

The Restoration of Femininity



Amanda Buys' Spiritual Covering

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1. INTRODUCTION

In this study, we're going to talk about why women are frustrated and why men are confused. We're also going to look at what has been happening to our relationships, our children, our hearts and our souls. And how the art of being a woman has become a priceless treasure.

As creation longs for the original plan of peaceful co-existence, the groans of weary women have come before the Throne of God. The vicious cycle of men abdicating, women rising up, men fleeing, and women becoming embittered, hardened and hopeless has tainted society. The lines are invisibly drawn, silently proclaiming WAR!

Romance lies trampled underfoot and understanding lies shattered beneath hurled insults and accusations. Is anyone really seeing what we're doing to one another?

Let's talk women-to-women about how we've "lost it" and how to get "it" back.

Dear Heavenly Father, there are so many voices with various expectations filling my world. Sometimes I find myself confused and even frustrated in my search to establish who I really am. Help me to remember that You hold the key to my true identity. You created me to be a valuable addition to mankind and a living expression and example of Your heart. Blot out the lies the enemy tries to plant in my soul to devalue me. As I cling to Your Word that tells me I am "fearfully and wonderfully made", a woman on purpose, let the revelation of what that truly means saturate my being, releasing me to celebrate my womanhood, and to rejoice in the gift I am to the world.

Grant me the confidence to walk in Your original design for my life. Restore to me the gift of my femininity and help me to keep it as a treasure in my heart.

As I release my femininity as a perfume from my spirit, use it to heal others around me as I touch them with my special brand of softness. And I will always be mindful to give the glory back to You as You show Your love through my hands to liberate others to be all You created them to be.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

2. BACK TO BASICS

Because of Eve's deception, some things in the Garden of Eden changed. From that day forward she would feel the pain of childbirth, a pain that she had caused God to feel when she wrenched herself from His protective womb to become master of her own destiny.

No one's position in the garden has changed. Man was responsible for covering and leading woman from the beginning.

But now, any woman, married or single, would find herself always striving to have man bend to her will. She would seek to grasp total fulfilment from man, to receive complete affirmation from him, but she would never achieve this fulfilment because no human being could be her completion.

The curse caused the heart of woman to say to man, "I need you to be willing to do anything for me, including disobeying God if that's what it takes to make me feel loved, desired, worthy and fulfilled."

The fall caused the God-given desire in her heart for man to be perverted into a need for him for all the wrong reasons. Man could never live up to the void the fall created, so woman's exaggerated need for man became her bondage. Her desire for him would now "rule" over her and colour all of her decisions as she constantly strove to gain his love in a spot reserved for God alone.

Adam abdicated his role as protector of Eve. He chose to wilfully follow her into disobedience, and now he would get to see how it felt to have the object of his affection rebel against him.

THE LITTLE GREEN LIE

"Who told you that you were naked?"

This is where it all began.

Who told you to be ashamed of who you are, woman?

Who told you that womanhood has no worth?

Who told you that embracing your femininity was a losing proposition?

Who told you that it's a man's world?

These words never came from God's lips. Satan planted this one little seed and it has grown into a great tree bearing a crop of fruit most poisonous.

And so began woman's suspicion that man was keeping something behind his back that he didn't want her to have.

Why didn't God want us to be like Him and know good and evil?

GOD NEVER SAID THIS!

It was His intent that we would be His sons and daughters, that we would be like Him because we would walk in perfect fellowship with Him, seeing Him as He is (I John 3:2). **What happened? How did we ever go from the garden to the war zone?**

Eve was given to Adam to help him stay focused, to give him extra encouragement from time to time. He needed someone to fill in the blanks, take up the slack, keep him together. He needed a helpmeet, a partner – someone designed especially to compliment him in every way. This person, called woman, would assist him in completing his assignment to subdue, maintain order, cultivate and take care of God's creation, to be fruitful and multiply. These things he could not do without her help.

SATAN'S PLAN

He knew God's plan for man and he had to abort it at all costs. He knew from experience that rebellion was the one thing God would not allow in His presence. He had to cause a breach in Adam and Eve's relationship with God.

He also knew never to underestimate the power of woman. He knew the effect she had on a man. This is why she became his target.

Instead of finding themselves like God, the only thing they really knew was that they were now ashamed of their nakedness.

Eve discovered something else: When man was ashamed, he became insecure. And when he became insecure, he became defensive and cast blame upon her. She became the enemy in the midst of his shame and failure. Failure was a weight that Adam could not bear. It emasculated him in the presence of Eve. Because he submitted to the woman's hand that held the fruit, he would now have to struggle for her respect and submission for the rest of his days.

SATAN'S VICTORY

Although he was also cursed, he was satisfied that the first phase of his mission had been accomplished. He had successfully caused man to forfeit his God-ordained authority upon the earth, severed the relationship between man and God, and drew battle lines between man and woman. Now he would always have the woman as an open door to get to the man, using her power of influence, her charms, her tongue and her body to penetrate the man's exterior. And he would use the man against the woman to cast blame and inflict authority rather than inspire submission. He would use man's confusion to victimise that which he should protect.

We now all stand as witnesses to the damage done in the Garden. We now have resorted to considering the idea that "men are from Mars and women are from Venus" in order to explain our differences. But, the truth is, no matter how clever the cliché, we are not from different planets. Our origin is much closer: We are part of one another with visible and invisible differences. We are made to benefit, not be at odds with one another. Understanding and celebrating our differences instead of blaming and shaming is the first step we must take.

God did not design a man's world. God's design for the world was man and woman working together in peaceful harmony, building one another up and promoting each other to good works – namely our God-given assignments on the earth – that others would observe the fruit of our lives and give glory to God.

We women lost it when we failed to recognise our own unique power. Instead we got locked into a power struggle that never existed from God's vantage point. With everyone defending themselves, we are all losing ground.

It's time to take off the boxing gloves and allow God to redistribute His first commission to us – man and woman both in power because of their status as complementary partners.

Let's take a look at Eve again. We need to remember, in order to start feeling valuable and powerful, that **man needs help**. Man does not do well without woman. God has given each of us specific gifts in order to equip us to be a specific man's helper. Your gifts may differ from that of another sister, and that's fine because she was created to assist a different type of man. This is why you must understand that not just any man will do for you, or visa versa.

EXAMINING YOUR GIFTS

1. Influence.
2. Intuition: The ability to be spiritually sensitive, to read the fine print in a given situation.
3. Sexuality and reproductive abilities.

Man and woman were both created in the image of God, each was uniquely created to emphasize specific parts of God's nature, with man leaning more toward the mind of God, and woman more toward the heart of God.

Keeping this in mind, we must realize that the man's heart also seeks the same thing that God's heart seeks – **worship**. Man's foremost desire is for honour, honour that comes in the form of respect and submission.

God dwells in the midst of His praise, and it is clear that intimacy is born out of the worship experience. All barriers come down in the face of admiration. All defences are lowered as we enjoy the attributes of our beloved, and they in turn respond by drawing closer to us.

As our praises go up to God, He comes down, drawing closer and standing ready to pour out to us the desires of our hearts.

The same thing takes place in our earthly relationships. As we make men feel good about themselves, they pour more of themselves out to us. True intimacy is birthed out of this sort of communion, and sexual intimacy is the highest form of mutual worship. It is the place of complete vulnerability and openness. Naked and unashamed; without pretence all is revealed and exchanged, and the two come away with a deeper knowing of one another, sharing a bond strong than before.

WHAT IS FEMININITY?

Soft, gentle, delicate, sensitive, modest, etc; it is also synonymous with **meek**: “**strength under control**”. Femininity is strength wrapped in a velvet glove.

It is an **inner** quality that flows from a woman who knows her calling and her value. Feminine women are strong women because their influence is deeply felt. This influence gets beneath the surface because it is invited in. It is invited in because it is attractive and non-threatening. The feminine woman knows who she is and celebrates being all woman. She lets who she is naturally do all the work for her.

I love being a woman. I love all that it encompasses. That I can be intelligent, intuitive, sharply discerning, dignified and strong, soft and warm; generous with my compassion; tender with my touch; that I can cry openly; that I can change my mind a million times because it's a woman thing! It's a beautiful thing.

WHAT ABOUT ADAM?

God made Adam go into a deep sleep in order to create woman. He didn't wake him up until woman was a complete and finished work.

God is waiting for you to become a finished vessel of honour – one capable of being the instrument to making that man change his ways because of your behaviour.

1 PET 3: 1, 2 *In like manner, you married women, be submissive to your own husbands, so that even if any do not obey the Word of God, they may be won over not by discussion but by the godly lives of their wives, when they observe the pure and modest way in which you conduct yourselves, together with your reverence for your husband; you are to feel for him all that reverence includes: to respect, defer to, revere him – to honour, esteem, appreciate, prize, and, in the human sense, to adore him, that is, to admire, praise, be devoted to, deeply love, and enjoy your husband.*

Before He wakes up that man in your life, God is going to complete His work in you. He is not going to wake the man up to behold a half-baked cookie! He wants every woman to be rooted and grounded in the full understanding of who she was created to be prior to setting her before the eyes of her own Adam. She needs to be equipped to inspire that man to be the man he's suppose to be. God knows that a complete woman is a force with which to be reckoned. This is why the enmity is between the woman and the serpent (Gen 3:15).

Satan knew that a determined woman was capable of doing great damage to the kingdom of darkness, especially if she sensed that any of her beloved was being threatened. Women are powerful. And praying women are the most dangerous weapons on the planet in Satan's eyes.

Ladies, let's get back to God's original design – then, and only then, will our men sit up and take notice and get in line. It's up to us, ladies! Back-to-the-Garden Movement!

Heavenly Father, help us to get back to basics to rediscover the beauty of who You created us to be. To rediscover our value in the light of the fact that in Your eyes there is neither male nor female, Greek nor Jew, for You created us all for Your good pleasure.

You've bought us with the price of the Blood of Your Son, Jesus, and ransomed us to be Yours – we are joint heirs with You in heavenly places and we walk in dominion in this present life because You shed Your love on us.

Grant us the security to remember at all times who we are and whose we are. Grant us the peace to know that our rights are all hidden in You and You are the ultimate defender of our cause. Finish the work that You have begun in us. Make us worthy vessels. Make us complete in You according to Your design.

Help us to rest in the assurance that as we yield to being the women You long for us to be, You will honour our submission by crowning us with Your divine favour and blessing us with abundant fulfilment and joy.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

3. THE GODLY ORDER OF WOMEN

It is time to take an honest look at what being out of order costs us as women.

It costs us the covering and protection of confident men. It costs us the security of our homes and the soundness of our children. It costs us the safety of our communities. It costs us our personal peace and fulfilment. It costs us our health.

THE CURSE

GEN 3: 16-19 *To the woman He said, I will greatly multiply your grief and your suffering in pregnancy and the pangs of childbearing; with spasms of distress you will bring forth children. Yet your desire and craving will be for your husband, and he will rule over you. And to Adam He said, Because you have listened and given heed to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, saying, You shall not eat of it, the ground is under a curse because of you; in sorrow and toil shall you eat of the fruits of it all the days of your life. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth for you, and you shall eat the plants of the field. In the sweat of your face shall you eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you shall return.*

What was supposed to be easy will now be difficult. The thing that gives you the most joy will also give you the most pain. “Bringing forth” children has proven to be more and more difficult as time goes by. We are waging war with the media, the educational system, other wayward children and outside influences to keep the minds and the spirits of our children pure.

Gen 3:16 Your desire will be for our husband, and he will rule over you. Because of the turning point of your heart to your husband (and, by implication, away from God) for validation, completion and affirmation, he shall rule over you.

This is the case with anything or anyone that we rely on other than God for our sense of self. That thing or person then begins to rule our lives. The love of money, power, food, materialism – you name it – it will rule over you if you let it outrun God in the area of your affections.

This was Eve's dilemma. It is not just a married woman's issue. It affects single women, too. Remember: This was a universal curse. All women are included. Look at how women today are ruled by the desire to get a man, have a man and keep a man. How many women have settled for unhappy relationships merely because they've come to the sad conclusions that to have **some** man is better than **no** man at all.

After the fall, Adam "named" Eve. A name is a definition of who you are. Today women still crave to be "named" by a man.

NB: You don't have to wait for a man to define who you are. God has already given you a name!

IS 62: 4, 5 *You shall no more be termed Forsaken, nor shall your land be called Desolate any more. But you shall be called Hephzibah (My delight is in her) and your land be called Beulah (married); for the Lord delights in you, and your land shall be married, owned and protected by the Lord. For as a young man marries a virgin, so shall your sons marry you; and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall our God rejoice over you.*

Because of God a woman is a complete woman whether she has a man or not. The Lord is a husband to the husbandless. He's the One Who owns everything you could ever dream of or hope for – the wealthiest Husband in the world!

IS 54:5 *For your Maker is your Husband – the Lord of hosts is His name – and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer; the God of the whole earth He is called.*

If Jesus took all the curses on the tree, then what's all the fuss about? Unfortunately, just because He wrote the cheque, doesn't mean that everyone has cashed it. A cheque is just a cheque until the recipient cashes it.

More than ever, we have women killing themselves in the workplace, toiling by the sweat of their brows. This was not God's original design. Our bodies were never made to be exposed to such an intense measure of stress. The "super woman syndrome" is taking its toll on us in larger and larger waves, thus the rise in female health problems. Notice where many of these problems strike – in the reproductive organs that produce our children, as well as the breasts that nurture our children.

By the time we have finished being "men" at the office, we find it difficult to shift back to being women at home. When we lose ourselves as women and begin forcing ourselves to develop muscles we were not designed to have, our internal and relational system suffers.

LESBIANISM

It is important to be educated in this area because we have women sitting in churches all across this land who are hurting, dying quietly inside because they cannot approach anyone in the church for counsel. They fear the disdain and disapproval of other Christians as they struggle with their urges toward other women.

No one is beyond the hope of healing and deliverance. But you must know the seed that the enemy has planted in order to know how to uproot it.

The first fact that many miss is that lesbianism is born out of a relational void. It is innate within the longing for love gone out of control.

A lot of women have resorted to seeking out each other for comfort, companionship and physical stimulation simply because they have grown weary of trying to make it work with men.

You must understand that lesbianism is not a sexual issue; it is an emotional and spiritual one.

Women connect to one another in a very powerful way because of their nurturing skills. Men do not connect on this level; therefore, the motivation for homosexual behaviour comes from a different place – it is based on visual stimulation and sensuality.

A man is able to separate his sexuality from his emotions, but a woman's emotions and sexuality are closely tied together.

When the men in a woman's world abuse her physically or are incapable of fulfilling her emotionally, the danger exists for the spirit of deception to enter into her life. Thereby she will mistake the emotional fulfillment she receives from other women in her life as a source of eros (sexual) love. This danger grows into a reality if the woman is not aware of the fact that no man or woman can ever completely fulfill her emotionally. Only God can do that.

Women who seek immediate gratification for their longings will fall prey to this deception, and the spirit of lesbianism will grip them. These are women who simply don't want to try anymore. They are filled with pain and unbelief and have resorted to ungodly means in order to comfort themselves.

LESSONS FROM THE LIFE OF DEBORAH

She understood her spiritual calling. She was a prophetess – it was her God-ordained purpose. It was the totality of who she was. Therefore, when she spoke, it was with authority.

This had nothing to do with her being a male or female. It had to do with a need God had to expose His heart and His plans to His people. This was a need that God knew Deborah would be able to fulfill.

Deborah also understood her call in the natural as a woman, as a **wife**. The Bible clearly adds the title of “wife of Lappidoth” to her list of credits, which means it was significant to God.

Lappidoth means “to shine forth”, which speaks of the fact that her husband had a renowned reputation of his own. Yet he was secure enough to release Deborah to be the great leader that she was. The way she handled the situation with Barak tells us about what went on in her home and the way she interacted with her husband. The text clearly indicates that she was submitted as a wife to her husband. And she was blessed because of it. Everyone knew that because her house was in order, they could respect her and follow her.

The people would never have willingly followed Deborah if she were out of line. She was a wife first before she was a judge. She was a woman first before she was a leader. She was under submission first to God and then to her husband.

Some Christian women are confused over this and they wonder why their husbands want nothing to do with God or the church. Do you know why?

Firstly, no man will ever embrace something with which he feels he is in competition. If you are making the man in your life feel that he has to compete with Jesus or your pastor, you need to repent about this right away. The presence of God in your life should make you a better wife to that man. Stop treating the pastor better than you treat your husband. Whether your husband is saved or unsaved, God still holds you responsible and accountable to serve, love and submit to that man (abusive situations are excluded).

Secondly, no man is going to frequent a place in which he feels all the women are in charge. Men are **fixers** by nature. If there is nothing for them to fix, they move on in search of unconquered territory.

As for those of you who feel stifled and hindered from ministry because of your mate, take heed. God is never going to put your ministry before your care for your husband. That is unscriptural. It would be going against His own Word, and He is not going to do that. Don't forget that serving your husband is also being obedient to God. Your man is won to God by your behaviour. You are the only example your mate receives of how to submit to God. The way we submit to visible leadership is a good indicator of how we will heed invisible authority.

Thirdly, Deborah understood her positional calling as a servant of God. This is the master hint on how to maintain your femininity in the boardroom or whatever environment makes you feel as if you need to wage a war for equal rights or just humane consideration. Deborah did her job because God said so. It wasn't about the men around her. It was about a Kingdom call, not her own personal agenda.

EPH 6: 7, 8 *Rendering service readily with goodwill, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that for whatever good anyone does, he will receive his reward from the Lord, whether he is slave or free.*

Stop looking at the natural man at your job. Your identity is hidden somewhere higher than the plaque on your door or your company job description. God has ordained you to operate on three levels:

1. In the spirit.
2. As a woman.
3. As His servant.

Your goal should be on fulfilling His call on your life and not what you can get out of doing what you do. You can spend all your energy trying to grasp your desires in your human efforts and live a life of frustration – overworked and under appreciated. As you get over the praise of men, God will reward you richly for developing a servant's heart.

Dear Heavenly Father, forgive me for my misplaced priorities. Forgive me for not celebrating the woman You created me to be. Forgive me for buying into the lie of the world that I am inferior, a voice to be ignored, an empty vessel without honour. Help me to embrace the truth that I am fearfully and wonderfully made, that I am a marvellous work, that my femininity is a treasure hidden in this earthly vessel.

Help me to rejoice in the gifts You have given me, gifts of influence and wisdom. Stir up the gifts You've placed within me and make me a wise steward of all that You have deposited in my spirit. As I strip off all preconceived ideas and worldly labels, redress me with Your salvation, Your authority, Your validation of all that I am in You. Teach me to be the woman whom You have fashioned me to be. Guide me in the way that You would have me take to the praise and honour of Your glory.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

4. MOTHER'S LOVE

Nobody messes with a mother's love. She is deeply nurturing, fiercely protective, and will do anything to ensure the welfare of her children.

Woven into the fibre of every mother's spirit is the instinct to protect the precious charges God has placed in her care.

Mothers are purveyors of life, created to give it, nurture it, protect it, and release it at the appropriate time to fulfil the purposes of God. The role of a mother is so intensely powerful that the destinies of nations lie in her hands.

The enemy works overtime to distort and destroy the very spirit of motherhood among women today.

REV 12:4 *His tail swept across the sky and dragged down a third of the stars and flung them to the earth. And the dragon stationed himself in front of the woman who was about to be delivered, so that he might devour her child as soon as she brought it forth.*

Satan has been on the rampage, seeking to exterminate the life of any child who might be a threat to his kingdom. Down through the ages he sought to be one step ahead of Jesus Christ, to cut Him off before He grew to fulfil His purpose, the salvation of mankind.

From Genesis to Revelation to present day the spirit of assassination has been released against children – our modern-day messiahs whom God has chosen to minister healing, deliverance and restoration in our homes, neighbourhoods, cities and nations.

God has a purpose for every life. He honours those who fight to preserve the life of their children in the face of very real obstacles by making a way out of no way for them.

We are here **on purpose!** No matter how you feel right now, you do have a purpose. You will know if you are fulfilling that purpose or not by the level of fulfilment you feel. People who are walking in their purpose are excited about life.

Those who are not, spend their time wondering what they're supposed to be doing with themselves or searching for a partner or some other type of outward stimuli to fill the empty space they feel. Satan tries to abort the children – it's not the life of the child he is after – it is the purpose of God that is within that child that Satan is after. He also comes in other forms of disguise – abuse, neglect, lack of discipline, gangs, drugs, broken homes...anything that will assist him in snuffing out that child's desire to rise to the occasion of fulfilling his or her purpose.

Mothers fail to see their own value, while children have lost all sense of hope for the future. "I am **just** a mother", or "I am **just** a housewife" – these roles have been stripped of all honour by the dragon.

Remember: Your role as a mother affects destiny beyond your personal space or home. It is a mother who is usually most spiritually attuned to the possibilities within her child.

DOMINEERING MOTHERS

Many mothers become dangerously attached to their sons, replacing their mate with their son. Their own search for the praises of men and for the love and fulfilment they fail to receive from their mate propels them to enter into emasculating relationships with their sons. This is out of God's order. Sons are not created to fill the void that you've determined your mate won't fill. Children are not made to be bargaining tools and instruments of manipulation to retaliate against, insult, draw, bind, or repel the man in your life. They are little people who come laden with purpose and endless possibilities that must not be distorted.

Mothers, be living New Testament examples of the type of person you would like your children to become. Speak wisdom into your children. Help your children to tap into the boundless possibilities within themselves because of the power of God at work within them. Be like Jesus in the home. Give your son the male affirmation he needs in order to be a man and let your daughter grow up affirmed as a woman, knowing she deserves to be loved properly.

This enables a son to “leave and cleave” and a daughter to grasp the concept of walking in oneness with her husband. This builds solid men and women who fulfil their purpose and further the world’s destiny.

A MOTHER’S ROLE

- To preserve the life of her children.
- To keep them from being devoured by the dragon.
- To nurture purpose.
- To blow on the embers of those little spirits until their hands reach up to God.
- To secure the blessing.
- To guard their inheritance.
- To release them into becoming pillars of destiny.

Motherhood is a precious assignment from God. It has a season. Enjoy the identity of being a mother. God chose you on purpose for such a time as this.

Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for the gift of my children. I am humbled that You thought me worthy of watching over someone who is so precious to You. Equip me with all the wisdom, strength and insight that I need to complete my assignment in a way that will be pleasing to You. Show me the way that I should take even as I instruct these ones that You have entrusted in my care.

As I commit them to Your care, I trust You to keep them safe in all their ways. Grant me an increased sense of discernment to recognize the work of the enemy in my children’s lives. Give me the strength to battle against the forces that will seek to pull their hearts away from You, to break their spirits and bend their wills.

When I grow weary, strengthen my weary arms and renew my faith in Your ability to keep us all.

By the authority that You’ve given me over the lives of my children, through Christ, I abort the plans of the enemy and his agenda for destroying the purposes of God in my children. Guide my prayer life to strategically call forth the destiny of my children. Help me to secure the inheritance that You have reserved for them.

But most of all, Lord, in those time when the going gets tough, remind me that children are only part of my reward for answering Your call. Reaffirm my worth when the world is telling me I have no value, and let me find my validation and all that is truly worthwhile in You.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

5. BUILDING YOUR HOME

A man wants three things:

1. To be well fed.
2. Well loved in the sexual sense.
3. And well appreciated.

What do we get out of it?

1. You'll be well loved.
2. Well kept.
3. And well satisfied.

Your home is more than just your physical house – it is your household. It is the hearts of those who surround you. The heart is where we all really live. It is the way everyone under your roof is affected by your presence. You get to set the stage for how everyone feels – children, mate, friends, yourself. Your home reflects who you are.

PROV 14:1 *Every wise woman builds her house, but the foolish one tears it down with her own hands.*

Everything revolves around the woman of the house.

PROV 21:9 *It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop, on the flat oriental roof, exposed to all kinds of weather, than in a house shared with a nagging, quarrelsome, and faultfinding woman.*

PROV 21:19 *It is better to dwell in a desert land than with a contentious woman and with vexation.*

PROV 27:15 *A continual dripping on a day of violent showers and a contentious woman are alike.*

PROV 9:13 *The foolish woman is noisy; she is simple and open to all forms of evil, she wilfully and recklessly knows nothing whatever of eternal value.*

PROV 12:4 *A virtuous and worthy wife, earnest and strong in character, is a crowning joy to her husband, but she who makes him ashamed is a rotteness in his bones.*

That about sums it up.

A woman can choose to use the power she has to make him or break him. She is his protection. The man is called to walk in front of the woman to ward off opposition and danger, but the woman has been created to surround that man and protect his heart. Even single women – every man that crosses your path should feel better when he is in your presence.

WHAT IS A HOUSE?

It wards off the elements.

It covers you in times of rain, storms, heat, cold, snow, anything that could affect your health.

It keeps you warm in the winter and cool in the summer. It harbours all of your possessions and keeps them safe.

It gives you safe boundaries and consistency – you return to the same place every day.

It provides access to others, as people know where to come to find you.

It offers you a place to feed, rest and even cleanse yourself.

As a wife, a godly woman, the man in your life should feel that his heart, his secrets, and his emotions are safe with you. You should be his haven of consistency, the one who is always there, and the one he can always count on. He knows what to expect from you because your character is so sound.

He should have access to your heart, your softness, your reassurances and your counsel all the time, and vice versa. You should be his oasis. He should be refreshed in your presence. Nothing can bring him more joy or pain than to be welcomed or spurned by the woman he longs after.

S OF SOL 4: 9, 10 *You have ravished my heart and given me courage, my sister, my promised bride; you have ravished my heart and given me courage with one look from your eyes, with one jewel of your necklace. How beautiful is your love, my sister, my promised bride! How much better is your love than wine! And the fragrance of your ointments than all spices!*

THE FOUNDATION

A house is not a home until the feminine touch has been applied. To build a good, solid house in which a man can feel at home, you need to begin with a **sound foundation** of TRUST.

Virginity on the wedding night lays a strong foundation to begin with. Her “fountain” is for her husband only (Proverbs 5). A man needs to know he can trust his woman – hide his heart, his dreams and his secrets with her.

THE FRAME

Prudence will keep a house firm no matter what is going on within its walls.

PROV 19:14 *House and riches are the inheritance from fathers, but a wise, understanding and prudent wife is from the Lord.*

PROV 12:23 *A prudent man (woman) is reluctant to display his knowledge, but the heart of self-confident fools proclaims their folly.*

PROV 13:16 *Every prudent man (woman) deals with knowledge, but a self-confident fool exposes and flaunts his folly.*

Prudence and wisdom walk hand in hand. Prudence is the frame, wisdom is the roof.

PROV 8:12 *I, Wisdom from God, make prudence my dwelling, and I find out knowledge and discretion.*

It is **God's purposes** that supply the **mortar** that keeps the whole house standing. It is our relationship with Him that furnishes us with true wisdom.

PROV 9:10 *The reverent and worshipful fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight and understanding.*

There is something special about a woman who masters the art of gently leading her man to see reason and to make wise decisions for her house. Art is not about manipulation. It's about possessing an understanding of the subject and the appropriate technique of rendering.

PROV 9:1 *Wisdom has built her house; she has hewn out and set up her seven perfect number of pillars.*

Wisdom keeps the house in order and covers it from all forces that threaten to destroy it. What are the **seven pillars** that make it able to withstand the storms of life and relationships?

1. Prudence
2. Knowledge
3. Discretion
4. Counsel
5. Sound Judgement
6. Understanding
7. Power

PS 127:1 *Except the Lord builds the house, they labour in vain who build it; except the Lord keeps the city, the watchman wakes but in vain.*

Dear Heavenly Father, You are the Potter, and I am the clay. Build my house. Furnish it with the fruit of the Spirit. Fill it with the aroma of Your anointing. Decorate me in wisdom and virtue, that I might be a sanctuary to all who dwell in my presence. Grant me the gift of discernment to truly listen and hear the needs of others. Teach me the ways of women according to your original design. Strengthen me to withstand the tests of storms and trials.

Help me to stand fast when the very foundations of all I believe in and hope for are shaken. As I stand fast in Your promise to be the Cornerstone that stands firm in my life, make me an oasis, a quiet place and a haven for the hearts of those You send my way.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

6. THE STRENGTH OF SUBMISSION

Because many women have partners who are not submitted to God, submission becomes an even more horrifying concept. You are not expected to submit to abuse or other things that clearly violate the Word of God.

You must trust God as your ultimate covering, even over your mate or whoever is your authority. For the unmarried, this applies as well. Your pastor, father and employer are your authorities.

Submission is a command to everyone, men and women alike. Until we see submission as God's instruction to become vulnerable enough to receive, we will fail to recognize that submission is an invitation to be blessed.

The word "submission" is not synonymous with "door mat". Your cooperation is required in submission. You have to decide to go along with another person – you have merely decided to walk in agreement.

If you can submit to the authority in your life, even when everything in you is screaming that this direction is not the wisest choice, God will give those in authority the grace to see their own mistakes. They'll love you more because you didn't point them out and they'll be more open to your counsel the next time round.

Submission calls for you to be open to direction, emptying yourself of all your own ideas on the subject to make room for other possibilities.

Submission is personal. It's between you, God and your authority. It's not an open forum for everyone else to give their opinion. It will be easier for you if it is a private affair.

PRIDE AND SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS

Some of us need to submit to the knowledge of what is really in our hearts before we can move to the next stage of blessing. Pride will keep us from coming clean with God. Self-righteousness will keep you from experiencing the flow of God's cleansing and liberating power. It is that power that enables us to submit to the wishes of men.

If the words "I am sorry, I was wrong" are words you find difficult to say, while "I told you so" comes easily, consider the state of your heart. It is probably not ripe for submission and the blessings that come with it.

JER 17: 9, 10 *The heart is deceitful above all things, and it is exceedingly perverse and corrupt and severely, mortally sick! Who can know it? I the Lord search the mind, I try the heart, even to give to every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings.*

DEUT 8:2 *And you shall remember all the way which the Lord your God led you these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and to prove you, to know what was in your mind and heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not.*

Submission is not only a test of our love for Him; it is a test of our strength. Sometimes its hard to submit – but it must always be voluntary. God will never force us to do anything. He has given each one a free will.

CONFIRMATION

When God speaks a word to a woman, He will confirm it in the spirit of the person in authority over her. Sometimes it can take a while before the message gets through to your authority figure, but that does not mean that they cannot hear from God. It might be a timing thing. Maybe God is using him to slow you down until it's really time to run with the plan He's given you. God will always back up a woman when He has given her a word to speak. Women need to pray for the sensitivity of their men to the Spirit of God.

The Lord is well able to put the man in your life under arrest if he hinders God's move in your life with his actions or words of unbelief. It is not your job to convince him of what God said or to talk down to him when he doesn't get it. There's no need to tell him he needs to get saved or become spiritually deeper. If God did speak to you, He is able to follow through on His own word and to do whatever it takes to bring that man into agreement while He brings His Word to pass. You must just remain in the right attitude and let God fix the situation for you. To move ahead of that man's agreement will set you up for **deception** and all sorts of trouble.

When God tells you to speak, He has no problem being your enforcer. You won't have to demand your way.

WOMEN BEING SILENT IN CHURCH?

1 COR 14: 33-35 *For He Who is the source of the prophesying is not a God of confusion and disorder but of peace and order. As is the practice in all the churches of the saints, the women should keep quiet in the churches, for they are not authorized to speak, but should take a secondary and subordinate place, just as the Law also says. But if there is anything they want to learn, they should ask their own husbands at home, for it is disgraceful for a woman to talk in church, for her to usurp and exercise authority over men in the church.*

1 TIM 2: 11-14 *Let a woman learn in quietness, and entire submissiveness. I allow no woman to teach or to have authority over men; she is to remain in quietness and keep silence in religious assemblies. For Adam was first formed, then Eve; And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman who was deceived and deluded and fell into transgression.*

Now, now ladies, calm down! I'm getting ready to fix this for you. Let us look at the context of Paul's statement. He had just finished giving the Corinthian church a rundown on orderly conduct during their services. He had found that everyone was talking all over one another. Everyone had a prophecy, a song, a revelation, a tongue, an interpretation, an instruction.

Everyone was so excited about all these new spiritual gifts and revelations they were having that they were being downright rude to one another! The women, who had not been formally trained in matters of the Bible up to this point, were thrilled to finally be let into this arena. They were excited, too. As they learned they realized that they had things to share along with a lot of questions. In addition to this, many of the women were beginning to challenge the men as they grasped this new information. Keep in mind that in Corinthian society, women had not been allowed to confront men in public. Now, finally, they were free. But those still new in their faith found it disconcerting to see women asking questions and challenging some of the teachings. Therefore, Paul told the women to ask these questions at home and to not take advantage of their new freedom so as not to cause consternation among those who weren't yet grounded in the faith.

As for the second passage, again I must clarify that Paul was speaking about a specific church that was having a lot of trouble. The Ephesian church had a problem with an influx of false teachers. The women of the church seemed to be most susceptible to the false teachings because they had not yet acquired enough Bible knowledge to be able to discern the truth. At this point, they were all baby Christians who had not been privy to studying the Scriptures before now. Yet here they were challenging those who had been studying for years and in some cases were promoting false teachers and revelations that were in error! The men had a jump start on them (mirroring the order of creation – Adam first, then Eve, who was deceived). Therefore, the women needed to sit down and learn from those who were qualified to teach them without disputing what they heard. A little bit of knowledge can be dangerous. These women needed to acquire the full truth along with understanding, experience, and Christian maturity. The word “silent” here in the Greek expresses an attitude of quietness and composure. **A different word is used to communicate complete silence.** These women also seemed to be having an issue about wearing inappropriate clothing. This was a situation where abuses of new freedom were abundant and had to be corrected. This increasingly became a problem across the board as churches began to spring up, causing this to become a universal mandate to women everywhere. Therefore, Paul was instructing Timothy not to put any of the women in leadership positions because of their inexperience and susceptibility to deception.

Everyone was clamouring for leadership positions in the Ephesian church, so Paul took the time to lay out the requirements for all of them everywhere. Based on their behaviour, he made it painstakingly clear – even with the men – that Christian maturity, sound moral character, and a pure and blameless life coupled with great faith and sound doctrine were requirements that could not be negotiated.

Paul was no way, no how, saying that women should not be allowed to speak in church. How could he when earlier in the same letter to the Corinthians, giving instruction for public worship, he addressed the matter of women praying and prophesying in public?

1 COR 11: 5, 6, 10 *And any woman who publicly prays or prophesies (teaches, refutes, reproves, admonishes and comforts) when she is bareheaded dishonours her head (her husband); it is the same as if her head were shaved. For if a woman will not wear a head covering, then she should cut off her hair too; but if it is disgraceful for a woman to have her head shorn or shaven, let her cover her head. Therefore she should be subject to his authority and should have a covering on her head as a token, a symbol, of her submission to authority, that she may show reverence as do the angels and not displease them.*

Let's face it – she wasn't prophesying to herself. So you tell me what's going on here. Does Paul really instruct women to cover their heads as a sign that they are under authority when they pray and prophesy in public, and then turn around and tell them not to speak in church? I don't think so! Paul knew too many women holding substantial positions in churches to have this type of attitude. If these women were doing anything responsible, they had to interact with and relegate to men as well as women. We know that Priscilla, along with her husband, Aquila, taught Apollos. Phoebe was a deaconess. Mary, Tryphena and Tryphosa laboured hard for the Lord. Euodia and Syntyche worked side by side with Paul, contending for the faith.

The note I must make here is that all of these women in leadership positions had a visible authority to who they were in submission. They were not just hanging out in the wind, running off to minister uncovered.

Even I am under the authority of my pastor as I travel and speak. To go out uncovered would be dangerous. When I make a breakthrough in spiritual understanding in a certain area, I run it by my pastor, my husband and other mature men in Christ to make sure I have received the understanding in balance and harmony with the Scriptures. I check and cross check before I go sprinting off to deliver the Word, no matter how wonderful it might sound to me. Remember, women are the ones the serpent targets first for deception because of the power of influence we possess. Remember when God appointed Deborah as judge over Israel? She was still a woman in submission. But this brings up another interesting point. Would God place a woman as leader of a nation, and then ban women from speaking in church? This would be a great contradiction. No, God has given women too much to say, too many incredible revelations to share, to subject them to silence.

I must interject here that women can deliver everything that God has given them to deliver while still maintaining their femininity. We are not to "dress" like men, in the sense of feeling that we have to be like men when we get up to deliver a message. We have our own unique way of serving things up that is extremely effective. There is no need for you to feel that you have to out-preach a man, or even preach like a man. You must simply give the Word. When the food is good, people eat. In this no one is offended. Paul was merely saying that, at the end of the day, it was crucial that women remained under the protective covering of authority even in this area. So let's not blame unclear understanding or, in some cases, overblown egos on Paul. This is the same Paul who said that there was no male or female, Greek or Jew, okay? Women were free to lift up the Body with the gifts God had given them, in an orderly fashion. However, they were not to challenge the men in public or teach others when they had not acquired enough knowledge to do an effective job. There is a time and a place for everything in order to keep peace.

SO, WHEN SHOULD YOU BE SILENT?

When you differ with a man in a public setting, or when your disagreement makes that man vulnerable to ruin or disgrace before his peers and family. This should apply to anyone, male or female. However, there is nothing more degrading and pathetic than a woman embarrassing a man in public. No one likes to see a henpecked man or a man disgraced by a woman in a crowd.

You cannot be feminine in this world unless you completely understand how covered by God you are. Then you will no longer react to men, but respond to His voice. You must master the art of timing, speech, inflection, movement – you name it, it all plays a part in the bottom line resolution to a situation.

HEB 13:17 *Obey your spiritual leaders and submit to them, continually recognizing their authority over you, for they are constantly keeping watch over your souls and guarding your spiritual welfare, as men who will have to render an account of their trust. Do your part to let them do this with gladness and not with sighing and groaning, for that would not be profitable to you either.*

Just remember: *When you walk in submission, the person who is your covering is held responsible for you. If you walk out from under that covering, you are the one who will get wet.*

Maybe you have been doing things your own way for a long time, and though you are weary, letting go is a scary proposition. But, let go you must. Let go of the reins. Let go of the idea that you must control everything in your world or nothing will happen. Let go of the concept that you have to be tough in order to gain respect and influence people. It's just not true. You can be your soft, warm, wise, feminine self and still get everything accomplished. Appeal to the heart of the one in authority – **don't demand**.

The phrase “the head of the woman is the man”, is not about supremacy. It is an indication that the man is to be the source of the woman.

After all, woman was taken out of man, the source of her existence, just as man is from Christ and Christ is from God. Authority bears responsibility. This is the boundary that forces the one in authority to make good choices for all involved. Authority makes things run smoothly. Submission makes them run even smoother. It is not a matter of inferior versus superior; it is simply a matter of order and function. **Submission is mutual commitment and cooperation to achieve the greater end.**

EPH 5:21 *Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ.*

Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for being my covering. As I rest beneath Your care, help me to keep my faith focused on You and not on the weakness of the arm of flesh. As my knowledge of You grows, strengthen my capacity to yield to authority, keeping in mind that in actuality I am yielding to You. As I am tempted to go my own way, do my own thing, and take matters into my own hands, grant me a revelation of You sitting on the Throne, still in control of every area of my life. Help me to rest in the knowledge of Your care for me. Increase my trust in You to break my fall when others let me down. As I look to You to be my rear guard, to instruct me when to speak and when to be silent, please show up on my behalf.

And in times when I hold my peace, grant me a visitation of Your Spirit to calm my fears.

Lord, I want to be the woman You have called me to be, completely available and yielded to You, to Your direction, for the completion of Your purposes and Your ultimate glory. Lord, here am I, an empty vessel. Come and fill me with Yourself as I surrender my all to You.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

7. THE POWER OF INFLUENCE

Influence is more powerful than authority, because influence is a heart thing. The gift of influence is the invisible power that women overlook – the ability to affect the heart of a man in order to change his mind.

PROV 27:19 *As in water face answers to and reflects face, so the heart of man to man.*

We must be willing to lovingly plant the right things in the heart, nourish the spirit without pressure, and then stand back and see the right decisions burst forth from that person. Unfortunately, all of the wrong people seem to have grasped the power of this secret weapon of influence, and the gift has been misused. Influence at no time should overstep its boundaries and manifest itself in the form of manipulation.

Manipulation is likened to witchcraft, and God will never bless it because manipulation is an attempt to control through soulish means someone or something over which you don't have authority. Manipulation strikes at the heart of man through **intimidation** or **seduction**, thus coercing subjects to respond according to your desire and against their will.

Rebellion and **witchcraft** also include (Gal 5:20):

- Debauchery
- Idolatry
- Hatred
- Discord
- Jealousy
- Fits of rage
- Selfish ambition

- Dissensions
- Factions
- Envy
- Drunkenness
- Orgies

These are all the works of the flesh.

Witchcraft is compared to rebellion because it forces someone to bend to another person's will other than God's. For you to set up circumstances, manipulating situations to get your way is only a clear indication that either your desire is not of God or it is not yet time for your wish to be granted. To move ahead of God always creates problems only seen in hindsight.

Queen Jezebel is the personification of manipulation – people got hurt, people died and the judgement of God fell upon her house.

Usually a woman with a manipulative spirit has no respect for the person she decides to “help”. In her mind, she now has to clean up another mess that this idiot has made. But she secretly likes to see the person down-and-out. She will even go as far as to plant seeds of disrespect in the hearts of others around the person in order to secure her position as controller. She will destroy the reputation of her husband to clear the path for herself. It is in this atmosphere that she can set herself up as the rescuer. She likes to look as though she saved the day. This builds feelings of **dependency**. No one would dare replace her, even if they couldn't stand her, because she has convinced them that they need her in order to function.

With this groundwork laid, she meticulously does her dirty work beneath a cloak of behind-the-scenes deception. She will use the name of the person she is “helping” to further her agenda. This ensures that the fallout doesn't fall back on her. She plants her seeds of dissension well, waters them with promises of reward or threats of retribution (whichever works best) and sits back to view the final outcome. When the explosion comes, she wipes off her hands, stifles a yawn and moves on...next!

The woman with a manipulative spirit is usually good at mastering the outer traits of femininity as well as a very convincing show of being religious. She surrounds herself with fake prophets, those who will speak what she wants to hear.

She is always in control, has a select group of cronies around who is only convenient as long as they carry out her wishes. She is comfortable with praying, fasting or any other outward religious shows. She hates these things in their pure form. She hates the true prophets of God. She wants to silence them.

Manipulation justifies making yourself happy at the expense of others and results in hatred, discord, dissensions, factions, fits of rage, etc. Manipulation intimidates and divides to conquer. Though it may work for a season, the final result if never pleasant.

PROV 28:10 *Whoever leads the upright astray into an evil way, he will himself fall into his own pit, but the blameless will have a goodly inheritance.*

Another example of manipulation is **Delilah** with Samson. Her speciality was **seduction** – using her eyes, her lips, her hands, her body and her perfume. It was a total woman thing. She drugged Samson with her femininity, slowly squeezing the life out of him by extracting the secret of his strength.

EXAMPLES OF TRUE FEMININITY

1. Esther
2. Abigail
3. Pilate's wife

PROV 31: 10-12 *A capable, intelligent, and virtuous woman – who is he who can find her? She is far more precious than jewels and her value is far above rubies or pearls. The heart of her husband trusts in her confidently and relies on and believes in her securely, so that he has no lack of honest gain or need of dishonest spoil. She comforts, encourages, and does him only good as long as there is life within her.*

Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for the extraordinary powerful gift You've given me – the gift of influence. Teach me to wield it well. Make me mindful of Your Word as I exercise my gift. Keep me in remembrance of Your purposes in my life, as well as those whom You put within my sphere of influence.

Help me never to abuse the hearts and wills of others. Let me know when I have crossed the line to manipulation. Lead me by Your Spirit, that I might know when to plant and when to let go in order for You to water and bear the increase in the lives of those around me. As I yield myself to Your leadership, help me to yield to those whom You have placed over me. Help me to do it joyfully. Open my eyes to see the reward of submission.

And, Lord, with those who make it difficult to follow Your design, move in a special way and give me a testimony of victory.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

8. GOING OVER HIS HEAD

Sometimes our own insecurities can cause us to demand things from men that are not humanly possible for them to give.

When the man in our life doesn't seem to assist us in being fruitful – be it pregnancy, financial assistance or just plain happiness – why do we still feel empty and unfulfilled, even after marriage?

There is a place in our hearts that only God can fill. It is important for us to understand the revelation that fruitfulness comes from the Lord, not from man. God's command to Adam and Eve in the Garden was to be fruitful and multiply. The individual call was to bear fruit; the mutual call was to multiply. God would meet them in the process and add to what they produced.

Fruitfulness is where our true contentment lies, and God Himself makes this possible.

LEV 26:9 *For I will be leaning toward you with favour and regard for you, rendering you fruitful, multiplying you, and establishing and ratifying My covenant with you.*

We cannot blame anyone but ourselves for our lives being barren of fruit. God has commanded us to be fruitful. He has equipped us to be fruitful, whether single or married.

No human being should affect your fruitfulness, unless they are adding to it by provoking you to greater good works. If they are subtracting from you, causing your fruit to wither or grow bitter, you should reconsider why you associate with that person.

WHAT HAPPENS WITH MEN IN OUR LIVES WHEN WE EXPECT THE IMPOSSIBLE FROM THEM?

Is your husband or the desire for a man in your life taking the place of God? Are you making demands he can do nothing about? Is there a void in you that is robbing you of the happiness that could be yours regardless of your circumstance?

Many of us expect the man to produce peace, self-worth, validation or even material things. God is ultimately our source of all these treasures. We will strive, weep and deprive ourselves of opportunities to live a full life if we put our hope in a person to fulfil our expectations.

When our sights get set on the arm of flesh, we will always be let down. Man can only do so much, but God can do any and everything. It is not a man who will make our lives fruitful, but rather our own yielding to God's call to fulfil our purpose through the use of our gifts and talents. We must live for the moment, making the best of every occasion to lift the spirits of those around us – then our world will change for the better. We will become more joyful and productive.

WHAT HAPPENS WITH MEN IN OUR LIVES WHEN THEY FAIL TO STEP INTO THEIR GOD-ASSIGNED POSITION?

“If I don't do this or that, it won't get done!”

Until you create a void for him to fill, he will not rise to the occasion. Sometimes a man needs to acquire a limp to find his place in God. Keep your expectations in tact; let him know that you expect him to be the man he's supposed to be. Follow that through by leaving the space for whatever he is supposed to be doing vacant. Do not rescue him from his own negligence.

THE HEARTS OF THE FATHERS

Especially when it comes to your children, it is important that you allow your man room to step up into his role. Make your needs known to him and then step back. Man craves respect and praise. “I need” are good words to use with men because they have planted in their spirits a God-given drive to fix things and to restore order. If a man feels like you’ve got it covered, he will allow you to take the whole ball and run with it.

Therefore, step back and let a man rise or fall on his own. This is where the muscles of character are built.

We don’t like to watch the struggle. It looks too painful, but don’t stop the process. God holds Adam accountable as He held Adam accountable to fulfil his entire call as a man. He gave men certain strengths that women do not possess and vice versa.

Dear Heavenly Father, I must admit that I have allowed myself to be swept away by my own expectations. I have invested misguided hope in a man when my hope should have been in You. You alone are my source of peace and joy. You alone can make me fruitful in a way that is pleasing to You and fulfilling to me. As I cast my cares upon You because You care for me, open my eyes to see Your willing participation in my life on a daily basis, even in the little things. I have nowhere else to turn and I am so weary. I admit that I am filled with disappointment, frustration and resentment. At times I am even angry with You as I begin to buy into the lie that You have failed me. It is really I who have failed myself by demanding more of myself than You do. Help me to relax and let go. Increase my trust in You to take care of the things for which I feel falsely responsible. Grant me the wisdom to know when I should take hold and when I should let go. Guide me by Your Holy Spirit and do not let me fall prey to my own fearful instincts. As I rest in You, keep that which I have committed into Your hands, now and evermore.

In Jesus’ Name, Amen.

9. UNDERSTANDING PRAISE

How do two people lose their way in a relationship?
Communication breakdown.

What bridges the gap between them? Understanding.

Men need appreciation, honour, respect...worship in a sense.

We have been made in God's image and it is natural for all of us to seek praise and adoration.

Men don't usually handle criticism well; they just flee until you get over it. If it occurs too often, they just avoid you altogether and go elsewhere in search of praise.

Watch your mouth! The power of changing how that man relates to you lies in your hands and in your tongue.

Praise blesses and liberates people. To withhold praise is to punish. It is to render the other person to the deepest depths of insecurity, misery and meaninglessness. Withholding praise can be a subtle case of manipulation.

Praise is as much for you as it is for the other person. It is your way of reminding yourself why you are blessed to have this person in your life. It releases you from harbouring past hurts or slipping into bitterness. It stirs up the desire within that person to be the best that he can be for you. He doesn't want to let you down.

THE ORIGIN OF WORSHIP

Sex is a type of worship. Adam and Eve were holy and pleasing to God. They were naked and unashamed.

After the fall, they ran for cover. The cover conceived separation, separation nurtured secrets and secrets evolved into mistrust and blame, which gave root to isolation.

From there, isolation gave root to territorialism, and territorialism gave birth to war = war between the sexes. Even after men and women married, the war continued. The invisible weapons of warfare would strike at the inner core of one another's beings.

Sex is one natural parallel to the spiritual act of worship. The spiritual act of worship began with the atonement process – the path of offences had to be cleared before encountering a Holy God (purifying the body, the shedding of blood, entering in Holy of Holies bearing burning coals and incense to present to the Lord). We confess our sins, repent and turn away from sin, never to revisit it again.

When a man has hurt or offended a woman, his first instinct is to make love because it is difficult for him to express remorse effectively. It is his way of saying he's sorry.

In many ways, the woman reflects God's heart. Everything about her body is fashioned to nurture life – her breasts give milk, her arms hold and comfort and her womb carries and gives birth to living souls on the earth.

But, like God, she finds it hard to receive from man when she is offended. Her body is in a sense like the Holy of Holies. The offences that stand between us must be cleared away.

VIRGINITY

Purification in the natural begins with bathing, preparing your body to be pleasing to your partner.

Women bleed at the first sexual encounter – this is the passage through the blood in the natural. Virginity is a type of the best sacrifice. The burning coals and incense are now replaced by the passion, appreciation and praise you shower on one another throughout your intimate encounter.

You are totally yielding, giving everything you have, everything you are, to one another – completely pouring out but being filled at the same time. This is worship in its purest form.

There is also wrong worship – Aaron’s sons died when they offered the wrong fire and incense before God. Sex outside of marriage brings death to our spirits, as well as to our sense of well-being; also physical death (AIDS, abortions, etc).

1 COR 6: 13, 18-20 *Food is intended for the stomach and the stomach for food, but God will finally end the functions of both and bring them to nothing. The body is not intended for sexual immorality, but is intended for the Lord, and the Lord is intended for the body to save, sanctify and raise it again.*

Shun immorality and all sexual looseness; flee from impurity in thought, word or deed. Any other sin which a man commits is one outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit Who lives within you, Whom you have received as a Gift from God? You are not your own, you were bought with a price. So then, honour God and bring glory to Him in your body.

Single women must learn how to worship God – this will fulfil your need for becoming one with another as a single person. It will help your struggle to walk in a life of purity. Worship will help you get through those difficult times. If you don’t direct your worship toward God, you will direct it elsewhere. That is what Satan hopes for. He comes to steal worship from singles by causing them to fall into sin.

From the beginning, Satan’s whole mission was to steal worship and praise in any form. He comes to steal, kill and destroy your praise and worship to God and the worship in your bedroom.

So, he will give you a headache, cause your husband to be insensitive, influence the kids to cause upset, use the circumstances of the day to wear you down – whatever it takes! He wants to shut down the ministry of worship in your home. Sex was not just created for multiplying. It was created to release tension, re-centre your soul back to the garden, make the world and all its trouble fade away and reinstate the oneness between man and woman.

It parallels the act of communion, the joining of your spirits as you partake of Christ in the symbolic receiving the bread and the fruit of the vine, absorbing Him fully. In this we are healed, made whole again, saturated with His life within us.

PROV 5: 18, 19 *Let your fountain of human life be blessed with the rewards of fidelity, and rejoice in the wife of your youth. Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant doe, tender, gentle, attractive – let her bosom satisfy you at all times, and always be transported with delight in her love.*

S OF SOL 4:10 *How beautiful is your love, my sister, my promised bride! How much better is your love than wine! And the fragrance of your ointments than all spices!*

S OF SOL 7: 8-10 *I resolve that I will climb the palm tree; I will grasp its branches. Let your breasts be like clusters of the grapevine, and the scent of your breath like apples, and your kisses like the best wine – then the Shulammitte interrupted, that goes down smoothly and sweetly for my beloved shepherd, kisses gliding over his lips while he sleeps! She proudly said, I am my beloved's and his desire is toward me!*

Sex is worship; it is communion; it is ministry; it is a marital duty ordained by God. To withhold it in order to punish your mate is sin. Get rid of the offence. Talk, communicate, let your husband know your needs. Influence him to become a better lover. Don't lecture him! Let the learning lesson be fun. Let God instruct you on how to please one another.

PROBLEMS WITH INTIMACY

Several things could be the cause:

1. Mental conditioning: When you were growing up, sex was spoken of as a “dirty thing” and you were never taught to see it as a celebration according to God's design. Sex was a deep, dark secret, something you **had** to do in marriage, so you would just grind your teeth and bear it when the time came.

2. Sexual abuse: God **can** heal your heart and your mind and make the beauty of His design for sex a reality to you.
3. It can also be a **physical problem**: Hormones, etc.

BLESSINGS

“When the praises go up, the blessings come down.”

As our worship goes up to God, He opens the windows of heaven and pours out blessings we won't have enough room to receive.

So, determine to worship, for God's sake, for your husband's sake and for your own sake.

Press past feelings.

Press past anger.

Forgive and forgive again.

Press past the weariness.

Press past the veil of your own previous perceptions and enter into the place of blessing.

Respond to your husband as unto God, and God will meet you there and bless you both.

As incense lingers in the air long after it has finished burning, so will your worship in the bedroom fill the rest of your home and affect the lives of your children as they bask in the security of the love they see between you and your husband.

Dear Heavenly Father, as I bow before Your throne, teach me to worship. In thought, in word, in deed, teach me to worship. In every way, teach me to worship. Release my tongue to render praise, to give honour where honour is due. Fill me with delight every time I bless someone with praise. Help me to help others celebrate the gifts and the blessings You grant to all of Your children. Forgive me for using praise and worship as a tool of punishment by withholding them.

Cleanse me from anger and the pain of offences. Help me not to hold grudges and seek to strike back at the hearts of those who wound me, whether knowingly or unknowingly. Help me to cleanse myself and pass through the Blood once again, as many times as it takes to release me from everything that binds me from being free to worship. Guide me to the Holy of Holies. Surround me with Yourself as I lift up praise and honour to You. And as You engulf me with Your Spirit, help me to share that which You release over me with others I encounter when I leave Your intimate presence. Let me take You with me throughout every room of my home, my work place and anywhere my feet touch.

Give me the unction to render praise.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

10. THE REWARD OF VIRTUE

The Proverbs 31 woman was called a virtuous woman.

“Virtuous” means **excellence**.

“Virtue” means **force**.

You, as a woman, never have to demand respect – just be excellent. No one can argue with excellence. Excellence is a force because excellence demands respect. A woman of excellence is a force to be reckoned with.

The Proverbs 31 woman planned her work according to her understanding of her purpose. She recognized the **seasons** in her life, and she embraced them.

Here’s the secret: She understood that you can have it all; you just can’t have it all at the same time. This releases you to live in the moment and to enjoy it fully.

Seasons

- Career building
- Nappies and baby formulas
- Marriage adjustments
- Etc.

ECC 3: 1, 11 *To everything there is a season, and a time for every matter or purpose under heaven.*

He has made everything beautiful in its time. He also has planted eternity in men’s hearts and minds, yet so that men cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.

One who has a sense of destiny and purpose stays centred, awaiting the cues that lead her to the next situation. To live your life according to what you or those around you think you should be doing, is to live a life of frustration.

But as you seek God to find out His expectations of you from day to day, you will find yourself released to rejoice in exactly where you are. Sense the power of your position.

God plants us where we are needed. As we respond to His call and apply ourselves to what He has placed before us, we become a “force” to be reckoned with.

So be free to be feminine. Rejoice in being everything you were created to be as a woman. Revel in it. Get all excited about it! Celebrate your **uniqueness**. Embrace your **softness**. Cherish your **tenderness**. Delight in your **warmth**. Enjoy your laughter. Discover the beauty of your tears. No matter what size you are, appreciate every curve, every roll, every bump, every line. And then lift up your eyes heavenward and worship the One Who loves you the most!

***Dear Heavenly Father,** thank You for creating me just as I am – a complex and incredible woman. Forgive me for the times I have allowed myself to forget who I am and why I was created. Create in me the heart of a woman as You ordained it to be. Restore to me the joy of my femininity. Impart a spirit of excellence in me that I might be a force in my home, in my church, in my community and in my world. Help my hands to always heal, my arms to always comfort, my spirit to always nurture, my words to always edify and my nature to always serve.*

Let my presence always be an oasis for those who gather in my shade. Teach me to render praise. Grant me the heart of a true worshipper. Heal the broken places within me and sever me from my past afflictions. Renew my mind and liberate my soul to rise again in spite of all past hindrances. Instruct me in the way of Your Word that I might be the woman, the sister, the mother, the wife and the influence You’ve caused me to be.

Help me to remember at all times that all I do and all I say is ultimately for Your glory.

In Jesus’ Name, Amen.