

# The Godly Woman

*"A wife of noble character who can find?..."*

*"Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." 1 Samuel 16:7*

## Becoming Esther

by Charo & Paul Washer

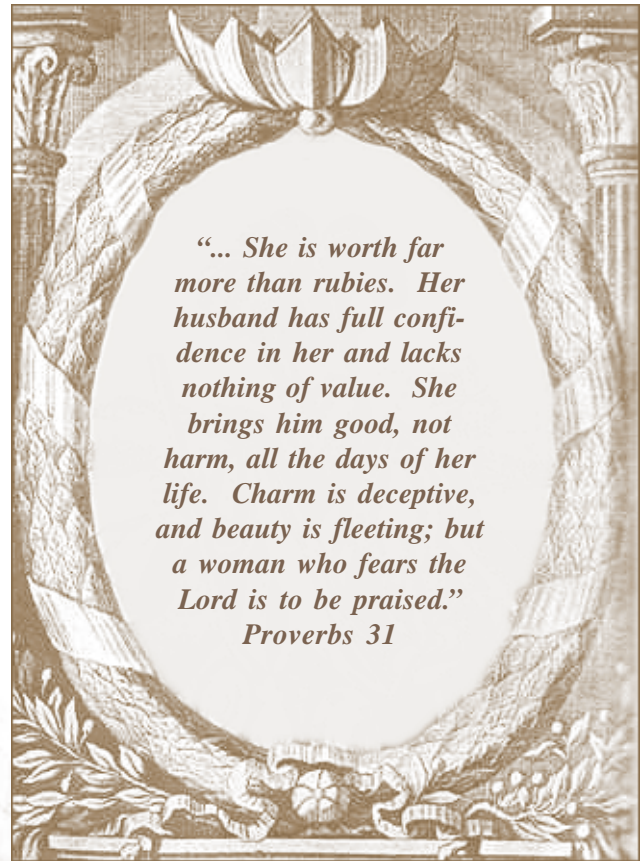
*"Before a girl's turn came to go in to King Xerxes, she had to complete twelve months of beauty treatments prescribed for the women, six months in oil of myrrh and six with perfumes and cosmetics. And this is how she would go to the king..."*

*Esther 2:12-13*

I have always been amazed at the kind of preparation that the future queen Esther had to go through before she was able to come before King Xerxes. Would any of us want to go through twelve months of beauty treatments before meeting the man of our dreams? Probably not, but then again, imagine the possibilities. One year set aside for one sole purpose - becoming all you can be for the one you love the most. Precious time to cultivate beauty, to make an investment in education and etiquette, to strengthen virtue, and build character.

The preparation of Esther reminds me of that precious time between the awakening of desire in a young woman's heart to share her life with a mate and the moment she walks down the aisle. For many, this time of preparation is seen as nothing more than a time of waiting. Single women often see themselves as sitting on the shelf while life passes them by, or as sitting on the bench while others play the game. They do not realize that they are wasting the most important time of their lives, they are robbing themselves of great joy and reward, they are robbing their future husbands of a more virtuous woman, and they are robbing God of a servant through whom He desires to do great things.

As Esther had to be prepared before she could be queen of an entire realm, so the woman must be prepared before she can embark on one of the most important and difficult callings in life - marriage and motherhood. Esther had to learn the ways of the kingdom to which she belonged, she had to learn the manners of court life, the intellectual, emotional and spiritual challenges of high position. To put it simply, Esther had to be transformed from a young lady into a queen before she could wear the title and fulfill the role. In the same way, the single Christian woman must learn the ways of the Kingdom of Heaven before she ever unites with the one that God is preparing for her. She must be prepared intellectually, emotionally and spiritually, not by court attendants in some pagan temple, but by God Himself, His Word, and by



other godly women who have been prepared before her.

Singleness is not a waste of time or a sitting on the sidelines, but a time that God has set aside especially for the woman, to make her into what He wants her to be, and to use her in ways that just might be impossible after marriage. Singleness is a time in which a woman is to cultivate the virtues that pertain to being a woman of God, so that she can offer to her future husband and the world something more than just a pretty face.

Remember in your singleness that you are not the only one single, but your future husband is passing through the same stage as you. Would it not be a terrible thing to finally meet the man who is to become your husband only to find out that he has used his singleness to serve God and to prepare himself to be a better husband for you. And yet you did not use the freedom of your singleness to serve the Lord, nor did you take advantage of the training that God offered you? Would it not also be a terrible thing to realize that your husband spent his days as a single man praying daily for your needs and the work of God in your life, while you neither prayed for him, nor responded to the grace of God that was given you as a result of his prayers.

It is a wonderful thing when God blesses a woman with a

husband. That special someone who is “just perfect” for her in that he has been carefully and thoughtfully designed by God to be united as one with her. It is such a joy for the woman to look back and remember how God enabled her to wait on Him and that He was faithful to bless. It is still an even greater joy for her to know that her time as a single woman was also a time of seeking God and being faithful to Him and His purpose. That she did not for one moment wish to flee that state, but desired only to trust in God and wait upon His gracious sovereignty.

By no means is it a tragedy to be a single Christian woman, but the way of the world has once again infiltrated Christianity with the false idea that it is. One of the greatest lies is that if you do not “have someone” or are not “actively looking”, there is something wrong with you. Another lie is that the single woman should be dating around as though looking for a husband were the same as shopping in a mall. Still another even stronger lie is that the single woman should be giving her affections away indiscriminately so that she may be more “experienced” and know what to do when she finally finds the man of her choice. My dear Christian, it is a lie and an affront to God to say that experience is the best teacher, when in fact it is God who is the best teacher, and though the world’s motto is “live and learn,” the Bible’s advice is “learn and live.” You do not need to be experienced, you only need to be knowledgeable of what God has said and obedient to it. You should not be looking for the man of your choice, but should be waiting on the man of God’s choice. And when he comes, it will not be past experiences that will make your marriage work, but past chastity, purity, and godliness. We should hide our faces from the ways and experiences of this wicked world and look upon only those things that God has placed in the path He has prepared for us.

God knows exactly what you need and He even knows the desires of your heart better than you do. God loves surprises. He does not want you to be looking for your husband, He wants to bring him to you, and probably at a time you least expect it. If you disobey this advice, as so many other women before you, and take it upon yourself to look for a mate, you may find someone, but chances are that someone you find will not be the right one.

As women, our nature desires the company and companionship of a man. This is from God and therefore good. But at the same time, we are wrong to think that death will be the result if this need is not fulfilled. Needing another as a companion is not like needing to take your next breath of air. That is, you can survive without companionship, at least until God has done His perfect work in you. Remember the Scripture, “God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear.” (1 Corinthians 10:13)

I have found that there are two primary reasons why someone “desperately” needs someone else. First of all, it is because they do not know God as they should. Is God not the God of all comfort? Is not Christ the exalted Lord who

fills all things everywhere? Then why do we complain about how empty and alone we feel? Could it be that God extends our time of singleness so that we might find our life in Him and learn to be complete in Him? If we seek to be married because we feel that a husband will fill our lives or will in some way make us complete, we will be sorely disappointed in our marriage. No man, no matter how Christ-like could ever take the place of God in our lives, to think such a thing is pure idolatry. If we are not filled by God now and complete in Christ in the present, then not even a marriage made in heaven will be able to change our emptiness.

The second reason for desperately needing someone in our lives is plain selfishness. When we need someone in order to feel loved, or when we need someone so that our feelings of loneliness might dissipate, then we are wanting marriage for all the wrong reasons. Marriage should not be looked upon as an opportunity to have our needs met, but as an opportunity to meet the needs of another. If we have not learned to take our own needs to God, then we will probably overwhelm our husbands with our own needs and be unaware of his. I have known Christian women who spent their days consumed with their own needs and constantly lamenting about why God had not brought someone into their life. But why should God entrust a godly man to a woman that is absorbed in herself and her own needs, and does not use the freedom of her singleness to serve God and prepare herself for His purposes? Such a woman would have little to offer a godly husband!

My dear friend, being single, like being married should be considered a very special and enjoyable time in the providence of God. It should not be considered a mere circumstance or a curse from which one should try desperately to flee. Being single is a time to learn of God and of ourselves, a time to discover who we are in Christ, and to grow in Christlikeness. It is a time to be zealous for good works and involved in ministry to others. Being single has a magic of its own that should be enjoyed in its time because once passed it may not return. There is nothing quite so sad as a woman now married who regrets what she could have been and done with her life while single. All was lost for the sake of hurrying to be married without consideration for the plan or work of God.

Every season in life has a beauty and wonder of its own. My prayer for all single Christian women is that they might enjoy their time in spite of the lies of the world. That they might be demanding and not settle for anything less than the perfect will of God. That they might wait patiently on God who is the giver of every good and perfect gift. That they might be like Esther, using whatever time God deems necessary to make them beautiful on the inside and out.

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