

May 2022
Theme: When God Intervenes
“Seller to Support”

Summary: Writer Carolyn Riddick introduces “Seller to Supporter” by reminiscing about her grandmother’s sacrificial giving and today’s methods of giving to the cause of Christ. These comparisons briefly illustrate the “Seller to Supporter” program, which explores how two Bible women, Dorcas and Lydia, “who served Jesus Christ in **different** ways—but in essence, had the **same heart**—to spread the Gospel of Christ and to minister to those around them!”

Scriptures: Ephesians 2:10; Acts 9:36-42; James 1:26-27; Acts 16:12-15, 40

Songs: “And He Cares About You” *Rejoice*, page 574; “Make Me A Blessing” *Rejoice*, page 509. “The Ninety and Nine” by Doug Little on CD *At Jesus’ Feet*.

Suggestions and Helps

Resources: Poster and invitation available at www.wnac.org/treasure/programhelps.

Publicity: For an exhibit around the poster, display some of a seamstress’s treasures of beautiful fabric stacked and swirled around sewing tools. Don’t forget to represent Lydia’s river spread with purple cloth and a clear blue water feature.

Ice breaker: Make prayer and praise bracelets. For each woman/girl attending, have approximately ten strips of one-inch-wide fabric cut into 10” lengths. As each person gives a prayer or praise item, first tie a folded strip of fabric around the wrist, and secondly, add a folded strip of material as a fringe on the bracelet. Keep circling the group until each one has a fringe bracelet to remind her of prayer and praise.

Presentation: Pray to know the best way to approach your group in presenting this study. A compare and contrast presentation can advance the study. These historical events from Scripture have several features in common, mainly two industrious women and fabric. Dorcas represents women who love to sew. Women who love to sew also love fabric, yards and yards of it. Lydia was a woman who sold fabric, large quantities of beautiful purple material. In contrast, Dorcas sewed for widows and other needy individuals. Lydia sold expensive fabric to the wealthy and royals in the Roman culture.

Yet, the stories are so much more than the physical necessity of clothing. Dorcas’ story is one of life and death. Peter is summoned, and he is the conduit for God miraculously bringing Dorcas

back to life with the gentle command, “Tabitha, arise.” Lydia’s story is one of spiritual life and spiritual death. Paul had a vision of a man pleading for Paul and his entourage to come to Macedonia. Imagine when He arrives, the Sabbath service congregation is all women. But Lydia received new life and was baptized, she and her household. God seeks all to come to Him. How thankful the messengers were that this convert was willing to come to Jesus and use her home for their headquarters and meeting of the church.

Testimony: Assign at least one woman to share a testimony regarding her experiences in using work skills to help those in need. Then ask one woman to testify to the blessing she received when someone surprised her with their time, talent, and treasure.

Breakout Groups: Breakout groups can discuss the questions below:

1. Are you looking to be blessed and be a blessing to others in your life?
2. What gifts of the Spirit did you receive since becoming a Christian? Are you using your gift to encourage and help others?
3. Have you opened your home to protect the hurt and helpless? How are you using your resources and abilities?
4. Are you open to becoming closer to God? How can we keep life's everyday ups and downs from making our service to God second place?

Further discussion and summaries brought back to the entire group can include examples of reaching out to others, what possessions were required, and the outcome.

Study

Using a Bible dictionary and Bible maps, research Thyatira and Joppa, the cities of Lydia and Dorcas. Some details of the culture around these two ladies may surprise you.

Missions

How to make your work your mission field? If you work for someone other than yourself, this can be incredibly complicated. How can you simultaneously witness and honor your commitment to give a full day’s work for a full day’s pay? One way is to make up any time you spend speaking for the Lord by working that time without recording it as overtime for pay. Do you have a church planter whose wife works outside the home in your area? Contact her and ask how you can help her with prayer, a new work outfit, a week-day lunch, etc.

Service

Emulate Dorcas and sew needed items to bless others. Extended Care homes still need lap

blankets. Get your women's group together to cut and tie velour blankets. Granny-square crocheted blankets are also welcome. The design and colors enrich residents. If some women are not crafty, perhaps they would donate money for fabric and yarn or search out bargains in stores and online. Craft time can draw your group together and bless others with the results.

Prayer

Pray for all those following the footsteps of Jesus through the business world. Pray for their wisdom, witness, and awareness of temptations and traps hiding from them. Pray for those in the family who support them and whom they support. Remember, God's witnesses in another culture are scrutinized even more than those in their home culture.

Refreshments

This study is filled with fabric. Use swirls of pastel fabric to decorate your refreshment table. You can even drape the material as a canopy over the table. Add coordinating dessert plates and utensils for a pleasing tableau. Bring pastel desserts, such as Jell-O, and cake or cookies decorated with pastel-tinted icing or whipped topping. Try this colorful punch:

Orange Pineapple Punch

1 can (48 ounces) pineapple juice, chilled
1 can (14 ounces) Eagle Brand Sweetened Condensed Milk
1 can (6 ounces) frozen orange juice concentrate, thawed
2 bottles (32 ounces each) ginger ale, chilled – add to combined ingredients right before serving.
Orange sherbet, orange slices, and mint leaves decorate the treat.

Extra:

“Empowered For Sharing”

by Susan Burgess

The altar was ready for a sacrifice. The coals were lit and glowing. This is the Holy of Holies that Isaiah saw where the Shekinah Glory of God dwelled in the midst of the cherubim at the mercy seat upon the Ark of the Covenant.

Where once a year, the high priest “shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from the altar before the Lord, with his hands full of sweet incense beaten fine, and bring it inside the veil (separating the Holy of Holies from the worshippers). And he shall put the incense on the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of incense may cover the mercy seat that is on the Testimony, lest he die” (Leviticus 16:12-13).

Now translate this to the New Covenant. Revelations 8:3-4, “Another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer, and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayer of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel’s hand.” The prayers of the saints ascend before God, and our prayers cover the mercy seat upon the ark of the new covenant that we die not in our sins and that our loved ones are saved too!

So, our iniquity is taken away, and our sin purged through the shed blood of the founder of the new covenant. In our forgiven sinfulness, the natural result of this restoration is sanctification for service. Amid the awe and the majesty, the burning coals, and the smoking incense—the still small voice speaks.

**The power and the glory grab our attention.
The still, small voice seeks our allegiance.**

Isaiah 6:8, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for me?” “Here am I! Send me.”

What did Isaiah see that brought his response of willingness to be sent? Look at John 12:36-41, “While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.” These things Jesus spoke, and departed, and was hidden from them. But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him, (38) that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke, ‘Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?’ Therefore they could not believe because Isaiah said again: ‘He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, Lest they should see with their eyes. Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn So that I should heal them.’ (41) **These things Isaiah said when he saw His glory and spoke of Him.”**

Isaiah saw **Jesus in the Temple—High and lifted up the Shekinah Glory of God!**

John, the writer of these words, was a young Jewish man. He either spoke the truth or uttered the ultimate blasphemy. John 1:14, “We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”

Now...picture the Shekinah Glory of God on the cross being crucified. It can’t be pictured, can it? Nails could pierce the list of our sins that were hammered to the cross along with Jesus’ hands and feet, but the Glory can’t rest on that cross. Look with heaven’s eyes on the cross. Jehovah God sees that mighty Glory mingled with our sins and the innocent blood of Jesus running down, and all the incense in the universe cannot cover the sight. God hides His face, and the Son cries, “My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me.”

And when the Son's human body dies, the Glory explodes. The temple veil surrounding the Holy of Holies splits from top to bottom. The Glory escapes its earthly bonds. And the veil, which as Hebrews 10:19 tells us, is the physical flesh of Jesus, that Tabernacle veil which separated God from man is **just lying there empty!**

Meanwhile, the God who created the world and now redeemed it with His blood is free to live in His people. The soul has been bought and paid for, but what of the body? We're still trapped in the physical. The power of the resurrection will be required to purchase victory over the grave.

Philippians 3:10: "That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death."

Humans have to know to see the proof. We have barely scratched the surface. Perhaps that is because we have looked for the sparkler and ignored the fellowship of the suffering and conformity to his death.

Romans 1:4, "and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." The resurrection declared the Son's position, holiness, and power. It was the proof humanity needs. The red stamp "Paid In Full" on the document of our sins hung on the cross.

The wages of sin are death, and someone had to pay and collect those wages. Without the resurrection, we would still be lying there empty and powerless. Now we are filled with the glory of the Son and ignited for witnessing by His resurrection power.

Matthew 28: 18-20:

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, '**All** power has been given to me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and make disciples of **all** nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe **all** things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you **always**, even to the end of the world' Amen.

We have access to our share of the All-Powerful's power. Let us use that power for witnessing in all nations and teaching all His commands while we trust Him in all ways. The familiar Acts 1:8 gives us a clue to the conduit of that power—the Holy Spirit.

Can we be as bold as the early Apostles who turned the world upside down and gave their lives for the cause? What turned the band of fearful, hiding disciples into the bold witnesses who saw thousands believe in Christ at one sermon?

It is as simple as a parent's love, something we can all understand. In Alabama, a house fire woke a sleeping family. The mother and father escaped, but the two small children were still inside. The father ran back into the flames, grabbed the children, and ran down the hall to

the back door. He almost made it. His arms were still clutched at the funeral as if he still held the two children: a parent's love that even a horrific death cannot erase.

Now picture Jesus on the cross. His arms extended to embrace the whole world of dying children. See Him clutching them in his nail scared grasp as He snatches them from the burning fires of hell. See Him taken down from the cross. His arms don't flap docilely. See Him wrapped in linens and laid in a tomb. His hands aren't clasping a lily on His chest.

John and Peter, His disciples, could boldly preach what no one had ever preached before because when they ran to the garden tomb and looked in, they didn't see a roll of grave wrappings in the tomb. They saw grave wrappings still shaped in the form of One saving us from our doom, still shaped in the form of a cross. But Hallelujah! They saw the grave wrappings JUST LYING THERE EMPTY!