



# THE WISE WOMAN

*With Literary Analysis Journal Questions*

*Stacy Farrell*



# HOW DO YOU TRAIN A HEART

*to love what is right, pure, and true?*

The Wise Woman enchants readers while it contrasts the ugliness of pride, selfishness, and conceit—with the beauty of humility, sacrifice, and compassion.

## **NOT FOR WOMEN ONLY:**

Do not let the title deceive you! This elegant fable is not for girls and women only. It captivates boys and men as well.

- Prepare to encounter sleek wolves, slobbering hyenas, and an assortment of beasts that go bump in the night.
- Step into enchanted rooms with pictures that become doorways into the familiar or the fantastic.
- Witness weak-willed parents who blindly overindulge their children and reap devastating consequences.
- Meet a fearlessly loving and wise woman who confronts stubborn ignorance and ugly pride with unflinching discipline, truth, and grace.

The story—combined with literary analysis questions—teaches critical thinking in a way that engages and transforms.

## **AS ONE STUDENT EXPLAINS:**

*"The literary analysis questions cut hard and deep—they forced me to reflect upon the story from a biblical worldview. As I processed the questions, I began to see Rosamond's problems in my own life. Answering offered me no choice but to change."*

**DANNY**

*14 years old*



# PRAISE FOR GEORGE MACDONALD & THE WISE WOMAN

## **FAMOUS AUTHORS ACKNOWLEDGE THEIR DEBT:**

**C. S. Lewis:**

"I have never concealed the fact that I regarded [George MacDonald] as my master; indeed I fancy I have never written a book in which I did not quote from him."

**Madeleine L'Engle:**

"Surely, George Macdonald is the grandfather of us all—all who struggle to come to terms with truth through fantasy."

**G. K. Chesterton** counted George MacDonald as one of the three or four greatest men of the 19th century.

## **MICHAEL PHILLIPS ENDORSES THIS EDITION:**

"*The Wise Woman with Literary Analysis Journal Questions* is fantastic. Its beautiful design is visually compelling. The discussion questions—the entire presentation—is like nothing on MacDonald I have ever seen. I just love it!

"We home schooled back in the early years when there were no resources available. We had to make up everything as we went. How we would have loved to have had *The Wise Woman with Literary Analysis Journal Questions* back then! We definitely would have used it.

"Many congratulations on this masterful way of introducing young readers to George MacDonald. I wish every home school family would use it and encourage readers toward a love for George MacDonald early in life."



—Michael Phillips  
Bestselling Christian Writer & George MacDonald Biographer

### FROM AN INSTRUCTOR'S PERSPECTIVE:



“What a treasure to find literary analysis questions written from a Christian world view. Each chapter of *The Wise Woman* is followed by questions designed to make students think critically about the reading, as well as their own spiritual walks. Mrs. Farrell has crafted questions that help students unearth the profound truths in George MacDonald's captivating tale.”

—Dr. Kimberly J. Bernecker  
Dean and Associate Professor of English, SAGU

### STUDENTS TALK ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCE:

“I found myself pleading with book characters to make right choices and realized that I have struggled with some of the same issues that gripped them. I began to wonder how I could apply what I was reading to my own life.... In addition to the deep wisdom found in the story, the supplementary journal questions left an impression on my heart as they caused me to stop and think even more clearly about the messages and life lessons coursing throughout this amazing book.”



—Renee  
Homeschool Student

“*The Wise Woman* tells the tale of Rosamond, a princess who has obedience problems and is very, very, very proud. Her desperate parents—the king and queen—decide to call on the help of the wise woman, who, unbeknownst to them, ‘kidnaps’ and carries Rosamond to her cottage. There the wise woman teaches her many valuable, albeit painful, lessons.



“The literary analysis questions cut hard and deep—they forced me to reflect upon the story from a biblical worldview. As I processed the questions, I began to see Rosamond's problems in my own life. Answering offered me no choice but to change. (After all, 15+/- questions a week are enough to convict anyone!)

“I highly recommend *The Wise Woman*, a tale of repentance and transformation that any child and parent, whether homeschooled or public schooled, will benefit from reading and analyzing for themselves. In addition, the masterly devised literary analysis questions develop critical thinking and provide the tools for ridding oneself of sinful behavior.

“I can only thank God for putting Stacy Farrell into my life to give me easy access to wise guidance in my faith.”

—Danny  
Homeschool Student

# THE WISE WOMAN

with

Literary Analysis Journal Questions

**George MacDonald**

Journal by Stacy Farrell

❧ Home School Adventure Series ❧

# The Wise Woman

by George MacDonald

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DEDICATED WITH LOVE

to my dear husband Roger Casey Farrell  
and to my precious sons, Roger Dean and Ryan,  
and to the families who traveled with us  
on the maiden voyage of  
*Philosophy Adventure*,  
and,  
above all,  
to my Lord and Savior,  
Jesus Christ.

*Were it not for His love, I would be a foolish rebel.*

**SAMPLE**



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**SAMPLE**

## INTRODUCTION

**L**ife is short. (Shorter than most of us realize.) The window of opportunity to learn and laugh with our children closes all too soon. With such limited time, we must carefully select which resources receive our attention.

*The Wise Woman*, (a/k/a *The Lost Princess*, *A Double Story*, and *Princess Rosamond*), enchants readers while it contrasts the ugliness of pride, selfishness and conceit with the beauty of humility, sacrifice, and compassion.

### **NOT FOR WOMEN ONLY**

Do not let the title deceive you. This elegant fable is not for girls and women only; it captivates boys and men as well.

Prepare to encounter sleek wolves, slobbering hyenas, and an assortment of beasts that go bump in the night. Step into enchanted rooms with pictures that become doorways into the familiar or the fantastic. Witness weak-willed parents who blindly overindulge their children...and reap the destructive consequences.

Meet a fearlessly loving and wise woman who confronts stubborn ignorance and ugly pride with unflinching discipline, truth, and grace.

*The Wise Woman* shows how strong and steadfast love creates the opportunity for a spoiled rebel (who is only royal in title) to become a noble princess (who is truly royal in character). Layers of insight unfold within this delightful and engaging tale.

## George MacDonald

### ABOUT GEORGE MACDONALD

Christian minister, author, and poet George MacDonald (1824-1905) is masterful in his ability to weave profound lessons into thoroughly entertaining tales. Perhaps that is why writers such as C. S. Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkien, and Madeleine L'Engle so deeply admired him.

Acknowledging his debt to George MacDonald, C. S. Lewis wrote:

*... I know hardly any other writer who seems to be closer, or more continually close, to the Spirit of Christ Himself. Hence his Christ-like union of tenderness and severity. Nowhere else outside the New Testament have I found terror and comfort so intertwined....I have never concealed the fact that I regarded him as my master; indeed I fancy I have never written a book in which I did not quote from him.*

### HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

*The Wise Woman* is a perfect story for a family to read together curled up on the couch under a warm afghan or after a meal. (It is only fair to warn you: once you read the first chapter, you might not put it down. More than one mom has stayed up late to read after her children have gone to bed.)

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### WHO SAYS DEVELOPING CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS REQUIRES DRY AND SOMBER STUDY?

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After each chapter, you can discuss the literary analysis questions and vocabulary with younger students and have older students write their answers. (A vocabulary list with space to write definitions is located at the back of the book.)

Clear writing requires clear thinking. The exercise of formulating answers will strengthen your students' critical thinking and communication skills.

### ONE FINAL THOUGHT

Reading *The Wise Woman* is one way to “make the most of every opportunity” (Ephesians 5:16). Attentive students will gain wisdom from engaging with this resource—and will encounter many blessings along the way.

ENJOY!



## ❧ CHAPTER 1 ❧

There was a certain country where things used to go rather oddly. For instance, you could never tell whether it was going to rain or hail, or whether or not the milk was going to turn sour. It was impossible to say whether the next baby would be a boy or a girl, or, even after he was a week old, whether he would wake sweet-tempered or cross.

In strict accordance with the peculiar nature of this country of uncertainties, it came to pass one day that, in the midst of a shower of rain that might well be called golden, seeing the sun, shining as it fell, turned all its drops into molten topazes, and every drop was good for a grain of golden corn, or a yellow cowslip, or a buttercup, or a dandelion at least,—while this splendid rain was falling, I say, with a musical patter upon the great leaves of the horse-chestnuts, which hung like Vandyke collars about the necks of the creamy, red-spotted blossoms, and on the leaves of the sycamores, looking as if they had blood in their veins, and on a multitude of flowers, of which some stood up and boldly held out their cups to catch their share, while others cowered down laughing under the soft patting blows of the heavy warm drops;—while this lovely rain was washing all the air clean from the motes, and the bad odors, and the poison seeds that had escaped from their prisons during the long drought—while it fell, splashing, and sparkling, with a hum, and a rush, and a soft clashing—but stop—I am stealing, I find, and not that only, but with clumsy hands spoiling what I steal:—

*“O Rain, with your dull two-fold sound,  
The clash hard-by, and the murmur all round;”*

—there! take it, Mr. Coleridge;—while, as I was saying, the lovely little rivers whose fountains are the clouds, and which cut their own channels through the air, and make sweet noises rubbing against their banks as they hurry down and down, until at length

they are pulled up on a sudden, with a musical splash, in the very heart of an odorous flower, that first gasps and then sighs up a blissful scent, or on the bald head of a stone that never says thank you;—while the very sheep felt it blessing them, though it could never reach their skins through the depth of their long wool, and the veriest hedgehog—I mean the one with the longest spikes—came and spiked himself out to impale as many of the drops as he could,—while the rain was thus falling, and the leaves, and the flowers, and the sheep, and the cattle, and the hedgehog, were all busily receiving the golden rain, something happened. It was not a great battle, nor an earthquake, nor a coronation, but something more important than all those put together: a baby-girl was born—and her father was a king, and her mother was a queen, and her uncles and aunts were princes and princesses, and her first cousins were dukes and duchesses, and not one of her second cousins was less than a marquis or marchioness, or of her third cousins less than an earl or countess, and below a countess they did not care to count. So the little girl was Somebody; and yet for all that, strange to say, the first thing she did was to cry! I told you it was a strange country.

4 As she grew up, everybody about her did his best to convince her that she was Somebody, and the girl herself was so easily persuaded of it that she quite forgot that anybody had ever told her so, and took it for a fundamental, innate, primary, firstborn, self-evident, necessary, and incontrovertible idea and principle that she was Somebody. And far be it from me to deny it! I will even go so far as to assert that in this odd country

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“THE PRINCESS NEVER THOUGHT  
OF THERE BEING MORE THAN ONE  
SOMEBODY—AND THAT WAS HERSELF.”

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there was a huge number of Somebodies. Indeed, it was one of its oddities that every boy and girl in it was rather too ready to think he or she was Somebody; and the worst of it was that the princess never thought of there being more than one Somebody—and that was herself.

Far away to the north in the same country, on the side of a bleak hill, where a horse-chestnut or a sycamore was never seen, where were no meadows rich with buttercups, only steep, rough, breezy slopes, covered with dry prickly furze and its flowers of red gold, or moister, softer broom with its flowers of yellow gold, and great sweeps of purple heather, mixed with bilberries, and crowberries, and cranberries—

no, I am all wrong—there was nothing out yet but a few furze blossoms, the rest were all waiting behind their doors till they were called;—and no full, slow-gliding river with meadow—sweet along its oozy banks, only a little brook here and there, that dashed past without a moment to say “How do you do?”—there—would you believe it?—while the same cloud that was dropping down golden rain all about the queen’s new baby, was dashing huge fierce handfuls of hail upon the hills, with such force that they flew spinning off the rocks and stones, went burrowing in the sheep’s wool, stung the cheeks and chin of the shepherd with their sharp, spiteful little blows, and made his dog wink and whine as they bounded off his hard wise head and long sagacious nose;—only, when they dropped plump down the chimney, and fell hissing in the little fire, they caught it then, for the clever little fire soon sent them up the chimney again, a good deal swollen, and harmless enough for a while, there (what do you think?) among the hailstones, and the heather, and the cold mountain air, another little girl was born, whom the shepherd her father, and the shepherdess her mother, and a good many of her kindred too, thought Somebody. She had not an uncle or an aunt that was less than a shepherd or dairymaid, not a cousin that was less than a farm-labourer, not a second cousin that was less than a grocer, and they did not count farther. And yet, would you believe it? She too cried the very first thing. It was an odd country! And what is still more surprising, the shepherd and shepherdess and the dairymaids and the labourers were not a bit wiser than the king and the queen and the dukes and the marquises and the earls, for they too, one and all, so constantly taught the little woman that she was Somebody, that she also forgot that there were a great many more Somebodies besides herself in the world.

It was, indeed, a peculiar country—very different from ours—so different that my reader must not be too much surprised when I add the amazing fact, that most of its inhabitants, instead of enjoying the things they had, were always wanting the things they had not, often even the things it was least likely they ever could have. The grown men and women being like this, there is no reason to be further astonished that the Princess Rosamond—the name her parents gave her because it means Rose of the World—should grow up like them, wanting everything she could and everything she couldn’t have. The things she could have were a great many too many, for her foolish parents always gave her what they could; but still there remained a few things they couldn’t give her, for they were only a common king and queen. They could and did give her a lighted candle when she cried for it, and managed by much care that she should not burn her fingers or set her frock on fire; but when she cried for the moon, that they could not give her. They did the worst thing possible instead, however, for

## Chapter 1

they pretended to do what they could not:—they got her a thin disc of brilliantly polished silver, as near the size of the moon as they could agree upon, and for a time she was delighted.

But, unfortunately, one evening she made the discovery that her moon was a little peculiar, inasmuch as she could not shine in the dark. Her nurse happened to snuff out the candles as she was playing with it, and instantly came a shriek of rage, for her moon had vanished. Presently, through the opening of the curtains, she caught sight of the real moon, far away in the sky, and shining quite calmly, as if she had been there all the time; and her rage increased to such a degree that if it had not passed off in a fit, I do not know what might have come of it.

As she grew up it was still the same—with this difference, that not only must she have everything, but she got tired of everything almost as soon as she had it. There was an accumulation of things in her nursery, and schoolroom, and bedroom that was perfectly appalling. Her mother's wardrobes were almost useless to her, so packed were they with things of which she never took any notice. When she was five years old, they gave her a splendid gold repeater, so close set with diamonds and rubies that the back was just one crust of gems: in one of her little tempers as they called her hideously ugly rages, she dashed it against the back of the chimney, after which it never gave a single tick, and some of the diamonds went to the ash-pit. As she grew older still, she became fond of animals, not in a way that brought them much pleasure, or herself much satisfaction. When angry, she would beat them and try to pull them to pieces, and as soon as she became a little used to them, would neglect them altogether. Then, if they could, they would run away, and she was furious. Some white mice, which she had ceased feeding altogether, did so, and soon the palace was swarming with white mice. Their red eyes might be seen glowing, and their white skins gleaming, in every dark corner; but when it came to the king's finding a nest of them in his second-best crown, he was angry, and ordered them to be drowned. The princess heard of it, however, and raised such a clamor that there they were left until they should run away of themselves, and the poor king had to wear his best crown every day till then. Nothing that was the princess's property, whether she cared for it or not, was to be meddled with.

Of course as she grew, she grew worse, for she never tried to grow better. She became more and more peevish and fretful every day—dissatisfied not only with what she had, but with all that was around her, and constantly wishing things in general to be different. She found fault with everything and everybody and all that happened, and grew more and more disagreeable to everyone who had to do with her. At last, when



she had nearly killed her nurse, and had all but succeeded in hanging herself, and was miserable from morning to night, her parents thought it time to do something.

A long way from the palace, in the heart of a deep wood of pine-trees, lived a wise woman. In some countries she would have been called a witch, but that would have been a mistake, for she never did anything wicked, and had more power than any witch could have. As her fame was spread through all the country, the king heard of her, and, thinking she might perhaps be able to suggest something, sent for her. In the dead of the night, lest the princess should know it, the king's messenger brought into the palace a tall woman, muffled from head to foot in a cloak of black cloth. In the presence of both their majesties, the king, to do her honour, requested her to sit, but she declined, and stood waiting to hear what they had to say. Nor had she to wait long, for almost instantly they began to tell her the dreadful trouble they were in with their only child—first the king talking, then the queen interposing with some yet more dreadful fact, and at times both letting out a torrent of words together, so anxious were they to show the wise woman that their perplexity was real, and their daughter a very terrible one. For a long while there appeared no sign of approaching pause. But the wise woman stood patiently folded in her black cloak, and listened without word or motion. At length silence fell, for they had talked themselves tired, and could not think of anything more to add to the list of their child's enormities.

7

After a minute, the wise woman unfolded her arms, and her cloak dropping open in front, disclosed a garment made of a strange stuff, which an old poet who knew her well has thus described:

*All lilly white, withoutten spot or pride,  
That seemed like silk and silver woven near;  
But neither silk nor silver therein did appear.*

"How very badly you have treated her!" said the wise woman: "Poor child."

"What! Treated her badly?" gasped the king.

"She is a very wicked child," said the queen; and both glared with indignation.

"Yes, indeed," returned the wise woman; "she is very naughty indeed, and that she must be made to feel; but it is half your fault too."

"What!" stammered the king. "Haven't we given her every mortal thing she wanted?"

"Surely," said the wise woman. "What else could have all but killed her! You should have given her a few things of the other sort. But you are far too dull to understand me."

"You are very polite!" remarked the king, with royal sarcasm on his thin, straight lips.

## Chapter 1

The wise woman made no answer beyond a deep sigh, and the king and queen sat silent also in their anger, glaring at the wise woman. The silence lasted again for a minute, and then the wise woman folded her cloak around her, and her shining garment vanished like the moon when a great cloud comes over her. Yet another minute passed and the silence endured, for the smouldering wrath of the king and queen choked the channels of their speech. Then the wise woman turned her back on them, and so stood. At this the rage of the king broke forth, and he cried to the queen, stammering in his fierceness:

“How should such an old hag as that teach Rosamond good manners? She knows nothing of them herself! Look how she stands! Actually with her back to us!”

At the word the wise woman walked from the room. The great folding doors fell to behind her, and the same moment the king and queen were quarreling like apes as to which of them was to blame for her departure. Before their altercation was over, for it lasted till the early morning, in rushed Rosamond, clutching in her hands a poor little white rabbit of which she was very fond, and from which, only because it would not come to her when she called it, she was pulling handfuls of fur, in the attempt to tear the squealing, pink-eared, red-eyed thing to pieces.

8 “Rosa! Rosamond!” cried the queen;—whereupon Rosamond threw the rabbit in her mother’s face. The king started up in a fury, and ran to seize her. She darted shrieking from the room. The king rushed after her, but, to his amazement, she was nowhere to be seen; the huge hall was empty.—No; just outside the door, close to the threshold, with her back to it, sat the figure of the wise woman, muffled in her dark cloak, with her head bowed over her knees. As the king stood looking at her she rose slowly, crossed the hall, and walked away down the marble staircase. The king called to her, but she never turned her head, or gave the least sign that she heard him. So quietly did she pass down the wide marble stair, that the king was all but persuaded he had seen only a shadow gliding across the white steps.

For the princess, she was nowhere to be found. The queen went into hysterics, and the rabbit ran away. The king sent out messengers, but in vain.

In a short time the palace was quiet—as quiet as it used to be before the princess was born. The king and queen cried a little now and then, for the hearts of parents were in that country strangely fashioned;—and yet I am afraid the first movement of those very hearts would have been a jump of terror if the ears above them had heard the voice of Rosamond in one of the corridors. As for the rest of the household, they could not have made up a single tear amongst them. They thought, whatever it might be for the princess, it was for every one else the best thing that could have happened;

## THE WISE WOMAN ~

and as to what had become of her, if their heads were puzzled, their hearts took no interest in the question. The Lord Chancellor alone had an idea about it, but he was far too wise to utter it.

SAMPLE

## Literary Analysis Questions

1. When and where does this story take place? Is it in a real or imagined land?
2. What does the author say about how the king and queen and the shepherd and shepherdess treat their daughters?
3. What does the author mean when he says that the little girl was a “Somebody”? Does being a “Somebody” prevent the little girl from being unhappy?
4. How does the author use sensory details to emphasize the contrast between life for the royal family and life for the shepherd’s family? Write two examples.



5. Notice the author's word choice: "*not less than a shepherd or dairymaid...not less than a grocer....*" Based upon his careful phrasing, do you think he respects the working-class? Why or why not?
6. Does MacDonald present either class—working or ruling—as wiser than the other when it comes to child rearing? What does he say about each?
7. What does MacDonald say about the status of human contentment in this peculiar country?
8. What does MacDonald communicate by telling us the king and queen gave Rosamond a lighted candle because she cried for it?

## Chapter 1

9. Were the king and queen honest with Rosamond? How do you know?
10. What do Rosamond's parents call her fits of rage? What does this tell you about her family?

12

11. Does Rosamond demonstrate a special tenderness toward animals? Explain your answer.
12. Instead of receiving loving discipline and guidance, Rosamond is left unrestricted and thoroughly indulged. What is the result?

13. What does Rosamond's response to this treatment communicate about the author's view of human nature?

14. At what point do Rosamond's parents finally decide they need help?

13

15. When MacDonald first introduces the wise woman, what important detail does he give that is consistent with a biblical worldview?

16. What is your initial impression of the wise woman based upon the author's physical description of her?

## Chapter 1

17. After listening to the king and queen recite a litany of Rosamond's dreadful behaviors, what is the wise woman's surprising response, and how do the king and queen subsequently react?

18. What is Rosamond doing when she first encounters the wise woman?

14

19. How do the various members of the royal household respond to Rosamond's disappearance?

20. Before reading on in the story, write what you think happened to Rosamond.



# VOCABULARY

Page numbers are listed next to each word so students can review vocabulary in-context prior to writing the definition in the space provided. Blank spaces are provided for optional words selected by the instructor.

| CHAPTER-PAGE | WORD             | DEFINITION |
|--------------|------------------|------------|
| 1-4          | marchioness      |            |
| 1-4          | incontrovertible |            |
| 1-5          | sagacious        |            |
| 1-7          | perplexity       |            |
| 1-7          | enormities       |            |
| 1-8          | altercation      |            |
| 2-15         | brazen           |            |
| 2-15         | partiality       |            |
| 2-16         | heath            |            |
| 2-16         | assuaged         |            |

## Glossary

| CHAPTER-PAGE | WORD        | DEFINITION |
|--------------|-------------|------------|
| 2-16         | countenance |            |
| 2-16         | obstinacy   |            |
| 3-27         | assailed    |            |
| 3-27         | covert      |            |
| 3-28         | tyrannical  |            |
| 3-28         | caverns     |            |
| 3-28         | forlorn     |            |
| 3-30         | picket      |            |
| 4-37         | perverted   |            |
| 4-38         | deceitful   |            |
| 4-38         | grievously  |            |
| 4-39         | hovel       |            |