

Introduction

When I visited Kenya, in April of 2001, I was asked to speak to a group of widows at the AIC (Africa Inland Church) Manza near Machakos. I shared my story and words of encouragement through an interpreter, Josephine Muteto.

I was a widow for thirty years and trusted God to be a husband to me. Isaiah 54:5. I was able to meet the widows attending the meeting and felt a strong bond with them. They asked me to prepare Bible studies for them, and as I thought and prayed about it, I had the idea to study the widows in the Bible.

I recognized that it was important to choose a topic related to the needs of these African widows. Bible studies about widows would address many issues they face, such as: a personal relationship with Christ, financial provision, forgiveness, thankfulness, faith, discipleship, illness, healing, death, grief and suffering.

As I began these series of studies, I asked God to help me think His thoughts regarding the issues at

hand. I prayed that He would help Josephine as she translated my words from English to Kikamba, their mother tongue and heart language, and as she taught each study to the widows.

When I listed the Bible widows, I found ten mentioned by name—Abigail, Anna, Bathsheba, Jezebel, Mary, Naomi, Orpha, Ruth, Tamar and Zeruah—and five spoken of specifically—widow of Zarepath, widow of Nain, the widow who prevailed upon a judge to help her, the poor widow who gave two mites to the temple treasury and the widow whose sons were about to be taken as slaves. Many other widows are alluded to briefly.

All Scripture is...useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man [and woman] of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 3:16–17

I am very grateful to two people who gave me input that helped shape the writing I have done in this book, Galina Gura and Rev. Alfred Muli.

A Russian American missionary and writer, Galina Gura, who heard me speak, asked if I had seen the New Tribes' material on teaching the Bible chronologically. I studied the New Tribes' philosophy and determined to use the chronological method in presenting biblical history preceding and surrounding each widow.

I had the privilege to interview Rev. Alfred Muli, a Kenyan pastor and teacher from the Kamba tribe, who is pursuing his doctorate in the U.S. He gave me insight into tribal culture and customs. I found that the Middle

Eastern culture of Bible times relates well to the tribal culture in Africa.

God has trained me uniquely in the “School of Experience” through being a wife, mother, teacher, widow, nurse, counselor and chaplain. God reminds me to teach Christ as Lord and that I am only a servant.

But we have this treasure [of Christ] in jars of clay [our bodies] to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.

2 Corinthians 4:7–9

Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal

2 Corinthians 4:16–18

*You did not choose me,
But I chose you
And appointed you
To go and bear fruit—
Fruit that will last.
Then the Father will give you
Whatever you ask in my name.
John 15:16*