



true wōman

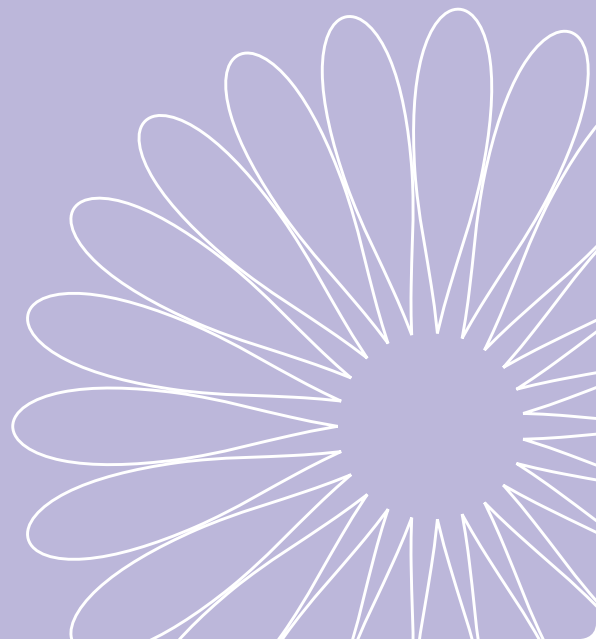
heart

preparation

guide

for leaders

KIMBERLY WAGNER



contents

Part I: Introduction to Biblical Womanhood

- 3 Day 1: Now Is the Time
- 4 Day 2: For Such a Time as This
- 6 Day 3: Life Is Sacred
- 7 Day 4: This Is Good
- 8 Day 5: Image Bearers
- 9 Day 6: My Role in the Big Picture
- 11 Day 7: Is There a Difference?
- 12 Day 8: Complementary Versus Competing
- 13 Day 9: Listening to Error Brings Deception
- 15 Day 10: Hiding from God
- 16 Day 11: Gender Conflict
- 18 Day 12: The Wilderness Is Looking Pretty Good

Part II: The Redeemed Woman and the Church

- 20 Day 13: Sacrifice Required
- 21 Day 14: Blood Redemption
- 23 Day 15: Living Proof
- 24 Day 16: Glorify God in Your Body

Part III: Heart Issues for Women

- 26 Day 17: Total Abandonment
- 27 Day 18: The Hardened Heart
- 28 Day 19: The Heart Where God Dwells
- 30 Day 20: The Bitter Heart

- 31 Day 21: The Contented Heart
- 33 Day 22: The Distracted Heart
- 34 Day 23: The Courageous Heart
- 35 Day 24: The Transformed Heart

Part IV: A Woman's Call to Intercession and Prayer

- 37 Day 25: Intimate Relationship
- 38 Day 26: Knowing Him
- 39 Day 27: Seeking Him
- 41 Day 28: Courageously Persistent in Prayer
- 42 Day 29: Intercession
- 43 Day 30: The Time Has Come to Wail

Part V: A Woman's View of God

- 45 Day 31: I Am God; You Are Not
- 46 Day 32: Condemning God
- 47 Day 33: God Is in a Class by Himself
- 49 Day 34: Treasures of Darkness
- 50 Day 35: Arguing with the Potter
- 51 Day 36: No Need to Fear

Part VI: Daughters of Biblical Womanhood

- 53 Day 37: Passing On the Baton
- 54 Day 38: Daughters of Biblical Womanhood
- 56 Day 39: Bearing Fruit
- 57 Day 40: Filling the Earth with His Glory

Part I: Introduction to Biblical Womanhood



day 1 now is the time

Scripture Focus: Isaiah 43

“Behold, I will do a new thing, now it shall spring forth; shall you not know it?”—Isaiah 43:19, NKJV

Let’s start with a little glimpse back in history to see God at work changing hearts and lives. There are times in history when God chooses to change the course and direction of a nation in order to accomplish His purposes. It has been 150 years since America experienced what has been called the Third Great Awakening. During a period of two years (1857–59), anywhere from 500,000 to 1,000,000 individuals were added to the church, and at one point 50,000 people were coming to Christ every week! This work of God could be considered one of those rare moments in history when God awakened an almost spiritually comatose church in order to do a “new thing.”

We believe America is ripe for another great movement of God. The family has never been more vulnerable; this nation has never seen such a rapid period of moral decline; there are more “fatherless” children, a higher divorce rate, and fewer mothers at home to invest in their children’s lives than at any other point in our nation’s history.

Our nation has succumbed to destructive ways of thinking and living that have struck a blow to the foundation of our society. Could it be that God is beginning to put in place the components necessary for Him to do a new work, to accomplish a spiritual revolution among women that will affect relationships, homes, churches, and ultimately our nation?

It is natural to fear change, to be cautious of a “new” way of thinking. But are you willing to consider that there may be some things that need to be changed, not only in our nation, not only in your friends’ lives, but in your own heart? This could be the time that God wants to do a new work in *your* life!

Would you humbly ask the Lord if there are areas where change is needed in your life? As we individually respond to the work of the Spirit of God, as we line up our lives under the authority of His Word, the impact of our obedience may grow into a powerful rushing wind that will sweep across our nation, birthing a “new thing”!

Take Time to Reflect

Isaiah 43 is filled with comforting reassurances of God's unfailing commitment to His people. Although as a nation Israel had repeatedly turned from Him and encountered His judgment, He was giving His people the promise of a "new work." As you read through the closing verses of this chapter, see what parallels you can find with our nation's spiritual condition and also with your own spiritual condition. Ask God to perform the necessary heart preparation in order for you to receive the "new thing" that He desires to accomplish in your life. ☪

day 2 for such a time as this

Scripture Focus: Esther

"Who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"—Esther 4:14, NKJV

"I believe the time is ripe for a new movement—a seismic holy quake of countercultural men and women who dare to take God at His Word and who have the courage to believe and delight in God's plan for male and female."—Mary Kassian¹


Do you sense that God is desiring to do a new thing in our world? Do you see the need for a cultural transformation in which women will embrace God's created design for their lives? Are you willing to endure personal sacrifice, if necessary, in order to take a stand and fulfill your role as a biblical woman in this hour? Perhaps you were born in this moment of time in history in order to be used as an integral part of this work of God. Are you willing?

Embracing our calling as women has far greater implications than what can be accomplished in just one woman's life, as important as that is. Imagine what might occur if even a small, but deeply committed, Spirit-empowered group of women began to submit to God's kingdom purposes, first in each one's individual walk with Him, then in homes, churches, and workplaces, and ultimately resulting in a mighty movement of God-fearing, Christ-exalting women across this nation.

Many years ago, God placed a young Jewish girl on the throne of one of the most powerful world kingdoms in order to accomplish His purposes for that hour in history. When her people were threatened with genocide, Esther was willing to suffer the consequences of taking a stand on their behalf. Look around. Do you see the great need of our day? Do you see women fulfilling their purpose? Do you see homes that are reflecting God's glory? Sadly, we are witnessing the tragic consequences of unbiblical thinking and living as women.

Consider the cost involved in being a “*True Woman*” in our day. For you, it may mean surrendering some of what you view to be your personal “rights.” To be a part of this movement may require some changes in your lifestyle: time spent in prayer, a vocational change, a simplifying of your schedule, or a new approach in the way you interact with others. Will you approach this study with honesty and humility, allowing the Lord to challenge any unbiblical thinking you may have? Are you willing to evaluate your attitudes and actions as a woman under the authority of Scripture? Perhaps you were born for this purpose—to be a part of a seismic “holy quake” of countercultural women who dare to take God at His word!

Take Time to Reflect

Review the life of Esther. What personal risk did she take by interceding for her people? What are some of the cultural indicators that point to a need for a cultural revolution in our day? Do you believe the time has come for a new movement among believers that will result in living out God's design for men and women? How will you respond to this need? 

day 3 life is sacred

Scripture Focus: Genesis 1

“The LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.” —Genesis 2:7, NASB

“We waste our lives when we do not pray and think and dream and plan and work toward magnifying God in all spheres of life.” —John Piper ²

Sometimes we can forget that life is a sacred gift from our good Creator. The fact that you are a living being is not something to be taken for granted. God had a purpose in giving you the life that He did!

As a woman, you not only have the gift of physical life, but also you’ve been designed to use your gender to glorify God. You were not created by mistake or as an afterthought. Rather, God artistically and intelligently formed you *distinctively as a woman* for His great purpose.

Wouldn’t it be a shame to miss out on His plan and purposes for your life because of an unwillingness to find contentment and value in your role as a woman? Sadly, many women have resisted God’s purpose in their gender and have wasted years by trying to reinvent their identity. In this way, women are left wounded and confused, wondering what went wrong.

God had something much better in mind for women when He gave them life. As John Piper has said,

This is the way God meant it to be before there was any sin in the world: sinless man, full of love, in his tender, strong, moral leadership in relation to woman; and sinless woman, full of love, in her joyful, responsive support for man’s leadership. No belittling from the man, no groveling from the woman. Two intelligent, humble, God-entranced beings living out, in beautiful harmony, their unique and different responsibilities.³

Take Time to Reflect

Do you view life as a sacred gift, an opportunity to glorify God in the way He created you and through the role He's assigned to you? How are you demonstrating contentment or discontentment in your womanhood? Thoughtfully read through the creation account in Genesis 1. As you do so, ask God to give you insight into your own heart and attitudes toward womanhood. ☩

day 4 this is good

Scripture Focus: Genesis 2

“God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good.”—Genesis 1:31, NKJV

Throughout Genesis 1–2, we see God repeatedly affirming the quality of His work as He views each part of His creation and evaluates it as “good.” However, there is one thing that He says is lacking—man is not complete without his complement: woman.

The woman was not an afterthought; God did not suddenly realize that He was missing something when populating His earthly paradise. No, man was created first—but woman was in the mind of God before the first molecule of earth was spoken into existence.

At the right time God presented Adam with His crowning glory—Eve! Intimately created from the bone and flesh of her future husband, this creature was unique in every way. She was presented to the man as a beautifully designed gift from his Maker.

Man was the physical source God used in forming the woman. She was given life as an individual, but her original composition was from the man's own body. Think about it—his body was broken sacrificially to provide the necessary physical components to produce his bride.

Why did God take woman out of man? Was God limited to providing man with a mate derived from “used” materials? Why didn't God create woman *ex nihilo* (out of nothing), as He did the heavens and the earth? Or why didn't God use rock or earth, marble even, to chisel an exquisite being to delight Adam?

God had a perfect and noble purpose in creating woman from man. Woman is intimately connected with man as her fleshly source. Although the heart of fallen woman seeks to dominate man, he was not created from her or for her—she was created from and for man. And God saw that it was good, even *very good!*

Take Time to Reflect

Think through the implications of God taking woman out of man. In what ways do you think woman was intended to complement man? Whether married or single, what are some ways you can encourage the men around you? How can you help them to fulfill their role and purpose as men? Read the creation account in Genesis 2; then ask God to help you see His purpose for you as a woman. Be open to what He desires to teach you. ☪

day 5 image bearers

Scripture Focus: Psalm 8

“God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”—Genesis 1:27, NASB


With the creation of mankind, God did a unique work, a “new thing”—something He had not done before. He created image bearers. That is, He placed mankind in a class of its own—above plant and animal life. He gave man the ability to reason and choose and gave him the authority to rule, having dominion over creation. Just as God functions with intellect, will, and emotion, so also God gave man the opportunity to use these capabilities in his relationship with God and others.

Of course, man is limited in his demonstration of God’s attributes and the extent to which he is free to function. For example, he is limited by a physical body to the earthly realm and is not free to roam the spirit world; he is not omnipresent. His intellect is limited in comparison to God’s, which is filled with all knowledge.

But even under the limitations that come with the state of humanity, our Creator has granted us an extremely privileged position. And it is clear from Scripture that both male and female are equally awarded this special status. Both are extremely valuable to God in our distinctive roles and functions. Both men and women are designed by God to reflect His image through our particular differences and our God-given identities as male and female.

As image bearers, we can embrace the opportunity to reflect God's character and attributes in our role as women. Using our exclusive design and beautiful female complexity, we can reflect the image of our Creator in a manner that only we can fulfill. Why would we want to minimize our female identity and thereby forfeit the plan that God put into place for our gender as image bearers?

Take Time to Reflect

Consider the honor that God has given to mankind as you read His thoughts on this subject in Psalm 8. Pray this psalm back to Him as a statement of praise. How are you portraying to others what God is like by functioning in the position of image bearer? In what ways can you, as a woman, distinctly exalt God through your womanhood? Is this a role that you are embracing or rejecting? 

day 6 my role in the big picture

Scripture Focus: 1 Corinthians 11:1–16

“Man was not created for the woman’s sake, but woman for the man’s sake.”
—1 Corinthians 11:9, NASB

One of the nagging characteristics of fallen man (and woman!) is the tendency to elevate our personal ambitions, concerns, and future above all else. In this way, not only do we lose sight of the big picture, but in fact we *become* the big picture. What a mistake! And that's why we must always remember that this life is *not* all about us.

In many ways our view of life is similar to that of the child who, when putting together a puzzle, places his entire focus on one puzzle piece. Many of us become so enamored with our colorful, one-dimensional puzzle piece that we begin to view the edges of this irregularly shaped piece of cardboard as the boundaries of the universe. We proudly think that the world evolves around us and that our puzzle piece *is* the big picture!


Sadly, we forget that we are merely one piece of the puzzle in God's grand scheme of redemption, and that He is the One ordering the placement of each piece in His Big Picture!

For women who struggle with pride, 1 Corinthians 11:9 can be hard to swallow, especially if we are still struck by the idea that our puzzle piece is *the* necessary component for the universe. "What do you mean I was created for the man's sake?!" we might say. Or our first reaction when reading this portion of Scripture may be to argue for a more prominent position or at least to say, "Hey, couldn't I just be created for my own sake? What does a man have to do with it?"

If your reaction is something like that, perhaps it is time to take a humble step back before you offer your challenges and objections to God's infallible Word.

Take Time to Reflect

Do you view individuals who serve in roles that require following their leader's instructions as being less valuable than the leader? Do you find it difficult to honor authority? Slowly work through 1 Corinthians 11:1–16. (A good commentary is helpful when studying this passage.) Are there any things in this passage that you find offensive? Does this uncover any heart issues that you need to deal with? If so, why? Spend some time asking God to give you His honest evaluation.

Over the next several weeks you may be tempted to give up or skip this devotional study. We hope you'll persevere through this time of heart preparation. Ask God to reveal any areas in your life that may be hindering you in fulfilling your role as a biblical woman. 

day 7 is there a difference?

Scripture Focus: John 13

“The LORD God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him.’” —Genesis 2:18, NASB

“Woman was made by God to meet man’s deficiency.” —John MacArthur ⁴

God designed a beautiful, complementary union between man and woman that would function in harmony. He created man first and gave specific responsibilities to him before woman ever appeared on the scene. And yet, although God designed man as the leader and gave him the responsibility of headship, this in no way implies that he occupies a superior position in relation to the woman.

John Piper describes the leadership role of man in this way:

The call to leadership is not a call to exalt ourselves over any woman. It is not a call to domineer, or belittle or put woman in her place. The call to leadership is a call to humble oneself and take the responsibility to be a servant-leader in ways that are appropriate to every different relationship to women.⁵

In the woman’s role of helper, she is called to support the man’s leadership and enable him to function in his God-assigned role. And yet the woman’s assigned role is one that requires significant contribution. A married woman, in particular, is to use her God-given gifts and abilities to aid her husband as his partner, bringing to the relationship her distinct strengths and insights as a woman. In this way she will serve as a complement to him.

A two-headed relationship, in which each individual is vying for power and control, is ineffective and will ultimately self-destruct. God turns this way of thinking upside down. He calls for the man to be a servant-leader and the woman to be a helper-partner. Additionally, He calls for the men to cherish and care for their wives, loving them in the same selfless, serving way that Christ loves His Bride, the Church.

Take Time to Reflect

Do you embrace or resent the “helper” role? Do you view this calling as demeaning, of less importance than the man’s role? Read John 13 and reflect on Jesus’ example as a servant-leader. Do you view Jesus as less valuable than the disciples because of His taking a helper’s role in ministering to His disciples? Ask God to reveal any areas of pride that may be causing you to resist the idea of being your husband’s helper. ☩

day 8 complementary versus competing

Scripture Focus: Mark 9:33–41

“Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted.”
—Matthew 23:12, NASB

“The role of men and women in ministry is complementary. True enrichment for both Christian men and women comes when these roles are fulfilled side-by-side. A woman’s ministry is primarily maternal in flavor and style, and the man’s is primarily paternal. This marvelous and rich role difference should be celebrated and reflected. It’s cooperative ministry.” —Joni Eareckson Tada⁶

The woman was created to fulfill a vital role in man’s life, serving as his co-regent over creation and functioning as his helper. Some women react to the concept of being a “helper,” as if that were an inferior position. But to the contrary, the helper role is honorable, vital, and can be embraced when it is seen as a necessary complement for the man.

Let’s look at one “helper” whom Jesus commended as the greatest Old Testament prophet.

In the Gospel narratives, John the Baptist stands out as a premier player, one of a kind and necessary in preparing the way for the coming King. But what did John say of Jesus and himself? “He must increase, but I must decrease” (John 3:30, NASB). Why didn’t John grasp for fame? Why didn’t he grumble over losing the following he had acquired in his wilderness ministry? Because he understood the principle “It’s all about Him; it’s not about me.”

Do we view John as less than the impacting proclaimer that he was because he played a supporting role when the Son of Man arrived on the scene? No, we hold him in even higher regard for humbly taking his rightful position as the “preparer of the way” while refusing to be proclaimed as “The Way.”

So, why do we, as women, sometimes take offense at being considered a supporting player rather than the leading character when it comes to God-assigned roles? Somehow we've convinced ourselves that there is less value in this position, so we view our role as demeaning or as less significant than the man's.

Where did that kind of thinking come from? Perhaps during a dialogue in Eden? We'll take a look at that fateful exchange tomorrow.

Take Time to Reflect

How did Jesus respond to His disciples' competitive spirit in Mark 9:33–37? Do you compete with the men you around you, or do you try to use your gifts and abilities to complement them? Do you seek to honor worthy men in respectful and appropriate ways, or do you have a demeaning attitude toward men? Ask God to open your eyes to your own attitude and behavior. ☪

day 9 listening to error brings deception

Scripture Focus: John 17

"The serpent said to the woman, 'You surely will not die!'" —Genesis 3:4, NASB

"Listening to things that are not true is the first step toward ultimate bondage and death. . . . There are no harmless lies. We cannot expose ourselves to the word's false, deceptive way of thinking and come out unscathed. Eve's first mistake was not eating the fruit; her first mistake was listening to the Serpent." —Nancy Leigh DeMoss⁷

What was Eve thinking? It is easy for us to scan the Genesis 3 account and roll our eyes at Eve's gullibility. But would we have fared any better in the situation? And honestly, do we manage any better as we battle deception on a daily basis?

One of the most amazing aspects of this biblical account is the fact that Eve so quickly abandoned her loyalty and confidence in her Creator. He had never given her any reason to question His care and commitment to her well-being, and yet she entertained doubts about


His motives and character and then proceeded to defy His instructions. But is our progression toward disobedience any different? Do we have any reason to doubt God's care and commitment to us?

From the moment the serpent spoke words that contradicted her Creator, Eve should have had heard warning alarms sounding. "You surely will not die!" (Genesis 3:4, NASB). Who was this creature to contradict the Master? Not only did he directly contradict God, but he also brought slanderous accusation: "God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil" (verse 5, NASB). The statement was not *completely* false; Adam and Eve definitely had their eyes opened. But that wasn't a *good* thing, and this temptation to "be like God" is vastly overrated.

Why do we put ourselves in the position to function as god, when our godlike qualities are severely limited? We can't see into the future; we don't have all power; we can't fathom the concept of infinity. We even struggle at times to remember what we ate for lunch! And yet we keep trying to step into the God role and take charge of our lives—always the wrong choice.

How can we protect ourselves from this kind of deception? We must become discerning women—women who are trained to recognize error, who are so filled with the truth that when we are exposed to error the contrast is as jolting to us as ice-cold water thrown in the face.

Take Time to Reflect

Read Jesus' prayer in John 17. What does He refer to as "truth"? What is His main concern for His disciples? Are you easily misled? Do you struggle with being able to discern? What does Hebrews 5:14 say about this? Ask God to mature you in His Word, to use the knowledge of His truths to protect you from error. Consider whether you need to increase your consumption of truth. 

day 10 hiding from God

Scripture Focus: John 3:16–21

“They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God.”—Genesis 3:8, NASB

Hiding. It is what we do when we’re afraid, when we’re ashamed, when we know we’ve messed up but we don’t want to face the consequences. Once Eve sinned, what may have been a daily, joyous routine, sharing the evening hours with her Creator, now became something to dread. She found herself hiding from God—and even ashamed for her husband to see her as she was.

Are you in hiding?

It may be hard to admit that we are trying to avoid God. We may find plenty of excuses to skip Bible reading, steer clear of friends who might confront us, or simply stop listening to truth. Sometimes we’ve been in hiding for so long that we’ve forgotten the reason why. Hiding from God keeps us from His presence, which leads to spiritual drought.

“Silence is not golden when we use it to try to avoid the truth,” say Nancy Leigh DeMoss and Tim Grissom. “Any attempt we make to hide from God—whether through silence or blatant lying—is absurd. Do we really believe God won’t notice our sin or our efforts to conceal it?”⁸

Our attempts to hide from God are as juvenile as the two year old covering his eyes and believing that he is hidden from view. Yet when we are unwilling to discuss something with a godly counselor, when we resist the things of God, when we fill up our lives with enough activity to drown out the Spirit’s conviction, we are in hiding mode.

Rather than fearing to come out into the open, we should fear the consequences of covering our sin. Consider this truth from the Word: “He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion. How blessed is the man who fears always, but he who hardens his heart will fall into calamity” (Proverbs 28:13–14, NASB).

A healthy fear of God leads to openness, honesty, and freedom. But fear of confessing our sins brings concealment, deception, and enslavement to our fears. Hiding seeks the darkness for its covering; confession seeks the light (John 3:19–21). Hiding is an attempt to deal with our sins independently from God; confession allows the blood of Christ to cover our sins.

Take Time to Reflect

Are there things you have kept hidden? Have you resorted to deception in an attempt to cover sin? Are you hiding from God because of resistance to His role and design for you as a woman? Do you have hidden sin in the area of moral purity? Is your pride keeping you from being honest? Is anything worth keeping you from experiencing God's presence? Prayerfully read John 3:16–21. Ask God to open your eyes to any sin you may have hidden for so long that you're no longer convicted. Ask God to soften your heart and make it sensitive to sin. Be willing to agree with God about your sin. Come clean and step into the light! ☩

day 11 gender conflict

Scripture Focus: Genesis 3

"Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you." —Genesis 3:16, NASB

In today's Scripture Focus passage, God pronounces the chilling decree that frames the future for mankind in their new state as fallen creatures. The serpent's enticing words have faded into a dim memory, the promise of godlike status having become nothing more than mockery. And the defiant assurance "You surely will not die!" (Genesis 3:4, NASB) has proven to be the biggest lie of all. We all die. In fact, because of the Fall, all of mankind would now be *born* spiritually dead. All that was produced from Eve's dalliance with disobedience has been destructive, and we, as Eve's daughters, are still dealing with it today.

Perhaps the most challenging consequence of Eve's fall has to do with the issue of desire. The Hebrew word that is translated into our English word "desire" (Genesis 3:16) is an interesting noun. We find it in only two other verses in Scripture. Many scholars view this term as referring to the woman's desire and urge to "rule over," or dominate, her husband, when in fact the husband has been given the position of authority over her. Sounds like a recipe for disaster.


Whether single or married, most women struggle with this issue of control. We have an underlying drive to manipulate the men around us. We may not express it overtly, with harsh tones or verbal jabs; some of us may take a more subtle route—raised eyebrows and manipulative silence. Yet either way, men can become paralyzed in fear when faced with a domineering woman and give in to what is generally their common struggle: passivity. In spite of their God-given position of headship, many men would gladly abdicate their role and bestow that “honor” on the woman.

John MacArthur has said,

Because of sin and the curse, the man and the woman will face struggles in their own relationship. Sin has turned the harmonious system of God-ordained roles into distasteful struggles of self-will. Life-long companions, husbands and wives, will need God’s help in getting along as a result. The woman’s desire will be to lord it over her husband, but the husband will rule by divine design (Eph. 5:22–25).⁹

Take Time to Reflect

Evaluate your general approach to men. Do you typically view men as incompetent, less intelligent than you, insensitive, or immature? Consider whether you have any negative attitudes toward the male gender and how that might affect your treatment of men.

Think through the events of Genesis 3. Ask yourself whether you recognize any tendencies in your own life that might be a result of the fallen desire to rule over men. Confess to God any areas where you are guilty of usurping man’s leadership role. Ask God to reveal to you what issues of the heart might be affecting your view of men. Also, ask Him to transform your thinking to enable you to view men with an attitude of respect that is compatible with their God-assigned position. 

day 12 the wilderness is looking pretty good

Scripture Focus: Song of Solomon 1–2

“Better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and angry woman.”
—Proverbs 21:19, NKJV

“Most people know I’m a quadriplegic. I cannot fold clothes; but I can pray for, cheer on, encourage, support, listen to, applaud, and praise my husband. The secular feminist movement has virtually neutered men’s masculinity. As women, we can help reinforce those characteristics about a man that are truly praiseworthy. In so doing, we not only fulfill our Genesis 2 role of being a helpmate, but we help our husbands be the men God designed them to be. That’s a marvelous vocation.” —Joni Eareckson Tada¹⁰


Surely you’ve seen him trudging behind his wife in the mall. His eyes are glazed over and downcast. He seems to be in an almost comatose state. He is the “neutered man.” At one time he may have seen himself as some type of leader, exhibiting certain skills and strengths, willing to take a risk in order to achieve and explore, to conquer new territory and hurdle obstacles. He no longer tries. He has lost his zeal for living and his confidence as a man and leader. And the greatest risk he takes now is to make feeble suggestions to his domineering wife. If we could read his mind, would it be filled with resentment, or would we find a blank emptiness, the resentment long ago dissolved into an ocean of hopelessness?

Many women confuse their assigned role of “helper” with that of “controller.” Rather than cheering on their man, they resort to ordering him around. This type of woman sees her husband as less than what she thinks he should be and resorts to various pressure tactics to whip him into shape—for his own good, of course! Rather than applauding and praising his achievements, she finds ways to critique him with the justification that she is merely “helping” him. When silence and supportive smiles would be appropriate, she blasts him with her opinionated rhetoric until he quietly retreats.

The feminine role of helper does not imply silent acquiescence toward a mate who is clearly making foolish choices, but it is a role that finds creative and supportive means to bring out the best in the men around us. If the men around us have lost the joy of manhood, their confidence to lead, and the desire to cherish us, it may be that we have stripped them of their masculinity through our rejection of the helper role.

Take Time to Reflect

Do the men around you have the confidence to make leadership decisions, even if it means conflicting with your opinion? Do men seem to fear having discussions with you?

If you are married, does your husband's countenance and attitude reflect mature masculinity? Does your husband seem to resent you? Has your husband retreated into a "silent but safe" world? 

Do you need to refuel your appreciation for your husband? Read Song of Solomon 1–2. Notice the words of admiration that the bride expresses. Also, if you have never taken the 30-Day Husband Encouragement Challenge for wives, consider doing so (www.ReviveOurHearts.com/challenge). If you are single, consider passing on the challenge to someone who is married. (You'll also find encouragement for your relationship with Christ in the Song of Solomon reading!)

Part II: The Redeemed Woman and the Church

day 13 sacrifice required

Scripture Focus: Romans 3

“The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them.”
—Genesis 3:21, NASB

Imagine the scene in the garden. Prior to the Fall, everything operated in perfect harmony. Formed by the masterful hand of God, creation displayed a beauty unknown to those born since the Fall. All creation danced in a song of praise for the Creator; the animal kingdom knew no fear of man; there existed no concept of pain or death. The earth was full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. But one act of disobedience changed all that and threw all of creation into a state of corruption and groaning (Romans 8:20–22).

Adam and Eve’s disobedience in the garden was not a mere flirtation with sin—it was an act of high treason against the Creator. The holy God, the Provider and Sustainer, the Just and Merciful, the Giver of all good things—spurned. His instructions disregarded. His commandment rebelled against.

The penalty for treason had to be paid. Blood would be shed. Death would now enter the perfect garden. If we stood as observers, what would we have witnessed? Consider the relationship that Adam had developed with the animal kingdom.

Before Eve, the animals were Adam’s only companions. He not only named and cared for them, but Adam probably spent many hours of enjoyment with the animals under his rule.

Then death came to the animal world. Genesis 3:21 gives a glimpse into God’s redemptive plan. The details are hidden, but it is clearly implied that a blood sacrifice was made. Adam and Eve must have stood transfixed by the shocking sight as they witnessed one of their precious lambs, never having shown hostility or aggression, quietly obey the Creator’s call.

What were they thinking as the Master laid His tender hand on the willing subject's neck? Were they horrified at their first sight of blood as the lamb's life ebbed away? Did they feel remorse that an innocent creature was bearing their death penalty and providing the necessary covering for their sin? Later, did they relive those moments every morning as they dressed in their garments of skin? Someday we may know the answers. But for now we understand that this sacrifice would be the first foreshadowing of the Lamb who would be slain for the sin of the world. This was the first hint of the ultimate sacrifice that would one day be made at the Cross.

Take Time to Reflect

How does the death of Christ relate to the sinful choices we have made as women and the breach in our relationship with God and others? Have you allowed your heart to grow cold and indifferent toward God's grace? Read Romans 3 and spend some time expressing gratitude for Christ's sacrifice. ☩

day 14 blood redemption

Scripture Focus: 1 Peter 1

“. . . knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.” —1 Peter 1:18–19, NASB

“In the Bible, differentiated roles for men and women are never traced back to the fall of man and woman into sin. Rather, the foundation of this differentiation is traced back to the way things were in Eden before sin warped our relationships. Differentiated roles were corrupted, not created, by the fall. They were created by God.” —John Piper¹¹

The harmony and union God created for man and woman to experience was broken with the fall of mankind in the garden. That's when the battle of the sexes began! The first couple became alienated, blaming one another and hiding in shame. The roles God had designed for each one became distorted. And ever since the Fall, men and women have been tempted to react in ways that distort the beauty and design of God's created order.


The biblical ideal for the man is to demonstrate humble, loving headship. But the temptation for the man is to react in one of two extremes: passivity or aggression. The man can become an extreme wimp or a domineering tyrant.

The biblical ideal for the woman is joyful, intelligent submission. But because of the distortions brought about since the Fall, she can also react in the extremes of passivity or aggression. This can result in her either living as a doormat or boldly usurping the man's headship.

These role distortions and extremes make it impossible for us to enjoy the kind of relationships God intended within marriage and between men and women. Mercifully, through Jesus, we have been redeemed from this futile way of life. Because of His redemptive work on the Cross, we can now experience true unity and intimate fellowship, and we can fulfill His purpose for our lives as women. We are not left in bondage to our fallen desires.

Jesus is the Lamb of God who was slain to deliver us from the mess we had made, to reverse the effects of the Fall. When we receive what He has done, we become living examples of His grace, filling the earth with His glory.

Take Time to Reflect

First Peter 1 gives a beautiful description of Jesus' payment for us. He set us free from bondage to the role distortions produced by the Fall. Do you know that you've truly been set free because of His blood that was shed for you? Why don't you take the time to write out a description of the way this occurred in your life, then spend some moments thanking Him for His work on the Cross. 

day 15 living proof

Scripture Focus: 1 Peter 2

“You are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God’s OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.” —1 Peter 2:9, NASB

Over the past two weeks of seeking God to prepare your heart, are you finding a new focus on who you are in Him? Do you have a fresh appreciation for His love in providing His Son as a sacrifice for you? Aren’t you glad He chose you?

Ask yourself this: *Why* did God choose you? Why would He determine to set His affection on you and purchase you as His own possession? It’s mind-boggling to think about, isn’t it?!

God told the people of Israel why He chose them. It wasn’t because they were holier than others or because they had some special inroad to God. He chose them and redeemed them, simply because He loved them, and so that they might display His grace and faithfulness to the world.


The same goes for us. When our lives fit God’s design, when His purposes are being lived out in us, and when others can see the demonstration of His power at work in our lives, then we are showcasing the splendor of who He is.

It works something like this: When the wife who would naturally be a controlling nag begins to be transformed by the grace and power of Christ . . . when the domineering woman surrenders her need to be “in charge” and begins to treat the men in her workplace with kindness and respect . . . when a woman is willing to live counter-culturally in order to fulfill God’s role for her life—then the world has living proof of God’s reality.

This issue of being God’s own possession should settle a lot of our struggles. When we start to grumble and complain about the guidelines of Scripture, we need to stop and remember that we are the Lord’s *possession*—His personal property! That means He has all rights and authority over our lives. He knows best; we don’t. The recognition that we belong to Him should move us to wave the white flag of surrender and say, *Yes, Lord!*

Take Time to Reflect

Do you picture yourself as independent and in charge of your life? Do you struggle with the fact that you are God's possession, or does that fact bring you a sense of comfort and delight? In what ways can others see the living proof of God's reality in your life? What practical evidence has there been in your life this week that you belong to God?

Meditate on 1 Peter 2. Allow the example of Christ, His reaction to suffering, and the role that He took in securing you for His possession to give you a greater appreciation for Him. Thank Him for choosing you as His possession, and ask Him to use you in proclaiming His excellence. Determine to demonstrate living proof of God's reality. 

day 16 glorify God in your body

Scripture Focus: Revelation 2–3

“You have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.”
—1 Corinthians 6:20, NASB

“The female raunch culture of Girls Gone Wild, Sex & the City, Victoria's Secret, and young women who dress for the office like they would for their honeymoon is a direct result of the ideology of third-wave feminism.” —Carolyn McCulley¹²

The dictionary defines *raunchy* as “smutty, indecent, lecherous.” Somehow this description doesn't seem consistent with God's beautiful and noble design for women. Pretending that the church has kept herself unspotted and pure in the midst of our soft-porn modern culture is to be naïve.

First Corinthians 6:20 presents a logical statement. It begins with the factual premise that “you have been bought with a price,” referring to the sacrificial atonement of Christ's blood. Then it proceeds to the conclusion that because of what has occurred (our purchase), we should glorify our Purchaser (Christ) in our bodies. Simply put, *God paid for you with His own blood—now live like it!*

Does the church look like a pure, blood-bought bride? Or is she in bed with the raunch culture?


Consider this scene: Your teenage daughter is a picture of virginal beauty and wholesome purity. Then one day she decides that your rules are too oppressive. So she opts to venture out into the wild world of experience, running away from home and breaking your heart. News reaches you that she's been abducted, taken to a foreign country, and sold into slavery. You cannot rest until you rescue her.

Reaching her destination, you discover that the local authorities fear the slave traders and are unwilling to help you. At great expense you hire a local gunman to plan your daughter's escape. In spite of the extreme danger, you insist on accompanying him. As you both approach the building where you believe your daughter is being held against her will, there is an exchange of gunfire and you are struck down. Rapidly losing blood, you crawl to the doorway, where you can see your daughter's profile. One captor lies dying, while the other escapes. As you fall across the threshold, with your last ounce of energy, you whisper your dying words to your daughter: "You're free, honey. Quick—run away! I've paid for your way back home."

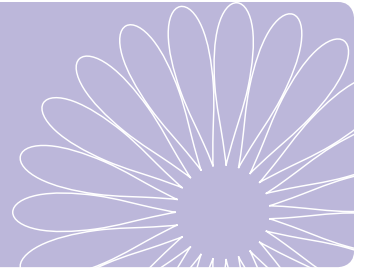
Imagine how bizarre it would be for your daughter to respond with a yawn, "Home? Why would I want to do that? I love it here. I'm not going anywhere."

God is on a "search and rescue" mission in this world. How have you responded to His initiative? He wants to use you to join Him in rescuing others' lives!

Take Time to Reflect

Does this story offend your sensibilities? It should. Although such a scene can hardly be imagined, it is no more unthinkable than the thought of Christ's Bride, the Church, being ambivalent toward His redeeming love. Although her deliverance has been made possible at great cost, she prefers to wallow in filth and remain in bondage to her lusts. Read Jesus' addresses to the churches of Revelation 2–3. What stands out to you about Christ's assessment of the condition of the church and about His prescription? 

Part III: Heart Issues for Women



day 17 total abandonment

Scripture Focus: Romans 8:28–30; 2 Corinthians 2:14–16; 5:17–21

“The eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His.” —2 Chronicles 16:9, NASB

“The world has yet to see what God can do with and for and through and in a man who is fully and wholly consecrated to Him.” —Henry Varley (D. L. Moody’s life was greatly impacted by this statement.)

What is God’s agenda? He clearly states it in Numbers 14:21: “As I live, all the earth will be filled with the glory of the LORD” (NASB). Here God is issuing His mandate for believers; His passion and desire is that the whole earth be filled with His glory.

How do we fulfill this mandate?

Ever since Adam and Eve fell from their state of glory, every human being has been born into a state that falls short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). We must go through the process of spiritual transformation—new birth—in order to have the capacity of glorifying God (2 Corinthians 5:17–21). As we are born again and grow in Christ, we begin to take on the characteristics of His nature, to reflect His attributes to those around us, to become His hands and feet—ministering and offering new life to those we come in contact with. Our single, overriding purpose in life should be to see the whole earth filled with His glory.

Imagine what God could do with and for and through and in a woman who is fully and wholly consecrated to Him. Are you willing to be one such woman? Are you willing to say, *Yes, Lord*, to whatever He asks of you? Are you willing to fulfill your distinctive role and calling as a woman so that the earth can be filled with His glory?

Take Time to Reflect

Prayerfully read through these portions of Scripture: Romans 8:28–30 and 2 Corinthians 2:14–16 and 5:17–21. In what way does your life reflect the reality of God’s presence? How are you fulfilling His mandate of filling the earth with His glory? How can your femininity be used to help further His Kingdom agenda in this world?

How do you respond to the challenge of 2 Chronicles 16:9? If you are motivated to be that “one woman” living in total abandonment to Him, how will you do this? Are there changes that need to be made in order for your life to be in accord with God’s counsel in Scripture for you as a woman? ☩

day 18 the hardened heart

Scripture Focus: Hebrews 3

“Just as the Holy Spirit says, ‘TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS.’”
—Hebrews 3:7–8, NASB

“The hardening of our hearts is the spring of all our other sins.” —Matthew Henry

What does it mean to “harden your heart”? Medically, when a physical heart becomes “hard,” it is due to a condition known as *scleroderma*, referring to a connective tissue disease that affects vital organs, including the heart, eventually resulting in death. Spiritually, when we harden our hearts to God’s instruction, it affects our entire outlook, our attitude, and ultimately our future.


Hardening of the spiritual heart occurs when we become resistant to the Word, the will, and the ways of God. We turn away from His instruction and go our own way. As you recall, it was the woman who first hardened her heart toward God in a certain garden!

The cycle goes something like this: You are walking through life, enjoying the presence of God, when suddenly He chooses to lead you up a new path—perhaps a steeper trail than you’re used to climbing. You may be filled with fear (*I’ve never gone this way before*). Or perhaps you’re not fond of doing hard things (*Couldn’t I take a breather for a while?*). Maybe you’ve seen another path that looks more comfortable, so you offer that route as a suggestion. The first step in the cycle of hardening your heart is to resist the path God has chosen for you.

Next in the cycle is to put your fingers in your ears. God uses truth from His Word, or perhaps life circumstances or counsel from godly friends, to get your attention. But you've determined to go your own way, and you don't want the conviction of God's voice to interfere with your plans.

Tragically, you proceed on your own way and find a measure of comfort in justifying your actions. By this time your heart is becoming even harder, resistant to any conviction of God, unwilling to move, bend, or surrender to the hand of God. This is a dangerous place for a believer. God will often graciously move in with some type of opposition in order to alert you to your pride and rebellion (James 4:6). It is critical to respond to Him in repentance. The failure to repent is the open door to spiritual bondage.

Take Time to Reflect

Work your way through the warning of Hebrews 3 and then read Psalm 95. Can you recall times when you've hardened your heart to God's instruction? Do you recognize any of this cycle occurring in your life currently? 

day 19 the heart where God dwells

Scripture Focus: 1 Peter 3

"Thus says the High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: 'I dwell in the high and holy place, with him who has a contrite and humble spirit, To revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.'" —Isaiah 57:15, NKJV

God describes two places where He is willing to dwell: on His holy throne and within the heart of the humble. What an awesome realization that the God of the universe desires to dwell with us!

Humility opens the door for God's presence to be at home in our hearts. Jesus compared this condition to that of a little child. It is the recognition that we are helpless, completely dependent on Him. Humility doesn't grasp for or demand control; it gladly surrenders to the Master's control.

A proud or rebellious spirit demonstrates a low view of God and a high view of ourselves. When we see God as He is—high and holy—and we see ourselves as we are—sinful and needy—we are compelled to bow before Him in humility and worship. We no longer demand our “rights,” but we humbly recognize our desperate need for God’s mercy and grace and we esteem all others as better than ourselves.

The apostle Peter wrote,


All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.

Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you. (1 Peter 5:5–7, NASB)

This heart attitude is the polar opposite of the feminist mindset that insists on grasping for power and proudly asserts the right of women to control their own bodies and to live independent of God and men.

As our Lord said, “Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted” (Matthew 23:11, NASB).

Take Time to Reflect

Is your life characterized by humility? Review what you read from 1 Peter 2 a few days ago, then read 1 Peter 3. As you consider these passages, what do you see in the example of Christ that should be a pattern for our own attitudes, actions, and responses? 

day 20 the bitter heart

Scripture Focus: James 1

“See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled.”—Hebrews 12:15, NASB

“. . . [women were] encouraged to share personal hurt and anger. As more and more women in the group ‘spoke bitterness,’ they were led to see that the source of their discontent commonly stemmed from their relationship or interaction with the men in their lives, be it fathers, employers, colleagues, spouses, teachers or other men. Bitterness grew as the participants concluded that men were responsible for women’s unhappiness.”—Mary Kassian¹³

Even if we wanted to, there’s no way we can turn back the clock and return to the mid 1960s—to a time before the early feminists set out to foment a spirit of discontent and bitterness among women. But if we could, we might find that women were struggling with an identity crisis, not primarily because of men, but because of the spiritually dry condition of the church and the moral decline in our nation.

It had been approximately a hundred years since we had experienced the last great spiritual awakening in our nation. Many churches had embraced liberal and man-centered theological views and were being influenced by the militant voices of the culture. Overall, the church had grown weak and ineffective, rather than being salt and light.

Not only was the spiritual condition of the church a factor in women’s struggle, but also the changes that had taken place within the family unit were a contributing factor. Before the Industrial Revolution, many women and families worked alongside the husband and father as a family unit. Whether the family income was produced through farming, a workshop, or a front-room store, it was an integrated family enterprise.

The Industrial Revolution radically altered family dynamics by sending fathers out to work in factories while mothers and children remained at home. With this division came many losses: time together as a family, a strong leadership role from fathers, active family involvement in accomplishing common goals and tasks, daily interaction and communication, the fellowship and fulfillment that come from teamwork.

Previous to industrialization, women had partnered with their husbands in a cooperative effort. As co-regent over creation, in this way women experienced the satisfaction of living out their identity and fulfilling a valuable role in a tangible way as “helpers” to their mate.

Although the church and culture provided fertile soil for bitterness to be spring up in women’s hearts, the choice to respond to difficult circumstances with joyful trust is still our own responsibility. What a different outcome we might have seen if, rather than “speak bitterness” meetings, women had held gratitude sessions!

Take Time to Reflect

Can you recognize the effects of bitterness in families today? Do you struggle with bitterness because of your life circumstances? Do you feel that you deserve better than the life you have?

Prayerfully read James 1. How are we instructed to respond to trials? What does this chapter have to say about humility? 

day 21 the contented heart

Scripture Focus: Philippians 1–2

“I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content.”—Philippians 4:11, ESV

Have you ever stopped to picture where the apostle Paul was when he made this statement? As you may be aware, he was in a Roman prison awaiting trial. Think about the extreme difficulty he was experiencing when he penned these familiar words.

Although Paul was a godly man, his ability to walk in contentment was *not* due to some superior saintliness or mystical endowment. He “learned” contentment, just as we must do. He cultivated a contented heart by viewing his circumstances through the lens of God’s sovereignty.

Paul’s circumstances were hardly comfortable or something he would have chosen! Unless you have a friend or family member in prison, you may not have thought about all the liberties that are forfeited in prison. The isolation of prison is not limited to separation from family and friends but includes the loss of common enjoyments in daily life. Freedom of choice is a distant memory: meals, schedule, room temperature, wall color, clothing preference, environment, activities—these are all chosen for you.

Many inmates have hearts hardened through bitterness and resentment, spending days in anger over their circumstances. There are, however, some beautiful women who, although behind bars, radiate a joy and freedom seldom seen in women living on the outside.

How do you explain such a stark contrast between inmates within the same prison? Miserable, dark, angry countenances of those who are filled with sullen resentment reveal the fact that these women are discontented with their situation. Who can blame them? Who *could* be content in prison? Only those who have found their true freedom in Christ and who live, walk, and breathe gratitude, knowing that God can cause “all things to work together for good” (Romans 8:28, NASB).

After spending the first portion of his letter in thankfulness and prayer for his fellow believers, Paul expressed his God-centered perspective on his imprisonment: “I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ. And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear” (Philippians 1:12–14, ESV).

Do you hear Paul’s perspective? He was looking beyond the pain, past the difficulty of imprisonment; his view was formed from trust in an almighty, sovereign God. Paul knew that God could use his sufferings to accomplish a greater work.

Take Time to Reflect

Are you a contented woman? If not, why not? Do you see a correlation between your contentment level and your trust of God? Read Philippians 1–2, taking note of Paul’s many references to humility, joy, and personal conduct. What do you need to apply to your life from today’s study? ☪

day 22 the distracted heart

Scripture Focus: Psalm 34

“Martha was distracted with much serving.” —Luke 10:40, ESV

“When you and I sit at Jesus’ feet and listen to His Word and then sit at His feet and lavish our worship and love upon Him, there will be an impact. . . . True worship and devotion will make our lives fragrant and will perfume the environment around us. Our homes, our churches, even our places of work will bear the sweet scent of our devotion. Most importantly, the Lord Jesus will be pleased. And ultimately that is all that really matters.” —Nancy Leigh DeMoss¹⁴

How often, like Martha, are we tempted to place our hands on our hips, wagging an accusing finger in Christ’s face while verbally assaulting Him with our orders? Perhaps we’re not even aware of times when we’ve done this. It is easy to become so preoccupied with activity (even ministry activity) that we lose sight of what is most important. When we are so busy that we neglect to sit at our Master’s feet, we have developed a distracted heart.

Because women generally multitask easily, we may be more prone to functioning spiritually with a distracted heart, whizzing through our quiet-time exercises without ever experiencing God’s presence or even remembering what we’ve just read or who we’ve prayed for.

Have you ever found yourself running to the next ministry opportunity or Bible study while spewing out impatient or unkind words to those who impede your progress along the way? What about becoming so busy preparing a meal to “minister hospitality” to friends that you injure your family with your critical or demanding spirit? All of these can be the effects of a distracted heart.

There is nothing—*nothing*—more important than spending time each day at the Master’s feet. Without the intimacy that this intentional devotion provides, our hearts will grow weary, we will spend our days without clear direction, and ultimately our hearts will become dry and barren.

Take Time to Reflect

Sit at your Master's feet today and use Psalm 34 as a prayer of worship and adoration. Don't be in a hurry! Where is your heart right now? Although you may faithfully be working through this heart preparation guide, you can be guilty of functioning with a distracted heart and "checking the box," using this exercise as just another spiritual "duty." Stop and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you the true condition and needs of your heart. ♀

day 23 the courageous heart

Scripture Focus: 2 Corinthians 4

"We do not lose heart."—2 Corinthians 4:16, NASB

"So here we all are, 150 years after feminism began to profoundly affect our culture. We have the highest number of single adults ever recorded in our nation's history, in the church and outside of it. We have nearly the same rate of divorce in the church as outside of it. And we have several generations of confused men who have been told their masculinity is the very reason for women's oppression—exactly the opposite of what the Bible teaches about the complementarity of the sexes and the Christlike model of servant-leadership that men are to cultivate for the benefit of the church, their wives, and their families."—Carolyn McCulley¹⁵

Do you ever find yourself feeling discouraged by the darkness of the culture around you—maybe even by your own surroundings at home or in the workplace? Often it appears that we Christians are so behind in the culture war that we might as well throw in the towel.


Paul may have been tempted at times to look at the hedonism of Rome and wonder if the little band of new Christians could be any match for the godless culture of the most powerful empire known to man. Did his heart ever tremble with fear or discouragement? Twice in 2 Corinthians 4 Paul exhorts the believers living in the sexually immoral culture of Corinth to not lose heart. What was the source of Paul's courage?

The English phrase “lose heart” in today’s key verse is translated from a strong Greek term that refers to losing courage or even cowardly surrender. Admittedly, for Christian women living in a predominately post-Christian world, this is a common temptation. But we must not give up; we must not lose heart. Too much is at stake, and our Captain is worthy of our undying service.

How can we find courage in such hostile times? Paul gives us the answer in the final verse of chapter 4. “Look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal” (NASB).

Living with an eternal perspective, focusing on God’s kingdom, knowing that earthly life is temporary and that He has called us to reflect His glory in our world—this perspective infuses us with strength and courage to persevere, even in the face of great darkness.

Take Time to Reflect

Meditate on 2 Corinthians 4. Have you grown weary and become discouraged in your Christian walk, your marriage, your parenting, or any other area of your life? Use this passage to focus on the truth. Ask God to give you His eternal perspective on your situation. And remember that it is in His power, not your own, that victory will be achieved. 

day 24 the transformed heart

Scripture Focus: Psalm 139

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”
—Romans 12:2, ESV

“If before He hung that first star He knew us by name and knows the number of hairs on our head, then our gender as we walk around in this costume known as flesh is not a mistake but a divine fingerprint.”—Janet Parshall¹⁶

Over the past 50–60 years, our culture has experienced gender role reversal, confusion over sexual distinctions, and a distorted view of femininity and masculinity. It is time for women’s hearts and minds to be transformed by the truth of the Word of God in order for women to be able to discern the will of God for their lives.

With so much false ideology permeating every aspect of our culture, how can you begin to have transformed thinking on the topic of femininity? It is necessary to fill your mind with truth. Begin to saturate your mind with scriptural passages that relate to womanhood; devote time to good reading materials (you’ll find lots of helpful resources at www.ReviveOurHearts.com); and visit websites that promote biblical womanhood like www.TrueWoman.com, www.GirlTalk.Blogs.com, and www.SoloFemininity.Blogs.com.

Titus 2:3–5 gives a beautiful description of biblical womanhood. You might call it a handbook for Christian women. Nancy Leigh DeMoss has recorded an extended radio series on this passage, on *Revive Our Hearts* radio. Visit www.ReviveOurHearts.com and search for the series, “God’s Beautiful Design for Women: Living Out Titus 2:1–5.” You may also want to purchase a set of the CDs or MP3s of this series, and invite one or more friends to study this important passage with you.

Hopefully your thinking is already starting to be transformed as you’ve been seeking the Lord during these past weeks.

Take Time to Reflect

In what ways has your thinking been affected by feminist ideology? What are the implications of the fact that God intentionally designed you as a woman? Read about His involvement in your creation in Psalm 139. Use God’s Word to inform your thinking on the issue of womanhood. Commit yourself to reading at least one book that promotes biblical womanhood this year. ☪

Part IV: A Woman's Call to Intercession and Prayer

day 25 intimate relationship

Scripture Focus: Psalm 66

"The LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend."
—Exodus 33:11, NASB

*"Speak, O Lord, as we come to You
To receive the food of Your Holy Word. . . .
Speak, O Lord, and renew our minds:
Help us grasp the heights of Your plans for us—
Truths unchanged from the dawn of time
That will echo down through eternity."
—Keith Getty & Stuart Townend¹⁷*

A woman's love of communication may be largely related to her desire for relationship. Many women enjoy conversing with friends, children, the checker at the grocery store, total strangers on the street, even perhaps a telemarketer. All of this conversation builds relationships. The exciting aspect about this is that, even more than we love conversation, God loves for us to spend time talking with Him!

Reading through the Psalms, you will find these themes: calling on God, seeking His face, praising and worshipping Him. All of these involve talking to Him, lifting our hearts in prayer, having conversation with Him. Communication is a necessary (and enjoyable) part of building a relationship with Him.


Yet it's important to remember that conversation is not a monologue. Conversation involves talking *and* listening. What a privilege to *hear* from God! When we open His Word, when our hearts are open to receive His truth, when our eyes are seeking His face, God speaks to us!

God's Word gives us counsel (Psalm 119:24). His Word is the testimony of His mouth (verse 88). His Word tells us which way to go (verse 105).

Sometimes we feel that God isn't speaking; however, the problem may be that we *aren't listening*.

Take Time to Reflect

How much of your day is filled with conversation? What percentage of that is communication with God? How could you be more intentional about listening to God?

Praise God with your mouth by reading through Psalm 66 aloud as a prayer to God, then personalize it according to the needs in your life right now. 

day 26 knowing Him

Scripture Focus: Psalm 71

"I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord." —Philippians 3:8, NIV

The heart of the Apostle Paul, as expressed by these words, conveys the essence of relationship—intimate knowing. In order for two people to truly value and appreciate one another, they have to spend time getting to know each other.

One of the most vital components of relationship is communication. God has given us a way to communicate with Him 24/7, through prayer! We don't have to know how to use technological gadgets to contact Him. We never have to worry about a dropped call or the inaccessibility of a cell tower. We don't have to fear others eavesdropping on our conversation with Him if we choose to commune with Him in the middle of a crowded room—He can hear us at any volume or even thought level.

God has chosen to reveal Himself so that we can know Him and enjoy intimate fellowship with Him. His creation visibly displays His character, without the use of words. The beauty of His creation evokes wonder and praise. From the earliest hours of the day, as dawn breaks and

His brilliant colors race across the sky, till the setting of the sun and the twinkling of the night sky; through violent storms and the changing colors of the fall leaves—at any moment of the day or night, at every season of the year—the beauty of creation calls us to worship Him with words of adoration and praise.

Not only does God's creation encourage communication with Him, but so does His Word. Scripture clearly and powerfully reveals to us who He is. It is a reliable written record of His thoughts, His works, His instructions, and His plans. He *communicates with us* through His Word, and *we can speak to Him* with His Word.

The Lord has graciously given His Holy Spirit as a means of comfort, communicating His Word, convicting, directing, and opening our eyes to see His truth. How can we say that prayer is boring, with all that God has provided to aid our communication with Him? He is alive—and He is not silent!

Take Time to Reflect

How well do you really know God? Do you know Him intimately, or is your relationship fairly shallow? Express to Him a desire to know Him more. Let this become a frequent prayer of your heart. Consider how you might deepen your relationship with Him. Use Psalm 71 as a prayer today. ☪

day 27 seeking Him

Scripture Focus: 1 Chronicles 16

“Seek the LORD and his strength; seek his presence continually!” —1 Chronicles 16:11, ESV

The English Standard Version adds an exclamation point to the end of this sentence, underscoring the intensity of this exhortation. Seeking God is not a suggestion or a helpful hint for believers to follow. It is a command.

Although this verse contains the English word “seek” twice, the Hebrew language, in which this verse was first recorded, uses two different words. The first word translated “seek” has to do with rational, cognitive inquiry, while the second word suggests begging, pursuing, desiring, or pleading.

This command is one we should be wholeheartedly running to obey, eagerly and intentionally pursuing a relationship with God. Psalm 16:11 tells us that “fullness of joy” is found in God’s presence. If this is true (and it is), then why would we do anything *but* seek His presence?

In *Seeking Him* (a 12-week study on personal revival), Nancy Leigh DeMoss and Tim Grissom write,

God wants to reveal Himself to you; He wants to fill your heart with Himself; He wants to set you free from every unholy passion; He wants you to drink deeply of the joys found in His presence; He wants your service for Him to be the overflow of genuine love and an authentic life; He wants you to be a reflector of His glory in our dark world. He wants you—and His entire church—to be revived!¹⁸

So, if God’s presence is as delightful as this sounds, why are so few actually seeking Him?

Perhaps one reason is that they’ve only “nibbled” around the edges of a relationship with God, taking a crumb here and there, sipping a drop of His presence occasionally, but they’ve never really tasted deeply of Him! “Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good!” (Psalm 34:8, ESV).


Another reason might be that they are hiding, as Adam and Eve did after they sinned. When we’re more comfortable “hiding” in the dark than walking in the light, we’re not motivated to pursue Him.

Is there anything keeping you from seeking Him? Don’t settle for less than the “times of refreshing” (Acts 3:20) and “fullness of joy” (Psalm 16:11) to be found in His presence!

Take Time to Reflect

Are you “nibbling” at the things of God or tasting deeply of the spiritual feast He has prepared for you? Ask Him to increase your appetite for His presence.

First Chronicles 16 contains the psalm of thanksgiving that was to be sung as the Ark entered the tent that David had prepared for it. You may recognize familiar words, as several psalms are blended together in this one (Psalms 105, 96, 136, and 106). Use the psalm in 1 Chronicles 16 to express your praise today.

Don't wait to experience God's presence—pursue Him today! Let Him speak to you through His Word. Consciously allow His Spirit to direct your thoughts and activities throughout the day. Ask Him to reveal any hidden areas of sin that might be robbing you of your appetite for Him. 

day 28 courageously persistent in prayer

Scripture Focus: Colossians 1

“Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving.”
—Colossians 4:2, NASB

“Devote” is a tame rendering of the actual meaning in the original Greek text. The following phrases do a better job of communicating what Paul is calling for here: “Be courageously persistent!” “Hold on and don't let go!” It brings to mind the way Jacob held on and refused to let go when he encountered the Lord at Peniel (which means “face of God”) in Genesis 32.

This is radical praying! Not half-hearted, groggy phrases offered in whispering tones with no real faith. No, this kind of praying is what Paul is referring to as he gives instructions for spiritual warfare: “With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints” (Ephesians 6:18, NASB).

Courageous praying is done with a conscious awareness of who we are speaking to. It is praying that believes there really is a God who hears and answers prayer according to His good pleasure. It is prayer that seeks His glory supremely, above every other human desire.

This type of praying isn't satisfied to drift into idle thoughts or inattention but is alert and intense. The woman who is careful to practice this discipline will be watchful and sensitive to what is taking place around her, stopping to pray with a friend in need, whether in a public place, on the phone, or on a crowded street. She will also be careful to listen to the Holy Spirit's promptings to pray. Throughout the day and night, she will always be ready to respond to His call to prayer.

The attitude of thanksgiving frames this type of praying. There is no place for a sense of entitlement or a demanding spirit. Gratitude is the fountain from which each request flows, since every good and perfect gift comes from the Father.

Take Time to Reflect

Drop to your knees, if you are physically able, and ask God to give you a greater level of intensity and focus in your praying. Ask His Holy Spirit to fill your mind with the needs of those around you, to give you an awareness of what you should be interceding for. Be sure to express your gratitude to the Lord. Use Colossians 1 as an outline in praying for others; insert personal names in appropriate places. ☪

day 29 intercession

Scripture Focus: Ephesians 1:15–19; Colossians 1:9–12

“We have not ceased to pray for you.”—Colossians 1:9, NASB

“Moms, it takes courage to keep praying for 18 years, for 20 years, for a lifetime. What ‘impossible’ walls did you walk around this school year? What walls collapsed? What prayers did you keep praying when you didn’t see any cracks in the wall?”—Fern Nichols¹⁹

When Fern Nichols' sons entered junior high, she had the usual motherly apprehensions. But overriding those fears was a deep trust that God, and only God, could protect and keep her children. Only God could change the lives of friends and coaches and teachers.

What specific prayers are you praying for your family and closest friends? If you are a mom, do you know what your children are struggling with right now? Do you know their deepest desires and longings? Are you interceding for them in prayer for specific areas of spiritual growth?

If you are married, what about your husband—do you pray for his protection from evil? Do you know the details of his day so you can stop at critical times to pray for him? Do you have prayers from Scripture that you've memorized and applied specifically to his needs?

Perhaps you are single and childless; there are still many for whom you need to be interceding in prayer. Pray for the children in your church, for your extended family, for your pastor and spiritual leaders, for the ministry of *Revive Our Hearts*, for our nation, for revival.

There is so much to pray for!

Take Time to Reflect

Use Paul's prayers in Ephesians 1:15–19 and Colossians 1:9–12 to pray for specific loved ones. Also, search for other prayers in Scripture that you can use in praying for the people whom God lays in your heart.

We are not limited to praying Scripture, but it is a wonderful tool in helping us to pray according to the Father's will. ☩

day 30 the time has come to wail

Scripture Focus: Jeremiah 2

“Consider and call for the mourning women, that they may come; and send for the wailing women, that they may come! Let them make haste and take up a wailing for us, that our eyes may shed tears and our eyelids flow with water. For a voice of wailing is heard from Zion, ‘How are we ruined! We are put to great shame.’” —Jeremiah 9:17–19, NASB

“When I read articles about the spread sheets college women keep about their sexual activities, or when I watch how the Christian men I know struggle to avoid the parade of barely dressed women before them at a mall or restaurant, or when I have to turn over all ten women’s magazines at the grocery checkout because my nieces can now read their soft-porn headlines—I find I am more than shocked; I am deeply grieved. This is what feminism has done to improve the standing of women? It’s a very poor trade-off, indeed.” —Carolyn McCulley²⁰

Perhaps the most disturbing cultural transformation that developed from the feminist movement of the 1960s and 70s was the sexual revolution. The role reversal of genders was not limited to issues in the workplace, shared responsibilities in the home, or political and social equality; the feminist agenda found its way into the bedroom. Even some feminists are now shocked by the extent of their revolution. One of their authors notes, “The downside is we’ve raised a generation of young women—and men—who don’t understand sexual ethics like: Don’t sleep with a married man; don’t sleep with a married woman. . . . They don’t see sex as sacred or even very important anymore. That’s been lost.”²¹


The book of Jeremiah was written as a message of rebuke and judgment to the people of God. They had adopted the depraved practices of the pagan culture around them and were involved in flagrant idol worship. The people of Judah had long ago lost their identity as God’s covenant people as their morality began to be shaped by the godless philosophies and sensual views of Assyria and Babylon. In chapter 9, God calls for the people to wail over the nation’s spiritual and moral condition.

Do you ever consider what God might say to America today? How does He view our moral condition, our casual attitude toward premarital and extramarital sex, our greed and lust for “more,” our abortions, our worship of fashion, and our insatiable appetite for sensual pleasure? What might He say to His church? Are we a spotless bride, or are we in bed with our immoral culture?

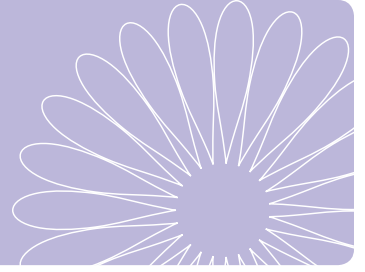
Jeremiah called for the women in his day to mourn and grieve over the things that were grievous to God. Where are the “wailing women” in our day? May we be women who truly and deeply care about what concerns the heart of God.

Take Time to Reflect

Have you grown accustomed or indifferent to the state of our culture? Pray for the church to be broken over the spiritual need all around us. Read Jeremiah 2 and consider what God might want to express to His people today.

Is your heart crying out for God to work in your life and in the lives of those you love? There is much in our culture to cause distress, but God will not turn away from our cries for help. 

Part V: A Woman's View of God



day 31 I am God; you are not

Scripture Focus: Job 38

“Have you ever in your life commanded the morning, and caused the dawn to know its place?”
—Job 38:12, NASB

We need to hear this question from God every time we forget that He is God and we are not. It is so easy to slip into a prideful spirit, protecting our own little kingdoms, thinking, *I've got it all under control, and if everyone else would just get in line, things would run so much smoother!*

When we attempt to take on God and challenge Him with the injustice of our situation, we can become like a child having a temper tantrum, screaming out accusations to a caring parent, “Why did you do that?!” Although Job wasn't screaming, and although he threw no fits and seemed rather patient, in his heart there was an accusation of injustice made against God. So in a barrage of more than eighty questions, God proceeded to move Job from his position of challenger to a much humbler place of speechlessness.

If we're not careful, our hurts and wounds will grow infected with resentment and self-pity. Out of our pain, we may strike back at God with an accusatory “Why?!” We allow ourselves to ignore the truth of His Word—the fact that He cares for us and will never leave us or forsake us, that He desires to comfort us in our affliction—and instead we stand as His accuser. That's when we need to hear Him ask, *“Have you ever in your life commanded the morning, and caused the dawn to know its place?”*

We need to remind ourselves regularly, *Although I may imagine that I am right and have all the answers, I didn't cause the sun to rise this morning! He is God; I'm not!*

Take Time to Reflect

We can't always see when our anger and self-pity are accusations against God's justice or that we are trying to be our own "god" whenever we are struggling for control. Sometimes a frank question can jolt us into reality. Are you struggling with releasing any anger or bitterness toward God because of the circumstances of your life? Do you view God as not only sovereign but also good? Does your life demonstrate that you've surrendered all to God's control? Read prayerfully through Job 38. What do you see about God in this chapter that relates to some situation you are facing? ☪

day 32 condemning God

Scripture Focus: Job 40

"Will you condemn Me that you may be justified?" —Job 40:8, NASB

When we are dissatisfied with God's plan for our lives, we may try to justify our sinful actions by condemning God. We argue that He's too restrictive, that His ways are too difficult, that He requires too much, and so on. We want the easy way, the smooth path, and the blessings without the sacrifice.

When Scripture calls for forgiveness but we want to hold onto our anger,
we justify our bitterness by claiming that *God requires the impossible*.

When Scripture calls for holiness but we want to flirt with immorality,
we justify our sin by claiming that *God expects too much*.

When Scripture calls for a life of self-denial but we want to gorge our flesh,
we justify our lust by claiming that *God is too restrictive*.

When Scripture calls for a life spent serving others but we want to live for ourselves,
we justify our selfishness by claiming that *God's way is too difficult*.

When Scripture calls us to count our trials as joy but we choose to give up,
we justify our self-pity by claiming that *God is uncaring*.

When we, as women, struggle and chafe against God's choice of our gender, when we resent His design for us and argue about or rebel against His distinctive purposes and role for us, then we are standing in judgment of Him. And at such times God's question can well be applied to us, "*Will the faultfinder contend with the Almighty? Let him who reproves God answer it*" (Job 40:1, NASB).

We can become so blinded by our own way of thinking that we deceive ourselves into believing that we know best how to run our lives.

Take Time to Reflect

Have you found yourself responding in some of the ways listed above? Is there any area where you may be justifying your disobedience and thereby condemning God? Read through God's questions to Job in 40:1–14 and apply these to yourself. God sums it all up in verse 14 by stating that if Job can answer all of these questions in the affirmative, then by all means he should go ahead and move right into God's position. How might this apply to your life?

Read Job's response to God in Job 42:1–6. Personalize his response as appropriate, and express your heart to God. ☩

day 33 God is in a class by Himself

Scripture Focus: Isaiah 44

"I, the LORD, am the maker of all things, stretching out the heavens by Myself and spreading out the earth all alone." —Isaiah 44:24, NASB

In the book of Isaiah, God repeatedly makes statements like this: "I am the LORD, and there is no other; besides Me there is no God" (45:5, NASB). It seems as if that should be obvious. We may feel like responding, "Duh! Of course there is no other!"


But God does not waste His words, and He has good reason to include this significant point and repeat it multiple times throughout the book of Isaiah. It is necessary to remind us that He is God, because we so quickly act as if He is not. At times, we even try to be our own god.

Rarely do we admit it, or are probably even aware of it, when we are attempting to play God or step into His position. But every time we choose to disobey Scripture, every time we take things into our own hands or decide to go our own way, we are dethroning God and stepping into that role ourselves. God does not need our help in running the universe—He stretched it all out and put it into place all by Himself. But we sure try to give Him advice all along the way!

What are some ways we might attempt to play God? Perhaps you can relate to some of these:

- When we accept a job offer without seeking God and asking Him to lead us . . . we are playing God.
- When we need to clean our house but choose to lie in front of the TV instead . . . we are playing God.
- When we know God commands us to treat our husband with respect but we choose to speak to him with demeaning words or attitudes . . . we are playing God.
- When we choose to spend time visiting with friends when our children need time from us . . . we are playing God.
- When we are rude to a store clerk because we think we deserve better treatment . . . we are playing God.
- When we try to force God to make exceptions for us or to change His plan for our life because things aren't going according to our plans . . . we are playing God.

Take Time to Reflect

Ask God to open your eyes to any ways you may be attempting to instruct, argue with, or disobey Him. Prayerfully read Isaiah 44. 

day 34 treasures of darkness

Scripture Focus: Isaiah 45

“I will give you the treasures of darkness.”—Isaiah 45:3, NASB

“A black night seems to make the moon brighter. Purple irises brighten yellow daffodils. And a dark gray Kansas sky makes the wheat look truly golden. So it is with us. It seems that God best displays the brilliance of His grace against the backdrop of our darkest and even blackest moments.”
—Joni Eareckson Tada²²

God gave this promise from Isaiah 45 to the Persian king Cyrus—150 years before he was even born! It refers to Cyrus’s conquest of Babylon while Israel was being held captive. A portion of God’s prophecy to Cyrus is that He would give him hidden treasures, riches that had been concealed from view.

Through the darkest night of suffering, in the midst of our deepest pain, there are hidden treasures of darkness that we will miss if we are not searching. God promised to give hidden treasures to Cyrus in order that His reality would be revealed—ultimately that He would be brought glory.

Cyrus did not receive these treasures as a result of his own suffering but as a result of a divine conquest. Likewise, when we are faced with pain, loss, and disappointment, God desires for us to unearth the valuable lessons that He has in store for us. We are to enter into a “divine conquest” to seek out what He has hidden in the painful season He has allowed.

Finding treasures in the darkness of suffering is more difficult than finding blessings in the abundance of sunny days, cool breezes, and smooth paths. But the treasures found in times of affliction are always of greater value; they are weighty with meaning; they are not easily forgotten.

As we set our hearts to seek God in the midst of the darkness, our trust in Him will be a visible demonstration to others of His reality. Our depending on His grace will allow others to know that He is trustworthy. Responding to the challenge of suffering with a heart of yielded submission will draw those who are watching to the beauty of Christ.

In every storm, every trial of affliction, there are hidden treasures waiting to be unearthed.

Take Time to Reflect

Work through Isaiah 45, noting each time God refers to the fact that He alone is God. God is not on an ego trip by repeating Himself so frequently on this issue. Why do you think He found it necessary to mention this so many times?

Can you recall times of suffering when God revealed to you His trustworthiness? Have you found treasures hidden in the darkness of affliction? Recount these times. If you haven't written them down, record them in a journal to be read when the next storm comes. Use this record to build your faith in fearful times. ☉

day 35 arguing with the Potter

Scripture Focus: Isaiah 44

“Woe to the one who quarrels with his Maker—an earthenware vessel among the vessels of earth! Will the clay say to the potter, ‘What are you doing?’”—Isaiah 45:9, NASB

Have you ever found yourself wondering whether things went wrong in the Creation Workshop the day your DNA blueprint was put together? Or perhaps it isn't your physical appearance that causes you to resent your Maker, but you're vulnerable to the same temptation that got Eve in trouble: *God's keeping something good from me, and I need to take things into my own hands in order to really be fulfilled.*

When we are dissatisfied with our physical design, unhappy with God's plan for our lives, or tempted to resent or resist His will, we can end up in the dangerous position of “quarreling with our Maker.”

Thanks to the wonder of technological and medical advances, we no longer have to live with sagging chins, baggy eyes, bulging waistlines, or otherwise unsatisfactory body parts. We can be clipped, nipped, and tucked; we can even switch our gender!

Further, we can change circumstances that are not to our liking. For example, a woman no longer has to stay married to a husband who cherishes *Monday Night Football* more than he cherishes his wife—no-fault divorce makes it easy and affordable to end an unhappy or difficult marriage.

In a world of seemingly endless opportunities for new and exciting careers, limitless ways to experience sensual pleasure, and innumerable ways to “fulfill” your life (everything from New Age gurus with offers of superior spirituality to the latest weight-loss plan), there is no shortage of ways to fuel our discontentment.

Here’s something to think about: Have you bought into the lie that someone else knows better than your all-knowing Master Potter what is best for you, His prized vessel? Contending with Him is more futile than striving with the wind. The way to true fulfillment is through gratitude, contentment, surrender, and humility.

When we finally learn to trust the Master Potter, our struggle will cease, anger and fear will flee, and we will find rest and tranquility in Him.

Take Time to Reflect

Use Isaiah 44 to direct your heart into worshiping your Master Potter. Focus on His mighty power, His faithful works, and His tender love and care for you.

God intimately created you for His good purposes. Memorize Psalm 139:14 and use it to battle lies of discontentment. ♂

day 36 no need to fear

Scripture Focus: Psalm 27

“... who stills the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves, and the tumult of the peoples.” —Psalm 65:7, NASB

Fear. It’s one of the most common struggles we as women battle with. Fear of the future. Fear for our children. Fear of financial loss. Fear of pain. Fear of rejection. Fear of failure. Fear of suffering. Fear of people. Fear of illness. Fear of conflict. Fear of exposure. Fear of relationships. Fear of loneliness. Fear of weight gain. Fear of growing old. Fear of Satan’s attacks. Fear of church. Fear for our reputation. Fear of death.

Living in a fallen world with sinful people and depraved conditions, we face multiple opportunities each day to cave in to unhealthy, paralyzing, sinful fear. The only truly healthy fear is the respectful awe that Scripture refers to as the “fear of the Lord.”

How do we counteract our fears? How do we deal with life courageously? How do we respond to fearful circumstances in a manner that glorifies God? By being so familiar with His character and His ways that His perfect love casts out all our fear. In other words, the key to overcoming fear is trust. It is not trust in a solution or a formula, but it is an abiding confidence in the character and faithfulness of God.

Our level of fear should be an indication to us of how little or how much we know of God. Our trust level is directly proportional to our level of confidence in Him. And our level of confidence increases as our knowledge of Him (His Name, His character, His power, His actions throughout history, His work in our own lives) increases.

When we truly come to appreciate the fact that the Savior who stood up in a storm-tossed boat to quiet the crashing of thunder and the roaring of wind is the same God who offers refuge to us in the midst of our own storm, we will not fear.

When we really believe that the almighty God who commanded the waters of the Red Sea to be separated in order for His people to pass through is the same loving Father who offers safety in the face of the Enemy's attacks, we will not fear.

When we believe that God is trustworthy, that He does not lie, that He is faithful, that He has all power, and that all He chooses to do is good and right, then we know that as long as we trust in Him we have no need to fear.

Take Time to Reflect

As you are preparing your heart to hear from God, the Enemy will likely attempt to distract, discourage, or derail you. Rather than responding in fear, cry out in trust to the One who cares for your soul. Meditate on Psalm 27 today. ☩

Part VI: Daughters of Biblical Womanhood



day 37 passing on the baton

Scripture Focus: Psalm 78

“. . . that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children, so that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments.”—Psalm 78:6–7, ESV

Young women today are surrounded by a culture that promotes aggressive sexuality, raw ambition, selfish individualism, the pursuit of outer beauty, and overall raunchiness. Many of these young women are crying out to be spiritually “mothered.” They may not openly express that desire, but if you are an older woman who will take the time to share loving insights and caring counsel, they will eat it up!

Each generation is commissioned with the responsibility from God to pass on His truth. God calls believers to press on to maturity in order to be a visible witness of His grace and power to the watching world, but also in order to model spiritual maturity to younger believers.

Paul summed up the motivation behind his years of teaching, writing, imprisonment, missionary endeavors, and physical hardship and suffering in Colossians 1:28–29: “We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ. For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me” (NASB).

Paul’s earnest desire was to see every believer brought to maturity in Christ. He sought to disciple, teach, pass on truth, encourage, exhort, and (if need be) confront in order to aid the spiritual development of the younger believer. He was driven by this mission to see others brought to spiritual maturity in order that they might display God’s grace and power, thereby attesting to His reality and bringing Him glory. Is that yours driving motivation in life?

What gets you out of bed in the morning? Do you have a burden for the next generation of young women to know the truth, to live meaningful lives, to fulfill God's purpose, to have healthy relationships, and to love their husbands and children well? Do you see it as your responsibility to pass on to them the wisdom you have gained from knowing God's Word and learning to live it out in the laboratory of life?

Don't allow your "life message" to be wasted. Pass on God's wisdom and truth to the daughters who follow in your footsteps.

Take Time to Reflect

Use Psalm 78:1–8 to inspire you to invest time, energy, and training in the next generation. If you are an older woman, consider how God desires to use you to spiritually "mother" younger women. If you are a younger woman, ask God to lead you to a more mature believer who can serve as a role model. ☩

day 38 daughters of biblical womanhood

Scripture Focus: Titus 2

"Older women likewise are to . . . teach what is good, and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled."—Titus 2:3–5, ESV

Grocery shopping, meal planning, budgeting, cleaning, gardening, decorating, cooking, organizing, relating to men, mothering a newborn, potty training, parenting a toddler, gracefully loving a teen—all of these situations give older women opportunities to train younger women. What a privilege and responsibility we have as women, to pass on to others both practical skills and a heart of wisdom, acquired from real-life experience!

The biblical model for learning the art of womanhood is this: those who have gone before gladly come alongside those who are following behind them. The more mature offer wisdom, encouragement, insight, practical help, understanding, hope, balance, and stability. The young woman who fails to take advantage of the wisdom she can gain from those who've been further down the road, is unwise and short-sighted. The older woman who selfishly withholds knowledge and experience from those who could benefit is likewise short-sighted.


You may be tempted to think, *How could I ever mentor a younger woman? I don't know enough! Besides, look at all the mistakes I've made!* Remember, you don't have to be a Bible scholar in order to convey truth, share experiences of walking with God, or help a younger woman grapple with issues of faith. Young women need love, honesty, simple truths, life experiences related in wisdom and confidentiality, and the gift of time. It is the responsibility, and should be the joy, of older women to train the younger.

Each season of life contains its own opportunities for serving, but for many, the “empty nest” season may provide the greatest opportunities for sowing spiritual seeds, nurturing those seeds, and reaping a harvest. The sunset years can be filled to overflowing with an abundance of ministry. If you find yourself in that season of life, don't let those years be wasted—finish well. Invest in the future generation.

Stop and thinking about it: What kind of spiritual legacy are you leaving to those who are following in your steps?

Take Time to Reflect

At almost any age, you are both older and younger than some of the women around you. So consider the women in your church body. If you are not currently investing in a woman who is younger in her faith, pray about who you should offer to disciple. If you know a young bride, a young mom, or a single young woman who needs some help in learning practical womanly skills, make the offer to take her grocery shopping, cook a meal, give housecleaning tips, and so on. Ask how you can pray for or encourage her in her walk with God. If you are a younger woman, seek out spiritual and practical help from older women.

Study Titus 2:3–5. Pray about using this passage as a study to do with a group of friends or another woman. (Nancy Leigh DeMoss has recorded an extended radio series on this passage, on *Revive Our Hearts* radio. Visit www.ReviveOurHearts.com and search for the series, “God's Beautiful Design for Women: Living Out Titus 2:1–5.” You may also want to purchase a set of the CDs or MP3s of the entire series.) 

day 39 bearing fruit

Scripture Focus: Psalm 92

“They shall still bear fruit in old age; they shall be fresh and flourishing, to declare that the LORD is upright; He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.”—Psalm 92:14–15, NKJV

“Perseverance is the surest evidence of sincerity.”—Matthew Henry

Do you ever think about how you want others to remember you after you're gone? Do you have a strong determination to finish well? Are you asking God to make you spiritually fruitful as long as you are alive?

Psalm 92 provides a contrast between those who are abiding in close fellowship with the Lord and those who have rejected God. Those who are seeking to be right with God are given hope and encouragement for the future. Although the wicked and unbelieving may have prosperity and an abundant life in a worldly sense, it is temporary, resembling the summer grass that springs up quickly but has only a brief life span. The picture of the righteous, by contrast, is that of palm and cedar trees (Psalm 92:12), symbolizing permanence, strength, noble beauty, and perpetual fruitfulness.

Notice where these trees have been planted—in the house of the Lord (Psalm 92:13). It is in His presence that we receive spiritual nourishment, the ability to bear fruit, strength, grace, and longevity.

Similarly, Jesus uses the beautiful imagery of the vine and branches to convey truths to us about abiding in Him. His promise of fruitfulness is granted as a result of intimate fellowship, obedience to His commandments, and the willingness to lay down our lives for others, following Christ's supreme example (John 15).

One thing we learn from all this is that fruitfulness is descriptive of two things: sanctification and multiplication. Hang on, those are BIG words, but they are important and rich with meaning.

Simply put, *sanctification* is the process of spiritual growth whereby, through the grace of God, the fruit of the Spirit become evident, mature, and prolific in the life of the believer. It is the beautiful process of change that takes place in one who is cooperating with the Holy Spirit, enabling him to die more and more to sin and to reflect more and more the nature and beauty of Christ (Romans 8:12–13).

Multiplication is the process of planting the seed of truth in others' lives, whether introducing them to Christ and/or leading them through the sanctification process by discipling them. It is investing in others' lives in order to see them transformed, abiding in and reflecting Christ, in order that the whole earth will see the glory of the Lord.

Great and marvelous are Your works,

O Lord God, the Almighty;

Righteous and true are Your ways,

King of the nations!

“Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Your name?

For You alone are holy;

FOR ALL THE NATIONS WILL COME AND WORSHIP BEFORE YOU.”

(Revelation 15:3–4, NASB)

Take Time to Reflect

Meditate on Psalm 92 and John 15. Do you desire to be fruitful? What can you do today to abide in Christ, obey His Word, surrender completely to His control, and invest in the lives of others? Ask Him to enable you to bear “much fruit” for His glory. ☩

day 40 filling the earth with His glory

Scripture Focus: Psalm 72

“Blessed be the LORD God, the God of Israel, who alone works wonders. And blessed be His glorious name forever; and may the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen, and Amen.”
—Psalm 72:18–19, NASB


On this final day of heart preparation, let's think about why any of this matters. What is the point? How does my perspective on the issue of femininity affect others? Does it matter whether it affects others? Is there more to my life than what I now see?

We're going to close our preparation period today by studying a beautiful psalm of hope. Psalm 72 can be understood on two levels. On one level, it views Solomon beginning his reign as Israel's monarch. But the meaning of this psalm reaches far beyond Solomon to One who will establish His rule eternally—One greater than Solomon (Matthew 12:42). When the Lord Jesus Christ sets up His earthly kingdom, the earth and its occupants will experience the rich fulfillment described here.

As we anticipate Christ's return, our lives are not to be wasted or idled away. We are called to be actively engaged in God's great redemptive plan. We are called to His mandate of filling the whole earth with His glory. We accomplish this is by fulfilling the grand and holy purposes for which He created us—as women!

What would happen if every Christian woman would live out the instructions found in Scripture? What would our homes look like? How would our husbands and children respond to that kind of radical transformation? Would our men be inspired as they watch the power of the gospel at work in our lives? Would they hunger to know God more intimately? Would they begin to feel the freedom and confidence to take on the role of spiritual leadership? How would our churches, our workplaces, our neighborhoods be different if thousands of women lived as “true women,” honoring Christ with their thoughts, words, attitudes, and actions? What would the unbelieving world around us think? How would they respond? How would their lives be impacted by the power of the gospel that has transformed our lives? Could revival occur?

Take Time to Reflect

Meditate on the questions at the end of today's devotional. Prayerfully read through Psalm 72. How well is your life contributing to God's ultimate intention that the whole earth should be filled with His glory? Do those around you see the transformational power of the gospel at work in your life? 

Note: the endnotes will be added to a future PDF. Check back soon to www.TrueWoman.com for updates.