

Spiritual Identity
The Remake
Updated 09/07/2018



In a culture where everything is hot or it's not, this book and coaching session makes pursuing God an act of foreplay. Experience why God is and will always be ultimate spiritual masculinity. A thought-provoking trainer, mentor, business, and life coach, Merle Ray brings women of all ages - black and white, rich and poor, single and married, - to their knees.

Spiritual Identity, from the Brides of Virtue series, Ray shows women how to bear everything naked before God in order to discover truth. Revealing many of her own dramatic stories in search of truth, Ray provides women everywhere the tools for exiting the dramas and traumas of culture-driven womanhood. "God wants you to know," says Ray, "there's too much devastation and desperation in waiting for your body, soul, and spirit to exhale. It's time to get yours!"

But how does one do that when there's nothing sexy or attractive about God,... or is there?

This isn't church. Churches are already over 60% filled by females who are perceived to be bored, indifferent, with undesirable attitudes, or unfulfilled. "Let's face it," says Ray, "that's just not sexy."

God's woman, like God's true church is exciting, approachable, desirable, and fulfilled. This event is not offered to make women stay away from that; it's offered that all women might be that - not a building made with hands - but a powerhouse of a woman made by God!

Request Merle Ray for assistance with moving your goals forward personally, professionally, or spiritually.

Email: mhray@noblegroups.com

JOURNAL & WORKBOOK INCLUDED

SPIRITUAL

Identity



FROM THE SERIES

Brides of Virtue

a wider definition of womanhood™



By

MERLE RAY

Spiritual Identity: A Wider Definition of Womanhood
From the Brides of Virtue Series
By Merle Ray

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From the Series
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What you're holding right now is the key to some woman's destiny. It may be your own or that of another. But handle her well *"for she is a God's god; she is a Master's Wife. She is a Married Woman."*

-Merle Ray
(Genesis 20:3 my paraphrase)

I would like to make it understood that I am in no way associated with the medical, psychological, or physiological profession. I do not offer the information included in this book as a substitute for professional advice, mental health advice or medical treatment. It is for your general knowledge only. I also do not take responsibility for any individual's mental, physical, or spiritual health or illness; nor am I responsible for their healing. I offer no guarantee that anyone will have a life that is stress free, or that any physical or mental disorder, disease, or illness will be prevented.

I do, however, believe that we are spirit beings who have a soul and live in a body according to I Thessalonians 5:23. I also believe that most problems that manifest in the behavior, soul, and body of a woman have a spiritual root. And I believe that Jesus paid the price for our physical, spiritual, and mental well-being (Isaiah 53:5, I Peter 2:24).

It is not my intent to lay any other foundation for the Gospel than that founded by Jesus Christ, My Lord. With this, I do believe that women have a wider definition and purpose from God than that of our various cultures and environments. God is the One who created us and destined us for greatness from the very beginning. In that, I believe God is the same yesterday, today, and forever more – which is to say that even today – despite what it looks like on the outside, we are built for greatness!

In sharing my opinions in this book my goal is not to debate religion or complain about church people, for I am one of them, and as you will soon find from reading the book, I love My Father God and my debate is not with Him! My call is to expose the lies of the world, the lies of our culture, and the lies of the enemy - with the truth of God's Word. It is a calling from God, my Father; it is not a goal. Nothing wrong with goals, but one works for them. I don't have to work for my calling. The One who called me is living in me. I am His and He is mine; we are One. And His call is my standard for truth.

When Jesus Christ came, died, resurrected, and ascended to the Father in Heaven, God gave Him all the riches, power, glory, honor, and dominion in all of heaven and earth. What the Father gave the Son, the Son gave me. He gave me everything I needed for life and godliness. He gave me my identity. He called me His Own. I am the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus, which is to say I am fully accepted by God. I don't have to try to be anything for God is already my everything. And with that, I am well pleased.

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TO MY DAUGHTER,

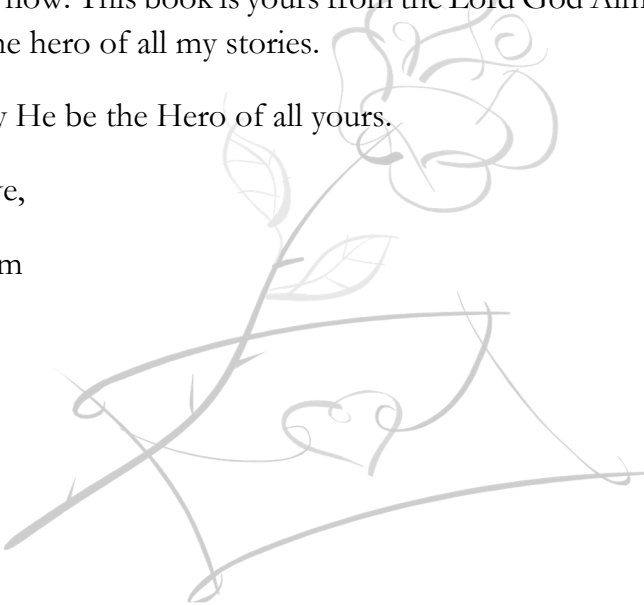
KAIYA

You saw me go through a host of boyfriends, three marriages, one spouse overcoming drug addiction, two abortions, multiple miscarriages and corporate career crises and never once called me anything but Mom. This book is for you and all the women and girls who wish to find true identity. Like me, you don't seek some forged identity from a culture that labels you, but a true life that you never knew existed right here and now. This book is yours from the Lord God Almighty, who is the hero of all my stories.

May He be the Hero of all yours.

Love,

Mom





INTRODUCTION

Real Women Don't Cheat

We are in serious trouble when the closest heroine a young woman can find when she has a man problem is a pistol-packing churched grandmother who smokes dope and has a criminal record. Female sages of wisdom are scarce these days even for the rich and famous. Just ask country music singing group, the *Dixie Chicks*. One has to wonder which female champion they consulted with before they all posed nude on the cover of a magazine some years back. They were attempting to justify a nasty remark they made about then U.S. President George W. Bush on foreign soil during wartime. Tyler Perry's 'Madea' and the Dixie Chicks: what do these '*women*' have in common?

They cheated!

One broke our idea of what a religiously correct “*Grandma*” looks like, and became a television, movie, and media sensation. The other broke our idea of a politically-correct “*Whistling Dixie*” and walked away with five Grammys. They used the rules of our culture to break the rules of our culture. And many saw them as heroes.

But what happens in real everyday life when the women in our culture cheat in applying the rules of our culture? When they are unfaithful to those who love them most are we laughing saying, “*It’s okay; it’s just their basic right to freedom of speech and expression?*” When mothers are hanging their children and then turning around and hanging themselves, are we sitting down writing prime time sit-coms about it? While entire families across our nation are being wiped out as a result of domestic violence, drug addiction, and teenage terrorism, are we now calling it entertainment and rallying for our basic freedoms to smoke pot, carry weapons, and get naked on the cover of a magazine?

Not to overlook men, but when women are missing in action from their families – when they offer themselves to other women’s husbands – when they reject their children or do even worse – or simply can’t see their God-given potential, I don’t accept those things as just another part of life. The state of the world has and will always be hinged on the health, well-being, and mindset of the women in it! So, when women cheat, they break sacred ground. They violate the right in favor of the wrong. They cross one cultural boundary that is virtually

unarguable in every humane society – the rule that **real women don't cheat**. They are faithful – to God, themselves, their families, and their country. As my pastor would say, “*You missed a good place to clap right there.*”

What makes a woman cheat and what constitutes cheating? Is there some epidemic responsible? Moreover, men of all nationalities are asking, “*Where can I find one of these **real women**, faithful to God, self, her family, and her country?*” With all the talk in America about desperate housewives and daring divas, real men with inquiring minds want to know where have all the real women gone?

Our identity in womanhood or the lack thereof, regardless of age, race, or background will be examined in this book, particularly as it applies to spiritual identity. Unfortunately culture has labeled and misdirected identity for many of us. For example, many might think this book is geared toward the young, ‘loose,’ or ‘indiscreet’ woman because I used the term “hootchie” in the book. If that’s what you’re thinking, that would be a mistake. I’ll give you a fresh new perspective for looking at the problem of “hootchies” at every level of society. I certainly want to challenge your definition of that word.

Women with identity issues are not all young, poor, loose, or neglected. But they all have one thing in common – they are unfulfilled. If you are tired of seeing beautiful women – young and old – rich and poor – turned into desperate dying dilemmas, this book is for you. Younger women feel they are alone in their thinking about men, mind, and morality issues.

They don't know how much we older women have our issues too – even in the church. Consequently, I want to also challenge your biblical worldview. Women with identity issues live with passion that is stifled and hindered or sometimes no passion at all. Moreover, they live without an understanding of who they are in relationship to their source of truth. They become unimpressed with life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. And why shouldn't they be? We church women act as if everyday is just another day while other women in need spend their 24 hours *dramatizing to survive*. How wrong we are to neglect laying our heads on the spiritual chest of Daddy God to hear what He's saying to heal the hearts and souls of our women. We would never look at another woman the same if we only knew God's wider definition of our womanhood.

This book isn't advice for the church woman alone. It's worldview wisdom for every woman. When I finally discovered the truth that I was God's woman, I became *more exciting, approachable, desirable, and fulfilled*. Hollywood calls that sexy. Look at the time we spend watching other women fake being that in the media. *Sexy people like to hang out with other sexy people*. I for one would like to see more of them in the church! *The exciting, approachable, desirable, and fulfilled*.

You have heard, “*The more we spend time in the presence of God the more attractive we become.*” This sounds nice. Oh, but it's a process! The problem with being in the presence of God is one becomes keenly aware of just how unattractive and undone one really is inside where no one else can see. In the presence of

Truth even the tiniest lie is exposed. This book exposes how much women both in and out of the church have traded in our identity for the lies of our culture. We've rejected the truth in order to embrace conditions in our various environments. You know the lies – they've become so pervasive that we have totally accepted them as *truth*. Lies cause us to believe there is nothing wrong with – with high divorce rates, children in poverty, sexual perversion, addiction and adultery even amongst church people. Lies tell us it's okay to sleep around as long as we use protection. They tell us it's okay to take a man who belonged to a wife as long as he wasn't happy with her. Lies tell us we ought to get excited about *seeing the surreal* rather than *looking for the absolute truth*.

Many lies tell us to go for wealth without going for wisdom. These are the same lies that tell us as women we have to be this or that in order to be successful, accepted, worthy, straight, and significant. For ages, these deceptions focused our attention on being copies instead of masterpieces. Living with the reality of hurtful conditions like broken families, adultery, divorce, addiction, immoral and unjust social, political, and corporate ethics all around – has caused our spiritual identity crisis. Instead of seeking and relating to God for answers, we are more reliant on icons as idols even in the church. I call this *spiritual hootchie-ism*. It has captivated those who would never step foot in a church, as well as those who were literally *born and bred there*. As a result we've traded our God-given identity in for the views of the world, and we're not really sure what a

biblical worldview is. What's worse is we're not sure what a biblical worldview is not.

Geared to women, don't think that this book excuses the men and their need for identity. It applies to men also. But for now, let's focus on how we women can come out of this spiritual identity crisis our culture has lured us into. The (8) spiritual principles I've covered are just the beginning. They apply to us all. Yet there are some personal principles God wants to whisper in your own ear. You will only find them when you find *Him desirable enough* to search out. That is *when God becomes sexy to you*. I'm not talking of male and female attraction – for God is Spirit and those that truly adore Him, do so in spirit and in truth (*John 4:24*). The secret things of God and you - I cannot help you with. But I promise *you can find them!* I started finding my secret things when to know Him became my passion.

You can always tell how hot or popular something is by how sexy it becomes in our world. *For me, everything changed when God became sexy*. I cannot begin to explain God or claim to know all there is to know about Him. One thing I do know, true identity in loving God is not a declining movement. Nor is it a new-fangled philosophy or the latest spiritual craze. God is not a philosophy, and belief in Him isn't a trendy fad or fashion garment that one wears for a season. Some say that Christianity in America is declining. They say that we have a new lineup of multiple choices when it comes to spirituality. But if you ask me, there is no alternative to the Truth unless you want to live

a lie. GOD wants women to know that He is the source of a woman's existence whether she chooses to believe Him or not.

WHY EVERY WOMAN NEEDS TO LISTEN

There are many reasons why I feel every woman should hear me out. First I am at a place where I am able to be transparent. Fortunately, for you that means I don't have to pose naked on this book cover to get you to read it. Second is the fact that I'm a woman – a real woman – conquering my very own woman's issues. I'm not a cross-dresser expressing the female agenda in drag. *That's a real plus too!* But, I feel all women should listen up because the challenges of identity aren't isolated to just me or where I grew up.

My story goes:

- From poverty to hitting corporate America glass ceilings to entrepreneurship;
- From learning that two marriages weren't enough and three to five were too many;
- From aborting babies to praying for more to be born;
- From experiencing men (*both religious & not*) to knowing the ultimate spiritual masculinity of God.

The issues of a woman cross different cultures. But what I'm most thrilled about is that I can open my own delicate mouth and talk about them. I don't have to wait on legislation that says, "*I have the right to express my views about God.*" I don't

have to feel like less of a person because I believe in God! That's the beauty of a biblical worldview. My own womanhood inspired by a Divine Creator has imprinted those inalienable distinctions upon my spirit, soul, and body. And in doing so, the Creator gave me *my real womanhood*. I know who I am. Don't get me wrong; history has proven policies concerning the rights of women, minorities, and religious rights are extremely necessary. But you and I shouldn't have to wait on a bill before we enforce our own **personal** legislation. Mine says, ***"I will not tolerate being degraded – not in any form – not from anyone."*** This means I don't care to click it, watch it, buy it, read it, dance to it, believe it, support it, or vote for it – if it doesn't honor God who created me!"

Worldview wisdom for women is not about politics but about finding oneself. Growing up finding out that just about every culture in the world mistreats its women was heartbreaking. Learning that each woman must have a strategy to gain victory in this area despite her culture was overwhelming. But I'm finding that it's not the **issues** we face as women that define us, it's the **godly woman** in them.

Most women are not even aware that their culture is cheating them out of their identity. They just know they don't feel good about themselves or the world around them. Women of low educational or economic status aren't the only ones who may face feelings of inferiority, oppression, alienation, or unworthiness. These feelings creep up in women who make millions and have multiple educational degrees. Exiting my

own dramas and traumas of my mind, men, and morality has been a bumpy ride. But as a result of having gone through it all, I am standing today. It is my hope that you will see your own womanhood differently after reading this book. For some, you will develop a worldview that is preserved by a self-worth rooted in God as your secret weapon. For others, you will know you're making a difference in the world around you as a result of applying these principles. And as for others, I believe your thinking concerning your own man issues, mind issues, and morality issues will change.

Thankfully, because of God and experiencing His wider definition of my womanhood, the various cultures of society are no longer cheating me out of fulfilling my destiny.

Moreover, I am no longer cheating myself.

Merle Ray



PART ONE

Who's Defining Your Womanhood?

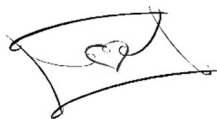
Identity theft hit center stage after the growth of the Internet, but the truth is, as women we were stripped and raped of our identity a long time ago. A woman today is looking to define what a good woman is and what a good man is not. Unlike many women of former generations who found their definition and strength in a safe secure upbringing, it's possible that today's girl may not have that luxury. Instead, she is left alone to find definition in the world or her view of the world, i.e. *her worldview*.

The problem is most women will find out too late that those definitions are not found in their culture or way of life. Contrary to popular behavior, we will not find our definition of self in the media, news, or multimedia. The world has become such a complex place that many girls may not find parent figures to develop healthy identity at home or “in the village” next door anymore. Sadly, many times they won’t even find healthy identity in the fellowship halls of a church. Unless women who care will intervene and help clarify for our sisters and daughters what real womanhood is, we may never find healthy identity, even if we lived to be 100 years old. When I have looked for the right examples of a woman, the right tenderness of a man, and the boldness to live without regret, I have, for better or for worse, looked within my society for the answer. It’s sad but true. How much of our life is not really about living, but about what others expect of us?

Real Womanhood – *What does it mean and where do you find it?* That ought to be the first essay every young girl learns to write. We learn in elementary school that humans are mammals – a warm-blooded species that cares for its young and nurtures them from birth. Mammals in essence, teach their young babies the basics about identity so when the babies go out into the world on their own, they know something about themselves, their strengths, their challenges, and what makes them who they are so they can thrive on their own. Yet when it comes to womanhood, it seems that today’s young woman is forced to take her cues from any number of icons in society rather than having spiritual moms and mother figures to help them define

what is sound moral clarity, good judgment, and strength in a real world.

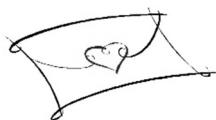
Like so many others, I've looked to define myself from many imperfect sources. Church leaders, business leaders, community leaders—I tried them all, hoping they would give me some form of mentorship to push me toward success. Television, business, and political celebrities, even religious ones — a wide variety of popular people out there are defining the direction for us without a clue as to who we really are.



We are too busy earning the right to speak into our culture, instead of making our culture earn the right to speak into us.

It seems that we mainstream American women are working hard at earning the right to speak into our culture instead of making our culture earn the right to speak into us. When you see people on television and media, ask yourself, “*What has earned them the right to speak into my life?*” What has given your culture the right to dictate your life? Our American forefathers believed in freedom and the God-given right that all men are created equal. We’re grateful that they did. But today, we American women have allowed our culture to make us look desperate — desperate housewives, desperate leaders of companies, desperate young girls, and even desperate church-going women — all striving for identity and success. We don’t

seek out the intimacy of God; we cover up our flaws, hurts, concerns and worries so we can look like everyone else and be accepted. All the while hidden challenges are corroding us within. Before you know it, we're suffering from health issues, personality issues, attitude issues, mental health issues, sexual issues, identity issues, work performance issues, and even family issues - the worst of which we laugh at in the media and in society.



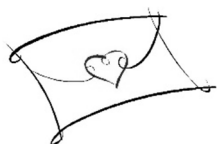
When God becomes sexy, we stop laughing at the things our culture doesn't want us to cry about.

Making women look desperate has become a multibillion-dollar industry. It's not just Hollywood portraying women as desperate. Corporations and government have done their part too. For example, welfare statistics paint women as non-self-sufficient. Believe me, there is nothing wrong with having to apply for WIC, food stamps, and other types of assistance, but the sad part is that the government stats are for the most part, true. In the past times, poverty was a family issue. Today, because of the disintegration of the American family, it's primarily a woman's issue. When people spoke of being poor back in the day, they were talking about so and so's family getting hit by hard times, like a layoff or sickness in the family. The whole family and community would pitch in and help that family. Today, however, thanks to divorce and the breakup of

family, when one speaks of poverty in America, they are talking about women and children.¹

Women are not only in a state of desperation by government statistics, Corporate America also sees women as desperate. Behind closed boardroom doors, male corporate executives make jokes about our desires to break their glass ceilings. Some have said that it would take 40 years for women to achieve the same levels as men in Corporate America.² Like me, many women aren't willing to wait that long. An article appearing in the March/April 2003 issue of *The Conference Board Review* shares stories of more and more women who are fed up with the wait and take the initiative to abandon their corporate roles for that of entrepreneurship.³ I was one of them. And I believe any woman who has started and run her own business can say with me that there are days when one certainly feels desperate no matter what her woman-owned business is.

It's not just media, government, and Corporate America portraying women as desperate. There are even some preachers causing us to feel desperate. Why do I say this? Because they are church leaders that are hollering at us to build more buildings, to shout more loudly, and to go through the motions of "having church" when they are not at all concerned with how well we live on a daily basis.



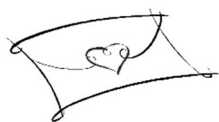
Whether you laugh at our desperation and call it entertainment, shout at it and call it worship, or cry with it and call it drama,...

Something has to change about the way we see our womanhood. Being seen as desperate by others is not the saddest part about our womanhood. The saddest part of it all is that inside perhaps we really do feel desperate—stifled, hindered, and ready to implode because we've lost our source of true empowerment. We have vision, hopes and dreams for the future, but we lack the power to see them to fruition. We know there's more to us than what we can see; yet we don't know how to use what God gave us to change things. We tend to look at those women around us and draw our conclusions from them, only to find that most times they are fighting desperation too.

This is not a call to a pity party, but rather a call to real womanhood, particularly to America's women. There are females in other parts of the world who would consider our desperation in America a luxury. It's not just coincidence that women from many parts of the world are involuntarily placed in positions of oppression, abuse, and even death simply because they are women. I believe it's a battle of spiritual significance.

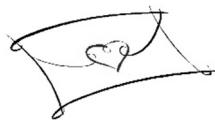
Regardless of who you are or where you come from, in His Word, God provides women everywhere tools for **exiting the**

dramas & traumas of culture-driven womanhood. *He wants you to know there's too much devastation & desperation in holding your breath waiting to exhale. **It's time to get yours!***



Something has to change about the way women see and define our womanhood.

We must learn what God says about us and stop relying on the music and entertainment world, the business world, the beauty industry, and government, for our self-esteem. If that's not insult enough to God, we also have given permission to celebrities, comics, and comediennes to address our issues for us. I don't know about you, but I don't need a top model, comic, or a clown to speak into my life about who I am! I must hear from God!

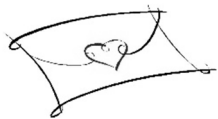


Society knows all too well how to confront, laugh at, and even glamorize women's issues. They just don't know how to solve them.

I believe women are tired of falling in and out of love with the best and worst of men, the latest and greatest of fashion fads, the wealthiest most prominent societies, and even the

coolest churches, businesses, and organizations. Instead, I think today's women need and want to find truth and strength separate and apart from what we've heard in TV and media. How thirsty we are for real love! How great is our craving for fulfillment! And we want them based on truth, not the fantasy or surreal. Our lives are not episodes from prime time reality shows and daytime soap operas.

We need to understand our origin the way God created us, and how this is significant for us today. When God made woman, He didn't say, "Oops, there she is." I understand what it is to struggle in one's faith. I have been there and done that – having great difficulty standing on the very word that I myself have taught. Everyone struggles in their faith at times; it's called life. But many times, when people struggle they don't take time out to deal with the issues. They stay in positions of leadership and this can be very harmful. Ladies, we cannot rely on public figures to be God or know God for us. We must know God for ourselves! And God wants us to know Him personally!

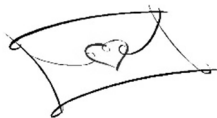


God is too much of a free spirit to limit Himself to the gifted and talented.

If we are unfulfilled or unproductive, we cannot blame the church, God or others. It's time to take off our own veils and accept responsibility for our own identity and fulfillment. As humans, we all need each other; that's true. God made us that

way. Yet as women, I think we've relinquished too much to others without experiencing some things that God intended for us to experience with Him and Him alone.

We must not only confront issues that keep us from living fully satisfied lives, but seek God to help us resolve them. So this is a mom's love offering to women and girls all over the world who need and want to know what real womanhood is. It's time to get real, discover who we really are - and find out who is our real God.



When God becomes sexy, we get rid of our other gods.



Taking Off the Veils

Women, we have no excuses for holding on to the issues that keep us from experiencing fulfillment, true identity, real womanhood — and experiencing life to its fullness. I call this taking off the veils. Veils are issues that exist as curtains, blockades, or walls that keep us from handling our business or womanhood effectively. These veils are any number of hurts and scars. They show up in ways that seem harmless and they also show up in extremely dangerous ways. From shame to ego-inflated pride, from a young girl being “womanish” to an older woman in spiritual adultery — veils are the very things that keep us desperate for self-worth. But if we seek God’s wider definition of our womanhood, we can learn to accept the tender loving touch of His spiritual hand soothing the desperation in our souls.

God wants us to understand that He is the source of all our definition, the strength of all our womanhood. When we are open to seeing God and His wider definition of us, we can see who we really are. We then learn not to cheat ourselves out of

our own identity. In addition, we learn not to cheat our husbands, potential spouses, children, family, friends, and business associates out of meaningful healthy relationships.

Wise mothers used to have a saying, *“Cheating is no different than stealing.”* And sadly enough many women cheat themselves every day. They destroy their dreams and goals by focusing on pop culture for being and getting what they want. Rather than defining their own self-worth and aspirations through God their Creator, they envy the identity of other women. They take on the ways of other women and even the aspirations of other women. Some have gone as far as to alter their bodies to look like the body parts of other women. There are those who go to the extremes of plotting to harm or take the lives of other women because of something lacking in their own lives. All of these women become unfaithful to themselves, and in turn lose out by accepting lies from many flawed sources. For some ungodly reason, lies have become acceptable in our society.

God taught me to hate lies when my two sons were born. Bishop and Elisha were born one year apart. When they were babies, I was a corporate powerhouse. My husband and I were separating due to his long-standing drug addiction. At the same time, my 17-year old daughter told me she was pregnant by a boy in the neighborhood. I didn’t even know she was dating! If you know anything about spouses in drug addiction and teenagers transitioning into adulthood, you know that lies and cheating are a part of the landscape. When dealing with these kinds of issues, we need God to direct us toward the truth.

I had become so used to hearing their lies for so long that my ears were no longer sensitive to searching for the truth. Before going back to work, I was taught a great lesson that could have cost me my life and that of my family. I asked a co-worker in church if she knew someone I could get to help me with my children. She told me of a lady who ran a business providing babysitters and dayworkers. When I looked her up, the woman-business owner told me of a woman who needed a place to live and was great with kids. She said the lady spoke a couple of different languages and I thought that was great. My children could be exposed to foreign languages, something exciting while I was at work. Just a few days afterward, I realized that the lady who recommended her had lied, and instead of dismissing the dayworker from my home immediately, I dismissed the lie and thought, *"It's no big deal. No harm done."* Shortly afterward, I was shocked to wake up one morning and find that the woman had a plot to endanger me and quite possibly my family.

My husband, a former church leader, struggled for many years with drugs and addiction. He had been gone on a binge for several weeks. One morning he just showed up at home just in time. If you have ever seen a church member under the influence of drugs or alcohol, it seems so strange to me that their gifts can still be operating even though their character is not. It makes you wonder how many church leaders today are operating only in their gifts from God, while they leave character on the sideline, but that's another story.

When he came home, I introduced my husband to the woman, but he never greeted her warmly. From the moment my husband met this woman, he quietly called me to the side and said, *"She must go. There's something about her I don't like; she cannot be alone with our children."* Well, I figured he had no business telling me what to do because of his own behavior. In my mind, he was the one totally out of order, and he was the one that must go. So I decided she would stay. He begged me and even asked me to pray with him for God to show us what was wrong because he was so upset over this woman watching our kids. I went on about my business dismissing him thinking, *"What right did he have to tell me anything about anybody else when he was doing dope and out of the will of God himself."* He was out of his position as a minister, and instead, he was out in the streets smoking dope every other day. I was insistent that the woman would stay.

I reluctantly agreed to pray with him that night about the situation. What I didn't know was that God had brought my husband home from his drug binge just in time for me to get the answer I needed. The next day my husband rose early before I did and left the house. I came down from my room and found the woman up and beginning her day. She encouraged me to go ahead and get my things together so I could start my day. For some reason, more than once, she kept saying, *"Go take your shower and get ready for work, I'll take care of everything."* So I did and since this is a book for women, let me just say here that my baby was still being breastfeed and I was still bleeding from the afterbirth. I took my shower and

disposed of the sanitary napkins properly and rushed off to work.

When I had been at the office only a couple of hours, my husband called and said, *“After we prayed, God woke me up in the middle of the night and lead me to see that woman last night sitting right in the middle of our family room performing some sort of witchcraft ritual in our home.”* He began to name the items she was using and I knew enough from hearing stories from my grandmother and other older women to know that it was witchcraft. I screamed, *“What? Are you crazy and you’re just now telling me?”* He said, *“When I tried to talk with you before, you put up such a fuss that I didn’t think you’d believe me.”*

As I left the office immediately for home, The Holy Spirit reminded me that I had heard the lie when she was first introduced into my home, yet, I’d gotten so used to hearing lies that I was no longer hating hearing them from anyone. I had just begun to accept them as a part of life as if they were the truth. I asked my husband nicely then to come home and help me get rid of her. At that point I didn’t care how much dope he had smoked, God was using my husband’s gifts to see something I wasn’t able to see in order to help me. The Scripture that says, *“the gifts of God are without repentance,”* finally made sense to me now.

When I got home, I discovered the woman had taken my bloodstained sanitary napkins from the trash and pulled out the blood soaked part in the middle. Now I’m from Louisiana and I’ve heard all sorts of things about the craft and the occult. But

God only knows what she was planning on doing with that blood from that pad. I learned then that those wise older women were right when they said *“If you’ll lie, you’ll steal, and if you’ll steal you’ll ...”*

That day I learned to value the source of all truth. In the middle of the crisis of putting the woman out of my house, I’d called on my pastor and his wife, who told me that he had just gotten up from crying out to God in what felt like a battle and he didn’t know why. He said that out of the blue he was lead to get on his face and pray intensely. He had been on his face for hours petitioning God in what sounded like loud cries for help and he didn’t know quite what was going on. He had just finished when I called him crying on the other end of the phone. I am convinced that God had him on his face crying out for my family and me just when we needed it most.

That was a Friday and it was no coincidence that the same day was the last day of a special fast his wife had requested of me and a group of women a week before. She had confidentially asked a few women in our church to use the time we’d normally spend eating and having fun to skip a meal and pray instead. We were asked to commit to praying consistently that week for women who would be attending an upcoming weekend retreat. The retreat was to begin this very Friday night and I was still in shock over the earlier events of the day. I had been crying all day long since the episode with the lady and I was pretty shaken up. I was crying not because I was physically hurt, but emotionally crushed. I had trusted another woman as

I would trust my own sister to help me care for myself and my two babies, plus my newborn baby granddaughter. For what seemed like no apparent reason, this woman dayworker had set out to do evil toward us. I was distraught just pondering over the trauma of what could have happened to my babies while I was away at work.

That night at that spiritual retreat I cried out to God like I'd never done before. I'll never forget that experience. We were on a campground in a little country town in the deep woods of Texas inside a small area that had been set up as a prayer garden. The women were all singing and praising God. I was still crying, feeling overwhelmed not just by the events of the day, but by everything that I felt was on my shoulders: my marriage to a man that was broken by addiction, my young daughter in my house now with a daughter of her own, my two babies, and a demanding high profile job. I was upset at myself that I did not recognize the evil lady in my house. I was shaking like a leaf on a tree. But in that prayer garden, I begin to thank God for saving our lives as I was still crying. My pastor's wife came over to me; she placed her hands lightly on my face and gave me a hug. She began to pray for me, and she asked God for something that I had never heard anyone ask before on my behalf. And as she spoke, I felt a fierce wind of air blowing into my face. Then something that I had never experienced happened to me. I felt something literally like fingers touching the inside of my cheeks, but no one was touching my face. She was only praying now. I couldn't see anyone else between us, but I felt someone else there. The muscles around my jawbones

and mouth were being massaged and they began to move, but I wasn't moving them and she wasn't either.

I couldn't fathom what was going on, but it literally felt like someone else was standing between us. I felt large fingers moving my cheekbones up and down. My mouth was moving even though I was not moving it and I was talking even though I had no idea of what I was saying! It was a conversational language as if I had been waiting all my life to say those words and they were finally coming out. It seemed as though I was telling them to this person in charge of things. I was crying and I was mumbling and I just remember feeling like my mouth had been loosed and I was standing there bent over crying and talking rapidly. It felt like I was tattle-telling to God everything that the enemy had ever tried to do to me. I felt like I was releasing all the years of pain from a hurtful marriage, pain from having my daughter scorned in pregnancy, pain from being emotionally traumatized during my early childhood, pain from being betrayed by that woman. I just let it all out in tears but someone else was moving my mouth doing the talking for me. This "spirit," I am sure was the Spirit of God and He hovered over me for days afterward. I recall that it had been about eight years before when I first stumbled into a prayer meeting hosted by my pastor's wife. I was listening to her challenge me and other women in the room to fall in love with God. I was angry at her for telling us to do that because she already had a man.

Now years later, I am personally seeing the manifestation of a God who is all holy, all-powerful, and all loving toward His

own. Needless to say, I learned to hate lies. I decided to not accept them anymore from myself or anyone else.

I share that story about lies with you because I have come to realize that we live in a culture full of lies. They are such a pervasive part of our culture that we have come to accept them as truth. We allow them to live with us and our families in our homes, on our jobs, and in our governments just like I allowed this woman to come into my home. We've learned to close our eyes to deceptions like: abuse, adultery, promiscuity, abortion, greed, lack, and perversion to name a few - as if they don't matter. These are all lies! We forget the main purpose of a lie is to hide the truth.

Veils hide demoralizing and destructive behaviors caused by lack of fulfillment in a woman's life. Veils come in all forms: envy, shame, pride, dishonesty, lust, fantasy, bad choices, hate, rudeness, indifference, out of control, you name it. All of them stem from some deception or lie. Some veils even appear on the surface to be harmless. But the problem with us wearing these veils is they hide the real truth about who we are. They cheat us out of reflecting the glory we were created to reflect. Think about it. Women must be something special when so many men are trying to walk like us, talk like us, look like us, and be like us. *Hmmm....*

There is something about women that makes the whole world stand up and take notice. It's not just our beautiful bodies, our amazing minds, or the funny things we do or say. There's something more that God puts in a woman that literally

moves the very soul of not just men, but mankind. It moves some women to love her as a sister, while others hate her as an enemy. The soul of a man is moved by something in a woman. A woman can make a man leave this world a hero, if he has to, in order to preserve her body, soul, and spirit.

In one woman this something caused her barren body to produce John the Baptist, the forerunner to the Savior of the world. In another woman, the same something that caused my mouth to speak that night without me moving it, hovered over her and caused her to produce the Son of God, even though she was a virgin. How much more then, can this something which is the very nature of God, cause you to seek out the truth about Him and about who you really are in Him?



**Identity isn't wearing a label.
Identity is living a name.**

With God, identity isn't wearing a label like we do in the back of our clothes. Identity is living a name – His name. I don't understand why women and girls, especially in America, waste precious time with matters deemed important by society. Matters like where to get the next designer purse or who's going to be America's next top model or singing idol, or global televangelist. These have become the focus of our culture when we and our families are in trouble. How can the priority of the day be who's got the craziest content on Facebook and

YouTube when women are shown castrated on the same Internet?

My darling daughters and sisters, don't we realize that for every moment we spend basking in someone else's identity, we're cheating ourselves out of our very own? One morning, I was awakened hearing these words in my ear, "*I am the way to the truth about life.*" And again, "*Tell them, I am the way to the truth about life.*" And for the first time, I understood what Jesus meant in John 14:6, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life,...* (KJV) Humans are always searching for the truth about life. What we need to realize is truth can only come from an unchanging source, otherwise it could not be called truth. Think about it: we would we have to call it something else if the source was always changing. We would have to call it *alternatives*. Hmmm,...sound familiar?

Truth is different from facts and opinions. Truth comes from an original. The Bible says that God *was there before the beginning, and He is there through the now, and will be there forever to give a never-ending witness to the truth*. If we believe that, then why isn't He our source of truth? Facts and opinions come a dime a dozen; we can get them from anywhere. They are temporary, are subject to change, and are limited in scope. But truth can only come from one who is real and alive all the time everywhere. God wants us to know that He is *the Truth*. That's why Jesus came. Despite everything we may have seen, heard, or experienced as women, God wants us to know, He is the

way to the truth about our lives. Everything used to cover up this truth is simply a veil – a nice word for a lie.

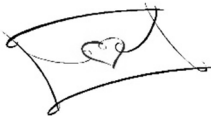


Truth only comes from an Unchanging Source; otherwise, it could not be called truth. It would have to be called *alternatives*.



PART TWO

Experience is not the Best Teacher



If experience was the best teacher, I would have passed the test with my first husband, and therefore had no need for a second and third.

Relying solely on experiences from the past to guide us toward our future is dangerous. Historically, all around the world women have not been treated as worthy, valuable, or respected as individuals having a rightful place in society. Many women sadly never overcome this challenge. In some cases, it's because they have been taught that they are 'women' as if to say, *"Teach them that they are inferior."* There's a reason why we have the women's empowerment and girl power movements. Historically, the social, economics, and political systems have not been in our favor. And although there have been great strides for women, I agree with women like Joyce Meyer, who

admit we still have a long way to go.⁴ I believe though that if we are ever going to enjoy the dominion, respect, value, benefits, and comparable worth that we were designed to have, we need to receive the right information, and it needs to start from birth.



All women are at risk regardless of age, race, religion, or status – because apart from God, we’re destined for failure.

Women everywhere are at risk! You could say that we’ve been raped and our identities have been stolen in the process. The crime happened so long ago that we blocked it out. Maybe as a society of women we are suppressing the overwhelming hurt of the things that happened before us that we did not understand. Most of us don’t even know that a crime has occurred against us. We don’t know our true identity. We don’t know the reason for our existence, and we sure don’t know how to hook up to a God-given destiny.

A real relationship with God is one that is free from hindrances and veils put up to hide the truth about who we really are and who God is. God’s wider definition of womanhood values you, your worth, and your impact in the world, right here and right now, not in the hereafter. These are timeless principles that give us clarity in a world where cultural views are perverted. Even today centuries after the women’s suffrage movement, it seems that our different cultures still

undermine moral standards for seeing value in women. Those fundamental truths said to be self-evident in American history, now have to be documented and pushed in legislation. It's a shame that things have gotten so bad that symbolic legislation speaking out against the public use of derogatory references to women now have to be discussed.

Suffering in private at the hands of our abusive fathers, husbands, brothers, male friends, and bosses is horrible enough, but being the target of public degradation by strangers is worse. Yet, even beyond that is the fact that women now refer to each other as the b word shows us just how systemic the problem really is. If we ourselves are too busy laughing at our own playwrights when they refer to us as the b word in their movies about girlfriends and that doesn't bother us, then that just tells me how deeply we have suppressed our pain. What are we doing hiding behind all these veils? How can we expect others to see us as anything more than witches, if we ourselves keep calling each other bitches? If we're too busy to notice the lyrics our kids are listening to that we cannot decipher, the words that disrespect us all, then look out when it's time to pay the piper.

The enemies of God have gone beyond attacking faith. After all, they have all but silenced it at every public level of courts, schools, and marketplaces. Today, the enemy doesn't have to fight to silence our faith—he is now working on destroying our hope. Why? Because faith only applies to a faithful few, but hope applies to everyone! Without hope, faith

doesn't stand a chance. That's why there's so much danger in the silence of women as a people. That's why the poverty statistics for women and children should be absolutely unacceptable. That's why every woman needs to embrace every other woman who is vulnerable to desperation. We need to throw our arms around each other to love, coach, and mentor one another. How else are our daughters and sons going to grow up to impact the world for good if there are no real women to seed into them?

Our expectations have got to come up! I believe the expectations of most women today are too low. Our expectations are either non-existent or counter-productive. God is concerned about us having hope. Yet, if we all just act like a bunch of desperate housewives entangled with our makeup, men, and girlfriend drama, then what need is there for hope? If our stories are only going as far as the soap opera, then why bother?

I mean, why don't we just go shopping? Get our nails done? Change our hair, and go sleep with somebody? That always works for the women in the media. If we listen to our culture, then the most we have to look forward to on earth is a gorgeous hunk of a man that can get it on in the bedroom. The world says it doesn't matter if we cannot benefit from a man's leadership in the family room, patience in the bathroom, determination in the workroom, or time and attention in the playroom.

I wonder what would happen if we would get as intimate with God, as we have gotten with the world? I wonder if our entire outlook would begin to change? I wonder if we would expect more out of life if we knew that we could woo our God, and that He is willing to let us? I wonder if we knew that at that point, spiritual intimacy would take place and we end up pregnant with the things of heaven to birth in the earth realm.

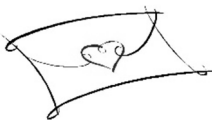
Being a woman is about more than getting to look our best, having a man, raising children, finding a great career, retiring, and going to heaven. God's wider definition of womanhood is for the here and now. Women won't need hope in heaven. With personal experiences between us and God, we can change the world. We can form healthy views of ourselves and the people around us. In intimacy with God, we raise our expectations, stop settling for just anything, and stop giving life to everything that has no meaning. It is only after we embrace God in all of His glory that we truly live!

I submit to ladies everywhere that there is reason to expect something more out of life. We need to explore—the hope of more than just having a man, more than just having a career, more than just having church, and even more than just existing wearing make-up and looking beautiful. There is more to knowing God created us women than just having the virtues of beauty, babies, and business success.



God's wider definition of womanhood has the power to not only change your life, but fulfill it.

God has something to say about everything impacting our lives. Even when He's quiet, God is still saying something. You just have to know who He is to understand His language. God wants women to know the truth of who they are, and as a result, gain a deeper different expectation from life than what the so-called experts offer us. The words of the so-called experts will point to your own potential and power, and that of the world around you. I'm telling you I tried operating life that way, and many superstars have tried operating life. That way. It wasn't enough. I submit to you that it takes more than psychology, vision, self-esteem, popularity, and drive to lead a woman to identity and fulfillment. Finding these go beyond any man's philosophy. Finding truth and holding passion goes even beyond religion.



Experiencing the wider definition God has for you is an intimate journey, not a religious one.

Since my purpose is not to be religious, but to be effective, church people will have to forgive me if I don't use proper systematic theology here. I'm not talking about having church as usual. The message isn't about whether or not a woman is

churched or unchurched, black or white, rich or poor, *American Idol* or unknown. It's about her search for identity and truth, passion and love. We must understand the destiny of every woman is at stake.



Nobody showed us how to destroy the lies of the “^&#^%*\$” who stole our identity and raped us of our passion for truth!

Instead of looking to public figures and celebrities with whom we have neither relationship nor accountability, we can look to a better example for defining ourselves and experiencing fulfillment in our public and private lives.

Don't take your cues from me. I am not your expert. I was the one whose first and second husbands had the same first name. And whose second and third husbands had the same last name. I was paying for wedding after wedding and not keeping the husband. I was married so many times; the last time my husband and I married, I was afraid no guests would show up for the event. They were saying, “*yeah, well, I've seen this one before.*” Perhaps you can relate. You know the desperation of wanting to be married. But, I also lived through the desperation of wanting to be divorced – and then wanting to be married again. Don't laugh. I thought I was pretty smart.

As an adult, I became one of the youngest and highest ranking corporate directors in a world-renown Texas Medical

Center organization. Later I became a high profile director for a Fortune 500 company. I was very active in leadership in my community and the church. I developed people and managed projects for a living. My degrees were in Leadership and my walls were decked with awards. Yet inside, I struggled at the thought of not having a man. And lest you think it's all about having a man, the truth is my life had just as much trauma if not more, when I finally got the man.

I'm sure you can identify times in your own life (married or single) when you were in personal and spiritual desperation? We all can remember experiences in marriage and single life that we wished we'd never had. I think we can safely rule out the old saying, *"Experience is the best teacher."*



**If experience is not the best teacher,
what is?
*"Wisdom, my daughter, wisdom!"***



Mama, What's the Definition of a Good Woman?

My daughter, Kaiya, now grown with three beautiful girls of her own, called me on the phone when I first started writing this book. I asked her what is it that she'd like to know from women like me. She kept silent for a few moments and then I heard her speak. I could just imagine her face with those big beautiful glistening brown eyes as she started to say something on the other side of the phone. She asked in her soft inquisitive tone, "*Mama, what's the definition of a good woman?*" I could hear the desperation in her voice; she really wanted to know the answer to this question. As I listened to her, all I could do was remember how I felt when watching the movie, *Braveheart*. Near the end of the movie, actor Mel Gibson is about to be escorted to the guillotine, and I'm desperately sitting on the edge of my seat, hoping someone will come out of nowhere to help him so he won't die. Kaiya's question, in my mind, was her cry for help

from a mother who could possibly save her from the harsh pains of reality and help her make some sense out of life.

Even though women all over the world are brought up differently from one culture to the next, raising a girl to become a young woman is still a job too commonly filled by society's acceptable standards for women. It doesn't matter whether we describe ourselves as Christians or atheists. It doesn't matter whether we grew up on the Western Hemisphere or the Eastern. Today, we grow up not having a true source of definition. What I mean by that is we don't know where a good woman comes from.

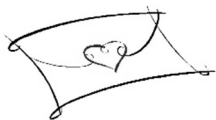
Can we look to certain women as role models in our own culture today? Who in our nation can be pointed to as *the* acceptable standard for womanhood today? Can we find that woman in television, politics, or culture? Are icons like *Michelle, Oprah, Hillary, Condoleezza, Barbara, Tyra, Whoopi, Ellen*,... our heroes? Are we getting our identity, confidence, and self-worth from them? Or do we get our womanhood definitions from traditions, customs or church culture? Either way, we still have a problem. We study other women in the news and television media, at church, work, and school. We know what they like, what they dislike, what they wear, where they've been and where they're going. But if asked to go and build our own "dream girl" life, many of us would not know where to begin.



If we understood God's wider definition of womanhood, we'd be living out our own dream-girl life.

In this day and time, we're so far from the truth of who we really are. Yet, we act like we're not, particularly us American women. We think we've got it all together because we have the best we've ever had. We have the best hair, the best spas, and the best fitness experts. Our bank accounts have gained a little momentum, and a number of us head multi-billion dollar corporations. Still, we are unfulfilled and miserable inside.

Without original identity, we use those things or people most familiar to us to succeed or survive – leaving our own real identities and strengths unknown. Without our own real identities, we don't have the capacity to make good quality decisions. Left without our own definition, we don't choose good men, good careers, and good decisions for ourselves. We don't know the real meaning of principles. We don't know what God had in mind for us. We have left critical decisions to the world around us. Our respective cultures lure us toward the habits and behaviors of our time - no matter how self-destructive. Just think what our lives would be like if we only had something that seems lost today – God's principles.



Great works of art are timeless masterpieces; so are a woman's principles.
They never go out of style.

Somehow we've supposed the right standard has come from around us, even some of us with trusted religious leaders. As such, we have tried to be like them instead of becoming who we really are. We have not explored the definition of what's "good" for us or questioned the culturally perfect standard. I challenge you— churchd or unchurchd woman, explore deeper the source of your individual meaning.

From where did you come from? From whom do you exist? What is your own destiny? God did not uniquely create you so you could run behind Oprah, Paula, Tyra, Angie, Joyce, or Juanita to live out of their lives. Nothing against these women, but each of us must make our own real everyday connection with our own dream girl life and learn to make positive impact in our own parts of the world. And we must do so with the help of our Creator.

Earlier I said this book is not about being religious. It's also not about being secular. It's about being *spiritual*, but not just *any* spiritual woman. Be a woman who is intimate with God.

Have you noticed there is more talk these days about "inspiration" and spiritual things? I believe before I go dipping into anything spiritual, I need to know its origin.

It used to be when you heard the word “spiritual” you could automatically assume a person was referring to God, the Bible, or Jesus. But today, you have to qualify what you mean by that word because there are all sorts of movements afloat in the name of God, that are no more than fronts for the enemies of God. The deceiver, the liar, Satan, who is the enemy of both the woman and God, is a spirit and he is active through people in our world today.

When my precious daughter asked, “*Mama, what’s the definition of a good woman?*” she was trying to figure out how to become the woman that her culture hails as good. She was trying to earn the right to speak into her culture, rather than making her culture earn the right to speak into her. She felt that the only way for her to survive in this life was for her to find out what is it that women who seem to “have it all” have and get “it”—whatever “it” is. In her view, that is what our culture honors and that is what people look for to define value and meaning in life. This is one of the biggest lies of our modern society.

“It” is the mark of acceptance by others. “It” is what gets people loved, respected, and looked at in our societies. So whether “it” is hair, money, sex, status, or whatever, the world says you must get “it” before you can attain a certain level of inclusion or satisfaction. Now please don’t misread me here. It’s great to be beautiful, educated, wealthy, sexy, and stylish. When God gives a prominent lifestyle, it is for a far greater purpose than self. It is a grace. But God gives different graces

my beautiful sisters and lovely young daughters. Our lives are more than our lifestyles. Yet we seem to allow life to revolve around lifestyle and things. Instead, our lives ought to be shaped by an upbringing from Father God loving us into the women He designed us to be.



When God becomes sexy, culture becomes our tool and no longer our rule.

Before we allow our cultures to speak into our lives, we need to make our cultures know who we are. And we can't do that if we ourselves don't know. Culture - be it social, political, corporate, even religious, I believe is a tool, not a rule. While your faith may be resident in you, it is not always resident in culture - the way of life where you live. Rather than beat down the doors of your culture trying to get those around you to let you exist in their way of life, start your own women's ownership movement. You'll find out who you are, whose you are, and what your destiny is so you can know the difference you were born to make.

Notice I didn't say, "*You can make a difference.*" Women are so full of influence; it's obvious that *we can make a difference.* The question is, "*What is the difference **we must make?***" Every woman on the face of the earth can impact and change something around her. It doesn't take rocket science to figure

that out. However, you must know the difference that you were uniquely *born to make*.

In the 21st century, America is still one of the most defining on the face of the earth. Yet, women and children are the poorest and most desperate of Americans. That is dreadful and intolerable; but it sets the stage for divine change in our lives. The crux of the matter is not how rich or poor we are. Think about it. For centuries women throughout history have positively impacted their families, those around them, and the world, regardless of their economic situation. Why is it so tough today?



**“There is no such thing as tough.
There is trained and untrained.
Now which one are you?”**

*-Denzel Washington as Creasy in the 2004
movie from AJ Quinnel's, Man on Fire*

Along with the guidance you may have already from a mom, mentor, or spiritual leader, this book is *your training*. It's a study for women of any age and race. I am writing it for my daughter, and her daughter, and her daughter's daughters. I am writing it for my friends of all ages. It's the secret to the passion God created in all of us. It is the womanhood - yours and mine.

This is not meant to be all we'll ever need to know about ourselves, but rather, an introduction to where our identity, passion and dominion come from, how to get them back, and

how to keep them. We need to talk about the dangers of what happens when we do not embrace our God-inspired origins. God wants women to realize the catastrophe of being untrained from birth on their true identity. Taking this study through creation, I believe you'll discover the veils that impact your life no matter how old you are. You'll discover what it means to be a woman. I'm praying that you'll discover the difference in your thinking and actions that must be made to remove your veils. I can't remove yours and you can't remove mine. But one thing's for sure: they keep us in spiritual identity crisis until we let God remove them.

Remember, when God becomes sexy, we get rid of our other gods. It's time to put away the fake gods and get off of our emotional rollercoasters. Get rid of the veils; they have become protective coverings, nothing more than idol gods.



When God becomes sexy, we get rid of our other gods.



Careful Who You Call Hootchie

Going from hootchie to holy isn't for the younger women, those of low socio-economic status, or women outside the church. It's not even for women only. **It's for the church.** In the 1950s, legendary Father of Chicago Blues, Muddy Waters, "the Hootchie Cootchie man," enthused both black and white cultures from Mississippi to England with this term. It allowed his music to cross over from blues, to rock and roll, and even jazz genres, before finally giving birth to the "hootchie mama" in recent years. Although the word has resurfaced in urban culture, and R&B and Hip Hop music, the "hootchie" has actually been around a long time. She existed as far back as the Bible days. She just wasn't called a hootchie back then. She was a harlot or a whore. A woman was referred to as one of these when she rejected the authority of her father's house and instead chose to depend on using her own tactics, primarily her body, to get her needs and wants met.

There's a strange thing about hootchies – they have a unique way of wearing clothing or the lack of it. Hootchies

believe that they can make any piece of clothing look good on them. Of all the different pieces of clothing they wear, it's the clothing that you don't see that speaks the loudest. Ironically, the most worn item of clothing for a hootchie is a favored among brides as well. It's an invisible veil that speaks the most for a hootchie. It masks her beauty within and mutilates her beauty without, leaving her with scars for a lifetime.

I used to hide behind many veils. As soon as I would take off one, another would take its place. I was ashamed of my past and too afraid of my future because of all the mistakes I had made. Some of them weren't even my mistakes: *they belonged to others that hurt me*. Nevertheless, they still caused me great shame and pain. I was a woman who had been taught the right behaviors, who was born and bred in the church, respectful to my parents and teachers, making good grades, and a leader at home and school. From the age of 12, I was assigned to teach other children Sunday School. Outside of church, I was an honor student in the top ten percent of my class and was decorated with academic medals and awards. Yet I was totally distraught by age of 22. I was unfulfilled and looking for love in all the wrong places.

I came from a family of warm loving women who were badly abused as young women and were raised with no self-esteem. As adults, they had no training or nurturing to compensate for what they didn't get as children. Wearing a lot of veils, I forwent college at first and married right out of high school, thinking that I was doing the right thing. Naivety and

domestic violence made me a divorced parent by the age of 21. An over-achiever, I excelled at work, receiving one promotion after another while going to college at night. Along the way, I became many great roles in Corporate America. Everyone knew me as a great leader on the job, but I was a wreck at home. I wouldn't even come home until long after happy hour, leaving my daughter cared for by my live-in sister. I was never into drugs or excessive alcohol, I was simply busy caring for those veils — trying to get the love and abandonment issues of my childhood resolved.

My earliest childhood memory is of the night when I overheard my mother say she was going to kill my father. He had been out for several days at a time with other women who we all knew well because we lived in a small town. My mother told us to go to bed and I remember thinking I would never see my father again. He was my favorite parent and I didn't know why. I seemed to have no issues with my father; I couldn't figure out why my mother had plenty. When I was four years old, my father left my mother, my two sisters and I. A fourth sister was on the way. I still remember the day my mother went into labor having my baby sister. My Dad had left us in Louisiana and I would not see him again until many years later when I was teenager.

In a single parent home, we were extremely poor. However I never remember us receiving food stamps or welfare assistance. Instead, my mother always worked hard labor under the most horrid conditions I'd ever seen. She worked in a

chicken processing plant where live chickens were killed on the spot while water, blood, and guts were splattered all over the workers' plastic aprons before the fowls were eventually shipped out to grocery stores.

People always brought us food and I cannot ever recall being hungry as a child. I do remember not having much, but it was always enough. The thing I feared most was going to bed at night because for some reason, I was afraid I would die. I used to stay awake as long as I could because I didn't want to close my eyes for fear of death. I don't know if it had anything to do with the fear of losing my father that night of their big fight, but all I know is that all of my life until I was 18 years old, my greatest wish was to have my father back. Even though my mother found a new husband several years later, it seemed as if I'd never recover from missing my father.

There was one moment in my life as an adolescent that has been the highlight of my entire childhood and that was when my father's mother passed away. My father came to her funeral and I got to spend a few hours with him. Though it was the second saddest day of my childhood because I lost my favorite grandmother, it was the happiest day of my childhood because I got to see my father again.

We went to church a lot during my childhood. I was practically born in church, but all I knew of God was that He was the one who would punish or kill you if you did not pray a lot or if you did too many wrong things. I tried to be the best little girl I could be because I didn't want to die.

By the time I was a teenager, I was so tired of being afraid to go to sleep at night that I was miserable. I begin to wonder if I would be better off dead. I never told anyone, not even my best friend Rose, but there were times, when I thought about what life would be like if I was not around. My issue in the end was that I was always too afraid of even the thought of hurting myself, so suicide was out.

Because of marital problems between my mom and stepfather, I ended up leaving home while still in high school and marrying immediately after graduation. We immediately got pregnant and when my daughter was just three years old, I left my first husband because he had become very violent and started out as a single mother when I was 21.

After many years of trying to find the love I missed as a child inside of night clubs and night club owners, I found myself even deeper in depression by the age of 30, yet I was still making a lot of money being promoted in a corporate career with Houston's largest employer, still going to college, and still appearing to be successful on the outside—proof that all hootchies are not poor and uneducated.

I met a man in a club and he didn't look like he belonged there. He seemed like a nice man and we became friends. He introduced me to his pastor and his pastor's wife, and that was the beginning of my new life. They introduced me to the Jesus that I had taught others about, and for the first time in my life, I accepted the gospel of grace for the condition that I was in.

And even after finding out that Christ accepted me just as I was, despite my past mistakes, I continued to struggle, especially in relationships because I was still trying to figure out the answer to the same question my daughter was now asking me, *"Mom, what makes a good woman?"* I had accepted Christ as Lord, but I didn't know He was also a Lover.

I married a second time to a preacher and spent thousands to have the wedding only to be divorced in less than six months. It took me six years to pay off the wedding. I think that was the first time in my life that I'd met a man who seemed even more desperate than me. However, that just shows how desperate I really was.

The third time I married, it was to the friend I'd met in the club through whom I'd been introduced to the person of Jesus Christ. But because of my friend's addiction, we were divorced after seven years. Then because of his sobriety, we were remarried 12 years later. Altogether, between his addiction issues and my identity issues, we have married each other three times, hoping to get it right and become a godly example of what to do, or rather what not to do with issues of identity and self-worth.

I was married so many times, it became a family tradition. Three times married to the same man and two times to different men, means I've been married five times. That's a lot of veils. That's like the woman from the Bible who Jesus met at a drinking well. I learned through all of my dramas and traumas that single or married, God has already divinely

ordained identity, love, and fulfillment in our favor. These are not things outside of us, but on the inside. We are just terribly unprepared for the individual and corporate struggles we have to overcome everyday just to enjoy them. From birth, women are not shown how to tap into the love of God. We then begin a lifetime of cheating ourselves and all the more, cheating others. When other people see this type of behavior in females, they usually call her a skank or hootchie. But God – He’s the One who calls her holy.

Brides and women of Eastern culture aren’t the only ones who wear veils to cover themselves. Hootchies, rich or poor, wear veils too. They cover their shame, pride, or even apathetic ignorance. They cover all the ways in which they themselves and others cheat them out of the truth about their lives. They are not all poor and uneducated - they are just untrained.

By my definition, a hootchie is a woman in spiritual identity crisis. They all wear facades. Most of them, like me, want to take off their veils, but they don’t know how. And other women either make us feel too ashamed or too angry that we can’t get them off. So instead, we hide behind the veils of men, money, careers, children, the high life, or the low life. We become either too prideful or too shameful to remove them. Either way, we are raped of self-worth.

In her book, *Life is Not a Fairy Tale*, Fantasia Barrino describes her own impressions of hootchies.⁵ I commend her for encouraging young women not to become hootchies. But I feel the need to encourage all women. Fantasia described a

woman of faith who helped her find true identity beyond the fairy tale. For many others, finding women of faith to coach them through identity, love, and fulfillment challenges is a real problem. In my own observations, churches are filled with women who appear to be in spiritual identity crisis themselves. I say this because many appear to be unapproachable; they don't seem to be fulfilled or passionate about life, and they seek to be accepted into the cliques or social clubs of life as their source for passion.

When talking about hootchies, the word whore first occurs in the Bible in Leviticus 19:29. Interestingly, God is not talking to daughters, but to fathers in this passage. *“Do not prostitute thy daughter, to cause her to be a whore; lest the land fall to whoredom, and the land become full of wickedness.”* God was saying that under no circumstances were fathers ever to cause their daughters to need to use their bodies for provision. It is obvious that He was speaking to the role of fathers in providing for their families and homeland. A father who will not take care of his own household, says the Bible in I Timothy 1:8, proves himself a faithless man. But that's another story.

Since God spoke of the term whore as evil, it's sad to see so many females today boast using words like [b's], whores, and hootchies proudly. What they may really want from their relationships is value, worth, protection, security, wedding rings, and commitment. Instead, the only rings they have are those displayed prominently as children circling from one end

of their dress-tails to another. Statistics say this situation will only get worse without intervention.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, there were more than 1.4 million young people between the ages of 16 and 19 who are not in school and not working.⁶ Imagine all of the entire number of households in Houston, Texas at that time, the fourth largest city in the United States. That's how many teenagers there were that were not in school and not working in the U.S. in 2000. One can only guess what they were doing. Without our intervention, what else can we expect?

Being in identity crisis is not a crime. The crime is not getting free. Hootchies aren't determined by age or where they live or what race or ethnicity they are. They are not even determined by their income or how much money they make. When a woman of any age, status, or position doesn't embrace God as her Father, she is instead attached to something else – even her own reputation. She looks for someone or something that can touch, pamper, and give her identity and value. On the big screen and off, in affluent neighborhoods and ghettos, you find hootchies from all walks of life. They come in all colors, shapes and sizes.

Hootchies use work, religion or anything to cover up insecurity. Both men and women act like hootchies because they cover up fear and insecurity. Some even do great work and commit to great causes, but they promote themselves by not trusting God. This is the way of the spiritual hootchie; she doesn't know she's missing something internally; she thinks she

already has God by virtue of having His blessings in life. The problem occurs when she doesn't rely on God to get her needs, problems, or issues met. Instead, she thinks these blessings are from her own personal effort. These are the real hootchies in God's sight. They use anything, including work, sex, popularity, money, power or religion for their own personal ambition, fulfillment, or security in life. Instead of letting God fill their deep personal desires for identity, security, success, and emotional intelligence, they do it their way. They don't yield to God as the author and source of every good and perfect gift. God wants to heal all of us from our issues whatever the issues are – for they are all spiritual wounds.

Hard-core hootchies are rich and poor. They do not embrace loving God. They wear even greater facades than the young girls living in the fast lanes of life. Instead of children around their waists, spiritual hootchies wear a number of things. They wear religion and self-defeating attitudes. They wear fantasy, disorientation, and control. Hardcore spiritual hootchies don't want to change. These are the real hootchies, not the poor half-dressed girls from the streets. The difference between the two is one word: hope.

The real hootchies are those who refuse to allow God to love on them. They might even say they know who He is, but they are not willing to apply His truth to their issues and situations. They'd rather choose their own way of being right. They even choose their own way of getting what they want, like getting their own man by compromising or taking someone

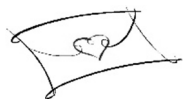
else's. Some spiritual hootchies even use God's name or places of worship to do it. These are they who have given up on God for the issues of their heart. Instead, they have become unfaithful to the God they say must exist. Yet, they have chosen someone or something else to hope in.

There are also hootchies who don't claim to know God and they want to stay that way. They have settled for lies *about* God, rather than wanting to open their hearts to Him. They would rather not experience Him for themselves. Their hearts have become cold and they like their evil ways.

Indeed spiritual identity crisis does not limit itself to the poor woman who gives her body away to survive. Jesus himself said this kind of woman could be accepted into His Kingdom before any who exalts her heart against God. Rahab, Mary Magdalene, the woman at the well, and the woman caught in adultery are all examples of women in the Bible who were considered hootchies. Yet, Jesus warmly welcomed them into his circle of influence. How could Jesus himself accept such women openly? *Because God has a wider definition of womanhood.* These women found the key to winning the heart of God. They learned the Kingdom of God is **wherever the King reigns**. They knew the first move one makes in the presence of a King is to acknowledge that 'He' *is the King*. The woman who bows to her own standard of right identity will never be right in the presence of the King.

Because of the way I carried myself, no one would have ever called me a hootchie. I was college educated, highly

compensated, a leader in the church and community. I didn't have many men. I was only interested in a serious long-term relationship. I looked like the woman who had it all. No one would have ever suspected me of having a heart that was turned against God. Relying on my own thoughts and tactics for getting my identity needs met made me no different than a hootchie. She exists at all levels even affluent ones. She is not the woman or girl with the birth control issues we've all heard about. I would venture to say that if the girl or woman we all call hootchie was nurtured from birth to experience the King, then she would not be called hootchie - but holy.



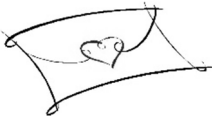
**When God becomes sexy, we realize
it isn't sex we want, but love.**



PART THREE

YOUR PERSONAL JOURNEY

Who Are You? Whose Are You? What Is Your Destiny?



A woman who does not explore what
God offers in womanhood will never
know the truth of who she is. With
truth being absent, the lie is what she
lives.

Antiques Roadshow, aired on American public television, highlights the value of rare collectibles people have held onto for years. Many people visiting *Antiques Roadshow* leave

BRIDES OF VIRTUE – A WIDER DEFINITION OF WOMANHOOD

completely shocked about the extreme value of their items. In some cases, owners have admittedly almost thrown out the items because they had no idea how much they were worth.

HOW MUCH IS YOUR SELF-WORTH?

Women all over the globe are treated differently by their respective cultures. Yet, voluntarily or involuntarily, they are still in desperate situations. Think of how women are treated around the world. During the post-Taliban era, I read of three separate occasions of Afghan women being murdered just for having a legitimate career outside the home.⁷ For centuries in countries like India and China female children have been murdered or neglected in favor of males for value.

In one society, womanhood is treated as a sex trade where a grown man has sex with his child-bride at age 8 to 10 years old. In another, womanhood is something to be suppressed, feared and contained to the dark recesses of the house. In yet another, womanhood is all about the visually-perfect beauty that she pampers and worships to any extent. From slaughtering female babies to sex discrimination, from poverty to domestic violence, from women's health to relationship issues, there is simply not enough hope for women everywhere without you and your self-worth being a part of the solution.

With all the different messages females receive, how can one really know who she is? Apart from her career, reputation, or what she has experienced with others, how can a woman of

any age know her own identity? How does a woman know every day that she is worthy? On the *Antiques Roadshow*, the person stating the value usually demonstrates a lot of knowledge about the origin or source of existence for a rare collectible. In order to treat us properly or have a correct opinion about ourselves, we need to have knowledge of our source of existence, our origin at creation, just like the owner of a collectible treasure. Once an owner knows the value of an item, the owner can better determine what to do with the item and how to handle it. The woman who knows her value can better handle her life. The woman who knows her value can invoke her destiny.

You may have heard any number of “*Who Are You? Whose Are You?*” sermons before. I’ve heard and enjoyed at least two. Dr. Bridget Hilliard and Minister Brenda Stewart of Houston, Texas are wonderful women that have two different versions of this topic. I’m sure there are even more who are well worth listening to. But if you’re like me, understanding is what you seek. It is what God will give you as He reveals Himself. No doubt, you will come out of these lessons with your own story, your own transformation. I encourage you to write your answers to the questions that are posed in this book. Ask God to customize your experience. Make the journey your own.

GOD'S WIDER DEFINITION OF YOUR WOMANHOOD – Your Notes

How were women portrayed where you grew up?

How do you think God sees women? Why do think God sees women this way?

From what sources are you comparing yourself to make changes in your life? Why? What does this say about how you define yourself?

Brides of Virtue

a wider definition of womanhood

Principle 1

Women are God's own unique creation, fashioned by God while man was asleep.

Women are precious to God. The Bible tells us that God put man to sleep when He got ready to create woman. He didn't get man's input or opinion when He fashioned the woman. He took a rib from the man and with it, God created the woman. Even though God took the rib of a man to create woman, none of us have exactly the same DNA. We are truly masterpieces. Each one of us is a genuine article, a priceless work of art. Our value originates from God Himself, and therefore, there's no limit to how much we are worth. Just like the woman at creation had her own special time with God, women today need to have their own special time with God.

Unlike any other species, mankind (that includes woman) originated from the image and handiwork of God Himself. Scripture tells us in Genesis 1:26 “...*God said let Us make man in Our own image.*” When God created the heavens, the earth and the living creatures, He spoke them into existence. He even formed animals from the dust of the ground. But when He got ready to create mankind, God did something He did not do with the animals and other living creatures. God

breathed into mankind His own breath, His Spirit, and man became a living soul.

God took six days to create the world. Everything God says and does is significant. Of special importance is what God says and does *first*. There is particular significance in what God has said and done in communicating with us as His created beings. Genesis, our book of beginnings, gives us some information behind our existence. God wants us to examine what He has revealed about Himself and the depth of His love for us. There are secrets and keys for our existence that many of us have missed because we still don't relate to the God of our beginnings. Women and girls in and out of the church should explore and discover who they are in the Creation, even if they think they already know the story.

I think we have taken for granted our book of beginnings. This is especially true for Christians. I believe we assume that almost everyone around knows the Creation account. I was surprised to find during a personal development series presented to women of different ages, that the majority of them never read the creation account. All of them had heard of Adam and Eve, but only one had ever actually read the account of creation in Genesis.

I use the word, account, because it's just that; it's more than a story. It's our history! You see, the Bible is not a book of fairy tales; it is the history of a universe and a people, namely God's people. The history of creation is written as a narrative in the Bible. We know from grade school that a narrative is a story

telling about a course of events. One or more characters are revealed along the way in a narrative. Although all of the pieces in a narrative story are important, the main character is especially important in a narrative. As we read, I want you to pay attention to the character as knowledge of them unfold in the history of the world and our beginning. In narratives one's attention is directed toward identifying the hero of the story. The hero in a narrative is distinguished from the supporting characters just as the star of the show is distinguished in the movies.

So, I'm asking you to journey through the first three chapters of the Bible with me as we discover what real womanhood is from the Master Himself who created us. To shed some light on this topic, I will share the meaning of some of the words as they were used in the original Bible language. You won't need a dictionary, but you will need a Bible. I want you to see that lessons from God are important to us today so we don't just survive as mammals do with their young. After all, since we're god-like creatures higher than animals, shouldn't we be thriving and not just surviving?

As you go through this journey in this book, I pray you will actually be obedient and do the journaling – writing answers and thoughts you have in this book. Whether this is your first time reading the Creation or not, look at it with fresh eyesight. Without a real appreciation for the creative power of God in Genesis, our book of beginnings, women are bound to devalue themselves and devalue the God who created them. *So regardless*

of what age you are, you're about to enjoy a one-of-kind experience as we take a Girls Trip with our God through Creation!

I wish to make it perfectly clear that the Creation is by no means the whole message God is revealing in Genesis. It is simply the beginning of what God wanted to reveal to us about Himself, His people, and His world. So let's invite God to be our mentor counselor and guide as we explore His testimony of our beginning.

LET'S PRAY:

Father God, whether or not this is our first time hearing your word in Genesis, we're asking you to help us catch a glimpse of the vision you saw for us in the beginning. Help us to appreciate all that you did beforehand just to prepare for our entrance on earth. And Lord, don't let us end this journey. We never want to forget the visions you have of us as Brides of Virtue. We want to get to the point where we respond to you as loyal brides to a faithful husband, as kept daughters of a loving father. You are a rewarder of them that earnestly seek you, so God as we seek you now, reward our diligence by gracing us with your presence, and transform us to realize our full potential.

Amen.

GOD'S WIDER DEFINITION OF YOUR WOMANHOOD - Workbook

Read Genesis 1:26 (*This study is based on Genesis chapters 1-3*)

How did God create man in Genesis 1:26? Was any other creature created this way?

What did God do when He was ready to create woman in Genesis 2:21-22?

What do you think woman might have looked like if man had not been put to sleep?

Brides of Virtue

a wider definition of womanhood

Principle 2

Women are whole in what God Himself has done; we are not incomplete persons looking for a better half.

As a young girl, did you ever dream of being swept away by your favorite hero or a knight in shining armor? Did it take too many husbands or boyfriends for you to find out that neither of them would come? Were you looking for a man to breathe destiny into your life? Did you know that God is the only **Creator** and everyone else who makes something is an **inventor**? Could it be that the One, who formed and shaped you before your own mother even knew you were there, is the one you were looking for? The God of all Creation completed woman when He formed her with his own hands and breathed into her nostrils the affinity of Himself—His spirit.

As women created by God in His image, we are whole beings. Our challenge has always been searching out the truth about what God said instead of listening to what society tells us. Let's face it. Today, we live in a society driven by looks and profits. Looks sell and profits soar when we use two things: women and sex. The media, television, video, and billboard makers have mastered the art of helping people see something

on women to make another woman or man want that. As women, we see another woman – her hair, her dress, her lifestyle, her husband or her friends – and it makes us feel lacking on the inside. When we see a woman that appears to “have it all,” we sometimes feel like that woman is more complete.

What makes a woman feel like she doesn’t “have it all?” Having a man, business, ministry, children, friends, etc., doesn’t make woman complete. The woman was complete when God made her. If she had needed anything else, God, her Creator, would have given it to her. God brought the woman to the man because the man needed her, not the other way around. It was not that the man was made incomplete, but that he needed to see something. He needed to see just how great a matter of his existence is being made in the image of God. If you read Genesis chapters 1 and 2, you might have just missed that.

When Adam saw all the living creatures God had made, he noticed that they all had something in common. He noticed that each species had a part and a counterpart. That is, each animal had an animal opposite it of its own kind. He noticed that for each creature, there was a matching creature and they physically fit with each other in connecting parts. Woman, when she was created, was physically designed for Adam, fitting him or matching his surrounding parts. He found that for every part of his body he could see, there was a corresponding counterpart on her body. He could see that she was like him, but he could also see that she was not. She had corresponding

parts that were taken out of his parts. So Adam called her woman because she was taken “out of” man.

The whole nature of their oppositeness, being counterparts of each other, was to reflect the splendor or beauty of man as a created being because nothing else looked or operated like Adam. In other words, woman was made to show the beauty and superiority of mankind over all the other things God created. I Corinthians 11:2-13 says it like this, “Man is the crowning glory of God and woman is the crowning glory of man.” Man was designed to manifest or show the splendor of God and woman was designed out of man to manifest or show the splendor of mankind. There’s a connection between God, man, and woman. This connection is extremely important. It is the first relationship existing between God and all mankind and it included woman as the crowning achievement of God’s creation.

What this means ladies is that from the beginning, you were a part of a miraculous one-of-a kind relationship or “covenant” if you will, that God had with all mankind. The word “covenant” in the original language used in the Bible meant, “cutting a pact” or “made by passing between pieces of flesh.” When God made Adam, he scooped up clay from the earth, formed it with his hands, and blew into his nostrils the breath of life. He did not “cut between pieces of flesh” or in other words, “form a covenant” because the third party to the agreement had not been “cut” yet. We were not yet formed from the man’s flesh and blood. God did not establish his first

act of covenant until after woman came on the scene. She was “cut” and formed through the flesh and blood of man by the hand of God Himself.

When God created woman, God cut a pact with mankind that included woman and could not be formed without her. She was the key to his destiny! Her purpose was to help or aid him in the whole scheme of things in creation. The Bible tells us that God put the man to sleep and took a rib from the man’s flesh and from it, God created the woman. Can you imagine the hand of God going into the side of Adam while he is asleep, and taking from him this piece of bone and flesh stained with Adam’s blood? This is the first time that the Bible records God putting His hand into flesh and blood to make flesh and blood.

Since the beginning, the cutting of the flesh and spilling of blood together with someone else always established a covenant. It signified an irrevocable agreement, something that was signed in blood and therefore, could not be undone. When God creates woman on the scene in Genesis, He shows me two spectacular things: 1) Woman was made in God’s image because man was made in God’s image; 2) Woman reflected God’s choice of mankind above all of creation as the vessel upon which to reflect His glory. This indicates that something beautiful happens when God chooses to reflect Himself in the physical realm. In Genesis, you get the creation of two beautiful, perfect, and splendid entities, called man and woman in the Old Testament. In the New Testament, you get a

resurrected Savior called Jesus Christ, and a body of worshippers called the church.

In the Old Testament, you have God cutting through the flesh of the man with His own hands to establish a final creation, woman. In the New Testament, you have God cutting through the flesh of a Savior to give birth to His church. Ladies, notice the significance of your womanhood here. God chooses to make a beautiful, perfectly designed inside and out, feminine intelligent creature to be the end result of what happens when God cuts through the flesh of His own prized possession!

Observe that man did not have any say in God taking this approach. Can you imagine what the woman might have looked like if God hadn't put the man to sleep? Some of the men we know would have said, "*Give her four breasts, three butts, and....*" You get the picture. Aren't you glad God put him to sleep? Some of us need to stop and thank God now for having that wisdom.

Woman was the result of this first "cutting of the flesh" that God enacted between Himself and all of mankind. She represented the beauty in God loving His created people above all that He had created because they - man and woman - were made in His own image. They were given God's Spirit. It was the greatest part of Himself that God could give, for it was what made them most like Him. Since man is described as God's glory in I Corinthians 11:7-12, that makes us women in our most rare and basic form, the *glory of God's glory*. Now when someone looks at you crazy or you feel like your fundamental

right to belong is being questioned, you can face yourself and others knowing this.



**You are the glory of God's glory.
You are a woman.**

This is NOT about who is more important, women or men. On the contrary it signifies the distinctive purpose of women and how we relate to existence with mankind. Women knowing and understanding this helps us see how significant being a woman is to mankind as a whole, and womankind in particular. You are important to God because you were made to honor God's glory. You had a specific role in God's creation of all mankind and that role was to represent or give a correct opinion of God's glory—the man. And that's just the beginning; God uses the word woman in the Bible to show significant meanings in relationship to His people and His Kingdom. Yes, women *are* important to God.

Brides of Virtue

a wider definition of womanhood

Principle 3

God created women to reflect the splendor of mankind above all creation.

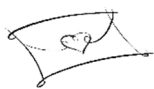
Genesis 2:20 explains the reason why woman was made and it says, “...and for Adam there was no help meet for him.” Translated in its original language, this means, counterpart, to stand with, or to surround and match his front. It means, “...and for Adam there was no one meeting his image or matching his likeness.” In other words, no creature was fit to stand with Adam; not one could match his superiority or correspond with the glory of man. There just wasn’t anything else fitting Adam physically, intellectually, and mentally. There was nothing else like him.

Ladies, you can imagine rightly that in every way Adam was so fine. The woman was the only being created explicitly that could “front” him or “surround his front.” No other creature could stand boldly up front with him. She was the only one that could stand with him matching his likeness because she was taken out of him. That’s why Adam declared in Genesis 2:23, “*this is now bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.*” There goes the lie of evolution.

It was Eve that was physically designed to match Adam’s oppositeness, surround his front, and be the reflection of his

image, not the apes of evolution. *Hmm, wonder what would happen if we wore that on a wet t-shirt..., lol.* Everybody say, “Back in the day...”

Unless married with husbands, God’s women don’t have to get naked to get heard. Our message still stands.



EVE.
Not EVOLUTION.

When woman was created, Adam who was extremely intelligent recognized she had the same physical, intellectual, and mental attributes that boldly matched his. Adam understood that she was his counterpart. He connected the fact that they were not made exactly the same, for their two whole figures complimented one another in an opposing fashion causing them to fit together in one flesh. It is not that they were half man and half woman to begin with. They were already two whole complete beings. There was nothing lacking in either of them. Adam was a completed perfect man and Eve was a completed perfect woman. God had to create the woman complete because she was the only entity able to stand with man reflecting their superiority over the whole universe. You see ladies, there’s nothing that God didn’t already put in our make-up—physically, emotionally, intellectually, spiritually—in every way. Every time you look at yourself in the mirror, you

ought to be reminded of where you *didn't* come from. She was complete because man was complete. Man was complete because God was complete. I believe when Adam saw Eve for the first time, he saw a reflection of his image from God and he knew at that moment just how great his completeness was.

Brides of Virtue **a wider definition of womanhood**

Principle 4

Together men and women share dominion not identities!

God is quite the artist. He neither needs nor desires our help in correcting any gender issues. God wants women to know that they are not mistakes. Since God knew us before we were even thought of by our parents, then how can we be mistakes? By design, he made women the incubators of mankind as a species, holding the key to the necessary nourishment and essential ingredients needed to protect our very existence. The first woman, Eve, was not a mistake and neither are you. But like Eve, you will have what you see and say because you are a god-like creature. If you believe your gender at birth was a mistake, then guess what? You will fulfill your own prophecy. Now when God cut through the flesh of man to create a gender at creation, He gave us **woman**. But when we cut through the flesh today supposedly “correcting

our sexual identity,” that is an *omen*. That behavior, and any sin is in direct contrast to the sacred declaration of God when He formed us. And while rejecting our own identity and pursuing that of sin may appear glamorous for some, and the lifestyle of it may even seem rewarding for others, they are acts of disgrace and disrespect toward the very God that created us and gave us our identity. God loves us and that’s all the more reason why He is offended if we call ourselves “correcting” our sexual identity or perverting our sexual orientation when He has already “perfected” it at creation. If you have made the mistake of participating in same sex intimacy and sin of any kind, God still loves you. But He despises the behavior and the lies that you believe about yourself and Him. Only you hold the key to your destiny, and it’s up to you to embrace the truth of God.

Just as men were created superior beings on the face of the earth, so are we as women. There’s nothing like us. God made Adam a glorious specimen to look upon, but the woman, Eve, was the finer vessel. In designing woman, God did not make her any less superior than man. He made her more special, more rare – like a precious stone or jewel. In an opposite fashion than He made man, God reflected the beauty of His being on earth with mankind through a woman. He chose to show the glory of a man through a woman. I heard Ed Young of Fellowship Church in Dallas, Texas say, *“They are both created superior beings, women in their womanhood, and men in their manhood.”*⁸ I would agree with Ed. They are two whole completely different creatures, and I say: Together they share dominion,

not identities. This is one of God's wider definitions of womanhood. It goes against the world's view of equal identities for men and women. God says equal in dominion, separate in identity.

When women spend time alone with God, we gain a sense of identity that makes us feel confident in whom we are, not lacking or longing to be someone else. We value ourselves based on what God has done and said about us and not the words and works of someone else. We get our definition of womanhood from God and not from society. It is because God has a wider definition of your womanhood than does society.

Remember, God cut the covenant, not man and not the woman. Woman was selected as the third party to God's covenant. God is the first party and man is the second. We are not third because we are of least importance; it's quite the opposite. We were the crowning achievement of creation for a reason and we need to understand that. Any man who pursues a woman must also understand that. I am not saying this for a man's dishonor, but for his honor. When a man disrespects or harms a woman, then he disrespects God's glory because that's just what women are to reflect. Women are created distinctively different than men for a purpose far greater than self and man put together. When we realize that, then we are no longer willing to settle for being treated as less.

GOD'S WIDER DEFINITION OF WOMANHOOD - Workbook

What did God say after He created: Light in Genesis 1:4?

Land and sea in Genesis 1:10?

Trees and vegetation in Genesis 1:12?

Day and night in verses Genesis 1:14-18?

Creatures of the sea and of the air in verses Gen 1:20-21?

Creatures of the ground in verse Genesis 1:25?

Who was last to be created according to Genesis 2:20-22?

After God created woman what did He say in Genesis 1:31?
How was this different than what He said before?

After woman was created, did God create anything else? What did God do?

From what you've read, what is meant by the words "help meet" in Genesis 2:20? Ask God to help you understand the significance of these words for your life today.

According to Scripture in Genesis 2:20, what is God's purpose for creating woman? How does this compare to how women are viewed worldwide?

From what you've read in Genesis Chapter 2, what can you tell about the character of God?

Notes:



What About ‘You’ is Worth Stealing?

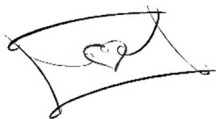
So, everything was great when God created the earth and placed two people in it. A man and a woman: Adam and Eve were separate individuals; yet they were complete. The first woman, Eve, was created perfect. She had influence and was called the mother of all living. Her man, Adam, was God’s Man. He was created complete; he had vision and was not clueless. To prove it, he and she named every creature. God blessed them and life was grand. They both had dominion together over everything on earth. They both held their own individuality as God had given them, because God was the Author and Creator of them both and He gave them a purpose, a reason for their very being that went well beyond procreation.

The man and woman had their identities intact. They were naked and not ashamed of anything – not ashamed of their bodies, not ashamed of their minds, not ashamed of their roles. They were not competing with each other, both were one of a kind, intelligent, and unique. They must have been truly beautiful, both physically to look at, and intellectually as human beings, because they named everything on earth with appropriate names that we still use today. Everything on earth was in perfect harmony with the man, the woman, and their God – our God! And I believe that even though we have evolved and made discoveries into the world of technology, they were much more intelligent than we are today, because they were the closest in proximity to God.

My sisters, I believe we have missed and overlooked blessings God designed for us to have at creation. There are actions that tell us about God hidden in the creation that I believe we have missed today because our eyes are wide open, but we do not see. Our ears are wide open, but we do not hear. Why? Because God has hidden some things not from us, ***but for us!***

I believe there are important actions that tell us about God and His character toward us that we have missed in God's story of creation in Genesis. This is and should be so important to us because it is the goodness of God that opens a woman's eyes, ears, and her heart to see, hear, and receive God's love in order to be able to effectively love others. But she will never

know that priceless love unless she embraces the beginnings of her history at creation.



A woman who doesn't explore what God says about her womanhood will never know the truth of who she is. *When truth is absent, the lie is what she lives.*

Just like the owners who visit “*Antique Roadshow*,” admit that they almost threw some stuff away, I believe women have thrown out much of their own value, because we don't know its origin. The more we know about the origin of a thing, the more value it has to us. The further we get away from something, the more difficult it becomes to remember. Things we love must become etched in our memory, or most assuredly, we will forget.

I don't have a picture of my Grandma Addie Garrett, my mother's grandmother who was married to my mother's grandfather, Julius Seazor Garrett, of Shelbyville County, in Center, Texas. Grandma Addie died when I was around four years old, but I still remember her face because I treasured how good she made me feel in her presence. She used to smile at me and I would light up like a candle. She would always have something good in her hand, a toy, a warm piece of cake, a fresh-picked piece of fruit off the tree, etc. She would bend down to my level to hand it to me. It's been over 50 years since

she died and I've not seen any pictures of her. Yet, I still remember how she smiled at me when we would visit her old house in the country with the big magnolia and pecan trees in the front yard; I cherished those memories of her in my heart.

Recapture the favor and blessing that God gave us in the beginning to live life to its fullest today. God did not take the favor and blessing away, He only added to and enhanced them. But the truth of these principles were slowly lured away from us as we embraced cultures of idolatry and ignorance. We do not even understand what has taken place at Creation for us. Though we've become the most educated people on the face of the earth, I believe we are the most unfulfilled because we are ever learning and never coming to the knowledge of the truth (2 Timothy 3:7). That is, we are still not experiencing God with us, and who we are in Him. When we don't have intimate experiences with God, we can't relate to Him. Rather, we have intimate experiences with religion, customs and traditions, but not an intimate dynamic growing relationship and life with our Creator, the Father of every living creature.

God wants women to know that He is real, He is relevant, and He is relational and that's how He's wired us. We can't begin to know the correct value of ourselves as individuals without intimate experiences with Him. Without those intimate experiences, we're so desperate. We are in a constant state of searching for someone or something in this life that makes sense.

We want someone or—something that we can relate to—like Adam related to Eve when he first laid eyes on her. The Bible says when Adam first laid eyes on Eve, he saw her, and his very existence made sense. He said, *‘This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.* She matched him. Though Adam was already made complete, he couldn’t see how complete he was until he saw Eve. When he saw her, it was the very first sight he saw that was closest to himself. He was already complete, but having her with him – *Now that made all the sense in the world to Adam; that’s why Adam made the statement above.*

If God could do that for Adam, surely He could do that for us too. God showed Adam that God is a God that values relationship. That definition was important to who God was and that in turn, was important to who Adam and Eve were. They were all connected.

Today, I believe too many of us are looking, but not finding that one who makes sense! Maybe we do not look in a sexual sense, but in a sense of demonstrating and providing clarity for meaning in life. There is no one to show us who we are. Many times we suffer from lack of a relationship or poor relationships with a father or mother who can properly demonstrate love and protection, emotionally and physically. Many of us women grew up without father figures and some without mother figures with whom we could feel secure and confident. We had no one that we could turn to or look at to make being here in this world make sense. I think that’s how television and media

became so popular. It used to be that there were wholesome shows filled with the arts, culture, meaningful drama, and learning that made good sense on the television. Today there is hardly a thing in the entertainment media world that isn't perverted and mindless. Nothing in life makes sense anymore and this is what people need in order to relate to themselves and others.

When God finished creating the earth, sun, moon, planets, and stars, He said it was good. When He created the fish, birds, animals, cattle, and creeping things, He said it was good. But when He created mankind, culminating with the creation of woman, He saw that His creation wasn't just good, it was now *very* good. It now made sense!

God was so satisfied with what He had done that He rested from all His work. On that Seventh Day, all of Creation—sun and elements, birds and beasts, man and woman did nothing but reflect the beauty in what God had done. Simply being what God created them to be was the first act of worship on their part. That's why God called that seventh day "*Holy*." He rested from all His work and simply let His Creation reflect what He had spoken. He let it all make sense! He had created everything in its glory and magnificence. And it all made sense!

Why did it make sense?

Because wisdom – God's wisdom was there!

Proverbs 8:22-36 King James Version - Public Domain states:

22 The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old.

23 I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.

24 When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water.

25 Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth:

26 While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world.

27 When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth:

28 When he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep:

29 When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth:

30 Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him;

31 Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men.

32 Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children: for blessed are they that keep my ways.

33 Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not.

34 Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors.

35 For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord.

36 But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death.

Notes:



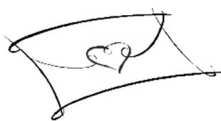
The first act of worship is being who God created you to be.

Ever notice that even though the man and woman were super-intelligent, they had complete supervision over the entire world; they were large and in charge, and yet, there is nothing said about them doing anything on that seventh day? The first act of worship is simply being who God created you to be. God was completely satisfied with the man, the woman, and all that He had created. That's why He called it all *very good*; He sat down and rested the seventh day. He made nothing else. God Himself calls us good in the book of Genesis, the book of beginnings. However, by the time we get to the New Testament, Jesus says there is none good, except God (Matthew 19:16-18; Mark 10:17-19). How is that we were once good in God's eyesight, a reflection of perfection, created in His image, but today even our righteous living according to Isaiah 64:6 is as dirty as filthy rags? What happened? How did everything get so out of whack?

Created in a perfect world, man and woman were given dominion and every element they needed to thrive. They were provided with the right amount of oxygen, water, nitrogen, and every element in the heavens and on earth. Their dominion is what made them the most superior of all God's creatures; it was their ability to choose and think and create. This was so

important that God even imprinted the blueprint for their dominion in their very fingertips. The woman and the man, although they were both human beings, neither had the other's fingerprint. Their creativity and individuality were **unique** and complete, his in his manhood, and hers in her womanhood. Their superiority over all living things, their **dominion** and their unique images, right down to the fingerprints were all tools to remind them that they were two unique individuals created by God.

As God-designed entities made into two uniquely different individuals, Adam and Eve were in perfect harmony with God and they stayed that way by choice. God did not threaten them to stay that way. Instead He gave them four things they would need to continue thriving on earth: **identity**, **resources**, **authority**, and **wisdom**. Everything they needed to enjoy their God-given dominion on earth was in these four things. You might call these tools or blessings. But whatever you call them, identity, resources, authority, and wisdom would guide them toward their destiny.



When God becomes sexy, you know you have something of value from Him, and you learn how to use it.

Now, the serpent was not a human like Adam and Eve. He was a creature created by God, just like all of the other creatures. Angelic beings were heavenly creatures. Unlike

humans, their purpose was providing service from heaven for God's creatures. The enemy, Satan, is named Lucifer, and according to the Bible, he used to be the most beautiful of all of the angels. He was also extremely gifted. However, his gifts were separate and apart from his character, proving that gifts from God can be separate and apart from ones character. As the most beautiful angel of light, Lucifer did not attribute his gifts to God, the Creator. Instead, Lucifer decided that he would rebel against God and wanted to run his own kind of heaven. Isaiah 14:12-14 describes how Lucifer set up a plan to exalt himself above God in the heavens.

Isaiah 14:12-14 (KJV)

*How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!
How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the
nations!*

*For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will
exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the
mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:*

*I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most
High.*

What else you need to know about Satan is recorded in Genesis 3:1 because we generally understand that it is through Satan that the serpent spoke to Eve. The Bible says Satan was more *subtil* (crafty, cunning, and shrewd) than any other creatures, which the Lord God had made. Satan was the very

first entity ever to offend God. By his revolting behavior, he caused other angelic beings along with himself to get thrown out of heaven. He became the leader of all evil while he was still in heaven. That's how I know demons can be found in the church. But by the power of God in us, they can be kicked out.

God, knowing all things, stripped Lucifer of his glory, beauty, and grace and kicked him out of his position as leader of worship in the heavens. As a spiritual being, Lucifer was still able to roam the heavens and the earth, but he was cursed forever. He hated God and everything that God stood for, especially mankind. This is what happened.

Genesis 1:26 (NIV)

26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

Genesis 2:15 through Genesis 3:19 (NIV)

15 The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; 17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."

18 The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."

19 Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. 20 So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field.

But for Adam no suitable helper was found. 21 So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. 22 Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

23 The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man."

24 For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

25 The man and his wife were both naked, and unashamed.

Genesis 3

1 Now the serpent was more subtil [crafty] than any of the beasts or animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden?'"

2 The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, 3 but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from

the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.”

4 “You will not surely die,” the serpent said to the woman. 5 “For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

6 When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

8 Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. 9 But the LORD God called to the man, “Where are you?”

10 He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.”

11 And he said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?”

12 The man said, “The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.”

13 Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

14 So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, "Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life.

15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

16 To the woman he said, "I will greatly increase your [sorrow and conception] pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth [bring forth] to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you."

17 To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,' "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life.

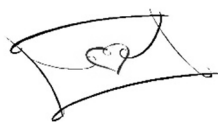
18 It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field.

19 By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return."

GOD'S WIDER DEFINITION OF YOUR WOMANHOOD - Workbook

What did Lucifer do to get thrown out of heaven according to Isaiah 14:12-14?

Imagine if you were the owner of a company and you invented something beautiful, awesomely great, and powerful that would change the entire universe. You would be extremely proud of your accomplishments and you would have every right to be because you had created it with your own mind, your own bare hands, your own toil and sweat. How would you feel if someone else tried to steal it? Think of how you would feel if they claimed it as their own. Think of how you would respond if they tried to destroy it?



**God has feelings too.
If He didn't, He couldn't love you.**

The first time the word sin appears in the Bible is in Genesis chapter four. God already sent Adam and Eve out away from the Garden of Eden. Now, the couple begins their own family and even though they are no longer allowed to live in the

Garden, notice they are still not out of God’s presence. In Genesis 4:7, God is talking to Cain, a son of Adam and Eve.

Genesis 4:1-7 (NIV)

1 Adam lay with his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. She said, “With the help of the LORD I have brought forth a man.” 2 Later she gave birth to his brother Abel.

Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil. 3 In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the LORD. 4 But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering, 5 but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast.

6 Then the LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? 7 If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it.”

The fact that God is still watching over Eve’s family says what about the character of God toward his people?

Find the (4) key things discussed that God gave man and woman at Creation in Scripture.

1. Gen 1:26 _____
2. Gen 2:15-16 _____
3. Gen 1:26; Gen 2:20 _____
4. Gen 2:17, 19 _____

According to the Hebrew Dictionary, in Genesis 4:7, the word “sin” means offense, insult, or wrongdoing. It comes from a primary root word *chata*, which means to miss, forfeit, lack, or cause to be condemned. It indicates to be in a condemning position or condition. In other words, it means to be offensive, repulsive or insulting; it indicates a position, condition or stand that one takes on.

In Genesis 3:6 *“When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it...”* How would you say that she insulted or offended God by her actions in this verse?

Read Isaiah 14:14 and Genesis 3:5. What are the similarities between what Lucifer said in Isaiah 14:14 and what the serpent said in Genesis 3:5?

Read Genesis 1:26-27. What does it say about how man and woman were made?

What did Satan say to the woman in Genesis 3:4-5 to trick her? How does this conflict with what God had already said in Genesis 1:26-27?

In Genesis 3:6, what internal conflict was going on inside the woman's mind about God?

What internal conflict was going on inside the woman's mind about herself?

How important is it to know that the enemy attacked the woman's perceptions of herself and her God?

Is it of any relevance to us as women today?

Notes:

[illegible]

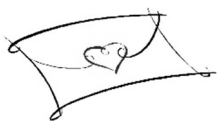


It Takes Faith to be a Woman

Nowadays too many hard-working women and their children are trapped in the destructive cycle of poverty because of low wages and few opportunities to save.² In my opinion, too many hardworking religious women and their children are stuck for the same reason. The Bible declares, *“the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life.”* God has given us a gift; it was the ultimate gift, but too many of us are still trying to work for it! We are stuck in religion and it is oppressing us. We can’t even smile at others; our faces are always stern stuck-up portraits of unfulfillment. Yet if you ask us what we’re doing, we’re always *doing something for the church*. If church is making us feel that bad, then we’ve got too much religion. All the service we put out in the name of religion has left some of us practically lifeless. But it’s the only way we feel like we measure up; we fight so hard in church because it’s the only place we feel important. That’s not ministry to me!

Just like people who are not satisfied with poverty but are oppressed by it, desire to advance themselves, women who

have no real relationship with God and who are trying to work for it in the church desire to advance themselves. They want change and they want it so badly that they are willing to do whatever it takes to be a part of that change. This is their motivation. They may already be His, but they want more of the Holy Spirit's empowering, so that they can see God's goodness in the land of the living. But what they don't realize is this kind of change comes only when you become deeply intimate with God and not dependent on your intimacy with the social culture.



**Without a biblical worldview,
all we have is –
just a view.**

As women, our number one priorities don't need to be more glamour or social gatherings in the public or in the pulpit. We don't need another nail shop, hair shop, or 3:00 program. It's true that we need empowerment, but not by the *world's view*. We need to become spiritually poor so that God can give us our inheritance, *His View*. No matter how rich or poor we become, without God's View - we are truly the poorest individuals on the face of the earth. This is because without a ***biblical worldview*** – *all we have is just a view*.

The true woman of God seeks to define herself and everything about her according to God's presence showing up in her life and in her circumstances. His very identity is

supernaturally present to turn things around for her, in such a way that there is no other explanation for how she got to where she is other than God. Status, education, and riches – whatever she has in the world is fine – but they are not her source. Religion and worldly standards do not define the true woman of God. Why? Because she recognizes that she is made in God's image and He is her source. Her identity has nothing to do with her possessions or what she does for a living, but everything to do with who she is. She knows she is royalty! Everything she is and everything she hopes to be is tied to God. When she is seeking God to give her more and more of Himself, she realizes that whatever she lacks is found in Him, not outside of Him.

A woman of God realizes she is all God's creation. That is a most vulnerable state because when you realize that without God, you couldn't be effective at all, it's a humbling reality. You wouldn't exist; you wouldn't be anything if it weren't for the power of God. At my best and at my worst, I realized, I am still God's creation. When a woman first realizes this at that very moment, a relationship is born! It is a relationship of royalty because He created you. With this relationship comes great blessing and great responsibility. It is not a relationship of work to prove you are of value as the first Eve thought – but it is a relationship that guides you toward faithfulness to your Father, God and the identity given to you by God.

Eve was blessed from the very beginning. She was in the presence of God in the garden with God, hand-fashioned by God, perfectly fit for womanhood. She was given a name and

position that meant mother of all living. That was a blessing! But she did not believe it! This shows us that we can be in perfect proximity to God all up in the church and still not be intimate with Him! That's why we can learn from our predecessor, Eve's mistake, the most powerful, most transforming, and most profound lesson of all time:

**Principle 5****IT TAKES FAITH TO BE A WOMAN!**

GOD'S WIDER DEFINITION OF YOUR WOMANHOOD - Workbook

We need to look at the effects sin had on the woman. Are these impacting us today? In Genesis 3:16, there are 4 things that happened to Eve as a result of her choice not to believe what Her Creator had already given her. They are:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

What did God say about the impact of Eve's sin upon her offspring in verse 15?

Eve's name means, "*Mother of all living.*" According to this statement who is Eve's offspring?

A striking observation in Scripture is found in Genesis 3:16 and John 3:16. Can you see the connection?

Genesis 3:16 *To the woman he said, "I will greatly increase your [sorrow and conception] pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth [bring forth] to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you."*

John 3:16 *For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have everlasting life.*

What correlation is there between these two Scriptures? If you don't see it yet, don't worry. Keep reading.

Let's look at the effect of sin upon the man. What happened as a result of Adam's disobedience in Genesis 3:17-19?

Did the results of Adam and Eve's sin apply to them only or all of mankind after them? Why or why not?

Sin has a direct cause and effect relationship. The Bible says, *“The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life.”* The hate and enmity that exists between the woman and Satan has everything to do with their sin and the pain and suffering we see upon earth today. How do we know that? Because God tells us in Genesis 3:15.

15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”

As the crowning achievement of God’s creation, Adam and Eve had a tremendous impact upon society. They went on to have children. Briefly read below what began to happen with their children.

Genesis 4:1-8 (NIV)

Adam slept with Eve his wife. She conceived and had Cain. She said, “I’ve gotten a man, with GOD’s help!” Then she had another baby, Abel. Abel was a herdsman and Cain a farmer. 3-5 Time passed. Cain brought an offering to GOD from the produce of his farm. Abel also brought an offering, but from the firstborn animals of his herd, choice cuts of meat. GOD liked Abel and his offering, but Cain and his offering didn’t get his approval. Cain lost his temper and went into a sulk.

GOD spoke to Cain: “Why this tantrum? Why the sulking? If you do well, won’t you be accepted? And if you don’t do well, sin

is lying in wait for you, ready to pounce; it's out to get you, you've got to master it."

Cain had words with his brother. They were out in the field; Cain came at Abel his brother and killed him.

How did crime, lawlessness, and murder come into the picture?

What happened to the serpent as a result of deceiving the woman in Gen. 3:14-15?

How does God take care of the problem serpent in Genesis 3? My uncles in the country taught me that the best way to kill a snake is to crush its head. Who do you think was the "head" of the serpent – meaning who was the one speaking in the form of a serpent to Eve? What does God do to take care of the problem? *[Hint: Read Isaiah 14:12-14]*

Since God brings justice upon the serpent for deceiving the woman, what does this say about the character of God toward His creation (man and woman)?

Notes:



Naked and Nice

Have you ever wondered why Satan hates us so much? It's not just us women, Satan hates men too; he hates all mankind. I submit to you that he hated us before he tricked the woman. That's why he tricked her. For what reason? Was it just his nature or was there something else about us that ticked him off? If you look at the first description the Bible gives of Satan or the serpent, you will find meaning in why Satan hates men and women.

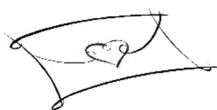
The very first mention of the serpent is in Genesis 3:1 and we see an interesting word the Bible uses to describe the serpent. That word is *subtil*.

Genesis 3:1 (KJV) Now the serpent was more subtil than any of the beasts the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"

I looked up *subtil* (#006175) in the Hebrew Lexicon and it is "arum" which means crafty, cunning, smart, sharp or prudent

– in an unacceptable, detestable, or bad sense. As I read the definition for *subtil*, strangely I found that the word comes from the root word for bare or ‘naked’ in Hebrew. Its origin is from the word “arom” pronounced aw-ram’ #06191 in the Hebrew Lexicon.

Now my eyes widened with amazement! Anybody who has read Adam and Eve’s story know there’s a part in their history that we have always thought of as sexy. It’s in Genesis 2:25, where Adam and Eve are said to be “*naked and not ashamed.*” How surprised I was to find that the Hebrew word naked is ‘aw-rome’ and it is used in a good way here when speaking of Adam and Eve’s nakedness. It comes from the same root word as the word *subtil* does (#06191 in the Hebrew Lexicon). The writer of Genesis uses the same word origin to describe the serpent in Genesis 3:1 but in a bad way. Then I thought, “*Oh my God, in our bare and naked form, we were crafty, prudent, smart, and wise –all in a good way – a way that God calls “very good” or “fully acceptable.”*” But Lucifer, the fallen angel of light who deceived the woman was not!



Satan was kicked out of heaven, stripped bare, vulgar and humiliated. We on the other hand, were given dominion, created naked, confident, and unashamed.

When God created Lucifer, the leader of angels in the heavens, Lucifer was the most beautiful, glorious magnificent of the angelic host creatures that God had created. But yet in Genesis 3:1, he is relegated to take on the body of an animal which the Bible describes as simply livestock or cattle. He was able to stand and had legs before God sentenced him in Genesis 3:15 to the dust of the ground to crawl upon his belly as a convicted criminal, representative of the enemy. Lucifer is not acceptable to God. In fact, God had already kicked him out of heaven long before then as we saw in Isaiah. Before Lucifer was a convicted criminal, a spiritual enemy, he was the envy of worship, a most glorious specimen in heaven to look upon. All angels admired his skill and beauty because he was the one chosen to stand before God and reflect his glorious praise and worship. He was the one chosen because of his created identity. In other words, he was created as the leader of angels and was named Lucifer which meant, "Son of the Morning Light." I looked up the meaning of the name Lucifer, and in the Greek, it means, literally "bringer of dawn" for the morning star. That's what God designed him to be; but Lucifer rejected his God-given identity as the Son of the Morning Light, and now had become a criminal as far as the spirit world goes. At creation, the serpent was a form of cunning crafty livestock that could walk and roam around just like cattle (see Genesis 3:15). Because the word subtil as used in Genesis 3:1 means crafty, prudent, shrewd and smart, but in a negative way, we know that the serpent was found by God to be unacceptable, lacking. That is what Isaiah is stating in Isaiah 14:12-16. In fact, Isaiah is prophesying the death sentence upon Lucifer.

12 How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!

13 For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:

14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

15 Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.

16 They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms;

Now the Bible describes that we humans were ‘naked’ (bare) using a form of the same root word as was used in Genesis 3:1 when speaking about how crafty, prudent, shrewd and sensible or smart the serpent was – like man. But unlike man, the serpent was not in an acceptable state to God. (*Note: Jesus told the disciples in the New Testament, “Be shrewd as the serpent, but gentle as the dove.”*) You see, the devil is not equal to God! The devil was created an angel of light, one of the angelic beings according to Isaiah 14, and now he was already punished as a criminal sentenced to roaming the earth like cattle or livestock.

People, on the other hand, were created magnificent human beings (not angels or service workers). We were created in the image of God to reflect the splendor of God, and to rule and reign as many nations under God. The Bible declares that we

were naked (bare) but fully acceptable to God, unlike Lucifer, who became the serpent and was found lacking in Genesis 3:1.

How do I know that we humans were fully acceptable at creation? There was one word used in Genesis 2:25 to describe us humans that was **not** used to describe the serpent (or Lucifer when Satan came on the scene in Genesis 3:1.)

Genesis 2:25 (KJV)

25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were 'unashamed.'

That word was *unashamed*.

The man and woman created by God were, in their bare and naked form, crafty, prudent, shrewd, smart and wise, but in a fully acceptable state. The Bible says, we were not ashamed. We were not in an offensive condition or position with God, but Lucifer, in the form of the serpent in Genesis 3:1 was. Isaiah tells us what happened with Lucifer that caused his offensive state and what condemned him forever. We, on the other hand, were created in God's image and Lucifer was not. When Lucifer rejected his identity as the angel of light and



Satan hates you and envies you above all that God created. You are made in the image of God and he is not. He lost his created identity forever! That's why he wants you to give up yours!

wanted to become his own god, he condemned himself and became the serpent, Satan. Thus, he was condemned by his own heart from the beginning. He wasn't created that way, but he chose to reject his glorious God-given identity.

He would be thrilled if you accepted becoming anyone or anything else, except who you were created to be. No wonder Satan hates us! No wonder he set out to destroy the woman, the crowning beauty of God's creation. God made us and put Satan to shame. Man and woman would be the leading worshipers, the leading public figures of God's great beauty and sovereignty on the earth and in the heavens. We make Satan look like crap because here we are in Genesis 2:25 in our form of bareness, **both naked and confident**. We were neither dejected nor ashamed. But here is Satan in his form of 'subtilness' (bareness): he is found **nude, vulgar, and humiliated** because he rejected his created glory! God is amazing! He did not create the devil a devil! The devil was created a glorious angelic being to worship and reflect God's beauty and splendor. But the devil decided that was not who he was and that was not what he wanted. Isn't it wonderful to know that our God created us in such a way that our very nature rivals that of the enemy!

Here we are humans, created in the image of the Light of God Himself, Jesus Christ! At creation, we are bare, naked and confident, proudly *projecting the beauty of God with mankind*, with no reason to hide or be humiliated, because we are fully accepted by God. In fact, God blessed the man and woman at

creation and told them to reign over the earth. That's the first thing God did after He made us was bless us!

The enemy however, devised his own plan to be like “the Most High.” As a result, he was stripped bare of his title, and humiliated – his original identification as the son of the Morning Light was taken from him. Now, he goes around stripped of his identity and crawling on his belly! We, on the other hand, were created in the image of the Son of God Himself, Jesus Christ – the True Light. He is the Light that lit up the world from the very beginning. The Bible declares Jesus was the one who created the world, us, and everything in it! What a powerful relationship we have with Jesus, the Christ! Colossians 1:13-16 (KJV) says this of Jesus:

13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:

16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

You know what reading that did for me? I just had to get up and shout and run around the house because what that did for me was tell me that all those times I looked in the mirror and hated myself, all those times I thought I was ugly, all those times, I thought nobody would find me pretty enough, all those times I thought I had to cover up with men, marriage, and money to be somebody - it was all over! I had nothing to be ashamed of. I knew Jesus created me the envy of Satan and He died for me to shut up the mouth of Satan. That was enough. I was acceptable to God!

I was now naked and beautiful. I was now bare before God and confident. I could come to Him knowing that all my wrongs were wiped away! I could come to God knowing that I was not condemned; there was no more oppression, and no opposition between the wonderful Creator and me. God wanted to help me through whatever I would go through in life. I had a relationship with God Almighty in Genesis and God Himself called it very good! I was fully acceptable! That was enough for me! I didn't need a man to do it for me. I didn't need another job to do it for me. I didn't need anti-depressants to do it for me. I didn't need an Act of Congress to do it for me. ***Jesus was enough!*** I just want to stop right here, shut the book and run around the room, saying, ***Thank you Jesus! I am fully acceptable; you're enough for me!***



Definition and Disorder

What happened between Adam and Eve in their relationship after they sinned against God was an amazing act on God's part. When they sinned against God, they sinned against us as their offspring. In regard to Eve and her part in the creation, the Bible says in Genesis 3:16:

*Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy **desire** shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.*

According to the Dictionary, the meaning of the word “desire” in this scripture indicates “*a stretching out after, a turning about, a longing; a strong desire,*” but not in a right sense. In other words, it means to have a yearning for, to take hold of, grab, grasp or snatch – but not in a good way – in a conflicting way instead. How do we know this desire is not in a good way? Well, answer that for yourself. Before sin entered the picture, did Eve have to “run after or run over” Adam? Recall before sin entered the picture:

Genesis 2:21-24 (NIV)

21 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof;

22 And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.

23 And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.

24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

Genesis 1:28 (KJV)

And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

What do these scriptures sound like to you? Sounds like a blessing to me. Sounds like unity, intimacy, oneness, romance, and preparation for a blessing. Sounds like a family! Write 3 words that came to your mind as you read the above scriptures:

According to scripture God blessed them and gave them dominion. When God put man to sleep to create the woman, God did not give her anything shameful, mediocre or less noble than what He had put in man. Why then are women and girls all around the world being slaughtered, raped, thrown away, neglected, and denied freedom all in the name of religion?

God wants every woman to hear the cry of her sisters and daughters next door, and those all over the world. We have been given grace to give out grace. I get so tired of people blaming God for the discord and disorder in our world. That same scripture, Genesis 3:16, is blamed for the poor treatment of women across multiple continents.

For women who have a problem with this scripture, you might be relieved if you ask yourself, *“What was the woman like before sin?”* Every time I see this Scripture I have to remind myself what the woman was like before the fall to understand what this scripture means. Moreover, I have to remind myself what God has done to resolve the problem of the woman and what this means for us today. We have already caught a magnificent glimpse of God’s character toward the woman in Genesis 3:16 which we discussed in the last chapter. Let me show you something I found even more exciting as God reveals

more of Himself and the blessings He gave us. You will be amazed to know these are the same blessings we have today. The Bible says that our God is the same yesterday, today, and forever more! He did not stop blessing us after the fall of man. On the contrary, He blessed us even more! But you will never see the blessing if you cannot relate to Him. God is all about relationship! Isn't it time you got intimately involved with experiencing God on a deeper level?

It is absolutely important that you get an understanding of who you are in this Amazing God! The more you experience God as a person and learn of Him like you would a person that you're in love with, the more you fall in love with Him. You can't help but to discover the blessings He has hidden for you in Scripture about yourself and your family benefits! Those benefits are blessings to you and your family – forever!

Let's find out what some of the blessings are.

GOD'S WIDER DEFINITION OF YOUR WOMANHOOD - Workbook

Starting at Genesis 1:22 through the end of Genesis chapter 2, there are at least (9) times when God blesses the man and woman or speaks good over them. List the blessings and the verses where you find these blessings.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____

Just as God had spent time working to create the man alone, He also spent time working to create the woman alone. I think that before the woman believed on and acted upon the lie of the enemy, she not only looked incredible, she was incredible. She had gotten her self-esteem and self-worth from God. I don't believe God would have created Eve, blew breath into

her, brought life into her, and not talked with her before taking her to Adam. Think about it. God had given Eve of His Spirit, which told her everything she needed to know about herself and the things around her. Eve only needed to believe them. Why? Because she needed them to function in her purpose as the mother of all living. She needed them to function in her faith! I submit to you that God had placed her in a tremendous position of favor and blessing with God and with man. But it was up to her to *believe* that it was so! Isn't that the same with us today?

Observe:

1. Eve was taken out of Adam but she had a relationship with God first.
2. She knew who she was because God told her when He created her in private while man was asleep.
3. When Adam saw her he confirmed what God had already done. Adam said, "this is bone of my bone..."
4. She was designed by Divine and divine by design. In her physical makeup, she was designed to represent an extraordinary spiritual principle – the principle of receiving seed and bearing fruit – a principle that Jesus constantly taught his disciples in the New Testament. Our children, family, money, career, etc. are all seed for bearing good fruit.

5. She was wired for marriage, family, and healthy relationships because they were a necessary part of her purpose as the mother of all living.
6. She had a spiritual relationship with God before she had a physical relationship with man. God designed her from His likeness and image.
7. Even in her nakedness – her bare crafty, prudent, shrewd, and wise form, she was fully accepted by God and by the man. There was nothing humiliating, insulting or offensive about her. God had declared her and the rest of Creation *very good*.

What does this show you of God's character toward the woman and us as women today?

The Creation shows how good the character of God is toward the woman. He didn't set up her up to fail; God designed her to win! But it takes faith to be a woman and it always has, even in the presence of the Almighty. Eve was not made a robot. Her belief about what God said had to kick in if she was going to reach her destiny. The same is true of you and me.

Everything was fine until Eve was deceived into acting upon a belief that came from someone other than her Creator. I bring this up to show you how the perfect agreement and harmonious balance between man, woman, and God was from the beginning, and how it came to be broken warped and upside down after sin entered the picture. Their relationship with each other and God were totally out of sync with how God blessed them at creation. Satan had now entered the picture and deceived her out of her nakedness and her confidence.

This brings to the scripture: “...and thy desire shall be for thy husband” in Genesis 3:16. Many have used this Scripture to mistakenly blame God for today’s state of womanhood and the mistreatment of women. God did not make women anything less than men. This Scripture is not God instituting a principle of inferiority where women are concerned. On the contrary, it is God loving her so much to explain what is going to happen next, and how she is to overcome.

Remember when God gave them the command in Genesis 2:17 not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. God didn’t say, “*If you eat of it, I will kill you!*” But He says, “*Don’t eat it, or you will die!*” God was not threatening them or manipulating them because that would be force and slavery. But rather, God was giving them a command as a father instructs His children for their safety and well-being. If God wanted to treat them as slaves, subjects, or hostages under His authority, then He would not have given them the ability to make choices in the

first place. Think about it. God is all-knowing. Since He knew that man and woman were going to be deceived and choose to sin, if God wanted subjects, slaves, and sub-servient servants, wouldn't He have intercepted and stopped her and made her not eat of the forbidden tree? If God wanted to be a dictator, wouldn't He have commanded Adam to go stop his wife from ruining the future of the world? In that way, He could have effectively forced them to be nothing but subjects or programmable robots. Instead, God made them human people in a relationship together with one another and with Himself. The God of Heaven is a good God! He desires to bless us and be in relationship with us as a Father. God's wisdom knows that real relationships have both ups and downs, but love is what holds them together!

AND THY DESIRE SHALL BE FOR THY HUSBAND

In Genesis 3:16, God explains what happened as a result of Eve's choice. He explains that in regard to Eve, there are now two problems: definition and disorder. God says because of what she did, things would now be different than they were before. Instead of being confident in her dominion of womanhood, having fulfillment in her divine purpose, she is now stripped of her confidence. Whereas she was once secure in her God-given identity as a counterpart to man standing in dominion facing him, now she would have a desire, a longing, a stretching out, and a searching for someone or something. This longing or desire or stretching out after is unfulfilled by her husband. The word, husband in this verse is *iysh* (#376 in

the Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary pronounced eesh) not just referring to Adam as her husband, but her fellowman. In other words, this verse does not necessarily mean she will have a longing for a man or for her husband, but she will have a longing for identification, role definition or position, with an individual or with mankind in general because she is now naked and ashamed. She is no longer confident in who God created her to be in her bare and naked form. It does not mean she will now desire her husband as a member of the opposite sex and remain unfulfilled, but rather she will now desire identification, intimacy, definition, and purpose to define who she really is. And if it takes sex to get identification and purpose, she will do that or whatever it takes in order to get her physical, mental, and emotional needs met.

When I was in college, we studied philosopher, Abraham Maslow, who describes the needs of human beings. These needs range from the need for safety and security, to belongingness, and various other levels all the way up to what is called the need for self-actualization, which represents the highest most sophisticated form of need. Maslow says that self-actualization is the point we get to in life when we say, “Wow! I’m satisfied fully with who I am.” Most people never reach self-actualization.

I believe the Scripture in Genesis 3:16 describes the need women have for self-actualization, the desires that a woman has to have meaningful relationships (not only with her husband but also with others), and the desire to be fulfilled in every area

of her life. I believe that God was explaining that need to the woman, and it is the same thing that Maslow describes in his hierarchy of human needs.⁹ God declares that the woman's desire would be for her husband, and he shall have rule over her. This simply means that the mutual understanding and harmonious agreement that they once had was now filled with conflict, misunderstanding, misinterpretation, physical and emotional stress and pain – in other words, there would be issues! Because the two of them: the man and the woman, only *knew good* before, but now they knew evil and good together, which would only bring about conflict. The disharmony created by the introduction of sin in the life of the woman would include physical pain and emotional sorrow in child-bearing and childbirth as well. Add to that the issues of self-esteem and belongingness, self-confidence, and worth, and what do you have? Discord in the relationship she had with her husband.

Mind you, not only was Adam her husband, he was also the only man alive. He was mankind. That meant the discord not only extended to how Eve would view Adam and relate to him as her husband, but also the discord would extend to how she would view him as mankind! Therefore, the 'desire' that God spoke of did not just refer to a woman's feelings for emotional gratification and desire for a husband, though it could very well impact those things. Clearly God was speaking beyond the context of husband and wife relationships because not all women are mothers, and not all women are wives; neither do all desire to be, and that is perfectly okay.

But what God was saying to Eve, was that she as a woman, now has to live with the lie that she believed from the enemy. The same lie that got her thinking that she was not like God in the first place, was now the lie she had to live with because that's what she was deceived to believe. She now had what she believed about herself. Why? Because she was given dominion over what she believed and that is how she chose to use her dominion. She would struggle now with the truth that declared she was fearfully and wonderfully made. Now she is a prisoner to the lie that she is not what God said she was. So all she has to compare herself with standing there is man and that's now the standard by which she is identifying herself, not God, but man. So she's searching out man, trying to find definition, and that definition is not necessarily in sex. Though this does have great impact upon sex with her husband, I believe after the fall, sex for her started in her mind, with Adam helping her to feel good about herself again, and who she was created to be. It was not God's best for them, but it was what they both had ordained through their own dominion.

I submit to you that after Eve sinned, she went into a state of fear and depression over her actions, her identity and her worth. First, they hid after they committed the sin. People only hide when they are afraid or feel inferior. Secondly, in regard to Eve, after God dealt with her sin, the next time the Bible records Eve's words were *related to her disposition*. Let's examine that.

After they sinned and were sent out of the Garden, Adam and Eve began to have children. The Bible records that Eve says in Genesis 4:1, “*I’ve gotten a man from the Lord.*” Notice, she didn’t say, “*I now have a son or a baby boy.*” She says “man” as in fellowman. You would think that if God called you “mother of all living,” you would connect to that purpose. You might say, “OMG, I now have *a son* from God!” or “Wow, we have a baby boy!” But no, Eve didn’t say that. Even then, I believe Eve was yearning, searching, grabbing and reaching out for definition and purpose in her fellow man, just as God had said would happen in Genesis 3:16.

What does this say about the importance of self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-worth originating from and being rooted in what God’s Word declares?

How does this speak to you about purpose and definition struggles women may deal with today?

AND HE SHALL HAVE RULE OVER THEE

Now here is where things get heated up. The desire that God talked about in Genesis 3:16 is to be identified or to have definition – to be meaningful. This need for identity might cause her as a woman to run after or to run over – her husband or any individual for that matter – in order to find definition for herself. It would be a stretching out after - something that was not there before, to take hold of, grab, or pursue “it.” It was not there before because Eve had no reason or desire to stretch out after, take hold of, grab, or pursue something else that she thought was missing before from her life. The “it” is not necessarily sex or competition with her husband, but it was identification and fulfillment.

Remember, they were both created and given dominion in their own rite, hers over womanhood, and his over manhood. They were once in sync with divine creation. Now, she’s out of touch with who she really is. Having Adam there is not helping any because remember, she doesn’t look at him now the same way. He looks different to her and she looks different to herself. This is nothing short of chaos – both sexually and intellectually. She will now always be searching for definition in someone other than God. The only other person she has to live with at that time is Adam, so guess who will be the target of her frustration? Guess who will get the brunt of her spiritual disorder? Adam and the children!

Now for the first time in Genesis, God begins to talk about order in the earth between man and woman. Prior to now, they

were both ruling together as one, having been given dominion over everything God made. There was no confusion because both had their identities intact. Eve's action had brought about the need for order in the home because now, there would be disorder. How do we know that this verse is talking about order? Because of what the next part of the verse says, "...*he shall have rule over thee.*"

If I could paraphrase what I believe God is saying to Eve, it would be this, "Eve, you have now changed your very nature – physically and spiritually. Whereas before, you would have had childbirth that was less painful because I ordained it to be a joy to you, now because of what you have believed and acted upon, the nature of your body responds differently. In childbirth and in child rearing, now you will suffer great pain." In my paraphrase, I would further state, "Whereas before, you and your husband and fellowman were created to have dominion, you now have caused your husband and fellowman to have rule over you, not by his desire to do so, but by your doubt and unbelief about who you are. Simply put Eve, what you believed about yourself has become your reality, and that brings disorder between you and your husband, and not only between you and your husband, but also disorder between you and your fellowman."

To me, this signifies the need for order between the two of them as people, not merely as husband and wife. As a wife, this means that she would now have desires, needs, and longings that he would find it difficult to grasp or understand. As a

fellowman this might be conflict or things off point with them taking care of creation. Either way, this would necessitate order. Many scholars say it would be a desire to rule her husband, but I disagree. It is a disorder of discord and non-unity which goes much farther than the relationship that a husband has with his wife and vice versa. I believe it was a desire for meaning and purpose in life period, and so outside of her original relationship with God, Adam was all she had left with which to measure her life. Therefore discord and disharmony may manifest itself in any number of ways.

As you might imagine, this would cause all kinds of trouble between them in a family relationship. That is why God had to state, “...and he shall have rule over thee” because there had to be governance and leadership between them in order to have peace. They were the only two people on earth; it was the first ever command “rule” that God gave humans. She was the one deceived about her identity not Adam. However, her offense had not only offended God, but it obviously affected her husband too. The Bible records that Adam had taken a part in the wrong choice. Now, if you think Eve’s impact upon her world was devastating, wait until you understand what Adam’s consequences were. Because he listened to her and ate of the tree, now his nature and superiority as the glory of God is contaminated with evil as well.

While Eve failed to believe she was created in the image of God already, Adam on the other hand failed to exercise his belief. The Bible says in I Timothy 2:13-15 that Adam was not

deceived, but Eve was. That tells me that Adam believed who God created him to be, but Eve was the one who doubted based on what the serpent had told her. However, for some ungodly reason, Adam, though he knew who he was, chose to follow after the actions of his wife, and failed to exercise his dominion over all creation! This was even more devastating than what Eve did, because now his dominion has to be fought for with work, sweat, and labor! What's worse is because *he* sinned, all of creation, all people to come would physically die. I do believe, because the Bible declares that Adam was the glory of God, a son of God, had Adam not listened to his wife, we would not be in the state of sin that came to be. I believe God would have given Adam another wife, but that's a different story altogether.

Eve was the first creation of all womankind. Her very name meant mother of all living. Because of her actions, she now held the "knowledge of evil" and "knowledge of good" DNA for every woman to come after her. Because of her actions, a woman now has the capacity to desire to take on or stretch out after something or someone she was not created to be and she searches for meaning and relevance in individuals to find definition. She is always looking to define herself and what she stands for. In other words, the perfected nature of every woman to stand in her superiority of womanhood was put out of order, lost, and misdirected by Eve. It's not that women would now have issues with having babies, but with being women of definition, purpose, and identity, all of which can definitely impact our sexuality as well as other areas of our lives.

Because of the influence of the ungodly nature of Satan now in the home and in the earth, there is now disorder and chaos. Wherever there is disorder, the need for order and authority must abide. That authority now exists in an imperfect world led by both men and women with issues. That means there is now the open door for abuse of that authority.

Adam and Eve severely missed the mark of excellence that God had created in their favor. Even though their offenses were different, the results were ultimately the same – disorder and death – both physically and spiritually. Physically over time, they began to die. Since God is life, they immediately became the opposite. Spiritually, they were now the walking dead.

They were now struggling to relate to God because they were in a different position and different condition than what God had given them. They were basically living by the standards they themselves had set. Adam would now have to work harder at demonstrating the superiority he was designed to freely have over all creation.

Eve would now be guided by her self-induced curse to look for definition. Whether that definition might be in other people or the things around her, it didn't matter; the nature of everything since she was the mother of all living – was now out of sync. What Eve actually did was bring about chaos in the state of womanhood, marriage and family. Moreover, she instituted the struggle that exists between mankind and their faith in God. What Adam actually did was bring about chaos in the earth itself and the problem that all men and women have

to face - physical death and a state of condemnation before God.



**When God became sexy, I realized
life without Him wasn't attractive
at all.**

Notes:

GOD'S WIDER DEFINITION OF YOUR WOMANHOOD - Workbook

In many cultures women have been mistreated and even cursed in the name of religion. Men and women have mistakenly used Scripture to defame the character of God and inflict pain, suffering, and mistreatment upon women. But God is not the source of this abuse and conflict. God is Just and a God of love. From the creation to the fall in Genesis chapters 1 through 3, God blesses the man and woman at least 9 times. On the other hand, there are only two Scriptures where God declares a curse, and neither was on the man and woman. Yes, Adam and Eve brought great suffering and death upon themselves and all of mankind, but it was not God who cursed them. Instead, God cursed something and someone else. Let's see who or what it is.

Looking at the two Scriptures, tell who or what is cursed in:

Genesis 3:14: _____

Genesis 3:17: _____

In these Scriptures does God curse Adam or Eve?

God says there will be constant struggle after the fall. How?

What did God say about creation at the beginning?

Who was condemned by God from the beginning?

Who chose to believe and act upon information outside of what they had seen and heard from God?

Who caused the constant state of conflict and condemnation that now existed upon the earth?

God created man and woman with everything they needed to live forever in His presence. Who brought about physical and spiritual destruction of man and woman? How?

To sin means to be found lacking, forfeited, missed, or condemned. Of the (4) key things given by God at Creation to man and woman, how many of them are now found to be lacking, forfeited, missed, or condemned since the fall?

From what you have learned, what about you is so valuable that the enemy would devise a plan to steal it?

Where did these things come from? Who gave them?

Of the (4) keys given by God at Creation, what is the significance of item one? Why is it the first target of attack?

Based upon what you have observed does mankind (including women) today have a problem?



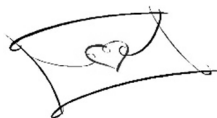
PART FOUR

YOUR PERSONAL JOURNEY CONTINUES

Over 75 Generations to Get it Back

When it comes to identity, there is only one question worth asking, “*Who are you?*” I’m not asking you what is your job, career or role in the world. I’m not even asking about your husband, family, friends, or church, but my question is, “*How do you identify yourself? Who’s your Daddy? Where are you from and where are you going?*” God’s desire is for every woman and young girl to be able to answer these questions so that she can walk into her God-given destiny on earth. Eve missed the mark because she failed to develop a worldview based on what God had said about her. She had knowledge of God, but she failed to believe it. She had knowledge of good too, but did it do her

any good without her believing it? Just as Eve's view of herself had ultimate impact on those she loved, how women view themselves today has ultimate impact on those they love. Your identity is so important that the enemy devised a plan going all the way back to creation to steal it! Satan knew that without your identity, you'd be miserably lost in life – not to mention without God forever.



Nothing would give Satan more pleasure than to have you reject your identity just as he rejected his.

You have a worldview and yet you may not even know it. Your worldview is your set of beliefs, spoken or unspoken, about life. It is critical that you train your children while they are young, even preschoolers, to have a worldview based on what God says about them. If you don't, the world will give them a view quickly, whether you agree with it or not. In the final analysis, they will have to make their own choices. But shouldn't you as a mother, sister, daughter or friend share the glorious heritage God has given you? That's why God calls you the glory of His glory.

In the last section we talked about God explaining the need for order in the earth as there was now disorder, and a lack of definition where Eve lost it. We have seen how before they sinned, Adam and Eve both had no problem with each other's authority on earth: hers in womanhood, his in manhood and they were not ashamed, humiliated or disgusted in their

separate roles. Both had dominion over the things of the earth and were able to work together as a team. As a result of Eve's sin, she now seeks definition through mankind rather than God. She was not seeing the deep significant glory she had from God.

We saw how God had to institute order at that point, not because He hated Eve, didn't like her, or felt she was inferior to her husband, but because there was now disorder in how she felt about herself. We touched on how this was an act of love on God's part and not an act of hate or repulsiveness toward Eve or women to come. Because they now lived in a different world – a world that was no longer in perfect harmony with God or each other, we can see and understand why there had to be an established form of order. Without order in the family, there would be constant chaos, not only between man and woman as husband and wife, but as fellow human beings. God knew that with the experience of evil now upon the earth, order was a necessity, starting with the family.

Even though instituting order was a great act of love on God's part, I see an even greater one. It's found in that same chapter -- Genesis 3. By the time God institutes order in the disorder on earth, there is now great hatred between the woman and the serpent. Eve knows now that she has an enemy who is literally out to kill her. She hates the enemy with more than a passion. Yet because of the state she's in, she struggles to relate to her God. That's enough to bring any woman to depression. She is fearful, fretful, and frustrated. On top of

that, she now lives knowing she's going to die. But God in His unending love, does not reject her for what she has done. Instead, when the woman tells God what happened the first thing God does is curse her enemy.

Genesis 3:14-15 (KJV)

14 And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life:

15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

Notice how God violently speaks to her enemy, striking the enemy down to the ground with His Word. In what God says to her enemy, God also gives her a prophecy – something that she can look forward to, a word to comfort, edify and exhort her, even though she has placed herself and her entire lineage in a state of annihilation. God sees beyond her faults and recognizes she is in need of a Savior.

God doesn't hesitate to come to her rescue. Before He even addresses the impact of her sin, He has already cursed her enemy. When God proclaims that her offspring will crush the enemy's head, He gives women of today all the empowerment they will ever need. To come out of her depression, state of doubt, and unbelief, she has a sure promise from her Creator –

her offspring will prevail! Seventy-seven generations later God would fulfill His promise to womankind.

Since the beginning of time, Jesus has been the most talked about controversial person that ever walked the face of the earth. Because of His worldview (what He believed) He was faced with the same life and death crises with identity that we have, yet He prevailed. His beliefs about who He was, whose He was, and what was His destiny formed His worldview. His worldview dictated His actions and He prevailed because of it. He knew who He was and who He was related to. He believed that He was from a heavenly father and a heavenly place. Do you?

Jesus was persecuted and crucified, not because He went around doing good things. Jesus was crucified because He would not reject His identity. He would not refuse or back down on His worldview.

Jesus claimed to be related to God. He said that God was His Father. He even showed how God empowered Him to represent Him on earth by doing all the things foretold by the prophets of old. But the people found His claim to be repulsive; they hated Him for it. They hated the fact that others who believed on Him were proof of all His good works, but much more than that, they hated that Jesus didn't stop the people when they hailed Him as King. That's why the religious leaders crucified Him – because He would not give up His Kingly identity. And many others who associated themselves with Him, who followed His teachings were martyred and

persecuted because they claimed relationship with Jesus the Christ who was related to God the King. *Are you related to the King?*

Identity is not only important for spiritual life after you leave earth, it is vital for you right now. When you hold on to your identity with God, you draw the line between those who are *of* this world and those who are *in* this world. The world we live in today has become so complicated that we cannot afford to take a casual laid-back approach to developing a worldview. We must train our children to have one as well. It is our view of the world and the principles, morals, and standards that govern our behavior. It is based on one thing: our faith in God or lack of it. Our time on this earth, while short in comparison to eternity, is critical, and the way we spend our time is an indication of the things we value most. To find out who we truly are, we must first spend time asking the question, am I related to God? And if so, how?

God is a spirit and the only way women can be related to Him is spiritually. That spiritual relationship is the very essence of our real everyday life right here, right now, in this physical realm. It is governed by the same relationship covenant that was cut when God put His own hand through Adam's rib cutting his flesh to create a woman. Ladies, don't you see, God cut covenant to make woman. *And you think women don't matter?* Women are so important that God didn't speak them into existence like He did the animals, plants and elements. He didn't even stoop down to the ground and pull them up from

the dirt like He did when He made man. When He made woman, He wrote it in blood by putting His hand through Adam's side. As when the blood of Adam and Eve wasn't enough, He didn't stop there. He went past 75 generations of women from Eve to Mary just to keep His promise and seal *our identity* with His own blood. His promise was not just to us, but also to our children - all of mankind - anyone who would believe.

You know, it's a shame that people and families don't come with papers or historical accounts when they are born. Or do they? I know that some families have taken the time to go back to their historical roots and trace their family origin. But I'm talking about going back to the beginning of time. What if I told you that the books of the Bible are those chronological accounts of our history? Sure we may be Englishmen, African, Frenchmen, Dutch, or Japanese. But we still have a beginning that goes further back. When we fail to embrace the Bible in all of its history, we reject a great portion of our history. Genesis is our book of beginnings. Other books in the Bible give us a look at how far we've come and where we're going.

For example, the book of John tells us in short, "Jesus was here." When you were a child in school and you saw graffiti on the walls of the school restroom doors, you'd see stuff like, "Janet was here," or "John was here." You never doubted that Janet was there or John was there, did you? Why then do we doubt that Jesus was here? He has given us first-hand accounts from witnesses like John:

John 1:1-3 (KJV)

All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

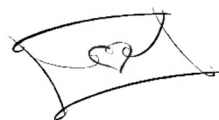
There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.

He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.

That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.



**When God becomes sexy, you
know in your heart Jesus was here.**

GOD'S WIDER DEFINITION OF YOUR WOMANHOOD - Workbook

Men and women today have a very real spiritual enemy. How does knowing this affect your viewpoint of the enemy?

Notes:



Identity Determines Destiny

When Eve sinned, in essence, she rejected the power of her identity with God. Eve accepted the lie from Satan that something was wrong with her. That is, she believed the lie from Satan that she was not like God already. She rejected the mark of excellence and glory that God had put in her at creation. Our Father God knew that this would happen and He knew the impact this would have on our lives. He knew that girls, young ladies, and women would have to deal with the consequences of Eve's choice, and we would be faced with doing the same thing.

As a result of her choice, we would be forever searching—looking to represent that excellence, splendor, and glory because that's what we were created to do. God knew that I would be looking to give glory to heroes and knights in shining armor when I grew up—not because I lacked anything when I was created, but because I didn't lack anything. At creation, we

were made to give splendor—to give glory—to give a correct opinion of God’s glory. Nothing else would ever be as satisfying as doing what we were created to do. That is, to represent Him and His beauty in mankind because that is why we are here – to reflect God’s glory!

God knew that all of our lives, we would be looking to glorify something. The word glorify means adore, worship, celebrate, exalt, honor, and praise. We are always looking to do that for which we are created. To give glory is to give a mirror image reflection of, in other words to represent the likeness of in a corresponding fashion, to match. Women are on earth to be a correct reflection of God’s crowning achievement in creating mankind. It represents God’s splendor in man. God knew that we would be forever trying to create that splendor and unable to do so without Him.

He knew that after Adam chose to sin, we wouldn’t always have perfect examples of the splendor of God in man. Apart from God, that splendor would always be contaminated. He knew that our fathers would at times fall short; He knew that our mothers would at times fall short. He knew that loved ones and spouses would fail us at times. He knew that they could only love us so much, and their love would always be with limits as long as mankind had the contaminated nature of sin. God, knowing all things before time, saw the state we would be in even before sin happened. Yet, He loved us so much, that even in the beginning at creation, He said that life with limits was not enough. He said that our lives had to be without limits,

even eternal. That's why He made us in His likeness, breathing into us His spirit and giving us a soul. Those things are eternal. Since He is the only limitless entity in existence, it was only Him that could save us.

Life with limits means living without ever knowing the satisfaction of fulfillment in God's joy, peace, and love. Life with limits means living behind a veil that covers up the glory we were created to represent. We live life with limits whenever we use anything to cover up the glory of God's glory in our lives. We have veils that we have used to cover hurts and disappointments. We have veils that we have used to cover the shame of secret sins that we want no one to know. We have veils that we have used to blame God for things that God had nothing to do with. We have veils that cover our real desires for good husbands and superheroes. Well, God is that good man and hero! In Matthew 27:51 after Jesus was crucified, the veil of the temple of worship was ripped away so that now women and men could enter the presence of God again and communicate with Him just as Adam and Eve once did at Creation.

You see, God saw our veils long before we did. We were so important to Him that He sent us Jesus, a Groom of Valor to remove them. Those veils, whatever yours and mine may be, have represented impurity and obstacles that separated us from a Holy God. The veil represents all the mistrust, misdeeds, doubt, shame, pride, evil, and even ignorance that separated us

from the original relationship we had with God in the beginning. But not anymore!

When God gave us His image and likeness, He knew that we would live forever because He lives forever. He also knew that we would sin. He loved us so much, He refused to allow us to live forever in a sin-contaminated state. He put a sword around the tree of life and put Adam and Eve out of the Garden so that we wouldn't be stuck living contaminated with sin for eternity. Now you can understand why God put them out of the garden, not because He hated them, but for the opposite reason. God knew that only a sinless sacrifice could lead the way back to the tree of life. God knew at the appointed time Jesus was *born to reign!*

When God made the tree of life and placed it in the Garden, it was an act of love. Knowing that Adam and Eve would contaminate themselves, He put the tree of life there so that we could still have our original identity and relationship with Him through Jesus Christ. God created us truly to have the *best life that we could possibly have—forever*. Now that's love!

Can you imagine being loved like that? God's love is all around us. It impacts our lives every day whether we realize it or not down to the very air we breathe. Openness to receive God's love and sovereignty is shown in decisions we make every day. It ultimately affects our eternity because we have now been given the way to live forever with God.

GOD'S WIDER DEFINITION OF YOUR WOMANHOOD - Workbook

Read Genesis 3:20-24 to find out what happened after God finished speaking to Adam and Eve about their sin.

Genesis 3:20-24 (KJV)

And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living.

Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.

And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:

Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.

So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the Garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

According to these verses, what happened to the man and woman after God finished speaking to them about their sin?

Read Genesis 2:9. According to this verse in the beginning, the Lord God made all kinds of trees to bear fruit and seed for the

man and woman's food, nourishment and comfort. Other than trees for food, nourishment and comfort, there are two other kinds of trees mentioned in Genesis 2:9 that God placed in the garden.

Name the two other trees:

Tree Of _____

Tree Of _____

Read Genesis 2:15-17, what did God say about the tree of knowledge of good and evil?

Read Genesis 3:22, what do you think God means when He says, "And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil:" Write as least two meanings for this phrase below. Remember, God is referring to mankind, including woman, not just man.

1. Mankind now knows _____.

and

2. Mankind now knows _____.

When God created man and woman, did He put anything bad or evil inside them? What does this tell you about God the Creator's character toward the man and the woman?

According to all you have read in Genesis, did the man or woman have any experience or intimacy with evil before they disobeyed God's instruction? Up until the time they sinned, who had they had experience with knowing? What does this say to you about the meaning of the word "know?" To "know" means *to have an* _____ *knowledge of or have an* _____ *with.*

What do you think it means to "know" evil? (Or "who" do you think it means to know evil? To "know evil" means to have an _____ knowledge of or an _____ with _____.

Based upon what you have just stated about the meaning of the word "know," fill in the blanks again concerning evil this time as it relates to the man and woman:

Man and woman are now _____ with _____ and _____ have _____ with evil.

Considering what we now know about the word “know,” why do you suppose the Tree of Knowledge of Good & Evil was in the garden?

Do you think that God put the tree of knowledge of good and evil in the garden to trick Adam and Eve?

In regard to the Tree of Life in the midst of the garden, what do you suppose God meant by the phrase, “*lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever*” in Genesis 3:22? What does this verse tell us about the Tree of Life?

Given their changed state having been both intimate with evil and intimate with good, what does this say about the condition of man and woman now?

Do you suppose that God now hated the man and woman? What does putting them out of the garden away from the tree of life say about God's character?

Why do you suppose God put the Tree of Life in the garden in the first place?

When God made all kinds of trees to bear fruit and seed for the man and woman's food or nourishment, and comfort, what does this say about our God's character?

Why do you think God told Adam and Eve not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil?

As you reflect on all God did for the man and woman when He created them and what God did for them after they sinned, what does this say about God's feelings for them?



When God becomes sexy, you don't mind being nudged by Him at 4 o'clock in the morning just so the two of you can talk.



Remember the Sabbath and Keep it Sacred

This is one of the Ten Commandments God gave Moses for the people of Israel in the Old Testament:

Exodus 20:7-11 (KJV)

Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:

But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

This word is designed to also help us today remember and recognize that it is God who created us and gave us identity. God wants us, even today, to hear His fatherly voice saying, *“Remember now I am your Creator and keep the memory of me holy.”* I believe this especially applies to women because it was the womanhood represented by Eve, who was tricked into believing that she was not what God had created. God is saying for us women today “Remember how I took six days to create the world and put mankind in it. I took my own Spoken Word and gave you a perfect world with light, moon, stars oxygen, planets, sun, water,... everything you needed was here, already prepared for you before you were even created. Remember that I am your Creator and stake the rest of your life on that. This is so important for you to remember because I have given you dominion to reign and rule in concert with the man. But if you lose sight of who I am, and what I’ve done in creating you, then how will you ever reach your destiny?”

When God rested on the first Sabbath in Genesis 2:3, it wasn’t because He was tired. Man was the only sacred being God created, a holy creature set apart to reflect the glory of God, untouchable in intelligence, appearance, and splendor by anything else God made. Even Lucifer, who became Satan, who was once a brilliant angelic being, was not made in the image and likeness of God, but man was.

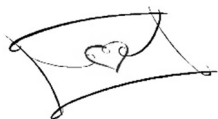
To stand with man, God created the woman to reflect this God-given glory. It was a sacred relationship established by God between Himself and His glory. The woman was the

resemblance of the beauty in what God had done in creating man. How glorious was that relationship and union between God and mankind. I believe God loved His created people so much, He made woman as a correct opinion of how much He loved them.

To think that God would give man his own man-like species just to show the glory God put in man speaks volumes about the love God has for His creation. So God further declares in His Own Word that He will share His glory with no one. Both man and woman are sacred to Him. We are part of His glory and therefore, we are special and set apart. But set apart for what? We are not set apart for just anything or anybody to touch and handle as they please. We as people are sacred souls created by a Divine Creator, so much so that when man and woman failed to hang on to their sacred destiny, God already provided a plan for their salvation and restoration simply because He loves us.

That's why all human beings and unborn babies do matter. You cannot just put them in a trashcan or lay them in a dumpster or leave them on a street corner somewhere. People are sacred beings. God rested on the seventh day not because He was tired, but because in creation, He had done something sacred. As His signature mark on creation, **we** are something sacred. But if we choose not to receive what He's done for us and never search out the truth of how we were made in perfect harmony with Him, and just how much He loves, then we'll

never understand how wonderful that relationship is. That's when the alternate view prevails.



The opposite of sacred is secular.

I myself came to grips with my belief that people do matter after making some terrible mistakes. Twice I aborted children because I listened to our culture tell me they didn't matter. I regretted those decisions later and finally learned to seek God's forgiveness. Today, I believe I am healed, forgiven and restored from those mistakes, but I will never forget the valuable lessons. If God felt so strongly about the man, the woman, and His creation that He sat down and rested the seventh day, blessed them and called the day Holy, then who are we to curse it by calling it unholy. That's what women do when they choose abortion. God is the master artist of Creation. How dare anyone destroy the artwork of another!

Jesus said in the New Testament, "Man was not made for Sabbath; the Sabbath was made for man." So God in Genesis was calling *us* holy and set apart, not the day. At Creation, God makes it clear that man and woman are to represent His authority on the earth. In Genesis 1:26-31, when God made man and woman, He gave them dominion over everything on earth and the evidence of this dominion was in their *identity* being made in the image and the likeness of Him. No other

creature was made this way. The whole earth rejoiced in God's creation and delighted in the making of man and woman over creation. (Proverbs 8:31) This makes me not a God, but a god-like creature the Bible calls a living soul. Representing the image and likeness of God, every human being at the moment of conception has life from God – a sacred gift.

The holiness of human life is God declaring that God made man and woman and we belong to Him. By creating women last, I see us as God's Holy Signature upon the earth. We are to remember the Creation and the seventh day that God rested because it was God declaring how sacred He was and how we were like him. When He created us - holy and set apart to reflect His Glory, He was declaring He would share His glory with no one, and that glory is reflected in who we are.

Since God cannot contradict Himself, when He says, "I will share my glory with no one," what does He mean? I think He means exactly what He said, "Mankind and His glory would not be shared with anyone, including Satan." So when mankind rejected God, Jesus had to come in the form of a man to fulfill God's Word that His glory would not be shared with anyone. God said what He meant and meant what He said: His glory, His mankind – including woman, would not be shared with anyone. Jesus then came in the form of man to prove that in the face of God's enemies, God will still share His glory with no one. How valiant is our God to stand in the face of His enemies and take back our identity! That's what Jesus did. He makes it such that woman and man, as God's creation, still have

their identity with God intact and not have to share it with the enemy.

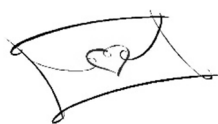
Jesus makes this possible - for all men and women to be restored in their identity and relationship with God just by trusting and accepting God at His Word. What word? The word that Jesus is God and we are His Creation. That's *God's story*. The word that Jesus is the story of God redeeming mankind back to Himself is God's kind of *history*. But the story is not over because you are a part of it. God wants you to remember His story, to keep it sacred. When you discover the beauty of God in Creation, respecting the belief that God did form that first man and woman, and everything else with them, that belief is kept holy to you. That is a start, a beginning if you will, to what you think about yourself and your own womanhood.

When a woman does not believe in the sanctity – the sacredness – of God creating her, then the opposite of sacred is secular. Everything in her life then is touched by the secular. Her life becomes open for anything and everything to touch, fondle, caress, and pamper her heart and mind. Instead of a Holy God having open access to her life, an unholy world has open access to her.

We all know women who allow open access to their bodies. We have names for women like that – who allow multiple partners to fondle, touch and caress them. We see them as anything but *brides*. When we refuse God's principles of our womanhood, refusing to acknowledge *Him as our Creator*,

the keeper AND sustainer of our bodies, our sexuality, our femininity, our definition, destiny, and purpose, that makes us no different. That makes us secular. Being secular, we cannot understand the things of God's heart – those things that motivate Him and make Him smile - things that are sacred to Him. But when you see yourself through the eyes of God, your Creator, you can begin to see how much He truly cares. You can appreciate the thoughts He has about you - thoughts that you be kept from harm, plans He has for your life, plans to empower you to see your dreams to reality, plans to protect you from sickness, harm, and disease. God has plenty of thoughts about you; He's had them from the beginning. But if you are not open to the sacred thoughts God has toward you, then the secular thoughts you have about yourself will molest you for the rest of your life.

How has your life become anything but sacred?



When God becomes sexy, our time, work, and resources have a deeper purpose.

GOD'S WIDER DEFINITION OF YOUR WOMANHOOD - Workbook

Think about your time, your talent, your resources, your strengths, and your weaknesses. Would you say that you handle your life as sacred or secular?

Veils are thoughts, actions, people, or things in your life that you use to keep a deep wound, situation, emotional pain, or crisis covered. They are demoralizing and destructive behaviors caused by the lack of truth and fulfillment in a woman's life. We are *all* great women. But until we learn to let God help us discover and remove the veils keeping us from the truth of fulfilling our destiny, then the world will never know just how great we really are. What are the veils you have to deal with? How are you seeking God's help?



Chosen Behind the Veil

Her Majesty the Queen of England and British Monarchy is said to be one of the most powerful and yet most graceful of women. I would like to use her life for a moment to show an example of identity. Have you ever wondered what it must be like to have been her as a child? Your father is king and you are heir to the throne. In studying her life, what I found amazing was that strangely enough, Her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain was not first in succession to be Queen when she was born in 1926; can you imagine that? Yet, but get this, *she was born to reign!*

Her entire destiny was changed when another, her uncle, Edward VIII, her father's brother, refused the crown. Instead, he married a woman who was said to be married when they began their relationship. The story was called one of the most scandalous events of England's history according to Michael Anthony of British History 101. In a podcast at <http://bh101.wordpress.com>¹⁰ Anthony reports: "In 1936, when King George V died, the throne was passed on to his son, Edward, whose title became 'Edward VIII, by the Grace of God, of Great Britain,

Ireland, and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, King, Defender of the Faith, Emperor of India.”¹¹ But Edward, rather than give up his alleged disreputable relationship with a married woman who was said to have a number of unpopular accusations behind her, relinquished his birthright. It is said that the members of the government all threatened to resign should he marry such a woman and remain in his position as King.¹²

To avoid an entire panel of government resigning behind the scandal, Edward chose the woman and passed the crown on to his brother Albert, the Duke of York. His brother then immediately became King George VI, whose daughter is Her Majesty the Queen.¹³

Though she has many titles because of her various roles in multiple nations, I found her current title in the UK quite interesting. It is “Elizabeth the Second, by the Grace of God of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and of Her other Realms and Territories Queen, Head of the Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith.”¹⁴ I like that part, “Defender of the Faith.” How many of us could say that we carry that title toward our Lord?

Brides of Virtue 
a wider definition of womanhood

Principle 6

Woman was created by the King and therefore, born to reign - not a sub-servient after-thought.

Can you imagine how the Queen’s father must have felt knowing that his then 10-year-old daughter was heir to his

throne? Imagine the feeling of looking at your 10-year-old knowing she will rule multiple kingdoms.

From her childhood an heiress is constantly being prepared to rule the kingdom. Why? Because the king has identity, destiny, and purpose. Then why do we allow our heiresses, our daughters, to be raised by society? Television, Internet, peers,...anybody and anything except us have the power to raise our daughters. Others have the power because they have their attention. Our daughters and sons don't have our undivided attention anymore and this has become acceptable parental behavior. Spending the best years of our lives giving away our best to systems and organizations that could care less instead of giving our best attention to developing our heritage, all in the name of survival, is not the life of a queen.

We have to come to the point where we believe we don't have time to waste with secular standards of living or gaining the world's acceptance. Instead, we need to concentrate on handling our dominion since that is what we are expected to rule. The world's principles do not come from God, so they are not going to matter much when it comes to fulfilling your own destiny. Yes, it's true that we are not all born with a silver spoon in our mouths, so it's necessary that we work for a living. But who says our jobs or careers have to suck the life out of us so that we have hardly anything left to give our families? We are the offspring of royalty and we must learn how to handle our noble domain, even in the world of work.

Speaking of work, what kind of woman wouldn't want to be treated as a King's daughter, or even a King's wife? That's what God is trying to do with you, even in the world of work. What kind of woman wouldn't find great pleasure as well as great responsibility in being prepared for kingdom life? That's what God is trying to give to you. A woman of royalty, whether she is the daughter of a King or the wife of a King, either way, she's treated as royalty by all. Like Her Majesty the Queen, because of Who her father is, her identity sets the stage for her entire life and the lives of those around her even in the world of work. If you've ever noticed Her Majesty the Queen at work in public view, she always represents the glory of the British Monarchy.

I found researching her fascinating and worth sharing with you because though she wasn't in the line of succession to the throne at the time, because someone else rejected it, she was born to reign. That story sounds familiar. It reminds me of the people of God, Israel, rejecting Jesus the Christ. Because they did, we who were considered strange women, Gentiles, not in succession to the throne, were engrafted in to reign with Christ. Was it just a lucky break, or do you think that a God who created womankind would want to see them all reach their destiny? Do you represent His Kingdom? He's offering it to you. For just like in the story of Her Majesty the Queen, somebody else was called, but she was chosen.

Matthew chapter 22 speaks of a similar story Jesus told his disciples before His death. It says that there was a rich and

distinguished king whose son was about to be married. The King threw a royal wedding banquet and he sent out his servants to compel everyone he knew to come. However, those who were invited would not come to the banquet. They made light of it and went on about their way.

Then the King requested again that they come to his son's wedding feast, but they would not and this time the invited guests killed the servants who were sent by the King. Then the King sent out his armies and destroyed the murderers and their city. He then sent out his servants to everybody else they could find, the rich and the poor, the less favored and the popular so that His son's wedding banquet would have guests and the rooms would be filled with people. Everybody had the opportunity to come. Now, not all of these people were wealthy, good or worthy of coming to a banquet fit for a King, but guess what? They were all invited anyway, even though they had issues. The King had them covered.

As the King walked around the banquet, he noticed a man who was not properly dressed for the occasion. After all, the King had made it possible for everyone to come, poor and rich from all over the Kingdom. Whatever they required to enter the banquet, undoubtedly the King had provided it for them, but this man had refused to cover himself with what the King offered. The man was bound up and sentenced to destruction because he refused to acknowledge the honor freely given to him as a guest of the King's Son.

Our Father God has made it possible that we can exchange our sin-contaminated condition and our veils that we try to cover them up with: shame, pride, low self-esteem, unworthiness, jealousy, bitterness, and dissatisfaction, all of it, whatever *it* is, for His Son's purity. We can actually take on His Body, and His Spirit, simply by choosing to genuinely accept the invitation. How will He know if the invitation was well-accepted? It will not be by what we women wear or do on the outside, but what we are covered with on the inside.

The Father was so happy about His Son's marriage that He wanted everyone to be a part of the celebration. Seeing that it was a special occasion, like God our Father, the King had provided garments to cover the condition of all the guests. However, not every guest chooses to put on her Royal Garment. Sadly, not every woman chooses to put on God's state of wholeness. Maybe that is because not every woman believes that she is God's creation? Instead, this woman has made her own god. By not accepting God, she stands on her own before the King.

What she fails to realize is that the garment of forgiveness in exchange for her own self-righteous or self-will is her identity when standing before the King. Forgiveness for her own self-condemning state puts her in right standing with God. It is her covering. It doesn't matter how rich or poor she is, when she stands before the King, He is King of All in the room by virtue of His position in having her there. He has provided room for all in the place. It is His territory she is standing in. He doesn't

have to beg her to love Him or respect Him or even believe Him. He has created everything and made it available to her, even down to the oxygen, air, and water she takes in.

Likewise, she didn't make God's Kingdom. God's glory wasn't made for her; she was made for God's glory. No matter how empowered she becomes by the wonderful grace of God and things He has given her, they are given, not because she's been so good, but for her to represent His glory.

So my dear daughters and sisters, whether you consider yourself to have a good life or bad life, in spite of your own condition and issues, you have been chosen to come to a wedding banquet. Only those who are thankful for life in the kingdom will sense the need to come to this banquet. All, including you, have been offered a covering if you choose to accept the Father's invitation. Evidence of your acceptance will be wearing the royal garment of Christ's forgiveness for mankind offending the King. You see, all at one time or another have not been thankful for life in the kingdom. All of us have, at one time or another, failed to handle our kingdom identity with the grace that was given out freely by the King. Jesus is the one - the only one - who can forgive that offense to the King. Right in the heart of your conscience, you simply say, "Yes, my Lord, you are my King, and I accept your love."

My dear daughters and sisters, if you are looking in this world for who you really are, perhaps your vision is blurred by any number of veils. Perhaps your hearing is dulled by any number of things good or bad. Anything is a veil if it keeps you

from seeing the love of God. The list could go from shameful habits to haughtiness and pride, from poverty to riches. If you're consumed with anything other than falling in love with God, then you're wearing a veil. The list of offenses does go on and on because it's not about the things you do, it's about the condition you are in if you have never accepted Christ's love. If you are unfulfilled in any areas of your life, there's an old Negro spiritual which says, "*Maybe God is trying to tell you something.*"

You have already read in Genesis that from the very beginning, He created you to live forever whether you want to or not. Evidence of your sovereignty is obvious in that you didn't create yourself. You are not God. But thanks be to God that you are a god-like creature—a creature like no other—because you have God's image and dominion inside of you. Evidence of your God-given dominion is obvious every time you make a choice. Good or bad—it's your choice.

God has done all He needed to do to remove the conditions of our lives that keep us unforgiven - away from His presence. Jesus wouldn't die just so you could stay the same way you were. Why would God give you life twice: life on earth and life for all eternity—if He didn't want you to live both of them to the fullest? That's why He gave you His Spirit. The Spirit of God helps us make good choices because His is the Spirit of Wisdom. (Proverbs chapter 8) He leads us to wisdom for instruction. He sends us counseling. The Spirit of God causes all things to work out for the good of those that love Him. That

doesn't mean there won't be hard times or others who make wrong choices; but it is those times that we need to ask ourselves, was this God's doing or man's choices? What God has already done since the foundation of the world, we can see that He wants the very best for us. He is the same God, yesterday, today and forevermore. God doesn't want women to miss out on anything.

Miss out on what you ask? Miss out on the glory of living in *His* story—living in His presence forever. The glory of God is the mark for carrying His identity. The mark of God is the High Calling of carrying the name of His Son, Jesus Christ in us, not on our cars, necklaces, or clothing. It is a spiritual identity compared to that of being a bride. Giving God your entire life means accepting identity with Christ. It's just like saying "yes" to a King when He asks, "Will you marry me?" Signifying that the creation of woman was special to God, it was so special that He parallels or corresponds the woman to his body of believers, the church. But God doesn't call his body of believers the name of just any woman, He calls her His Bride.

At the point your heart, mind, and soul say, "yes," you are marked with the same identity that Jesus proclaimed as He died and rose again. You get this spiritual identity the moment you claim His name as your own, His life as your own, and His Word as your own. I'm not talking about *impersonating* God; I'm talking about accepting your already God-given *identity* with Him. In this world, many people do believe that a god exists;

they just don't know which one. They don't know His name; they don't know Him as the "*I AM*."

Saying you believe on God and never getting to know Him is like marrying a man and never having sex with him. You never consummate the marriage if you don't get intimate. In Texas (*I don't know about other states, I've only been married five times in Texas*) there's a law that says if you don't consummate the marriage, it can be automatically declared null and void. I am wondering how many of us who say we love Jesus have ever consummated our marriage vows to Him.

We have already seen that the word "know" means to become "intimate with." It means having shared some stuff. Women need to come to the point where we fall in love deeply with God—where we share some stuff with Him and Him only. We must come to the point where our belief in God is what not only saves us, but sustains and pushes us toward our own fruitful productive destiny on earth. Do you believe God created the heavens and the earth? Do you believe He is the same God who made you a God's god—a masterful creation? Is your future on earth and in eternity—marked by the significance of His name, Jesus the Christ? Then your everyday life should manifest a passion for what you believe.

Those who are asking themselves at this point, "*Is Jesus really the Savior of the world, the Creator of the universe?*" must first ask themselves if they are in need of a savior? The only way a woman can believe that she is in need of a savior is to know and believe her book of beginnings. God has written His own

story. If you are truly interested, God is truly interested in you. His Word says, “In that day, you will have need of no man to teach you, for I will write my words upon your heart. And you will be my people and I will be your God.”

The void that every woman yearns for at one time or another in her life is a “He.” And His name is not the man’s name you’re thinking of from your past, present or future. His name is Jesus. He is more romantic, more secure and more satisfying than any experience given by man. Like me, many have found Him to be that and much more. Life is not about falling in love with a man, or falling in love with religious traditions, culture, or even falling in love with self. Life is about finding the source of true love, identity, strength, and fulfillment – becoming who you were created to be.

The more I know about God, the more I learn about myself; the more my self-esteem and self-worth are established. I am convinced the lessons about me are endless because my God and His love are endless. What an exciting love affair, and it’s for the rest of my life. It never ends. It only goes to a higher level. No man, woman, or entity can ever top that. God is saying to us ladies, “*Why are you cheating on me? I AM* more romantic, more loving, more secure and more satisfying than anyone or anything you’ll ever know. Stop looking for me in other people. Stop looking for me in other places. Stop looking for me in other things. I can be found if you want me. I can guide your life if you let me. Don’t wait too long. I am reaching out to you.” He says, “I am calling out your name so we can

make spiritual love one to another.” He says, “I have always loved you. *Why are you still cheating on me?*”

God wants us to know it’s not the things we do that signify we are God’s people. It’s not our meetings, our buildings, our gyrations, or our tongues. It’s His identity, His supernatural presence in and among us that makes a physical difference in our lives. My dear daughters listen very carefully. God waits patiently; He has all the time in the world. But you do not; you will change addresses. Therefore, you do not know your time. He will not force Himself on us. God wants little girls to grow up knowing that He doesn’t *take away* our love. He only *receives* from us what we give Him. If you don’t **give** Him your life, your love, He cannot receive it. Why? Because He is a gentleman, not a rapist.

A gentleman receives what is freely given to Him. A gentleman does not coerce, manipulate, steal, or threaten. A real gentleman, does not want what belongs to someone else. He only wants that which belongs to him *and he will provide for it* to prove His faithfulness. Only murderers, thieves, robbers, and rapists take what do not belong to them. Unfaithful men refuse to provide for their own. Instead they take what does not belong to them. A man who refuses to work to provide for his children and family, is no different than any of these because he is faithless.

A true gentleman knows how to win His lady’s heart and He has the faith to provide for her needs, not just in the physical sense, but also mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and

socially. Rapists steal and destroy that which does not belong to them; there is only one place reserved for those filled with this kind of evil. This is the place where those who refused to give up their sin-contaminated lives in exchange for God's forgiveness. Their lives are destined, whether they believe it or not, to the pit of hell reserved for fallen angels and demons. It was never made for you, but should you exercise your God-given spiritual dominion to live there, the Father will not stop you. Why? No one can take away your eternal destiny. That's your dominion; it's under your rule and your authority. Just like in the abdication of King Edward VIII, it's the dominion you were born with. Only you can give it away.

Every one of us is born to reign. It is a question of how will we reign? Will we reign over the throne of our hearts by our God-created and inspired identity? Or, will we reign by the influence of our own self-will contaminated with evil? Even God's enemy, Satan trembles before the One whose reign is greater than his own.

Our identity is not for us only, but it impacts those around us. And just as Her Majesty the Queen always represents the glory of the British Monarchy, we should always represent the glory of the Heavenly Monarchy.



No one can take away our God-given destiny. That's our domain.

Notes:

[illegible]

GOD'S WIDER DEFINITION OF YOUR WOMANHOOD - Workbook

Why is it important to embrace God as your spiritual father, and Jesus Christ, the coming King, as spiritual bridegroom?

How does it feel to know that God's character is that of a spiritual gentleman and not a rapist?

How does a King behave toward his enemies, those who attempt to hurt his people, or those who attempt to destroy his kingdom?

Her Majesty, the Queen is ruler over many territories. No area goes unclaimed because the kingdom has identity, purpose, and destiny. Write down any area or territory of your life that is yet unclaimed or not trusted to God.

Who is the hero of creation and why?

Notes:



PART FIVE

What's So Sexy About God?

Many people are afraid of reading the book of Revelation. However when I look at it, I see a culmination of a long historical love affair inside a marriage relationship. I see it from the eyes of a young girl who always longed for her knight in shining armor. I see it as a queen whose king has come in from battle and won.

As we've seen, God is always a gentleman toward His own bride and when Jesus returns, we will see Him as a reigning Glorious King. He will return to judge the likes of rapists, thieves, and robbers who have not repented of their condition. It will be the ultimate "Knight in Shining Armor" story because that's exactly what He's returning to do - rescue His Queen, His Bride, the body of people who have received His forgiveness, His identity. However, when it comes to those

who have not wanted nor received His forgiveness, His identity, He is not an unjust King. He will not force you.

He is returning only for those whose faith was in their confession of Him and Him alone —the kind of faith that produces virtue: worth, strength, and value. Everyone whose faith was truly in God, and not in someone or something else will be revealed. Those hearts (those souls) will stand out like pure gold. Understand that God will behave towards His Bride as a gentleman, but toward the spiritual hootchie, He will not be sexy at all.

God will not take back that which does not belong to Him, even your heart and your spirit. You must be willing to give them to Him and trust Him with them while you still can. Unlike trifling dates, He doesn't ask us to pay for His love. He doesn't ask us to do anything for His love. He loved us long before we loved Him. He just wants to know who loves Him back.

All He asks is that we declare in our heart who He is to us. Like a patient lover who doesn't take his love's virginity, He waited past 75 generations after Adam, 42 generations after Abraham, just so we could "know" and "experience" Him. Every time you hear the word "know" remember that it means "be intimate with" or have experience with. What man in the flesh do you know would wait 75 generations for you to love Him? What man would wait even 42 generations for you to love Him? God has waited much longer for us.

Think of how God must feel to know that soon we will know Him for who He really is. He came as Jesus the Christ, so men and women could know Him in the flesh. In His ministry on earth, Jesus used to ask, “*Whom do you say I am?*” as well as, “*Do you love me?*” and “*Do you believe me?*” Remember in the book of Genesis when God told Adam to name everything He had created? Whatever Adam called it that was its name. God wants *you* to declare to Him who He is. He gave you the same dominion He gave Adam and Eve. All He wants you to do is use it. He wants to know from you: *Who do you say He is? Do you love Him? Do you believe Him?*

I’m going to share this and I know some religious people might faint when they hear it.



Nothing about God is kinky or freaky. But He does get romantic with a woman whose love and trust are in Him.

Women who know anything about making love (or even having sex) know that people communicate when they do. C’mon, all of us can remember times when we’ve been in the act of sex, intimacy, or lovemaking. Somebody inevitably would ask, “*Do you love me?*” or they might say, “*Tell me you love me.*” And if you were really freaky, you might hear something like, “*Who’s your Daddy?*” or “*What’s my name?*”

Nothing about God is kinky or freaky, but He does get romantic with a woman whose love and trust are in Him. God wants you to declare who He is. He wants your entire life on this earth to be one gigantic love story between you and Him. And the best part about it is this: *His love story with you never ends.* It began before you were born and it continues when you leave this earth. It never stops. You will see Him like you've never seen Him before on the day He holds you in His arms face to face showing you His glory and you in your matching glory - the way He created you.

After years of struggle trying to be the best, have the best, and do my best based on my own strength, education, and wealth, I am finally now able to rest and receive someone else's best. I didn't realize how dependent I was on being what popular culture and religion said I was supposed to be until I stopped and allowed God to satisfy me. My best is outweighed by God's unconditional love.

Now if someone loving me when I'm at my worst is not romance, I don't know what is. God's passion is awesome! His Word is my love story, but He's not limited to loving me. He's in love with you too like that!

After falling in love with God, that's when a woman is ready to receive her husband. Mind you, I said "her husband." If he's somebody else's man, then He can't be your husband. I don't care how many visions and dreams you thought you saw. Having someone else's man is infidelity because the word means "faithless." Only a faithless woman accepts a man who

belongs to someone else. That's because she doesn't have faith for her own. How do you know if he belongs to someone else? Hints: if he's married, *he belongs to someone else!* If they are separated and one is still pleased to dwell with the other, *he belongs to someone else!* If there are children, *he belongs to someone else!* God is never faithless; that's why He can never give you someone out of faithlessness. When we take on spouses who are not of faith, it is by our own choices, not God's. Marriage and family failure are the biggest deceptions in our culture today. Who says, "*We can't change?*" God is full of faith, ready to passionately respond to the woman and man who stand trusting in Him and Him alone. When we or our spouses compromise or allow ourselves and our families to be deceived by the pressures around us, those are our own mistakes, not God's choices.



God needs to be the author and finisher of our marriages, because God is the author and finisher of our faith.

Marriage is a relationship of spiritual origin, so you don't have to be in a physical relationship with a man to enjoy marriage with God. In this relationship, God is your husband and you are His bride. This marriage is a real live covenant backed by God Himself.

Being in a relationship with God doesn't make a woman un-sexy or unable to be happily married to a man. God is not in the business of taking the fun out of sex in marriage. On the

contrary, God makes her sexier than ever. She is *approachable*, *fulfilled*, *desirable*, and *conquering* because she now knows who she is, whose she is, and what is her destiny.

Even though she is a free spirit understanding her identity takes work. Demonstrating that she is *approachable*, *fulfilled*, *desirable*, and *conquering* is a process. It might take awhile. In cultures today where we live, work, and play, it takes training. Sometimes it takes counseling. She is learning to love and be loved. This is a learning journey that never ends. But one thing's for sure, she is a beautiful free spirit given by God. Now a woman can either accept that or reject it, but knowing God as her Creator is where a real woman's identity comes from.



When God becomes sexy, we realize He put out His best for us.



Marriage Matters, But...

Marriages and families are so under attack these days and have been since the fall of mankind. This is no coincidence, particularly among church people. Even as I started writing this book, I started out in a celebration with my third and last husband, the only one I ever loved, renewing our 12th year of marriage. By the time this book was finished, we were again facing whether or not we could stay married and raise our family together.

In all my experience with marriage, I have learned a whole lot of lessons, but there is one lesson about marriage that stands out above all the rest.

God-ordained marriage and ours was no exception. We faced battle after battle in our marriage, and I could go down the line locally and nationally naming others who I believe are also facing battle. We either fight for or against our own selves when we fight marriage. This is like your body cells fighting against itself. In science, that would be called a disease. We

already know the enemy hates love and marriage because it symbolizes the relationship God has for His people. But what we don't know is how much we tragically help him by not addressing our fears, issues, and insecurities, especially before getting married, and yes, even in the church.

In church you may get a lot of training that you consider to be spiritual and practical education. But from what I've seen, it is very rare that churched people are held accountable for the training and education they teach and receive. I will be the first to admit that it was my own lack of wisdom and understanding concerning myself and relationships that led me to the path of failed marriages at the age of 18.

Lack of character, proper training and accountability in our cultures is the main problem for single and married women today in my opinion. In marriage and family life, as well as in the church, there is so great a lack of these three things. This can only lead to bad experiences in both marriage and church life. I've had both and I know firsthand their devastation. Sometimes unfortunately, they cause hurt and pain touching even people in the public domain, reflecting the same drama and trauma you see on prime time and daytime television.

In marriage and in church, we must learn better how to be accountable. There are a number of mistakes we make in our physical marriage relationships that mimic the spiritual mistakes we make in our spiritual growth and development with God. I have focused particularly on spiritual hoochism and spiritual adultery. I have compared these to identity issues

that women and young girls seem to suffer from in desperation, despite their socio-economic status. I have discussed in general some of the glaring issues that affected me during my lifetime.

Born in Shreveport, Louisiana in the 60's, I didn't grow up seeking to become a spiritual hootchie or spiritual adulteress. At the age of 7, my mother remarried and moved us to Houston, Texas and all I remember is being a sad little girl. Most of the mistakes I made both as a young girl and after falling in love with God, were the results of cultural influences in our family and church environment where religious training abounded but accountability and unconditional love were not.

What godly influences I did have, came from my mother and grandmothers, who no doubt, loved me very much. Even though my mom and grandmothers lacked self-esteem and had no training on spiritual gifts or the ability to use them, they had character. I'll never forget the conversation my mother and grandmother had with me the day of my high school graduation. I still had on my cap and gown after the ceremony. Their conversation was not about encouraging me to go to college, though I was a student with honors. Instead they encouraged me to get married because I had a boyfriend and in those days, it was about preserving my character as a good girl. They told me the worst thing I could do was to get myself pregnant while being unmarried. I have no doubt that these women loved God and loved me the best and only way they knew how.

I learned much later that this was the only way they knew how to protect me - by telling me to do what the Bible says to do – avoid sex outside of marriage. The problem was that I didn't know anything about the relationship covenant God has established with women. That relationship is not based on what they do; it's based on who He is. Getting married had not protected my mother, grandmother, and practically all my aunts from abuse and domestic violence. Neither was it going to protect me. By the grace of God, they were given a supernatural strength to love God and love others, even through the toughest of their family situations. Their lack of self-esteem however created a pattern of oppression and abusive situations in my life because that was the acceptable standard of our culture at the time. That is what we were used to.

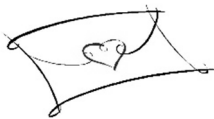
For years with me, this created a love-hate relationship with the church and church people until I finally met and fell in love with God out of my own desperate search for love. In the midst of bad church experiences, bad marriages, and bad family experiences, I learned how to forgive and be forgiven.

Having accepted Christ's love and learning how to love and forgive others, I believe God created me a whole woman, but even a whole woman needs training in order to live whole. My daughters and my sisters, what I'm trying to get you to see is that marriage and family is great, but they are not automatic. Getting the husband you want and wanting the husband you get involves practice and accountability three ways - between you, your husband, and God before and after the wedding. *The*

same is needed in many of our churches today...go figure. We will have challenges in marriage, and in the church. But we can have them a lot less using the wisdom of accountability. Now I do love my husband and He is a god-like creature, but that's just it. He's a creature, not the Creator. Unlike God, my husband is not all-powerful, all-knowing, and ever-present everywhere without error. Since it is clear that our spouses cannot be God, we must operate by the principle that marriage matters, but it will not replace a close intimate relationship with God.

Marriage takes practical training in addition to the spiritual experience of knowing God. Even though I've been divorced three times, God didn't cause any of them. God is not in the business of breaking up marriages and families.

The bottom line is a godly marriage is something that all married people need to strive for and it takes a willingness to do so. It takes *cultivation*. That's the same word God used in Genesis when He told Adam the ground had been cursed because of his sin. The word means, "*It takes work.*" Marriage is work and lots of it. For most women who have been through troubled marriages and relationships as I have, that's reason enough to seek God. But there's so much more to God once you actually fall in love with Him as a Husband and best friend.



**When God becomes sexy,
marriage becomes more than just
another legal agreement.**

Marriages are shattered today because sin-contaminated people made them that way. But even in that, God has made us more than conquerors. Marriage between a man and a woman today is still the most sacred physical institution on the face of the earth. How you see God and how you see yourself in God makes all the difference, not how you see religion, culture, church ministry obligations, or even family obligations. Since God is who created us, from His viewpoint is the only legitimate way to define our marriage. Since God is the author and finisher of our faith, we need to allow Him to be the author and finisher of our marriage. Single or married, wherever we go in life, each and every day, we have a journey toward a higher calling to walk out. It's called our IDENTITY.

Brides of Virtue 
a wider definition of womanhood

Principle 7

A woman is the only one who can affirm her identity. Christ is the only one who confirms it.

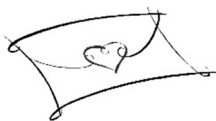
God wants you to understand the importance of knowing who you are based on faith, which is what God has said. This type of relationship with God throughout your entire life is so important whether you are committed to a church or not, and whether you are married or not.

Without your source of truth being rooted in Him who is priceless, your identity is worth nothing to you. How often do we hear and see the horror stories of people suffering from lack of self-worth? Have you considered the horror in wasting one minute of your life allowing popular culture to demean you or your marriage? That's exactly what happens to you and your marriage when you are empowered by outside influences and not God. For the most part, our culture wants to lure us away from accepting the moral truth that it is God who created us and not we, ourselves. Therefore, only God's love can govern us in relationships; we need His help.

Living single, married, and divorced repeatedly, each time, I was spiritually, physically, and emotionally wounded and hurt. Divorce is not something that I love, but something that I hate, not because it exists, but because it necessarily exists. Divorce is rampant, not because there's something wrong with God's institution of marriage, but because there's something wrong with the people in it.

Women and men have issues before, during and after marriage that constantly change and must be conquered. God has made us more than conquerors for a reason. Building a relationship with Him that includes *accountability* gives people

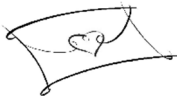
the strength and ability they need to be more than conquerors in identity, relationships, family, communication, love & intimacy, security... everything. These are not just for women; they are extremely important for men too. When it comes to relationships, men need intimacy, self-worth, and communication too – maybe sometimes just a different kind. Whether your issue is staying married or staying single, either way, what I've learned is *it all takes work*.



Marriage matters, but it will not replace a close intimate relationship with God.



Drop the Drama, Queen



**The most fulfilled woman on the planet
is the one who is intimate with the
King.**

The first time I *connected* with God as King, I didn't intuitively know He was the King. He had to reveal Himself to me as *the Lover* - someone He knew that I could relate to. He wasn't just *any* lover like I had experienced before. He didn't physically touch me at all, but He spoke volumes to the desperation in my soul. It wasn't a weird spooky or mystical feeling. On the contrary, it was the most unique romantic encounter I've ever had. Yet, it wasn't a meeting I planned or set-up. I didn't even know I was going to meet Him that day.

I'll never forget the day. It was not an "at church" experience. It was not that night at the women's retreat; those were entirely different experiences with God altogether. When you get to know God, you'll discover that He has different ways of communicating and being intimate with you. I didn't have

time to get my hair right, put on makeup, or change my lipstick. He quietly entered the car I was driving and changed my life forever. It wasn't a car accident or some catastrophic event; I was simply driving home on my way from work listening to my favorite love songs by a Gospel Artist on CD. And the King, the Ultimate Lover wanted to visit me that day. He quietly spoke to my heart and said, *"Why won't you let me love on you like that? I've been waiting for you. You've let everyone else into your heart, but you won't let me. I can love you like that."*

I can't begin to explain it all. But know that there is a masculinity of God that outperforms what any man can ever do to please a woman with an open spirit. I am not talking sensual pleasure here, but what God does to a woman with an open spirit is 100% fulfilling. He makes her feel like the Queen she is.

No one affirms my identity as God's Queen more than that of the Coming King. The more I find out about Him, the more I love being me. I used to hear people say, "Women are queens." But no one I knew ever treated me, or the women I knew like we were. I had always been fascinated with seeing pictures of the Queen of England, but unfortunately the closest I'd ever come to meeting royalty is seeing a lot of trauma and drama queens. That is until I found out that the King was in love with me.

In biblical times when a woman became married, the father of the bride customarily was ensured his daughter was a faithful woman by the groom bringing out the bedding on their

wedding night and presenting the bloodstained bedding to the father. This was the highest sign of honor that an engaged woman could show to her father and her new husband. It signified that she was loyal to both her father's name and her husband's, which was a great act of respect. In a spiritual manner, a woman is a bride of virtue when she affirms before her spiritual father - her Creator, God - that she is a woman of faith in Jesus Christ. By her sincerity of belief and trust in Him as her bridegroom, her very identity is confirmed standing before the King.

We have no time to pursue definition and meaning outside of the Creator, especially when the King of Creation is ours. Our homes, businesses, and religious institutions were meant for us to enjoy, but not be defined by them. These cultures are filled with women who love drama and have their fill of trauma, but many don't want to talk to the King. Instead they listen to people who hate the King, people who have already refused the King, or stuck-up people thinking they're the only ones with an open door to the King. We don't have time to put off addressing our own fears and guilt concerning the King. When we do, we are deceived by our own issues with men, mind, and morality. All cultures today are filled with enough drama and trauma queens as it is.

Statistics tell us that there is a shortage of marriageable men and things will only get worse. I don't know about you, but I'm through listening to stats and even jokes about the state of our lives. The King and I are the only ones able to make things

change in my life. There are millions of good women and men – people we know and love – whose hearts and spirits are dying out. They are open to their cultures, but not open to the King. No More in our lives!

When a woman is not open to experiencing God as her Lover, then there is someone or something else she is allowing to fill her, simply because she is made that way. Our first goal as women ought not to be filled by *a man*, but by *the man*, Christ Jesus. If we reject Him who is the source of our identity, then what we become are fakes with counterfeit identity. The trouble with using fake identity is it only gives you freedom temporarily. Fake IDs and identity theft eventually lands one into the legal system. Unlike our jails and penal systems, which might let us go free after awhile, hell is a place of permanent judgment of choice. It was not created for you; it was created for Lucifer and the fallen angels. Just like the laws of gravity work whether you believe them or not, so do the laws of creation.

Brides of Virtue

a wider definition of womanhood

Principle 8

**Every daughter isn't born to be a wife or mother;
but every daughter is born to be a Bride of Virtue.**

Every woman I know loves the idea of being a bride. She may not feel so comfortable with the idea of being married, but the thought of being a bride is fun and exciting at any age. How many women do you know – even if they don't want to stay married – like the idea of trying on a wedding gown? To wear a bridal garment without having any intention of being a good and faithful wife is cheating.

This is how we end up missing God's mark. We wear a beautiful body, mind, and spirit that God gave us, but we haven't any intention of allowing God to live in them. Instead we allow that which is unholy to penetrate the very heart of that which God created to be holy, in essence becoming spiritual "drama and trauma queens." It's the very core of spiritual adultery and idolatry I call hootchism. Every daughter isn't born to become a wife. Every wife isn't born to become a mother. But I believe every female is born to become a bride – God's spiritual bride. Even if you don't believe in God, you were still born wearing His glory.

The spiritual DNA your body carries didn't come from your physical parents; it's a spiritual phenomena ultimately traced back to God, whether you ever acknowledge it or not. God is a spirit and that part of us that leaves our body when the heart stops beating belongs to Him. It is that part of Him that He gave in the beginning to that first man and woman. It is the part of us that will live forever. Our spirit returns to God when the body dies, but not the spirit of those who have rejected Him. The spirit always goes back to the father it came from, not the physical father, but the spiritual father. There is only one true spiritual father; all other spirits that claim to be Daddy are lying spirits. That's why the Bible calls the devil the 'Father of Lies' because he is the spirit that women believe when they second-guess God or refuse to acknowledge Him as the Creator of their body, soul, and spirit. This is what Eve did when she accepted the lie of the enemy.

The Bible tells us that Jesus is returning for those who have trusted Him as Savior and King over their lives, just as a groom of valor returns for his bride. I have addressed how any woman who uses her own tactics to get her body, soul, and spiritual needs met apart from God becomes open to other sources for fulfillment. But the genuine true bride trusts her Lord King and seeks Him out as her only source of spiritual identification and fulfillment. Of all the roles you could have while you're on this side of heaven, there is one that you were *born* to have. It is the role of a spiritual bride of Christ, the people who make up the body of believers God calls the church.

Your spiritual husband is a King! His name is Jesus. His title is Christ! Just as God the Father did not override Eve's dominion to make her own choice about what she believed, God allows you to make your own choices. Think about it. God knew that Eve would make such a choice before she made it. God knew that Adam would make the choice he made to follow Eve's actions. Knowing that their choices would totally destroy the perfect world that He had made and create mass destruction for themselves and the rest of the world to come, God did not step in and override their dominion. How could God not stop them knowing the result of such devastating decisions they would make?

Our Father God respects our dominion to make choices because He remembers where that dominion comes from - Him. God still sees that first covenant he cut when He created man and woman when he created the both of them and breathed into them His breath of life, His Spirit. He was then at that very moment giving them a part of Himself - His own expression of love and His power to live forever. The word Spirit means wind, breath, violent exhalation, blast, inspiration, or vital breath needed to live. Breath comes from the root word *nasham* which means to blow away or destroy. In Genesis, when God breathed into man, He blew away deadness of the earth and mud, and man became alive complete with a body, soul and spirit. With a functioning physical body, mankind has the capacity to enjoy what God created. With a functioning soul, mankind has the capacity to choose love. But with a functioning spirit, mankind has the capacity to experience God

forever. God wants us to remember that. With the power to choose, God wants us to remember now that He is our Creator. He wants us to keep that memory holy, sacred. If we do, that one memory has a profound effect on our lives and those around us.

As spiritual beings, we must begin to connect with God. When we don't, it leads to deep character flaws. Many of us don't get the help we need because we don't think we have a problem without God. We have accepted beliefs of the changing world and cultures around us. Even some Christians who are busy going to church every Sunday are unfulfilled by the main reason for its existence. They seek practices, coaching, and lecturing to fulfill God's Word in their lives, but they really don't seek God as a real person.

There are many reasons for this type of religious behavior which I do not purpose to discuss here, but whatever the reason for our unfulfillment, it all boils down to one word - mediocrity, simply because - it's not God's best.

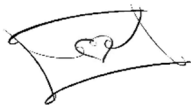
God is such a romantic. He cuts through all the crap of what the world offers us no matter who we are or what we have done, and He begins to deal with us intimately. With the help of His Holy Spirit, God is drawing me and you closer to Him personally. Pay attention to what He's saying to you. Life lessons are important, but without a biblical worldview, we will never get the point. Now, more than ever, you need to be sure of who you are and whose you are.

Your identity points you to your destiny. Wherever you go, you are His. That makes all the difference when it comes to your life, who you marry, what you want: everything and everyone connected to you is based on *your identity*. You may not always feel like it. Others may not always treat you like it, but you better know that you are related to God.

While women are here on earth, there is only one statement worth making, “*I am married to God.*” Ladies, this means so much if we could just grasp what this statement is saying. It means, “*I am a God’s god. I am a master’s wife.*” When Abraham, the man who was to become father of our faith, passed Sarah, his wife, off as his sister to another man in Genesis 20:3, God vowed to kill the other man and all that was his if he would but touch Sarah because she was a master’s wife. If you are in love with God, then so are *you*. God has just as much love for you as He had for Sarah.

But only you can declare that you are a God-loving woman marked for a purpose. Only you can say, “*I am a believer; I am more than a conqueror; I am not an offense to God; I am a Defender of the Faith. I am that I am!*” This one confession can resonate through your entire being and world around you. Why? Because it’s the same thing your Father God declared in the heavens.

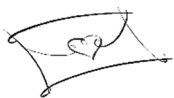
God created you to be a woman of God in all of her strength, splendor and glory. But only you can rise up and be that woman. No one else can be her for you.



Your soul has a role.

Your spirit is more than just the glorious body you will spend eternity in. Wrapped around your spirit is another part of you. It's the very place you make decisions in your everyday life right now. It is your soul. It's the place where your desires live and God wants to live there.

This is why your soul is not just important for life in the heavens; your soul is the place where your desires are decided upon today. This is where your will, your mind, your imaginations, and your intellect come alive. Every decision you'll ever make about yourself, your family, your culture, your work and your world begins there in your soul. The health of your soul is important. As with Eve, the health and condition of your soul is important. What you believe about God will determine what you believe about yourself and your life.



Life's lessons are important, but without a biblical worldview, we'll miss the whole point.

Today's woman is a real woman when she responds to God – as a woman falling in love with her Ultimate Lover. It doesn't matter her age or whether she is married or single; her love

affair with God must never end. We have been told that the man who takes our virginity is the one who gives us our womanhood. *Who told that lie?* There is only One man from whom I recall virtue flowing from His body. He is the One who gives us our womanhood. He is the One who takes our spiritual life from hootchie to holy.

WORLDVIEW WISDOM FOR ALL WOMEN

PRINCIPLE 1:

Women are God's own unique creation, fashioned by God while man was asleep.

PRINCIPLE 2:

Women are whole in what God Himself has done; we are not incomplete persons looking for a better half.

PRINCIPLE 3:

God created women reflecting the splendor of mankind over all creation.

PRINCIPLE 4:

Together men and women share dominion not identities!

PRINCIPLE 5:

It takes faith to be a woman!

PRINCIPLE 6:

Woman was created by the King; she was born to reign! She was not a sub-servient afterthought.

PRINCIPLE 7:

A woman is the only one who can *affirm* her identity. Christ is the only one who *confirms* it.

PRINCIPLE 8:

Every daughter isn't born to be a wife or mother; but every daughter is born to be a Bride of Virtue.

WHEN GOD BECOMES SEXY

1. We get rid of our other gods.
2. We stop laughing at things our culture doesn't want us to cry about.
3. Culture becomes our tool and no longer our rule.
4. We realize it isn't sex we want; it's love.
5. We see ourselves as sexy too.
6. We know we have something of value from God and we learn how to use it.
7. We realize that life without God isn't attractive at all.
8. We know in our heart that Jesus Christ was here.
9. We don't mind being nudged by Him at 4 o'clock in the morning just so the two of us can talk.
10. Our time, work, and resources have a deeper purpose.
11. We realize God put out His best for us.
12. Marriage becomes more than just another legal agreement.

My Take-Aways from this book:

[illegible]

My Take-Aways from this book:

[illegible]

Psalm 119: 1-8
(Adopted From The Message Bible)

1-8 I am blessed when I stay on course,
walking steadily on the road revealed by God.
I am blessed when I follow His directions,
doing my best to find Him.
That's right — I won't go off on my own;
I walk straight along the road He set.
You, God, prescribed the right way to live;
now you expect us to live it.
Oh, that my steps might be steady,
keeping to the course you set;
Then I'd never have any regrets
in comparing my life with your counsel.
I thank you for speaking straight from your heart;
I learn the pattern of your righteous ways.
I'm going to do what you tell me to do;
don't ever walk off and leave me.

[illegible]

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Merle Evelyn Ray

**Raising Performance ▪ Reshaping Culture ▪
Renewing Minds**



For over 20 years, Merle Ray has been a top performer in Corporate America, business, and leadership. She is a lead performance consultant, organizational developer, keynote speaker, and inspiring practitioner in business and ministry.

Working her way from secretary to Director of Human Resources in 13 years for a Texas Medical Center institution, while still a college student, Merle later became a top performing Director of a Fortune 500 private sector organization for 5 years before starting

her own business and consulting firm, The Noble Groups in 2003. In 2001-2004, the Human Resources Certification Institute, the national credentialing body for HR professionals, certified Merle Ray as a Senior Professional of Human Resources (SPHR).

A full-time working mom, Merle graduated college at the age of 40 in May 2003, along with her second youngest sister. They both became the first known college graduates in their family that year. In 2008, Merle was ordained into the ministry by Christian healing ministry giants, Frances and Charles Hunter, and actively participated for several years in cell churches under cell church pioneer, Dr. Ralph Neighbour, Jr.

An entrepreneur for more than 10 years, Merle has served large corporations, small businesses, for-profits and non-



profits in her community full-time in many consultative roles, ranging from that of organizational strategist to director, ERP functional consultant, organizational change management consultant, executive coach, senior analyst, business developer, project manager, workshop leader, or grants and technical writer. God has

truly endowed Merle with many gifts and talents which she has used to serve individuals personally and help make organizations professionally a better place.

In 2012, Merle Ray earned her Masters of Science degree in Leadership from Grand Canyon University. Prior to that, she earned her Bachelors of Science degree in Leadership from the College of Biblical Studies. Nicknamed Eve (*short for Evelyn, her middle name*) Merle enjoys living, learning, and loving her life in Christ. *Pictured (right) with daughter, Kaiya (left) and grand-daughter, Sara (middle).*

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| Phone: | (281) 827-4396 |

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