

History re-examined

Consider the situation below in light of God’s providence, and then write your thoughts. The story is written from a human perspective, so you’ll need to fill in some blanks: how might God have been moving through these events? What did He accomplish through “chance” misfortune? How did He turn bad circumstances to good?

Joseph was the favored son of Jacob, a man with multiple wives and a severely dysfunctional family. Though Joseph was only the second youngest of twelve sons, he was born from Jacob’s favorite wife and therefore received special gifts and privileges. The object of bitter jealousy, he didn’t help things by telling his brothers about his dreams—in which he saw his entire family bowing down to him.

So Joseph’s ten older brothers decided to get rid of him. One day they threw him in a well, hauling him back up a little later only to sell him to passing slave traders. Afterward, they dipped Joseph’s old coat in blood, convincing Jacob that wild animals had killed his cherished son.

The slave traders took Joseph to Egypt and sold him to a man named Potiphar, the captain of Pharaoh’s guard. Joseph did well there—at first, anyway. He worked hard, succeeding in whatever he did, and Potiphar eventually put Joseph in charge of his entire household. But soon the handsome Hebrew slave caught the eye of his master’s wife.

Attracted to Joseph, Potiphar’s wife repeatedly tried to seduce him. He refused her advances, but one day she cornered him in the house alone, grabbing him by his coat, which he left behind in his hurry to flee. Angered, Potiphar’s

wife showed her husband the garment and convinced him that Joseph had tried to rape her.

Potiphar threw Joseph into the Pharaoh’s personal dungeon, but the slave-turned-convict soon gained the trust of the prison’s keeper. Joseph again worked hard and succeeded in all his efforts, and the keeper eventually put him in charge of the dungeon.

Finally, thanks to a chance encounter with a disgraced royal cupbearer, Joseph was released from prison and given the chance to interpret a dream of the Pharaoh. Joseph explained its meaning—that there would be a widespread famine in just a few years—and Pharaoh placed him in charge of efforts to stave off disaster.

As the second-in-command of Egypt, Joseph had nearly limitless power. He managed to bring the entire economy under Pharaoh’s personal control, and he got an opportunity to help his family, as well. After discovering his brothers trying to buy food during the famine, Joseph allowed all of Jacob’s clan to settle in a fertile region of the country. He reunited with his family and forgave them for what they had done.

Joseph married a girl named Asenath, had two sons, and finally died at the age of 110.

PROVIDENCE

As your teacher goes through the lesson, write down how God used different kinds of events to providentially care for Ruth. How have circumstances like these affected your life in the past?

	Ruth's Life	My Life
Disaster		
Sin		
Death		
Difficult Choices		
Timing		
Sheer Chance		
Kindness		
Selfishness		
Love		

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Are you a Virtuous woman?

Take some time to think about how well you match the qualities of the virtuous woman described in Proverbs 31. Next to each description, rate yourself from 0 to 2.

Zero means “not at all”; one means “sometimes”; two means “most of the time.”

0 1 2

I am trustworthy, and I give people no reason to doubt my integrity. I am transparent and sincere (v. 12).

0 1 2

I take initiative and work hard. I try to do well at whatever job I’m given (vv. 13–14, 27).

0 1 2

I anticipate the needs of others. I don’t shirk responsibility (v. 15).

0 1 2

I use the skills and talents God gave me to serve others (v. 16).

0 1 2

I am strong. With strength from God, I don’t worry about the future, and I trust only in His provision (vv. 17, 25).

0 1 2

I help those in need. I do not avoid others because they aren’t on my “level” (v. 20).

0 1 2

I take care of my appearance. While I don’t obsess about my looks, my appearance does not distract from my service and testimony (v. 22).

0 1 2

I demonstrate a love and reverence for God in my life. I seek Him and trust in Him (v. 30).

If you answered “0” for any of the above, ask God for wisdom to improve this area of your life and cultivate true virtue.

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what are you thinking?

Face it: you've probably already thought at least a little about what you'd want your future wife to be like. That's not a bad thing, so long as what you're thinking is in line with the Bible. What qualities do you think are important in a wife? Check at least a few.

- | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> trustworthy | <input type="checkbox"/> witty | <input type="checkbox"/> intelligent | <input type="checkbox"/> popular |
| <input type="checkbox"/> kind and gracious | <input type="checkbox"/> respected | <input type="checkbox"/> talented | <input type="checkbox"/> conversational |
| <input type="checkbox"/> hardworking | <input type="checkbox"/> God-fearing | <input type="checkbox"/> likes kids | <input type="checkbox"/> fun-loving |
| <input type="checkbox"/> beautiful to me | <input type="checkbox"/> attractive to everyone | <input type="checkbox"/> loves her family | <input type="checkbox"/> clingy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> cheerful | <input type="checkbox"/> faithful to church | <input type="checkbox"/> friendly | <input type="checkbox"/> faithful to the Word |
| <input type="checkbox"/> athletic | <input type="checkbox"/> flattering | <input type="checkbox"/> adventurous | <input type="checkbox"/> down-to-earth |
| <input type="checkbox"/> careful about her appearance | <input type="checkbox"/> wise and gentle in her speech | <input type="checkbox"/> liked by my parents | <input type="checkbox"/> comfortable with the guys |
| <input type="checkbox"/> interested in what I like | <input type="checkbox"/> enjoys staying up late | <input type="checkbox"/> likes to get up early | <input type="checkbox"/> enjoys trying new things |
| <input type="checkbox"/> independent | <input type="checkbox"/> forceful | <input type="checkbox"/> passive | <input type="checkbox"/> quiet |

Read Proverbs 31:10–31 and list the qualities of a virtuous woman. What qualities are truly essential in a wife? Which are good to develop over time? Which are just irrelevant?

What kind of **MAN** are you?

Read each quality of biblical manhood and ask yourself how well you stack up against God's standard. Write out ways to practice each quality, and find Scripture to encourage your decision to be a godly man.

	Ways to Practice	Scripture
Service		
Provision		
Honor		
Purity		
Integrity		
God-fearing		

If you are struggling in any of these areas, ask God to give you the grace and strength to reflect His character.

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[who do you want to marry?]

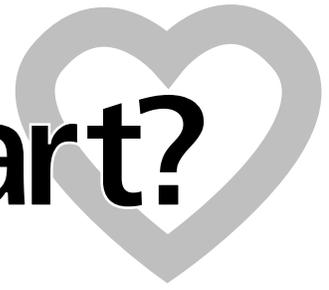
Based on this lesson and others that feature godly men, what kind of qualities do you want in a future husband?

How can he display these qualities before marriage? How can you spot them?

How can you be attractive to this kind of man? How can you encourage his walk with Christ?



how's your heart?



How do you express your feelings to your parents and family, if at all?

When you pray, how do you verbalize your love to God?

How do you actively show your love for others?

When have you truly sacrificed something of great value for another's good?

What has Christ done for you?

Given what you've learned about love from this lesson, in what areas can you better reflect Christ's love to others?
