



JANUARY 2013
FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

ON HIS MIND

GOD'S RELIABLE CARE FOR WIDOWS

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BEGINNING THOUGHTS...

I've often told my husband that I want to die before he does. It's not that I'm rushing things, but I just cannot see myself as a widow. After all, widows are sad and lonely. Widows are defenseless and old. Widows wear black and stay home alone. These depressing statements may be true for some women who have lost their mate. On the other hand, when a Christian wife loses her husband, she will grieve—but not as those who have no hope. The Christian's hope is an anchor of the soul. It gives stability to life.

Christian widows can stay active in their churches and within their church families. They can continue to contribute to society. This may not be easy at first; the loss of a spouse is monumental. But strength and healing can come as a widow surrenders her heartache to God. He can multiply all we are willing to give to Him. He expects us to continue, actively serving Him, no matter our situation in life. We see examples of this throughout the Scriptures.

The study this month highlights some widows who faced dire circumstances. Did any of them give up? We'll find that they did not. Instead, each received miraculous blessings that enabled them to look past the sufferings and circumstances. Sometimes it's through the suffering that we can mature and grow. Here the myth about widows being only old is shattered. There are very young widows in this world who are hurting and wonder why God is allowing such things to be in their lives. They may think they have no control over the situation they are in and that it will never change. It's in the most difficult times, that we can begin to see through God's eyes and allow His hand to lead us in the way we should go. Suffering does have purpose. Let's ask the widows in our study to tell us about their lives.



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Widows and Deuteronomy

POINTER OF TRUTH: *"When thou cuttest down thine harvest in thy field, and hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow: that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hands" (Deuteronomy 24:19).*

RULE OF THUMB: God's laws protect widows to prevent them from becoming victims in society.

- 🔴 Write the Pointer of Truth on a 3x5 card for review or in a journal.
- 🔴 Go over all the questions and answers on p. 25, *Treasure*.
- 🔴 Do you know any widows personally? Are there widows in your church (*1 Timothy 5:3-8*)?
- 🔴 Paul wrote the passage in 1 Timothy 5 for the church to properly recognize its needy widows. What were the qualifications listed? (*Must be all alone—(5:5); At least 60 years of age—(5:9); Exemplary life of faith—(5:5); Good deeds—(5:10); Responsible child care—(5:10).*)
- 🔴 Is someone in your church in charge of widow care? Who was appointed in Acts to do this job? (*Deacons—Acts 6:1,3*)
- 🔴 God gives instructions for widows. (*They should be: Visited in affliction—James 1:27; Relieved by the church—Acts 6:1; Allowed to share in our blessings—Deuteronomy 14:29; Honored—1 Timothy 5:3.*)
- 🔴 God will hear the cry of the widow. How do we know? (*Exodus 22:22-23; Jeremiah 49:11*)
- 🔴 Did Israel obey God in this? (*No—Isaiah 1:17,23. This was only one of the many ways God was displeased with Israel at this time. Read Isaiah 1:4*)
- 🔴 Is there any reason for widows to feel neglected if they love God and attend church? Do you know of widows who are having a hard time fitting in to past relationships?
- 🔴 Do single or divorced women fit in the church's care of widows (*James 1:27*)?
- 🔴 How can we help these women? (*1) Small repairs around their place, (2) Share holidays with them, (3) Baby sitting, (4) Bible studies, (5) Pass good clothes on to them, (6) Outings such as shopping, movies, or eating.*)
- 🔴 It's normal to grieve and mourn after losing a loved one. Who gives comfort at these times? (*Jesus—Luke 7:13; John 14:18; 16:33 and God—2 Corinthians 1:3.*)

GENTLE TOUCH: Pray that God will help you to fear Him, walk in His ways, to love Him, to serve Him, and to keep His commandments.



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The Widow, Her Sons and the Oil

POINTER OF TRUTH: *"For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth" (2 Corinthians 10:17).*

RULE OF THUMB: God will provide for our necessities, leaving us no need for worry or fear.

- 🔴 Write the Pointer of Truth on a 3x5 card or in your journal.
- 🔴 Go over the questions and answers on p. 27, *Treasure*.
- 🔴 Olive oil was very important in the culture of this day and used for numerous things. Name some. (*Food; Medicine; Cosmetics; Fuel; Offerings; Barter/Trading*.)
- 🔴 Why did Elisha ask the widow to gather jars from her neighbors? (1) *Faith—neighbors knew the situation. It took faith to do as Elisha had asked.* (2) *To remind the community that they should have helped her—Deuteronomy 14:28-29.*)
- 🔴 How do you think the widow felt going to these folks whom she had talked, prayed, and had fellowship with? How would you have felt?
- 🔴 Does it take courage sometimes to make known our prayer requests? Are we afraid God might not answer? What does God tell us to do? (*Hebrews 4:16, 13:6*)
- 🔴 What effect do you think this miracle had on the widow's two sons? What did they get to experience first hand? (*A demonstration of the love, care, and power of God.*)
- 🔴 How is this an example for us? (1) *Share with your children what God does in your life,* (2) *Remember that you are your children's major source of information about God,* (3) *Let them know that God is real for you, and for them,* (4) *We need to know how to lead them to God at an early age.*)
- 🔴 Did receiving the oil end all of the widow's problems? (*Probably not. But it did pay for her debts and keep her sons from slavery. God met her need.*)
- 🔴 Do you feel that God owes you something? God expects us to pay our debts as well (*Romans 13:8*).
- 🔴 Is there a problem you don't understand, can't find a reason for, you're bitter about, or that makes it hard for you to believe God love you?
- 🔴 Are you willingly to believe that God will ultimately use it for your good? (*Romans 8:28*)

GENTLE TOUCH: Pray and ask God to help you trust and obey Him with every aspect of your life.



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The Widow of Zarephath

POINTER OF TRUTH: *"And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work" (2 Corinthians 32:26).*

RULE OF THUMB: Don't quit giving. As we offer our resources to the Lord, He brings others alongside to help us.

- 🔴 Memorize the Pointer of Truth this week. Write it down for review.
- 🔴 Go over all the questions and answers on p. 29, *Treasure*.
- 🔴 Did Elijah know this widow? (*The Bible doesn't tell us, but she trusted him enough to provide a place for him to stay.*)
- 🔴 Where is Zarepath (or Sarepta)? (*A town in Phoenicia, a chief center for the glass works of Phoenicia—1 Kings 17:9; Luke 4:26*)
- 🔴 Why was this widow so hospitable when she knew she really had only enough for herself and her son? (*(1) She knew he was a man of God, (2) She probably thought, "Why not, we're going to die anyway?", (3) It was her personality or way of doing things—1 Kings 17:12. Do you know anyone "who would give you her last dime" to help you?*)
- 🔴 What did Elijah tell her? (*Fear not—1 Kings 17:13-14.*) What kind of faith did this woman possess? (*A great faith—Hebrews 11:6, 34-35.*)
- 🔴 What character in the New Testament is Elijah most associated with? (*John the Baptist—2 Kings 1:8; Matthew 3:4.*) How did he end up in Zarephath? (*The Lord sent him there—1 Kings 17:8-9.*)
- 🔴 Even after feeding the widow and her son for two years, the strain on the famine was too great for the son and he died. Describe what Elijah did. (*1 Kings 17:17-22*) How did the widow react? (*At first, upset and angry with Elijah—1 Kings 17:18; Then, thankful; she knew that Elijah spoke the truth—1 Kings 17:23-24.*)
- 🔴 What do you think happened to the widow and her son after Elijah left? What happened to Elijah? *Visited a king and some false prophets—1 Kings 18:17-19; Prayed and a divine fire descended—1 Kings 18:36-38; Prayed for rain—1 Kings 18:42-45; Was depressed and wants to die—1 Kings 19:4; Found a successor—1 Kings 19:19-21; Called down fire from Heaven—2 Kings 1:12; Smote the Jordan river so he and Elisha could walk on dry ground—2 Kings 2:7-8; (8) Took a chariot ride—2 Kings 2:11.*
- 🔴 Was this the last we hear of Elijah? (*No, he appeared with Moses and talked with Christ—Matthew 17:3; Elias, same as Elijah—James 5:17.*)
- 🔴 Do you believe that the widow and Elijah had quite a reunion in Heaven?

GENTLE TOUCH: Ponder these questions (p. 29) and dismiss in prayer.



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Widow Ruth and Widow Naomi

POINTER OF TRUTH: *"For the Lord hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God. . . . I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer" (Isaiah 54:6, 8).*

RULE OF THUMB: Don't become bitter. God cares and has a plan for each and every life.

- 🔴 Write the Pointer of Truth verse in your journal.
- 🔴 Go over the questions and answers on p. 31, *Treasure*.
- 🔴 Why is Ruth such a notable woman? (1) *She possessed a spotless name—Ruth 3:11; (2) She exemplified obedience—3:5; (3) She was industrious—Ruth 2:6, 7, 23; (4) She showed constancy in love—Ruth 1:16.)*
- 🔴 Do you believe a good name is important? (*Proverbs 22:1; Acts 6:3, 22:12; 2 Corinthians 8:18; 3 John 12.*) Why then is obedience needed? (*John 14:23; Matthew 7:21; 1 Samuel 15:22; Revelation 22:14*)
- 🔴 How should industry/hard work figure in your life? (*Proverbs 6:6; 13:11; 20:13; Romans 12:11; Ephesians 4:28.*) Do you have constancy of love in your relationships? (*John 15:9; Romans 12:9; Matthew 22:39; Titus 2:4*)
- 🔴 Do you think Ruth was a believer when she started this journey with Naomi?
- 🔴 Why was Naomi such a wonderful mother-in-law? (*She was kind, giving, thinking of others' needs before her own, and she loved and trusted God.*)
- 🔴 What emotions and experiences had Naomi and Ruth shared together? (*Grief, loneliness, hunger, poverty and anxiety.*)
- 🔴 What did Naomi's name mean? (*Pleasure or pleasant*) In Ruth 1:20, what did she asked to be called? Why? (*Mara. Because God had dwelt bitterly with her.*)
- 🔴 How can we cope during great hardships? (*As Naomi, we can keep the faith and not give up on God.*)
- 🔴 What did Naomi remember? (*Leviticus 19:9-10; God's provisional law for the destitute and bankrupt.*)
- 🔴 Does this story of Ruth and Naomi end well? (*Yes—Ruth 4:22.*) Who are these people? (*Obed is Ruth's son, Naomi's grandson; Jesse is Ruth's grandson, Naomi's great grandson; and David is Ruth's great grandson, Naomi's great, great grandson. Matthew 1:1; 5, 6; 16; 18.*)
- 🔴 Ruth may have been a poor widow, but she was blessed to be part of the lineage of a king. What is the name of this King? (*Jesus Christ—Luke 1:26-32*)

GENTLE TOUCH: Close in prayer by thanking God for your family. Pray for blessings and wisdom on their lives.

WRAPPING UP...

Statistics show that women live longer than men. This is not good news for me; I really don't want to think about living longer than my husband. However, if that should happen, then I pray I will not waste my time God has given me. I want to be active instead of passive in the work of the Kingdom.

Do you want to be an influence where you are? Then love Him, obey Him and serve Him. Whether you are single, married or widowed, make your life count for Him. This is a new year; the future lies before you. Let the handprints of God on your life also serve as a shining example to others as they see you doing the things He would have you do.