

LESSONS FOR THE SISTERS

Lesson 4

The Female Life Being the Life Useful to God in His Economy

Scripture Reading: Exo. 1-2

- I. The book of Exodus reveals the kind of people God can use in His economy for the fulfillment of His purpose:¹**
 - A. God's intention as seen in this book is to have a people to build Him a dwelling place on earth; thus, at the end of Exodus the tabernacle is erected to be God's dwelling place—Exo. 40:17, 33-34.
 - B. Furthermore, for the fulfillment of God's purpose, there is also the need for an army to fight for God's interests on earth; if the children of Israel were to enjoy the good land and to fulfill God's purpose of building a temple as God's testimony on earth, they had to fight to deliver the land from the usurping hand of the enemy—Num. 1:1-4; 33:52-54.
 - C. Therefore, to be useful to God is related to building up His dwelling place and to fighting for His interests on earth—cf. Eph. 4:11-16; 6:10-18.
 - D. The life useful to God in these matters is the female life:
 1. The underlying theme of Exodus 1-2 is that God needs a certain kind of life both to preserve His people and to prepare a savior to deliver them from bondage.
 2. Both the preservation of the people and the preparation of the savior were accomplished only through the female life—1:15-21; 2:1-10.
- II. God is the head of Christ; Christ, under the headship of God, is the head of every man; and man, under the headship of Christ, is the head of the woman—1 Cor. 11:3.²**
- III. Man, typifying Christ, signifies the independent life—Rom. 5:14; John 5:26; 8:58.³**
- IV. Woman, typifying man, signifies the dependent life—1 Cor. 11:7-8; Gen. 2:7-9; Matt. 4:4; John 6:53-54, 57; 14:19b; 15:4-5; 20:22; 1 John 5:12.⁴**
- V. Man is to be a real “female” living a life dependent on God—Phil. 1:21a; Gal. 2:20; 1 Cor. 15:10; 2 Cor. 1:8-10; 3:5, 4:7; 12:9-10.⁵**
- VI. Man's independence of God is rebellion—Gen. 2:16-17; 3:1-6; Rom. 5:19a:⁶**
 - A. The moment we become independent, we become rebellious against God—1 John 3:4, 6; Col. 2:19.
 - B. Because the male life is independent and rebellious, God cannot use it for the accomplishment of His purpose.
- VII. If a woman lives an independent life she becomes a real “male”:⁷**
 - A. Today a great many women have become “males.”
 - B. This is the main reason for the many separations and divorces.
- VIII. Only the real “female” life is useful to God—Exo. 1:15-21; 2:1-10:⁸**
 - A. In the Bible God's people are likened to a female:⁹
 1. God dealt with Israel as His spouse—Isa. 54:5; Jer. 2:2; Hosea 2:19.
 2. In the New Testament the believers in Christ are considered virgins—Matt. 25:1; 2 Cor. 11:2.

3. In Ephesians 5:25 we see that Christ loves the church as His counterpart, His wife.
 4. Christ will marry the New Jerusalem as His bride in the millennium—Rev. 19:7.
 5. For eternity the New Jerusalem will be the wife of God—21:2-3, 9.
- B. Whether we are sisters or brothers, we all need to be “females” and live by the only life that is useful to God:¹⁰
1. In order to be “females” we need to depend on the Lord—cf. S.S. 6:13b; 8:5a:
 - a. The tree of life in Genesis 2 signifies dependence, and the tree of knowledge signifies independence; life always makes us dependent, whereas knowledge always makes us independent—v. 9.
 - b. God desires that we choose life instead of knowledge; this means that He wants us to choose dependence rather than independence—vv. 16-17; cf. Deut. 30:19.
 - c. No matter how long we have been with the Lord, we still must depend upon Him for life today; we cannot graduate from eating, drinking, and breathing; with life, there is no graduation—John 6:57; 7:37; 20:22; Rev. 22:1-2.¹¹
 - d. God’s strategy is to put us in a position where we must depend upon Him; this is the kind of life God can use for the fulfillment of His purpose—2 Cor. 1:8-10; 12:9-10; Gen. 32:1-31; cf. 2 Chron. 20:12-27; S.S. 6:13b; 8:5a.
 2. If we all have a healthy fear of independence, there will be no problems in the church life:¹²
 - a. All problems in the church life, in married life, and among the saints come from one source, and that source is independence—cf. Rev. 2:4.
 - b. The reason the church throughout the years has been torn down instead of built up is that the so-called builders have been too independent; they have been males instead of females—Gal. 4:29; Phil. 3:2-3; Col. 2:18-19; Jude 8, 19; 2 Pet. 2:10; 2 Tim. 4:14-15; Titus 1:10-14; 3 John 9-10; Rev. 2:20.¹³
 - c. The crucial point is that it is not a matter of how much we can do, but of how much we depend upon the Lord—John 15:5; Phil. 4:13.¹⁴
- C. It is crucial that we learn of the Lord that only the “female” life is useful to Him:¹⁵
1. Not only do the worldly people live an independent life, but many Christians also live a life that is independent of God; for this reason, the vast majority of Christians have become useless to God.¹⁶
 2. Moses was trained to live a female life—Exo. 2:11-22; 3:1-6, 10-12; 4:10-12:¹⁷
 - a. Moses honored God as the unique initiator; he was called by God to ascend the mountain where God revealed to him what was on His heart and then charged him to build the tabernacle according to the pattern shown him on the mountain—25:40.¹⁸
 - b. If we would perfect others in a proper way and build up the church, we need such a “female” life—1 Cor. 2:1-5; 15:10; 2 Cor. 2:10, 12-14; 4:7; Phil. 3:3; Col. 1:29.¹⁹
 3. Moreover, all the warriors were living a female life of dependence on God—Josh. 6; 10:7-14; 11:1-9; cf. Psa. 18:1-3, 28-50:²⁰
 - a. If you have not learned to be a female, you will not be able to fight for the kingdom of God—Eph. 6:10-18; Rev. 19:7-8, 11, 14; *Hymns* #887, stanza 1.
 - b. God uses only female warriors; this means that if you are living an independent male life, you are useless as far as spiritual warfare is concerned—S.S. 6:10, 13.
- D. May we all see that God can use us only if we are “females” depending on Him at all times and for all things.²¹

Excerpts from the Ministry:

THE LIFE USEFUL TO GOD

The book of Exodus reveals the kind of people God can use in His economy for the fulfillment of His purpose. God's intention as seen in this book is to have a people to build Him a dwelling place on earth. Thus, at the end of Exodus the tabernacle is erected to be God's dwelling place. Furthermore, for the fulfillment of God's purpose, there is also the need for an army to fight for God's interests on earth. The children of Israel came out of Egypt as a collective people, and right away they were formed into an army. From the time of their redemption until the conquest of the good land, they had to subdue the enemies, especially the enemies who had occupied and fully possessed the land promised to them. If the children of Israel were to enjoy the good land and to fulfill God's purpose of building a temple as God's testimony on earth, they had to fight to deliver the land from the usurping hand of the enemy. Therefore, to be useful to God is related to building up His dwelling place and to fighting for His interests on earth.

The life useful to God in these matters is the female life. According to the natural concept, however, it should be the male life that is useful to God. This is because the males are good fighters, whereas the females are regarded as weaker ones.

Not many readers of Exodus 1 and 2 have seen the underlying theme that links these chapters. Chapter one shows that the people of God were under slavery, and chapter two reveals how God prepared one to save His people out of bondage. The underlying theme is that God needs a certain kind of life both to preserve His people and to prepare a savior to deliver them from bondage. Both the preservation of the people and the preparation of the savior were accomplished only through the female life.

In the Bible the concept of a "male" is rich in meaning. It refers, of course, to a man, but it also indicates an independent life. Furthermore, it refers to Christ as the unique male in the universe. All married brothers need to realize that they are simply husbands in shadow and that the real husband is Christ. Because God is the unique husband, Isaiah 54:5 says, "Thy Maker is thine husband." In the Old Testament God regarded His people as His spouse (Hosea 2:19). No matter whether an Israelite was a male or a female, he or she was part of God's corporate wife.

In the Bible the term "husband" indicates headship, and it also indicates an independent life. When we speak of a male in the positive sense, we have in mind a husband who is the head and who has an independent life. Because God is the unique husband in the universe, only He is the head and only He has an independent life. It is blasphemous to say that God needs to depend on anyone or anything. It is also blasphemous to claim that we can be independent of Him.

As females, the married sisters should not usurp the headship, nor should they live in an independent way. Rather, they must live a life of dependence upon their husbands, who are but shadows of the Lord as the real husband. Although the married brothers are husbands in shadow with respect to their wives, in actuality they are females with respect to the Lord. Therefore, they should not usurp the headship of the Lord nor have an independent life. They also should be submissive and live a life of dependence.

ONLY THE REAL "FEMALE" LIFE BEING USEFUL TO GOD

Whether we are sisters or brothers, we all need to be "females" and live by the only life that is useful to God. In order to be "females" we need to depend upon the Lord. The tree of life in Genesis 2 signifies dependence, and the tree of knowledge signifies independence. Life always makes us dependent, whereas knowledge always makes us independent. For example, before

you teach a child something, he depends on you concerning that matter. But as soon as he learns that particular thing, he becomes proud and independent. Life, on the contrary, makes us dependent on God. God desires that we choose life instead of knowledge. This means that He wants us to choose dependence rather than independence.

To live an independent life means to live by the tree of knowledge, but to live a dependent life means to live by the tree of life. Living by the tree of life is actually living by the Lord Himself. The vine in John 15 is an excellent illustration of the dependent life. John 15:5 says, "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing." All the branches of the vine are dependent upon the vine. To abide in the vine is to be dependent upon the vine. Thus, as far as abiding is concerned, there can be no independence.

Not only do the worldly people live an independent life, but many Christians also live a life that is independent of God. For this reason, the vast majority of Christians have become useless to God. Therefore, we must learn that, whether we are males or females, we must live a life in constant dependence on God. No matter how long we have been with the Lord, we still must depend upon Him for life today. For example, we cannot graduate from eating, drinking, and breathing. How foolish for a person to say that because he has been breathing for seventy years he no longer needs to breathe! With life, there is no graduation. God's strategy is to put us in a position where we must depend upon Him. We need to pray, "Lord, apart from You, I can do nothing. I must abide in You and take You as my life. Daily I need to eat the tree of life. Lord, I want to live a 'female' life, a life that always depends on You." This is the kind of life God can use for the fulfillment of His purpose.

At the age of forty, Moses lived an independent "male" life. Acting independently of God, he exercised his natural strength to smite an Egyptian. Moses was truly an independent "male." However, during the forty years Moses was set aside, God taught him that He would not use his male life. It is not an easy matter to train a male to live a female life. Nevertheless, in the second forty years of his life, Moses learned to be a female. During his third forty years, from the age of eighty to the age of one hundred twenty, Moses lived the life of a female. Only in one instance, when he struck the rock the second time, was he independent of God (Num. 20:7-13). Because Moses acted as a male on that occasion, he offended the Lord and thus was denied the privilege of entering into the good land.

Readers of the Bible usually regard Moses as the leader of the children of Israel. Moses, however, did not have this concept about himself; he never assumed a position as the leader. When the children of Israel rebelled against him, he considered it rebellion against God, not against himself. Moses simply went to the Lord and presented the problems to Him. In doing so, Moses honored the Lord as the head, as the unique male. This indicates that Moses was living a female life, a life of dependence on God.

The female life is seen not only in chapters one and two of Exodus, but also throughout the following chapters. We have pointed out that Moses was trained to live a female life. Moreover, all the warriors were living a female life of dependence on God. If you have not learned to be a female, you will not be able to fight for the kingdom of God. God uses only female warriors. This means that if you are living an independent male life, you are useless as far as spiritual warfare is concerned.

I wish to emphasize the point that to be a male is to be independent of God. For example, a husband may deal with his wife in a way that is independent of God, and a wife may deal with her husband in the same manner. This means that both the husband and wife may be "males" in the negative sense. But we should not be such "males," those who are independent of God. We should be "females," those who depend upon God and do nothing apart from Him. In all that we

say or do we should depend on Him. If this is our situation, then we are true “females” living a dependent life.

The history of the church reveals that whenever there is such a “female” life, God is able to do something for His purpose. Take Martin Luther as an example. He was a man who learned to depend on God. No doubt, Luther was born with a strong will. Nevertheless, he learned to depend on the Lord. He did not live and act as a strong “male,” but as a dependent “female.”

The Apostle Paul also was such a “female.” His writings bear witness to this fact. As a “female,” Paul did not do anything in a way that was independent of the Lord. His work, his behavior, and his actions issued from a life of dependence on God.

...

We all need to live such a dependent life in the local churches today. None of us should behave as “males.” The problems among Christians and in the churches are due to brothers or sisters living an independent “male” life. Whenever there are brothers or sisters in a local church living like “males,” there will be trouble. How we must learn not to live independently of God! If we learn this lesson, we shall realize that we must not do certain things; this is not because these things are wrong, but because in doing them we would be independent of God. If we all have a healthy fear of independence, there will be no problems in the church life. Furthermore, there will be no problems among married couples. All problems in the church life, in married life, and among the saints come from one source, and that source is independence. We need to be like the midwives in Exodus; we need to pray, “Lord, I don’t want to be a strong ‘man,’ full of opinions and always insisting on my way. Lord, I want to be like the midwives in Exodus 1 and like the females in Exodus 2.”

As we shall see, when Moses confronted Pharaoh, Moses was not a “male.” In his dealings with Pharaoh, he was a “female” depending on God. Moses made no decisions nor did he make any proposals. Everything he did was initiated by God. Moses honored God as the unique initiator.

God’s initiating work is seen very clearly in the building of the tabernacle. Moses did not wake up one morning with an idea to build a tabernacle for God. On the contrary, he was called by God to ascend the mountain where God revealed to him what was on His heart and then charged him to build the tabernacle according to the pattern shown him on the mountain (25:40). God gave Moses no room to make independent decisions. Moses had to depend on God for every detail. This is the life God can use for His purpose.

In these days we have been speaking much about the perfecting of the saints for the building up of the Body of Christ. If we would be used to perfect others, we ourselves must have a dependent life. The only life the Lord desires to see perfected is the dependent life. If we live and work independently of God, the result of our work will be that other lives will be perfected to be independent. Only a dependent life can produce a dependent life. Only a life that depends on God for all things can perfect others to be “females.” Suppose a certain person is very strong in himself, confident of his abilities, proposals, and decisions. Such a one can produce only independent lives, capable persons who are independent of God. The result of such work will not be the New Jerusalem—it will be Babylon the Great, a city independent of God and rebellious against Him. The church, however, is a female. As a female, she does not have the headship, nor does she have an independent life. Her head is Christ, and her life is a dependent life. This should be the situation in the church today. If we would perfect others in a proper way and build up the church, we need such a “female” life.

The reason the church throughout the years has been torn down instead of built up is that the so-called builders have been too independent. They have been males instead of females. Nevertheless, we thank the Lord that there have been a small number who were willing to live a “female” life in dependence on the Lord.

The crucial point is that it is not a matter of how much we can do, but of how much we depend upon the Lord. We have pointed out that in John 15:5 the Lord Jesus says that apart from Him we can do nothing. Although we are familiar with this word, in our daily living we frequently forget it or set it aside. The Apostle Paul, however, was one who practiced it. In 1 Corinthians 2:3 he said, "And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling." Paul was fearful that he might do something in himself independently of the Lord. How we need such a fear today! May the Lord be merciful to us and grant us this proper kind of fear. If we have it, we shall be afraid to say or do anything in ourselves, anything that is independent of God.

Anything we do independently of the Lord is rebellion. Even our preaching of the gospel or our helping of the saints may be a form of rebellion. We may do many things to help the churches; yet all that we do may be rebellion because it is done independently of the Lord.

I am thankful for the light the Lord has shown us concerning the female life in the book of Exodus. The only life useful to Him is the female life. We all must learn that God never uses the male life. The females in chapter one were used to preserve the children of Israel, and the females in chapter two were used to prepare the vessel the Lord had raised up. Eventually, even Moses himself was trained to be a "female"; he became like the midwives in chapter one and like the different females in chapter two. Because he was a "female" for the fulfillment of God's purpose, he could be used by God. But even Moses, when he was provoked by the children of Israel in the wilderness, once acted like a male and in so doing lost God's blessing. In the Lord's economy and in His move today in His recovery, we all must be watchful with fear and trembling not to act independently of God. May we all see that God can use us only if we are "females" depending on Him at all times and for all things. It is crucial that we learn of the Lord that only the "female" life is useful to Him. (*Life-study of Exodus*, msg. 4, pp. 37-38, 41-44, 45-48)

Study Questions:

1. What does it mean to be useful to God for His purpose according to the book of Exodus?
2. What does it mean to be a “female” spiritually?
3. What is the one source of all the problems in married life, the church life, and among the saints, and what is the solution to this problem?

References and Further Reading:

1. *Life-study of Exodus*, message 4.

-
- ¹ Life-study of Exodus, ch. 4, pp. 37-38.
 - ² Life-study of Exodus, ch. 4, pp. 38-39.
 - ³ Life-study of Exodus, ch. 4, p. 40.
 - ⁴ Life-study of Exodus, ch. 4, p. 40.
 - ⁵ Life-study of Exodus, ch. 4, p. 40.
 - ⁶ Life-study of Exodus, ch. 4, p. 41.
 - ⁷ Life-study of Exodus, ch. 4, p. 41.
 - ⁸ Life-study of Exodus, ch. 4, p. 41.
 - ⁹ Life-study of Exodus, ch. 4, pp. 44-45.
 - ¹⁰ Life-study of Exodus, ch. 4, p. 41.
 - ¹¹ Life-study of Exodus, ch. 4, p. 42.
 - ¹² Life-study of Exodus, ch. 4, p. 45.
 - ¹³ Life-study of Exodus, ch. 4, p. 46.
 - ¹⁴ Life-study of Exodus, ch. 4, p. 47.
 - ¹⁵ Life-study of Exodus, ch. 4, p. 48.
 - ¹⁶ Life-study of Exodus, ch. 4, p. 42.
 - ¹⁷ Life-study of Exodus, ch. 4, p. 43.
 - ¹⁸ Life-study of Exodus, ch. 4, p. 46.
 - ¹⁹ Life-study of Exodus, ch. 4, p. 46.
 - ²⁰ Life-study of Exodus, ch. 4, p. 43.
 - ²¹ Life-study of Exodus, ch. 4, pp. 47-48.