IN ALL SEASONS- EPISODE 2- Our Biblical Models of Womanhood

Welcome to **IN ALL SEASONS**. I am Beverly Flanagan, your host on this podcast, for women like me, who love the Lord, in the second half of life.

How does **LIVING WISELY, AGING WELL** relate to our purpose in life? As women? As Christian women?

Who are our models?

Our challenges today include living in an Information Age, where we participate in screen life, via social media, instant news, not all of it true, nor all of it false, but usually given with an agenda, not generally hidden, and in a time that glorifies celebrities, whether TV, movies, literature, or sports. Plenty of models for us in our daily lives, but how do we discern?

Oprah Winfrey is very spiritual, she can be generous, is she a good model? How about Madonna? (Not Mary, the Mother of Jesus, but the performer). Do we as Christian women allow ourselves to be entertained by the women on THE VIEW? How do we perceive what the co-hosts - Whoopi Goldberg, Joy Behar, Sunny Hostin, Meghan McCain and Abby Huntsman - say & do, in the context of what we know to be Beautiful, Good, & True? When most of our entertainment tends to show what is best termed as "situational ethics", how does this affect our consciences?

God's Commands are mocked, morality is defined as whatever we want it to be. Pro-Life, Pro-Marriage, Pro-Family in the Traditional sense is derided, and has been the subject of much legal wrangling & other discourse. LGBTQ is not only normalized, but militantly supported by those who live the lifestyle & those who have lost their bearings morally & spiritually. My apologies to any Christians out there who believe otherwise, but this itself an area for study & dialogue, and I am uncertain that I could see God's Word as saying other than it does, nor do I believe I could erase what I don't like to hear.

Then there is the Uncivility of our Civil Life. We cannot be blind to the influence of our Ancient Enemy in all this, we know he is a Liar & a Thief, and as Jesus said **"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy,"** John 10:10. How? By splitting, causing disorder, and so on & so forth. We need to be aware, and on the alert, without giving the Enemy more than his due. God is always greater & is the

Winner in the Great Battle Between Good & Evil. Ultimately. That is our Hope and our Wisdom. We KNOW the ending of the story, and it's a good one!

I want to talk specifically about some of our Biblical models for Womanhood, among them Eve, the Proverbs 31 Woman, Martha & Mary, & the Titus 2 Woman. Since the focus of **IN ALL SEASONS** is women in the second half of life, we will spotlight some mature ladies in both the Old & new Testaments, perhaps in the next episode. Let's keep going!

EVE

Genesis tells us about the Creation of All That Is & of Man, Adam, and that he, even in the perfection of the Garden of Eden and in full communion with the Lord God Almighty, was lonely. God saw that it was not good for man to be alone, and so, made for him a companion, a helpmate. He caused Adam to fall into a deep sleep, then made a companion for him out of his rib. Adam called the woman, taken out of man, Eve, the mother of all living things.

They lived in glorious freedom, loving each other, taking care of the Garden, keeping company with God. For how long? Who knows. Time was not as much of a thing then as it has become.

And then what happened? Eve was tempted by the Serpent to eat the Fruit of a Tree forbidden to her & her husband by God. They could eat of ALL the other trees, just not that one. The Serpent's Temptation was to persuade Eve to believe that God was "holding out" on her & Adam, that the Fruit from the Forbidden Tree was wonderful & just what they needed. And once that Seed of Doubt was sown, she reached out, ate of that Fruit, and gave some to Adam, and he ate some of it too!

We could say, justifiably, that Adam should have known better, better even than his wife. God had told this to him directly, and Adam had relayed this directive to Eve. So for Eve it was second-hand, and in the story, she did embellish the directive when she was conversing with the Serpent.

In the end it doesn't matter, as All disobeyed God and were given consequences. Adam & Eve were expelled from the Garden, living in Exile, no longer in direct & constant communion with God. Adam has to work for a living, and Eve has pain in childbirth, and fear, fear of not having her husband's love & fear of childbirth. The Serpent was made to crawl. We All still live with those consequences.

Thankfully, God gave Hope even in the midst of all this turmoil. That from Eve would come someone who would conquer the Serpent, even while the Serpent attacked & tried to kill. And of course, we know that happened when Jesus came & died on the Cross for us.

EISCHET CHAYIL- WOMAN OF VIRTUE AND VALOR

What is a Proverbs 31 woman? When this phrase is used, it refers to Proverbs 31:10-31. In this Bible passage, a godly, wise woman is described. The book of Proverbs in general is not a book of promises. It is a book of principles. The book of Proverbs provides wise principles and descriptions of wise people.

This book should be viewed through the lens of principles. Therefore I believe Christian women and men should read Proverbs 31:10-31 less like a job description and more like general counsel on what a true godly woman will look like and act like. Jesus said you will be able to recognize people by their fruit (Matthew 17:20). A Proverbs 31 woman will be unique from other women, but all Proverbs 31 women will be bearing certain indicators in their life that mark their wisdom and godliness.

I won't read the entire chapter, but urge you, my listeners, to do so when you can, and ponder the meanings of what is described there. I will read the last two verses, as they DO pertain to women of maturity:

30 Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing, but a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised. 31 Give her of the fruit of her hands, And let her own works praise her in the gates.

MARY & MARTHA, FRIENDS OF JESUS

38 Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. 39 And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. 40 But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me." 41 And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. 42 But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen

that good part, which will not be taken away from her.
Luke 10:38-42

In this well known story, the split being action & contemplation is clearly described. Martha gets bad press typically from this story, but to be fair, Martha was providing Hospitality, still a valued practice, and one which has been expected for women to provide through the ages. And Mary was not behaving as expected for that time & place, as a woman- and maybe not for our own time & place either. She wanted to be close to Jesus, did not want to miss a single word or action. So one sister ministered to him, and one kept company with him.

For centuries people in the church have puzzled over the Mary and Martha story, knowing that someone has to do the work. The point of this passage, however, is about making Jesus and his word our first priority. Today we come to know Jesus better through prayer, church attendance, and Bible study. These are the basics. We also come to know Jesus better through service, to Him and with Him.

Some of us tend to be more like Mary in our Christian walk, while others resemble Martha. It's likely we have qualities of both within us. We may be inclined at times to let our busy lives of service distract us from spending time with Jesus and listening to his word. It's significant to note, though, that Jesus gently admonished Martha for being "worried and upset," not for serving. Service is a good thing, but sitting at Jesus' feet is best. We must remember what is most important.

This is not an EITHER/OR choice for us. As a matter of fact, both are needed. We need to be BOTH a Martha, AND a Mary. An Activist AND a Contemplative.

THE TITUS 2 WOMAN

Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, [4] and so train the young women to lo ve their husbands and children, [5] to be selfcontrolled, pure, working at home, kin d, & submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled"
Titus 2: 3-5

A Titus 2 woman is an older, mature Christian woman who teaches and encourages younger women. Her ministry is based on Titus 2:3-5, and she is called by God to make time for this work. She is not called to preach, but to teach, and most of what she has to teach is by example. Much is said and written today about "mentoring."

God wants a godly woman whose life speaks louder than her words. A woman whose character is noticed and prompts other women to examine their own lives and seek to emulate her joy, her peace, her walk in the Spirit in evident and practical ways. The Titus 2 older-woman-in-the-faith's life is a pattern for others to use in shaping their own lives.

For every woman in this church there are some older and some younger. To those younger, you are to look and see if they are an example of Christ—if they are, ask them to show you what they have learned and how they do it. For those who are older, you are to seek to get into their lives and help them bring every area of their lives under the gracious Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Every godly woman has the opportunity to teach the younger generation of women in the church. Not meant to be yet another program, this instruction is to occur in informal settings, such as one on one, small groups, or women's Bible studies. It can be as informal as simple conversations, in the parking lot, during the coffee hour. Not every older woman has been married or a mother, that does not disqualify them from serving. We have all learned in our lives the living out of our faith, at home, at work, in finances, in community life and in church.

And this instruction is both by word and example. Many young women today were not raised under a Biblical family model. That's a challenge for the older women in the church. Godly women seek to be reverent in their behavior, careful in all their conversations, *never enslaved to anything but* Christ, and teaching by example the way to follow Christ. The whole goal of a Titus 2 woman is to train younger women in Biblical, simple-to-measure, Spirit-empowered, love-based living.

In the next Episode of **IN ALL SEASONS**, we will continue to talk about Biblical role models, and our focus will be on mature women and their legacies to us.

Signing off for today, and thank you for joining me on **IN ALL SEASONS**!

(WC= 2028)