Who can find a virtuous woman?
for her price is far above rubies.
- Proverbs 31:10

THE VIRTUOUS WOMAN

Ages 7-9

The Missionary Baptist
Vacation Bible School Literature Committee presents

THE VIRTUOUS WOMAN

Vacation Bible School Lessons for Ages 7-9
Written by Sister Susan Collins

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THE VIRTUOUS WOMAN - LESSON 1
FAITH

Lesson Key: Ruth 1:16-17
Memory Verse "...THY PEOPLE SHALL BE MY PEOPLE, AND THY GOD MY GOD:" - Ruth 1:16b

The scripture in this lesson is often read at weddings but did you know it was actually spoken by a woman to her mother-in-law? The circumstances were thus: Because of a famine in Bethlehem, Naomi's husband Elimelech moved the family, including their sons Mahlon and Chilim, to Moab. Sadly, Elimelech died, and rather than return to Bethlehem, Naomi and her sons stayed in Moab. Later Naomi's sons married Moabite women, Orpah and Ruth, but more sadness came as both Mahlon and Chilim died. Neither couple had children.

Naomi heard that the famine in Judah was passed and decided to return to Bethlehem. She instructed Orpah and Ruth to return home also to the house of their mother. Naomi realized that she could not provide for them. She felt they might marry again and have a good life. However, they wanted to go back to Bethlehem with Naomi.

Naomi said, " Turn again, my daughters: why will ye go with me?" She told them that she could have no more children at her age and even if she could have more sons the age difference would be too great for them to marry Orpah and Ruth and have children together.

Orpah and Ruth both wept at Naomi's words. Orpah kissed Naomi and turned back toward her home. Ruth, however, continued to cling to Naomi and would not leave her.

It is at this point that Ruth spoke the beautiful words of this lesson text: "Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest I will die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me." (Ruth 1:16&17)

Ruth appeared to love Naomi, her mother-in-law, more than her own mother's people. How wonderful Naomi must have been to her! Ruth was even willing to adopt Naomi's religion. Naomi finally took Ruth with her back to Bethlehem. There Ruth gleaned grain from the field of Boaz, Naomi's kinsman, to provide food for them. Ruth's care of her mother-in-law came to Boaz's attention. He came to love Ruth and she became his wife. In this way Ruth was able not only to continue taking care of Naomi, but also made a home for herself among God's people. Ruth and Boaz had a son named Obed, who had a son named Jesse who had a son named David, who became a great king of Israel.

By following Naomi in faith, Ruth came to know the true and living God, and He used her in a wonderful way.

QUESTIONS:

1 WHY DID ELIMELECH AND NAOMI LEAVE BETHLEHEM AND GO TO MOAB?

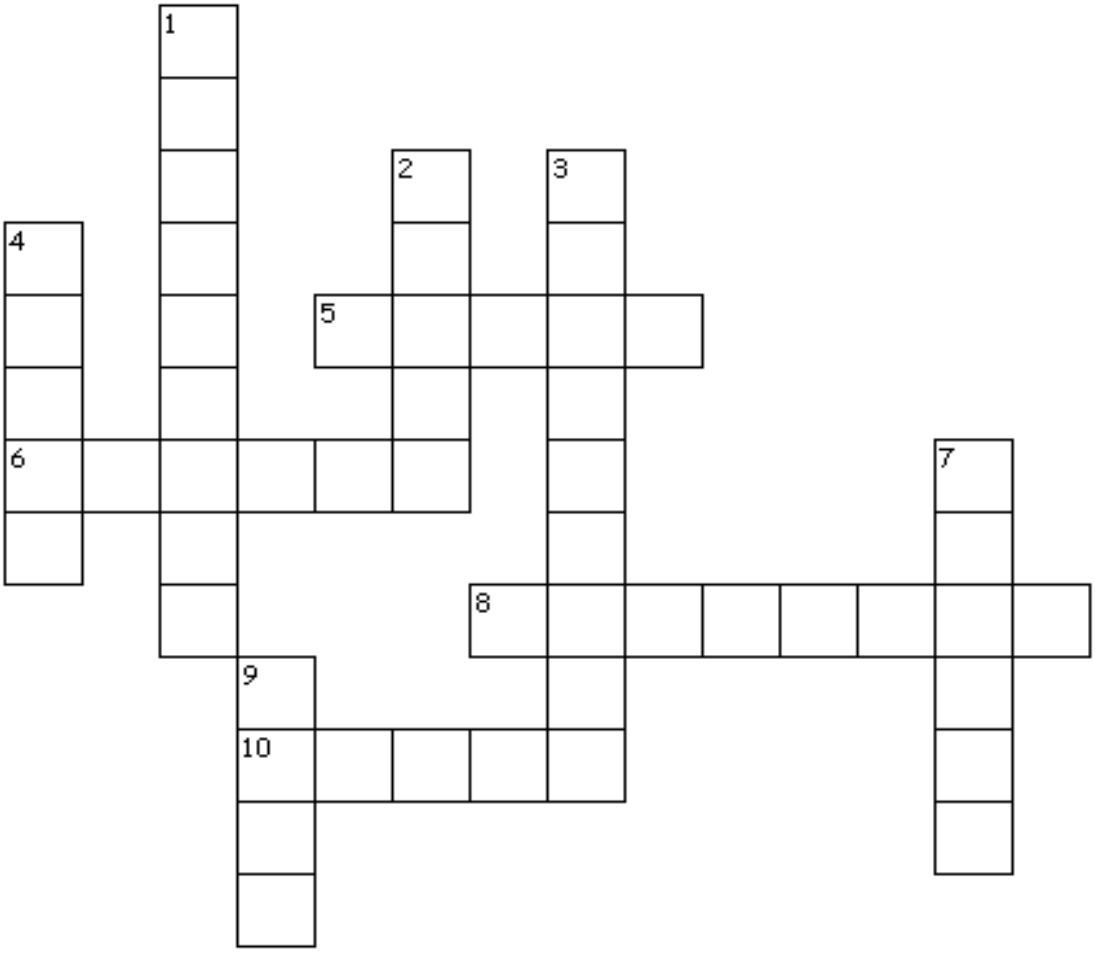
2 WHY WAS NAOMI LEFT WITH ONLY HER DAUGHTER-IN-LAWS, ORPAH AND RUTH?

3 WHAT DID NAOMI DECIDE TO DO NEXT? WHAT WERE HER INSTRUCTIONS TO ORPAH AND RUTH?

4 WHAT DID ORPAH DO NEXT? WHAT DID RUTH DO NEXT?

5 WHO WAS LATER BORN IN THE LINE OF RUTH AND BOAZ?

6 WHAT WONDERFUL THING HAPPENED TO RUTH AS A RESULT OF FOLLOWING NAOMI BACK TO BETHLEHEM?



Across
5. This was the son of Jesse who became a great king.
6. This was the name of one of Naomi's sons.
8. Ruth adopted Naomi's _____.
10. She decided to return to her home in Moab.

Down
1. Naomi and Ruth travel back to this town when the famine was over.
2. Ruth collected this from the field of Boaz.
3. This was the name of Naomi's husband.
4. She told Ruth and Orpah to return home after her sons died.
7. "thy _____ shall be my people."
9. He married Ruth.

THE VIRTUOUS WOMAN - LESSON 2
WISDOM

Lesson Key: I Samuel 25
Memory Verse "BLESSED IS THE LORD GOD OF ISRAEL, WHO SENT YOU THIS DAY TO MEET ME." I SAMUEL 25:32

The words of the memory verse today were spoken by David to Abigail, whose wisdom saved her entire household.

Abigail's husband Nabal was a stubborn, greedy man. Although he had great wealth, including three thousand sheep and one thousand goats, he was selfish with his possessions.

David at this time, along with his army, was hiding from King Saul. God had decreed that David would replace Saul as king because Saul had been disobedient to Him. Saul was angry and jealous of David and tried to kill him many times.

David and his men were in the countryside around Carmel. Nabal had taken his sheep to Carmel to be sheered. David and his men kept them safe. In return they expected Nabal to feed them but he refused.

David was very angry with Nabal. He ordered his men to strike against Nabal and all the men of his household. A servant of Nabal slipped away to Abigail and told her what was happening. Abigail immediately realized the danger to her household. She quickly gathered 200 loaves of bread, two containers of wine, five sheep ready to be cooked, five seahs of grain, 100 clusters of raisins, and 200 cakes of figs. Abigail loaded them on donkeys and sent her servant ahead, saying she would follow. She cautioned him to say nothing to Nabal.

Abigail rode down to David, who was still making threats against Nabal. She quickly dismounted and fell on her face before David. She asked him to hold her guilty of Nabal's foolishness. Then Abigail asked David to listen to her.

Abigail explained to David that she did not see the messengers David sent asking for food. Just as Nabal means foolish, so was he a foolish man. Then she pronounced a blessing on David saying," Now therefore, my lord, as the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, seeing the Lord hath withdrawn thee from coming to shed blood, and from avenging thyself with thine own blood, now let thine enemies and they that seek evil to my lord be as Nabal."

Abigail went on to say that this blessing extended to all the young men

following David. She then asked for David's forgiveness. She stated that God would reward David because he fought the Lord's battles and no evil was found in him. She reminded David that God was going to make him triumph over Saul and replace him as king. Abigail realized that if David killed the men of her household out of anger toward Nabal, he would later be remorseful.

David realized that Abigail's intercession prevented him from doing great wrong. David was a warrior for God, not for himself. He was only to fight under God's instructions. He was not to use his army for his own purposes such as revenge. David also realized how close he came to killing Nabal and the men of Nabal's household. He was so relieved that Abigail intervened!

David cried, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me: And blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thee, which has kept me this day from coming to shed blood, and from avenging myself with mine own hand."

Then David accepted the food that Abigail had brought and told her to go in peace.

How did Nabal react? When Abigail returned home she found Nabal having a great feast, very drunk on wine. She wisely decided to wait until morning when he was sober to tell him of the event with David. When Nabal heard these things he had a heart attack and died ten days later!

When David heard this he sought Abigail to become his wife. Her wisdom in dealing with David not only saved her household but gained them future protection as David's wife.

1 WHY DID DAVID EXPECT NABAL TO FEED HIS ARMY?

2 WHAT TYPE OF MAN WAS NABAL?

3 WHAT DID ABIGAIL DO WHEN SHE HEARD OF THE DANGER TO HER HOUSEHOLD?

4 WHY WAS DAVID RELIEVED THAT ABIGAIL HAD INTERVENED TO PREVENT HIM FROM KILLING THEM?

5 HAVE YOU EVER REACTED IN ANGER TOWARD SOMEONE AND LATER REGRETTED IT?

6 WHAT HAPPENED TO NABAL? TO ABIGAIL?

Word Scramble

Unscramble the words from lesson two below:

balna _____

dvdia _____

nargi _____

ulhdoesoh _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

sniasre _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

lsreia _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

mowsid _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

baliagi _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

usal _____ _____ _____ _____

THE VIRTUOUS WOMAN - LESSON 3
COMPASSION

Lesson Key: Acts 16:13-15; 40
Memory Verse "If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there."

In this lesson we learn about a woman of generosity, named Lydia. She had compassion on the apostle Paul while he traveled on his missionary journey.

When we travel today, most of the time we can depend on finding a motel/hotel to spend the night. We also have quick transportation that allows us to reach our journey's end in a timely manner. In the days of Paul, however, travel was slow, often by foot. There were no modern hotels to rest for the night with a complimentary breakfast included! For this reason, hospitality was very important in the ancient world. Travelers were dependent on the kindness of others to meet their need of shelter and food.

Do you think hospitality is important today? Have you ever been on a trip away from home and needed help? Perhaps your automobile broke down, or a flat tire occurred. Maybe you have been involved in an accident, or had a sick family member that needed medical attention. If so, then you can understand how important it was to Paul to have Lydia show him kindness in a foreign land.

The Bible teaches that Lydia was a businesswoman from Thyratira. She sold purple cloth, which was very expensive in that day and age. Since only rich people could afford this cloth, wearing purple automatically identified a person as one of the elite of society. It also indicates that Lydia was a successful businesswoman.

Lydia did business in the city of Philippi, which was a commercial crossroad. Many people came to Philippi to buy goods from the east and sell them to the Romans or Greeks in the west.

The Apostle Paul, along with Silas, had come to Philippi to preach the gospel. In Acts 16:13 we read that Paul and Silas went out of the city on the Sabbath to find a place to pray. They sat down and began talking with some of the women who had gathered there. One of those women was Lydia. Scripture teaches that the Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's

message. In fact she and her whole household believed and were baptized. It was common in those days, when the head of a household believed, that everyone else followed. There was a strong sense of community.

Do you think there is a strong sense of community in our world today? Do you often see a member of a family saved and then others in their home get saved also?

Although Lydia was a wealthy businesswoman, she was not too proud to go out and hear Paul preach. After believing, she was not afraid to share her faith with her household or to be publicly baptized. Are you sometimes afraid to speak to someone who seems richer or perhaps more popular than you? Paul and Silas were not afraid to preach to anyone great or small!

Lydia, after she was saved, wanted to help Paul and Silas. She was not selfish with her wealth and did not think herself above asking two traveling preachers into her home. She told them, " If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there." So Paul and Silas were persuaded. Not only did Lydia give them shelter and food, but by taking them in she gave them the protection of her home.

Sometimes our churches are visited by preachers who are a long way from home. Perhaps they have even come from a poor country and do not have the money to pay for lodging and food. It is a wonderful thing when church members take them into their homes and show compassion and generosity just like Lydia.

QUESTIONS

1 In what city did our lesson take place?

2 What made it a good place for business? What was Lydia's business?

3 Why was hospitality important in the ancient world?

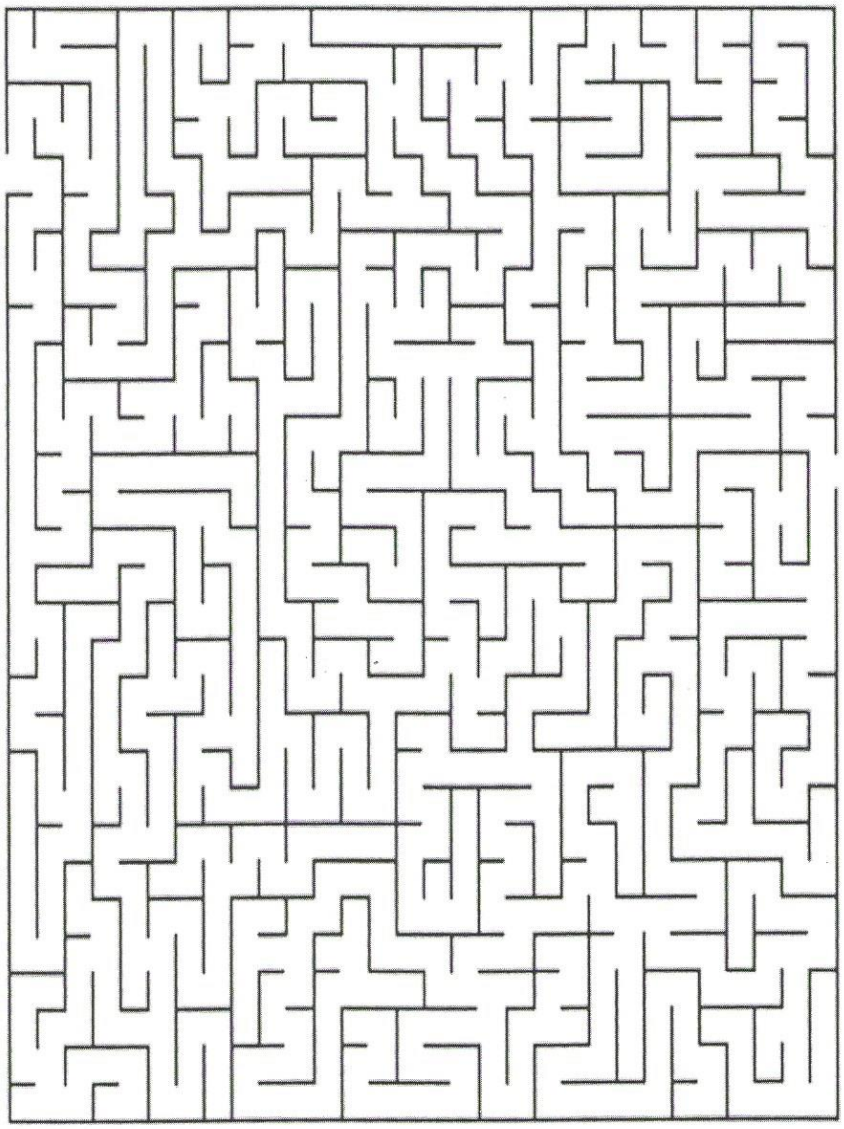
4 How did Lydia hear the gospel? What happened after she heard Paul preach?

5 What did she do for Paul and Silas?

6 Have your parents ever asked a preacher to dinner or kept a missionary in their home?

MAZE

Help Paul find food and shelter at Lydia's house.



THE VIRTUOUS WOMAN - LESSON 4

COURAGE

Esther

Lesson Key: Esther 4:13-17, 7:1-6, & 8:3-6
Memory Verse "And who knoweth whither thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" Esther 4:14b

Queen Esther was a very courageous woman. When her cousin Mordecai told her of Haman's plot to kill the Jewish people, Esther was willing to plead their case before Ahaseurus the king.

Haman, a high official favored by the king, was jealous of Mordecai. He felt that everyone should bow down to him as the kings "most noble prince", but Mordecai bowed only to God.

Haman told the king that the Jews in his province would not obey the king's laws. He asked Ahaseurus permission to have them killed. Haman promised to pay ten thousand talents of silver into the king's treasury for this purpose.

The king, not realizing that Esther was Jewish, agreed and sealed the petition with his signet ring.

Mordecai, learning of this plot, went to Esther. He told her that since she was a Jew, she would not escape their fate, even though she was the queen. Mordecai asked Esther to plead their case before the king. Esther realized the truth of Mordecai's words. She agreed to go before the king. Esther asked Mordecai to tell all the Jewish people in the community to fast and pray for three days. She stated that she and all her handmaids would fast and pray for three days also.

Esther knew that only those whom the king called were to go to him. She had not been called for thirty days. If the king did not hold out his golden scepter to her, Esther would be put to death. Esther knew she had only become queen when the king, angry with Queen Vashti, had her deposed. She realized the seriousness of her situation but said, " If I perish, I perish."

Can you imagine having that much courage? Yet Esther knew to turn to God. She realized the importance of prayer and fasting.

After three days, Esther went before the king. She was very humble. Ahasheurus, pleased to see her, held out his golden scepter. Esther then drew close and touched the scepter. King Ahaseurus then asked for her petition.

Instead of immediately pouring out her troubles, Esther wisely asked to give a banquet for Haman with the king in attendance. She realized that King Ahaseurus called Haman his "most noble prince". She knew she must proceed with caution.

Esther showed wisdom as well as courage! The king agreed and the banquet was given. Once again the king asked for Esther's petition. Once again she asked the king if she had found favor in his sight, to give a banquet for Haman on the following day. She again asked the king to be present.

By now Haman was quite puffed up. Two banquets in his honor! Surely, he thought, the king meant to reward him in a special way. Haman went home and bragged to his wife and friends of his importance to the king. He also complained bitterly of Mordecai's lack of respect for him.

Saresh, Haman's wife, along with his friends, encouraged him to have a gallows built to hang Mordecai on. Thinking of his high position, they told him to go to the king and get permission to hang Mordecai. Haman had the gallows built and hurried to the palace.

In the meantime the king had spent a restless night. Unable to sleep he called for a servant to bring the record book of chronicles, or events, during his reign. While reading to the king, the servant came to an incident that King Ahaseurus had forgotten. It seems that Mordecai had learned of a plot to kill the king and warned Esther. Esther in turn reported it and the men were caught and killed. Mordecai had saved Ahaseurus life!

"What has been done for Mordecai?" the king asked. "Nothing has been done for him," replied the servant.

So, while Haman was intent on asking the king's permission to kill Mordecai, the king was actually planning to honor him. Imagine how Haman felt when he was ordered to put King Ahaseurus' robe on Mordecai and parade him on the king's horse before the people. Haman was instructed to proclaim along the way, "See what happens to those who please the king."

When Haman went home and told his wife all that had transpired, she realized Haman was in grave danger. "If Mordecai is a Jew you will not prevail against him," she warned. Just as she spoke the palace servants came to escort Haman to the banquet.

Once there the king again asked Esther for her petition. She told him that she wanted her life and the life of her people. Esther explained that they had been marked for complete destruction. King Ahaseurus then asked Esther who would do such a thing! She pointed and said, "That wicked man Haman." The king, very angry, jumped up and rushed out into the garden. Haman then

began pleading for his life, falling across Esther's couch. Unfortunately for him, the king came back in and thought Haman was attacking Esther. "Would he assault the queen in my presence?" he cried.

The servants, hearing this, covered Haman's face. One of them said, " Look, there is the gallows he built to hang Mordecai!" So Haman was hung on the gallows instead.

The king gave the house of Haman to Esther. He allowed her to elevate Mordecai to Haman's position and even gave Mordecai his signet ring.

Still, Esther knew there was one more item to be taken care of. "What about the decree to kill the Jews? How can I stand to see my people perish?" she asked. So Ahaseurus gave Mordecai permission to write a decree giving the Jews in all his provinces the right to defend themselves and to keep any plunder they might gain in the process.

So... they all lived happily ever after... well, not quite. There would be many times throughout the years that Jewish people would be persecuted. But God has always saved a remnant, not allowing them to perish from the earth.

For this time, and this season, God used Esther to preserve His people, and she was God's willing servant. Do you think you will be God's willing servant when He calls you?

QUESTIONS:

1 Why did Haman hate Mordecai? How did he seek revenge against him?

2 Why did Mordecai seek Esther for help? What was Esther's response?

3 Why did Haman think the king meant to reward him? What was he planning to ask of the king?

4 How did Esther show courage in this situation? How did she show wisdom?

5 Who lost his life Mordecai or Haman? Why?

6 Do you think you will ever have the courage of Esther?

B E Y O G N E X I N A N I G Z
A H E B B S W A D J Y D W T E
N N P R T B C S B T N U W M A
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AHASEURUS
BANQUET
COURAGE
DECREE
ESTHER
GALLOWS
HAMAN
JEWS
MORDECAI
PERISH
QUEEN
WISDOM

VIRTUOUS WOMAN - LESSON 5
PURITY

Mary, the Mother of Jesus

Lesson Key: Luke 1:26-55
Memory Verse "And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord..." Luke 1:46

From the time Eve, the first woman, began bearing children, all through the Hebrew heritage, women hoped they would be the mother of the promised Messiah. Imagine Mary's surprise when she was chosen. She was still very young, probably mid-teens, and although espoused she had never lived with a man. The Hebrews observed a very strict one year engagement, during which time the couple were to consider themselves married although they did not live together. After the year was up, a formal wedding ceremony would take place. Then the couple would set up their household together. Until that time the bride lived with her parents.

Scripture says that in the sixth month the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary in her hometown of Nazereth, Galilee. The angel told Mary that the Lord had bestowed favor and blessing on her. Mary was troubled and wondered what Gabriel meant, but Gabriel told her not to be afraid. He then told Mary that she would bear a child and name him Jesus. He went on to say that Jesus would be great and would be called the Son of the Highest, "and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end."

Mary was astonished, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?"

Gabriel then explained that the Holy Spirit would come upon her and the power of God would overshadow her bringing forth a Holy child "called the Son of God". He told her that her cousin Elizabeth was also expecting a child though she was past the age of child bearing. Nothing is impossible with God! Mary did not hesitate in her response saying, "Be it unto me according to thy will."

Mary then arose and traveled to visit Elizabeth. When Mary greeted her, Elizabeth felt the baby in her womb leap for joy. Then being filled with the Holy Spirit, Elizabeth cried, "and whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" Elizabeth's son was to be named John. We have come to know him as John the Baptist who preached in the wilderness

preparing people for the coming of the messiah Jesus.

Mary then spoke the words that became known as Mary's song. Read Luke 46-55.

Mary, although she wondered about it, was willing to be an obedient servant of God. Although initially it would bring her shame, she believed God when He promised that she would be blessed above all women. She realized the seriousness of her situation, to be with child during the one year engagement was a disgrace to her family! Joseph also knew that the child was not his. This made it seem as though Mary had been with another man, which was adultery. The penalty for adultery was death! Mary actually faced being stoned. What faith Mary displayed!

Joseph loved Mary and did not want her publicly disgraced, or stoned, so he sought to end the engagement privately. Before this could happen, however, an angel appeared to Joseph and explained that Mary had not been unfaithful to him but in fact was carrying the Son of God, the promised Messiah, Jesus. The angel told Joseph not to be afraid to take Mary as his wife.

We are all familiar with the rest of the story, and how Jesus came to be born in a stable in Bethlehem, with shepherds gathering in from the fields and wise men coming later following the star in the sky.

Have you ever wondered what would have happened if Mary had said, "No! I'm too afraid. I can't bear the shame of my family. I won't do it!" or what if Mary had not been a woman of purity? No doubt God would have chosen someone else, but what Mary would have missed!

Throughout Jesus' life, Mary is mentioned now and then. When Jesus is left in Jerusalem, Mary and Joseph went looking for him. At the wedding in Cana, it is Mary who asks Jesus to provide more wine. At the cross she stands nearby witnessing His cruel death. After Jesus glorious ascension to heaven she gathers with His disciples, brothers and other women. Acts 1:14 says, "Those all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren."

This is the last time Mary is mentioned in scripture. Perhaps she died shortly after, we do not know. At the cross Jesus gave the care of his mother to His disciple John. He instructed John to take Mary as his mother and Mary to take John as her son. Obviously Jesus cared for her!

Mary, though little is known of her daily life, was a woman of purity first of all. God would not have chosen her as the Messiah's mother otherwise. She also had courage and integrity. Mary faced death and shame to have

Jesus, but she did not hesitate. Though she wondered how it would be, she never turned back, facing not only the birth of Jesus but His death. Then, she was there with the early church, after Jesus' resurrection and ascension into heaven.

She is an example to women everywhere of the importance of living a life of purity and integrity, so that when God calls us to serve him, we will have the qualifications to answer that call.

QUESTIONS:

1 WHAT WAS EVERY WOMAN'S HOPE BEFORE THE BIRTH OF JESUS?

2 WHY DO YOU THINK GOD CHOSE MARY?

3 WHAT PROBLEMS DID MARY FACE HAVING JESUS?

4 WHAT WAS MARY'S RESPONSE WHEN TOLD SHE WAS TO HAVE JESUS?

5 WHAT OTHER OCCASIONS ARE MENTIONED IN THE BIBLE CONCERNING MARY?

6 HOW DID JESUS SHOW HIS LOVE FOR MARY WHEN HE WAS HANGING ON THE CROSS?

7 WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO LIVE A LIFE OF INTEGRITY?

CRYPTOGRAM

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
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