

A LESSON FROM ANNA

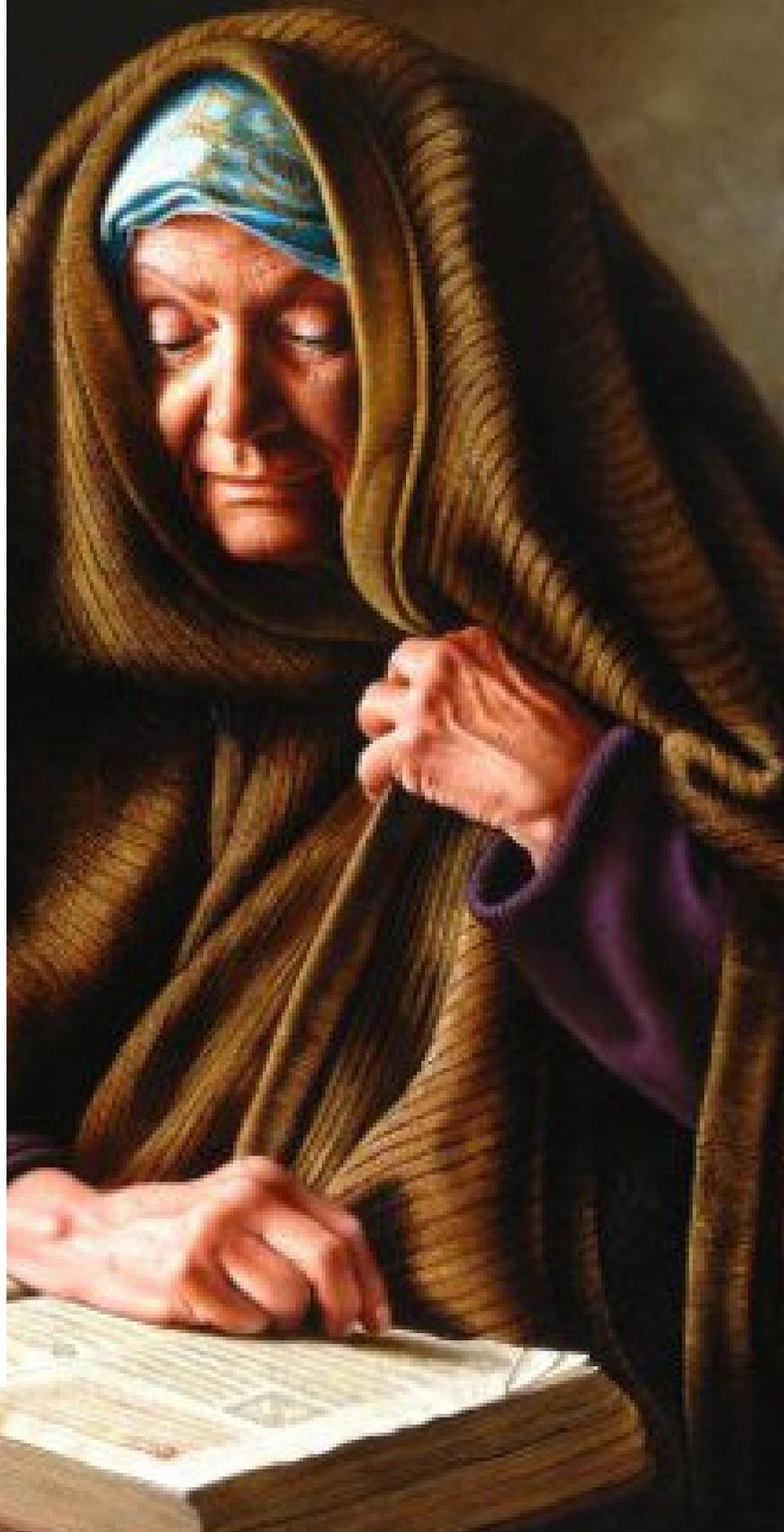
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*Would you still
love God if you
lost everything?*

If we place our trust in material things or accomplishments rather than our faith in God, we will experience major disappointments. In order to be prepared for life's challenges and cherish God's blessings, we need to have a strong foundation in Him.

Anna, a widow in the New Testament, is a remarkable woman in the Bible who chose to follow God despite everything she lost. Anna's love for the Lord brought fulfillment to her and others, and God rewarded her with a special blessing.

"Now there was one, Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity; and this woman was a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the



temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. And coming in that instant she gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem.” Luke 2:36-38 (NKJV)

It is clear that Anna was a woman of God. She was a prophetess, a woman who spoke the Word of God; she was known for proclaiming God’s Word to others, perhaps as a teacher or encourager in the temple to other women. In fact, Anna’s heritage itself points towards God’s faithfulness. In the Old Testament, when the Assyrians conquered Israel and took many as captives, the tribe of Asher was the remnant who escaped this, having either migrated before the conquest or were part of the few exiles who returned from captivity.

Additionally, Anna could be found serving God. She stayed in the temple and made a routine of fasting and praying 24/7. She knew that loving the Lord was a choice and had to be followed with actions, so she made it a habit to seek Him diligently. Anna’s past is also revealed in this passage. She had been married young—only for seven years—then her husband passed away. She was not noted to have children, and now she had been widowed for 84 years. In that society, without a husband or any sons, a widow would more than likely live a life of poverty, since there were limited opportunities for such a woman.

Although Anna lived through tragedy, she dedicated her time to pleasing God. She sacrificed all she had for Him through fasting, prayer, and teaching. At the same time, God provided her with a place to stay in the temple, and she was not lonely; she had contact with others who she probably discipled. More importantly, she had a deep relationship with God.

Anna had an encounter with Jesus that few others experienced; she was one of the first people to see Him when He was born (v. 38). She was afforded that privilege because of her intimacy with God. Through her time spent with Him, she had a heart that was prepared to meet her Messiah. Though she had experienced loss, she had joy and security because she knew God—a type of joy she had to share with others.

As women in Christ, our lives are not defined by what we have lost or what society deems we should have—whether it is marriage, children, a certain job or degree. These are blessings that the Lord can provide, but our character will ultimately shape our lives. Anna’s circumstances seemed to guarantee a life of suffering and loneliness, but her faith and diligence sustained her and impacted those around her. God can use us with what we have now to honor Him. It is easy to fall into the trap of feeling we need specific things to fall into place or need to see God manifest Himself several times before we obey Him. However, just seeing Jesus once as an infant was enough for Anna to speak about Him to those who were also seeking Him.

Set your foundation in God. He will honor your faithfulness and can use your story as a great testimony to others around you.

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