

*Heroines
of the
Past
Bible Study*

**An Inspiring Thirteen-Week Virtue Study
Celebrating the Noble Deeds of
Women and Girls from History**

By Amy Puetz

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INTRODUCTION

I'm so excited to share the stories in this book with you! One day I was talking with a lovely Christian woman who asked me if I'd ever written a Bible study for girls. I told her that I'd thought about it before but had never actually started. She encouraged me to write one because she saw a need for such books, and the book you are holding now is the result of that conversation. That is what Christian women and girls are supposed to do for each other: encourage their sisters in Christ to follow God and grow spiritually.

As I put this book together, I met lots of amazing, virtuous ladies who inspired me. There are hundreds of old stories that have been unpublished for years, and I'm excited to be republishing some of them for a whole new generation to discover. Each day of this study has a short story about a historical lady. Following that is a Bible study, where you will read Scriptures that talk about that lady's virtues. I encourage you to make this experience as special as possible. I created this study to be used by a mother and daughter but it could also be used for a personal Bible study or in a

Sunday school class. For a large class you could have the girls do the daily readings at home and then talk about what they learned during the class. If you are doing the study as a mother and daughter, consider buying pretty notebooks or journals to write down your answers to the study questions. If you're studying on your own, brew a cup of tea and enjoy it while you do your daily reading. This book is a tool that can open up doors to deeper discussions: if a subject comes up while doing the study, take time to learn more about it.

If you are studying as a group, keep in mind that many of the stories in this book would be fun to dramatize. Use the dialogue where provided, and ad lib the rest.

Another element of this study is the "box of visual reminders" which is referenced in some lessons. This box could be made during the first day. All you need is a box (a shoebox would work well) covered with fabric or pretty pictures. In this box, you will put things that remind you of important truths. I have several suggestions throughout the book of what to put in the box, but feel free to be creative and add your own items.

Have fun, and enjoy learning about these truly noble hearts. May they point you toward your Creator, Jesus Christ. For no matter how virtuous a woman is, her characteristics pale in comparison to our perfect Lord.

I hope and pray this book will bless you on your journey through life.

Pilgrim on a journey,
Amy Puetz

WEEK 1 ~ DAY 1



The Courage of Princess Edith, Part 1

By E.S. Brooks, 1887

During the turbulent years of the Middle Ages, a beautiful young princess lived. She would later be remembered as a great queen, but in her youth she was known simply as Princess Edith.

On a broad and deep window seat in the old Abbey guesthouse at Gloucester sat two young girls, aged thirteen and ten. Before them, brave-looking enough in his old-time costume, stood a manly young fellow of sixteen. The three were in earnest conversation, unmindful of the noise about them created by the chatter of young people, attendants, and followers of the knights and barons of King William's court.

William Rufus, son of William the Conqueror and second Norman king of England, held his summer council in the curious old Roman-Saxon-Norman town of Gloucester, in the fair valley through which flows the noble Severn. It was held in the old Benedictine Abbey, while the court was lodged in the Abbey guesthouses, in the stately Gloucester Castle, and in the houses of the quaint old town itself.

The boy was shaking his head rather doubtfully as he stood looking down upon the two girls on the broad window seat.

“Nay, nay, sir, shake not your head like that,” exclaimed the younger of the girls. “We did escape that way, trust me we did, Edith here can tell you I do speak the truth—for sure, ’twas her device.”

Thirteen-year-old Edith laughed cheerfully enough at her sister’s confusion, and said merrily as the lad turned questioningly to her, “Sure, then, sir, ’tis plain to see that you are Southern-born and know not the nature of a Scottish mist. Yet ’tis even as Mary said. For, as we have told you, the Maiden’s Castle stands high on the crag in Edwin’s Burgh and hath many concealed pathways to the lower gate. So when the Red Donald’s men were swarming up the steep, my uncle, Atheling, did guide us by ways we knew well, and by twists and turnings that none knew better, straight through Red Donald’s troops, and unseen by them because of the blessed thickness of the gathering mist.”

“And this was your device?” asked the boy admiringly.

“Aye, but anyone might have devised it too,” replied young Edith modestly. “Sure, ’twas no great device to use a Scottish mist for our safety, and ’twere wiser to chance it than stay and be murdered by Red Donald’s men. And so it was, good Robert, even as Mary did say, that we came forth unharmed from amidst them and fled here to King William’s court, where we are safe at last.”

“Safe, say you—safe?” exclaimed the lad impulsively. “Aye, as safe as is a mouse’s nest in a cat’s corner. But that I know you to be a brave and resolute maid, I should say to you—”

But before Edith could know what he would say, their conference was rudely broken in upon. For a royal page, dashing up to the three, with scant courtesy seized the arm of the elder girl

and said hurriedly, "Haste ye, haste ye, my lady! Our lord king is even now calling for you to come before him in the banquet hall."

Edith knew too well the rough manners of those dangerous days. She freed herself from the grasp of the page and said, "Nay, that may I not, master page. 'Tis neither safe nor seemly for a maid to show herself in a baron's hall or in a king's banquet room."

"Safe and seemly it may not be, but come you must," said the page rudely. "The king demands it, and your reluctance is worthless."

And so, hurried along whether she would or no, while her friend, Robert Fitz Godwine, accompanied her as far as he dared, the young Princess Edith was speedily brought into the presence of the king of England, William II, called, from the color of his hair and from his fiery temper, Rufus, or "the Red."

For Edith and Mary were both princesses of Scotland, with a history, even before they had reached their teens, as romantic as it was exciting. Their mother, an exiled Saxon princess, had, after the conquest of Saxon England by the firm Duke William the Norman, found refuge in Scotland. She had there married King Malcolm Canmore, the son of that King Duncan whom Macbeth had slain. But when King Malcolm had fallen beneath the walls of Alnwick Castle, a victim to English treachery, and when his fierce brother Donald Bane, or Donald the Red, had usurped the throne of Scotland, then the good Queen Margaret died in the gray castle on the rock of Edinburgh. The five orphaned children were only saved from the vengeance of their bad uncle Donald by the shrewd and daring device of the young Princess Edith, who bade their good uncle Edgar, the Atheling, guide them under cover of the mist straight through the Red Donald's knights and spearmen to England and safety.

Virtue Study

Memory Verse: Proverbs 31:10. Write this verse on a 3 x 5 card and memorize it during the week.

Share your thoughts about the questions below.

1. Why was Edith in Gloucester?
2. How did she and her family escape?
3. What are some of the virtues mentioned in this chapter?

What do these verses say about courage? Where does true courage come from?

- ♥ Philippians 1:20
- ♥ Hebrews 3:6

Edith's family was saved by her quick thinking. Does her story of escape remind you of anyone in the Bible? (Read 1 Samuel 19:11–18 and 2 Samuel 17:17–22 for a couple of examples.) Read those passages and answer these questions.

- ♥ Who escaped?
- ♥ How did they get away?
- ♥ Why were they in trouble?

The days of brave knights and fair maidens may be long gone, but the virtues they possessed are still alive and well. What are some noble ways you could help your family do everyday activities? Could you offer to help your mom do the dishes? Could you take care of a younger sibling? Could you tell an older sibling that you like something he or she did? Think of a couple of things to do today to help or encourage your family.

WEEK 1 ~ DAY 2



The Courage of Princess Edith, Part 2

By E.S. Brooks, 1887

Perhaps the worst possible place for the fugitives to seek safety was in Norman England, for Edgar the Atheling, a Saxon prince, had twice been declared king of England by the Saxon enemies of the Norman conquerors, and the children of King Malcolm and Queen Margaret—half-Scottish, half-Saxon—were, by blood and birth, a threat to the conquerors. But the Red King in his rough sort of way—hot today and cold tomorrow—had shown something almost like friendship for this Saxon Atheling, or royal prince, who might have been king of England had he not wisely submitted to the greater power of William the Conqueror and to the Red William, his son. More than this, it had been rumored that some two years before, when there was a truce between the kings of England and of Scotland, this

harsh and headstrong English king, who was as rough and repelling as a chestnut burr, had seen, noticed, and expressed a particular interest in the eleven-year-old Scottish girl—this very Princess Edith who now sought his protection.

So when this wandering uncle boldly threw himself upon Norman courtesy and came with his homeless nephews and nieces straight to the Norman court for safety, King William Rufus not only received these children with favor and a royal welcome, but gave them comfortable rooms in the quaint old town of Gloucester, where he held his court.

Just when the royal fugitives deemed themselves safest were they in the greatest danger.

Among the attendant knights and nobles of King William's court was a Saxon knight known as Sir Ordgar, a thane (or baronet) of Oxfordshire, and because those who change their opinions—political or otherwise—often prove the most unrelenting enemies of their former associates, it came to pass that Sir Ordgar, the Saxon, conceived a strong dislike for these orphaned descendants of the Saxon kings. He convinced himself that the best way to secure himself in the good graces of the Norman King William was to slander and accuse the children of the Saxon Queen Margaret.

So that very day in the great hall, when wine was flowing and passions were strong, this false knight, raising his glass, bade them all drink, "Confusion to the enemies of our liege the king, from the base Philip of France to the baser Edgar the Atheling and his Scottish brats!"

This was an insult that even the peace-loving nature of Edgar the Atheling could not brook. He sprang to his feet and denounced the charge. "None here is truer or more loyal to you, Lord King,"

he said, “than am I, Edgar the Atheling, and my charges, your guests.”

However, King William Rufus was of that changing temper that goes with jealousy and suspicion. His flushed face grew still redder, and, turning away from the Saxon prince, he demanded, “Why make you this charge, Sir Ordgar?”

“Because of its truth, sire,” said the faithless knight. “For what other cause hath this false Atheling sought sanctuary here, save to use his own descent from the ancient kings of this realm to plot against your majesty? And his eldest kinsgirl here, the Princess Edith, hath she not been spreading a story among the younger folk, of how some old woman hath said that she who is the daughter of kings shall be the wife and mother of kings? And is it not further true that when her aunt, the Abbess of Romsey, bade her wear the holy veil, she hath again and yet again torn it off, and said that she, who was to be a queen, could never be made a nun? Children and fools, ’tis said, do speak the truth, sire. And in all this do I see the malice of this false Atheling, the friend of your rebellious brother Duke Robert, as you do know him to be, and I do brand him here, in this presence, as traitor and disloyal to you, his lord.”

The anger of the jealous king grew more unreasoning as Sir Ordgar went on.

“Enough!” he cried. “Seize the traitor, or stay. Children and fools, as you have said, Sir Ordgar, do indeed speak the truth. Have in the girl and let us hear the truth. Not seemly? Sir Atheling—” he broke out in reply to some protest of Edith’s uncle. “Aught is seemly that the king doth wish. Raoul! Damian! My pages! Run, one of you, and seek the Princess Edith, and bring her here forthwith!”

While Edgar the Atheling tried, though without effect, to reason with the angry king, Damian the page hurried after the Princess Edith.

Virtue Study

Work on Proverbs 31:10, the memory verse for this week.

1. What were the character flaws of King William Rufus?
2. Why did Princess Edith go to his court?
3. Did she know the danger she would face?

What warnings and promises are found in these verses?

- ♥ Proverbs 9:7–9
- ♥ Proverbs 12:3
- ♥ Proverbs 12:20
- ♥ Proverbs 14:14–18
- ♥ Proverbs 15:1–2

Does Edith's situation remind you of a Bible character? (Read 1 Samuel 19:1–10 for an example.)