

Created to Image

LIVING AS A FEMALE
IMAGE-BEARER OF GOD



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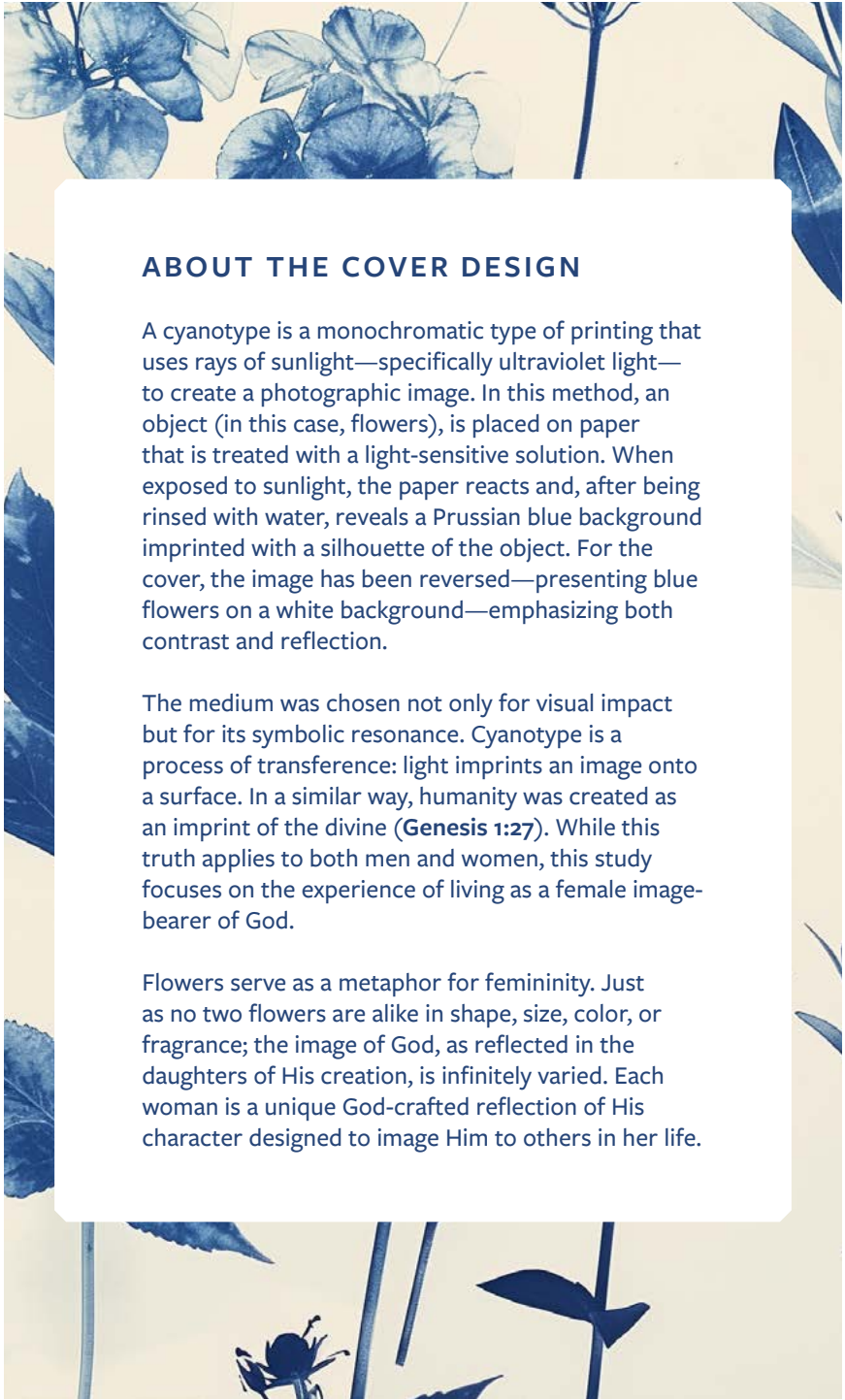
College Park
Women

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Then 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 birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

GENESIS 1:26-27



ABOUT THE COVER DESIGN

A cyanotype is a monochromatic type of printing that uses rays of sunlight—specifically ultraviolet light—to create a photographic image. In this method, an object (in this case, flowers), is placed on paper that is treated with a light-sensitive solution. When exposed to sunlight, the paper reacts and, after being rinsed with water, reveals a Prussian blue background imprinted with a silhouette of the object. For the cover, the image has been reversed—presenting blue flowers on a white background—emphasizing both contrast and reflection.

The medium was chosen not only for visual impact but for its symbolic resonance. Cyanotype is a process of transference: light imprints an image onto a surface. In a similar way, humanity was created as an imprint of the divine (**Genesis 1:27**). While this truth applies to both men and women, this study focuses on the experience of living as a female image-bearer of God.

Flowers serve as a metaphor for femininity. Just as no two flowers are alike in shape, size, color, or fragrance; the image of God, as reflected in the daughters of His creation, is infinitely varied. Each woman is a unique God-crafted reflection of His character designed to image Him to others in her life.



Image

im • age

NOUN

a physical likeness or representation
of a person, animal, or thing

VERB

to picture or represent; to reflect the
likeness of; mirror



WEEK ONE

God Called Her “Helper”

Introduction

Welcome! We are so glad you are joining us for this five-week study of what it means to be a female image-bearer of God.

The Bible opens with God’s creation of all things: far-flung stars and planets, dry land and salty oceans, plants bearing fruit and seeds, creatures that fly, and creatures that crawl. And then on the sixth day, God said:

Then 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 birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them (**Genesis 1:26-27**).

In His infinite wisdom and creativity, God chose to place His image (noun) on mankind’s two distinct forms—male and female. Each form will image (verb) God in ways that are unique to their sex. Though equal in value and dignity, God designed men and women to reflect His character in different and beautiful ways.

The vast majority of Scripture is applicable to all men and women equally and does not differentiate between sexes. However, there are a few passages that speak directly to men or directly to women. In this study, we will explore five passages that speak directly to or about women. In these passages, we will explore God’s instructions to women not as a to-do list, but rather a gracious invitation to reflect God’s image as His daughters to the watching world.

Although these passages focus on womanhood, not every woman will live them out in the same way. God has uniquely fashioned each of us. There is no such thing as a “godly woman” cookie cutter! But using our unique personalities and through our various life circumstances, we have the privilege of reflecting our infinite Creator to those around us.

Weekly Study

Each week's study comprises five days of individual study followed by our class session on the sixth day. The seventh day is for rest and reflection. We designed it this way to encourage you to spend daily time in the Word and in prayer, allowing Scripture to saturate your week in preparation for our class time.

Each week's study ends with the same two reflection questions:

- What have you learned about God's plan for you as His image-bearer this week?
- How does this affect your view of God's own character?

Tips for Success

Each day, plan on beginning your study time with prayer. Simply ask God to open your eyes to the truth found in His Word and to help you understand how these truths can impact your relationship with Him. Over the course of the study, we will memorize **Genesis 1:26-27**. Memorizing Scripture allows the words to be woven into your heart. So, take time each day to learn and review the verse presented in the lesson.

Throughout the study, you will be asked to mark up printed Scripture, looking for specific words, etc. We may specify contrasting-colored pencils or markers. The idea is for the words to stand out on the page. This study uses the English Standard Version (ESV) of the Bible, but feel free to use your preferred translation. At times, you will be asked to look up Scriptures in other versions. We recommend using Blue Letter Bible, a free app and website without ads.

You will occasionally be asked to look up something in a dictionary. Beyond this outside tool, please wait to consult commentaries or study notes until after our class discussion and teaching. The weekly discussion time is designed for you and others in your group to share what you've learned in your study with the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

God Called Her “Helper”

At our first teaching time, we will explore the following:

Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him” (**Genesis 2:18**).

Genesis 2 is a retelling of the creation story found in chapter 1. In this play-by-play narration of creation’s sixth day, we see God’s purpose in the creation of woman. Man was incomplete on his own. God’s solution was a helper.

At first, the word “helper” may strike you wrong, sort of like being a classroom teacher’s aide rather than the fully qualified teacher. The word “helper” (*ezer* in Hebrew) feels less than. That is, until you understand that God uses it as a description of Himself. Over thirty times in Scripture, *ezer* is used to describe the actions or character of God. Kathleen Neilson writes,

The word helper is a word denoting strength—often the kind of strength that wins battles. In fact, throughout the Old Testament the word is often used to describe God, as He helps His people—“The LORD is with me; He is my helper” (**Psalms 118:7**). The helper given to Adam is an extension of God’s own help to him. The helper is God’s means of turning ‘not good’ into ‘very good.’ The helper is the high point, the climactic completion of God’s creation story. The helper role of woman is a high calling: one through which she reflects the image of God her Creator and through which she serves God as she walks according to His word.^a

Being a helper does not negate the ability of a woman of God to lead (think of the Old Testament judge Deborah). Rather, whether she leads or follows, she does it in such a way that she enables others to also have success.



... the Bible's claim that all humans are made in the image of God is quite incredible. The Almighty God of the universe, who is an invisible Spirit, created every single human being to be a visual representation of Him. We were made to live in relationship with God. Reflecting the goodness and glory of His nature to the world. We were called to mediate between the Creator and the rest of His creation by taking dominion of the created order and lovingly ruling on His behalf (Genesis 1:28). And we were made to do this as distinctly gendered beings.¹

Sarah Rice, *Gospel-Shaped Womanhood*



¹Kathleen Nielson, *Women and God: Hard Questions. Beautiful Truths* (The Good Book Company, 2018). Page 38.

TEACHING NOTES



WEEK TWO

To Be a Life-Giver

MEMORY VERSE

Then 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 birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

GENESIS 1:26

Day One - Review

Write out this week’s memory verse:

1. Look over your notes from the study’s introduction and Week One’s teaching. What are one or two of your main takeaways?
2. What is your first reaction when you think of yourself as a “helper”?

3. Read the following verses and record your observations of God as “helper.”

PASSAGE	OBSERVATIONS
Psalm 40:17	
Psalm 46:1	
Psalm 54:4	
Psalm 118:7	
Psalm 121:1-8	
Isaiah 41:10	
Hebrews 13:6	

4. God is the ultimate, supernatural, all-powerful Helper. And He has called you to be a helper as you image Him to others. After reading the verses above, what opportunities do you see in your life for reflecting God as a helper?

5. Helping and leading are not mutually exclusive. How might a woman in a leadership position use her circumstances to help others?

**What have you learned about God's plan
for you as His image-bearer this week?**

**How does this affect your view
of God's own character?**

You are a woman. Handcrafted by God. Designed to be a female on purpose and for a purpose. You are made in the very image of God as a reflection of His nature. You are made to be she for God's glory and your good.²

Kristen Clark and Bethany Beal, *Made to Be She*

Day Two

Write out this week's memory verse:

1. As you read the following passage, use two contrasting-colored pens or pencils to mark the words:

- die, death
- life, live, offspring

GENESIS 3:1-20

¹Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made.

He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’” ²And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, ³but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’” ⁴But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. ⁵For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” ⁶So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. ⁷Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

⁸And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?” ¹⁰And he said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.” ¹¹He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” ¹²The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.” ¹³Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

¹⁴The LORD God said to the serpent,
“Because you have done this,

cursed are you above all livestock
and above all beasts of the field;
on your belly you shall go,
and dust you shall eat
all the days of your life.

¹⁵I will put enmity between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and her offspring;
he shall bruise your head,
and you shall bruise his heel.”

¹⁶To the woman he said,

“I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing;
in pain you shall bring forth children.
Your desire shall be for your husband,
and he shall rule over you.”

¹⁷And to Adam he said,

“Because you have listened to the voice of your wife
and have eaten of the tree
of which I commanded you,
‘You shall not eat of it,’

cursed is the ground because of you;
in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life;

¹⁸thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you;
and you shall eat the plants of the field.

¹⁹By the sweat of your face
you shall eat bread,
till you return to the ground,
for out of it you were taken;
for you are dust,
and to dust you shall return.”

²⁰The man called his wife’s name Eve, because she was the
mother of all living.

2. What lie did Satan tell the woman about life and death?

3. Summarize the results of the curses God gives to:

- The serpent

- The woman

- Adam

4. What message of hope is found for Adam and Eve in God's curse on the serpent?

5. Adam didn't name Eve until after the fall, but before she gave birth to a child. Why is this significant? What does it tell us about Eve's and womankind's role as "the mother of all the living"?

6. Using a dictionary, look up the definition of "mother." Write down at least two different definitions.

By disobeying God’s instructions in the garden, Eve acted as a life-taker. Rather than being allowed to eat of the tree of life, she and Adam were banished from the garden and doomed to die. But God, in His mercy, did not leave them there.

Susan Hunt writes,

Adam’s response to this good news was to name his wife. . . He named her Eve “because she was the mother of all living” (**Genesis 3:20**). Eve means life-giver. The life-taker was restored to her pre-fall ability to be a life-giving helper because of the gospel. Woman’s redemptive calling to be a life-giver is not just biological. The redeemed woman is called to be a life-giver in every season, relationship, and situation. And get this—only redeemed women have the ability to display God’s creation design and redemptive calling.^a

7. Think of a time in your life when you observed a woman being a life-giver. Perhaps you witnessed a woman who nurtures relationships rather than tearing them down, who builds others up rather than dishing out critical condemnation, who brings joy and life to conversations rather than the latest gossip or divisions. How does her life point you to Jesus? How are you inspired to be a life-giver?

Each day we make dozens and dozens of small decisions. Each individual decision seems trivial and inconsequential. But together they add up to a habitual pattern that is either life-giving or life-quenching.³

Mary Kassian, *Girls Gone Wise in a World Gone Wild*

^aSusan Hunt, “The Covenant Way” Ligonier Ministries, November 10, 2010, <https://learn.ligonier.org/articles/covenant-way>.

Day Three

Write out this week's memory verse:

1. As you read the following passage, use two contrasting-colored pens or pencils to mark the words describing:

- Jesus as a giver of life
- death or destruction

JOHN 10:7-15

⁷So Jesus again said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. ⁸All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. ¹⁰The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. ¹¹I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹²He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. ¹³He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. ¹⁴I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, ¹⁵just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.

2. As Jesus contrasts Himself with the thief, He states He came to give rather than take life. From the passage above, what are some characteristics of the Life-giver?

3. What are some characteristics of the life-taker?

4. Look back at **Genesis 3:14-15**. List the similarities you see between the serpent in **Genesis 3** and the thief in **John 10**.
5. How can we say that Jesus is a life-giver if he “laid down [his] life for the sheep”? See **verse 15**.
6. What inspires you as you think of Jesus as the ultimate Life-giver?
7. Are there ways you can emulate the life-giving characteristics of Jesus in your own life as you interact with others?

Birthing a child—a life—is a beautiful illustration of our redemptive calling to be life-givers, but the ultimate demonstration is when the Life of Christ fills us and spills out onto our circumstances and relationships. Our redemptive calling transcends age, life-season, marital status, time, and place in history.⁴

Karen Hodge and Susan Hunt, *Transformed: Life-taker to Life-giver*

Day Four

Write out this week's memory verse:

1. As you read the following passage, use two contrasting-colored pens or pencils to mark the words:

- rise, live, lives, resurrection, and life
- die and died

JOHN 11:17-27

¹⁷Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. ¹⁸Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, ¹⁹and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother. ²⁰So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house. ²¹Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²²But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you." ²³Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." ²⁴Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." ²⁵Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, ²⁶and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" ²⁷She said to him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world."

2. What does this passage tell us about the giving of physical life?

What does it tell us about the giving of spiritual life?

3. How has Jesus been the creator of physical life and a spiritual giver of life?

Some women believe they can only truly be life-givers when they give birth or sustain life through being a mother. Although motherhood is indeed a beautiful picture of giving life and exemplifies a woman's ability to nurture another, the ability to be a life-giver goes beyond biology and motherhood.

Giving life to those around you means nurturing them with compassion—caring deeply with the intention of fostering their growth and flourishing. It also involves speaking life into situations through gracious and truthful words.

4. God describes Himself as a nurturing mother. Read **Isaiah 66:13** and describe His relationship with His people.

5. How can being a nurturing life-giver reflect or image the character of God?

6. How have you seen women model life-giving characteristics in the various stages of life? Below are a few examples of seasons women may experience. Write down the name and a few characteristics of a woman who gives life to others while in one of these stages of life (if you can't think of an example, note what being a life-giver could look like in that stage).

- Teenager

- Adult (single, young to middle years)

- Mom (single or married, young to middle years)

- Empty nester
- Adult (single or married, no kids, older years)
- Grandmother

7. Describe a current situation in your life in which you can reflect God's character as a life-giving nurturer.

Even if a woman never gets married or has kids, she can still nurture relationships, produce spiritual life, and glorify God in her femininity. As Christian women, our lives will look vastly different across the globe, but there should be a recognizable godly, feminine disposition that is beautifully visible within each one of us.⁵

Kristen Clark and Bethany Beal, *Made to Be She*

Day Five

Review this week's memory verse:

1. As you read the following passage, use two contrasting-colored pens or pencils to mark the words describing:

- Hannah's character and emotions
- Hannah's actions

1 SAMUEL 1

¹There was a certain man of Ramathaim-zophim of the hill country of Ephraim whose name was Elkanah the son of Jeroham, son of Elihu, son of Tohu, son of Zuph, an Ephrathite. ²He had two wives. The name of the one was Hannah, and the name of the other, Peninnah. And Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.

³Now this man used to go up year by year from his city to worship and to sacrifice to the LORD of hosts at Shiloh, where the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were priests of the LORD. ⁴On the day when Elkanah sacrificed, he would give portions to Peninnah his wife and to all her sons and daughters. ⁵But to Hannah he gave a double portion, because he loved her, though the LORD had closed her womb. ⁶And her rival used to provoke her grievously to irritate her, because the LORD had closed her womb. ⁷So it went on year by year. As often as she went up to the house of the LORD, she used to provoke her. Therefore Hannah wept and would not eat. ⁸And Elkanah, her husband, said to her, "Hannah, why do you weep? And why do you not eat? And why is your heart sad? Am I not more to you than ten sons?"

⁹After they had eaten and drunk in Shiloh, Hannah rose. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat beside the doorpost of the temple of the LORD. ¹⁰She was deeply distressed and prayed to the LORD and wept bitterly. ¹¹And she vowed a vow and said, "O LORD of hosts, if you will indeed look on the affliction of your servant and remember me and not forget your servant, but will give to your servant a son, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and no razor shall touch his head."

¹²As she continued praying before the LORD, Eli observed her mouth.

¹³Hannah was speaking in her heart; only her lips moved, and her voice was not heard. Therefore Eli took her to be a drunken woman. ¹⁴And Eli said to her, “How long will you go on being drunk? Put your wine away from you.”

¹⁵But Hannah answered, “No, my lord, I am a woman troubled in spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have been pouring out my soul before the LORD. ¹⁶Do not regard your servant as a worthless woman, for all along I have been speaking out of my great anxiety and vexation.”

¹⁷Then Eli answered, “Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant your petition that you have made to him.” ¹⁸And she said, “Let your servant find favor in your eyes.” Then the woman went her way and ate, and her face was no longer sad.

¹⁹They rose early in the morning and worshiped before the LORD; then they went back to their house at Ramah. And Elkanah knew Hannah his wife, and the LORD remembered her. ²⁰And in due time Hannah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Samuel, for she said, “I have asked for him from the LORD.”

²¹The man Elkanah and all his house went up to offer to the LORD the yearly sacrifice and to pay his vow. ²²But Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, “As soon as the child is weaned, I will bring him, so that he may appear in the presence of the LORD and dwell there forever.” ²³Elkanah her husband said to her, “Do what seems best to you; wait until you have weaned him; only, may the LORD establish his word.” So the woman remained and nursed her son until she weaned him. ²⁴And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, along with a three-year-old bull, an ephah of flour, and a skin of wine, and she brought him to the house of the LORD at Shiloh. And the child was young. ²⁵Then they slaughtered the bull, and they brought the child to Eli. ²⁶And she said, “Oh, my lord! As you live, my lord, I am the woman who was standing here in your presence, praying to the LORD. ²⁷For this child I prayed, and the LORD has granted me my petition that I made to him. ²⁸Therefore I have lent him to the LORD. As long as he lives, he is lent to the LORD.”

And he worshiped the LORD there.

2. What are some characteristics we learn about Hannah from this passage?

3. What role does prayer play in Hannah's life? Reread the passage, highlighting instances where prayer is noted (use a different color than those used for question 1).

4. What is Hannah's posture toward God despite her circumstances?

5. What can you learn and apply in your own life from Hannah's posture towards God?

6. Why is prayer an important characteristic of a life-giver?

7. Would you consider Hannah (as portrayed in this passage) to be a life-giver? Why or why not?

8. Read **Hebrews 11:32-34**. Through Hannah's faithfulness as a spiritual and biological life-giver, Samuel went on to impact the lives of many thousands of people. But it started with a prayerful, life-giving posture even when she didn't know what the outcome would be. What's one step you could take personally to become or continue to be a prayer warrior on behalf of those for whom God has called you to be a life-giver?

**What have you learned about God's plan
for you as His image-bearer this week?**

**How does this affect your view
of God's own character?**

In the prayers of a mother, awakenings are born and peoples won, idols are toppled, and devils undone, dry bones are raised and prodigals rescued. Again and again, before God laid his hand on a man, he laid it on his mother.⁶

Scott Hubbard, "The Power of a Praying Mother"

Spiritual motherhood is not a second-rate role given to women who are unable to have biological children. It is not the pastor's cop-out answer given to ambitious women who desire to teach. Spiritual motherhood is the high calling God puts on every woman's life, because God's way has always been to pass truth from life to life and generation to generation.⁷

T. Kim, "Every Woman Needs Another"

TEACHING NOTES



WEEK THREE

A Woman Who Fears God and Serves People

MEMORY VERSE

Then 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 birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

GENESIS 1:26

Day One - Review

Write out this week’s memory verse:

1. Look over your notes from the study’s introduction and Week Two’s teaching. What are one or two of your main takeaways?
2. Do you know the meaning of your first name? If not, look it up.

3. Look up the following instances of naming in the Bible and note the significance of each name.

SCRIPTURE	SIGNIFICANCE
Genesis 3:20	
Genesis 17:5	
Genesis 32:28	
Exodus 3:14	
Matthew 1:21	
Matthew 16:18	
Revelation 19:16	

4. Based on your reading of these passages, why do you think naming is important to God?

5. Write a prayer of praise to the Lord, honoring Him as your Life-giver. Ask for wisdom to know how you might honor Him through your life as a Christian woman and life-giver.



God has the right and the power to cause anyone he names to become what the name implies. The names he gives are sure indicators of the destiny of those he names.⁸

John Piper, "I Am Who I Am"



Day Two

Write out this week's memory verse:

This week, we are widening the lens of who women are uniquely made to be as we explore the roles of God-fearer/people-server through the text of **Proverbs 31**. This chapter comes to us in two sections, **Proverbs 31:1-9** and **Proverbs 31:10-31**. It's interesting that neither section was intended to describe a typical day in the life of a godly woman. If that were the case, most of us would panic thinking, "If she can do it, I should be able to do it too!" And that is an unrealistic expectation. We'll begin by learning about the background of this chapter.

Read the passage below and answer the following questions.

PROVERBS 31:1-9

¹The words of King Lemuel. An oracle that his mother taught him:

²What are you doing, my son? What are you doing, son of my womb? What are you doing, son of my vows?

³Do not give your strength to women, your ways to those who destroy kings.

⁴It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine, or for rulers to take strong drink,

⁵lest they drink and forget what has been decreed and pervert the rights of all the afflicted.

⁶Give strong drink to the one who is perishing, and wine to those in bitter distress;

⁷let them drink and forget their poverty and remember their misery no more.

⁸Open your mouth for the mute, for the rights of all who are destitute.

⁹Open your mouth, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy.

1. Unlike most of the content in the book of **Proverbs**, which was written by King Solomon, who is the author of **chapter 31**?

2. Whose words are being quoted by this writer in **verses 2-9**?

There is no consensus on who King Lemuel was. Some suggest he was actually King Solomon with the pen name of “Lemuel.” That would mean his mother was Bathsheba, King David’s wife. Other commentators believe King Lemuel was a pagan king who had learned to fear the Lord and put his faith in Yahweh. His name meant “belonging to God.” We know three things for sure: he is never mentioned in the list of Israelite kings; he had a wise mother; and he was a poet.

3. Regardless of Lemuel’s family ancestry, his mother cared about him very much and called him some tender names in **Proverbs 31:2**. How did she describe him that indicates he was beloved?

4. Lemuel’s mother identified three areas of warning for him as a leader. Read **Proverbs 31:3-9** and summarize her advice.

- v. 3

- vv. 4-7

- vv. 8-9

5. Regarding her first piece of advice, let's look at two kings from the Old Testament narrative who acted foolishly with women.

a. Whose affair with a beautiful woman is described in **2 Samuel 11-12**? What were some of the disastrous results of this sin?

b. Read **1 Kings 11:1-13**. Which king is described in these verses? What were some of the disastrous results of his sin?

6. Now let's dig deeper into the second piece of advice. While the use of alcohol is not forbidden in the Bible, drunkenness is. Why does King Lemuel's mother warn her kingly son to stay away from it altogether (**vv. 4-7**)?

Under what circumstances does she suggest its use could be beneficial?

7. Finally, let's explore King Lemuel's mother's third piece of advice. Every society has those who are poor and needy and those who have been treated unjustly. King Lemuel's mother reminds him that his privileged position as leader gives him the power to effect change for those in this situation. Read the following texts:

- **Deuteronomy 15:7-11**
- **Proverbs 19:17**
- **Proverbs 22:9**
- **1 John 3:16-18**

What common theme do you see throughout these verses that should characterize a God-fearing person?

8. Whether we are married, single, widowed, or divorced, most of us have others we love within our sphere of influence. We wish to offer them wise guidance like King Lemuel's mother did for her son. What principles did your mother or father teach you during your formative years that you will never forget?
9. Which issues in our world do you feel burdened to discuss with young men and women in your sphere of influence?

Discipleship takes place in community. Christians don't thrive as "lone sheep"; we are meant to live in flocks. And an important feature of that community-based discipleship is that it happens across generations.⁹

Tim Chester, *Titus for You*

Day Three

Write out this week's memory verse:

The second half of **Proverbs 31** is a poem, presumably written by the same author as the king who wrote the first nine verses of the chapter. The point of the poem is to show young men what they should look for in a wife. Each verse begins with the succeeding letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Some commentators have suggested the writer used this technique to help the reader remember the advice. The poem is written as a chiasm, a literary device often used in Hebrew writings that utilizes inverted parallelism. The format follows an A-B-C-B-A pattern, emphasizing the main element of the poem at the center of its structure.

The passage is written here in a way that illustrates its chiastic structure.

PROVERBS 31:10-31

A ¹⁰A wife of noble character, who can find? She is far more precious than rubies.

B ¹¹The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he lacks nothing of value.

¹²She brings him good and not harm all the days of her life.

C ¹³She selects wool and flax and works with eager hands. ¹⁴She is like the merchant ships, bringing her food from afar. ¹⁵She rises while it is still night to provide food for her household and portions for her maidservants.

¹⁶She appraises a field and buys it; from her earnings she plants a vineyard

¹⁷She girds herself with strength and shows that her arms are strong. ¹⁸She sees that her gain is good, and her lamp is not extinguished at night. ¹⁹She stretches out her hands to the distaff and grasps the spindle with her fingers.

D ²⁰She opens her arms to the poor and reaches out her hands to the needy.

E ²¹When it snows, she has no fear for her household,

F for they are all clothed in scarlet. ²²She makes coverings for her bed; her clothing is fine linen and purple.

G ²³Her husband is known at the city gates, where he sits among the elders of the land.

F' ²⁴She makes linen garments and sells them; she delivers sashes to the merchants.

E' ²⁵Strength and honor are her clothing, and she can laugh at the days to come.

D' ²⁶She opens her mouth with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue.

C' ²⁷She watches over the affairs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness.

B' ²⁸Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband praises her as well:
²⁹“Many daughters have done noble things, but you surpass them all!”

A' ³⁰Charm is deceptive and beauty is fleeting, but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised. ³¹Give her the fruit of her hands, and let her works praise her at the gates.

1. Note the parallel structure illustrated above. Describe in a few words what connects A to A', B to B', etc.

A, A'	
B, B'	
C, C'	
D, D'	
E, E'	
F, F'	
G	

2. Using a colored pen or pencil, highlight the central line (G) where the first half and the second half of the text intersect.

This line may surprise you because it describes the peak of accomplishment of a man, but author and Crossway editor, Doug O'Donnell, concludes, "This is no mistake. It is the bullseye of this poem's target, striking at the heart of its intended audience: young men. This is a book for boys; and this is a poem for boys."^b Indeed, it is a wise man who selects a wife like this one.

So, what can women gain from studying it? The first thing to realize is that this chapter in **Proverbs** is God's Word. It is completely authoritative and true. There is a reason God allowed the inclusion of this text in His Word for the instruction of men and women. Bible teacher and pastor, David Guzik provides an insightful statement, saying the **Proverbs 31:10-31** text is a "search-list for a man primarily but secondarily it is a checklist for a woman."^c

Proverbs 31:12 states, "She brings him good, and not harm, all the days of her life." This implies the development of these character qualities of a godly woman is under construction for the duration of a woman's life. The process continues throughout the seasons of her life whether she is married, single, divorced, or widowed.

3. Match the character quality in the left column by drawing a line to the verses that describe it.

CHARACTER QUALITY	REFERENCE
Industrious	v. 11
Organized and prepared	vv. 13-15, 27
Trustworthy	vv. 16, 18, 24
Wise and kind	vv. 17, 25a
Clothed in strength and dignity	v. 20
Good steward of finances	vv. 21, 25b
Compassionate to the needy	v. 26

4. Choose two or three of these qualities and share how they are also traits of our Creator.

5. The pinnacle of the **Proverbs 31** poem defining a virtuous woman is **verse 30**. These words set everything in perspective. Restate this verse in your own words using expressions that your generation might use.

6. Using a dictionary, write the definition of the noun “charm.”

Why do you think **verse 30** describes charm as deceitful?

7. Using a dictionary, write the definition of “beauty.”

Why do you think beauty can be “vain”?

8. To fear the Lord is to have an awe, reverence, and respect for God that leads to obedience. Describe what you think “a woman who fears the Lord” looks like.

9. What is the result of being a woman who fears the Lord? See **Proverbs 31:28, 30-31**.

10. Now for a moment of honest introspection.

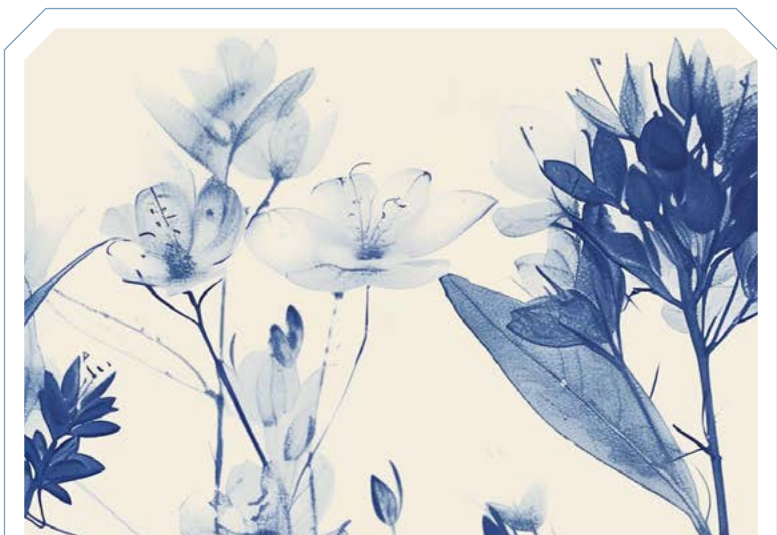
a. Where do your strengths lie?

b. What virtues from **Proverbs 31:10-27** could you grow and improve in?

^aLydia Brownback, *A Woman's Wisdom: How the Book of Proverbs Speaks to Everything* (Crossway, 2012). Page 164.

^bDouglas Sean O'Donnell, *The Beginning and End of Wisdom: Preaching Christ from the First and Last Chapters of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Job* (Crossway, 2011), Pages 50-51.

^cEnduring Word, *Enduring Word Bible Commentary Proverbs 31*, February 5, 2025, <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/proverbs-31>.



... Growing in wisdom means looking more at Christ than at the Proverbs 31 woman. We cannot be like her by ourselves. We can only do it in dependence on Christ, because He is our wisdom.¹⁰

Lydia Brownback, *A Woman's Wisdom*



Day Four

Write out this week’s memory verse:

Just as Satan lied to Eve in the garden, He lies to us today. He is the father of lies (**John 8:44**). He knows that the more we hear something, the greater the likelihood we will believe it, whether or not it’s true. If we are not careful, our brains can mistake familiarity for truth.

Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth suggests two deceptions women stumble over as they try to implement the truths in **Proverbs 31**. The first deception is “I don’t have time to do everything I’m supposed to do.” Of this, Nancy writes,

We often feel overwhelmed by how much we have to do and how little time we have to do it. As a result, many of us live breathless, frazzled, discouraged lives. Social media fuels this lie. After scrolling through your Facebook feed, you might feel you should foster children, remodel your kitchen, do daily crafts with your children, cook up a storm, eat all organic produce, vacation regularly, parent differently, and make sure your kids are involved in every possible event, so they won’t miss out on their life calling! ^a

But this is a lie.

- 1. Make a list of the top six categories of activities that consume the hours in a typical day for you. Calculate what percentage of your twenty-four-hour day is spent on each category. Be sure to include time spent on your phone, scrolling social media, gaming, etc.

ACTIVITY	HOURS/DAY

2. Is this your to-do list for yourself, or is it God's to-do list for you?

We can be sure of one thing. You will always have time to complete the work God has given you to do for the day.

3. Read **John 17:4** and record the perspective Jesus had about the work He had to accomplish.

4. How do you think you can determine God's daily "to-do list" for you?

5. Mark the nonessentials taking priority over your time and schedule in the chart above. Consider reprioritizing so you can accomplish God's to-do list.

The second lie Nancy identifies is "I can thrive without the discipline of regularly reading God's Word and prayer."

6. Using a dictionary, write the definition of the word "thrive."

7. Read **John 15:1-8**. What is the secret to thriving in this text?

8. What happens if we believe the second deception and pull back from the Vine?
9. Read **Psalm 1**. According to this passage, what ensures a “fruit-bearing” thriving life?
10. In your current season of life, what challenges do you face in implementing a routine of Bible study and prayer?

The Proverbs 31 woman makes the best use of her time, which is how she redeems it. Redeeming our time doesn't necessarily mean checking everything off our to-do list. It might mean creating a shorter to-do list so that we can do the remaining tasks better.¹¹

Lydia Brownback, *A Woman's Wisdom*

¹¹Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth, *Lies Women Believe: And the Truth that Sets Them Free* (Moody Publishers, 2001). Page 115.

Day Five

Write out this week's memory verse:

The Hebrew phrase used for a woman of virtue in **Proverbs 31:10** is *eshet hayil*. It signifies a woman of courage, strength, and valor. Many women before and after the **Proverbs 31** poem have been significant in the narrative of God's unfolding plan for the history of the world, but few have been specifically marked with the words *eshet hayil*. Certainly, this sparks our curiosity. Which Bible heroine is uniquely described this way? Is it Deborah, Mary, Abigail, Lydia, or another? Actually, it is Ruth! The book of Ruth is a short narrative of only four chapters, but it gives a powerful account of a special woman.

The book of Ruth took place during the period of the judges (about 1400 BC to 1001 BC). This was a time when Israel had no king and anarchy prevailed. "Everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (**Judges 21:25**). A severe famine came upon the land of Judah, causing Elimelech to move his wife, Naomi, and two sons to the country of Moab. This fifty-mile journey would have taken about seven to ten days, walking over a harsh, mountainous, desolate landscape.

1. The two sons both married Moabite women, Orpah and Ruth. Based on **Ruth 1:3-5**, what happened to make the next ten years particularly tragic and difficult for Naomi?
2. Naomi eventually heard the situation in Judah had improved, and she wanted to return home to Bethlehem. Summarize the ensuing conversation between Naomi, Ruth, and Orpah in **1:8-13**.
3. Ruth was a Moabite (a Gentile) and Naomi an Israelite. Which quality or qualities from **Proverbs 31** do Ruth's well-known words in **1:16** display?

At this point, Ruth and Naomi were both widowed, disadvantaged, and poor. They arrived in Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest in late spring. In **2:2**, Ruth seems to initiate the suggestion that she should go out and work, picking up the stalks of grain left over from the harvesters so they would have something to eat. This common activity was called gleaning. It was a welfare system of sorts. Farmers were required by the law of Moses to allow gleaning so that those who were poor, orphans, widows, and foreign residents would not go hungry (**Leviticus 19:9-10**).

4. Which quality or qualities from **Proverbs 31** does Ruth display by undertaking this job?

5. **Chapter 2** introduces us to Boaz, a wealthy landowner in Bethlehem. According to **verses 5-18**, what did Boaz advise his workmen to do for Ruth?

6. In **2:19-20**, what surprise did Naomi share with Ruth about Boaz?

During the time of Ruth, the law of “kinsman redeemer” was followed in Israel, which made the identity of Boaz significant. As one of the closest living relatives to Naomi, Boaz was responsible for buying back any property Naomi’s deceased husband, Elimelech, had owned and been forced to sell during the famine. The law also included the responsibility to marry Ruth to ensure there would be an offspring to carry on her husband’s name. Boaz willingly fulfills these obligations. While we do not know the exact ages of Boaz and Ruth, Rabbinic commentaries estimate that Boaz was around eighty years old at the time he married Ruth, who may have been around forty. Once they were married, God blessed the couple with a son, Obed.

7. In **Ruth 3:11**, who called Ruth an *eshet hayil*? For what reasons do you think she received this high praise?

8. Read **Matthew 1:5-6** and fill in the genealogy of Jesus. Compare this New Testament text with the ancestry record at the end of **Ruth 4**.

“Salmon the father of _____ by Rahab, and
_____ the father of _____ by Ruth,
and _____ the father of _____, and
_____ the father of _____”

The king whose descendant was Jesus Christ.

Can you believe it? God took a Moabite widow of humble origin and placed her in the middle of the family bloodline of Jesus Christ!

9. How did Ruth reflect God’s image to those around her?

**What have you learned about God's plan
for you as His image-bearer this week?**

**How does this affect your view
of God's own character?**

Ruth is an important eshet hayil to note, for, even while resonating with the truths of Proverbs 31's eshet hayil, her strengths unfold quite differently. Ruth is a poor widow with no children, not a well-to-do wife with husband and children like the woman of Proverbs 31. This is crucial to remember as we take this poem to heart, aiming to live out wisdom's strength in the various concrete contexts of our lives.¹²

Kathleen Nielson, *Proverbs for You*

TEACHING NOTES



WEEK FOUR

It's the Inside That Counts

MEMORY VERSE

²⁶Then 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 birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

²⁷*So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.*

GENESIS 1:26-27

Day One - Review

Write out this week's memory verse:

1. Look over your notes from the study's introduction and Week Three's teaching. What are one or two of your main takeaways?
2. **Proverbs 31:10** implies that a virtuous woman, a woman who embodies the character qualities of this poem, is hard to find. Why do you think that is true?

3. Last week on Day Three, we discussed the climax of **Proverbs 31**: fearing the Lord. It surpasses all other virtues in the passage. List the characteristics of someone who does not fear the Lord, who does not take God seriously. See also **Romans 1-2**.

Be encouraged by this: God is not going to judge you at the end of your life by how much wool and flax you have spun or by how many days in a row you have risen before dawn and burned your lamp late into the night or by whether your closet is full of linen and purple gowns. These aspects of the virtuous woman are applauded, but they are not the greatest thing to be pursued. Your worth is to be found in whether you fear the Lord. Serving others is the natural outflow of that posture as you reflect His image in your sphere of influence.

4. What, if anything, needs to change in your life for the fear of the Lord to be your focus?

A woman who fears the Lord will not run away from God to satisfy her longings and relieve her anxieties. She will wait for the Lord. She will hope in God. She will stay close to the heart of God and trust in his promises. The prospect of departing into the way of sin will be too fearful to pursue; and the benefits of abiding in the shadow of the Almighty too glorious to forsake.¹³

John Piper, "A Woman Who Fears the Lord is to Be Praised"

Day Two

Write out this week's memory verse:

We live in a world that prizes outward beauty as the standard, from advertisements and influencer media to the fashion industry. Women spend varying amounts on beauty, but studies suggest the average woman spends \$1,000 to over \$3,700 annually. So, what does Scripture say about beauty?

1 PETER 3:3-4

³Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear—⁴but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious.

1. This passage contrasts outer and inner beauty. Using two contrasting-colored pens or pencils:
 - Circle every word describing outer beauty.
 - Underline every word describing inner beauty.

Write the words you marked in the corresponding column of the table.

OUTER BEAUTY	INNER BEAUTY

3. How does your personal definition of beauty compare to what is described in 1 Peter 3:3-4?

5. Can you think of a woman you know who has a gentle and quiet spirit? Why do you describe her that way (i.e. is it her personality, attitude, or something else)?

6. Consider the emphasis that **1 Peter 3:3-4** puts on inner beauty and a gentle and quiet spirit. How does this compare to the following verses on the value of inner character over outward appearance? What consistent themes or differing implications do you find in these Scriptures?

PASSAGE	OBSERVATIONS
Proverbs 31:30	
1 Samuel 16:7	

7. The passage is not a rejection of outward care. It does not say women should be unattractive or neglect their appearance. Rather, it emphasizes true inner beauty and inner character. These are more valuable than outward beauty. What advantage does inward beauty have over outward beauty? See also **2 Corinthians 4:16**.

I'm impressed with a woman who knows what she could say but doesn't, and instead finds a way to season her words with grace and kindness. Our gentleness, the one that restrains the fire and uses it to warm people instead of burn them, is what marks a woman with true beauty. Women without the ability to restrain themselves are not helpful to anyone's cause. In the same way men without restraint destroy societies, women do the same. But women who know their strength and channel it through gentleness, with care to not crush the very hearts and lives they hold, those women are a force for the Kingdom that cannot be stopped.¹⁴

Andrea Burke, "A Gentle and Quiet Woman"

Day Three

Write out this week’s memory verse:

- 1. What the world sees and how the world glorifies women is different than God’s view of women. When God looks upon a woman, where does He look?
- 2. God wants women to relinquish their control and allow the Spirit to have His way. It’s a Spirit-controlled self-control. Read the following passages and record your observations.

PASSAGE	OBSERVATIONS
Galatians 5:22-23	
2 Timothy 1:7	
Romans 8:5-6	

3. How do we see God’s character imaged in a woman’s inner beauty as displayed through a controlled, gentle, and quiet spirit? Read the following verses and record your observations of God’s own character.

PASSAGE	OBSERVATIONS OF GOD’S CHARACTER
Psalm 23:1-3	
Psalm 145:8	
Isaiah 40:11	
Matthew 11:29	
1 Peter 2:23	

4. What warning do you see in **Matthew 23:27-28** concerning outward versus inward appearance?
5. Take a moment to reflect on your inner spirit over the past twenty-four hours. Reread the description of a gentle and quiet spirit (found in question 5 of yesterday’s lesson). How closely do you resemble that definition? Where do you need to improve?

6. When your heart is troubled, it is hard to image a gentle and quiet spirit, but it is this peace amid trouble that Peter is describing. It is to have a heart that rests and trusts in God when life is uncertain. The following verses can be helpful when your heart is troubled. Read and record a phrase or observation that is helpful to you.

PASSAGE	OBSERVATIONS
Exodus 14:14	
Psalms 4:8	
Psalms 13:6	
Psalms 116:7	
Proverbs 3:5, 6	
Matthew 6:34	
Philippians 4:6	
1 Peter 5:7	

7. Using phrases from the verses above, write a prayer asking God to develop your inner beauty, a gentle and quiet spirit.



... Christ's meekness and humility are the very way Christ Himself describes His own heart in Matthew 11:29. In other words, it is Christ's gentle heart that adorns Him with beauty; or put the other way, what most deeply attracts us to Christ is His gentle, tender, humble heart.¹⁵

Dane Ortlund, *Gentle and Lowly*



Day Four

Write out this week’s memory verse:

Social media may be a modern invention, but its focus on outer beauty is not. A few minutes online can cause you to start thinking that your clothes, makeup, hairstyle, and accessories all determine your worth. When we believe this message, even subconsciously, we take our focus off God’s view of us and His calling on our lives.

1. How does God view you? Read the following verses and record what they say about how God sees you.

PASSAGE	HOW GOD SEES YOU
Psalm 139:1-18	
Ephesians 1:3-8	

2. What has God done for you? Read the following verses and record what God has done for you because of His love for you.

PASSAGE	WHAT GOD HAS DONE FOR YOU
John 3:16-18	
Romans 5:6-8	

3. What lies have you believed about yourself based on your outward appearance?

Which truths from Scripture can you use to expose these lies when you find them creeping into your thoughts?

Write one or more of the above Scriptures on a notecard. Attach the card to a mirror where you often check your reflection. Let it be a reminder that as you check your outward appearance, you ought to also check your heart's attitude, which "in God's sight is very precious" (**1 Peter 3:4**).

Nowhere does the Scripture condemn physical beauty or suggest that the outward appearance does not matter. What is condemned is taking pride in God-given beauty, giving excessive attention to physical beauty, or tending to physical matters while neglecting matters of the heart.¹⁶

Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth, *Lies Women Believe*

Day Five

Write out this week's memory verse:

Scripture tells the story of an outwardly beautiful woman who also possessed a strong, calm inner beauty. Her name is Abigail. Read **1 Samuel 25:2-42** and answer the following questions.

1. What do you learn about Abigail from **verses 2-4**?
2. Do you know a woman married to a harsh, evil man? What does she have to deal with on a regular basis?
3. What is David's request of Nabal, and how does Nabal respond? What transpires after this (**vv. 5-13**)?
4. One of Nabal's young men acted wisely and shared the situation with Abigail (**vv. 14-17**). How does Abigail respond (**vv. 18-31**)?
5. Abigail was outwardly beautiful, *and* she acted with courage and inner strength. How did Abigail personify the saying, "It's what is on the inside that counts"?

6. Abigail stands as a godly role model: a woman of strength, grace, and wisdom in a tough situation, who used her voice and actions to honor the Lord and bring peace. Through her inner calm and self-control, she reflected God's image in a risky and dangerous situation. Read **Philippians 4:4-9**. According to this passage, what steps can you take to cultivate inner beauty?

- v. 4

- v. 5

- v. 6

- v. 7

- v. 8

- v. 9

What have you learned about God's plan
for you as His image-bearer this week?

How does this affect your view
of God's own character?

Gentleness is part of our calling because gentleness displays the gospel to our neighbors. Our gentleness toward one another is important because it points to the one who lived and died for us. By His grace we can be gentle toward each other. As we remind ourselves of the gift we've received, we can pray the overflow of our transformed hearts would reflect the gentleness of our Savior.¹⁷

Trillia Newbell, *Fruitful*

TEACHING NOTES



WEEK FIVE

Teaching and Training Female Image-Bearers

MEMORY VERSE

²⁶Then 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 birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

²⁷So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

GENESIS 1:26-27

Day One - Review

To help you review the two verses of our memory passage this week, we will ask you to write the first letter of each word. Today's has been done for you as an example.

TGS, “LUMMIOI, AOL. ALTHDOTFOTSAOTBOTH AOTLAOA
TEAOECTTCOTE.” SGCMIHOL, ITIOGHCH; MAFHCT.

1. Look over your notes from Week Four's teaching and lesson. What are one or two of your main takeaways?
2. What is the Bible's view on physical appearance? How do you define your own inner beauty?

What makes you feel truly beautiful, beyond your physical appearance?

3. We are women made in the image of God (**Genesis 1:26**). According to **1 Timothy 2:9-10**, with what are we to adorn ourselves?

4. In **1 Samuel 16:7**, God tells Samuel that He looks at the heart rather than outward appearance. His standards differ from human standards.

a. From **Matthew 5:3-12**, list the qualities God blesses.

b. How do we develop and grow in the standards that matter to God?

5. What have you been able to overcome by relying on inner strength that comes from the Lord?

A woman's . . . outward appearance is not the measure of her beauty or worth. Being made in the image of God is that measure, and it makes all of us equally valuable, from fertilization to death, regardless of age, ability, or appearance.¹⁸

Lynn Armstrong, "Biblical Beauty and the Culture Beast"

Day Two

To review the two verses of our memory passage, write the first letter of each word.

The book of **Titus** is Paul's letter to his coworker with instructions on organizing and strengthening the churches in Crete. In the following passage, Paul describes what godly living looks like for different groups of believers in the church.

1. As you read the passage, mark the text in these four ways:
 - Draw a box around the five groups of people Titus instructs.
 - Draw a double underline under Paul's instructions to Titus in verse 1.
 - Circle the word "doctrine."
 - Draw brackets around "(so) that" clauses.

TITUS 2:1-10

¹But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine. ²Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness. ³Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, ⁴and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, ⁵to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled. ⁶Likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled. ⁷Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, ⁸and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us. ⁹Bondservants are to be submissive to their own masters in everything; they are to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, ¹⁰not pilfering, but showing all good faith, so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior.

2. Make a list of the positive and negative character qualities listed in the passage.

POSITIVE	NEGATIVE

3. Throughout the book of **Titus**, Paul highlights godly living. What do the following passages add to this concept?

PASSAGE	OBSERVATIONS
1 Thessalonians 4:3, 7	
Galatians 5:16	
1 Peter 1:14-16	

4. Summarize the believer's call to godly living.

What enables us to live this way?

5. Why do you think we often fail to take this call seriously in daily life? How might that reveal the need to be more deeply grounded in truth?

In **Titus 2:1**, Paul says, “Teach what accords with sound doctrine.” The word “sound” refers to healthy, true, and wholesome. Paul wants the church to be fed truths that lead to spiritual health—implying that false teaching leads to spiritual illness. If believers are going to reflect God's image with spiritual health and wholeness, they need to be taught truth.

6. What is one cultural lie (or untruth) that tends to shape our lives? How can sound doctrine reshape our behavior in this area?

7. For each purpose clause in **Titus 2:1-10**, briefly state the outcome in positive terms—what does godly living accomplish?

PURPOSE		POSITIVE OUTCOME
2:5b	...that the word of God may not be reviled.	
2:8b	...so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us.	
10b	...so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior.	
OVERALL IMPACT:		

8. Based on what your family, neighbors, or coworkers see in your life, what impression do you think they have of God and the gospel? How are you imaging God and His truth to those around you?

God’s will for your life is that you be holy . . . Every story of every figure in every corner of every book of the Bible is chanting this call. Be holy, for He is holy.”¹⁹

Jen Wilkin, *In His Image*

Day Three

To review the two verses of our memory passage, write the first letter of each word.

Yesterday we learned about the believer's general call to godly living in **Titus 2**. Now we will look at the specific call to women.

1. As you reread the passage, mark the text in these four ways:

- Draw a box around groups of women.
- Draw a single underline under any character trait being commanded (to be).
- Draw a double underline under any action being commanded (to do).
- Draw parentheses around the core intergenerational command.

TITUS 2:3-5

³Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, ⁴and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, ⁵to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled.

2. List the character virtues for each group.

OLDER WOMEN	YOUNGER WOMEN

3. What stands out to you? Do you see any qualities that are related? Are any more foundational than others?
4. Reverent behavior is the expression of living as a priestess in God's presence (**1 Peter 2:9; Romans 12:1**). How can knowing this change how you approach each day?
5. In this passage, self-control is sound-minded thinking that curbs passions and desires through the work of the Holy Spirit. What does this look like practically in your life?
6. How are reverence and self-control foundational for other aspects of godly living?

Where do you feel challenged in this area?

7. Paul specifically gives older women the responsibility to teach and train the younger women. Why do you think that is?
8. From whom are you learning? Whom are you teaching?

9. Training takes place in everyday spaces. According to **2 Corinthians 10:13**, who assigns our areas of influence? How does that bring focus to your own spheres of influence?

In Paul's day, the home was "the original small business unit, the building block of a community's economic vitality."^a It was not only the domain of the family, but also the area where work and commerce were conducted.

10. If the home was the main area of influence for women in Paul's day, how does that shed light on our understanding of his instruction for younger women to be "workers at home"? What is your reaction to this?
11. List your God-given spheres of influence in this season. Circle the three that you sense are most central for you right now. How can you uniquely reflect God's image in these spaces for His glory?

Women need women to train them how to apply God's Word to areas of our lives that are uniquely feminine.²⁰

Susan Hunt, *Spiritual Mothering*

^aCarolyn McCulley, Nora Shank, *The Measure of Success: Uncovering the Biblical Perspective on Women, Work, and the Home* (B & H Publishing Group, 2014). Page 47.

Day Four

To review the two verses of our memory passage, write the first letter of each word:

1. We have seen how God calls older women to mentor younger women. However, both older and younger women find themselves holding back from living this out. Some may see the **Titus 2** call as optional. How do the following passages, although written to a broader audience, support this calling?

PASSAGE	OBSERVATIONS
Matthew 28:19-20	
Titus 2:1	
James 1:22	

2. What do the following passages teach about humility in relationships?

PASSAGE	OBSERVATIONS
Philippians 2:3-4	
1 Peter 5:5	

How might this shape the way older women mentor and younger women receive guidance?

3. What qualities of a teachable spirit do you see in these verses?

PASSAGE	OBSERVATIONS
Proverbs 9:9	
James 1:19-21	

Why do you think having a teachable spirit matters for spiritual growth?

4. How do the following verses speak to the idea that we ought to be perfect before we can minister to others?

PASSAGE	OBSERVATIONS
John 15:5	
2 Corinthians 3:5-6	

5. What do we learn about our role in the body of Christ from the following passages?

PASSAGE	OBSERVATIONS
Colossians 3:16	
Hebrews 10:24-25	

How does this strengthen the call to mentoring?

6. Which of the above truths most encourages you to pursue both being mentored and mentoring others?

The goal is to point people to Jesus, saying, “Go follow Him. He’s the source of all that’s good!”²¹

Melissa Kruger, *Growing Together*

Day Five

Review our memory passage.

Now that we have a clear understanding of the **Titus 2** call, we turn to Elizabeth and Mary as an example of an intergenerational relationship that encourages growth for God’s glory.

1. In **Luke 1**, we read about Elizabeth and Mary’s unique circumstances and about their reaction to some special news. Note your observations about each woman in the table below.

	ELIZABETH (LUKE 1:1-25)	MARY (LUKE 1:26-38)
Background		
Life Situation		
Character		
News Received		
Response		

In the previous table, underline any evidence of **Titus 2** womanhood.

2. What stands out to you as you compare Elizabeth and Mary's situations and responses?
3. In **Luke 1:39-56**, we read about the time Elizabeth and Mary spent together. Why do you think Mary went "with haste" to visit her older relative Elizabeth (**v. 39**)?
4. What shared circumstances brought them together? How might God have used this to strengthen them both?
5. How does Elizabeth's Spirit-filled blessing (**vv. 41-45**) encourage Mary in her calling?
6. How does Mary's song of praise (**vv. 46-55**) reflect the encouragement she received from Elizabeth?
7. What fruit do we see from these women spending time together? How does this illustrate the value of rich intergenerational relationships?

8. How does the example of Elizabeth and Mary encourage you to engage in **Titus 2** relationships that nurture, encourage, and equip one another to live for God's glory?

**What have you learned about God's plan
for you as His image-bearer this week?**

**How does this affect your view
of God's own character?**

[Amy Carmichael] showed me the shape of godliness.²²

Elizabeth Elliot, *A Chance to Die*

As we teach others, the truths of God become more firmly rooted in our own hearts.²³

Melissa Kruger, *Growing Together*

TEACHING NOTES



MEET OUR

Writing Team

JACKI BERG and her husband, Ryan, have a one-year-old son. Jacki began attending women's Bible studies after graduating from college and spent several years teaching and writing for middle school students. She also works for Crossway, where she writes articles reporting on the many beautiful ways God is growing His Kingdom around the world. Jacki enjoys water skiing, running, cooking, spending summers in northern Michigan, and delighting in God's creation with her active and energetic son.

RUTH CARTER and her husband, Steve, have four married sons. Ruth taught women's Bible studies during her early adult years and then moved to the more difficult task of writing for and teaching children. Steve is a retired surgeon, and Ruth is an RN. Their professions provided them with the means to serve in mission hospitals in central Africa and the Caribbean. Most recently, they worked with Answers in Genesis by directing the volunteer program at the Creation Museum for twelve years. Ruth's hobbies include quilting and writing as well as raising monarch butterflies, orchids, and hybrid tea roses. Most importantly, she has tried to implement the principles of intentional Christian grandparenting in the lives of her thirteen grandchildren.

MARTA BELL is a lifelong resident of Indianapolis. She is a mother to two adult daughters and a toddler-aged granddaughter. Marta spent twenty-nine years as a law enforcement officer for the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department, retiring in 2012. Marta presently teaches as an adjunct professor for Vincennes University and as a criminal justice teacher at Pike High School. Marta is passionate about women's ministry, utilizing her experience and education. She shares her personal story in her book *One Voice Many Faces*, which focuses on domestic violence from a scriptural perspective.



JENNIFER BENJAMIN and her husband, John, have two adult sons and are long-time members of College Park. Jennifer teaches Latin to middle schoolers at The Master's Study and has been active in College Park's women's Bible studies for the past six years. She is thankful for the new opportunities the Lord has provided in this empty-nest season. Jennifer finds joy in daily walks, reading and studying, learning new skills in the kitchen, meaningful conversations, hiking with her husband, peaceful spaces, and dark chocolate.

KAREN POURCHO and her husband, Bob, have three grown children and two wonderful daughters-in-law. Karen has served as the Director of Women's Ministry at College Park Church since 2015, following many years of teaching and leading in Community Bible Study. After a season of empty nesting, she now delights in being "Nana" to six adorable grandchildren. Karen loves studying God's Word and enjoys playing the piano, baking, gardening, needlepoint, and traveling with her best friend and husband, Bob.

Appendix

At creation, God placed His image upon both genders—male and female. This study has focused primarily on the female image-bearers. However, the relationship between men and women continues to be a topic of significant discussion within the Church.

In recent years, two primary terms have been used to describe differing views on this relationship. Egalitarianism holds that men and women possess equal worth and gifting, with no inherent distinctions in their roles, callings, or authority. Complementarianism, while affirming the equal worth and value of men and women, maintains that they have distinct and complementary roles within the family and the Church.

The following represents the stance of the elders of College Park Church. The first section outlines the theological convictions underlying this position, while the second applies these beliefs to practical areas of ministry. As discipleship and shepherding strategies evolve, the practical applications may be adjusted; however, the theological convictions, grounded in Scripture, will remain unchanged.

COLLEGE PARK ELDER POSITION PAPER

Complementarianism in Belief and Practice

College Park Church derives the foundation for its practice and function from the Word of God. It is our belief that the Word of God teaches that although men and women are created by God as having equal value and worth, they uniquely reflect complementary truths about the image of God. We believe that the Bible teaches that the roles of men and women, therefore, are not interchangeable (egalitarianism). Both are necessary to correctly embody God's image in the Church and to the world.

We further believe that the complementarian view is not limited to the defining of roles for women, but it is meant to illustrate the beauty of believing men and women living in harmony and order as brothers and sisters in Christ. The following statements are meant to provide clarity and guidance to the application of this biblical view in the life of our church.

Whereas, God created male and female together in his image, with equal value, dignity, worth, access, and love, they were created with the intent that together they would reflect his triune image in his creation. While equal in value, men and women are distinct and complementary in how they image their Creator (Gen. 1:26-27). Gender complementarity within equality is God's means for ordering his world so that his image is manifested and glorified most beautifully.

We affirm that men and women are both precious to God and are on equal footing in their relationship to God as believers in Jesus Christ where "there is neither male nor female" (Gal. 3:28).

We affirm that all men and women are created in the image of God, whether single or married (1 Cor. 7:7-8; 1 Pet. 3:7).

We affirm that complementarian theology rightly practiced leads to the greater good and flourishing for both men and women (Ps. 18:30).

We deny that the roles of men and women are culturally determined and are without authoritative biblical definition (Gen. 1:26-27; Eph. 5:21-33).

Whereas, the beauty of the oneness of the Godhead (Deut. 6:4) is also expressed in its diversity (Father, Son, Spirit) and the equal members of the Godhead possessing different functions that complement each other (Rom. 8:26, 31-35), so it is with God's imagebearers. Men and women have different functions to live out in their roles within the Church and marriage (Gen. 2:18-25).

We affirm that the role of pastor/elder is to be held by qualified men as in keeping with the Scripture (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9).

We affirm that the eldership which consists of qualified, godly men (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9) is the office ordained by God to lead Christ's Church as shepherds with authority. All members of the church (men and women) are called to follow this authority as the elders humbly serve God's people through the authoritative preaching of the Word, and the pastoral leadership and the care of the Church and its members (1 Tim. 2:8-15).

We affirm that in marriage, husbands are to lovingly and sacrificially lead in their home as Christ loved and sacrificed for the church, and wives are to graciously and respectfully submit to the leadership of their own husband as to the Lord (Eph. 5:22, 25; Titus 2:4-5; 1 Pet. 3:1).

We deny that all women are subject to the leadership and authority of all men (Eph. 5:22; Col. 3:18; Titus 2:4,5; 1 Peter 3:1).

Whereas, both the mandate to fill the earth and subdue it (Gen. 1:27-28) and the mandate given by Christ to evangelize and disciple others (Matt. 28:18-20) was given to men and women equally, so also the spiritual gifts were given by Christ to his Church for the flourishing of the Church as a whole (1 Cor. 12).

We affirm that the primary relationship between men and women in the church is the biblical picture of brothers and sisters working alongside one another in the world and within the Church for the sake of the kingdom of God (Acts 18:26; 21:8-9; Rom. 16; 1 Cor. 12; Phil. 4:2,3).

We deny that single men and women must be married to be meaningful participants in the corporate life of the church (1 Cor.7:7).

We deny complementarianism that leads to subjugation, abuse, or neglect of any man or woman. We denounce any distorted view of Scripture that contributes to the belief that biblical manhood or womanhood includes or permits practices such as marginalization, intimidation, neglect, or abuse of any man or woman (Ps. 11:5; 1 Cor. 13:4-7; Eph. 4:29-32; Col. 3:19, 21; 2 Tim. 3:1-5; James 1:19-20, 1 Pet. 3:7).

Guidelines for Practice at College Park Church

WORSHIP

Both men and women are encouraged to use their gifts in areas of worship such as Scripture reading, dramatic presentation, prayer, and musical accompaniment and performance. All those who serve in worship are under the direct authority of the pastor who oversees this area, including the men and women who lead the congregation in song.

Examples:

1. Men or women may read Scripture or lead in prayer during the worship service, however, weekly Elder Prayer is reserved for pastors/elders.
2. With pastoral/elder oversight, congregational worship may be led by men or women.

TEACHING

The regular preaching of the Word to the congregation during Sunday worship services (the formal weekly gathering of the church body) is restricted to a pastor/elder (or their designee) and is an example of their teaching authority.

Other mixed gender teaching environments are overseen by pastors/elders, who will seek out, equip, and utilize gifted men and women to help lead, teach, and shape these ministries (see explanation of Adult Big Group and Small Group leadership below). Gender-specific teaching environments are taught by a leader of the same gender.

Examples:

1. Pastors/elders will have oversight of all Adult Big Groups and Small Groups. Ongoing, co-ed Adult Big Groups and Small Groups are both areas of our church community where the “big church becomes small.” As such, they will function under the Biblical principle of male headship as applied to pastors/elders in the big church setting and will be led by qualified men. It is recommended that when possible the Adult Big Group or Small Group leader’s wife (or if single, a qualified woman) co-lead in the discipleship and care of the women of the group.

2. Teachers of mixed older students are under the authority of a pastor/elder. Because student large group teaching times closely resemble the authoritative preaching of the Word in Sunday Worship, the primary and regular teacher to this age group will be male. Female teachers may be used for particular subjects or events.
3. The teaching of children through the sixth grade is open to men and women and is under the authority of the pastor/elder leading in this area.
4. Other classes (held on Sunday morning or at other times during the week) may be taught by qualified men or women with pastoral/elder oversight.

SERVING

All members of the church body are encouraged to use their gifts as brothers and sisters in Christ within a wide variety of serving opportunities.

Examples:

1. Opportunities include the serving of communion, ushers, greeters, hospitality, one-on-one discipleship, evangelism, supporting missionaries, counseling, etc.
2. At the request and continuing oversight of the pastors/elders, both men and women may serve in the office of deacon.

PROFESSIONAL STAFF

The body of College Park Church adheres to the complementarian view that the role of pastor/elder is to be reserved for qualified men. All ministries of the church have pastoral/elder oversight. Women and men are encouraged to use their leadership skills within this pastoral framework as directors, assistant directors, coordinators, assistants, managers, producers, specialists, residents, and interns.

Examples:

1. The lead pastor has all oversight of the regular authoritative preaching of the Word in the weekly meeting of the congregation. He may assign this responsibility to other pastors/elders of the church, pastoral residents, or guest speakers.
2. Both men and women may serve in all non-pastoral hired positions including director of guest and member services, director of children, director of youth, director of worship, director of finance, director of information systems, etc. Gender specific roles will be held by the same gender such as director of women's ministry. Each of these roles is under pastoral/elder authority.

3. Pastoral residents are to be men since the role of pastor/elder is biblically reserved for men. Qualified men and women may be considered for one-year or two-year residencies to prepare for non-pastoral roles in the areas of ministry such as children, youth, and worship.

Featured Quotes

¹Sarah Rice, *Gospel-Shaped Womanhood: How Losing Yourself & finding Your Identity in Christ Changes Everything* (10 Publishing, 2024). Pages 28-29.

²Kristen Clark and Bethany Beal, *Made to Be She: Reclaiming God's Plan for Fearless Femininity* (Baker Books, 2024). Page 117.

³Mary A. Kassian, *Girls Gone Wise in a World Gone Wild* (Moody Publishers, 2010). Page 82.

⁴Karen Hodge and Susan Hunt, *Transformed: Life-taker to Life-giver* (Christian Focus Publications, 2016). Page 16.

⁵Clark and Beal, *Made to Be She: Reclaiming God's Plan for Fearless Femininity*. Page 131.

⁶Scott Hubbard, "The Power of a Praying Mother" *Desiring God*, March 9, 2022. <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-power-of-a-praying-mother>.

⁷T. Kim, "Every Woman Needs Another - A Call to Spiritual Motherhood" *Desiring God*, November 14, 2020. <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/every-woman-needs-another>.

⁸John Piper, "I Am Who I Am" *Desiring God*, September 16, 1984, <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/i-am-who-i-am>.

⁹Tim Chester, *Titus for You* (The Good Book Company, 2014). Page 66.

¹⁰Lydia Brownback, *A Woman's Wisdom: How the Book of Proverbs Speaks to Everything* (Crossway, 2012). Page 186.

¹¹Brownback, *A Woman's Wisdom: How the Book of Proverbs Speaks to Everything*. Page 172.

¹²Kathleen Nielson, *Proverbs for You* (The Good Book Company, 2020). Page 234.

¹³John Piper, "A Woman Who Fears the Lord is to be Praised" *Desiring God*, May 10, 1981. <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/a-woman-who-fears-the-lord-is-to-be-praised>.

¹⁴Andrea Burke, "A Gentle and Quiet Woman" *For the Church*, May 13, 2019.

<https://ftc.co/resource-library/blog-entries/a-gentle-and-quiet-woman>.

¹⁵Dane Ortlund, *Gentle and Lowly: The Heart of Christ for Sinners and Sufferers* (Crossway, 2020). Page 97.

¹⁶Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth, *Lies Women Believe: And the Truth That Sets Them Free* (Moody Publishers, 2018). Page 80.

¹⁷Trillia Newbell, from her chapter “Gentleness is Your Calling” in *Fruitful: Cultivating a Spiritual Harvest That Won’t Leave You Empty*, Hill, Kruger, editors (Crossway, 2024). Page 168.

¹⁸Lynn Armstrong, “Biblical Beauty and the Culture Beast” *Answers in Genesis*, March 8, 2020. <https://www.answersingenesis.org/culture/biblical-beauty-and-culture-beast/>.

¹⁹Jen Wilkin, *In His Image: 10 Ways God Calls Us to Reflect His Character* (Crossway, 2018). Page 27.

²⁰Susan Hunt, *Spiritual Mothering: The Titus 2 Model for Women Mentoring Women* (Crossway, reprint 2016). Page 71.

²¹Melissa Kruger, *Growing Together: Taking Mentoring Beyond Small Talk and Prayer Requests* (Crossway, 2020). Page 23.

²²Elizabeth Elliot, *A Chance to Die: The Life and Legacy of Amy Carmichael* (Revell, reprint 2005). Page 15.

²³Kruger, *Growing Together: Taking Mentoring Beyond Small Talk and Prayer Requests*. Page 18.

Resources

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