

How Ordinary Women Make an Extraordinary Difference

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Introduction.

Ordinary does not imply plain but normal women trusting in God. These women have been empowered to do extraordinary things for God. Preparing for this message has been a blessing. Magnifying the Lord has been our marriage verse. (Psalm 44:3) We have been reading much about women of faith in preparation for this seminar. We looked for common principles that might help you. To begin we want to read Scripture. (Romans 16:1-16)

1. As we read please notice the number of women named in this passage.
 - a. Phoebe has been a help to me.
 - b. Priscilla and Aquilla.
 - c. Mary has worked hard in the Lord.
 - d. Andronicus and Junia among the apostles.
 - e. Tryphena and Tryphosa.
 - f. Mother of Ruphus.
 - g. About a third of the names in this chapter are women.
2. What commendations are given to the women?
 - a. They worked hard.
 - b. They risked their lives.
 - c. They were in Christ.
 - d. Junia being numbered among the apostles may not indicate that she was an apostle but that she was esteemed highly by the apostles.
 - e. Rufus' mother had been a mother to Paul.
 - f. Phoebe had been a great help to many.
 - g. One had a church in her home.
 - h. In Jewish culture men prayed in thanks to God that they were not Gentile nor female.
 - i. In Roman law women were property of their husbands.

j. Greek culture may have been a bit more generous toward women but Christianity far outshined the advances of Greek culture.

3. We want to be able to salute the women involved with Navigators for their part in taking the Gospel to the world.

I. We will chose one woman from each case to see what we can learn from them.

A. The speakers have people read about Biblical women and it is difficult hearing them.

1. Sarah lived by faith. (Hebrews 11)

2. Deborah judged Israel a ministry obviously outside the home. (Judges 4:4)

3. Ruth cared for Naomi and became a part of the Davidic line. (Ruth)

4. Naom the servant girl.

5. Mary the mother of our Lord. (Luke 1)

6. Lydia responded to the Gospel and invited Paul to preach there.

B. The history of the people of God over time.

1. Lyova founded a convent in Ireland among cultic believers.

a. These convents were like Navigator training centers.

b. Her ministry resulted in hundreds of godly women ministers.

2. Philina. (1770 a. d.)

a. These stories were taken from books like *Daughters of the Church* by Ruth Custer.

b. Many of these women have biographies on the internet.

c. Some of these women have suffered in prison for the Gospel.

1. Some were martyrs in the Roman arena.

2. Some in ministering to each other during these days of persecution had a profound influence on other martyrs.

3. Are there any observations about these women of faith through the centuries?

a. They put their lives in a bigger context of God's providence.

b. None would have realized the effect they have had on us today.

- c. They opened themselves up to hear the voice of God.
- d. God uses people in ordinary circumstances. (2 Corinthians 4:7)
- e. Their lives collided with the world through faith in God.
- f. I am overwhelmed by the way God uses us.
- g. It is difficult to generalize how God uses individual lives.
 - 1. Deborah is different from Hannah.
 - 2. Ruth is different from each one.
 - 3. This principle of diversity is difficult for us, but God gives a manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. (1 Corinthians 12:4-7)
- h. Amanda Smith was born a slave but overcame the drudgery of life by sharing Christ with others. After the Civil War she became an evangelist in America, Africa, and India. (John 15:16)
 - 1. She overcame obstacles because she believed Christ called her.
 - 2. Many said she taught them much.
 - 3. She believed God could use her in the lives of anyone.
- i. We need to guard against comparing ourselves with others.
- j. These women were used as God wanted them to be used. (1 Corinthians 12:18)
- k. There are differences between men and women but they serve in different capacities.

C. Abiding in Christ is the key to fulfilling the ministry God has for us. (John 15:1-7)

- 1. Christina Rossette was the daughter of an Italian refugee. (Psalm 45:1)
 - a. She was sickly and lived a quiet recluse life.
 - b. Her unhappiness in love did not deter her from inspiring others.
 - c. She pointed to Christ as the only true source of love and joy.
 - d. Her heart cried out to God for fulfillment.
 - e. Her poems have been great devotional material in our family.
 - f. Her society constrained her yet by faith she soared.

- g. Jim Eliot was deeply influenced by her writing.
- h. Her poems were filled with redemptive analogies so that secular universities who reject the Christian message read her works.
- i. It is obvious that Christina Rossette abided in Christ her vine.

2. Faith and perseverance enables us to fulfill the ministry Christ has called us to. (Hebrews 10:34-35).

- a. We need to live by faith and not draw back for this will not please Christ.
- b. Monica the mother of Saint Augustine cried out for her son. (Lamentations 2:19)
- c. Augustine attributed his conversion to his mother's prayers.
- d. Monica teaches us to not give up in praying for our children.
- e. Encouraging one another is crucial. (1 Thessalonians 5:11)
 - 1. We all need encouragement throughout life.
 - 2. I think women especially need encouragement.

D. Mary Magdalene teaches us to love the Lord even through pain.

- 1. Jesus appeared first to Mary Magdalene after he rose.
- 2. She had remained close to the cross during his crucifixion.
- 3. She was the last at the cross and the first at the tomb.
- 4. She was the first to share the good news, "I have seen the Lord."
- 5. Why did he choose Mary?
 - a. In that society women were not allowed to give testimony.
 - b. He honored her faith and her love.
 - c. We don't know what happened to her later in life.
 - d. She lived the rest of her life knowing that Jesus had chosen her to be the first one he revealed himself to.
- 6. The speakers take questions from the audience, which are difficult to hear.
 - a. Believing that God has gifted us is the key to ministering.

- b. We all have boundaries, like boys playing soccer, who have no clear markers yet know what is in bounds and what is not.
- c. They keep their eyes on the goal, not the boundaries.
- d. God used these saints we have studied today in extraordinary ways and we desire that he use us in a similar way.
- e. The daughters of Zelophahad complained to Moses about their inheritance problem because their father had no male children and God agreed with them.
- f. Women have roles just as men do and need not feel inferior to anyone.
- g. Adam rejoiced when he first saw Eve and man and woman are made joint heirs in the kingdom of God.