

# GOD PORTRAYS MORE WOMEN

by

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## CHAPTER TEN

### MICAH'S MOTHER

(Judges 17)

IT WOULD HAVE BEEN an embarrassing situation to be a guest in Micah's home at the time our story opens. Micah's mother was very upset. Her life's savings of eleven hundred pieces of silver had suddenly disappeared. There was no rest day or night for his mother or for anyone else in the house. Suspicion pointed in every direction. No matter what turn the conversation took, it came back to the lost money. There was the most thorough housecleaning that home had ever experienced, and the confusion did not add to the comfort of anyone there. The lament turned to curses on the head of the culprit. It was amazing to hear the number of uses to which that special money had been designated. One would think she had never intended to use any of it for herself or the household.

At last, things got so heated and the curses so extravagant that fear of all this coming on his head eclipsed the joy of possessing the eleven hundred pieces of silver, and with great confusion Micah said, "Mother, I took it." Likely, he was as glad to throw it out of his hands as Judas threw the ill-gotten silver on the temple floor.

Proverbs tells us: "**Whoso robbeth his father or his mother and saith, It is no transgression; the same is the companion of a destroyer**" (28:24) or a highwayman. We do not read of any repentance on Micah's part. He confessed because he was in a tight place. But listen to his mother's words, whose mouth had so recently been full of cursings, "**Blessed be thou of the Lord, my son**" (17:2).

Is maternal love blind? The Lord keep us from being hard on other folk's children and lenient and indulgent of our own! When Micah returned the money to her she said: "**I had wholly dedicated the silver unto the Lord from my hand for my son, to make a graven image and a molten image**" (17:3). How amazing!

The whole of it was to go to the Lord. Did the Lord want graven or molten images? He had expressly forbidden them; they were utterly abhorrent to Him. His mother took two hundred, not eleven hundred, shekels of silver and gave them to a founder, who made thereof a graven image and a molten image, and they were in the house of Micah. Did Micah protest against making forbidden images? If he did, it made no difference. This managing old lady attended to it herself.

Micah was already an idolater and had a house of gods. He consecrated one of his sons to be his priest and made an ephod and teraphim for him.

Perhaps there were misgivings in Micah's heart about his son's spiritual qualification for the priesthood because, when a Levite came to his home seeking employment, it seemed a more satisfactory arrangement to hire him. This Levite had been an assistant in the tabernacle but not a priest. He brought no credentials, none were asked. There seemed to be no **"prayer and fasting"** before his dedication service. It was merely a business transaction that appealed to both parties.

Though the Levite was only a young man, Micah said: **"Dwell with me, and be unto me a father and a priest, and I will give thee ten shekels of silver by the year, and a suit of apparel, and thy victuals"** (17:10).

And the young man signed the contract and was content to dwell with Micah. Matthew Henry aptly says, "The ministry is the best calling but the worst trade in the world." Micah had acquired quite a penchant for dedication services, so to consecrate the priest he held a service in which he again officiated. At the close of the service he complacently remarked: **"Now know I that the Lord will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest"** (17:13). Was the good he expected from the Lord financial prosperity? No doubt; in the inaugural address Micah stressed how providentially the Levite arrived, and how much pleasure he had in introducing him.

One day five guests arrived at Micah's home, looking for a new location for some of the families of the tribe of Dan. As they visited, they recognized the voice of the priest officiating in the chapel nearby. They went in to see him and asked: **"Who brought thee hither? and what makest thou in this place? and what hast thou here?"** (18:3). He explained that Micah had hired him for his private priest. They said unto him: **"Ask counsel, we pray thee, of God, that we may know whether our way which we go shall be prosperous"** (18:5). The Levite made the ambiguous and pious sounding answer, **"Go in peace: before the Lord is your way wherein ye go."**

The visitors went on to Laish and completed their investigation. Then they returned home and reported that they had found a place where there was no want of anything that is in the earth. In a short time they came again accompanied by six hundred armed soldiers who stood by the entering in of the gate. But the five men went directly to Micah's house and carried away the carved image, the ephod, the teraphim, and the molten image. They recalled that when Israel took Jericho, they carried the ark with them, the priests going along in the midst. They had a superstitious notion that having a few consecrated articles with them portended good fortune in their adventure. As the Levite saw them carrying the vestments out, he mildly protested, **"What are you doing?"**

They said, **"Lay thine hand upon thy mouth, and go with us, and be to us a father and a priest,"** adding the tempting argument of personal advantage in a larger sphere of service: **"Is it better for thee to be a priest unto the house of one man, or that thou be a priest unto a tribe and a family in Israel? And the priest's heart was glad"** (18:19, 20).

This man who was hired for a priest and a father had no scruples about breaking a contract. He robbed the one who had befriended him, entered into collusion with the robbers, and absconded. He took charge of the consecrated articles and went in the midst of the people. He surely looked after his own safety and protection.

Micah was shocked when he discovered himself robbed of all on which he had set his heart. The desertion and theft of his hireling was unbearably distressing. He resolved; to pursue and recover all. He hastily gathered his neighbors and friends and angrily marched after the brigands. They soon caught up to them because their progress was impeded by women and children. Micah and his men shouted after them, and the children of Dan turned their faces, as if they wouldn't stop marching, and insultingly asked, **“What aileth thee, that thou comest with such a company?”**

And he said: **“Ye have taken away my gods which I made, and the priest, and ye are gone away; [and with a wail], what have I more? and what is this that ye say unto me, What aileth thee?”** (18:23, 24). This was certainly adding insult to injury.

**“And the children of Dan said unto him, Let not thy voice be heard among us, lest angry fellows run upon thee, and thou lose thy life, with the lives of thy household”** (18:25).

Surely this was a demonstration of superstitious religion divorced from morality! Micah realized how impotent he was against such a host, and with a heavy heart returned home. We are poor indeed if our treasures are only that which can be corrupted by moth or rust, or that which thieves may break through and steal. We may well ask ourselves: “Have we an inheritance incorruptible and undented, that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us?” If our confidence is in a mere man, he will fail us as the Levite failed Micah. We are exhorted to look off from even the greatest men of faith to Christ Himself. **“Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith”** (Hebrews 12:2). Many who set up a certain servant of the Lord as their ideal have seen their idol come crashing down. **“Little children, keep yourselves from idols”** (I John 5:21). An idol is anything or anyone who comes between my soul and God.

This bit of idolatry was started by an ambitious old lady. Yet like a disease the infection spread from one inconspicuous individual to a whole tribe. Any departure from the Lord and disobedience to His Word may have far-flung results. Let us guard against any departure from the known will of God lest we cause others “to stumble and stray.”

~ end of chapter 10 ~

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