

Shunammite Woman and Husband

Examples on Husband Wife Interactions

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Husband Wife Interactions

Bible Study Series

- Husband-wife interactions from the bible
- Events in the life of selected couples
- How they responded in the events
- Effects of the response on subsequent events
 - Did response lead to blessing?
 - Did response lead to adversity?
- Other questions to enhance understanding

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Shunammite Couple Example

- Developed lasting close relationship
- With man of God Elisha
- Blessed from the encounter
 - Bore a son against reasonable expectation
 - Son restored to life after sudden death
 - Escaped severe famine in their land
 - Regained property lost during sojourn abroad
- 2 Kings 4 and 8

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Encounter with Elisha

- Woman met an interesting stranger
- Maybe at a public event
- Did not know he was Prophet Elisha
- Brought stranger home to share a meal
- Stranger shared meal with couple
- Pleasant experience for all
- 2 Kings 4:8

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2 Kings 4 (NIV and NKJV)

8 One day Elisha went to Shunem. And a well-to-do woman was there, who urged him to stay for a meal. So whenever he came by, he stopped there to eat. [NIV]

8 Now it happened one day that Elisha went to Shunem, where there was a notable woman, and she persuaded him to eat some food. So it was, as often as he passed by, he would turn in there to eat some food. [NKJV]

Understanding the Encounter

- Husband accepted stranger for a meal
- Based only on wife's information
 - Husband's habit of trusting wife's judgment?
 - Wife's habit of protecting husband's trust?
- Husband followed wife's leadership in act of compassion
- Couple started lasting relationship with stranger (that happened to be Elisha)

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Long-term Shelter for Stranger

- Woman sensed stranger was man of God
- Proposed providing long-term shelter in their home for the stranger
- Believed proposal feasible and worthwhile
- Recognized husband's authority
- To decide such matters
- 2 Kings 4:9–10

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2 Kings 4 (NKJV)

9 And she said to her husband, “Look now, I know that this is a holy man of God, who passes by us regularly.

10 Please, let us make a small upper room on the wall; and let us put a bed for him there, and a table and a chair and a lampstand; so it will be, whenever he comes to us, he can turn in there.”

Understanding Shelter Proposal (1)

- Woman believed in proposal
- Recognized husbands approval was needed
- Asked with humility
 - Promise of obedience
 - Husband may approve or disapprove
 - She said “Please, let us...”
 - Did not say “I want to do” or “I am doing”
- Assurance husband will consider in good faith

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Understanding Shelter Proposal (2)

- A call to compassion
- Through husband or wife as leader
- The other is called to support the leader
- Shunammite husband recognized wife's leadership in the call to compassion
- And provided support
- Accepted and implemented wife's proposal

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Father Sends Sick Child to Mother

- Child complained of headache
- While at the field with father
- He sent the child back home to mother
- Mother cared for the child as she could
- 2 Kings 4:18–20

2 Kings 4 (NKJV)

18 And the child grew. Now it happened one day that he went out to his father, to the reapers.

19 And he said to his father, “My head, my head!” So he said to a servant, “Carry him to his mother.”

20 When he had taken him and brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon, and then died.

Understanding Response to Sick Child

- Both recognized a division of responsibilities
- Husband focused on the family farm
- Expected wife to care for sick child better
- Wife shared same understanding
- Accepted responsibility wholeheartedly
- Even after child died
- Committed to division of responsibilities

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Transportation Request

- Wife requested husband for transportation
- To visit man of God at Mount Carmel
- Husband asked if there was a problem
- Wife reassured him
- He provided her donkey and driver
- She departed for Mount Carmel
- 2 Kings 4:21–25

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2 Kings 4 (NKJV)

21 And she went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God, shut the door upon him, and went out.

22 Then she called to her husband, and said, “Please send me one of the young men and one of the donkeys, that I may run to the man of God and come back.”

2 Kings 4 (NKJV)

23 So he said, “Why are you going to him today? It is neither the New Moon nor the Sabbath.” And she said, “It is well.”

24 Then she saddled a donkey, and said to her servant, “Drive, and go forward; do not slacken the pace for me unless I tell you.”

25 And so she departed, and went to the man of God at Mount Carmel....

Understanding Interaction on Transportation

- Wife accomplished two things thru request
 - Informed husband she needed to go to Mount Carmel and why
 - Showed respect for husband's authority over such matters
- Husband showed respect and trust for wife's judgment

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Notable Blessings

- Bore a son against reasonable expectation
- Son restored to life after sudden death
- Escaped severe famine in their land
- Regained property lost during sojourn abroad
- All started with
 - Woman's compassion toward a stranger
 - Husband's support for her spiritual leadership

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What We Learned

- Shunammite couple recognized and respected each other's leadership in specialized areas of family life
- Woman: family's spiritual leader and guard
- Man: family's leader in other areas
- Trusted, respected, and relied on each other's judgment
- Abundantly blessed

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