



LEADER
GUIDE

VIRTUOUS WOMAN INTEGRITY

THE FELLOWSHIP OF CHRISTIAN ATHLETES®

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FCA Virtuous Woman

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Thank you to Larry Coley and the FCA staff team in Memphis, Tenn., who assisted in the development of this study. We offer special thanks to Memphis staff member, Alliesha Easley, for helping develop and finalize the "Training for Godliness" section of the discussion questions. We would also like to extend our gratitude to the 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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Leader's Information

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 not only for 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: Valor, Integrity, Resourcefulness, Trust in God, Uniqueness, Obedience, Unity, and Service.

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 life, "demonstrates 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 (Coming Soon)

This 12-session study focuses on two more of the four key FCA values. Serving is "modeling Jesus's 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 (Coming Soon)

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 extra 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 girls further understand Part II of the **FCA Virtuous Woman: Integrity**, the verses in Proverbs 31:10-16 have been broken down and associated with a character trait that is found in that verse. The scripture references, traits, and characters are:

Session	Part II: <i>FCA Virtuous Woman—Integrity</i> (Proverbs 31:10-16)	Trait	Character
	Introduction	Integrity	Jesus
1	10 Who can find a virtuous woman;	Virtue	Ruth
2	For her worth is far above rubies.	Worth	Eve/Woman
3	11 The heart of her husband safely trust her; so he will have no lack of gain.	Trustworthy	Priscilla
4	12 She does him good and not evil all the days of her life.	Loyalty	Lot's wife & Mary M.
5	13 She seeks wool and flax,	Initiative	Woman with Issue
6	And willingly works with her hands	Work Ethic	Shallum's Daughters
7	14 She is like the merchant ships. She brings her food from afar	Industriousness	Queen of Sheba
8	15 She also rises while it is yet night,	Preparedness	Mary (Jesus's Mother)
9	And provides food for her household, and a portion for her maidservants	Generosity	Mary (Jesus's Mother)
10	16 She considers a field and buys it; from her profits she plants a vineyard	Purpose	Samaritan Woman
	Review		



INSTRUCTIONS

1 Timothy 4:8-9 states,

For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. This is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance.

For athletes, much of their time is spent on the physical aspect of the game, which is very important as they learn to compete at high levels. Scripture reminds us that this physical training is useful but really is just a picture of a greater truth in our spiritual life—training for godliness. 1 Timothy says this has value for “all things.” FCA has a unique platform to address this need in the lives of those who wish to follow Jesus. Spiritual principles can be taught through the lens of athletics in a meaningful way.

Integrity is not just made up of one attribute or character trait, but consists of many aspects. **FCA Virtuous Woman: Integrity** features many of the attributes that make up integrity. The Proverbs 31 woman illustrates these attributes by the way she lives her life and the stories found in scripture bring them to life.

First and foremost, Jesus exemplifies **integrity** in every aspect of His life whether tired, hungry, thirsty, or tempted. Through His example we can see different attributes that make up integrity. We can display Integrity in both our public and private life by:

- Displaying **virtue** even in difficult circumstances
- Finding our **worth** in God and not the world
- Being **trustworthy** with the gifts given to us by God
- Being **loyal** to God, forsaking other things that would produce a divided heart
- Taking the **initiative** to strengthen ourselves in every area of our life
- Displaying a strong **work ethic** towards the tasks that lay before us
- Making the most of every moment of our life by being **industrious** at all times
- Demonstrating **preparedness** by making provision for the expected and the unexpected
- Being **generous** in all that we have to offer, knowing that God has been generous to us
- Living out God's **purpose** for our life and not giving ourselves to anything less

Each of these character traits is demonstrated through the stories of scripture and is covered in the **FCA Virtuous Woman: Integrity** material.

A new 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.

Leader Instructions

There are 12 total sessions in Part II of FCA Virtuous Woman: Integrity and each one focuses on a female biblical character who exhibits the character trait taken from the selected passages of Proverbs 31:10-16. 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 (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 questions as the Leader's Guide).
2. Introduce 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 Reading noted at the top of the Discussion Guide. (The participants have copies of the scripture on the back of their hand-outs in case a Bible is not available to them.)
7. Ask the Discussion Questions on the guide or focus on the *Training for Godliness* section for a comprehensive question about the lesson if time is short. Allow enough time for the girls to answer and discuss. Some answers are provided for the Discussion Questions, 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 31:10-16 by the end of the twelve sessions!*
9. *Close in prayer and incorporate some of their discussion into that prayer.*

You can use the questions as they are printed, make adjustments to the number of questions based on your time available, utilize only the *Training for Godliness* section for a quick discussion, or add your own questions to personalize the discussion to your group. It is yours to use as you wish!

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.



INTEGRITY

INTRODUCTION

Purpose: To encourage women to live with integrity for the glory of God

Integrity – Living a life that reflects godliness in private and public for God's glory

"I will be careful to live a blameless life—when will you come to help me? I will lead a life of integrity in my own home." Psalm 101:2 NLT

"The true test of a man's (or woman's) character is what he does when no one is watching."
— John Wooden

How do we become women whose lives reflect Godliness no matter who is around or isn't watching? As we study Jesus's life, one thing is very evident—He lived unto the Lord. Jesus was always aware of His Father's presence and sought to please Him in all He did. He remained in unbroken fellowship with the Father as He went about His life and made even the most mundane things an act of worship. Jesus experienced the same kind of relationship with God as we do; although we cannot see Him with our physical eyes, we walk with Him instead by faith, trusting His word and resting on His promises. In studying the passage in Matthew chapters 3 and 4, we can see three things that enabled Jesus to live a life of integrity before God, and I believe these same things will enable us as well:

1. Jesus knew He was God's Son.
2. He knew God loved Him and was already pleased with Him.
3. He knew God's presence and power was with Him through the Holy Spirit.

Jesus took these three truths with Him into the wilderness and, by them, He was able to overcome the schemes of the devil. He displayed traits such as loyalty, worth, preparedness, vision, and mission—all of which we will look at more in depth throughout this study. In seeking to be women of integrity, it is vital that we also possess and apply these same truths to our own personal lives so that we may be victorious not only in public, but also in private. I pray that we would be women who focus more on our heart before God and allow Him to conform us into the image of His Son. *"Let integrity and uprightness preserve me, For I wait for You."* Psalm 25:21 NKJ

Leader: Story Background – Read Matthew 3-4

At the age of 30, Jesus goes out to the Jordan to be baptized by John. He hears His Father's voice and is thus prepared to face Satan's temptations in the wilderness after fasting forty days and forty nights. After being tempted to doubt all that God had just spoken to Him, Jesus was victorious as He chose to believe the words and heart of His Father instead of the schemes of the enemy. He was able to live a life of integrity before God by walking by faith and not by sight. Although He could not see His Father during that wilderness trial, He trusted in His goodness and what He knew and believed to be true of Him. This was His, and will be our, keys to victory in this life.

Participant: Story Intro.

Before Jesus began His earthly ministry, He went to His cousin John to be baptized by Him. This was a pivotal moment in Jesus's life and vital in preparing Him for what He was to face in the wilderness with the devil.

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 have integrity?
 2. How is integrity compromised in your sport?
- Jesus exemplified integrity in both His private and public life.

Character Goal: Integrity—Living a life that reflects godliness in private and public for God's glory

Biblical Character: Jesus

Scripture Readings: Matthew 3:1-6, 13-17; 4:1-11

Discussion Questions:

- To whom did Jesus go to be baptized in the Jordan? John
- What miraculous event happened after Jesus came up from the water? What did this voice say? *The heavens opened, God spoke, and the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus like a dove. "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."*
- What 3 truths did God the Father communicate to Jesus, His Son? Why do you think He did this? What does this teach us about God? *1) Jesus was His Son. 2) God loved and was pleased with Jesus. 3) God was with Him through the presence of the Holy Spirit. God has spoken to us these same truths in His word and will remind His children of them.*
- How do you think it made Jesus feel to hear these things from His Father? Do you think He desired to live a life of integrity as a result of hearing this? *Secure, joyful, at peace. Yes.*
- How would you feel if you heard these same things from God? How would you desire to live and please?
- After being baptized by His cousin, John, and affirmed by His Father, where was Jesus led and why? *He was led into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.*

- How did Jesus feel after fasting for forty days and forty nights? *He was hungry.*
- Who came to tempt Jesus at His weakest moment? What does this tell us about him? *Satan. He tempts us when we are weak. He hates us and wants us to doubt God's care for us.*
- What does Satan say? What does this teach us about Satan's schemes? *"If you are the Son of God..." He wants us to doubt who we are and not believe what God says and feels about us.*
- How does Jesus respond to Satan's temptation? What does this teach us about the importance of God's Word? *"It is written..." In other words, "This is what my Father has told Me and I am going to believe Him and not you!" God's Word is important to have in our hearts in order that we can resist temptation.*
- Think back. What 3 truths did Jesus take with Him into the wilderness? How do you think this helped Him resist Satan's temptations? *He knew who He was and how God felt about Him, so He didn't have to prove that to Satan.*
- When we are tempted to act in ways that are contrary to God's will, what things should we remember in those moments? *Who God says we are, How God feels about us, and that God is with us.*
- How did Jesus display integrity while alone in the wilderness? *Jesus' knowledge and study of God's Word in private was displayed publicly when He was able to quote the scriptures that reminded Him of what was true. He endured the temptation with great integrity to God and His Word.*
- As a female athlete, in what areas can you seek to display integrity? In what areas have you been tempted to not live a life of integrity?
- Is it harder to act with integrity when in private or in public? Why?
- Who is with us even when we are physically alone? Why is important for us to believe as it pertains to our integrity? *God is always with us. Acknowledging His presence when we are alone can keep us from sinning and help us walk in integrity.*
- What happened as a result of Jesus resisting Satan's temptations with the Truth of God's Word? What does this teach us about perseverance and choosing to believe and obey God's Word when we are tempted? *Satan left Him. When we resist Satan's temptations with Truth, he flees.*
- What does this story teach you about God? Jesus? 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?**

Training for Godliness

Athletes have influence on others whether they intend to or not. How does your life on and off the court or field display integrity? What are some ways you can better reflect godliness with integrity in both private (home) and public (sport) life?

Core Truths:

- ▶ God speaks to His children about who they are and how He feels about them.
- ▶ Believing what God says about us helps us live with integrity and resist temptation.
- ▶ Satan tempts us to not believe who God is and who He says we are.



VIRTUE

SESSION 1

Purpose: To encourage women to live righteously with God
and with others

Virtue – Virtue is displaying moral excellence, goodness, and righteousness that lead to godly living.

The story of Ruth and Naomi is one that displays the tenderness of God to meet the needs of women. In Leviticus 19:9-10, God gave a provision to Moses about 350 years prior to the life of Naomi and Ruth. God told Moses, "When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the foreigner. I am the LORD your God."

Naomi had lost her husband and three sons in Moab (Ruth 1:3, 5). She was a woman, had no male protection, and no way to make a living. She was poor. Ruth was from Moab (Ruth 1:4) which was a foreign land outside of Israel's territory given to them by God. Ruth was a foreigner. Could it be that God gave this statute to Moses hundreds of years before as he thought of the provision that would be needed by Ruth and Naomi? There is no doubt because God knows the future and all the provisions that are needed before we have to ask. He is always at work throughout the generations to bring about His will and good purpose. He loves women, provides for them, is drawn to their struggles, and meets their needs both physically and spiritually.

Leader: Story Background – Read Ruth 1-4

The book of Ruth is set against the era of the Judges of Israel. The time of the Judges was a very dark time when Israel fell into great sin and idolatry after the death of Joshua. It is marked by the last verse in Judges 21:25, *"In those days Israel had no king: everyone did as he saw fit."* The book of Ruth takes place toward the end of the time of the Judges and is a bright hope of light on a dark canvas. Ruth and her husband, Elimelech, went to live a while in the land of Moab due to a famine in Judah. That "while" turned into ten plus years of difficulty and death. Upon hearing there was once again bread in Israel, she returns, this time, without her husband and three sons. She returns with only Ruth—her daughter-in-law. We see God at work in their suffering to intersect their life with Boaz, a close family relative. He becomes their "Kinsman Redeemer" (see Deuteronomy 25:5-10), a blood relative who had the means to purchase the forfeited inheritance and was willing to do so. This example of Boaz as redeemer to Ruth ultimately points toward Christ as our Kinsman Redeemer (see Isaiah 59:17-21).

After Boaz takes Ruth as his wife, they have a son, Obed, the father of Jesse, the father of King David, who is in the line of Christ (Matthew 1:1-16). We see God at work throughout the generations, bringing His promise and plan about on earth. This story reminds us God is faithful even when we are faithless (2 Timothy 2:13) and fall into great sin. He is always reaching out toward mankind and looking for those who have a heart of virtue that is steadfast toward Him.

Participant: Story Intro.

In Deuteronomy 28, God promised His people, the Israelites, that he would bless them if they would fully obey Him and His commandments. He also promised there would be consequences for their disobedience. One of those consequences is famine. Because of the Israelites unfaithfulness to God's commandments, they were reaping the consequences of their sin and a severe famine came to the land of Israel.

Families were left to seek food. One of those families was that of Naomi and Elimilech. They had two sons and moved to the land of Moab where their sons married Orpah and Ruth, Moabite women. Over time, Naomi's husband AND two sons die and Naomi is left without a protector and with no provision. Word came that "...the Lord had come to the aid of people by providing food for them" (Ruth 1:6). Naomi urges her daughters-in-law to remain with their families in Moab, but Ruth, in her virtue, clings to her and chooses to go to the unknown land with God rather than remain in her familiar land without God. Upon the return of Ruth and Naomi, God orchestrates their circumstances to fall under the provision that He had set in motion long ago through Moses.

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 a woman of virtue?
 2. How do we become this kind of woman? (Not by doing good things but having a relationship with Jesus)
- Let's look at a story of a woman named Ruth who had opportunity in her hardship to complain and play the victim, but instead displayed moral excellence and faith in God even when it was difficult.

Character Goal: Virtue – Displaying moral excellence, goodness, and righteousness that lead to godly living

Biblical Character: Ruth

Scripture Readings: Ruth 1:8, 9, 17, 18, 22; 2:1-12; 3:1-11; 4:13-17

Discussion Questions:

- Who was Ruth? *A Moabite and Naomi's Daughter in Law*
- What did Naomi encourage her daughters-in-law to do? *Return to their own family and god*
- What does Ruth decide? *To stay with Naomi, follow her to her land and serve the one true God*
- Did she know what was ahead? What does this tell about her character and her faith? *No. She is loyal and trusts that God will take care of them both.*
- When you have the option of being comfortable, or leaving what's comfortable and familiar to follow God, what do you tend to choose? What has been the result of these choices?
- After they arrive in Bethlehem, what does Ruth do? *She went to the fields to glean.* What does this tell us about her? *She desires to serve and not be idle.*
- In whose field does she end up? *Boaz*
- How does Boaz treat Ruth while in the fields? *He treats her with favor.*
- What does Boaz offer Ruth? Why? What does this teach us about the fruit of a virtuous character? *He offers her consistent provision for her and Naomi's needs. He has heard about her character and how she left her family to follow and serve Naomi. Having this type of character allows us to have favor with others.*
- Define reputation. As a female athlete, what is your reputation among your peers, coaches, teammates, teachers, etc.? What would they say about your character? What do you want your reputation to be?
- What does Naomi decide to do for her daughter-in-law? *Find her a home and provision for living*
- How does Boaz respond to Ruth's request? Why do you think he is so excited? What has he seen and heard about her? *He accepts her request with joy! He knows and has heard that she is a virtuous woman. He has noticed her hard work, loyalty, service, giving. Her reputation of virtue was reinforced by her actions.*

- For what does Boaz continue to praise her? Read and discuss Proverbs 31:30. *Her faith and character*
- Naomi and Ruth were both widows with no one to provide for them. How does God act on their behalf? What does this tell us about Him? *He provides a man that would take care of them—a "Guardian Redeemer." He meets our needs, loves us, and provides for us even before we know we need the provision.*
- What does it mean to redeem something, like a coupon, gift card, certificate, etc?
- Who did God send into the world to redeem us? *Jesus. He died for our sins so our deepest need could be met when we believe in Him. In turn, we receive peace with God and forgiveness of sins.*
- What do the women acknowledge about God as it pertains to Naomi? What do they say about Ruth? *That God has blessed her and provided her with family. She is better to Naomi than seven sons. Wow!*
- What does this story teach us about God? Women?
- What is one thing I learned from this story that I can apply to my life before the next lesson?

Training for Godliness

As a female athlete, you have the platform to influence those around you. In what ways have you influenced others? How can you use your influence for God's glory?

Core Truths:

- ▶ God provides for us before we know we need it.
- ▶ Women of virtue find favor with others
- ▶ God blesses good work ethic and strong character.

Memory Verse: *"Who can find a virtuous woman? For her worth is far above rubies."*
Proverbs 31:10



WORTH

SESSION 2

Purpose: To help women understand their worth in the sight of God

Worth is seeking to understand our worth in God's sight.

"But now, this is what the Lord says—he who created you, Jacob, he who formed you, Israel: "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine... For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior, I give Egypt for your ransom Cush and Seba in your stead. Since you are precious and honored in my sight, and because I love you, I will give people in exchange for you, nations in exchange for your life...everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made."

Isaiah 43:1, 3-4, 7

As human beings and women, we have inherent worth because we have been created by God, in the image of God, and for the glory of God. Satan and the culture in which we live desire to keep us from believing this great truth about our value. As women, we have to stand against Satan's deception, which says that we are not loved by God; the world, which says that our worth comes from what we do and not who we are; and even our flesh that seeks to live out of this deception. By studying and standing on the truth of God's Word, our minds will be renewed, and as we believe our heavenly Father, we can quench the lies of the enemy. We are worthy because God is our Creator and we belong to Him. We are worthy because God says we are, and His opinion is the only one that matters and is the truth! Let's incline our ears to hear what He says about us and take Him at His word.

Leader: Story Background – Read Genesis 1-3

At the beginning of creation, God is there. He creates the world in six days by speaking life and material things into existence. God is involved in His creation, evaluating it and then declaring, "it is good." This includes man and woman whom He created in His own image.

Participant: Story Intro.

God is introduced as the Creator of all things in Genesis. He creates the heavens and earth in five days, and on the sixth day creates the animals and mankind. After God creates something, He evaluates it and declares it to be good. On the sixth day, after creating man and woman, God said, "It is very good." To God, the man and woman were of great worth!

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 for something to be valuable?
 2. Who is it that placed such a high value on your life that He sent His only son to die for your sins so that you might have eternal life?
- Let's look at the story of the first woman created by God and her value to God as He charged her and Adam with specific tasks. While Adam and Eve were different (physically, mentally, and emotionally), they were created as co-equals in the garden by God.

Character Goal: Worth – the quality that renders someone desirable, valuable, and useful to God

Biblical Character: Eve

Scripture Readings: Genesis 1:26-28, 31; 2:8-9, 15-25; 3:1-15

Discussion Questions:

- Who created man and woman? What did God say about what He had created? What does this teach us about our worth and value in the eyes of God? *God created mankind. He said that it was "very good." We have worth and value because we have been created by God for God.*
- What does it mean to be created in the image and likeness of God? Discuss the word "Re-present." *We have been created to show the world what God is like (loving, kind, generous, forgiving). We are God's representatives on earth. As Christians, we have the responsibility to re-present God to others. We see, hear, speak, feel, etc. just like God does. But we do not possess all His attributes(all-knowing, all powerful, etc.).*
- What was the man and woman's mission on earth? Who gave them this mission and authority? What does this teach us about God? *God has a plan for mankind. God gave them a mission. He gives us authority to carry out His will on earth.*
- Discuss God's command for them to rule, fill, and subdue. Could either fulfill this mission alone? What does this teach us about the value and role of women on the earth? *Man and woman could not fulfill this as individuals. Women are valuable to God and play a vital role in carrying out His plans on the earth.*
- As a female athlete, what is your role on the team? What contributions can you make in order to fulfill your team's mission?

- What command did God give to the man in the Garden? What does this teach us about God? *To tend the garden and take care of it. Also said that Adam was free to eat from every tree of the garden except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God gives us good work to do. He gives boundaries for our good.*
- As a woman and female athlete, what has God given you to “work and take care of”? How can you do this to the glory of God?
- What does God say “is not good”? What does God decide to do for Adam? How is Eve created? *It was not good for the man to be alone. When God created woman, He created a human being that would possess the strength and power to contribute to man and others to advance His kingdom on earth.*
- What do we see the serpent doing in order to bring about the fall of mankind? *He is deceiving the woman to not trust God’s Word or believe that He is good and loves her.*
- What does this teach us about one of the tactics Satan uses to deceive women? How is this evident in our world today? *Satan wants us to feel unloved and unworthy of God’s affection, which causes us to question His love and goodness towards us. Women feel like their worth comes from what they do or look like. They have a low view of themselves and act in light of this deception.*
- How has Satan used this tactic in your life? How can you know how God truly feels about you? *By reading His Word we can see and know God’s heart for us.*
- What happens as a result of Eve eating the fruit and listening to Satan? What does this tell us about Satan’s goal in tempting us to sin? *She sins. His goal in tempting us to sin is to separate us from God and His Word.*
- Ultimately, God forgives the sin of Adam and Eve and covers their nakedness. What does He tell the serpent would happen in the future? Who is this promised “Seed”? *A Seed would come that would “crush his head” or, in other words, give Satan a deathblow—Jesus.*
- What does this story teach us about God? What does this teach us about our worth?
- **What is one thing I learned from this story that I can apply to my life before the next lesson?**

Training for Godliness

Most athletes measure what they are worth based on statistics, scoreboards, and the applause of the crowd. Their identity is wrapped up in things that can end in a movement because of injury, coaching changes, or a fickle crowd. As a teammate and player, where do you find your worth or value? Will these things last more than a game or a season?

Core Truths:

- ▶ Women are valuable because we have been created by God, in the image of God, for the glory of God.
- ▶ Women are of great worth to God and necessary in advancing God's Kingdom on earth.
- ▶ Satan deceives women to not believe they are loved and valued by God.

Memory Verse: *Who can find a virtuous woman? For her worth is far above rubies.*
Proverbs 31:10



TRUSTWORTHY

SESSION 3

Purpose: To encourage women to make the most of what has been entrusted to them by God

A **Trustworthy** person is someone who is reliable, responsible, and makes the most of everything that has been entrusted to them.

What does it mean to be entrusted with something? It is to put something into someone's care or protection. The Lord has entrusted many things to those who serve Him and desires for us to use them for His Kingdom and Glory. He has given His Word into our care and protection. Our job is to know it for ourselves, live by it, and teach it to others with diligence and commitment. He has entrusted talents to us such as athletic ability, music, art, creativity, and organization. He has entrusted attitudes of faith, hospitality, grace, and many others. Are we trustworthy of the care of these things or do we squander them, perhaps using them for our own glory rather than God's? Sometimes our health, wealth, talents, and personality affect our spiritual perception. We begin to believe our own press and think that we have something to do with our own success. But God desires us to recognize the origin of the gifts and the more noble use for them: advancing God's Kingdom on Earth. Priscilla is a great example of this. Even though she moved many times and was probably living a somewhat nomadic life, she made the most of every situation to teach and encourage others in word and deed. Mary Engelbreit would say it this way, "Bloom where you are planted!"

Leader: Story Background

We don't know a lot of background about Priscilla but Paul commends her in scripture as one of many women who furthered the Kingdom of God on earth. How did she do this? She simply made the most for the Gospel in the circumstances she found herself. Could walking with God really be that simple? Of course it can! Those who are devoted to Christ do simple things really well. They read methodically and intentionally through God's Word daily, and they memorize scripture and pray—simple building blocks that we often fail to do because of busyness, misguided priorities, and sometimes laziness. God wants to bless us but we must first live a life that He can bless. Colossians 3:23, 24 addresses this:

"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving."

Participant: Story Intro.

The Apostle Paul was a man who was raised as a devout Jew, studied under the most prestigious scholars, and took pride in all of the rules he was able to follow. But he lacked one thing: faith that Christ was the Messiah and had entered into the world to save us by His substitutionary death on the cross. Paul knew the Law, doctrine, commandments, and decrees but he did not know the living Christ until he encountered Him on the road to Damascus. Paul was blinded, healed, and placed his faith in Christ. From that point on, he spent his life telling others of Christ and His crucifixion. On his many journeys, Paul encountered both men and women who were helpful to him and useful

to the Gospel. He commended many of them in his letters. Priscilla and her husband were two of those whom he commended.

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 a trustworthy person?
 2. What are some things that have been given to you and how have you used them in a trustworthy way?
- Priscilla was a woman married to a man named Aquila. They lived in New Testament times after Jesus as the Apostle Paul's ministry was vibrant and strong. Priscilla proved herself time and again to be a trustworthy person with the most valuable thing in her possession: The Good News of the Gospel.

Character Goal: Trustworthy – to be reliable, responsible, make the most of everything entrusted to one by God

Biblical Character: Priscilla

Scripture Readings: Acts 18:1-4, 18-28; Romans 16:3-5; 1 Timothy 3:1-13

Discussion Questions:

- What couple did Paul stay with while at Corinth? *Aquila and Priscilla*
- What did Paul have in common with this couple? *They were followers of Christ and tent makers*
- Paul had faith and occupation in common with this couple. Describe the commonalities you have with your teammates. How can these things help you reach your goals and glorify God as a team?
- After sailing for another country to preach the gospel, where did Paul leave them? *In Ephesus*
- Describe Apollos. What was his dilemma in ministering to others? *He was a man who was mighty in God's Word. He understood only some of the Gospel—the baptism of John.*

- How did Priscilla and Aquila help Apollos? How did their influence impact the people he ministered to? *They invited him into their home and explained the Word of God to him more accurately. He greatly encouraged those he ministered to and was able to prove by the scriptures that Jesus is the Christ.*
- The couple's ministry called for them to move many times. What do you think Priscilla sacrificed in order to see God's Kingdom advance? *Her comfort, familiar surroundings, stability*
- Even though Priscilla traveled a lot, she always found a way to make the most of every opportunity entrusted to her. What can you learn from her example and how can you apply this to your life? How did she do this? *She worked hard, was hospitable, encouraged others, knew scripture and taught it to others, risked her life for God, and listened to others speak about Jesus.*
- As a woman/friend/athlete, how can you make the most of every opportunity entrusted to you?
- Priscilla was a woman who played a vital role in encouraging others in the Lord. Why do you think she was able to have this kind of influence? *Her personal relationship with God was a priority and probably sought ways to better understand God's Word, enabling her to share with and teach others.*
- What does Priscilla reveal to us about God's view of women and their role in the body of Christ? *God desires to use women to teach His Word and encourage and influence others for the Gospel.*
- As Aquila's wife and fellow worker for God's Kingdom, how does Priscilla display trustworthiness? *She is a faithful helper to him. She can be trusted to use the things God has entrusted to her to love, serve, and minister to others. She was a supporter and partner in ministry with her husband.*
- Read Romans 16:3-5. For what does Paul commend Priscilla and Aquila? What does this tell us about her character and her role in God's Kingdom? *They were his fellow workers and risked their lives for him and all the churches. She was a strong and courageous woman. She loved God and His people and was devoted to the Gospel even at the risk of her own life.*
- Read 1 Timothy 3:1-13. Priscilla and Aquila were both leaders in the church. Describe the characteristics of what a deacon/servant and his wife should possess? Why are these traits important? Trustworthy, faithful, not greedy, etc.
- As a female athlete, how can you display these characteristics?
- 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?

Training for Godliness

Trust is foundational to every team. It can lead to success, unity and good relationships both on and off the court. As a female athlete, what trustworthy characteristics have you displayed on your team? What characteristics can you improve upon?

Core Truths:

- ▶ God entrust things to us so that we might use those things to encourage others.
- ▶ Women are valuable to God and He desires to use them to advance His Kingdom.
- ▶ We glorify God when we make the most of our situation or circumstances (i.e. new neighborhood, school, team, coach, school, etc).

Memory Verse: *"The heart of her husband safely trusts her; So he will have no lack of gain."*
Proverbs 31:11



LOYALTY

SESSION 4

Purpose: To encourage women to live with loyalty and allegiance toward the God who saves them

Loyalty is a strong feeling of support or allegiance and faithfulness to people and/or obligations.

"Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it." Matthew 7:13-14

When we receive salvation through Jesus Christ, one of the things that occurs is a transfer of allegiance—a change in loyalty. As unbelievers, we are God's enemies and children of darkness, but as believers we are adopted as children of God and are transferred into the Kingdom of the Son of His Love. Not only do we have a new identity, but we also have a new loyalty. When Jesus walked the earth, He spoke to the people saying, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me" (Matthew 16:24). To be a disciple of Christ is to commit to being a loyal follower of His, no matter what the cost. Throughout times in our life, this will require sacrifice, but as we die to ourselves and to this world, we will experience the resurrection power of Jesus and the abundant life He promises. There is certainly a cost to being a Christian and many will choose the wide and broad way that the world offers because of this fact. But we can be certain that though the cost is high and the road sometimes difficult, the way of Christ is the way to life!

Leader: Story Background – Read Genesis 19, Luke 8:1-3, and John 19

In this lesson we will cover the story of two women: Lot's wife and Mary Magdalene. After God called Abraham to follow Him, He began to reveal to this new believer His plans. One of these plans included the destruction of the wicked cities, Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham pleaded with God to deliver any righteous persons living there and God answered his prayer by saving his nephew Lot and his family. Although they were brought outside of the city, its wickedness had taken hold of the heart of Lot's wife and her loyalty revealed itself when she looked back in longing for it. Lot's wife was loyal to the very thing that led to her destruction instead of what would bring her life.

The other story covered is of Mary Magdalene. This was a woman with a past and obvious strongholds (i.e. seven demons)! After an encounter with God in the flesh (Jesus), she was delivered and became a loyal follower of His. She experienced abundant life that comes with walking with Him. She also witnessed the Gospel first hand; the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ; and the freedom of being loyal to the eternal King.

Participant: Story Intro.

God desires us to be loyal to Him, not only because He is King, but because He knows and wants what is best for our lives. Being a follower of Christ demands loyalty to Him and His ways. Today we will look at the stories of two women, one who chose loyalty to wickedness and the destruction she suffered because of it, and the other who chose loyalty to Jesus and the life she experienced as a result.

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 a loyal fan of a team or school?
 2. What qualities does a loyal fan possess?
- The lesson today covers the story of two women with strong allegiances or loyalty to a particular way of life. So strong, they were both willing to give their whole life to their causes. One woman swore allegiance to sinfulness and evil that lead to her death, while the other was delivered from evil to new life in Christ. She lived out her days with the saving knowledge of forgiveness and assurance of eternal life with God.

Character Goal: Loyalty – a strong feeling of support or allegiance and faithfulness to people and ultimately toward God and His ways

Biblical Character: Lot's Wife and Mary Magdalene

Scripture Readings: Genesis 19:1-17, 24-26; Luke 8:1-3;
John 19:17-18, 25; 20:11-14, 16-18

Discussion Questions: Genesis Passages

- What were the angels sent to do to Sodom and Gomorrah? Why? What does this teach us about God? *To destroy the city and the people in it. The outcry about the wickedness of these cities had come to God's ears. He hears the prayers against wickedness and acts in judgment.*
- Who invited the angels into his house? Lot
- Who all came to Lot's house that night and why? What does this tell us about the morality of the city? *All the men of the city, both young and old. They wanted to have sex with the men in Lot's house. They had no fear of God nor walked according to His ways.*
- How did Lot respond as the angels urged him to leave? Why do you think he hesitated? *He continued to tarry. He was so used to being where he was that it was hard for him to leave even though his surroundings were wicked.*

- Is there a time in your life when you knew you needed to get away from negative influences but hesitated? Why was it difficult?
- What did the angels do for Lot and his family? Why? What does this teach us about God? *They grabbed them by the hand and set them outside the city. God had mercy on them. God is merciful. He wants to deliver us from present as well as eternal destruction.*
- What do the angels tell Lot and his family not to do? *Look back*
- What happened to Sodom and Gomorrah as soon as they got outside of the city? *God destroyed it by fire.*
- What happened to Lot's wife? Why? What was she loyal to? *She turned into a pillar of salt because she looked back. Her heart was with the city.*
- When God in His mercy removes us from a situation that is detrimental for us and we "look back" (i.e. return to that sin, circumstance, etc.) what often happens? How can we avoid falling back into these sinful patterns? *We get hurt, destruction comes our way, etc. We can surround ourselves with others that are seeking God. Fill our hearts and minds with truth through the Bible.*

Luke and John Passages

- Who was with Jesus as He went about preaching? What does this tell us about Him and His feelings towards women? Does Jesus want you to be "with Him"? *The disciples and women*
- What do we know about Mary Magdalene? How does looking to Jesus impact her life? *She had seven demons. She was healed and set free.*
- Around the time of Jesus's death it was not acceptable to be a follower of His, but who was near the cross when He was crucified? What does this tell us about these women? *Jesus' mother, His mother's sister and Mary Magdalene. They were loyal to Jesus and brave.*
- Who was the first person to the tomb after Jesus's death? Who was she looking for? Was she successful in finding Him? What does this tell us about Jesus? *Mary. Yes. Jesus reveals Himself to those who seek Him.*
- Mary came to Jesus' tomb in grief and turmoil. How did she leave? *In joy*
- Read John 10:10. Based on the stories of Mary Magdalene and Lot's wife, whom do you think experienced destruction? Why? Who do you think experienced abundant life? Why?
- What do these two stories teach us about God? Women? *Being loyal to your team or coach?*
- **What is one thing I learned from this story that I can apply to my life before the next lesson?**

Training for Godliness

Coaches give rules to their players for behavior, teamwork, and strategy. Sometimes players on a team have a divided allegiance between their own agenda and the good of the team. Are you “all in” with the team’s goals or do you try to do your own thing? Think about the things and people you are loyal to. Are they bringing you abundant life or destruction? Explain.

Core Truths:

- ▶ The ways of the world are easy and popular but will lead to our destruction.
- ▶ God rewards those who are loyal to Him with abundant life.
- ▶ A transformed life is marked by patterns of behavior that honor God and His word.

Memory Verse: *“She does him good and not evil all the days of her life.”* Proverbs 31:12



INITIATIVE

SESSION 5

Purpose: To encourage women to take an individual action that begins a process of learning to live by faith in God

Initiative – an individual action that begins a process. Our goal is to take action to begin the process of living by faith in God.

"Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ." Romans 10:17

Rahab was a prostitute that lived in the city of Jericho during the lifetime of Joshua. Spies were sent by Joshua to survey the city before the Israelite attack and were hidden by Rahab. God could have sent the spies to anyone in the city but it was Rahab who hid them. Have you ever wondered why she risked hiding the spies? This question is answered in Joshua 2:9-11 (emphasis added).

"...and (Rahab) said to them (the spies), "I know that the LORD has given you this land and that a great fear of you has fallen on us, so that all who live in this country are melting in fear because of you. We have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to Sihon and Og, the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan, whom you completely destroyed. When we heard of it, our hearts melted in fear and everyone's courage failed because of you, for the LORD your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below.

Who in the city of Jericho had heard these things about God? Everyone (vs. 11)—the whole city. But who acted on what had been heard? Only Rahab. We act on what we know. When we know the stories of God, we will act out of faith and take the initiative to begin a relationship with Him. God is sovereign and always reaching in salvation toward mankind, but man still has the responsibility to extend his hand to receive healing and forgiveness from God.

Leader: Story Background – Read Genesis 19, Luke 8:1-3 and John 19

The story of Jarius' daughter in Mark 5 is interwoven with the story of the woman with the bleeding issue. Though they may seem to be unrelated, spiritually there is a thread that connects them. This thread is the initiative of people to go to the Jesus they have heard that heals, and seek Him for themselves. They did not send their neighbor, pastor, or favorite Aunt Sally, they sought Jesus *for themselves*. Jarius and the woman with the bleeding issue believed that Jesus could offer them what they had not experienced in their life—healing. Jarius probably had doctors giving medicine and other synagogue leaders praying at his house. Yet, he departed, leaving his dying daughter, and went to Jesus knowing there was no other hope. The woman had spent all she had on many doctors for 12 years! She was broke, desperate, and no doubt felt isolated and ashamed by her illness. Yet she went out among the crowds and went to Jesus knowing there was no other hope. Many (the whole crowd) had heard of Jesus but the only one we know of from scripture who was healed in the crowd that day was the woman. Her hearing became faith in action when she stretched out her hand to touch the hem of Jesus's robe. God's free gift of salvation sits on the shelf waiting for us to take the initiative to stretch out our hand, unwrap it, and experience the healing it brings!

Oswald Chambers in *My Utmost for His Highest* says this about spiritual initiative, "If we will take the initiative to overcome, we will find that we have the inspiration of God, because He immediately gives us the power of life."

Participant: Story Intro.

God has the power to do all that He desires but rather than make us His puppets, He desires for us to walk in fellowship or relationship with Him. A good illustration of what fellowship means is "two fellows, in a ship, heading the same direction." This is what Jesus desires from us. He wants to fellowship with us through relationship. It takes two people to have a relationship. Jesus is already in the boat waiting for us to join Him. All we need to do is decide to get in the boat with Him and head the same direction! The stories of Jarius and the woman with the bleeding issue are two stories about people who joined Jesus in the boat.

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 a time when you have taken the initiative to ensure something got done at school or with your team.
 2. Based on what you have heard about God, what are some ways you have reached out to Him either in times of difficulty or gladness?
- Our faith moves God to act on our behalf. We will look at two short stories in this lesson that demonstrate how Jesus healed those who sought Him out (took the initiative) and believed that He had the ability to heal. These stories are not only about the physical healing that takes place but also the spiritual healing that takes place when we display faith toward Jesus.

Character Goal: Initiative – an individual action that begins a process. Our goal is to take action to begin the process of living by faith in God.

Biblical Character: Woman with the Issue of Blood

Scripture Readings: Mark 5:21-43

Discussion Questions:

- What did Jarius believe about Jesus? *He believed that Jesus was able to heal his daughter so he came to him crying out and asked that He would come and heal her.*

- What was the result of the initiative Jarius took to seek healing from Jesus? *His daughter was raised from death!*
- What does this teach us about faith and works? *Our faith causes us to act in such a way that reveals our trust in God.*
- As a teammate, friend, or family member, how has your faith in Jesus impacted the way you live?
- What was Jesus' reputation in the area? Describe the scene around Him. What does this tell us about Him? *He was known for having power to heal and His message of salvation. Crowds of people were surrounding Him. He is approachable and people want to be near Him.*
- Mark 5 also tells us that the woman with the issue of blood heard about Jesus. What do you think she heard? How did this knowledge of Him impact her behavior? *That He was a healer, approachable, merciful, and powerful. She acted on what she heard by pressing through the crowd and touching His garment. She received healing.*
- How long did she have her disease? What all did she try to do about it? How do you think she felt about herself and her situation? *Over 12 years. She spent all she had on doctors. She probably did not feel valuable. She was desperate.*
- Have you struggled with something for a long time either athletically or personally and given up hope for things to change? What all did you do to try and fix or change the situation? What was the result?
- What does the woman decide to do? What does this tell us that she believed about Jesus? *To go to Him and touch the hem of His garment. That there was power even in His clothes. Just by touching Him she would be made well.*
- What does the story of this woman encourage or challenge us to do when all else has failed in changing our circumstances? *Trust the Lord and believe in His power to act in our seemingly hopeless circumstances.*
- What did this woman possess in order to push through the crowd that surrounded Jesus? Will these things also be required of us as we seek to see God act in our lives? *Faith, hope, trust, perseverance, initiative, focus. Yes*
- Describe a time when you took the initiative on your team. What was the result?
- What happened after she touched His cloak? What does this tell us about the power of Jesus? *Power went out from Him and healed her. Jesus is powerful and can heal any ailment or disease. His power is available to any who believe.*

- How many people were pressed up against Jesus? Out of the crowd, who was healed? Why? *A large crowd. Only this woman that we know of. She had faith, acted on it, and believed.*
- What does this teach us about faith? *Our faith moves God to act on our behalf. He is pleased even with the smallest effort to seek Him.*
- What does the woman do when she realizes that Jesus knows? *She comes to Him and tells Him everything.*
- What does Jesus call the woman? What else does He tell her? What does this tell us about Him? *Daughter. He desires for us to not only be physically whole, but also spiritually. He desires relationship.*
- Describe how these two people took initiative based on what they heard about Jesus. What was the result? *They took an individual action that began a process of healing. They took the initiative and acted on what they heard about Jesus. They had learned by word of mouth and the testimonies of others that Jesus could heal and so they sought to experience this in their own lives.*
- What do these two stories teach us about whom Jesus responds to? *Those who have heard of Jesus's ability to heal, act on it in faith, and believe that Jesus can offer healing—both physical and spiritual healing*
- What is one thing I learned from this story that I can apply to my life before the next lesson?

Training for Godliness

Taking the initiative is an important part of being a great athlete. When you see an area of your game that needs improvement, do you take the necessary steps to improve or do you just blow it off? Do you ask for help, stay after practice, or do more conditioning in order to improve that aspect? What is the result of your action or lack thereof? How can you apply this athletic principal to your relationships or even your spiritual life?

Core Truths:

- ▶ Jesus responds to the faith of the desperate and needy.
- ▶ Our faith in Jesus ignites our actions toward God and others.
- ▶ We experience God's power in our lives when we take initiative and intentionally move towards Him in faith.

Memory Verse: *"She seeks wool and flax, And willingly works with her hands."* Proverbs 31:13



WORK ETHIC

SESSION 6

Purpose: To help women see the value in a strong work ethic

Work Ethic is applying your best effort to the work in front of you, knowing that it will strengthen character and bring God glory.

"She selects wool and flax and willingly works with her hands." Proverbs 31:13

One obvious characteristic that the Proverbs 31 woman possesses is a strong work ethic. This trait contributes to her success as a mother, wife, businesswoman, and ambassador for God's Kingdom. The phrase *"and works with eager hands"* gives us insight into how she went about her days serving in these different areas. As women, we can get preoccupied in trying to do a thousand things but not being able to give our best effort in any of them. This is where priorities come into play. We clearly see that the Proverbs 31 woman prioritized God, her family and friends, believers, those in need, and her work. Having these priorities allowed her to give her best in these areas and in Proverbs 31:31 we see how her works brought her praise. This verse causes us to ask the question, *"Will my works bring me praise?"* As we seek to be the Virtuous Women God sees us to be, we need to prioritize what's most important in order to give our best effort in these areas and bring God glory. May this also be said of us as we seek to cultivate a good work ethic. *"Honor her for all that her hands have done, and let her works bring her praise at the city gate"* Proverbs 31:31.

Leader: Story Background – Read Nehemiah 1-4

The story of Nehemiah takes place in the era of scripture when the Jews were returning from captivity. After being in captivity for 70 years for their disobedience, God fulfilled His promise of freeing His people and brought them back to the Promised Land. The people began to return in waves, but there was much work to do. Their beloved city of Jerusalem had been destroyed by their captors. Everything was in ruins and its stone walls had been burned to rubble.

Participant: Story Intro.

After being in captivity for 70 years for their disobedience, the Jews began to return to their homeland as God promised. Upon their return, they found their beloved city and its walls in ruins. God put a desire into the heart of a man to lead the way in rebuilding Jerusalem.

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 are some character traits of a person who has a strong work ethic?
 2. Why would a good work ethic bring us praise? Why would it bring God praise?

- The story in Nehemiah shows us that God uses men and women in His Story. Shallum's daughters were an important part of the building process. These women were brave, strong, faithful, hardworking team players and carried swords (Nehemiah 3:17). God desires to use you, too, and wants you to co-labor with others to glorify Him.

Character Goal: Work Ethic – applying your best effort to the work in front of you, knowing that it will strengthen character and bring God glory

Biblical Characters: Nehemiah, Shallum's Daughters & the Israelites

Scripture Readings: Nehemiah 1:1-5, 11; 2:1-5, 10 (summary), 11, 16-18; 3:1-2; 4:2, 6-11, 14, 16-18, 21, 23; 6:15-16

Discussion Questions:

- What had Nehemiah heard that upset him? What did he do after he heard this? *That Jerusalem and its people were in disgrace and the walls were burned down. He wept, fasted, and prayed*
- What did the king allow Nehemiah to do? *Return to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls*
- Upon his arrival in Jerusalem, what did Nehemiah commission the people to do? How did they respond? *To come together to rebuild the walls. They set out to do this good work.*
- What did Sanballat say about this mission? What does this tell you about those that oppose God and His people? *He ridiculed them. Those that oppose God will try to stand against His people seeking to keep them from fulfilling God's will on earth.*
- Have you ever been ridiculed or made fun of when you set out to do the good works God had for you? How did you respond?
- What do we know about Shallum's daughters? Considering the type of work they did and the circumstances surrounding it, what can we gather about these women? *They helped their father rebuild the wall. These women were brave, strong, faithful, hard-working, team players and carried swords (Nehemiah 3:17).*
- As a woman, athlete, daughter, etc., what good works can you contribute to the people around you for the betterment of your team, family, neighborhood, and city?
- How does Nehemiah describe the way the people worked? What was the result of their hard work? What does this teach us about work ethic and working together? *"With all their heart" They rebuilt the wall. By applying their best effort, they accomplished more than they thought they could both personally and as a group.*
- Who on your team has a good work ethic? In what ways is this evident?

- After working continuously, how were the laborers beginning to feel? *They were physically and emotionally tired*
- What were their enemies plotting? Do you think they were discouraged? *Their destruction. Yes*
- How does Nehemiah encourage the people? *He reminds them of God and places their focus back on Him.*
- When you are tired and discouraged, what are ways you can take your mind off your circumstances and back on God who can give you strength? *Remind ourselves of what God says in His Word. Pray. Talk to other believers to receive encouragement. Worship.*
- How did the Israelites respond to their enemies' threats? Sometimes we can allow opposition to keep us from moving forward with God's purposes. What can we learn from their example? *They prayed (Nehemiah 4:9), "remembered the Lord." (Nehemiah 4:14), took up arms and continued the work (Nehemiah 4:21).*
- Describe how the people continued to build the wall after being encouraged? *They bravely worked night and day.*
- Did the Israelites finish the task? Why? *Yes, because God was with them and they applied their best effort to accomplish the task God had given Nehemiah.*
- What does story teach us about God? Women? How can I apply these truths to my life before the next lesson?

Training for Godliness

In the story of Shallum's daughters, everyone played a role and did their part. No one role was more important than the other. When each individual applied their best effort, they accomplished their mission. This is very similar to players that make up a team. How is hard work and teamwork applied in this story? Is this a reflection of your effort on your team?

Core Truths:

- ▶ Women with good work ethic play a vital role in advancing God's purposes.
- ▶ We may face opposition when seeking to fulfill God's purposes in our lives.
- ▶ Being reminded of who God is encourages His people to continue in the work.

Memory Verse: *"She selects wool and flax and willingly works with her hands."*
Proverbs 31:13



INDUSTRIOUSNESS

SESSION 7

Purpose: To work energetically, devotedly, and diligently
toward knowing God

Industriousness is working with enthusiasm and diligence to obtain knowledge and wisdom in a particular area of life. Our goal is to be diligent about knowing the Living God as He has revealed Himself in scripture.

Hebrews 11:6 tells us, "But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." God does not give Himself away to the casual seeker. He looks for those who, by faith, seek diligently to know Him and His Word.

This verse points to two ways in which we must believe. We must "believe that He is"—that He even exists, and we must also believe "that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." This second belief is the understanding that our enthusiasm and diligence to know Him through His Word is worth the sacrifice of other physical things such as time, money, personal pampering, or entertainment. Knowing the unseen God is more important than anything we can touch, see, hear, smell, or taste. This diligence is an act of faith because it acknowledges that the unseen God is even more real than the physical world in which we live.

Leader Story Background – Read 1 Kings 3, 10

Sheba was located where modern day Yemen is today (Southern Arabian Peninsula). The Queen of Sheba ruled over a very wealthy kingdom with much gold, spices, and precious woods. Her trip to Jerusalem was no weekend getaway. It would have been as far as 1,500 miles and she probably came as part of a trade delegation. The cumbersome journey was evidence of her strong desire to see Solomon and his kingdom.

Solomon was the third and final king over the united kingdom of Israel. Very early in Solomon's reign, God appeared to him in a dream and told him to ask for whatever he would want God to give him. Solomon asked for "a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong" (1 Kings 3:9). Because of his wise request, God gave him a "wise and discerning heart," as well as wealth and honor. He would have no equal among kings. The depth and breadth of Solomon's wisdom was so great that kings, queens, and dignitaries came from everywhere to witness this mystery. In the process, they also got a glimpse of the One True Living God that Solomon served. Solomon was God's witness in the known world that He was a God who anointed kings, speaks to His people, and offers a way to be reconciled to Him by shedding the innocent blood of the substitutionary sacrifice on behalf of their guilt. This sacrifice during Solomon's day was an animal but the substitutionary sacrifice for us today is Jesus Christ.

Participant: Story Intro.

Solomon was the son of David, the greatest King over Israel. He began his rule with a humble spirit as he realized how great the Israelites were in number. He desired to know how to rule wisely and “discern between good and evil.” Being able to discern between these two things is still difficult for us today. Sometimes God’s good is difficult to do and evil seems so easy. The only way to know the difference between the Truth and a lie is to know what the Truth is. When we are certain of Truth, the lie is easily detected. Solomon possessed the truth of God’s wisdom and this made him renown across the land. Every nation desired his wisdom and wealth and they eagerly came from distant lands to seek it.

Character Goal: Industriousness – working with enthusiasm and diligence to obtain knowledge and wisdom in a particular area of life. Our goal is to be diligent about knowing the Living God as He has revealed Himself in scripture.

Biblical Character: Queen of Sheba

Scripture Readings: 1 Kings 3:4-7, 9-10, 12-13, 29-30, 32-34; 1 Kings 10:1-10, 13; Luke 11:31

Discussion Questions:

- What happens after Solomon goes to the high place to seek the Lord? What does God say to him in the vision? What does this teach us about God? *God appears to him and tells him to ask for whatever he may want. God reveals Himself to those who come seeking Him.*
- What does Solomon acknowledge about himself regarding being the new king over Israel? Because of this, what does he ask that God do for him? What does this tell us about Solomon’s view of God? *He recognizes that he needs wisdom in order to rule God’s people well and so he asks God for it. Solomon believes that God possess all the wisdom we need to live. He also believes that He hears and answers prayer.*
- As an athlete, student, or friend, have you ever been put in a position that left you feeling inadequate or ill equipped? *How did you respond in that situation?*
- How did God feel about and respond to Solomon’s request for wisdom? What does this teach us about where wisdom comes from? *God was pleased that he was humble and asked for His help by asking for wisdom. God gives him wisdom and material blessings. Wisdom comes from God and His resources are limitless.*
- Who came to hear Solomon’s wisdom? What does this teach us about its value? *People sent by kings from all nations. Wisdom is very valuable. Though Solomon had great wealth, they came to seek wisdom.*

- What did the Queen hear about Solomon? What did she decide to do about the information she learned? What does this teach us about her character? She heard that he was very wise in all things and so she came to personally hear his wisdom. She was humble, diligent, and devoted herself with enthusiasm by traveling almost fifteen hundred miles (no cars, trains, or planes...only camels and horses that would have taken months!) to hear Solomon's great wisdom.
- Are there people in your life that possess godly wisdom? How diligent are you to take advantage of this treasure?
- How did Solomon respond to all the Queen's questions? Why? *He answered them all and nothing was too hard for him. Because God, the creator and sustainer of all things, had given Him this wisdom.*
- What did she observe about Solomon's kingdom? Why do think this information was valuable to her? *She observed the way Solomon managed his Kingdom. God had made Solomon's name renown among the kingdoms so he could tell others about the Living God they served. She also ruled over a kingdom and wanted to apply what she'd seen in order that she could rule in a wise way.*
- What does the Queen recognize about God and the people who hear and receive the wisdom He gave to Solomon? What does this teach us about receiving wisdom? *She praises God for His love of His people and recognized that the officials and people must be happy because they were governed by a wise king. Wisdom benefits us as well as others.*
- How do you think her kingdom was affected by what she learned from King Solomon?
- What did the Queen sacrifice in order to gain wisdom? What will we have to sacrifice to obtain this treasure? *Time, travel, money, leaving her comfort zone, risk of leaving the safety of her own kingdom*
- What does Jesus acknowledge about this Queen? Who was He referring to as the "one greater than Solomon"? Ultimately, who or where do we go to gain wisdom? *That she had faith and acted on what she heard about Solomon's God-given wisdom. Himself. We go to God's Word.*
- What does this story teach you about God? Women?
- **What is one thing I learned from this story that I can apply to my life before the next lesson?**

Training for Godliness

Industriousness is making the most of every moment we have in practice, school, or even chores at home with a good attitude and enthusiasm. Athletes often forgo diligence in working hard for comfort and ease. What does an athlete miss out on when they take the easy way out and settle for the shortcut (lie about reps, laps, nutrition—or make excuses for not following the coaches' direction)? What does an athlete gain by making the most of the conditioning, training, practices, and coaching advice? How does this apply to other areas of our life?

Core Truths

- ▶ God rewards those who persevere in diligently seeking Him.
- ▶ God's wisdom is beneficial to the person as well as those around them.
- ▶ God's wisdom is attractive because of the blessing it brings.

Memory Verse: *"She is like the merchant ships. She brings her food from afar."*
Proverbs 31:14



PREPAREDNESS

SESSION 8

Purpose: To help women see the value in being prepared to recognize God's activity in their life

Preparedness is a state of readiness for something expected and/or unexpected to occur. We can prepare ourselves to recognize God's activity in our life by reading His Word.

"By faith Noah being divinely warned of things not yet seen moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith." Hebrews 11:7

As women, we will face challenges and circumstances in life that will threaten to shake who we are and what we believe. Although we cannot be completely prepared for all that life throws at us, we can strengthen our souls to be prepared spiritually. We do this by reading, meditating on, and memorizing God's Word. God has spoken to us through His Word about the present as well as the future. Our Heavenly Father calls us to trust in what He says, choosing to walk by faith and not by sight. As we listen to Him, we gain insight into how to navigate the circumstances in our lives today and be prepared for what will occur in the future. This is what Noah did. After God revealed to him in Genesis 6 that He would destroy the earth by flood, Noah acted on God's warning by building the ark that God commanded him to build. This magnificent boat was for him and his family's salvation and the preservation of the different kinds of animals on the earth. Noah acted on God's warning to him about future events and was delivered from the flood. What we do or don't do with God's Word today will impact how we respond to things in the future. Let us be women who are prepared by being diligent to read and take heed to God's Word, building our lives on a strong and firm foundation that can stand the trials of life. *"Therefore whoever hears these sayings of mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock"* Matthew 11:24-25.

Leader: Story Background – Read Luke 1:1-56

The angel Gabriel was sent to a young and unassuming Jewish girl in the town of Nazareth. He gave her the good news and announced that she would be the mother of Jesus, God in the flesh! Although she was young and seemed confounded by the news, she received it and chose to trust the God whose ways were higher than hers. She had come to know this God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; the One who kept His promises and did great things for His people. At the end of their conversation Mary said to the angel, *"Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word"* (Luke 1:38). During her encounter with her also expectant cousin, Mary burst into song and quotes over twenty Old Testament scriptures. Mary's response gives us a glimpse of a heart prepared for God's activity in her life.

Participant: Story Intro.

After over 400 years of silence from God, the angel Gabriel burst onto the scene with two birth announcements: the first to an elderly priest and the other to a young Jewish girl. Mary received the unexpected news that she would be the mother of Jesus the Messiah and her response gives us a glimpse of a heart prepared to be used by God and see His glory.

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 are some things you might do to prepare for something you expect to happen (test, game, etc.)?
 2. What are some things you might do to prepare for something unexpected (injury, pop quiz, etc.)?
- This lesson is a story about the angel, Gabriel, who came to Mary and announced that she would become pregnant and give birth to a son who would save the world. She was taken by surprise that God had found favor with her and had given her such a big task. The remarkable thing we see in Luke is that Mary had done the work ahead of time to know God's Word for herself. When the angel unexpectedly came to her, she was prepared to give God thanks and praise. She was a scripture-quotin' girl even though women at that time in history were not allowed to attend synagogue (church) or be educated!

Character Goal: Preparedness is a state of readiness for something expected and/or unexpected to occur. We can prepare ourselves to recognize God's activity in our life by reading His Word.

Biblical Character: Mary, Mother of Jesus

Scripture Readings: Luke 1:26-55

Discussion Questions:

- Who does the angel go to? To a virgin named Mary
- What has Mary found with God? Read Proverbs 3:3-4 *NKJ. What does this tell us about her? Where is truth found? *Favor. She had mercy and truth with her. Truth is found in God's Word.*
- What things does the angel tell Mary about the Son who is to be born to her? *His name is to be called Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. He will have the throne of His father David.*
- The angel tells Mary of another miracle that has occurred. What is it? What do you think this does for Mary? What does this tell us about God? *Elizabeth is pregnant in her old age. It encourages her to trust and believe God. He puts people in our lives who will encourage us and prepare us to walk with Him.*
- What statement does Mary make at the end of her conversation with the angel? What does this tell us about her? *"May your word to me be fulfilled." She believes that nothing is impossible with God and that He will fulfill His Word.*
- What does Mary recognize about who she is? About God? Why do you think this is important? *She is a chosen servant of God. God is powerful and in control and will fulfill His Word to her.*
- After Mary receives this amazing news, where does she go? Why do you think she goes to her? *She goes to her cousin Elizabeth to fellowship and share the good news she's received and also witness the miracle occurring in Elizabeth's life.*
- How does Elizabeth respond to Mary's visit? What do you think this does for Mary? *She is happy and her baby leaps for joy. She also confirms what the angel spoke to her. It strengthens her faith.*
- Describe Mary's song. In Mary's song, she quotes 26 Old Testament scriptures. What does this tell us about her understanding and value of God's Word? *She valued and understood the importance of God's Word and hiding it in her heart.*
- How does this previous knowledge of scripture show Mary's preparedness to receive God's call for her life? *She was diligent to pursue God in His word and understand His will so that when the time came she blessed God for the things He had revealed in His word that He would do.*
- How can knowing God's Word prepare you for the expected or unexpected things in your own life?

- Mary testifies of at least ten things God has done for His people. What are some of these things? *He is mindful of us, merciful, mighty, lifts us up, fills us with good things, helps us...*
- What does Mary say about their ancestors? How do you think she knows these things? *That God would fulfill the promises He made to them. She has heard, read about, and learned these promises for herself.*
- What do you think caused Mary to grow in her faith? How will we grow and strengthen our faith in God?
- What prepared Mary for the promise and plan God had for her life? *She had God's Word in her mind and heart.*
- As a female and athlete how can you prepare for the purposes and plans God has for your life?
- What does this story teach us about God? Women?
- What is one thing I learned from this story that I can apply to my life before the next lesson?

Training for Godliness

Being prepared is fundamental to playing at the top of your game. Whether it is being prepared physically through diet and exercise for a longer game than you anticipated or mentally by knowing the plays, knowing that you are ready for anything gives you confidence in your play. How do you prepare for practice, a big game, or stressful competition? What are some ways you can apply these same principles to other areas of your life to prepare for both the expected and unexpected?

Core Truths:

- ▶ Knowing God's Word prepares us for the purposes and plans God has for our life.
- ▶ God often provides people to walk alongside us in unknown circumstances.
- ▶ God is over all things and intends His purposes for our good and His glory.

Memory Verse: *"She also rises while it is yet night, and provides food for her household, and a portion for her maidservants."* Proverbs 31:15



GENEROSITY

SESSION 9

Purpose: To encourage women to be generous with the provisions that have been given to them

Generosity is liberality in giving or sharing time, money, food, or similar blessings with others in order to bring glory to God.

"But do not forget to do good and to share for with such sacrifices the Lord is well pleased."
Hebrews 13:16

We can simply define the word *"sacrifice"* as a possession that cost us something to give up. God calls the act of sharing the things we possess as sacrifices that are well pleasing to Him. These things may include our time, talent, and/or treasure. It is good to recognize that anything we possess has been given to us by God *"If I were hungry I would not tell you for the world is Mine and all its fullness,"* He says in Psalm 50:12. Viewing our possessions as God's gifts enables us to have the right perspective and motivates us to use them for His glory and not our own. We often don't have this perspective and seek to use the things given to us for our own glory. Things end up possessing us instead of the other way around. The world entices us to believe that what we have is ours and nobody else has a right to it. But God in His deep love for us made the greatest sacrifice ever when He gave His beloved Son over to death in order that we might live. This free gift to us cost the Heavenly Father the priceless blood of Jesus. He calls His children to imitate Him with the same kind of scandalous generosity. But, we can trust that as we share the things precious to us, He is looking on with smiling eyes ready to reward our sacrifices with heavenly and earthly treasures. *"Give and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure you use, it will be measured back to you"* (Luke 6:38). What might God be asking you to share of your time, talents, or treasure?

Leader: Story Background – Read Luke 2, John 19:25-30, Isaiah 9:6

Mary received news from the angel Gabriel that she would give birth to Jesus, the Savior of the world. Though this news bewildered her, she received it with joy and shared the excitement with her cousin who was also expecting. Although Mary realized the weighty task of birthing and raising God in the flesh, one must wonder if she realized the pain that she would later endure as her precious Son was crucified and hung on a rugged cross. Not only was Mary the recipient of the good news, so also were some lowly shepherds in the town of Bethlehem. An angel also appeared to them with this wonderful birth announcement, *"I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord."* Though Jesus was born to Mary, He was given also to the Shepherds and to the whole world as Savior. Mary would soon realize that her precious first-born Son was a gift to be shared and ultimately given so that those who believe in Him might be saved!

Participant: Story Intro.

Mary was given the good news that she would give birth to Jesus. After He was born, an angel appeared to some shepherds in a nearby field to announce the good news to them as well. They then went and shared in the joy that finally their Messiah had come!

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 the most generous gift you have received (it doesn't have to be expensive to be generous!)?
 - 2 What is the most generous gift you have ever given another person?
- Mary was generous with her most precious possession, her son Jesus. She gave him freely as a sacrifice for you and me to have forgiveness. Although Jesus was born to Mary, He was ultimately given for the salvation of the world. Most certainly this was not done without heartache and sorrow, but she gave Him so that we might have life!

Character Goal: Generosity – readiness or liberality in giving for the purpose of God's glory

Biblical Character: Mary, Mother of Jesus

Scripture Readings: Luke 2:1-19, 22, 25-30, 33-35; John 19:25-30; Isaiah 9:6

Discussion Questions:

- Who is Mary pregnant with? From the discussion from the last lesson, what does Mary know about Jesus? *Jesus. That He will be the Savior of the world*
- How do you think Mary feels about this chosen Child of hers? *She loves and cherishes Him.*
- What precious possessions do you have? Why do they mean so much to you?
- Who was Jesus physically born to? Who does the angel say Jesus was born to? Who is this good news for and why? *Mary. To them, the shepherds. All people because God sent Jesus, Savior and Messiah, into the world for the salvation of all that would believe in Him.*
- What three titles does the angel use to refer to Jesus? What do you think each of these titles mean? *Savior, Messiah, and Lord*

- What did the shepherds do after they saw Jesus for themselves? What does this teach us about the “good news” of Christ? *They hurried to spread the word about the child. It is meant to be told to others and shared!*
- After Joseph and Mary bring Jesus into the temple, what did Simeon say about the child? About Mary? *About Jesus: that He was “the salvation of God, He would reveal the hearts of many in Israel.” About Mary: that a sword would pierce through her soul.*
- Who was at the cross when Jesus was crucified? *Describe how you think she felt. His mother and other women who followed Him. Extremely sad and heartbroken*
- How does Jesus ensure she will be taken care of after He dies? What does this tell us about Jesus? *He tells John that Mary is now his mother and he is her son. Jesus is generous towards others even when He is suffering. He cares for the weak, lonely and heartbroken*
- What did it cost God to send Jesus into the world to save sinners? Mary? Jesus? How does this display generosity? *It cost God the death of His beloved Son. It cost Mary her firstborn son. It cost Jesus His life and separation from His Father. God is generous toward sinners (us!) and sent His one and only Son to die so that we could have life. Mary had to realize that although Jesus was born to her, He was ultimately given for the salvation of the world. She allowed Him to live the life God had planned for Him. Jesus was willing and ready to lay down His life so that sinners could be saved and reconciled (brought back) to God.*
- Read the last section of verses. Who is the “Us” referring to? How did God provide for our salvation? Have you responded to God’s generous gift to you of His one and only Son? *Those who receive Jesus as Lord and Savior*
- From Isaiah 9:6, what names were given that describe the Son? What can these names mean to you personally? *Ruler, Wonderful Counselor, Everlasting Father, Mighty God, Prince of Peace*
- What does this story teach us about God? Women? Being a good teammate?
- What is one thing I learned from this story that I can apply to my life before the next lesson?

Training for Godliness

Mary had to give up her son to death so that she and those who believe could be saved. As an athlete, what might you have to sacrifice for the good of others? Your team? Your coach?

Core Truths:

- ▶ We can be generous towards others because God has been generous to us.
- ▶ The blessings we receive from God for our generosity will outweigh the personal sacrifices we make.
- ▶ We may have to sacrifice things that are precious to us for the good of others.

Memory Verse: *"She also rises while it is yet night, and provides food for her household, and a portion for her maidservants."* Proverbs 31:15



PURPOSE

SESSION 10

Purpose: To help women understand that the purpose in everything they do is to glorify God

Purpose is the reason for which something is done, created, or exists. Our purpose is to glorify God in all things.

Since the sin of Adam and Eve, mankind has struggled with emptiness of the soul. We sense there is something more and spend a good portion of life trying to find satisfaction in the things of this world. We think if we were thinner, prettier, healthier, nicer, stronger, better dressed, had more friends, were more highly recruited, had a boyfriend or children, we would be totally satisfied. But, the list never ends. There is always one more pair of shoes, one more game, one last big meal or exotic trip. This is the struggle of mankind. We sense the emptiness because the new stuff doesn't satisfy us for long and so we have to go to the next thing or experience to get our need met. Fortunately, Jesus has an answer for that! He tells us in Ephesians 3:19 that we will be filled with Him!

"and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God"

When we are full and satisfied, we no longer need other things to meet our needs. Only Jesus can truly satisfy the deepest longings of our hearts. When we know Him, we know the depth of satisfaction in relationship with Him. We no longer have an empty cup in front of us begging others to fill it with compliments or material things and then being hurt when they don't fill us the way we want. We as believers in Jesus have a *full cup*—so full that we can't help but share it with others and "splash" a little on them!

Leader: Story Background

Samaria was adjacent to Jerusalem and formerly the northern Israelite kingdom. After taking Israel captive, many Assyrians left their own land and were sent to tend the land in Israel. Those who settled among the few Israelites who remained began to populate the area. The Jews in Jerusalem hated the Samaritans because they believed them to be from an "impure" Jewish line mixed with Assyrian culture, bloodlines, and beliefs. Most Jews saw Samaria as a place to avoid but Jesus saw it as an opportunity to take the Gospel to a place the Jews refused to go. He had (John 4:4) to go through Samaria to seek and to save that which is lost (Luke 19:10). This is where we find Jesus. He sought out a woman with a sordid past and offered her living water that would fill her to overflowing allowing her to engage in relationship out of the overflow rather than her emptiness.

Participant: Story Intro.

The Samaritan woman at the well had been married five times and was now living with a man who was not her husband. She went to get water at noon, the hottest part of the day. No other women were there because they would have drawn water during the cool of early morning. Why was she alone? Could it be that she was ashamed, ridiculed, and ostracized by the other women for her “serial” relationships? She heard them whispering about her and noticed she could not catch their glance. Rather than be humiliated and alienated, she went alone in the heat. One day Jesus met her there with her empty water jug, He filled her with His Living Water and she left her still empty jug by the well to tell others of this new found life and purpose. After encountering Jesus she was never the same again!

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. If someone were to look at your life from the outside, what would they say is your purpose?
 2. Do you know that God has a purpose for your life? What does this tell you about how God feels about you?
- The woman at the well lived with new purpose after her encounter with Christ. Her new purpose was to tell others how Jesus had forgiven her, even knowing that she had done wrong. She no longer wandered from relationship to relationship looking for love. Instead, she spent her time telling others of the unconditional love she received from Jesus.

Character Goal: Purpose – the reason for which something is done, created, or exists. Our purpose is to glorify God in all things.

Biblical Character: The Samaritan Woman

Scripture Readings: John 4:1-42

Discussion Questions:

- Based on this story, why do you think Jesus “had to” go through Samaria? What does this say about Him? *He wanted to meet this woman. Jesus will go out of His way to minister to us so we can know Him personally.*
- Describe how Jesus felt as He sat down at the well. *He was weary, hungry, and thirsty.*
- Who comes to Jesus at this time? Why? Who initiates the conversation between them? *A Samaritan woman. She was thirsty and wanted physical water. Jesus initiated the conversation between them.*
- How does she respond to Jesus’s question? What does this tell us about how she views herself? *“Why are you talking to me a Samaritan woman?” She seems to have a low view of herself and low self-worth.*
- What does Jesus offer her? *Living water*
- What happens to the person who drinks the “living water” that Jesus offers? *They will not thirst and out of their heart will flow rivers of living water.*
- After learning about what living water can do, what does she ask Jesus? *“Where do I get this living water?”*
- What does Jesus say is the purpose of the living water? What does the woman think the water Jesus is offering will do? *Eternal Life. Quench her physical thirst so she won’t have to keep coming back to the well.*
- What does Jesus tell her to do? Why do you think He brings this up? *Go and get her husband. To help her see how she has tried to find purpose outside of Him*
- Does Jesus condemn or judge her because of her current lifestyle? What does this tell us about Him? *No, He is gracious toward her, wanting to draw her to Himself. He is patient and loving towards her and welcomes sinners who desire a relationship with Him.*
- As a female athlete, what things can you look to when trying to find purpose, identity, worth, etc.? Do these things work? Did they seem to be working for this woman? Why or Why not?
- Who does Jesus say that He is? *The Messiah*
- What did the woman leave at the well? Why? What did she go into the city to do? What does this teach us about what life is like after we encounter Jesus? *Her water bucket. She had been filled by Jesus. She went back into the city and testified about her encounter with Jesus. After we encounter Jesus, we are filled with His love and our lives are transformed.*

- After the disciples urge Jesus to eat, what does Jesus say is His purpose? What has filled and refreshed Him? *To do the will of Him who sent me and to finish His work (v. 34). He has food they don't know about. He is filled by filling us!*
- What happens as a result of this woman sharing her testimony to the people in the city? What does this tell you about your personal story of God's work in your life? *Many people believe. Our testimony is powerful.*
- Describe Jesus's purpose for the Samaritan Woman. Describe the woman's purpose in life before she met Jesus. Did the woman's purpose change after she met Jesus at the well? *Jesus saw past the sin in her life and offered her what He knew she was really seeking: forgiveness and eternal life through Him. The woman's purpose before she met Jesus was to keep from feeling empty by finding purpose/fulfillment in relationships with men. She felt empty and desired to be full but she filled her cup with all the wrong things that never satisfy. Yes! Her new purpose was to tell others about Jesus!*
- What is one thing I learned from this story that I can apply to my life before the next lesson?

Training for Godliness

It is easy as an athlete to find purpose in our statistics, performance, or position. What happens if those things are taken away or don't satisfy us? When things that are important to us are removed or replaced with better athletes, booing from the crowd, bad games or a slump, we feel empty. How can we resist the temptation to find purpose in things that don't last?

Core Truths:

- ▶ God's purpose for our life is to bring us to salvation.
- ▶ Deep longings in our life will only be met by a relationship with Jesus.
- ▶ When we receive what Jesus offers, we experience eternal life and new purpose!

Memory Verse: *"She considers a field and buys it; from her profits she plants a vineyard."*
Proverbs 31:16



INTEGRITY

REVIEW

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

Leader Review Guide:

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

"...being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ." Philippians 1:6

It is God who works in us both 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 to implement 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 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, as well as 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 119:11

Session	Memory Verse	Trait	Character	Personal Application	Team Application
	Introduction	Integrity	Jesus		
1	10 Who can find a virtuous woman?	Virtue	Ruth		
2	For her worth is far above rubies.	Worth	Eve/Woman		
3	11 The heart of her husband safely trusts her; so he will have no lack of gain.	Trustworthy	Priscilla		
4	12 She does him good and not evil all the days of her life.	Loyalty	Lots Wife and Mary Magdelene		
5	13 She seeks wool and flax,	Initiative	Woman with issue		
6	And willingly works with her hands.	Work Ethic	Shallum's Daughters		
7	14 She is like the merchant ships. She brings her food from afar.	Industriousness	Queen of Sheba		
8	15 She also rises while it is yet night,	Preparedness	Mary (Jesus's Mother)		
9	And provides food for her household, and a portion for her maidservants	Provision and Generosity	Mary (Jesus's mother)		
10	16 She considers a field and buys it; from her profits she plants a vineyard.	Purpose	Woman at the Well		

VIRTUOUS WOMAN INTEGRITY

FCA VISION

To see the world impacted for Jesus Christ through the influence of coaches and athletes.

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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