

WOMEN IN
THE BIBLE:
LYDIA
AND ME

A HOSPITABLE BUSINESSWOMAN



10
LESSON

WOMEN IN THE BIBLE: LYDIA AND ME

INTRODUCTION

Lydia is mentioned in only two short passages in the Bible, both in the book of Acts, but what is said tells us a lot about her.

Lydia is the first woman named in Scripture who is described as a retailer. She was a successful businesswoman. Her name originally might have been the designation of her home. She came from Thyatira, a city in the western part of Lydia in Asia Minor.

Lydia's life reveals to us a God who longs for a relationship with His people.

DISCOVER

- * Her Business Skills
- * Her Gift of Hospitality
- * Her Character

GOING DEEPER

1. What did Paul and the others do as they met with the women who had gathered by the river? (Acts 16:12-13)

2. Lydia is named in verse 14. What business was Lydia engaged in?

Note: This was a type of cloth prized for its purple color.

3. Whom did she worship? (Verse 14)

4. What effect did Paul's message have on her? (Verse 24)

5. What further step did she and members of her household take? (Verse 15)

6. Quote the gracious words she used as she opened her home to Paul and his companions. (Verse 15)

7. Was this a one-time invitation, or did Paul and Silas return to her house? (Verse 40)

8. Paul closes this short account of her life saying "and she persuaded us." (Verse 15, NIV) What does this suggest about her?

WORDS FOR TODAY

9. Which was more important to Lydia, her business or the comfort of fellow believers? Why do you say this?

LYDIA

A COMMON NAME MEANING "BENDING"

KEY SCRIPTURE: ACTS 16:12-40

10. Am I as ready to practice the gift of hospitality as Lydia was?

11. If not, am I perhaps overly concerned with the appearance of my house and whether or not I have food prepared that is elegant enough for guests? Or am I ready to welcome guests to share whatever I have?

12. How can we apply the principle of hospitality in our church?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Some of the women we study in these lessons were maids, servants, or very poor. In contrast, Lydia was a successful business woman. What are some of the advantages each of these two categories has? What are some problems or temptations that might come to each group?

2. Assuming she has the ability, would you encourage a woman to become a businessperson? Why, or why not?

WORDS OF WISDOM

1 Peter 4:9 (NIV) reminds us to "offer hospitality to one another without grumbling."

Ellen White gives us a reason to ponder true hospitality: "Even among those who profess to be Christians, true hospitality is little exercised. Among our own people the opportunity of showing hospitality is not regarded as it should be, as a privilege and a blessing. There is altogether too little sociability, too little of a disposition to make room for two or three more at the family board without embarrassment or parade. Some plead that 'it is too much trouble.' It would not be if you would say, 'We have made no special preparation but you are welcome to what we have.' By the unexpected guest a welcome is appreciated far more than in the most elaborate preparation" (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 343).

"Pleasant voices, gentle manners, and sincere affection that finds expression in all the actions, together with industry, neatness, and economy, make even a hovel the happiest of homes. The Creator regards such a home with approbation" (*Signs of the Times*, Oct. 2, 1884).

Our Savior is pleased when we extend hospitality to all. Lydia did not allow her business to interfere with opening her home to others.

Notes:

MY PRAYER FOR TODAY

Dear God, may our homes be filled with warmth and love. Let us be ever ready to open our homes and hearts to all. May joy and rest be found within our homes for all who come to us.

SHARING

Rich or poor, old or young, there are many in our community who feel lonely. Who are three people in my community who may be lonely and longing for a friend? How can I show them love and hospitality?



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