

Valiant

BECOMING A WOMAN OF HEAVENLY STRENGTH

with Leslie Ludy

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*Through God we shall do valiantly:
for it is He that shall tread down our enemies.*

Psalm 60:12

“Through our God we shall do valiantly. It is He who will tread down our enemies.”
Is there anyone who needs to fear after reading such words as these? Each of us has something to do which is not easy. God takes care it shall be so. If things were easy, where would be the fight? How would we be trained for heavenly service? But there is no need to ever be overcome. God makes provision for victory, never for defeat.

Amy Carmichael

Who can find a virtuous woman? For her worth is far above rubies.

Proverbs 31:10

“VIRTUOUS:” STRENGTH, MIGHT, POWER, AND VALOR

Key Truth

The word “virtuous” or “valiant” in this verse is the same word used to describe the valiance of David when God chose him to be Israel’s mighty king:

*“...I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, who is ... a mighty man of valor, a man of war
... and the Lord is with him.”*

1 Samuel 16:18

Key Truth

David’s mighty valor was unmatched. As a boy, he killed lions and bears with his bare hands and single-handedly defeated the greatest giant in the land. As a man, he valiantly led armies into battle and annihilated all the enemies of Israel. It is this very same valiance that marks the Proverbs 31 woman. And it is the valiance that each of us are called to demonstrate through our lives.

THE STRENGTH OF A GODLY WOMAN

The chief word used to describe the Proverbs 31 woman is the word *strength*. It's mentioned no less than three times throughout the chapter, in addition to that "virtuous, valiant" opening description. God's design for us as His daughters is *strength* — His strength.

Key Question

What if we began to see Proverbs 31 valor not as a standard to try to rise up to, but a beautiful *promise* from our faithful God?

... out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle.

Hebrews 11:34

"Thy God hath sent forth strength for Thee" (Ps. 68:28). The day lies before us. It will bring us things that in ourselves we have no strength to meet. That does not matter. Our God has already sent forth strength for us. That duty, that difficulty, which we see coming to meet us, what of it? Our God has already sent forth strength for us, and before the thing we fear can meet us on the road, our God ... shall meet us there.

Amy Carmichael

Key Truth

God is calling *us* — you and me — to become modern day examples of valiant womanhood in *this* generation. Instead of waiting for modern-day heroic women to show up and change the world, are we willing to let God shape *us* into those women, for such a time as this?

His thoughts said, "I can no longer..."

His Father said, "You can. You can do all things through Christ who strengthens you. Is tribulation a new thing to any child of Mine? Should you expect to be without pressure, battering, toil, tears, discouragements, disappointments? All my servants have had these in abundant measure. Look and you will see their footsteps in the dust of the road. But they had strong consultation, and so do you. Not to be pitied, but happy is he who has the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord His God.

Amy Carmichael

Key Question

What is the secret to becoming a woman of valor? Do you have to have special qualifications, education, the right circumstances, or the right personality? No. You simply need the willingness to cast yourself completely upon the strength of God ... and let Him do this amazing miracle through you. Not by your ability, but His. Happy is she who has the God of Jacob for her help!

MEMORIES OF IDA CALLIHAM:

There were so many instances of helping others, it was an everyday occurrence. She was raising seven children, and took care of us in every way a mother could. In the early days, there was no electricity, no washing machine.

We lived in the drought days, the Depression days. She weathered all of that, not only without complaint, but with joy.

I remember her working around the house, washing dishes, sweeping the floor and she whistled and sang all the time. We would walk into the house and she would be singing a hymn, just emanating happiness.

In spite of taking care of us in those conditions, she also helped people in the community. Most babies were born at home and she was a midwife to so many. There was one particular family with several kids, that I remember, they were very poor farmers and the father drank quite a bit.

He would come over and say, "Ms. Ida? It's time again." She would wrap up whatever she was doing and go deliver that baby.

There was a woman in our community who was ostracized because she had been a former prostitute. One day she got very sick. She didn't have money for a doctor or hospital so she was isolated at home. Her husband couldn't quit work to take care of her, but my mother went and took care of her for two weeks. It didn't matter who that woman was, she was sick and needed help, and my mother was there.

Another man had scarlet fever, and no one to take care of him. With that disease you were supposed to put quarantine signs up and keep people out of the house. But my mother went to help him. She cleaned her hands and face with a disinfectant solution so she wouldn't bring it back to her family, and she prayed to the Good Lord to take care of her, and it worked out that way.

WHAT IS A CHANNEL OF BLESSING?

Written by Ida Calliham, 1923

As I sat in a large church, listening to the songs from the choir as they rang forth with such radiance, this is what we heard, "Make me a channel of blessing today, make me a channel of blessing I pray." As these words fell upon my ears, the question came into my mind, "What is a channel of blessing?"

So I began to ask myself, "Am I a channel of blessing? And how can I be such? What must I do?" The answer came when I remembered the words of Jesus spoken to the disciples in Matthew 14, when the multitude of five thousand were fed. When the disciples said, "We have here but five loaves and two fish" they thought that was too small to think of even troubling with. But Jesus said, "Bring to Me what you have, no matter how very small it may seem."

"He took the loaves and the fish, and looking up into Heaven, he blessed and broke the bread, and gave the loaves to His disciples, and the disciples to the multitude."

There we have a channel of blessing.

When the disciples obeyed the Lord and brought what they had, though so very little, and laid it at His feet, He blessed it and gave it back to them more than a hundred fold. Then the disciples were able to convert this blessing and to feed the multitude until their hunger was satisfied and still had food to spare.

This story from Matthew 14 shows us what a channel of blessing is and how our life might be made a channel of blessing. When we lay our all at Jesus' feet, He blesses and gives it back to us – that we might pass the blessing on to our fellow brothers and sisters.

God calls us His co-workers. Are we working with Him, or leaving it up to Him alone? The disciples helped Jesus to feed the multitude, or rather, Jesus helped the disciples to feed the multitude. And He will just as surely help us to feed hungry souls if we will give Him our life to bless, that "we may be a blessing."

THE IMPOSSIBLE CALLING

Key Truth

Valiant womanhood is just as impossible as the feeding of the 5,000 was. But just like the disciples, He has not left us to fend for ourselves in tackling the challenge. Are we willing to go to Him to receive everything that is needed to say “yes” to His call?

THE IMPOSSIBLE COMMISSION

When the day was now far spent, His disciples came to Him and said, “This is a deserted place, and already the hour is late. Send them away, that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy themselves bread; for they have nothing to eat.” But He answered and said to them, “You give them something to eat.”

Mark 6:35-37

Key Truth

Jesus asked them to do the impossible. But He wasn't asking them to look to their own resources in order to obey His request. It says in John 6:6 that “...He Himself knew what He would do.” The disciples didn't need to figure out how to provide bread for the crowd. They simply needed to get in step with the Bread of Life Himself.

Key Question

Are you facing any “impossible odds” in your own life?

- Limited resources — lack of money, opportunity, education, etc.
- Difficult or challenging relationships / people who weigh you down
- A weak church, or worse, a spiritually “off” church
- Feelings of personal weakness, insecurity, or inadequacy
- The darkness and spiritual hardness of our culture
- Personal stumbles or failures
- Past regrets and hurts

- Family challenges and spiritual warfare
- Health problems and physical weakness
- Or simply coming face to face with the high calling God has placed upon your life and realizing you can't do it.

OPENING THE CHANNEL OF GOD'S BLESSING

Is your life a channel of blessing?
 Is the love of God flowing through you?
 Are you telling the lost of the Savior?
 Are you ready His service to do?

Make me a channel of blessing today,
 Make me a channel of blessing, I pray;
 My life possessing, my service blessing,
 Make me a channel of blessing today.

LEARNING FROM IDA'S EXAMPLE: EMBRACING HEROIC WOMANHOOD

#1 BE AVAILABLE TO GOD.

Key Truth

When we hear God's truth being spoken or even sung, are we willing to ask God the question, "what must I do?" with an open heart and a listening ear? Psalm 25:14 says, "*The secret of the Lord is with those who fear Him...*" He whispers the glorious secrets of His kingdom to us when our hearts are postured to hear Him.

Key Truth

For the disciples, God showed them **each specific step** He had for them: making the people sit down in groups, distributing the food, collecting the remainders in baskets. He did the miracle but they were **wiling participants** in the miracle, *one step at a time*. The same is true for us.

#2 CATCH GOD'S BIGGER VISION FOR YOUR LIFE.

Key Question

Are we willing to look beyond ourselves, our own little comfortable world, and receive God's bigger calling for our lives?

Key Truth

When Jesus asked the disciples to feed the crowd, He was calling them to something bigger than themselves — something beyond what they had ever seen or done. Are we willing to make ourselves fully available to Him, even if it pulls us outside of our comfort zone?

Many times throughout the Gospels, Jesus clearly defines the epic calling upon the life of a Christian:

*...I chose you and appointed you that **you should go and bear fruit,**
and that your fruit should remain...*

John 15:16

*Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields,
for they are already **white for harvest!***

John 4:35

*... Go into all the world and **preach the gospel** to every creature.*

Mark 16:15

*Go therefore and **make disciples** of all the nations...*

Matthew 28:19

*...he who believes in Me, the works that I do **he will do also...***

John 14:12

Key Question

How seriously are we taking the amazing calling that He has given us? It's a calling that goes far beyond sitting in church once a week and attending Bible studies every now and then. *We are called to change the world for His glory.*

We have been commissioned by the Most High God to build His kingdom; to go into all the world and preach His Gospel; to shine His light in the midst of the darkness of this age; to make a difference that will last for eternity.

Key Truth

One of the reasons we often struggle to catch God's bigger vision for our lives is because we are believing the enemy's lies about who we are. The truth is that we are loved and valued by the King of all kings – we are infinitely precious to Him. *Our confidence must come from knowing who we are in Christ and learning to agree with His reality.*

...the LORD will be your confidence...

Proverbs 3:26

REMEMBERING WHO WE ARE (IN CHRIST)

Key Truth

When we know who we are in Christ, we won't desperately seek fulfillment elsewhere. So many of the mistakes we make are because we don't really know who we are in Him. We think we need popularity, or affirmation from others, or a relationship, or a specific achievement or circumstance in order to be fulfilled, when all we really need to do is remember who He is and who we are in Him.

I AM ... LOVED

*...Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness
I have drawn you.*

Jeremiah 31:3

I AM ... ROYALTY

The King's daughter is all glorious within; her clothing is interwoven with gold. She will be brought to the King in colorful garments...

Psalm 45:13-14 NASB

I AM ... CHOSEN

Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I sanctified you.

Jeremiah 1:5

I AM ... REDEEMED

*...I washed you in water; yes, I thoroughly washed off your blood, and I anointed you with oil
... I clothed you with fine linen and covered you with silk.*

Ezekiel 16:9-10

I AM ... BEAUTIFUL

...the King will greatly desire your beauty; because He is your Lord, worship Him.

Psalm 45:11

I AM ... VALUED

*See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!
And that is what we are! ...*

1 John 3:1 NIV

I AM ... TREASURED

...when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him...the father said to his servants, "Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found."

Luke 15:20-24

I AM ... CALLED

...I have even called you by your name...

Isaiah 45:4

#3 HAVE OUTWARD EYES.

In her article, Ida challenges, "Let our prayers not always be, 'Lord, bless us,' and, 'Send blessings upon us.' Rather, let us pray, 'Bless me, Lord, and make me a blessing.'"

Key Truth

Are we willing to pray that prayer? To not merely seek God's spiritual benefits for our ourselves, but so that we might become a blessing to others? God desires to make us spiritually strong and equip us with all the benefits of His kingdom — not so we can hoard them for ourselves, but so that we can be a conduit of His love and hope to others. Let's ask Him to give us outward eyes. Let's ask Him to make us strong in Him, so that we can be poured out for His glory.

...I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God — this is your true and proper worship.

Romans 12:1 NIV

...if I am being poured out as a drink offering ... I am glad and rejoice...

Philippians 2:17

Key Truth

God has given us a mission field wherever He has placed us *today*.

- Encouraging a discouraged soul
- Serving a family member
- Giving sacrificially to someone in need
- Sharing the Gospel with the lost
- Etc.

Do we have eyes to see the mission field around us? Do we have a heart of availability to Him?

THE POWER OF A POURED-OUT LIFE

...Freely you have received, freely give.

Matthew 10:8

Key Truth

When we make ourselves fully available to God we won't always see the fruit of our labor immediately. Sometimes we won't even see it this side of heaven. But we can be sure that no step of obedience is ever wasted. And His Word, His Gospel, His Truth will *never* return void.

*So shall My Word be that goes forth from My mouth;
It shall not return to Me void,
But it shall accomplish what I please,
And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.*

Isaiah 55:11

Our Master has never promised us success. He demands obedience. He expects faithfulness. Results are His concern, not ours. And our reputation is of no consequence at all.

Amy Carmichael

SAYING “YES” TO THE OPPORTUNITY OF A LIFETIME:

Key Truth

The disciples could have remained in their comfort zone, refusing to take the risk of feeding that enormous crowd with nothing more than a few small fish and loaves of bread. But what would they have missed? The opportunity of a lifetime; the privilege of working with the King of all kings, of being His hands and His feet to a needy world.

The disciples helped Jesus to feed the multitude, or rather, Jesus helped the disciples to feed the multitude. And He will just as surely help us to feed hungry souls if we will give Him our life to bless, that “we may be a blessing.”

Ida Calliham

Key Truth

Let’s not turn a blind eye or deaf ear to His call. Let’s not limit what He can do through us by looking to our own resources. Let’s not stop the flow of His blessing and supply to us by dwelling on our own limitations instead of His faithfulness and power.

HE GIVETH MORE GRACE

By Annie J. Flint

He giveth more grace when the burdens grow greater,
He sendeth more strength when the labors increase;
To added afflictions He addeth His mercy,
To multiplied trials, His multiplied peace.
When we have exhausted our store of endurance,
When our strength has failed ere the day is half done,
When we reach the end of our hoarded resources
Our Father’s full giving is only begun.

Fear not that thy need shall exceed His provision,
Our God ever yearns His resources to share;
Lean hard on the arm everlasting, availing;
The Father both thee and thy load will upbear.
His love has no limits, His grace has no measure,
His power no boundary known unto men;
For out of His infinite riches in Jesus
He giveth, and giveth, and giveth again.

. . .

He must increase, but I must decrease.

John 3:30

And that is the secret to being made strong out of weakness and becoming women of heavenly valor.