



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 ONLINE BIBLE STUDY**  
**FAMILY LIFE SERIES**  
**LESSON # 3 FAMILY SACRIFICE**  
**Website: [www.wdgonline.org](http://www.wdgonline.org)**  
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**Definitions: Helpmate – Handmaiden – Harlot**

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

**Handmaiden:** A married or unmarried woman who is committed to serving the Lord.

**Harlot:** A married or unmarried woman who will sacrifice her soul and body for personal gain.

**SCRIPTURE FOCUS:**

**Helpmates:** Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai. – “And so I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish!” (*Esther 4:15-16b*)

**Handmaidens:** She replied (to King David), “Why don't you do as much for all the people of God as you have promised to do for me? You have convicted yourself in making this decision, because you have refused to bring home your own banished son. (*2 Samuel 14:13*)

**Harlots:** Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty warrior. His father was Gilead; his mother was a prostitute. Gilead's wife also bore him sons, and when they were grown up, they drove Jephthah away. Vs.7 – Jephthah said to them, “Didn't you hate me and drive me from my father's house? Why do you come to me now, when you're in trouble?” (*Judges 11:1-2&7*)

**OPENING STATEMENT:**

**My Story:** Fortunately, I come from a family where making sacrifices for one another is the norm. When my mother was sick, my sisters and I took turns taking care of her. We didn't see it as an inconvenience or a sacrifice because we loved her and knew that she would do the same for us. I remember one morning my sister and I were about to give mother a bath. My daughters Roz and Theresa were in the bedroom along with my sister's daughter Jenni. “You girls wait in the living room while we take care of Mom,” I said. As our daughters were about to leave the room, my mother stopped them. “Let them stay,” she said. “They need to learn how to take care of their family.” The younger people in your family should learn at an early age that sacrifice is the deepest expression of love. The role of sacrifice and inconvenience can lead to negative feelings if there is no love in the family. But when you come from a family that loves one another through thick and thin, no sacrifice is too small and no sacrifice is too great. *Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another (1 John 4:11).*

### **Helpmates:**

The Book of Esther tells the story of a young Jewish woman who rose from obscurity to become queen of Persia. Her husband King Ahasuerus was a powerful man and could have destroyed her for challenging a royal decree. But it was Esther's love for her uncle Mordaci and for her people that caused her to put her life on the line. *"For how can I endure to see my people and my family slaughtered and destroyed?" (Esther 8:6).* Most married women will lay down their life for the well-being of their family. But even when the situation is not critical, married women make sacrifices on a daily basis for the sake of family. I want to caution you married ladies not to allow yourself to be the only one in the family to make sacrifices. Don't allow your children to think that they don't have to make sacrifices for the family. Teach them early to pitch in and do their share and help them to realize that the world doesn't always revolve around them. Teach them that giving is a part of living. Let your husband know that while you appreciate him for going to work, he still needs to make sacrifices on the home front, especially when it comes to helping out around the house and with parenting responsibilities. Remember, sacrificing should always be a family affair.

### **Handmaidens:**

In 2 Samuel 14, a wise woman from Tekoa was called upon by Joab to try to change King David's mind when he banished his son Absalom. Because it was such a sensitive matter, the woman could have aroused the king's anger and lost her life. But this godly handmaiden understood the value of family relationships. She was obedient to God's divine assignment and made a sacrifice in order to bring peace and reconciliation to David's family. *So the king sent for Joab and told him, "All right, go and bring back my son Absalom (2 Samuel 14:21)* A handmaiden is not only concerned with her own family, she is helpful and supportive whenever she is needed to strengthen the bond of family. She will work with teenagers who are on feuding with their parents. She will encourage a wife to hold on when difficulties arise in her marriage. She will consider the elderly and make a stranger a part of her family. Godly handmaidens will even make the sacrifice of raising children who have no parents to take care of them. As time passes, the Lord will always remember her kindness – *she will never be forsaken and her children will never beg for bread.*

### **Harlots:**

The children of a harlot are always the ones who suffer the most. Jephthah, who was a judge in Israel, suffered tremendously because of the harlotry of his mother and father. His brothers rejected him and would not allow him to share their father's inheritance. But in spite of the hurt and rejection that he suffered, when his brother's needed his help, Jephthah made the sacrifice and came to fight on their behalf. *Jephthah said to them, "Didn't you hate me and drive me from my father's house? Why do you come to me now, when you're in trouble?" (Judges 11:1-2&7)* The love of God will cause you to help your family even when they mistreat you and fail to appreciate what you try to do to help them. I have heard women who are involved in ungodly relationships say that they did what they did to feed their children. But no matter what your circumstance, your dependency should be in Christ. He promises to supply all of our needs according to His riches in glory. As a single parent, I experienced days when I had to depend solely on the Lord to supply my needs, and He never failed me. No matter what you're going through, learn to put your trust in God, because He has already made the ultimate sacrifice for you. *This is real love. It is not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins. (1 John 4:9)*

**Your Story:** Tell us about a sacrifice that someone in your family made for you - or a sacrifice that you made for a family member.

## **OBSERVATIONS AND PERSONALIZATION:**

### Helpmates:

Read: Esther 4:13-16

1. What did Mordecai say to Esther when she feared the consequences of helping her family and the Jewish people?
2. What was her response?
3. What sacrifices have you had to make for your family?

### Handmaidens:

Read: 2 Samuel 14:1-23

1. What kind of woman did Joab find to bring reconciliation between King David and his son Absalom?
2. How did the woman convince David to forgive his son?
3. What words of wisdom do you give to persuade someone to forgive a family member? Use a personal experience if possible.

### Harlots:

Read Judges 11:1-9

1. Why did Jephthah's brothers reject him?
2. What kind of people did Jephthah associate with when he left his family?
3. Have you ever helped a family member who mistreated you? How did your relationship with the Lord strengthen you?