



Say to wisdom, “you are my sister,” And make understanding your closest friend. For they will keep you from the immoral woman.
Proverbs 7:4-5a

Women’s Discipleship Group – 2006
HELPMATES, HANDMAIDENS & HARLOTS ON-LINE BIBLE STUDY
SPIRITUAL LIFE SERIES
LESSON #2: The Challenge of Making Jesus First
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Definitions: *Helpmate – Handmaiden – Harlot*

Helpmate: A married woman who is committed to the well being of her husband.

Handmaiden: An unmarried or married woman that is committed to serving the Lord.

Harlot: An unmarried or married woman who sells her soul or body for personal gain.

Scripture Focus:

Helpmate: Luke 8:3 Joanna the wife of Chuza, the manager of Herod’s household; Susanna; and many others. These women were helping to support Jesus and his disciples out of their own means.

Handmaiden: Luke 8:2 And certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities – Mary called Magdalene, out of whom had come seven demons.

Harlot: Mark 6:17 For Herod (Antipas) himself had sent and laid hold of John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife; for he married her.

OPENING STATEMENT:

The Helpmate’s Story: It is possible that Joanna followed Jesus because the Lord healed her infirmities. The bible takes the time to mention that her husband Chuza was the manager of Herod’s household. Herod was the governor of the region and during his time in office he beheaded John the Baptist and threatened to kill Jesus. *(Luke 13:31) On that very day some Pharisees came, saying to Jesus, “Get out and depart from here, for Herod wants to kill You.”* Even with the threats, Chuza’s wife, Joanna followed Jesus without any known resistance from her husband. It appears that Joanna even used her husband’s money to help Jesus and his disciples. It could have been that Chuza was so grateful to Jesus for healing his wife that he didn’t interfere with Joanna’s commitment to the Lord. Joanna is a clear example of a helpmate who served the Lord in spite of the challenges that came with making Jesus first in her life. It is also clear that Joanna was married to a godly man, who did not allow his job to interfere with his family’s relationship with Jesus.

The Handmaiden’s Story: Mary Magdalene the leader of the women disciples that followed Jesus. The bible tells us that when she came to Jesus, he cast out the demons that possessed her. Jesus healed her, saved her and then used her to do a great ministry for God’s kingdom. Very often the women who have the greatest commitment to the Lord are those who are rescued from the greatest troubles. We must not criticize women who come to Jesus with a list of eye-popping sins. Because women that have committed extreme sins are often the same women that will commit themselves to extreme service to the Lord. If you are an ex-this or that, don’t let the

Devil convince you that the Lord can't use you because of your past life. *(Luke 7:47) Therefore I say to you, her sins which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little.*

The Harlot's Story: Herodias was a high-class harlot. She was the wife of Herod and was formerly married to his brother Phillip. The TV show "Desperate Housewives" has nothing on Herodias. Not only was she an adulteress, but she also used her young daughter Salome to seduce her stepfather, Herod. Mark 6:16-28 says that this young girl (a harlot in training) was such a good pole dancer that Herod offered to give her up to half of his kingdom. Her mother instructed her to ask for the head of John the Baptist. Herod had no other choice than to grant her request. Please understand that a harlot will find a man's sexual weakness and use it to her advantage. The scriptures tell us that Herod was grieved over killing John the Baptist. His sin pulled him in deeper than he planned to go. I can almost picture Chuza (who worked for Herod and Herodias) rushing home to tell his wife Joanna the dreadful story of how Herodias manipulated her husband into killing John the Baptist. It is clear from this story that a harlot will sell her body and soul and even her children to get what she wants.

Your Story:

Have you faced difficulties or persecution following the Lord? Please share your story.

If you once lived an ungodly lifestyle but the Lord saved you and now you serve Him with all your heart – please share your story?

Have you witnessed a man in your life or in leadership being seduced and tricked by a woman? Please share your story.

PERSONALIZATION/APPLICATION:

1. Let's imagine that you met a woman who was not a Christian because she felt that she had done too much wrong in her life to be forgiven. What would you write to her and what scripture would you share to encourage her to come to the Lord?
2. What would you do if you were married to a man who was not like Chuza and refused to allow you to follow Jesus?
3. What advice would you give to a woman who is dating an unsaved man – or a man who says he is saved, but there is no strong evidence to support his convictions? How can this put her spiritual life in jeopardy?