

# Influence of a Godly Woman

by Stephen Olford

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*The sermon highlights the profound impact of a godly woman's influence through the story of Naaman and a young Hebrew girl.*

**Duration:** 25:24

**Scripture:** Psalm 75:6

**Topics:** "Godly Woman"

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## Description

In this video, Joyce shares her personal testimony of how she came to know Jesus Christ and the impact it had on her life. She explains how she learned about the special quality and quantity of life that comes from having a relationship with God. Joyce also talks about her experience working in the White House and how she believes God placed her there for a purpose. She shares about the Bible study she started at the White House and the excitement she feels about being able to share her faith with others in such a prominent setting.

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## Transcript

Encounter Ministries presents Dr. Stephen Oldford, as heard on nationwide television. It is our prayer that this half-hour program will exalt the Savior and bless you, the listener. And welcome to another presentation of Encounter.

You know, one of the most powerful influences that Almighty God has ordained for affecting not only homes, neighborhoods, and countries is the power of a dedicated woman. It's my privilege today to welcome to our program Joyce Adams, a native of Southern California, who was appointed receptionist to the First Lady and the East Wing of the White House in 1972. Joyce, it's a tremendous joy to have you on our program Encounter.

Thank you, Dr. Oldford. Tell me, when did you leave California to come east permanently? In May of 1971, and we've been in Washington since that time. Thoroughly enjoy it.

What did you do before you came to the White House? I had been working for my father for a while, which I found to be a very enjoyable experience. I had also been with Trans World Airlines for five years. That's my favorite airline.

Good. Don't tell anybody. And then, from that point onwards, you... From that time on, we were in Washington, and I did not work the first year that we were in Washington, and felt very strongly that it was important that the Lord was definitely leading me out of the home after I had satisfied the responsibilities to my husband and made sure that he was very... not going to be the least bit subtly robbed of his position of providing for me as his wife.

I didn't want to rob him or our marriage or myself of something that precious. And within a year's time, the Lord made it very clear that he was leading me out of the home and into a job. You know, that's beautifully put, beautifully put, because, you know, so often wives sort of escape from the responsibility of the home and the respect for the husband.

And I think to the detriment of the home eventually, and I love the way you said that, Joyce, the way you talk makes it very evident, and of course I know it even before this program started, that there came a moment in your life when you had a personal encounter with Jesus Christ. Do you tell our viewers a little bit about that? Certainly. I was eight years old when a Sunday school superintendent explained to me how I could have not only a special quality of life, but a special quantity of life.

And being eight, I was more interested in that quantity of life because I wanted to know, frankly, what would happen to me if I were to die. And she explained to me how I could know for certain that I would spend my eternity and have everlasting life with God. It wasn't until I was 25 that I came to understand what she meant by that special quality of life, the quality of life where you submit all of your ambitions to Jesus Christ.

And that quality of life where you say, Lord, I want to be available to you to do whatever you want me to do for you. That's just bang on. That's just tremendous.

That throws me. And from the surrender of your life to Jesus Christ, obviously you discovered he had a plan for your life to find and follow and finish. And it brought you into the White House, the very center of our national life.

How did that take place? I had spent three months trying to find a job in Washington and had come to the place where the employment agencies were trying to talk me into talking other women into jobs I knew I didn't want and that they wouldn't want either. And my husband's boss offered to send my resume to the White House and also to a gentleman by the name of Jeb Magruder. And my first interview was with a gentleman by the name of Gordon Strawn to have been one of the five executive secretaries to Mr. Bob Haldeman.

Now, all three of these men have been in the news, and I think most people are familiar with them. It shows how the Lord knew where he wanted me, and rather than plant me in their shadow, he placed me in the East Wing where I could really shine for him. I found out six months after I had taken the job in the East Wing that the man who hired me had received my resume from three totally different sources within the White House.

Isn't that amazing? It doesn't that just show what I said about the sovereignty of God's leading, that there is a plan for every life to find and follow and finish. Tell me a little bit about your actual activities there. What do you do as a receptionist and how do you wait on the First Lady and so forth? As the receptionist to the First Lady, I'll greet her official appointments, which might be a poster child or someone who has a very special presentation to make to her.

It's a matter of my getting them to the point of being comfortable enough to ask me questions. As you can imagine, people are rather uncomfortable about meeting the First Lady. My duties also include meeting all of the VIPs visiting foreign heads of state or their cabinet or the wives of senators or congressmen or the congressmen themselves who will be visiting the White House for a special tour.

So you can imagine if a movie star was going through the White House, they'd probably be mobbed before they saw the Red Room. But also you have visiting foreign heads of state where there is going to be a problem with the language barrier. Right.

So we try to do something special as far as small groups of tours for them. Talking about overseas people, are you a linguist yourself or do you then have an interpreter? We have an interpreter. In fact, I've often said that if I'd known when I was taking French in high school that one day I'd be in the White House greeting Madame Giscard d'Estaing, I probably would have learned more than *bonjour*.

I bet so. Joyce, the most thrilling thing I happen to know about you and I'd love you to share is your own Christian witness and the way you've been instrumental in forming a vital Bible study right there at the White House. It's been very exciting.

Tell us about it. Well, it started about a year ago. It was a matter of a number of the Christians who were within the White House who knew one another and there was a small group of us.

We had talked for some time about starting a Bible study, but as you know, these things are very important that they be within the Lord's timing. And the Lord just opened one door after another as far as the Bible study is concerned. He had to place women in key positions within the White House.

I happen to do all of the scheduling for the family theater where we meet and I also handle the auxiliary parking so that our speakers and all can come into the White House and speak to us. But we started with eight women a year ago. We now have 25.

Tremendous. We've seen 11 women come to know the Lord within this time. Isn't that thrilling? Now, where would those women particularly be drawn from? From all over the White House, from the East Wing, the West Wing, the executive office building.

Mainly the personnel of the White House, then? Exactly. Because we are meeting in the family quarters and you do have security problems for outside. Naturally.

And speakers actually do come in to speak to that group. Yes, we've had the Lord has really given us fantastic speakers. I was going to say that's probably one of your problems to try and keep that at a high standard and something real and vital.

And you have to realize that these women who are at the White House are coming into contact with pretty dynamic people every single day. Right, right. And the Lord has given us singing groups that have been very good and have had a special message.

We've had movies. We've invited the women to bring their husbands and their families on certain occasions. These are mainly the lower echelon women in the White House.

They're not the ones who are making the decisions that are going to affect all of the people in our country. But they're the women who are working for the men who will be making these decisions. That's the power

behind.

That's tremendous. That's a great principle. And all this is done in the framework of still submitting to your husband and recognizing his role in the home and not depriving him of his place, as you said.

Right. What does your husband do? My husband is the founder of Witness Art, which is a new concept in Christian art. Isn't that wonderful? How does that work? He will take the joys and the promises that we have in this Christian life and have an artist create an original oil painting.

And from this original oil painting, reproduce the painting in the form of lithographs that can be marketed throughout the country. And tell out the message. Exactly.

There is a witness card that comes with the painting because there are no traditional Christian symbols within it. That's fabulous. That's fabulous.

Just one question more, Joyce. You sense the atmosphere of the White House. You're living there, praying, working and so forth.

Have you an optimism about the coming days? I know we're living in very grim days. But God is on the throne and he'll have the last word. But is your feeling that there's enough prayer and enough Christian influence that's going to turn the tide of some of the things that have disturbed us recently? I'm very excited about what God is doing in Washington and our world today.

And even though I was there during Watergate, I remembered in Psalm 75 where the Lord says that he is the one who gives all men the power. He is the one who gives them the promotion. And I'm excited to realize that, as you said, he's still on the throne and he's still the one who's taking care of each of those that belong to him and is waiting for the opportunity for those of us who know him to share him with those who need him.

Joyce, that's a precious, precious testimony. Thank you for being with us on this program. And God bless you in your witness in the White House as well as in your home.

God bless you. Isn't that thrilling and sweet and wonderful? You know, as I said earlier, God has a very special place for women in his economy. Has it ever occurred to you that God's crowning act was the making of a woman? So many people are so absorbed with Adam when God created Adam and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and Adam became a living soul that they forget that the crowning act was a woman.

Has it ever occurred to you that God chose a woman to bring the Savior into the world? That Jesus Christ, the Son of God, became flesh in order that he might die for us men in our salvation. And to become flesh, he had to be born, and he was born of a woman. Now, God's greatest agency in the world today, barring none, is a called-out group known as the church.

Not buildings, chandeliers, organs, but a people, a redeemed people. Do you know what that church is called in the Bible? The bride, the bride. The godly influence of a woman.

And you know, as I was thinking of Joyce Adams and her sharing in this program today, a very wonderful story came to my mind found in the second book of Kings, chapter 5. And I want to read one or two of these verses and then talk about this for a moment or two. It's the story of Naaman. If you know your

Bible, that name will be familiar.

If you don't know your Bible, don't bother. Just listen. You'll understand the message in just a moment.

But for those of you who'd like to follow along, it's 2 Kings, chapter 5. 2 Kings, chapter 5. Now, Naaman, the captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master. And he was honorable, because by him the Lord had given deliverance unto Syria. He was also a mighty man of valor.

But, but, he was a leper. And the Syrians had gone out by companies and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel, a young lady. And she waited on Naaman's wife.

And she said unto her mistress, Would God, my master, were with the prophet that is in Samaria, for he would recover him of his leprosy. And one went in and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the young lady, which is of the land of Israel. And the king of Syria said, Go, I will send a letter unto the king of Israel.

And later down in the chapter, we read this. And Naaman's flesh, remember he was a leper. And Naaman's flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child.

And he was clean. And he was clean. Do you know, that's a thrilling story.

A thrilling story. I'm talking about the influence of a godly woman. The influence of a godly woman.

We've heard from Joyce Adams of the impact of her life. At the very heart of our nation. The east wing of the White House.

And what she's doing for the Lord Jesus Christ there. A power behind decision making men and women. And the president himself.

And God alone knows what your life could mean in a similar situation. But I think this story fits Joyce so well. Now I want you to notice three wonderful things about this story.

First of all, the sweetness of this young woman's influence. The sweetness of this young woman's influence. And she waited on Naaman's wife.

Now there's a truth packed into that statement. She waited on her. She waited on her.

She was a lady in waiting, so to speak, on Naaman's wife. Naaman was a great captain. Honorable.

A man of valor. A man of tremendous fame. But he was a leper.

And he'd gone out, as we understand in those days, on one of his campaigns. And one of the objectives of war in those days was to capture slaves. And of course, amongst the very best personalities and talented people, he would choose those who would wait upon him and his wife and the household.

And for his wife and his household, he chose this particular young lady. But from the very beginning, we sense it in the story, there was a sweetness about the influence of this young lady. First of all, the sweetness of her life.

She waited on Naaman. You know, how do I know that she had a sweet and wonderful spirit? Because Naaman's wife listened to every word. When she spoke, she was credible.

When she spoke, it was integrity. When she spoke, Naaman's wife took notice. There was a sweetness about her life which demanded a supernatural explanation, as we shall see in a moment.

But not only am I impressed with the sweetness of her life, but the sweetness of her love. Remember that this girl, this young woman, had been torn out of her home, her Hebrew home, torn out of her home by a marauding army. And loved ones had been left behind.

And a home had been left behind. And a heritage had been left behind. And everything she owned and loved had been left behind.

And there she was, really a slave. But in a household, a royal household, so to speak. But you know, there was nothing revengeful about her, nothing spiteful.

She poured out compassion and love. And instead of hating her captor, she pitied her captor. Why? Because he was a leper.

And longed for the healing from that loathsome disease. Isn't that terrific? Tremendous! A life and a love of sweet influence. The power of a godly woman.

But that leads me to say something else. If that's the sweetness of the influence of this young lady, look at the secret of her influence. What was the secret of it? It's bound up in those words.

Talking to her mistress, she said, Would to my god, the master, were with a prophet that is in Israel. For he would recover my master of his leprosy. What does that mean? That means that even though she was in a heathen atmosphere and climate there, and a household, that girl never sold her principles.

Just like Daniel in Babylon. Just like Joseph in Egypt. This little lass was in Syria.

And though she may have not had the scrolls, because she'd been torn out of her home to read, in her memory she carried all that she'd be taught about God. And there are two things about this girl's life that I see here. She never, never neglected the worship of God.

And even though she was in that home, with influences calculated to change her views, she worshipped her god. And she said, Would to my god, that my master, were with a prophet that is in Judea. And she worshipped God.

And you know, I don't care where a person is found, you can still worship God. In these days of easy travel, there is the saying that's often, unfortunately, actualized in lies. When you're in Rome, do as the Romans do.

But not so this young lady. She was in Naaman's home, but she was gonna live for God. She was gonna live for God.

So she drew her resources from God. She had a personal relationship with God. In New Testament language we'd say, she had a personal commitment to Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ was her life. And with that life, dwelling within her personality, she worshipped day by day. And not only do I notice her worship of God, but her witness to God.

Because when she discovered that her master was a leper, notice what she said. Would God, my master, my Lord, were with a prophet that is in Samaria. He would recover him of his leprosy.

Now you know that was a tremendous statement to make. Do you know why? Because if she were taken seriously, she knew that this would be investigated. And if he had gone to Samaria and nothing had happened, he would have come back embarrassed and enraged.

But she laid her life on the line. She laid her life on the line and she said, I am absolutely convinced that if he'll only go to Elisha the prophet, he'll be healed. He'll be healed.

What a witness. What a witness. Listen, in a day of shallow thinking, in a day of easy believism, in a day of professional religiousism, it's a terrific thing to have a person who has conviction and says, God can work.

God can act. Jesus can save. And I believe it.

And that's what she said. And she said, I'm absolutely committed to the view that if my master goes to Elisha, he will be healed. That was the secret of her influence.

Do you know I was in Britain not so very long ago and I heard a whole bunch of young people talking and I thought, reported, and I thought again in a magazine since I came back to America, that young people today in university and school are saying, we are fed up with open-end discussion and dialogue. We want authoritative proclamation. We want to hear people who have convictions and stand by them.

That's what this young person was like. And so we have the sweetness of her influence. We have the secret of her influence.

But listen, thirdly, the service of her influence. What did it achieve? What did it achieve? She said, would to God that my master were with the prophet Elisha, who is in Israel. He would recover him of his leprosy.

Now, I want you to notice what happened. It's a terrific chain reaction. First of all, she influenced Naaman's wife.

She waited on Naaman's wife. And in influencing her, Naaman's wife influenced her husband. And Naaman took this so seriously, first it started with the girl, then with the wife, then with Naaman, took it so seriously that in the next place, Naaman influenced the king of Syria.

And the message got to the king of Syria. And the king of Syria took it so seriously from this honorable captain of Syria's hosts, that what do you think he did? He wrote a letter to Elisha the prophet. And so the prophet was influenced.

And the prophet, in turn, influenced Naaman's life. And you remember the story. If you don't, let me tell you it very briefly.

Naaman said, I have an answer. I want you to go down into the river Jordan, and I want you to dip in that Jordan seven times. Now, there was nothing very virtuous about the waters of Jordan.

I've seen Jordan, it's a muddy kind of a river. And the immediate reaction of Naaman was, are not the rivers of Damascus better rivers in Jordan? Can't I go there and be washed? I'm not going to do such a thing as go down into that muddy stream. But that wasn't the point.

It wasn't the river, nor was it the stream, nor was it the mud that mattered. It was the obedience to God's only way of cleansing. And if God says this is the way to be cleansed, that's the only way to be cleansed.

You can't decide, God decides. And the point was obedience. And you know, he had second thoughts.

And he thought about that young woman back there in his household. Said, no, no, I'm going to try it. I'm going to try it.

I know I'm furious. I know it's humbling. I know I've got to bow myself and bend myself and repent.

I know I've got to do that, but I'm going to do it. And he stepped down into those waters once, twice, three times, four times, seven times. And he came up and his flesh was as the flesh of a little child.

Absolutely clean. He was cleansed. And you know, centuries later, centuries later, when the Son of God stood upon this earth, he referred to Naaman.

And in the book of Luke, there is the story. And it says this. In Syria in those days were many lepers.

And none of them was cleansed, save Naaman the leper. So the fame of this man has come down through the centuries to the very hour in which I'm speaking. Why? Because of the influence of a young lady.

The influence of a young lady who had committed her life to God in totalitarian surrender. Did you hear Joyce Adams say, there came a moment in my life when I handed him my whole life, my ambitions, my faculties, my all. I yielded everything.

And the change in my life came. Will you do that and become an influence for God in your generation, in your society? Will you do that right now? I challenge you. You say, how? Follow me in a simple prayer of response.

Bow your head right there at your set. And pray these words with me. Will you pray now? Let's pray together.

Lord Jesus, I thank you for speaking to my heart and showing me what an influence I can be for God and for good in this confused and chaotic and corrupt world in which we live. I yield myself to you as my savior. Come into my heart.

Cleanse me by your precious blood and use me for your glory. For your dear name's sake. Amen.

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