God in that everything was hers for the taking. She saw Ahab as weak and incapable. In order for anything to happen, she felt like she had to do it herself. She had no need for a man.*
- What does your behavior reflect about your view of God and men?
- What happened to Naboth as a result of Jezebel's plan? *Naboth was stoned to death and his land taken by Jezebel.*
- After she received the news of Naboth's death, what did Jezebel tell Ahab to do? *Get up and take possession of the vineyard.*
- What are some character traits seen in Jezebel? What does this tell us about women who have no fear of God? *Disrespectful, prideful, commanding, hate-filled, scheming, murderous, etc. The character that is inside our hearts impacts others and encourages them to display the same traits.*
- Are the traits that Jezebel possessed evident in your own life? Do they show up in your sport? Which ones? How can you repent and glorify God in these areas?
- What was the Lord's message to Ahab and his wife Jezebel? What does this tell us about God? *Dogs would lick up Ahab's blood and devour Jezebel. They would both die! God sees evil and exercises judgment on those who do evil.*

- What does verse 25 tell us about Ahab and the influence of his wife? *There was never anyone like Ahab who was urged on to do evil in the eyes of the Lord, and he was urged on by his wife.*
- What does this tell us about the power women have in the lives of others? *Women wield great power in the lives of others and we can use our influence to build up people according to God's ways or we can use our influence to encourage destructive behavior that leads to death.*
- Athletes have a lot of power to influence others. Do you use your power to influence others for God or for selfish gain?
- In what ways can you use your influence as a female athlete for God's glory?
- What does this story teach you about God? Women? How can you apply these truths to your life?
- **What is one thing I learned from this story that I can apply to my life before the next lesson?**

Core Truths:

- ▶ Women have power to influence others either for evil or for God's glory.
- ▶ People who live without any fear of God show no restraint in their life or in the way they treat others.
- ▶ Fearing God and being aware of His presences in our lives influences our behavior in positive way.

Training for Godliness

Athletes are powerful in their influence. Women are powerful in their influence. What does that tell you about a woman who is an athlete? How will you use your power to influence others? What are some tools you can use to make sure you are on the right track and not using your influence for selfish gain or to harm others?

Memory Verse: *"Charm is deceitful and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised."* Proverbs 31:30



FAITH

SESSION 9

Purpose: To encourage women to put their faith in God, not in themselves.

Perhaps no other aspect of the Christian life is more important than faith. We cannot buy it, sell it, or give it away. It is an aspect of the Christian life that dwells within individuals and it can be nurtured or ignored. The dictionary defines faith as “belief in, devotion to, or trust in somebody or something, especially without logical proof.” It also defines faith as “belief in and devotion to God.” Each of us has the choice to put our faith in a person, place, thing, idea OR we can put our faith in the one person who never disappoints—God.

Hebrews 11:6 tells us,

“And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.”

Do you see what faith is? It is not just passively believing that God exists, but believing that He rewards those who “earnestly” (NKJV “diligently”) seek Him! Faith is not passive—it is active. This is not to say that we are to have faith in God just to get something from Him. However, God loves to bless those who are obedient and faithful.

Faith is ignited within us as we know God’s Word and character for ourselves, trusting only in Him and putting it into practice. As followers of Christ, our faith isn’t found in a building, ceremony, or even a song. It rests solely in God—that He is who He says He is and will do what He says He will do. How do we know who He is or what He does? His Word!

Leader: Story Background

Elijah was a great and mighty prophet of God who prophesied during the reign of Ahab, the seventh King of Israel. His primary message was one of repentance and confrontation regarding the worshipping of idols, primarily Baal, rather than the one true God. His name means, “Yahweh is God,” a significant name in a time when Baal worship threatened to extinguish the worship of Yahweh in Israel.

Because of his courage to speak God’s Word, including God’s curses on the people because of their disobedience, he was not exactly the most sought after friend in the region! More importantly than what others thought of him, he had great faith in God and believed His promises by trusting Him with his very life, as well as the lives of those he cared about.

Participant: Story Intro.

Elijah was a man of great faith. He worshipped God alone, trusted His promises, and lived them out in his life. While he was on a mission from God, he encountered a starving widow and her son. There was famine in the land and the Scripture records her preparing her last meal. But, because of her obedience to the Word of the Lord sent through the prophet Elijah, God produced a miracle that met the physical and spiritual needs of her household.

Directions for Small Group:

- Pray and commit the time you have with the girls to the Lord.
- Have one of the group members read the Character Goal.
- Ask lead questions:
 1. What does faith mean to you?
 2. How is your faith or lack of faith currently affecting your life?
- Let’s look at a story of a woman who displayed faith in the midst of her struggle. She simply believed that what God said through the prophet would be true!

Character Goal: Faith is having a confident belief in the truth, value, and trustworthiness of God regardless of our circumstances.

Biblical Character: A Widow

Scripture Readings: 1 Kings 17

Discussion Questions:

- What did Elijah proclaim to Ahab about the rain? *There would be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at Elijah's word.*
- What did God instruct Elijah to do? How did Elijah respond to these instructions? What does this tell us about Elijah's faith? *Hide in the Kerith Ravine, drink from the brook, and eat what the Ravens supply. He obeyed the Word of the Lord. Even though God's commands seemed illogical to him, Elijah had a confident belief in the trustworthiness of God's provision.*
- How did God care for Elijah during this time? What does this tell us about God? *He used the brook and the ravens to supply food for Elijah's needs. God uses the things He has created to meet man's needs. All things are at His command and He can use all of His creation any way He chooses.*
- After some time passed, what happened to the brook? What does this tell us about God? *It dried up. God gives us provision, but sometimes it is only for a time so that we will not have faith in the resource but have faith in God to provide for us however He sees fit.*
- After the brook dried up, did God stop providing for Elijah? *No. He dried up the one provision to move Elijah to another place of faith in his provision through the poor widow.*
- As an athlete, friend, sister, daughter, etc., what difficult circumstances do you currently face that give you an opportunity to place your faith in God's provision?
- How did God say He would continue to provide for Elijah? *Through the poor widow and her scarce resources.*
- Describe the widow's situation. *She was poor, had a son, and was down to her last drop of oil and handful of flour.*
- What did she assume would happen to them after the meal she was preparing? *They would run out of food and die.*
- What did Elijah tell the woman to do? What did this require of the woman? What is the one thing that pleases God? (Read Hebrews 11:6) *Go home and first make a small loaf of bread for him and afterwards make some for herself and her son. Faith that God would bless her obedience and continue to provide for her needs. FAITH!*
- How did the woman respond to the Prophet Elijah's instructions? What does this tell us about what she believed about God? *She fully obeyed. She believed that God is trustworthy and would continue to provide for her and her son.*
- What happened with the woman's resources? What does this tell us about God? (v. 16) *"the jar of flour was not used up and the jar of oil did not run dry." He keeps His promises in accordance with His Word.*
- What things are the same about God's provision at the brook and God's provision through the

widow? What is different? *They both required faith from Elijah to take God at His Word though the command seemed strange. They both required total obedience in order to receive God's blessing. Both were given to him by God. They are different in that Elijah received at the brook but then had to ask the widow for provision. He experienced God alone at the brook but was able to share God's ability with someone in need in Zarephath.*

- What did God require of both Elijah and the woman in order to experience His provision? *Faith in God's ability and obedience.*
- What happened "Some time later..." (v. 17)? How did the first miracle with the oil prepare both Elijah and the widow to experience an even greater miracle in the restoration of life to the boy? What does this tell us about God? *The son of the widow became ill and stopped breathing. Because of their experience of the miracle of the oil, both Elijah and the widow knew God was able. He is powerful, can restore life, and hears our prayers.*
- What does this story teach you about God? Women? How can you apply these truths to your life?
- **What is one thing I learned from this story that I can apply to my life before the next lesson?**

Core Truths:

- ▶ God requires faith in order that we might experience blessing in our life.
- ▶ Faith and obedience go hand-in-hand.
- ▶ God asks us to trust in Him as provider rather than trusting in what He provides.

Training for Godliness

Did Elijah and the widow put their faith in what God provided (brook, raven, bread) or in God alone? As a female athlete, do you put your faith in the talent you possess or in God who has given that talent to you? What is the difference between putting your faith in your talent and putting your faith in God? God alone. When we put our faith in our own ability, it becomes about us. When we put our faith in God as the one who has provided our talent, we recognize it should be used to glorify Him.

Memory Verse: "Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting, but a woman who fears the Lord, is to be praised." Proverbs 31:30



FRUITFULNESS

SESSION 10

Purpose: To encourage women to glorify God by bearing fruit in union with Christ.

Fruitfulness is a result of remaining in Jesus, receiving nourishment from Him and expressing His nature through our lives towards others.

Leader: Story Background

Jesus' work on the cross not only secured our eternal salvation, but it also sealed us with His Holy Spirit, which is the guarantee of our present and future union with Christ. Christ's bride, those who have put their faith in Him, have the privilege of experiencing the intimacy of this eternal relationship now, even as we wait for His return. Being connected to Jesus, receiving His love, grace, and truth, and responding in obedience to Him causes us to bear fruit for His glory.

Jesus is the "true vine" and "apart from Him we can do nothing" of eternal value. It is vital that we notice that Jesus calls Himself the "true" vine. This implies that there are indeed other false vines that we can seek to connect ourselves to, and in vain try to receive nourishment from. No doubt these attempts will leave us wanting. In addition, He tells us that we can do nothing if we are not connected to Him.

We all experience times in our lives when we have not been connected to Christ but managed to do a lot. If we think back on those times, what was the result? Was it love, peace, joy, souls being saved or encouraged? Our attempts to live apart from Christ leave us looking and feeling like a branch disconnected from a vine—brittle, dry, and fruitless. But, oh the joy of being in His presence, believing His promises, and trusting and obeying His Word. The result of this is a vibrant and fruitful life that brings God glory.

In John 15, Jesus makes clear who He, the Father, and we are, and what each of our roles entails. He leaves no room for guessing as far as what His part and ours are. He is the life giver and nourisher, we are the receivers, and God the Father is the sanctifier. Just like on a team, we need to know and play our role in order to be successful. In a similar way, we must know who we are and what our role entails in a relationship with Jesus in order to bear fruit for His glory.

"Hi, I am the Bride of Christ, a branch and receiver of Jesus' life and nourishment. My role is to stay connected to Him, allowing Him to bear fruit through me. Nice to meet you."

Participant: Story Intro.

As Jesus prepared to die and return to His Father, He taught His disciples about who they were, and how they were to live connected to Him even after His departure. He gave them the illustration of a vine and branch to teach them eternal truths about their relationship with Him and their fruitfulness on earth.

Directions for Small Group:

- Introduce lesson using the story background of "Participant Story Intro."
- Pray and commit the time you have with the girls to the Lord.
- Have one of the group members read the Character Goal.
- Ask lead questions:
 1. Describe what a branch might look like that's connected to a tree in the springtime. Compare this to what a fallen branch might look like.
 2. What happens when you speak kindly to a teammate? What is the response when you speak harshly to a teammate?
- Let's look at Jesus' Parable of the Vine and Branches as He teaches us how we can bear fruit for His Father's glory.

Character Goal: Fruitfulness is a result of remaining in Jesus, receiving nourishment from him, and expressing His nature through our lives towards others.

Biblical Character: The Bride of Christ

Scripture Readings: John 15:1-15; Galatians 5:22-23; 6:7-9

Discussion Questions:

- What is a vine and how does it relate to the branches? *A vine provides nourishment to the branches in order for it to be fruitful.*
- In this passage, what does Jesus refer to Himself as? What does this imply about other vines? *The true vine. There are other "false" vines that we can abide in for a time but will not bear fruit that lasts (i.e. money, athletic talent, beauty, intelligence).*
- Who is the Father and what is His role? *The Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch that does not bear fruit and prunes the branches that do so that they will become even more fruitful.*
- Who are the branches? *Followers of Christ.*
- What does Jesus command His followers to do in verse 4? What does this mean for our life? *Remain in Him. We are to depend on Jesus for life-sustaining nourishment so that we might grow, flourish, and impact others for God.*
- What is the only way that a believer is able to bear fruit? *By remaining in Jesus.*
- What is the significance of God's Word in the life of a believer according to verse 7? In what ways can we allow God's Word to remain in us? *God's Word is to remain in us. Read the Bible, memorize Scripture, attend church, have relationships with godly people.*
- How is the Father glorified by His people and what does this show about them? *He is glorified when they bear much fruit and this shows they are His disciples.*
- Read Galatians 6:7-9. What does a man reap (harvest)? In what two areas of our lives do we have the ability to sow? What is the result of each? *What he sows (plants). The flesh and the Spirit. Sowing to the flesh brings destruction but sowing to the Spirit brings eternal life.*
- From the verse in Galatians 5, what type of fruit comes as a result of sowing into the Spirit? What is the opposite of each of these kinds of fruit? *Fruit of the Spirit: Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, and self-control. Works of the flesh: Hatred, sadness, fear/anxiety, mistrust, selfishness, meanness, harshness, and unrestrained in your desires.*
- What are some specific seeds we plant that bring about destructive attitudes and behavior? What are some specific seeds we plant to bring about Godly attitudes and behaviors? *Music with bad language that encourage sex, acting in a way that exalts yourself above your teammates or others, TV shows that encourage scheming and lying, movies that support selfishness and a "mean-girl" attitude, hanging around people with foolish behavior, etc... Read the Bible (Truth), listen to uplifting and encouraging Christian music, guard your heart and mind from taking in messages that go against God's desire for your life as His daughter. Flee from people and things that sow lies into to your mind about who God says He is in His Word (Creator, Redeemer, lover of our souls, Our Father in Heaven, knower of all things).*
- What types of seeds have you been sowing on your team and what has been the result?
- Where does Jesus tell us to remain and how are we to do that? *In His love by keeping His commands.*
- What kind of fruit did Jesus appoint us to bear? *Fruit that lasts.*

- What are examples of fruit that lasts and what are examples of fruit that does not last? *The fruits that last are God's Word because it stands forever (Isaiah), the souls of men (Ecclesiastes), and Prayer (Revelation). The fruits that do not last are anything else—money, fame, beauty, athletic ability, etc.*
- What does this tell us about what we are to be investing our time in? *For example, not investing an overabundance of our time on beauty because it will not last (It's okay to look nice and feel pretty, but don't invest too much time, money, and attention into looking perfect). Instead, invest in prayer.*
- What does this story teach you about God? Women? How can you apply these truths to your life?
- What is one thing I learned from this story that I can apply to my life before the next lesson?

Core Truths:

- ▶ Jesus is the true vine and our only source of life.
- ▶ Abiding in Jesus allows us to be fruitful, but apart from Jesus we cannot bear fruit that lasts.
- ▶ We reap the fruit of the seeds that we sow—either of the flesh or of the Spirit.
- ▶ Sowing seeds to the flesh reaps destruction and sowing seeds to the Spirit reaps eternal life.

Training for Godliness

Team cohesion is very important. If even one teammate is putting herself above the rest, it disrupts the whole team. BUT, if each team member realizes they have an important role to play—all the way from the starter to the one encouraging others on the bench—the team comes together to accomplish greater things than all the individuals can accomplish alone. Have you ever experienced a team of a bunch of individuals? What was it like? What about a team with strong cohesion? What was that like? How can you work together with your teammates to be more like the example Jesus gave in John 15 of the Vine and Branches.

Memory Verse: *"Honor her for all that her hands have done, and let her works bring her praise at the city gate."* Proverbs 31:31



REVIEW

Purpose: To encourage girls to continue seeking God through His Word and grow in their relationship with Jesus and their knowledge of Him.

Review: Review what God has revealed to us during the sessions and where we go from here.

"Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." Philippians 1:6

It is God who works in us to will and to do for His good pleasure (Philippians 2:13). He begins and ends the life-changing work in our lives. He is the author and finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:2). We can continue to trust that God will lead, teach, help, and strengthen us in our journey with Him. Our God will never leave us nor forsake us!

During this session you will review what the girls have learned from your time together. This will be more of a discussion and reflection time for you and the girls.

Leader Instructions:

1. Allow the girls 15 minutes to fill out the worksheet to the best of their ability.
2. Ask girls these three questions and allow them to reflect on what God has shown them individually. (Allow the girls to talk with the group about how God has used these lessons in their lives.)
 - Which character trait or lesson meant the most to you and why?
 - What steps do you plan on implementing in your life to become the woman God created you to be?
 - What did you learn about God and what does this mean for you?
3. End the time by praying for each girl by name. Say a one-sentence prayer for each. (You can prepare for this by writing down their names and the Scripture you want to pray beside it before you get to the session.)

What Next?

It is important for the girls to know how to continue to seek the Lord and grow in their relationship with Christ. Provided is a sheet that explains how to have a Quiet Time and pray, and a Scripture memorization plan. Go over these tools with the girls and share with them about the importance of seeking God in these ways. (You can include a personal testimony about how God has spoken to you through your Quiet Time, prayer, or Scripture memory.) Also share the importance of being involved in a local Bible-believing church and surrounding themselves with people that are following Jesus Christ.

"How can a young person stay on the path of purity? By living according to your word. I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you." Psalm 119:9-11

Session	Memory Verse	Trait	Character	Personal Application	Team Application
Intro	John 17:4 I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do.	Excellence	Jesus		
1	v. 24: She makes linen garments and sells them, and supplies the merchants with sashes.	Stewardship	Lydia		
2	v. 25: strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come.	Dignity	Hagar		
3	v. 26: She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue.	Wisdom	Abigail		
4	v. 27: She watches over the affairs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness.	Attentiveness	The Servant Girl		
5	v. 28 Her children arise and call her blessed;	Legacy	Eunice and Lois		
6	Her husband also, and he praises her:	Value	Caleb's Daughter		
7	v. 29: Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all.	Faithfulness	Anna		
8	v. 30: Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting;	Power	Jezebel		
9	But a woman who fears the Lord, is to be praised.	Faith	The Widow		
10	v. 31: Honor her for all that her hands have done, and let her works bring her praise at the city gate.	Fruitfulness	The Bride of Christ		

VIRTUOUS WOMAN EXCELLENCE

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FCA MISSION

To present to coaches and athletes, and all whom they influence, the challenge and adventure of receiving Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, serving Him in their relationships and in the fellowship of the church.

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