

Gracious God, you call all people who feel marginalized or forgotten into your fold. Help us to be mindful of those in need that we might proclaim the gospel to all who need your love and grace. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

In this lesson, we move Christian Vocation forward by examining the effect of vocation on specifically, women.

Part 1 Luther's Paradoxical View of Women

Read Genesis 2:18-23

1. In examining some of Luther's and Medieval time's problematic thinking on how women were "subordinate" to men:
 - a. What details in this story seem to indicate that the man was more dominant in creation?

 - b. What details in this story seem to indicate that the woman was subordinate?

2. Understanding that we are not to read this story literally, how might we read this story in a way that gets us away from women being viewed as "subordinate."

Read Genesis 3:1-6, 12-13, 16

3. Similar questions as above . . . In examining some of Luther's and Medieval time's problematic thinking on how women were "subordinate" to men . . . What details in this story seem to indicate that the woman was subordinate?

4. Again, understanding that we are not to read this story literally, how might we read this story in a way that gets us away from women being viewed as "subordinate."

Read Joshua 2:1-16; 6:22-24; Mathew 1:1, 5

5. Describe what the woman, Rahab did for the Israelite spies?

6. What word or phrases indicate that Rahab, though not an Israelite had a faith in God?

7. As a result of her faith and actions, what reward does she receive?

8. In Mathew 1:1-5, in Jesus' genealogy, we begin to see the paradoxical view of women. Although women do not have a strong place in society when the Christian Scriptures were written, what is significant about three instances in these verses?

Read 1 Samuel 1:1-20; 1 Samuel 2:1-10; Luke 1:46-55

9. What is the reason for Hanna's distress and weeping?

10. In what way does the temple priest, Eli, treat her as subordinate?

11. To a degree she stands up to Eli and expresses an amazing faith. What does she say in her defense?

12. Compare Hanna's song in 1 Samuel 2 to Mary's Magnificat in Luke. What hope do both women express in what God has done for them – especially being people on the margins of importance?

Read Acts 16:11-15, 40

13a. In these verses we meet a woman, Lydia. What business is Lydia in?

b. What is significant about this detail?

14a. As Lydia is converted her "household" is as well. What is significant about that detail?

b. At the end of her conversion story as well as after Paul gets out of prison, how does she help support Paul's mission?

Part 2 What Does This Have to Do With My Life?

15. How has the role of women changed since biblical times both inside the church and outside the church?