

GOD PORTRAYS WOMEN

by

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CHAPTER SIXTEEN

MRS. JOB

“THE GREATEST OF ALL the men of the east” chose this woman to be his life companion. When he accepted the sacred bonds of matrimony it was with a sincere heart. From chapter 31 we learn that he made a covenant with his eyes that he would not look for admiration from other women, young or old, but remain true and content with his wife. It was in the days when polygamy was commonly practiced. He called God who **“saw all his ways and counted all his steps”** to witness to his loyalty and fidelity to Mrs. Job. She must have been proud to have enjoyed the love of so good a man; which is a very great mercy to any woman.

In these days of enlightened Christianity it is a matter of grave concern to the men in law courts that men and women enter the marriage relationship with so little sense of its responsibilities. They deplore the heartlessness with which homes are wrecked, hearts crushed and children deprived of proper parental love and care. Shame on any Christian who applies to the divorce courts to be released from his obligations for selfish reasons!

A godly home was established by Mr. and Mrs. Job. There were the early morning prayers and sacrifices. Seven boys and three girls were born to this saintly couple. As they grew up it was the family custom to celebrate each birthday. They had their fun together and the boys were always glad of their sisters' company. Even after they were married and had homes of their own they continued these gatherings on their respective birthdays.

On these occasions Job had special prayers and sacrifices for his boys and girls. He did not delude himself that his family was perfect and incapable of doing any wrong. He felt that during their merriment they might have been unmindful of the Lord, or behaved in an unseemly manner for God-fearing people. Thus did Job continually. Do you pray for your children when they go to parties even with their own people?

Mrs. Job enjoyed the comforts of a wealthy home. And we learn from little expressions told here and there throughout the whole book these pictures of their home life. It was the house of the open door. They entertained royalty, for Job's three friends were kings in their respective countries. The poor came to their home and counted Job as their father. The lame and blind or those in trouble never lacked for a friend or support when Job knew their need. A passing stranger was never allowed to lodge in the street. Their doors were always opened to the travelers.

We know by experience that where there is such open-handed hospitality the burden of the responsibility must have fallen on Mrs. Job. Hospitality of that type would be impossible without the hearty co-operation of his wife. We have blessed encouragement from the Lord to practice hospitality. **“For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints and do minister”** (Hebrews 6:10).

There was an atmosphere of pleasantness in the home. Everyone went away as refreshed as after a lovely shower. If they were worried over trifles, Job laughed them off and his smile of encouragement sent them away happier. The home was a regal one, “he sat as a king with his army,” yet here mourners would come and be comforted and sent away with fresh courage to meet their respective problems.

The household servants felt free to discuss problems and grievances and always found fair adjustments. No snobbery was tolerated in the home. The domestics were recognized as human beings, as Job says, **“Did not he that made me in the womb make him?”** (31:15). God took as much care forming my servant as He did me. If I am unjust with my servant, how can I face God? Labor troubles would be few in such an establishment. There are no strikes where employer and employee frankly discuss and, without interference of others, adjust their difficulties.

The Lord found such delight in this household that He surrounded them with blessings. He even called Satan’s attention to **“My servant Job, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil.”** Satan rudely answered that it paid Job to fear God. **“Hast not thou made a hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blest the work of his hands and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face”** (1:10-11). And the Lord gave Satan liberty to touch all that he had, **“only upon himself put not forth thine hand”** (1:12).

There is comfort in knowing that God puts a restraining and limiting hand on Satan’s power to destroy us. But he will go as far as he can. It is worthy of our notice that Job never took his trials as afflictions from Satan, but his attitude was like that of our Lord, **“The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?”** (John 18:11). Some folk get so occupied with Satan that they lose sight of the Lord. They quarrel with the rod God uses instead of hearing Him and recognizing His permissive will in our testing. People of this type are ever in a state of turmoil. **“Hear ye the rod and who hath appointed it”** (Micah 6:9). God is **“Lord of our life,”** not Satan.

During one of the family birthday celebrations a messenger arrived at Job’s home saying, **“The oxen were working and the asses feeding beside them, and the Sabeans fell upon them and took them away.”** That was quite a roundup! **“Yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword, and I only am escaped to tell thee.”** Satan planned that he would pile shock on shock in such rapidity that Job should be quickly overwhelmed.

While the first escaped servant was yet speaking there came also another who said, **“A great fire of God is fallen from heaven.”**

Satan insinuated that God was the author of all Job’s adversity and that Heaven was against him. **“The sheep are all burned, and the servants too, and I only am escaped to tell thee.”**

While he was yet speaking another one came and said, **“The Chaldeans came and have marched off with all the camels, and slew all the servants except me with the edge of the sword.”**

Can you see Job calling Mrs. Job and saying, “Wife, we have lost everything we have, but we have our children left to comfort us.” Three calamities in quick succession failed of their purpose to make Job distrust God.

In desperation Satan planned his master stroke. **“While he was yet speaking there came also another and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking in their eldest brother’s house; and behold there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men and they are dead. And I only am escaped to tell thee” (1:18-19).**

Again Satan wanted Job to think that the stormy wind fulfilling his word came from the hand of God. It is always difficult for a father and husband to tell the mother and wife of the loss of one child. No doubt Job solicitously watched Mrs. Job’s reaction to their material losses. How shall she bare up under the loss of all her family at one fell stroke? Can you almost hear Job’s scarcely breathed words, “Lord, sustain her! May she keep her sanity under such a blow!” How deep was their grief! A common grief often cements more strongly than ever the love of a husband and wife.

Job was so grief-stricken he tore his cloak, shaved his head and prostrated himself on the earth. Perhaps he was “dumb because thou didst it,” at first, yet when he recovered himself, he had no bitterness or rebellion against God. He knew Him well enough to trust Him and did not question Him. **“As for God his way is perfect” (Psalm 18:30).**

Perhaps there were many questions from Mrs. Job that were hard to answer. For if Job was so grief-stricken, what must have been the anguish of the bereaved mother! Did she say to Job, “How could God do it, if He loved us?”

“My dear, He doesn’t have to explain to me, I know Him. I have absolute confidence in Him. Let us pray.” She must have been amazed to see Job worshiping and hear him say, **“Naked came I out of the womb, and naked shall I return thither; the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the Name of the Lord” (1:21).**

Instead of cursing God, Job blesses God. Satan’s claim that Job served God because of His gifts and mercies was proved to be false. He had outwitted himself in the swiftness and the severity of the calamities he imposed.

Satan seems to have learned that he hadn't arranged things well, so he allowed some time to elapse before his next attack in order that grief might do its work. Job's elastic table had contracted: there were no children to enliven the dinner hour. Since their riches had taken wings, many of their friends and acquaintances had forsaken them. All this was not sufficient for Satan's malignity.

He again challenged God saying, **"Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face. And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold he is in thine hand; but save his life. So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown. And he took a potsherd to scrape him self withal; and he sat down among the ashes"** (2:4-8). This was a very cruel affliction with which Satan smote Job.

When Job replied to his three friends he described some of his sufferings. He scraped his festering sores with a piece of broken crockery. He sat among the ashes. He tells us **"my flesh is clothed with worms and clods of dust, my skin is broken and become loathsome."**

His life seemed purposeless. His restless nights were trying to himself and to Mrs. Job. When he lay down he said to her, **"When shall I arise and the night be gone?"** And he tossed to and fro till the dawning of the day (7:4). As the disease progressed he felt like a rotten thing and as a moth-eaten garment (13: 28). He grew thinner and thinner, and his face more wrinkled; his face was ghastly.

As Mrs. Job turned away, sick at the sight of her suffering husband, she heard him say, **"My breath is strange to my wife, though I entreated her for the children's sake."** His bones stuck out and hurt him whichever way he turned, and he was racked with gnawing muscle pains as well as tortured with a high fever.

When his wife heard him say even in the midst of all his excruciating agony, **"Though he slay me, yet will I trust him,"** her heart cried out, **"How can he?"** It is always very hard on those who witness the suffering of a loved one, especially if they cannot do anything to relieve them.

In her desperation over the losses she had undergone and seeing her husband physically and mentally tortured, she exclaimed, **"Curse God and die"** (2:9).

She did not think he could endure any more suffering. When Satan tempted Eve it was when every circumstance was favorable; but when he tried Job's wife she had been stripped of all but her husband and he was in torture. It was at a moment of mean disadvantage that the wily enemy suggested such a wicked idea; which was exactly what Satan wanted Job to do.

In a weak moment who of us has not said regrettable words? Were I tried as Mrs. Job was, I am sure I do not know how I would behave. We need to pray constantly that we may behave ourselves as children of God, and not be an occasion of stumbling to others. Thank God, Job had faith enough to repel her suggestion. He gave it no room in his heart. He felt sorry for her anguish over him.

Job did not scold his wife but sought to encourage her to put her confidence in God.

“Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?” (2:10).

Thus he rebuked her untimely suggestion sanely, quietly and inoffensively. I feel sure she regretted her words and admired the unfailing courage of her godly husband! I think she was glad of his prayers for her that night—as glad as the three friends were later when the Lord bade them repent of what they said to Job, and commanded them to bring burnt offerings and have Job pray for them that they might be accepted.

Job’s friends had never suffered as Job had, but their unjust accusations of God’s perfect and upright man were cruel indeed. It is easy when one has never experienced such an affliction to say how one should behave under trial. Let us not be harsh in our judgment of those under affliction.

We learn from Mrs. Job that a husband’s faith is not enough; one must lean directly on the arm of God for himself. We can only encourage others and be real helpmates as we find our strength in the Lord for ourselves. **“Above all, taking the shield of faith.”** Never give up your confidence in God. It will repel the fiery darts of the wicked one. **“Have faith in God.”**

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