

# “THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

## The Surpassing Worth of the Worthy Woman

By Guy Roberson

Historically, women have suffered degradation and enslavement. They have been bartered and sold like cattle on the auction block. Women have also functioned as beasts of burden, and as playthings – existing only for the use and pleasure of men. Such unenlightened, bigoted and degrading treatment of women results from following the wisdom of this world. It isn't any wonder that women are rebelling and refusing to play the role human wisdom has staked out for them. In contrast, God elevates women to their rightful place of honor, love and worthiness throughout the Bible.

In Genesis 2:18-23 we learn that woman is the crowning and culminating act of God's creation. Everything had been created, including man, when God said, ***“It is not good that the man should be alone.”*** Woman's creation establishes the worthiness and dignity of women by showing that only one woman is needed to complete a man.

Womanhood was exalted in both Hebrew law and history. Under the Hebrew system, as given by God, the position of woman was in marked contrast with her status in surrounding nations. Her liberties were greater, her employments more varied and important, and her social standing more respected and commanding. The Law honored the mother equally with the father (Ex. 20:12; Prov. 1:8). It took God to exalt womanhood to the eminence achieved in Proverbs 31:10-31. She typifies all the best qualities in womanhood while administering the affairs of the home with a liberty and leadership unknown to other nations. That lady was not the slave nor the domestic servant of her husband, but rather his co-laborer in life.

There were a number of women who also rose to prominence in various ways throughout Hebrew history. Miriam, the sister of Moses, led the women in triumphant song and the prophet paid tribute to Miriam in Micah 6:4 when the Lord said, ***“I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.”*** Deborah became a prophetess and a judge and delivered her people from bondage (Judg. 4:1-5:31). Esther became one of the most loved and honored women in Jewish history. She was selected for the king's queen and risked her own position and life to save her people, the Jews. God honored her by having a Bible book named for her. Anna served God continually in the Temple and God gave her the honor of speaking of the Messiah to those who were looking for the redemption of Israel (Lk. 2:36-38). Therefore, throughout Hebrew law and history God gave men the light they needed to recognize and honor the worthiness and dignity of womanhood.

Jesus demonstrated His respect also for womanhood throughout His ministry. Even though women were the degraded and enslaved victims of paganism, they found in Jesus a true benefactor and friend. Some of the most inspiring parts of the gospels concern our Lord's contacts and conversations with women (Jn. 8:1-11; Lk. 7:36-50; Jn. 4:7-26). Profound revelations were given in private teaching to women, which indicated His appreciation for their intellectual capacity and spiritual capabilities (Jn. 4:10-26; Lk. 10:41-42; Jn. 11:21-27). Jesus also gave some of His highest commendation to women for exercising strong faith and for setting some of the highest standards of sacrificial giving (Matt. 15:21-28; Mk. 12:41-44; 14:3-9). He also gave the first revelation of His risen life to women and gave them the privilege of announcing the most startling news the world has ever received (Matt. 28:10).

Our last point emphasizes the prominence of women in the early church. In Acts 1:1-14 we learn that women as well as men were devoting themselves to prayer while waiting for the Holy Spirit. Women, as well as men, helped establish churches (Acts 16:12-15; 18:18-28). They, as well as men, were filled with the Spirit and prophesied (Joel 2:28-29; 1 Cor. 11:5; Acts 21:9). They also functioned as special servants of the early church

(Rom. 16:1-2; Phil. 4:3). Such prominence throughout the Bible clearly reveals the high regard God has for womanhood, and thereby establishes her glory and dignity.

You are neither inferior nor superior to men, but simply a different creation. Another pulse beats in your veins, another way of thinking, of feeling, of being, thereby making it possible for you to shake the foundations of the universe with your commanding virtues. God has made you unique - so look to Him, to be indwelt by Him and experience the outworking of His love in your life. And ladies – thank God you are a woman! – **Knollwood church of Christ Articles**, May 2020. ■

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## HE SAID THE “H” WORD!

By Larry Ray Hafley

“Daddy,” the little boy whispered, “*he said the ‘H’ word!*” The word was “**hell**,” and the preacher was the one who said it — from the pulpit.

It is good that a young child realizes that the word “**hell**” may be used as a “bad word.” It is sad that many people rarely hear the word “**hell**” properly used in a sermon. Unfortunately, “**hell**” is better known to the world as an adjective than as a noun! Or, if it is used as a noun, it is used when people are angry and want to curse the destiny of another.

*Hell* is not, in its true sense, a curse word. It is, as Cled Wallace once described it, “**a lake of fire and brimstone and without modern conveniences.**” The Lord Jesus spoke more about *hell* than any other person in the New Testament. Not once did he speak of it in a “positive” way (Matt. 5:22; 23:33; Mk. 9:42-50). He always employed it in a “negative” manner, which surely must offend the gentle senses of snobbish religionists and sneering modernists in every age.

Today, silk-suited sermonizers sweetly intone the tender mercy and gentle grace of God. With an actor’s dramatic tears (never mentioning damnation’s deepest fears), they weepingly speak the soothing words of salvation. But salvation from what?

They never tell us. If men reject the wooing word of eternal salvation, there is the withering word of everlasting damnation (Matt. 10:32-33; Mk. 8:38; Lk. 13:3, 5; Jn. 8:24; 12:48; Acts 13:46; 24:25). Somehow, though, some finely-tailored and well-manicured men avoid the topic of “**hell fire.**” However, nearly twenty centuries ago a certain uncouth and crude preacher and prophet did not ignore the consequences of unbelief and disobedience (Isa. 53:2-3). He plainly spoke of the reward of unrighteousness, the pain, and penalty of sin. Dare we do any less?

It is past time that pulpits of today were aflame with the shame of *hell* (Dan. 12:2). Assuredly, we must tell men of God’s goodness, kindness, mercy, and grace, but we must also tell them that “**our God is a consuming fire,**” and that “**it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God**” (Heb. 10:31; 12:29). The man who is devoid of either one or the other is not a preacher of love, grace, and mercy as defined by the word of God. “**Good words and fair speeches**” were not words used to describe the work of preachers sent by God (Rom. 16:18)! Therefore, let pulpits glow with the splendor and soft hues of the love of God, but let them also be ablaze with the harsh horrors of the doomed and the damned “**in the fire that never shall be quenched**” (Mk. 9:45). True love impels and compels both sides of the eternal equation.

When the hope of heaven and the horror of *hell* are both revered and feared, perhaps then children will not think the preacher has “cussed” when he speaks of *hell* and earnestly encourages sinful men to accept the love and grace of God. ■

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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