



From His Hands
MINISTRIES

The Women in Christ's Life: Anna, The Prophetess
by Kris Swiatocho

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EDITOR'S NOTE: The following article is part of the The Women in Christ's Life series.

My mother is only one example of a woman who has impacted my life as a result of her relationship with Christ. Over the next several months in this series, I want to share with you about some of the other women who have impacted my life solely because of their relationship with Jesus. I believe as I share, you too will connect with them and discover for yourself how God has always had a plan for you, is working it out in your life and will never leave you.

Don't you know you're a woman - a young woman? Widowed? This place isn't for you. Go home and darn socks, take care of your family and leave the ministry stuff to us men!

Have you ever heard these words before? Have you ever felt that your life wasn't as important as others? You didn't have the right training or knowledge that other people have? Or perhaps you didn't feel as equipped to handle the job? Maybe you were uncertain of your purpose.

I understand because I have been there. For many years, while running a graphic design business I also volunteered in various single adult ministries. As the years passed, I became more and more involved, to the point that I had to make a decision about going into full-time ministry. I had some fears and doubts because 1) I was a woman 2) I was single 3) I didn't feel adequately educated or equipped. I let my insecurities direct a lot of my choices. I was more concerned with what the world was saying versus God. God told me to go into full-time ministry. God told me that he would equip me. God told me I was equally valued in his Kingdom. That I had a purpose and a plan. Now I just had to believe him.

For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you.

— Jeremiah 29:11-12

Anna: A Woman With Purpose

Anna, a prophet, was also there in the Temple. She was the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher, and was very old. She was a widow, for her husband had died when they had been married only seven years.

She was now eighty-four years old. She never left the Temple but stayed there day and night, worshiping God with fasting and prayer. She came along just as Simeon was talking with Mary and Joseph, and she began praising God. She talked about Jesus to everyone who had been waiting for the promised King to come and deliver Jerusalem.

— Luke 2:36-38

Anna was not like most women of her time. She chose a different path.

More than likely, after her husband's death, Anna would have been encouraged to get married again and have children. Anna, instead, chose to stay single. She chose to share her faith to as many people as she could. She chose to serve the Lord. She chose to fast and pray, worshiping the Lord day and night. She chose to tell them the news of the Savior that was coming, no matter how long it might be before he came. She knew her purpose and she didn't let anyone's opinions or comments keep her from it. Anna's choice would not only affect her life in an abundant way, but also the lives of others ever since.



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What I've Learned From Anna

I would have love to have been a fly on the wall to watch Anna through her 84 years. How she might have shared her pain of losing her husband, being single, and relying on others financially. To also see her share her joy, hope and security in Jesus Christ.

1. She didn't give up.

There have been times in my ministry that I have wanted to give up. Being on the road can get hard. You miss your friends, your church and your community. Sometimes churches cancel, leaving you without finances and resources. Sometimes you get lonely, sick and exhausted. But like Anna, I have also experienced many positives that far outweigh the negatives. I have met so many people who have encouraged me. I have also witnessed many come to Christ and recommit to him. Just think of Anna and how for at least 60 or more years she was able to share her faith with so many people. God's timing is truly perfect. Think about it. If Christ had come the first day she was widowed, how many people would have never heard the message of salvation. We must never give up.

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

— Hebrews 12:1-3

2. She did what God told her to do.

Anna was told by God what to do and she did it. How about you? Has God told you to do something but you are afraid? Lazy? Being disobedient? The blessings of being obedient far outweigh the blessings of staying safe.

Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever.

— 1 Peter 4:10-11

3. She taught me about being strong.

Despite her husband's death, she exemplified that even in the worse of circumstances God is with us. She taught me that you can be used by God no matter who you are, what situation you're in - married or single, rich or poor.

Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve my life; you stretch out your hand against the anger of my foes, with your right hand you save me. The LORD will fulfill his purpose for me; your love, O LORD, endures forever - do not abandon the works of your hands.

— Psalm 138:7-9

4. God provided for Anna.

Anna knew from past experience that the Lord answers prayers. Being a widow, Anna, had to rely on others to feed and clothe her. God provided for her. Wow, this means God is going to provide for you.

My steps have held to your paths; my feet have not slipped. I call on you, O God, for you will answer me; give ear to me and hear my prayer.

- Psalm 17:5-6

5. Fasting produces results.

Recently I spoke at a church where everyone was doing the "Daniels Fast" ... eating only fruit, vegetables and nuts.



Although I sure some were tempted to go off the fast, there seem to be an ease to doing it. Well, as a body of believers, it is always easier to do things together. However, Anna fasted all alone. What strength she must have had to do this. She truly didn't care what "man" thought, but what God thought. Have you ever tried to fast? I once fasted my TV. I felt it was an addiction so I cut the cord three times, only to re-wire it. Fasting is more difficult than it seems.

Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust.

— Acts 14:22

6. She was committed.

Anna was committed to telling everyone about the coming Savior, no matter how long it was going to take.

We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they are good for us - they help us learn to endure. And endurance develops strength of character in us, and character strengthens our confident expectation of salvation. And this expectation will not disappoint us. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.

— Romans 5:3-5

7. She had a lot of courage.

I am sure Anna spoke to some people that didn't want to hear. But she kept moving forth, telling about Christ coming. She had courage to do this alone.

Be on guard. Stand true to what you believe. Be courageous. Be strong.

— 1 Corinthians 16:13

8. She was a strong witness for Christ.

Anna showed me how important it is to tell others about Christ in all situations. Whether I am at a restaurant, getting my car fixed, at the doctor's or talking to my neighbor.

And now, dear children, continue to live in fellowship with Christ so that when he returns, you will be full of courage and not shrink back from him in shame.

— 1 John 2:28

9. She listened to God for direction.

Anna didn't let anyone tell her who she was in Christ. She listened to God to tell her who she was and the direction he wanted to send her.

So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

— 2 Corinthians 5:16-17

10. Anna understood what patience meant.

She waited for Christ to come despite the many years that had past. I am not sure I could have waited that long, especially considering there wasn't any retirement fund.

We also pray that you will be strengthened with his glorious power so that you will have all the patience and endurance you need. May you be filled with joy, always thanking the Father, who has enabled you to share the inheritance that belongs to God's holy people, who live in the light.

— Colossians 1:11-12



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Spend some time reading about Anna, a woman who truly set the example for us all.

Kris Swiatocho is the President and Director of TheSinglesNetwork.org Ministries and FromHisHands.com Ministries. Kris has served in ministry in various capacities for the last 20 years. An accomplished trainer and mentor, Kris has a heart to reach and grow leaders so they will in turn reach and grow others. She is currently working on her third Bible study, *From the Manger to the Cross: The Men in Jesus' Life*. Her second Bible study, *From the Manger to the Cross: The Women in Jesus' Life*, was published last fall and is available on her websites. Her first book, *Singles and Relationships: A 31-Day Experiment*, was co-authored with Dick Purnell of Single Life Resources.

TheSinglesNetwork.org Ministries helps churches, pastors and single adult leaders evaluate, develop and support their single adult ministries through high-energy speaking engagements, results-oriented consulting and training and leadership development conferences and seminars. Click here to request a FREE "How to Start a Single Adult Ministry" guide.

FromHisHands.com Ministries is Kris's speaking ministry. If you've ever heard her speak, you know that Kris is the kind of speaker who keeps the crowd captivated, shares great information and motivates people to make a difference in the lives of those around them! She speaks to all church audiences on everything from "first impression" ministry to women's topics to singles and young adults. She can speak on a Sunday morning, at a woman's retreat or for a single adults conference. Bring Kris to your church today!

Singles and Relationships by Kris Swiatocho and Dick Purnell

Many singles are Christians who wonder if God will ever bring a mate their way or if they should just stop focusing on a future with a marriage partner and live the single life to the fullest. Kris Swiatocho and Dick Purnell offer solid biblical answers for singles in this newest title in Dick's popular 31-Day Experiment Bible study.