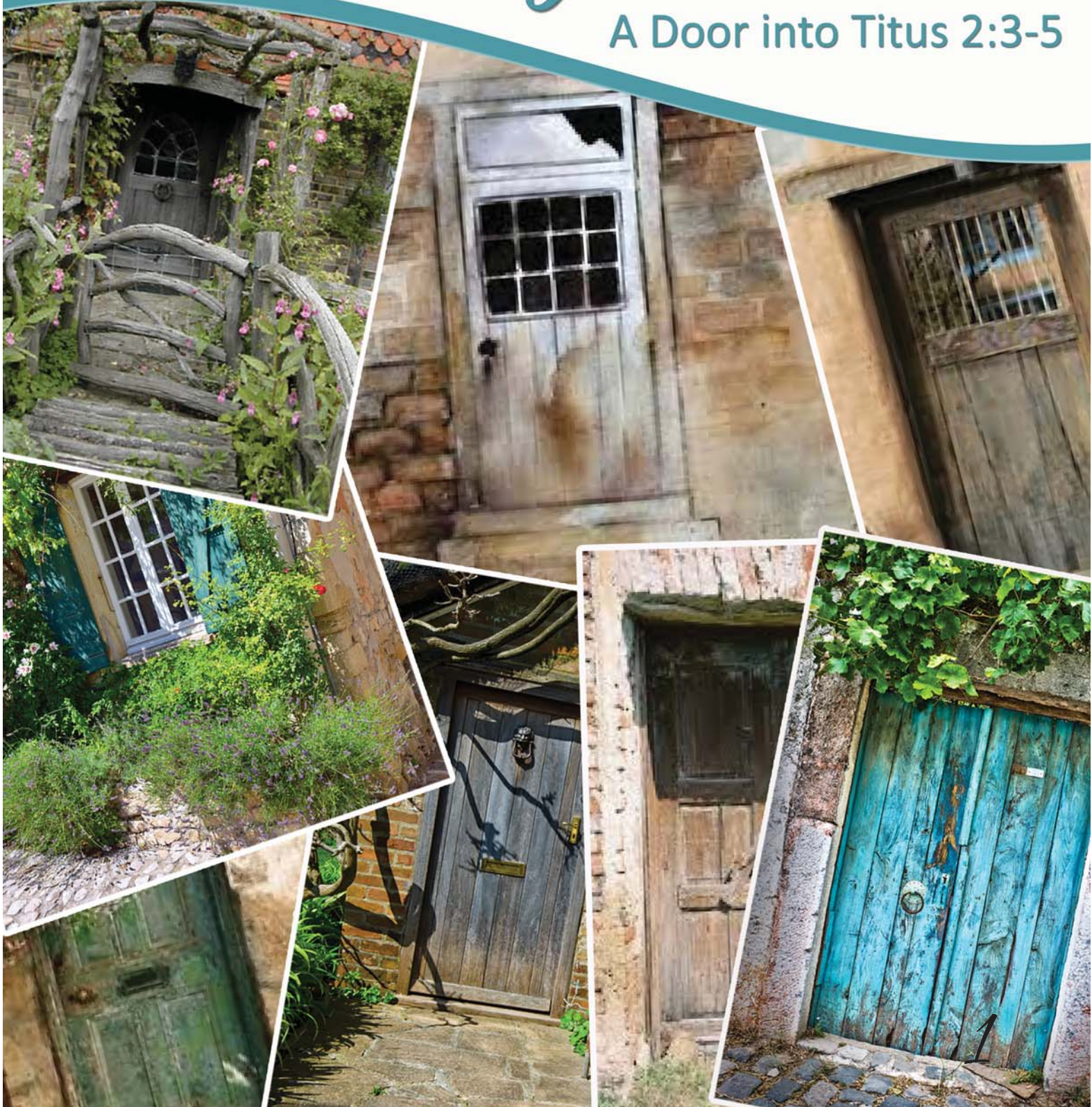


# Women of the *Heavenly Father*

A Door into Titus 2:3-5



*Dear Sisters,*

*Each of this study's four topics include an introduction, five days of study/ meditation, and a page of discussion questions for WOW Groups or discipleship-relationships. It is our prayer that as we work through this study we may grow to more closely reflect Jesus Christ our Savior.*

*FFC Elders Wives*

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# Women of the Heavenly Father

A Door into Titus 2:3-5

## *Awed*

1. Standing in Awe
2. Bowing in Reverence
3. Thinking Worshipfully
4. Speaking Worshipfully
5. Living Worshipfully

## *Beloved*

1. Reflecting God's Patience
2. Wearing Love Well
3. Relying on God's Steadfast Love
4. Practicing God's Love
5. Manifesting God's Love

## *Governed*

1. Empowering Self-control
2. Growing Pure
3. Managing Home
4. Extending Kindness
5. Embracing Submission

## *Persuaded*

1. Awakening Transformation
2. Tasting Satisfaction
3. Adorning God's Doctrine
4. Fulfilling our Parabolic Purpose
5. Shining God's Glory



# Awed

**W**e live to be awed. We passionately pursue awe. Of course the way we do so is unique to each of us, but in each of us, deep within our hearts, the desire for awe stirs. Something, as they say, floats our boats.

- \* Kitty climbs Adirondack mountains. All winter long she stays fit so she'll have strength and energy to make it to the top. That moment at the top, where she has a birds-eye view of the world, takes her breath away.
- \* Lindy saves her pennies so she can buy fancy frappuccinos from a coffee shop. One sip and the sweetness of those java chips on her tongue, the bite of espresso, and she is ready to save her pennies for the next one.
- \* Nettie ignores pain and difficulty for that moment of holding another newborn, all fresh and wet and helpless. The feeling of awe, as bright little eyes gaze up at her and tiny fingers clutch hers, is worth it all to her, though every moment of the rest of her life is changed.

*"On the glorious splendor of your majesty, and on your wondrous works, I will meditate."*

*Psalms 145:5*

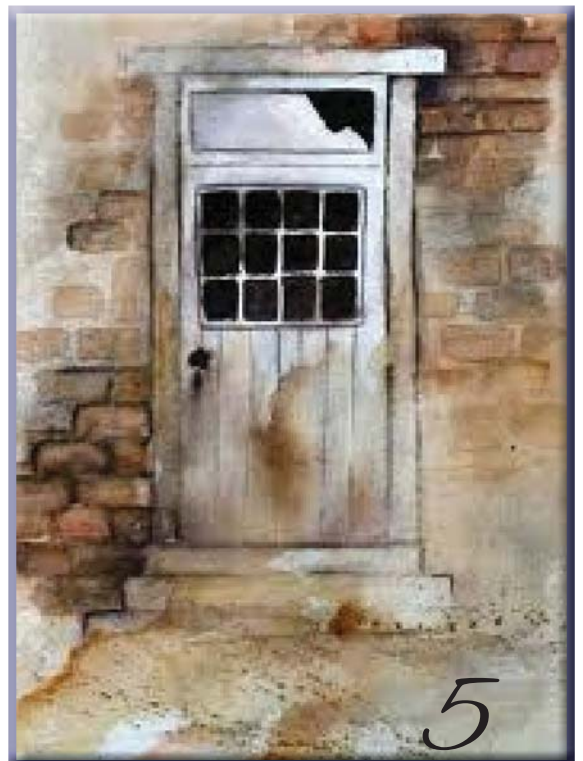
We live for awe because that's the way God made us. Our awesome God created us with ability to notice and appreciate and be stirred by the wonders of His creation. He calls us to awe. Reverent behavior does not flow from rule-keeping or grit and determination, rather reverent behavior reveals a woman awed by God.

*"Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not slaves to much wine."*

*Titus 2:3*

- \* Better to be crippled with awe of God, than able to climb mountains or run races.
- \* Better to have less but be filled with God, than all the treats imaginable.
- \* Better friendship with God, than earth's sweetest relationships.

Are you in awe of God? This week we're going to study how desire for Him can become our greatest pursuit in life.



# Day 1 Standing in Awe

*"By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and by the breath of His mouth all their host. He gathers the waters of the sea as a heap; he puts the deeps in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him! For He spoke, and it came to be; He commanded, and it stood firm."*

*Psalm 33:6-9*

Fill in the blanks below from the verses on the left, Psalm 33:6-9.

Let all the earth \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the world \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_ of Him.

What motivation is given as the reason why we fear God and stand in awe of Him?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

God's incredible creation is reason to stand in awe of Him. According to Psalm 33:9 and Hebrews 11:3, on the right, how did God create the world? \_\_\_\_\_

*"By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible."*

*Hebrews 11:3*

Maybe it works better for you than me, but it's not that often that the things I speak come about. Many ideas I've expressed, even with great enthusiasm, have been shut down by practicality or impossibility. How about you? Or, have you, like me, ever commanded a child to do or not do something, only to have him or her disobey? But with God, every single word He utters happens. Including creation of this world, and, even more amazingly, our salvation.

What does it mean to stand in awe?

- \* Thoughts of awe take notice of God's amazing creation and ongoing, daily grace.
- \* The attitude of awe is an attitude of gratitude, recognizing that all things are from God.
- \* Words of awe acknowledge God's wondrous word and ways.
- \* What demeanor does awe take? Awe chooses joy.

Take a few moments to reflect on ways you have been awed by God. Write down at least four reasons why you personally stand in awe of God: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Day 2 Bowing in Reverence

*And Hannah prayed and said, "My heart exults in the LORD; my horn is exalted in the LORD. My mouth derides my enemies, because I rejoice in your salvation. "There is none holy like the LORD: for there is none besides you; there is no rock like our God. Talk no more so very proudly, let not arrogance come from your mouth; for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed. The bows of the mighty are broken, but the feeble bind on strength.*

*1 Samuel 2:1-4*

**W**e can learn a lot from Hannah's prayer. No prayer is prayed in a vacuum, rather the cries of our hearts flow out of the contexts of our lives. Consider what Hannah had endured before praying this prayer.

- \* Hannah lived in a house with Peninnah, who "provoked her grievously to irritate her." Imagine, every day in your own kitchen, encountering deliberate meanness.
- \* Hannah had longed for a child. With deep distress, weeping bitterly, she had begged God for a son. When Eli the priest saw her, he accused her of being drunk.

We would say that Hannah had reason for bitterness. And indeed, she acknowledged her enemies right from the get-go, but not bitterly, for she considered her enemies in light of God's knowledge (the LORD is a God of knowledge) and His justice (and by Him actions are weighed). Do you have reason for your heart to hurt? Or course. We live in a sin-cursed world. God wants us to pour out our hearts to Him, all the while remembering His knowledge and justice. How does Ecclesiastes 12:14 echo this truth? \_\_\_\_\_

Let's note two more things from Hannah's prayer.

**H**annah, in the midst of oppression and despair, turned for help to the completely reliable and unchanging Rock, her Refuge. In 1 Peter 5:7, what does God command, and why? \_\_\_\_\_

*"Casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you."*

*1 Peter 5:7*

**H**annah bowed in reverence. Fill in the blanks from 1 Samuel 2:4: "The bows of the mighty are broken, but the \_\_\_\_\_ bind on strength." Bowing in reverence requires humility.

Let 1 Samuel 2:3, which says — "Talk no more so very proudly, let not arrogance come from your mouth" — reverberate in our thoughts. God knows, and He will judge. It is in humility that we bind on strength.

- \* To study this truth further, consider 2 Corinthians 12:7-10.

# Day 3 Thinking Worshipfully

*"Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not slaves to much wine."*

*Titus 2:3*

Reverent behavior flows from reverent thinking. Titus 2:3 carefully points out that a woman who is reverent in behavior is not controlled by a mind-altering substance (not a slave to much wine). By the grace of God, she controls her thoughts in the power of the Holy Spirit, rather than relying on other habits. The list below mentions a few habits which, if we persist in them, evidence mind-enslavement.

- \* The use of mind-altering substances such as alcohol or anti-depressants.
- \* Inordinate involvement in time-wasting habits such as Facebook or computer gaming.
- \* Irresponsible habits, such as unnecessary shopping (on-line or in stores), eating too much, or not eating enough.

Read Ephesians 5:18-20 on the right. What is to replace "addictive" habits? \_\_\_\_\_

*"And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."*

*Ephesians 5:18-20*

What a wonderful truth! Our awesome holy God wants to fill us with His Spirit, so that our thoughts praise Him and we have a song in our hearts!

*"Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."*

*1 Thessalonians 5:18*

In 1 Thessalonians 5:18 (to the left), we are commanded to control our minds to give glad thanksgiving. Whatever you are enduring, it is the will of God for you. Thinking worshipfully requires thankfulness in all things. Below are three realities for thankful women. Would those people closest to you describe you in the following ways?

- \* My overriding attitude is joy in the Lord.
- \* I am defined by resolute trust that God will bring good from every circumstance.
- \* I don't need pills or other outside influences because I rest in God's sovereignty, even when bad news hits.

If you are a woman of joy, trust, and rest in the Lord, thank Him! If not, why not seek support in a true Titus 2:3 "older woman" who can provide encouragement through prayer and example.

# Day 4 Speaking Worshipfully

**W**orship is to honor with extravagant love and extreme submission (Webster's Dictionary 1828). I (Randa) understand myself well enough to know that these are not traits "I come by honestly". I know God loves me and loved me first and therefore teaches and gives me the ability to worship Him in my speech.

*"But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."*

*Romans 5:8*

**I** remember back to my childhood and being raised in the Lebanese Orthodox church. Every Sunday was a battle for my mom. My brothers hated wearing a suit and having to go to church and sitting through the service. If I can speak honestly here, the best part of church for us was the coffee and donut hour immediately following the service. Every single Sunday you would find my mom at the same table having coffee with the same woman. I would get my donut and quietly work my way over to my mom's table. I knew better than to interrupt or speak unless spoken to. Many times I spent my time trying to understand their fast Arabic.

As I was eating my donut my mom turned to me and explained the most beautiful story I had ever heard. With big eyes I was so excited to be brought into this conversation. Mind you we did not know Jesus at the time but I have never been able to forget this story. You see the older woman was the priest's mother. She was always in church seated in the same pew. When there came a part of the service when her son would walk around with incense and give communion, she would lift her weak body and sing a prayer and praises in Arabic. My mom explained to me that this beautiful older woman loved reading her Bible. It was her most prized possession. She read it when she was happy, sad, fearful and just needed a friend. Jesus was her one true friend.

I am not sure why, but she became blind. She could no longer see to read her beloved book. BUT God was faithful! His word was stored in her heart and she could recall Scripture after Scripture for whatever the day brought. I was in AWE. She spoke of His faithfulness in her life as not only a widow but a blind widow. He was her sight. He gave her breath. He gave her joy when she knew people just looked at her as a poor old woman and did not want to bother with her. He was enough and her speech was all about Him.

**W**hen I think about speaking worshipfully, the Lord brings to mind this precious woman who used her words to show the love of our Lord in her life. That story has never left me. I check myself with it often. How are my words?

- \* Are they edifying?
- \* Are they encouraging?
- \* Do they look out for the better of another?
- \* Are they sincere?

Choose today to think differently. Choose today to think of Christ's goodness and follow in His steps with speaking worshipfully. It will benefit not only you but all those around you.

# Day 5 Living Worshipfully

A woman who is reverent in behavior lives worshipfully. Her choices, priorities, and actions flow from a heart of obedience.

There is no worship of God, no love for God, apart from obeying His commands. (John 14:15) Jesus demonstrated perfect obedience. John 14:31 records Jesus saying, "I do as the Father has commanded Me, so that the world may know that I love the Father."

In 1 John 3:23-24 on the right, what marks the life of a Christian woman? Fill in the blank: "We believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and \_\_\_\_\_ one another, just as he has commanded us."

*"And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us."*

*1 John 3:23-24*

Jesus final prayer for us (John 17:11) included this plea: "Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one." Loving unity amongst Christians in the church is a key aspect of worshipful living.

We have seen that living worshipfully demands three things:

- \* Obedient keeping of God's commands, the greatest being that we love God and others.
- \* Love for one another in the church.
- \* Unity in the church. As women we play an important role in respectfulness toward church leadership.

*"Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity! ... For there the LORD has commanded the blessing, life forevermore."*

*Psalms 133:1,3*

Consider Psalm 133 on the left. Where does God command blessing? \_\_\_\_\_

If you open your Bible and read Psalm 133 in entirety, you'll see that the author stretches his imagination to describe the beauty of unity. Better than your favorite body lotions and perfumes. Better than a lovely garden well-watered and blooming luxuriously.

List three ways in which you personally, by living worshipfully in obedient love for others in the body, can further unity: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Awed Women Discussion

- 1 **STANDING IN AWE**—Share reasons why you personally stand in awe of God (please refer to page 6).
- 2 **BOWING IN REVERENCE**—In times of oppression or bitterness, we have a choice—either bow in reverence, or be in bondage to bitterness. What turns us from bitterness to worship?
- 3 **THINKING WORSHIPFULLY**—Share ways in which you personally have learned to turn your thoughts to thankfulness. How do you remember to be thankful in good times? How do you choose thankfulness in difficult times? How would others know we are thankful?
- 4 **SPEAKING WORSHIPFULLY**—We learned that worship means to “honor with extravagant love and extreme submission.” In what ways do your words need to change in order to be a woman who speaks worshipfully?
- 5 **LIVING WORSHIPFULLY**—In what ways can you grow to increase your influence towards unity?



# Beloved

**D**o you remember the first time you had a feeling of “gotta keep this thing alive at all costs”? When I (Ruth) caught my first frog, some protective mania took hold of me. At all costs, that frog did not belong to my friend Naomi. No way! I found a box, brought it home, held it so tight at first chance it jumped as far away from me as it could. In retrospect, it is a bit frightening, the sense of extravagant possessiveness that came over me about that frog.

I felt it again, except over a baby, when my aunt and uncle adopted a sweet infant daughter. At all of ten years, I thought myself better equipped to hold her than my aunt. For about three hours I refused to give her up, until Mama Bear rose up in my aunt and she insisted I hand her over.

New moms, holding a wet, new, squirmy body feel an amazingly extravagant, protective possessiveness. The things this feeling does! It makes you drip milk, makes you stop wearing mascara, makes you start wearing non-matching shoes (I’m not the only one, am I?).

All these earthly feelings are nothing compared to the extravagant love God has lavished upon us. Turn to Isaiah 53:10-11 and read about what satisfies God—our prospering and being made righteous at the expense of Christ’s crushing. The Father is satisfied by what the darling Prince of Heaven humiliated Himself to do for us. Why? Because we are His possession.

Whether you’ve known an earthly feeling of loving or being loved isn’t the question. Whether you had parents who loved and protected you doesn’t really factor in here. The reality is, God has lavished His love and grace upon you. He loves you. He is jealous for you. He calls you beloved.

*“They are to teach what is good and so train the young women to love their husbands and children.”*

*Titus 2:4*

As God’s maturing women, He calls us to love and teach love. Belonging to Christ means we know His loving forgiveness, His extravagant mercy. As we grow in Christ, we must take seriously the good discipline of loving those whom God has entrusted us, and that includes the hard ones—first husbands, then children.

*“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”*

*John 3:16*



# Day 1 Reflecting God's Patience

*"The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. He will not always chide, nor will he keep his anger forever. He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us."*

*Psalms 103:8-12*

Throughout the Old Testament, God is consistently described as merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love. David describes this aspect of God in Psalm 103 to the left. He deals with an important question: "How does God's gracious slowness to anger affect the wrath we deserve from Him?"

Once we recognize that sin is dark, hideous, and horrendously evil, we begin to fathom the depth of God's patient love. Take a moment to reflect on the indescribable culmination of God's love—God, who detests sin and must pour out His wrath on evil, freely chose to condemn His own Son to a horribly gruesome death deserved by you and me, to purchase our pardon.

As women, when we see the effects of war, neglect, or abuse on children, we are appalled. We understand that if God is love, He must detest these evils. We cry for just vengeance on the perpetrator. To see such wickedness and say, "It's fine," is to say we don't care, which means we don't love. God is holy, therefore sin goes against His very nature, He abhors it and cannot tolerate it. God's perfect justice demands wrath. All the same, while God is love, He is not wrath. Love is an attribute of God, while wrath is an action of God that flows from His perfect love.

*"The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance."*

*2 Peter 3:9*

God is patient toward us, as we read in the verse to the left. Fill in the blanks: "God is not wishing that any should \_\_\_\_\_ but that all should reach \_\_\_\_\_." We all deserve God's wrath. As Isaiah 30:15 explains, we are saved in repentance, not by works which we have done, but as we rest and trust, by grace through faith. In Mark 1:15, Jesus said, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."

God pours out His wrath not as a first response, but only after much patience, warning, and chance-giving. God sacrificed Himself to be able to offer mercy. Further, Christ waits patiently, delaying His return and the day He will rule in total power. God is graciously patient!

If we love, we imitate God's gracious patience. Wrath is not our job. It is never our place to take vengeance when sinned against. Rather, we are to bless (Romans 12:19-21, 1 Peter 3:8-11). Our job is to trust God to pour out His wrath on evil and to proclaim the Gospel that holds back God's wrath in gracious slowness to anger.

# Day 2 Wearing Love Well

When I (Carole) was ready to embark upon my adventure as a college freshman, my dad sat me down to have “a talk.” He wanted me to clearly understand that he and my mom would help with my expenses. However, if I was going off to college to “make a fashion statement” they would not be financially supportive. It was interesting that this should be the topic for “the talk”, seeing as how up to that point most of my clothes my mom had made, or I wore blessed hand-me-downs. I suspect that I had a very perceptive dad, for which I am thankful.

Have you checked your wardrobe lately? Spring is coming and you do want to be in vogue, don’t you? And how about accessories? You know what they say! Accessorize, accessorize! But wait!! There’s another wardrobe that also bears checking. This wardrobe is spoken of in Colossians 3:12-14. Let’s take a “look see.” (Amish expression).

*“Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.”*

*Colossians 3:12-14*

The Fashion Designer in these verses refers to us as “Beloved”. This is used in reference to only believers. God is trying to teach us about His kind of love, we being the objects of His special love. He directs us to the essential pieces of Christian apparel that we are to wear—compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience. These garments, to be worn by the child of God, are always appropriate and always in season.

Paul, in Colossians 3:1-11, gives us motivation for pursuing the life of a well-dressed Christian. If we have been raised up with Christ, we have died to ourselves and our lives are hidden with Christ in God. On the great reckoning day, it will not be our sins that are revealed, but rather God’s glory. As those whom God has chosen, holy and beloved, we will put on the clothing of one named “Beloved.” Over the next few days we’ll be studying these garments.

The first “godly garment” is compassion. How does your garment of compassion look? Are you wearing this well, as did the Good Samaritan in Luke? He acted! If you are lacking in compassion, it may be that you have made it “all about you.” Pray, and ask God to reveal a lack of compassion in your life. Write down two acts of compassion you are going to put on today. Come back to this page tomorrow and check off that you completed them. \_\_\_\_\_

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# Day 3 Relying on God's Kindness

*"Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved... kindness..."*

*"When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, 'It may be that Joseph will hate us and pay us back for all the evil that we did to him.' So they sent a message to Joseph, saying, 'Your father gave this command before he died: 'Say to Joseph, 'Please forgive the transgression of your brothers and their sin, because they did evil to you.'" And now, please forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father.'" Joseph wept when they spoke to him."*

*Genesis 50:15-17*

Joseph sets a great example of kindness, our next garment mentioned in Colossians. His brothers expected him to hate them and pay them back for the evil they had done. But Joseph didn't! Neither was he demanding or pushy. What request did the brothers send to Joseph after his father died? Treating others with kindness could lead to repentance.

Titus 2:5b calls us to kindness. If you are a mom, likely you too cringe at the memory of a child cowering before your unkindness. If married, we are first to love our husbands, then our children. Yet, are we as easily convicted about unkindness towards our husbands?

To help us think about kindness, let's step back and consider the great kindness of God. Read the verse on the right aloud. Have you experienced God's kindness according to His mercies? Take a moment to write a few words of gratitude here: \_\_\_\_\_

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Because of God's great mercy, He extended kindness to us. If we've experienced the kindness of God's mercy, we want to extend it to others. Are your words tempered with grace and tenderness? Do you extend mercy? Remember, treating others with kindness could lead to repentance. WOW! What a garment!

- \* To help us wear the garment of kindness, let's memorize Ephesians 4:32 and meditate on it numerous times throughout the day.

*"When the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared toward man, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy, He saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life"*

*Titus 3:4-7*

*"Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."*

*Ephesians 4:32*

# Day 4 Practicing God's Love

*"Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved... humility, meekness, and patience..."*

How is your garment of humility looking, or has it been shoved to the back of the closet? A humble person submits as did Christ in Philippians 2:10. To what extent did Christ humble Himself? \_\_\_\_\_

*"And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."*

*Philippians 2:10*

*"Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God."*

*Colossians 3:2-3*

We may not be asked to be obedient to the point of death, but we are to see ourselves as dead to self and hidden in God with Christ. How does the teaching of Colossians 3:3-4 assure that we will be able to wear the garment of humility which we are to put on? (Colossians 3:13)

*Humble love for others requires Christ-sufficiency, rather than self-sufficiency.*

As we address the garment of meekness, we once again can look at Christ. Plato used the word gentle/meek of a doctor who used only enough force in setting a broken bone to bring healing. So the meek person will sometimes be strong, to confront sin, as opposed to overbearing, thus to promote healing.

*Meekness in loving others is sometimes strong, when it promotes healing.*

Oh, my! Do we really want patience in our wardrobe? This word relates to how we respond to people, not circumstances. Only in God's strength can we pass the patience test. Maybe this is in the back of the closet also?

*Only in God's strength can we pass the patience test.*

Write down one specific way in which you personally, will practice God's love in wearing the garments of humility, meekness, and patience.

*Humility* \_\_\_\_\_

*Meekness* \_\_\_\_\_

*Patience* \_\_\_\_\_

# Day 5 Manifesting God's Love

*"... bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive..."*

**T**ake note, from the above passage, what we are able to do by being properly attired—  
forbear, forgive, and love one another. I can't imagine not wanting this wardrobe.

*"The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness."*

*Lamentations 3:22-23*

Reflect for a moment on Lamentations 3:22-23. What stands out to you about God's love? Write down what strikes you as amazing, or rewrite the verse in your own words: \_\_\_\_\_

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\* Because God loves you, He is ready and waiting to lavish you with mercy, every single day. We are all desperate for that daily mercy, since we sin every day. In our fallen world, we're constantly tempted to respond with agitation, anger, and animosity instead of forbearance, forgiveness, and loving mercy. Yet, what does Christ call us to in Luke 6:35-36? \_\_\_\_\_

*"But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful."*

*Luke 6:35-36*

\* What is to be the limit of our mercy? \_\_\_\_\_

\* We are to be as merciful as our Father is merciful toward us—never ending, new every morning, and greatly faithful.

**W**e give tremendous amounts of time and attention to styles. Styles change almost overnight. However, the wardrobe spoken of in Colossians was in style in the 1st Century and continues to be in style today. Christ was so beautifully attired in the garments spoken of here. He longs for us to wear these garments as well. In Matthew 11:29, Christ says "Learn from me." Let's purpose in our hearts to do just that; learn from Him and wear His godly garments, always appropriate and always in season.

# Beloved Women Discussion

- 1 **REFLECTING GOD'S PATIENCE**—Do you find it hard to reconcile love and wrath in your thinking? Talk about the cross and how it reveals that God's wrath pours out of His love.
- 2 **WEARING LOVE WELL**—From page 15, share an act of compassion to which you committed. Share how they evidence that it is God working in you.
- 3 **RELYING ON GOD'S STEADFAST LOVE**—Recite Ephesians 4:32 aloud together. Turn to Titus 3:4-7. Read it and discuss how those verses bring about Titus 3:8-9 in our lives.
- 4 **PRACTICING GOD'S LOVE**—Share a specific way in which you personally are working on humility, meekness, or patience.



# Governed

**P**raise the Lord for opportunities to reflect and grow!!! While praying about what to write the Lord not only answered but also allowed more opportunity to put into practice what He has been teaching me for years. Over the years He has shown me (Tammy) that the way I react to trials or times of confusion can set the tone for how those around me react. As mothers we see this on a daily basis. If our children get hurt we can make the situation better or worse by our reaction, thus teaching our children how to respond.

*"...to be self-controlled, pure..."*  
*Titus 2:5a*

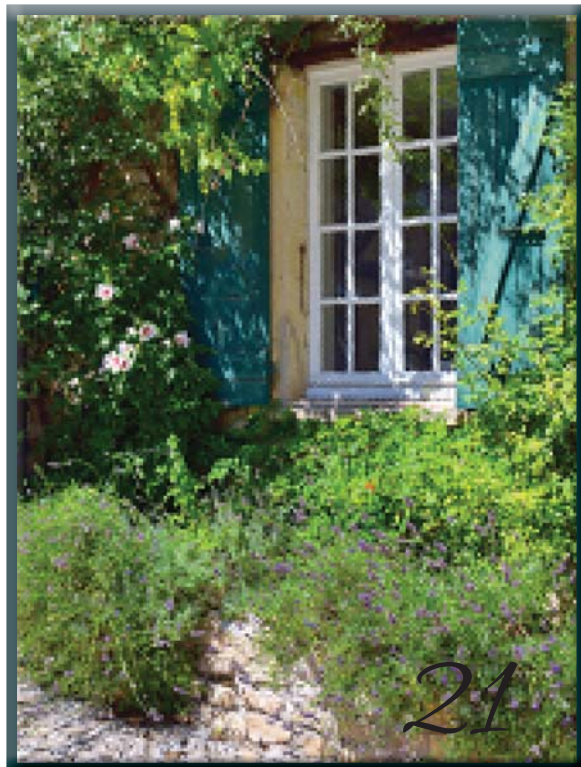
Do I remain calm in the midst of the storm? When thinking about this question I thought, well, yes, I do (I'm humble also but that's another subject all together). I need to be careful and always pray whenever a storm arises, and ask the Lord to guide my response. He always has and always will. Even times like this week, when twice I was faced with how much I need Him to guide me and lead. I need to pray that I will be calm in my reactions, and be an encouragement to my family. When we remain calm and pray before responding, we have a greater opportunity to show and tell what the love of Christ has done in our lives

*"Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words."*

*Romans 8:26*

While undergoing chemo, I learned what it means to have the Holy Spirit intercede for me. I had been a Christian for many years but never really felt that intercession until one night in the midst of my therapy. I was in a great deal of pain and not thinking clearly. I could not sleep and was very distraught. The Holy Spirit laid on my heart to pray for myself and others.

I started to pray for myself and then turned to praying for my family members. I could not think straight but I felt the Holy Spirit interceding for me. I knew from the Scriptures that He was changing my thoughts and words into sweet words to my Lord. Before I knew it, I was sound asleep and comfortable. My attitude had gone from victim to victor in Christ.



# Day 1 Empowering Self-Control

As humans, as women, we are emotional beings created in God's image (Genesis 1:27). We experience emotions such as compassion, anger, joy, fear, and sorrow on a daily basis (as Tammy pointed out on the last page). While emotions themselves are not bad, we must guard against allowing our emotions to rule us. This requires the self-control we read about in Titus 2:5a.

*"To be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled."*

*Titus 2:5*

For almost all women, there are days when we more easily succumb to sudden irritability, irrational emotional vulnerability, or just general crabbiness. It's exactly those days when we need to remember, and remind one another, about the power of walking in God's Holy Spirit.

*"For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace."*

*Romans 8:6*

In Romans 8:6, on the left, when our inner man is characterized by life and peace, what is our mind set on? \_\_\_\_\_

When our spirit is not controlled by life and peace, our mind is set on the flesh. Ask the Holy Spirit to intervene for you, as He promises in Romans 8:26.

It takes a relationship of humble trust in God to calm and control our thoughts in tough situations. David taught the Israelites a song about this, a lovely picture of a woman whose hidden person of the heart is described in 1 Peter 3:3-4, as adorned with:

- \* The imperishable beauty of a gentle spirit. A gentle spirit is not proud, but humble, meek.
- \* The imperishable beauty of a quiet spirit. A quiet spirit is calm and at peace.

Read Psalm 131 to the right. What's going on in our hearts when we calmly and quietly place our hope fully in God? \_\_\_\_\_

David understood that when we stress out, worry, or experience uncontrolled inner turmoil, we are prideful. We are not fully reliant and trusting in the God who has provided the solution to our problem. In what situations in your life have you evidenced a prideful heart, because you have been unable to control yourself to hope in God? \_\_\_\_\_

*"A song of ascents, of David. O LORD, my heart is not lifted up; my eyes are not raised too high; I do not occupy myself with things too great and too marvelous for me. But I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with its mother; like a weaned child is my soul within me. O Israel, hope in the LORD from this time forth and forevermore."*

*Psalm 131:1-3*

- \* From this time forth and forever more, will you confess pride and hope in God? \_\_\_\_\_

# Day 2 Growing Pure

The word “pure” used in Titus 2:5 (*hagnas*, ἁγνᾶς) seems to refer to something even deeper than the very important issues of modesty and sexual morality. To understand the meaning of pure (*hagnas*), let’s look at how it’s used in other passages.

*“To be self-controlled, pure...”*

*Titus 2:5*

*“And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.”*

*1 John 3:3*

From 1 John 3:3 on the left, please fill in the blanks. “Everyone who hopes in God purifies (herself) as \_\_\_\_\_ is pure.” We have quite a standard for purity, don’t we! Who is our model for purity?

To married women, 1 Peter 3:1-2 says that when a wife is being treated sinfully by her husband, it is not her words that will win him, but rather her respect and purity (ἁγνᾶς). Don’t miss the connection with what we studied yesterday about self-control. Emotions that spin out of control tremendously impact purity within the marriage. How do you speak with your husband in the privacy of your home? Do you show him respect? How do you treat your husband outside the home? Do you talk about him in judgmental ways to your friends? A married woman must guard against the corruption of disrespect toward her husband. A wife’s disrespectful words and behavior—nagging, complaining to others, speaking of his habits or lack of attention, not submitting to his headship—will very quickly erode away at the purity of a marriage, causing pain and hurt to her husband and creating barriers in sexual intimacy.

- ✱ When a man and a woman become married, two become one (Ephesians 5:31). 1 Corinthians 7:2-5 teaches that a pure wife gives her body to her husband. In marriage, sexual intimacy and affection are expressions of love that must not be withheld. A wife bears responsibility to give intimacy to her husband. However, this does not mean that a wife is entitled to hold a lack of intimacy over her husband’s head. Instead, she is to win her husband’s affections through pure conduct and respectful behavior.

Another impactful use of the word pure (*hagnas*, ἁγνᾶς), is found in 2 Corinthians 7:11. With godly grief over our sin, the repentant one proves to be pure. Such innocent purity does not refer to never having sinned. Rather, it refers to godly sorrow that leads to repentance and deliverance. Take a moment to reflect on your own purity.

*“In every way you showed yourself pure in the matter.”*

*2 Corinthians 7:11 (hcsb)*

- ✱ If married, are you faithful in the sexual relationship with your husband?
- ✱ If unmarried, reflect on your purity in conduct and behavior.
- ✱ Have you been convicted of any areas in which you need to repent and ask forgiveness? Let 2 Corinthians 7:10-11 wash over you as you confess your sin. You can prove to be pure in the matter. Please remember and be encouraged that this purity is not your own strength. It is by the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit who has unlimited power.

# Day 3 Managing Home

What exactly are maturing women supposed to teach younger women regarding their home? “Working at home” in Greek comes from two root words. *Oikos* (οἶκος) refers to the house. *Ourgous* (οὐργους) is rooted in the word *ergon*, or work. But what does it mean to *ergon* (work) in your house? In other biblical usage, *ergon* refers to business, employment, occupation, or enterprise. *Ergon* speaks of a specific act, deed or thing accomplished or achieved, by hand, art, industry, or mind. With this understanding in mind, if we dare say, “I don’t work,” are we not denying a God-given role?

*“To be...working at home...”*  
Titus 2:5

*“Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men,”*  
Colossians 3:23

Read Colossians 3:23. How would you describe a biblical work ethic?

The Bible does not limit our work to the home (Acts 16:14-15, Proverbs 31:16). Titus 2:5 clarifies that our *first* work is our homes. But none of us, wherever we work, may approach our days with anything more or less than a biblical work ethic.

Scripture provides quite a lot of detail for us in regards to “working at home,” whether we are married or unmarried. Take a moment to read Proverbs 31:10-31. These verses teach what a man is to look for in a wife with regards to the home—industriousness, studiousness, wakefulness, generosity, kindness, preparedness, optimism, and creativity. Married women work toward those things, motivated by what it means to her husband’s reputation (Proverbs 31:23, 1 Corinthians 11:7).

Do you think the imperatives of Titus 2:5b and Proverbs 31:10-31 an impossible burden? As Christians, we realize our inadequacy and our dependence on the Lord, and we rely on Him alone in our day-to-day struggle. We are transparent sinners. Our work at home will not earn us the label “good” or remove guilt for past offenses. Rather, it is a way we glorify God.

A completed reality frames the obedience we embrace. It begins with admitting that depravity threatens to darken every thought and task. It means believing that God righteously and lovingly responds to sin with wrath, and that Jesus bore the wrath we deserve when He carried our sins to the cross and rose victorious. This powerful dynamic inspires and encourages us to fulfill our role of working at home. Failure no longer leads to discouragement, but drives us to the relief of repentance and to the joy of working harder to look more like Jesus’ perfect righteousness.

Our work at home can create a safe haven, a place of peace for families, as we order well the family and household affairs. Which of the following would describe your work at home?

- \* I add to the chaos and clutter of my home, or, I bring a calm amidst the commotion of the day.
- \* I handle situations within the home impatiently, or, I am characterized by loving forbearance.
- \* I respond brashly to those residing in my home, or, I respond kindly and thereby create an atmosphere of love.

# Day 4 Extending Kindness

**K**indness is the quality or state of being kind. Treating people with kindness and respect. A kind deed: Favor. (Webster's Dictionary 1828)

At first I (Randa) thought of kindness as costing nothing. The more I prayed the clearer it became that kindness can come easily and cost nothing at times, but at other times it can cost more than we think we are able to give. Jesus extended kindness to a fallen world that spit and scoffed at Him. What an example He is to me when I am hurt or rejected by another. What an example to keep my eyes on what is important when someone is speaking or behaving unkindly.

One of my favorite sayings is "spread kindness like confetti". Confetti gets into everything and goes everywhere. It is even hard to find and pick up. When an act of kindness is given you never know how far it can be spread. I remember when Brian was in the hospital in 2007 with blood clots. I called my sister in Syracuse and told her he had flown home very sick and that I had never seen him like that before. He did not want me to leave his side, yet I was torn with the care for our children. Within 2 ½ hours my doorbell rang, and there stood my sister. She helped me pack up the children and took them to her home so I could focus on Brian. Kindness disrupted her day and took over her week. Without even a thought, she saw a need and acted on it. When Brian came home from the hospital we had dear friends tell us we could live in their home if things got bad. Kindness! They even told us they could give us their savings if we needed it. Kindness!

Displays of kindness are evident to me when I see forgiveness given, whether deserved or not. It is a choice I make as a follower of Christ. I choose to love unconditionally and am able to carry it through by following 1 Corinthians 13 in the power of the Holy Spirit. There is no doubt about this! First Corinthians 13:4 says love is patient first, then kind. Can you walk that path my sweet friends?

- \* Can you first pray and ask God to give you longsuffering patience and extend love to those who have hurt you or been rude to you?
- \* Did Jesus not do that for you at your very worst? Did He not give His life for you?

*"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."*  
*Ephesians 4:32 [NIV]*

You can do it. You can love those that are not kind. You can choose to do good to them and do it joyfully. You can extend kindness in your response. Wear it daily as you wear your clothing or make up. Let it add beauty to who you are. Let the world see a beauty that is so different from anything they have seen because it's Christ shining through you. Tell them He is your motivator. Tell them of His sacrifice and love for you.

Before you put your feet on the floor in the morning, ask Him for the opportunities throughout your day to extend kindness. Jesus told His disciples that they will be known as His by their love. Choose to extend kindness sincerely and lavishly.

- \* Watch your life be blessed by this gift.

*"By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."*  
*John 13:35*

# Day 5 Embracing Submission

God's plan for women includes submission as wives. All women, whether married or single, need to embrace this, as it clearly reflects God's heart. Yet we fight it tooth and nail, if not in our words, then in our attitudes.

*"To be ... submissive to their  
own husbands..."*  
Titus 2:5

Why would the enemy be so hard at work to help us disobey God's plan? Because a wife's submission is her opportunity to reflect the God in whose image she was created. The God who is one and manifests Himself in three persons with unique functions. A wife's submission to her husband imitates Christ's submission to the Father

*"But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God."*

1 Corinthians 11:3

Please read 1 Corinthians 11:3 on the left. Three different relationships of headship and submission are described in this text. Write them in the spaces below.

HEADSHIP

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---

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SUBMISSION

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When a wife falls under her husband's headship, who is she imitating? \_\_\_\_\_

We tend to make submission an issue that depends on the ease or difficulty of a particular marriage. But submission has little to do with us and our relationships, and much to do with Jesus. Submission is about imitating Him and being conformed to His image. When a wife submits to her husband, she does so "as to the Lord," not in reaction to the type of earthly leadership being provided. Our value, worth, or purpose is not about us and how we are being treated.

*"Wives, submit to your  
own husbands, as to the  
Lord."*

Ephesians 5:22

We are all called to be in submission to God the Father, whether married or not. If married, then submission to the Lord will result in submission to a husband. Even if he is not leading well, this is the way a wife helps her husband (1 Peter 3:1-2). Please note that submission never means physical abuse, that is another topic. Ultimately, the defining mark of Christians is that we extend mercy toward all men and women, whether they do or don't live out God's purposes (Matthew 6:14-15). The context of, and purposes of, submission begin with the gospel—mercy and grace. This is the picture of hope being painted by a wife who submits to her husband. Submission is a wife's opportunity to reflect the beauty and gospel of Christ before her children, her extended family, her world.

Today's final paragraph is for married women. Be courageous! Say to your husband: "Honey, please tell me one way I can submit to you better." Write down what you need to change here: \_\_\_\_\_

# Governed Women Discussion

1

**EMPOWERING SELF-CONTROL**—Read 1 Peter 3:3-4 aloud together, and share what you learned about a gentle and quiet spirit.

2

**GROWING PURE**—Read John 8:3-11. Discuss how this passage encourages you.

3

**MANAGING HOME**—Read the three bullet points at the bottom of page 24, and share ways in which God has taught you to bring calm, be characterized by loving forbearance, and respond kindly to create an atmosphere of love.

4

**EXTENDING KINDNESS**—Jeremiah 17:5-9 teaches that those who trust in man will not see good when it comes. Share ways in which you have experienced kindness.

5

**EMBRACING SUBMISSION**—Each share a specific way in which you need to grow in embracing submission (if married, then to your husband), then pray for one another.



# Persuaded

**I**t was an unusually warm day for the beginning of Fall. It was also our first day of cross-country practice. As I (Lisa) sat there on the ground slowly lacing up my sneakers, I was bemoaning the fact that I gave into the constant persuasion of my best friend who wanted me to try out for our high school cross country team with her. I discovered that cross country running is much different than running on a treadmill or around a track for that matter. My best friend, who runs like a gazelle, can finish practice in "lightening speed". I on the other hand, stopped multiple times to catch my breath and also tried to avoid hitting a tree as I trekked through the wooded path.

Needless to say, I finished at the end of the pack, and my friend was there to encourage me that each day would get easier. "Each day?" I responded to her. I profusely apologized and explained that my first day of cross-country practice would also be my last.

*"...love one another fervently  
with a pure heart."*

*1 Peter 1:22b*

Twenty-three years later, I ran my first half marathon, and the year after that a full marathon. Guess who joined me in the race and encouraged me all the way? My sweet friend, who is also my dear sister in the Lord! She stuck in there with me and lovingly persuaded me to keep going, finish the race, and give the Lord the glory for it all belongs to Him!

This is just a little earthly illustration of how someone, be it a friend or loved one, can persuade us to join them in something they may love to do and want us to be a part of.

**D**ear sisters, are we persuaded to love others and spur them on to run the "Heavenly race" that glorifies our Lord and Savior and not self? May we be found faithful to run according to Titus 2, so that we shine the "Gospel Torch" to the whole world!

*"They are to teach what is good, and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled."*

*Titus 2:3b-5*



# Day 1 Awakening Transformation

Are you familiar with Romans 12:2, where Paul calls us to transformation by the renewing of our minds? “Be transformed with the renewing of your minds.” The prayer of Moses in Psalm 90 awakens transformation in me (Ruth), as I memorize and meditate upon it.

*Psalm 90:1-2 — “A Prayer of Moses, the man of God. Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.”*

In 1975, at Eden Christian School, an excitable choir conductor attempted, unsuccessfully, to teach us a song, the words of Psalm 90:1-2. The operatic tune drew disrespectful giggles so that we never sang it well enough to perform, preferring a dramatic version of **Tom, the Piper’s Son** who stole a pig and ran away. Yet, God’s word never returns void. Over the years, the words “Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling place through all generations” have boomed in my mind, especially when my world seemed to be rocking and shaking with no secure dwelling place but the Lord.

*Psalm 90:3-11 — “You return man to dust and say, ‘Return, O children of man!’ For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night. You sweep them away as with a flood; they are like a dream, like grass that is renewed in the morning: in the morning it flourishes and is renewed; in the evening it fades and withers. For we are brought to an end by your anger; by your wrath we are dismayed. You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your presence. For all our days pass away under your wrath; we bring our years to an end like a sigh. The years of our life are seventy, or even by reason of strength eighty; yet their span is but toil and trouble; they are soon gone, and we fly away. Who considers the power of your anger, and your wrath according to the fear of you?”*

Two things. 1. The obvious: Life is short, soon over. 2. God is a God of wrath. In his 1924 diary, my grandfather bemoaned the fact that few consider the power of God’s anger. In 2017, we must also consider and accept God’s anger. This Moses knew to be the starting place of transformation, so that our few short days can pass in wisdom, satisfaction, joy and gladness, and generational purpose and favor.

*Psalm 90:12-17 — “So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom. Return, O LORD! How long? Have pity on your servants! Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. Make us glad for as many days as you have afflicted us, and for as many years as we have seen evil. Let your work be shown to your servants, and your glorious power to their children. Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands upon us; yes, establish the work of our hands!”*

Will you make this prayer your prayer today? Take a few minutes to read it aloud, inserting your name for “our” or “us/we” or “man.” If you will memorize/meditate on it, see how God uses Moses’ words to awaken transformation in you.

# Day 2 Tasting Satisfaction

*"Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days."*

*Psalm 90:14*

Read Psalm 90:14 (above). What is the way we can be satisfied? \_\_\_\_\_  
Some of us seek satisfaction in accomplishments or achievements. Our list may look something like this:

- \* Getting a 4.0 for your GPA, or obtaining a higher degree
- \* Having a book or article published
- \* Getting everything on our "To Do List" done
- \* Promoted to Vice President of a corporation
- \* Building your "dream" home

Some of us seek satisfaction in emotion. Our list may look something like this:

- \* Being in a good mood
- \* Receiving affection or affirmation from another person
- \* Feeling romantic goose bumps

These achievements, goals, or emotions in and of themselves are not bad. However, when we find our fulfillment or identity in them or even to the point of "tasting satisfaction" in what "I" have accomplished or what I am feeling, it spells out.... DANGER!!

The word "satisfaction" means fulfillment of one's wishes, expectations, needs, or the pleasure derived from. It can also be equated with contentment and gratification. In Psalm 17:15, what is the Psalmist referring to and when will he be satisfied? \_\_\_\_\_

*"As for me, I shall behold your face in righteousness; when I awake, I shall be satisfied with your likeness."*

*Psalm 17:15*

King David relishes in meeting His Lord face to face in glory! He longs to be in Heaven and can almost taste it! (Cross reference—1 John 3:2)

Speaking of tasting, name some ways in Psalm 63:5-6 (on the right) that our souls are satisfied by God: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*"My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food, and my mouth will praise you with joyful lips, when I remember you upon my bed, and meditate on you in the watches of the night;"*

*Psalm 63:5-6*

Take some time to be still before the Lord. Ask Him to reveal to you four areas in your life where you have "tasted satisfaction" in accomplishments or feelings. List them in the space provided:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Ask the Lord to ruin these for you. Ask Him to give you a taste of true satisfaction in Him. That's all it takes, and you'll know that no other delight, achievement, or emotion can ever satisfy.

# Day 3 Adorning God's Doctrine

**H**ave you ever thought about the legacy you would like to leave here on earth? In considering this topic, I (Tammy) was reminded of the pleasure of spending a great deal of time with both of my grandmothers. One was fun loving, always willing to travel, and loved to spend time with the family. Although she was from a worldly standpoint a great person, she did not live for the Lord until later in life. My other grandmother loved the Lord and led not only by words but also by example. She always bowed her head before every meal no matter who was there or where she was. She loved my grandfather and was a great example of being a biblical helpmate. Both taught me a lot about what is important in life, most of all that I will leave a legacy.

**T**he Bible specifically speaks to our legacy as women. The passage we've been studying, Titus 2:3-5, tells us that we can make choices which either hold high the Word of God or revile the Word of God. As you consider the options presented to us by God in His word, please consider the opposite and then fill in the blank with what Titus:3-5 teaches.

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

*Titus 2:3-5*

## REVILE GOD'S WORD BY:

- Disrespect towards authority
- Slandering others with my words
- Continuing in enslaving habits
- Loving differently than how God teaches
- Letting emotions, anxieties, or fears rule me
- Impurity
- Neglecting home
- Unkindness
- Rising over or rebelling against my husband

## HOLD HIGH GOD'S WORD BY:

- Reverent behavior
- Not slandering
- Not being enslaved
- Loving my husband first, then my children
- Being self-controlled
- Being pure
- Working at home
- Being kind
- Being submissive to my husband

**W**hat will our legacy be? Will those we know be able to say we pointed them to the Lord, that we led lives sold out to Jesus Christ and what He did for us? If we neglect Titus 2:3-5, all our other efforts will be in vain. In the column on the left above, check the ways you have reviled God's Word. Pray, asking God to forgive you and show you specific ways you can hold God's Word high. Write down one of these ways and share it with your group. Ask them for prayer and accountability: \_\_\_\_\_

# Day 4 Fulfilling Our Purpose

The original title for this day's study (except it didn't fit into the space), was "Fulfilling Our Parabolic Purpose." What on earth is parabolic purpose, you ask? Well, think about the way that Jesus taught. He told stories, parables, that presented a surprising lesson. As our Creator, He calls our lives to be living stories that present surprising lessons. We will consider one passage and the specific ordering of our lives to which we are thereby called. Though you may think this lesson mostly impacts the lives of married Christian women, both married Christian women and single Christian women are called to embrace the mindset from which such ordering flows. And, all mature Christian women are called to teach younger women to obey Scripture's teaching.

*"Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands."*

*Ephesians 5:22-25*

Please read Ephesians 5:22-25, on the left. Circle the little word "so." When wives submit to their husbands, it is as the \_\_\_\_\_ submits to Christ.

Wives should present a picture to of how the church submits to Christ as her head.

Think of how such submission would encourage the leaders of the church! They would see wives making tough decisions to order their lives according to divine logic rather than human logic.

Think of how such submission edifies the entire church body! Young believers are immersed in a counter-cultural atmosphere abundant with living examples of faithful submission to leadership. Church becomes a haven of right thinking in the midst of a society that eschews submission to authority.

Think of how such submission teaches watching children! They learn that there is an ordering, the ordering by which Christ's headship comes to fruition. They observe the ordering that characterizes the church, Christ's body of which He is the Savior. In a culture where submission is undermined, it is vitally important that women become such a living parable for their children.

If you are married, write down a prayer that names one specific area in which you need to grow in fulfilling your created parabolic purpose. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If you are single, write down a prayer that names one specific way in which you need to help a married woman to grow in fulfilling her created parabolic purpose. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# Day 5 Shining God's Glory

Throughout the Bible we read account after account of women fulfilling or denying their God-given role as women. We see submissive wives (Sarah), favor-playing moms (Rebekah), evil queens (Jezebel), wise wives (Abigail), business women (Lydia), and ministry supporters (Joanna). Ultimately they are either holding God's Word high or reviling it through their behavior and conduct.

What a treasure the Lord has given us in Titus 2:3-5, a list of specific ways we can shine God's glory by holding His Word high! He doesn't include an excuse clause for difficult situations. That means no exceptions. Disobedience reviles the Word of God. Obedience shines His glory. We tend to be highly sensitive to sinners in our lives who make obedience to commands like this passage difficult, and highly adept at ignoring our own sinful responses. By God's grace, Titus 2:3-5 invites a humbling self-assessment. Before reading through the following list, please take a moment to pray, asking God to soften your heart and give you grace to receive what He wants to reveal.

- \* Have I inspired reverence for God through my integrity and obedience?
- \* Have I complained, slandered, or listened to slander?
- \* Have I numbed or diverted unfavorable emotions rather than choosing joy and thankfulness?
- \* Have I ignored a younger woman's need for discipleship?
- \* Have I responded unkindly, denying the merciful kindness of God revealed through His Son?
- \* Have I failed to extend merciful, gracious love? If married, to my husband first, then children?
- \* Have I been slow to anger or have I allowed my emotions to rule my responses?
- \* Have I grieved God's Spirit through a lack of self-control of words, actions, or thoughts?
- \* Have I fallen to immodest or impure thoughts or actions?
- \* Have I justified a lack of submission to my own husband or person of authority?

A few words regarding singleness may be helpful here. Sometimes women think, "I'm not married, this isn't a text that applies to me," but such thoughts are incorrect. Titus 2:3-5 speaks to all Christian women. We all need to be maturing, and we all need to be able to teach what is good—training younger women in the ways we have studied. God calls women in every walk of life to strengthen one another in God, so as to honor God's Word.

While a humble, honest look at the magnitude of our own sinfulness can be difficult, it is the starting place to stop reviling God's Word. Jesus taught that self-righteousness would be the undoing of us (Luke 18:9, 13-14). The best place for us to be is acutely aware of our crippling sinful tendencies. Then, crucified with Christ, His Spirit empowers and enables us to desire, think, do, and say what holds God's Word high. For Christian women, these two antithesis are the pillars that under-gird the lifestyle described in Titus 2:3-5. On one side, we must be aware of the deeply pervasive tyranny of our sin. On the other side, we see how fully and completely we are redeemed. Then at the cross, we deny ourselves daily and glorify our Heavenly Father by our obedience.

# Persuaded Women

## Discussion

1

**AWAKING TRANSFORMATION**—How does considering the brevity of our lives and the wrath of God bring us to the need of Him being our dwelling place? Discuss how to grow in wisdom, in satisfied joy and gladness, and in generational purpose and favor.

2

**TASTING SATISFACTION**—Have you ever learned about the nutritional aspects of bones and the fat and marrow? Marrow is a delicacy in high end restaurants and comes with a high price tag. So it is with God's Word; a choice delicacy, that satisfies the ravenous belly of one who digs away and picks apart every choice morsel of promises He has to offer. It satiates you like feasting upon God's Word! Share how you order your life in order to faithfully dig into Scripture.

3

**ADORNING GOD'S DOCTRINE**—Share what you desire your legacy to be.

4

**FULFILLING OUR PURPOSE**—Our lesson showed us how submission fulfills our parabolic purpose. Think of another example of being a living parable. (Hint: We are created in God's image. How do we show people His attributes by our lives?)

5

**SHINING GOD'S GLORY**—Share one lesson from our study *Women of the Heavenly Father* that most helped you to change and better glorify God.