

# Sanctified Together

Email and Online Publication



## July 2010 Issue: Measure of a Woman

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#### A Word from the Editor

##### Beloved!

Women can never measure up to the allusive standard set by the world's yardstick, and we find ourselves drowning in waves of self-doubt, pulled down by the undertow of shabby self-worth and suffocating under the current of low self-confidence. Many women are not embracing their destiny because they are distracted, confused and broken by a measurement that has nothing to do with them.

How are we to validate ourselves then? Where do we find the measure of a woman? We find it in God alone.

God is our creator, and He is the only one who knows how to measure our worth, value and potential. When we seek God's affirmation, we find the freedom to confidently discover our design and purpose. If we align ourselves in God's will, our lives will measure up to the only standard we need to worry about -- His!

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The articles in this publication are written by women who are trying to find their measure in God. These women are seeking God's approval, instead of trying to find value in the world's eyes. They are no longer satisfied with the world's opinion; they want to know God's heart.

Once we allow God to measure our lives, we finally discover acceptance that lasts no matter how many times we stumble and fall. God measures us with His grace, love and mercy. We are His cherished daughters, and our measure is not based on our accomplishments....it's based on His. We are free to be ourselves because we allow God to define us.

"For the Lord is the Spirit, and wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom" (2 Corinthians 3.17 NLT).

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"You never did tell me why you made that decision," he said quietly, completely out of the blue. I stared at him in disbelief. Was I hearing correctly? The decision he was talking about wasn't something new, in fact it was quite a while back. Why bring it up now?

For just a moment the old anger, hurt and resentment rose up inside. The reasons and explanation regarding my decision had all been explained, discussed, dissected and discarded by others as trivial, including him. Did I want to even try to explain again? Yet, I wanted to be understood. I wanted to know that somebody saw my side. I wanted validation that my decision was the right one.

"The innate desire to defend myself battled fiercely with the voice of the holy spirit speaking softly to my heart.

*"Be still, the battle is not yours."*

I sat quietly, almost frozen in that moment for what seemed like a long time but in reality was only seconds. Why is it that I have trouble remembering this? I often try to fight my own battles and end up with unnecessary battle scars in the process. Why can't I just automatically trust Him to fight my battles? As I thought about it, the answer was not really complicated. I want immediate justice, validation, perfect endings with no loose ends. But unfortunately, life is not perfect and often not fair...

Then finally, almost unconsciously two words came softly out of my mouth, *"God knows."*

I said it again more assertively, *"God knows."*

As I said it, I sat back with a sigh of relief. I gave the desire to be understood to God.

*"The Lord is watching everywhere,  
keeping his eye on both the evil and the good."* - Proverbs 15:3 (NLT)

Truly God does know. Nothing we do is a surprise to him.

God knows the whole matter.

God knows what was said and what was done.

God knows who's wrong and who's right.

God knows my side, your side, their side and the unbiased truth.

God knows the back story that no one else is privy to. He knows the heart of a matter.

Some decisions that we make will never make sense in the natural. There will always be those who feel that they are more qualified to make decisions about our lives than we are. Often our decisions may be second guessed and dissected. However the important thing to know is that you make your life decisions after much prayer and communication with God.

*"Trust in the Lord with all your heart;  
do not depend on your own understanding.  
Seek his will in all you do,  
and he will show you which path to take."* - Proverbs 3:5-6 (NLT)

The true measure of a woman shows when she allows God's peace to fill her heart even in the midst of difficult situations. It shines forth in her trust and confidence in God.

~ Bernadine McIntosh

Bernadine is a thirty something single lady who loves life, loves to laugh and loves her Lord. She has a passion for ministry to young ladies and seeks to point them to Jesus Christ, the one who captured her heart as a teenager. Bernadine can often be found curled up reading a book or writing in one. You can find her at personal blog, [Keeping it Real Girl Talk](#), and she's a monthly contributor at [Laced With Grace](#).



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## Some Will Say



When a woman starts her morning and the day starts passing by,  
She looks at all that's on her list while minutes start to fly.  
With all the tasks she has to do and all she's asked to choose,  
Measuring her worth is hard. What standard should she use?  
Opinions seem to strike her through her eye gate and her ears,  
And challenges take new forms as she measures out her years.  
Some will try to tell her count her value by her miles,

Some will tell her she can rest when she produces smiles.

Some will try to tell her that she needs to build net worth.  
Some will say she's modern if she's linked to mother Earth.  
Some will say she's made it if she gathers more degrees.  
Some will say she's valuable if all her features please.  
Some will say she's found success when people know her name.  
Some will say her life counts when her skill has earned her fame.  
Some will say that she's arrived when juggling all these things.  
Some will say she matters when accomplishments she brings.  
But when the Father measures all His girls, the ones He's raised,  
A woman who has known Him is the one whom He will praise.  
It won't be all the things she's done or beauty she's displayed.  
It won't be all the laud she earned from clubs or blogs she made.  
It won't be for the works she did or ratings she received.  
It won't be for a perfect home, no blemishes perceived.  
Instead she will be measured as her heart has loved Him best,  
Her value in the following and finding in Him rest.  
And He'll pronounce her precious, for her hope in Him was stored  
To count for all eternity her measureless reward.  
And so we have permission to let go of standards dim,  
When measuring our life is done by steps we take with Him.

~ Julie Sanders

Julie is a pastor's wife, mom, women's ministry director, writer, and Bible



teacher who is so thankful for God's divine intervention in her life through 20 years of marriage and over two continents she's called home. She loves to teach God's Word and write about how His peace covers each day. Check out Julie's almost daily blog, [Come Have Peace](#), and her Marriage Mondays for more encouragement and info.

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## 5 lbs of Grace



I had been avoiding the scale for several weeks, but I finally decided to weigh myself and account for the damage. Yep, I had gained 5 lbs. My weight always fluctuates. I think it enjoys making me mad, happy or sad based on its movements; it likes to show off its control over me.

Normally when I gain weight, I focus all my attention and efforts on the unwanted pounds. I lose all my peace and joy, and every aspect of my daily life is affected. I'm determined to lose the weight at all cost.

As my mind started its downward spiral of negative and distracted thoughts, God told me, "They don't make a difference."

"What?" I asked. I was really tired of this cycle, and I was willing to hear what God had to say.

"Those 5 lbs you are worrying about make absolutely no difference in your life. They don't affect how people see you, they don't affect your health and they don't affect your destiny. They are meaningless."

After God gave me the truth about my 5 lbs, I finally found freedom. I didn't want to waste my energy over a few pounds because I'm busy enough doing things that have purpose. Why would I misuse my time on something that is insignificant? I felt light as a feather, though I was 5 lbs heavier!

In my new found freedom, I got dressed. I didn't even worry about the fact that my jeans were a tad snugger around my waist. Since my mind was freed up to think about more important things, I started focusing on God's promises for me. My thoughts instantly started exploring what I needed to do in order for God to finally fulfill His plan in my life.

God said almost cheekily, "They don't make a difference."

"What?" I asked. If God had more freedom for me, I wanted it.

During my entire adult life, I have struggled with trying to humble myself more, trying to learn more, trying to shed more sin, trying to focus on God more. I've wanted to do everything in my power, so I could prove to God that I was ready to receive His promises. Without knowing it, though, I was basing God's promises on what I was doing.

God said, "Nothing you could ever do would make you deserve the promises that I have for you. My promises will always be too great for you to achieve. I give them freely to you because of who I am and because I love you."

Talk about freedom! All my efforts could never secure God's blessings, so I can quit worrying about proving myself all the time. God blesses me because of what He has done, not what I have done. All I need to do is focus on staying in God's will. If I am in the center of His purpose, God will accomplish His plans for me. I simply need to cooperate with Him.

I also realized that God gives all of us 5 lbs of grace. When you look at an imperfect woman and wonder why she's getting blessed, just remember that she has 5 lbs of grace. And the same goes for you. If you see your imperfections and wonder how God could ever bless you, just remember that God has 5 lbs of grace for you too. All of us make mistakes. None of us deserve God's blessing. I don't care how perfect you are or how perfect you think she is. Our efforts are meaningless compared to God's perfection. We all deserve death if it wasn't for Christ!

Christians can claim God's grace, and that is why we can boldly go to the throne! God has an amazing life for us, and He gives it to us freely. We just have to be available and willing to receive it. Finally, 5 lbs we can all rejoice about!

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God -- not by works, so that no one can boast" (Ephesians 2.8-9 NIV).

Alisa has a God-given passion to write, and she loves to write about what the Holy Spirit is currently teaching her. She is the founder of [Granola Bar Devotional Writing Ministry](#), which helps publish and share women's faith-story. She writes Christian meditations on her personal website, [Faith Imagined](#). She is also a contributing for [Internet Cafe](#). She and her husband lead a church homegroup and enjoy homeschooling their three children.

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How Do You Measure a Woman





'Measure' defined means a unit or standard of measurement; the extent, dimensions, quantity of something; any standard of comparison, estimation, or judgment; and so on. Some of the synonyms are model, example, scope, portion, scale, test, pattern, and gauge.

So, how do you measure a woman?

- \*By how tall she is?
- \*By the size of her brain?
- \*By the size of her gloves?
- \*By the size of her shoes?

Well, yes and no. Proverbs 31 is always the standard against which a woman (or wife) is measured; her worth being far above rubies, so it says.

But how do you measure that?

- \*By the love for her in the eyes of her family and friends, you can measure how tall she is.
- \*By the scope of her thoughts, words, and prayers, you can measure the size of her brain.
- \*By the extent of her giving and doing for others, you can measure the size of her gloves.
- \*By where and how she walks, you can measure the size of her shoes.

I guess if we went by that, a valuable woman would then be very tall, have a very large head, and have large hands and feet. Well, I know that sounds silly, but not if you apply it spiritually.

I love this quote: "The measure of a woman's character is not what she gets from her ancestors, but what she leaves her descendents." ~ unknown

So, how large am I, spiritually that is? How do I measure up to all this? How do I leave my daughter and my sons those values and character that I desire them to have? How do I make my husband and family proud of me and not bring shame to them?

To be and do all that is necessary, my life must mirror one pattern, one example, one standard...the Bible!

Other than the character traits of Proverbs 31, Paul listed several other traits when he wrote to Titus: "The older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things - that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed." (Titus 2:3-5 NKJV)

All this, plus grace, strength, and faith, was passed on to me by my mother ...so what am I leaving to my children? How do they see me? How do others see me? How tall am I to them?



What are you passing on to your children? What is your measure?

How do you measure a woman? By Jesus!

~ Lynn Mosher

Born and raised in a Christian home in Kentucky, Lynn Mosher has been a believer since the age of 11. Lynn lives with her husband of 44 years in their empty nest in Kentucky. On occasion, the three offspring, who have flown the coop, come to visit, accompanied by a lovable son-in-law, daughter-in-law, and three precious granddaughters. During this time, the Lord placed the desire in her heart to write for Him. She now writes in obedience and, in addition to devotionals and inspirational writings, which can be found on her blog [Heading Home](#), she is putting the final touches on her first book.



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## Who Are These Kids And Why Are They Calling Me Mom?



*"And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased." (Hebrews 13:16 NIV)*

With all the busyness in this fast paced world, it can become increasingly difficult to get alone with God. And when you're raising a family, a few minutes of time alone with God can be slim to none. If you're like me, you like to worship God with your eyes closed and tune the rest of the world out, so to speak, so you can give God your full attention.

A few years ago, my 'alone' time with God consisted of going up to my bedroom, shutting the door, and completely ignoring my dearly loved children's relentless banging on the door to get my attention (they were teenagers at the time, so no need to call Social Services). "Mom -- I'm starving, and there's nothing here to eat." "Mom, it's my turn for the computer and they won't get off." "Mom..." Well, you get the picture.

Of course, I would lay down the law beforehand - "No one is to bother me under any circumstances. I need my God time so I don't kill all of you!" But none of that did any good. I would be in the middle of my prayers, when I would have to stop to feed the poor, hungry children, or break up World War III. Oddly, when I would finally get back upstairs to God, I could no longer feel His presence. So I would yell to my kids "Now look what you did -- you scared God away!"

I think the reason I need to have God all to myself is because I grew up in a family of nine children, and at times it was a real battle to have anything for myself. There were always other people to consider and to share with. There were times at the dinner table where we had to draw our weapons in order to get

enough food to eat. I remember on one occasion, my parents bought a gallon of ice cream. We lined up for our ice cream cones, and then I wittingly watched as my brothers and sisters furiously licked their cones like they were in an 'all you can eat' competition; while I, with great wisdom and determination, licked mine slowly to make it last, thinking I would win the title as the dairy queen (pun intended). But the joke was on me. They all ran back to the kitchen and received seconds, so I quickly downed mine and ran to the kitchen for another one, only to learn the ice cream was all gone.

As I meditated on Hebrews 13:16, I came to the realization that this scripture wasn't necessarily speaking of material goods, but sharing the love of God. Oh sure, it's easy to say to your neighbor "God loves you." No, there has to be more to this. Beyond reaching into your designer jean pockets, there must be a way to share God's love with humility and selflessness, in a down-to-earth kind of way. I really couldn't see how that would be accomplished by locking myself in my room, closing my eyes and shutting out the world.

One day as I was driving alone in my car, my thoughts drifted off to something I had heard a famous evangelist say regarding a dream he once had. He dreamt that he was in heaven, and there were thousands of people lined up before the throne, waiting to see God. The thought of having to wait for any amount of time to see God alarms me. So I said to Him, "God? When I get to heaven, will I ever be able to be alone with You?" And right then and there I felt as though God was saying, "You're alone with me right now, but please don't worship me with your eyes closed when you're driving!"

~ Deborah Erdmann

Deborah is first and foremost a friend of God. She is also a wife, mother and grandmother. God has called Deborah to write humorous devotionals, and a book is currently in the making. She is also a featured writer for her local newspaper, contributing articles on coffee and God, with that same brand of humor. Deborah has 3 blog sites, each with a specific purpose to glorify God: [Heavenly Humor](#) is her main blog, where she shares her heart and humor. [Markings in the Wood](#) is a place to go for solitude and rest in God's Presence. And [Poetry and Paradise](#) is where she dabbles in poetry

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Dot. Dot. Dot.



If you are a *Mama Mia* movie fan like me, you probably remember the opening scene where the daughter is reading the mom's journal. The mom wrote about some boy she met and what a wonderful evening they had. Then she followed the story with "Dot. Dot. Dot."

In our English grammar an ellipsis [ ... ] proves to be a handy device when you want to omit some words. It's like saying "and so on" or "you get the picture." Of course, we all know that if there were only one dot that would be a period. We are all familiar with the period, which means that's the end of the statement or *The End* (period).

Enough about English grammar--I've been thinking quite a bit about the ellipsis and period in my life. I think I always want to describe myself as mom (period) or author (period). I want a title that easily defines me to others. Wife (period). What is the title you use? How do you describe yourself?

What I've determined is that I use the wrong punctuation when describing myself. Our God is so creative and multifaceted that I'm sure He didn't make me to just reveal one aspect of His glory.

*Oh yes, you shaped me first inside, then out;  
you formed me in my mother's womb.  
I thank you, High God-you're breathtaking!  
Body and soul, I am marvelously made!  
I worship in adoration-what a creation!  
You know me inside and out,  
you know every bone in my body;  
You know exactly how I was made, bit by bit,  
how I was sculpted from nothing into something.  
Like an open book, you watched me grow from conception to birth;  
all the stages of my life were spread out before you,  
The days of my life all prepared  
before I'd even lived one day. (Psalm 139: 13-16 MSG)*

My pastor once said, "Don't label me a pastor. I'm not just a pastor (period). I'm much more. Pastor, real estate investor, author, speaker, father, husband, entrepreneur. Don't use periods when God creates you with commas."

What punctuation are you using? Dot. Dot. Dots, commas, or periods? Hopefully, you are using commas to show off the creative design that God has blessed you with. As I've thought about the punctuation in my own life, my eyes have been opened. I seriously had been looking for that one nice pretty word to label myself: Speaker. Author. Teacher. No one word ever really described me.

The measure of me, the whole of me, is not found in those words before the period. I am more than that! What about all those others gifts that God has given me? Nurturer. Encourager. Photographer. Friend.

And the list could go on Dot. Dot. Dot.

I've determined to erase the periods out of my life. I hope you will too.

As we try to describe ourselves to others, I hope we'll remember the comma that helps others see just how magnificently God created us, as well as the Dot. Dot. Dot, because God's goodness and creativity in our lives will continue to stretch as long as we are growing in Him.

If you are gifted in the area of grammar and punctuation, this article is probably driving you crazy as it's hard to write about punctuation in our life and keep the right punctuation. But look beyond the grammar marks and think deeply about the punctuation that describes your life.

Girl, you are designed with commas! Fill your life with comma, after comma and then a Dot. Dot. Dot.

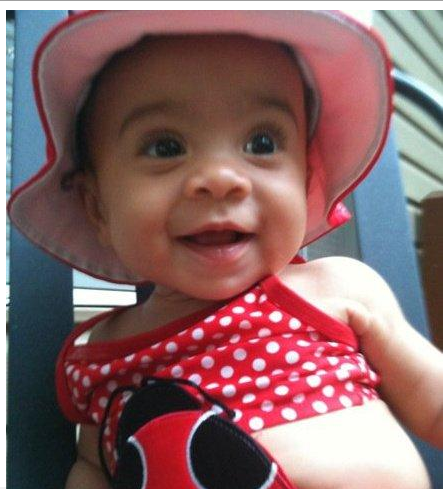
~ Alene Snodgrass

Alene Snodgrass speaks all over the country and is the author of two Bible studies, *Dirty Laundry Secrets ~ a Journey to Meet the Launderer* and *I'm a Fixer-Upper ~ A Day-by-Day Remodeling Guide*. Each study has created drastic changes in many women's lives. Alene, her husband, and three children reside in Corpus Christi, Texas and attend Bay Area Fellowship where Alene coordinates the women's Bible studies. For more information, visit [www.alenesnodgrass.com](http://www.alenesnodgrass.com). For a peak into her personal life, check out [Positively Alene](#) or find her on [facebook](#) and [twitter](#).



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## A Mother's Adoption Story



In 2005, Jason and I started researching adoption agencies and in 2007 we finally found the agency that fit in with what God had specifically laid upon our hearts. We began our official paper work with New Life Pregnancy Center in November of 2007. From that point on our faith began to be tested and our hearts finally began to beat like HIS.

Our journey was not an easy one. Normally, the wait time with our agency is 6-9 months. We waited 20 months before we were chosen by a birth mom and almost to 22 months before our little child was placed in our arms. Those 20 months of waiting were filled with heartache, joy, complete dependency on Jesus, and the belief that God had called us to adoption. I would get asked all the

time (and still get asked) "Why would you adopt if you can still have children biologically." My simple answer has been "Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father means caring for orphans and widows in their distress...." (James 1:27a NLT).

It's clear in God's Word that it is our responsibility as Christ followers to take care of the orphans. I just couldn't let that go. Specifically, for our family God was asking us to take care of orphans on a more personal level. He simply wanted us to add to our family through adoption. We couldn't argue with that or say no. Our yes was on the table. He gave us clarity that adoption was perfect for our family, so we had to trust every single day of those 20 months that He would bless us with a child.

Those 20 months were difficult. Four times our agency called us with possible placements. One of those placements was of a little boy who was to be born May 2009. We met his birth mom just a couple of weeks before she was to deliver him. We got his room ready, stocked his room with little boy gear, got the car seat in the car, packed his diaper bag, and then she changed her mind and the agency never heard from her again. I have never felt pain like that. I couldn't function for three weeks afterwards. Every day it was a chore to focus on what God had called us to. Jason and I were broken-hearted. From May to October, God continued to work in my heart for the child that I knew He would eventually place in our family. He was tender with me yet firm, and He helped me see Him more and love Him more during that time.

On October 13th, 2009 (exactly 20 months of waiting), we received a call from our adoption agency saying we had been chosen by a birth mom, and she was due Dec 14th. The next week we drove to Houston to meet her, and I instantly fell in love with her. But, I was still guarding my heart because I knew this placement could possibly end with her changing her mind....it was just the reality of the situation.

October, November and December were spent getting to know our birth mom, planning for a little girl, and preparing our hearts for our birth mom's final decision. Would she go through with what her "plan" was? Or would she change her mind at the last minute?

Our adoption story truly began December 5th, 2009. We drove to Houston and met our little girl and we instantly fell in love. She is beautiful in every way, and we knew from the moment we laid eyes on her that she was the child God had created for our family. She is a wonderful masterpiece and a reminder of God's perfect timing!

She reminds me everyday how I have been adopted as God's own. He didn't have to adopt me. He could have left me as an orphan. He could remind me every day that I'm not "biologically" His, but instead He reminds me every day that I am His chosen treasure and that there is nothing I can do to change His mind. I am His for eternity, and He is mine for eternity.

Natalie Grace is beyond what we imagined. I would wait all over again to simply have her in my arms. We followed after God's heart, and He brought us a child-our child! And for that gift, I wouldn't trade our journey.

~ Lindsey Gerdes



I am a wife to the best husband in the world and a mom to the greatest 6 year old ever and to the sweetest baby ever! I am devoted to my relationship with Christ and I love this journey that I am on! I feel blessed beyond measures! Check out my adoption blog at [A Chosen Treasure](#). You can also find me at [Revolution Church](#) in Canton, Georgia, where my husband is Senior Pastor.



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## Can I Have a "Do Over"?



Do you ever wish for a "do over?" Sometimes when I say something, I think, "Why did I just say that? I had an opportunity to say something great, to speak of Jesus and salvation, to speak with wisdom, say life giving words, a profound statement...anything but what I just said!"

If I had one of those huge mallets they use in cartoons, I would beat myself over the head with it: "Stupid, stupid!" (I have a mental image of Chris Farley saying that in one of his skits.) I always wish I could just say, "Cut!! Do over!" Then, I could quickly pray and gather my thoughts and proudly say the perfect words for the situation. If only life had retakes.

I truly desire that the wisdom of the Holy Spirit flow through my words and bless everyone I speak to, no matter where I am. It's Jesus who is profound. It is He who knows the right words at the right time. Since He lives in me, how can I let His words flow through me at just the right time?

While on a job, I was behind the counter selling merchandise and many children stepped up to look. To my shock, a cute little girl took a necklace and quickly rolled it up in her jacket to steal it. As she turned to sneak away, I called her back and asked her if she wanted to put the necklace back. She looked ashamed, lowered her head, and put the necklace back on its display. Time seemed to halt as she looked me in the eyes, full of embarrassment and shame.

My mind raced through words, but I was speechless. Such a cute little girl, stealing at such a young age. I was grieved and sad for her. Surely I had some profound words to say at this moment suspended in time, the clock ticking waiting for me to speak, the little girl's eyes locked on mine with expectation.

"You shouldn't steal ... because it's sin," was all I could come up with. She looked at me in shock as if to say, "That's it?"

In my "saved" little life, my statement encompasses everything. Why would anyone sin on purpose? Aren't there enough accidental sins to muddy the waters of life as it is?

But for this unsaved little girl, my words meant nothing. She lingered a moment as if to give me another



chance to say something more profound. But I had nothing.

As she turned to leave I wanted to shout, "Cut! Just give me a few minutes to pray and think things over and I'll be right back with words that could make a difference in your life. Please, just one more chance."

But life has no do overs, and I was left searching for that cartoon mallet to hit myself over the head once again.

I brought my dilemma to the Lord in prayer. "Please God, fix my brain, make me wise, please give me do overs!!!"

To my great delight, God gave me the perfect answer. The solution is a "do over workout". After each situation that I didn't have the right words, I will sit down with pen and paper, pray and ask the Lord for ideas for the right response. I'll come up with 3 good possible ways to respond to that particular situation and write them down. I'll consider what Jesus would say in that situation. What would be His life giving words?

If I continue to practice this "do over" exercise, I'll be prepared for the various circumstances that arise. I've realized that the situations that come up in all of our lives really don't vary that much. It's more likely that I will be in the same situation again. But this time I will know the right thing to say. I'll be ready with the right words, at the right time.

Do over? No problem! I'll be ready!

*"Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have." 1Peter 3:15*

~ Susan Wood

Susan Wood is a founding member of Catskill Mountain Christian Center and has served in compassionate ministry to the homeless of New York City and the victims of the Chernobyl disaster in Belarus. She worked for CitiHope International where she also served as outreach programming director for Christian radio, coordinating a variety of New York City ministries. Susan and her husband, Jonathan, founded the [Raptor Project Inc.](#), a rehabilitation and educational effort with birds of prey. Susan, Jonathan and daughter Rachel travel the U.S. on tour each year producing bird shows and exhibits in 28 states. She has been featured on Cornerstone television and CBN. In between road tours, her family divides their time between their New York home and a home on North Padre Island, Texas, where they are members of Bay Area Fellowship.



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## A Wife of Noble Character



*A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies. Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised. (Proverbs 31:10, 30, NIV)*

What happened to that Proverbs 31 woman who speaks with wisdom? Why had the Titus 2 woman who exhibits self-control and kindness disappeared? However, my husband found that quarrelsome wife of Proverbs 21:9 present and accounted for.

Although tempted to climb on the rooftop, it was far

too close for him.

After having spent most of the day indoors, I decided to walk outside to watch the sunset and wait for my husband to arrive home. Knowing I would have a better view from our pasture, I walked to the gate, but found it wired shut. The beauty of the autumn afternoon disappeared with my anger.

In vain, I tried to untwist the wire. My temper flared. If the person responsible had been nearby, he would have heard my frustration. Instead, my husband bore the brunt of my anger over something he had nothing to do with. My mother always advised, "Unless it can't wait, don't tell your husband bad news the minute he comes home from work." Boy, did I ever fail that day.

I desire to be a Titus 2 wife. I want my husband to think of me as a Proverbs 31 woman and not equate me with the quarrelsome wife. Dare I say the "s" word-submission? Every Christian wife should desire to submit.

How do we become that woman? First, we should listen to wise council by surrounding ourselves with godly women. I'm thankful for my mother's wise words, passed down from her mother. Seek women in your church that are knowledgeable and wise. Titus 2 tells us the older women should teach the younger ones so that the Word of God is not defiled. On the other hand, age does not necessarily mean maturity. Many young women are spiritually mature and knowledgeable in the ways of the Lord.

Submitting to our husbands is easier when they are following Christ's example. Rather than responding in anger, my husband demonstrated his love by putting his hands on my shoulders. "Are you feeling okay? I'm really concerned about you." Harsh words would have kindled the fire. Gentle words extinguished the flames.

Finally, the Bible speaks of another woman whom we would do well to follow her example. We are all familiar with the story of Mary and her sister Martha. While Martha busied herself with preparations for her guests, Mary sat at the feet of Jesus listening to His teaching. In Matthew 11:29a, Jesus says, "Take my yoke upon you, and **learn** from me..." (Emphasis mine)

When we take time to sit at the Master's feet, learn from Him, and follow His example, then we will

become a Titus 2 woman, and a wife of noble character.

~ Joan Hall

Joan became a Christian at age ten, but many years passed before she allowed Jesus to be Lord of her life. Now she is passionate about telling others about the abundant life found in Christ. She is married to her best friend, John, and they serve together in prison ministry. Joan leads women's Bible studies and loves writing from her country home in East Texas. She co-leads a writer's group at her home church and has contributed to [Granola Bar Devotionals](#). You can find her at her personal blog, [Reflections](#).



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## Licensed to Parent



With an aspiring teenage driver in the family, I've become a regular fixture at the Department of Public Safety office. Today I've brought my fifteen-year-old daughter to take the written exam for her learner's permit. Trying to make myself comfortable on one of the hard plastic chairs, I glance through the testing room window to watch her take her own seat at the computer. I pray for her even as my hearts pounds anxiously- this is not her first attempt! The minutes drag by as I wait to learn her results. Did she pass-or do I need to plan another trip

out here next week?

As trying as the process is, I know it's just the beginning. Katherine has much more to learn before she's qualified to get her driver's license-and even that won't necessarily make her a *good* driver. After all, holding a license isn't the only measure of competence. There's no test that can reliably predict what kind of driver *my* child will be. Will she be cautious without being too fearful? Confident, but not reckless? Only time will tell for sure.

It got me to thinking, though. Our culture just loves to quantify ability-valuing "evaluation." Newborns get their APGAR scores just moments after birth-and from that point on, the tests just keep coming. Already my first-grader appreciates what it is to be measured. Since the tender age of six, he has been tested weekly to track his reading. As "making your goal" is a big deal, we follow his progress carefully, checking the computer printouts which gauge his efforts precisely: "You have reached 89.9% of your goal." Maybe the best thing about tests is their assurance that *somewhere*, at least, we are "doing it right." Rarely does life provide such accurate feedback, especially where it matters most.

Take parenting, for instance. My husband and I had our entire lives evaluated when we adopted our youngest daughter. (At least, it felt that way. Talk about tests!) Already a struggling mommy of two young children, I was anxious to see how---or even *if*---I measured up. Certainly I wanted the adoption officials to think I was a qualified mother. More importantly, I wanted to see for *myself* that I was one. If I made it through the process, wouldn't that mean I was a "good" mom?

Considering all the checkpoints we had to pass, this seemed like a pretty reasonable expectation. After all, local, state *and* federal background checks found us to be model citizens. Neighbors, pastors, employers and friends vouched for our character. Lastly, after thorough examinations of our house, and interviews with our entire family, even the social workers determined we were "fit" parents. Anyone who could leap all *these* hurdles "in a single bound" just *had* to be a Supermom, right? Who else could survive so much scrutiny?

If only it were that simple! However, as any adoptive parent can attest, it didn't quite turn out that way. While I may have looked pretty good on paper, in real life, well, that was a whole different story! This "model citizen" in the eyes of the law was still the same woman praying for God's grace every day to help my children overcome my mistakes. Sigh. I knew all along I wasn't Supermom.

However, I still needed to know---was I "Good-Enough" mom? I kept looking for ways to determine if I was doing it right---or at least, *right* enough. Since the bureaucrats couldn't tell me, maybe other mothers could. So I watched them. Closely. Unfortunately, comparing myself to everyone else just left me feeling like a bigger failure than ever. Everywhere I turned there were moms who were doing it, if not "right," well then, certainly *better* than me. This was not the reassurance I was hoping for.

In self-defense, I decided to poke fun at myself-better to laugh at my parental insecurities than cry about them! In my own version of *Confessions of a Slacker Mom*, I shared these with my MOPS group. I listed some of the ways that I felt I wasn't a great mom:

- The *great* mom makes sure that her children's teeth are brushed and flossed twice a *day*. I make sure that my children get to the dentist twice a *year*.
- The *great* mom consistently feeds her children hot, healthy, nutritionally-balanced meals. I consistently feed my children (sometimes it's hot), but many weeks my version of balanced just means equal trips to McDonald's, Chick-Fil-A and Taco Bell!
- The *great* mom agonizes over her choice of Mother's Day Out vs. preschool vs. public school vs. private school vs. home school. I agonize about surviving the summer until I can dump my kids back *into* school.
- The *truly great* mom enjoys each and every minute with her children, from conception on. I, on the other hand, have bad moods and bad tempers and all-around bad days where I don't enjoy *anything* at all, least of all my children. Sometimes *especially* not my children.

Judging from the appreciative laughter of the other mothers that day, I knew I was in good company. It seems I was great at one thing---being a typical mom! By admitting that I wasn't Supermom, or even a "great" mom, I found absolution in being a *real* mom.

It's taken me a while, but I've decided to stop trying to prove that I'm a qualified parent. While it's tempting sometimes to look to my kids for confirmation, I don't exactly want to pass or fail based on what *they* do. After all, they are just as imperfect as I am! In any case, if parental success is gauged by the behavior of the children, even God Himself would be considered a failure.

Ultimately, there is no truly reliable test of "great mothering." My guess is that God planned it that way. After all, wherever measures exist, we are certain to use them to measure one another. However, we aren't equipped to decide who's a great *parent* any more than we are to judge who's a great *person*.

Don't get me wrong---I still long to be recognized as a good mother sometimes. I *want* that Proverbs 31 moment, when my kids "will rise up and call me blessed!" Certainly I will always want to *be* a good mother. I'm just going to worry a little less about whether or not I *am* one. I'm going to stop trying to answer the wrong questions, and start *asking* the right ones:

*Is it really about me-or is it about God? Does my children's future depend on my performance-or His ability to shape them for His purposes through me? (Or even in spite of me!) Finally, regardless of how my kids turn out or make me look, can they still reveal God's glory?*

I find that I'm a lot less concerned about "passing the test" once I remember who is *really* in the driver's seat...

~ Pamela R. Watts

God taught Pamela long ago that it is because of Him we have a story to tell, and it is for Him that we tell it. Pamela's pastor taught her that her writing is a kind of "literary sanctification." She's being refined by God through her story-telling. God is refining Pamela just now in her latest work, *Measuring Up at Last: Realigning Your Way to Freedom in Christ*, which can be found at [The Measure of God's Grace](#). Pamela lives in Waco, Texas, with her husband and four children who give her lots of stories to tell -- and who also refine her!

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The Wonder Woman





"Be this! Be that!" Commands evoking the same kind of scattered feeling that leaves you running around trying to "Be Everything" until you feel like you can "*Be Nothing.*"

*Be Wonder Woman, Be Beth Moore, Be the Barefoot Contessa, Be Martha Stewart.*

Or maybe Be more like the woman who leads the children's ministry and Be more like the Vacation Bible School Kitchen

Leader who can out-organize you and Be more like the eloquent Sunday School class teacher, and Be the heart-wringing compassionate mama who can soothe a splinter out of a finger while feeling the patient's pain and mean it.

Be the Stay at Home Mom! No, wait! Be Working Mom capable of everything. Be it all! At least, that is what it feels like from all sides -- pressure to Be it all. Not just excelling at one Spiritual Gift - but excelling at all the Spiritual gifts. God did not create us to be everything to everybody. We only need to be what He created us to be.

Facets of society like to promote one-dimensional roles, taking sides, creating dissension, dividing into Stay-at-Home Moms and Working-Moms. Sometimes, these two factions of womanhood clash, fall into judgmental and defensive posturing, egged on by a culture itching for a fight. However, these are just caricatures of the roles God created for women. While the woman does indeed fill the home with heart, God created women for different roles, just like He filled each of us with different gifts.

- **The Cricket on the Hearth:** Hannah is the quintessential stay-at-home mom. She wants nothing more than to be a mother -- and everything that evolved around motherhood. She must have been a craft-mom because she made Samuel her son a coat every year. Her story centers around her children, her husband and her God, Nothing lends itself to involvement outside her doorstep or position within the community.
- **Spiritual Mother:** Naomi reaches out to other women, like she did her daughter-in-law Ruth. She provided sound advice, a loving heart and mothering. She might not have her own family, but maybe she volunteers at your church, is a foster mother, or is just an encourager. She is a woman who looks beyond her doorstep to build relationships, exhort and support other women.
- **Entrepreneur Mother:** Proverbs 31 Woman is a home-entrepreneur, juggling family and a self-made business. She is interested in life beyond her doorstep, her family's position within the community, but all her efforts return home to make it a better place. Her priorities are family-focused, with her outside efforts creating enriching results.
- **Heroine:** A heroine never seeks glory. Like Esther, a heroine is an intercessor with initiative and courage. She not only intercedes in the prayer closet, but she intercedes with those in authority. She does not necessarily choose her mission field; her mission field chooses her. She spends much time in preparation - maybe through education, prayer, working her way up in the ranks. She is a woman who runs Crisis Pregnancy Centers, missionaries in 3rd world countries, a doctor who fights against abortion, a lawyer who fights for the right to pray in schools, or maybe a God-inspired senator. maybe one day the president of our country. She goes to battle for



others who are unable to help themselves - and that battlefield is outside the home.

God knew our heart's desires. He placed those desires within us -- and provided diverse roles within society for those skills, dreams and desires. *You are only called to Be what God created you to be. And that promise emancipates us and frees us to just . . . BE.*

~ Maryleigh Bucher

A wife of 27 years, a mom of 5 sons, a child of divorce become whole as a daughter of The King. With a BS degree in Journalism and MA in English from Eastern Kentucky University, I taught college composition and home school groups. Author of [Blue Cotton Memory](#), guest contributor to [The Home School Post](#), journalist, poet and creator of Standing at the Cross Roads, a program designed to break/prevent cycles of dysfunction.



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## Author Interview & Book Giveaway: *That Was Then, This is Now* by Paulette Harper



Why did you become a writer?

I believe it was a decision that God made for me. Actually becoming an author was far from what I anticipated for my life. It was through my personal experiences in life, which drew me into this profession. It was through my writing I found it to be a source of therapy. While writing my first book, *That Was Then, This Is Now*, I began to see how God healed and restored my life and what He did for me I felt I needed to share with others. It was at that moment that I realized God wanted my writing to be used as a ministry. My desire is to write books that will empower, equip and transform the lives of every reader.

In your book, you mention you have been destined for success, destined to prosper, destined to achieve the impossible. Can you please explain? How does one know he/she on the right track to reaching their destiny?

It is the desire of God to bless His children. In spite of what one may be facing, we have been chosen by God to prosper. Until a person accepts how God sees them, they will never rise above their current condition. We must believe that it is the will of God for us to succeed and live a fulfilled life. As a child of

the King, we have been marked, hand picked and set apart by God to show the world that regardless of what the economic conditions are... God will sustain us. I believe one knows they are on the right track in reaching their destiny when the passion of what they are doing will not die.

What was the most powerful chapter or scene in the book for you?

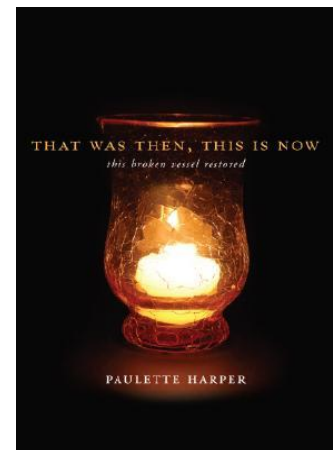
I believe chapter three Identifying Strongholds is the most powerful chapter in *That Was Then, This Is Now*. In that particular chapter I'm open, honest and transparent about the issues I faced while going through my divorce. Some of those issues almost cost me my life. Suicide, depression, oppression and low self-esteem greeted me everyday for almost two years. The desire to die outweighed my desire to live many days. I had to recognize that what I was experiencing could only be conquered by faith and the Word of God. I give biblical examples with supporting scriptures that helped me turn what I considered a tragedy to triumph.

[Watch Book Trailer](#)

**Author Bio:**

Minister, bestselling author and Indie Award Finalist for 2009

Breathing a breath of fresh air into Christian writing, inspirational speaker, Paulette Harper, is a woman of purpose, passion and power. Paulette seeks to inspire women from all walks of life. Her desire is to empower, equip and transform the lives of women through her preaching and teaching from the Word of God. As a licensed and ordained minister, Paulette's passion is to minister the Word of God with boldness and accuracy so those who are dealing with life's complexities will become whole and walk in their God given potential.



A woman of destiny, Paulette has accepted the call from God and established herself as a best selling, award winning author. Her writing career began in 2007 with her first published book, *That Was Then, This Is Now*, which achieved national recognition by being awarded a finalist in the 2009 Next Generation Indie Book Award and ranked consecutively on the *Black Christian Publishers Bestsellers List for Independent Publishers, Non-Fiction*. Published articles have appeared on *CBN*, *Internet Café*, *WOW magazine*, *Black Pearl Magazine* and *Divine Inspirations*.

*Victorious Living for Women* (an anthology) is her second book, which features 40 incredible women who share stories of their life experiences from their heart to yours. Collectively, these women have endured personal tragedy and have emerged empowered, encouraged and victorious.

Paulette is the visionary behind *Write Now: Releasing the Word in You Literary Workshops* designed to coach inspiring writers in the areas of creativity, development and publication of Christian books. God has given her a desire for writers, especially those who want to write for the Lord. Through these workshops, it is her desire to provide information that will help inspiring authors' dream come to reality by providing tools, resources and opportunities to help them succeed.

Paulette currently resides in Northern California.

Find Paulette:

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We are giving away a free author signed copy of *That Was Then, This is Now* by Paulette Harper. Please email us at [sanctifiedtogether@gmail.com](mailto:sanctifiedtogether@gmail.com) to enter! The winner will be randomly chosen on July 7, 2010.

Paulette's third book, *Completely Whole*, will be released August 3, 2010.

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In His Arms



As I considered writing for *Sanctified Together Publication's* June topic, *The Measure of a Woman*, I have to admit that I was intimidated by the subject. I have been involved in ministering to women for the last 6 years and the overwhelming similarity that I have seen between women is that they have the same common fear: **they are not good enough and they do not measure up.**

I believe a large percentage of American women walk around with an inferiority complex, always measuring themselves against the woman next to them. Are they pretty enough, skinny enough, a good enough wife, mother, friend, etc? All the while wishing they were somebody else not realizing that the "somebody" else they want to be is also wishing to be "someone" else.

When I started my blog, *For His Glory*, I wanted people to experience the freedom that Jesus purchased for us on the cross, and I believe that freedom applies directly to this struggle that women have. I believe Jesus wants to set women free from this inferiority complex and that He wants them to see themselves as He sees them: a beautiful daughter of the King.

Colossians 2:13b-14 (NIV)

"He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross."

The overwhelming similarity with women is that they are never doing enough, and they are always falling short of achieving that elusive goal. Jesus took the "to do" list and He nailed it to the cross. There is nothing that you can say or do to make you "okay." Jesus made that issue null and void. Instead, He invites you into relationship with Him to be who you are through the cross and who you are will always be

different than your neighbor.

#### Galatians 4:6-7 (NCV)

"Since you are God's children, God sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, and the Spirit cries out, 'Father.' So now you are not a slave; you are God's child, and God will give you the blessing he promised, because you are his child."

My prayer for the women who read this is that you would release yourself from the false measures and expectations that society and you have put on yourself. Jesus has set you free; you are no longer a slave to these things. Come into agreement with His heart and see that you are measured as a loved child, in the arms of your Father.

~ Jaime Farkas

Jaime Farkas has been happily married for the last 8 years to her high school sweetheart. She has two beautiful children: a 5 1/2 year old boy and a 4 year old daughter. She is able to stay home with her children full-time and is currently homeschooling them. She leads women's Bible studies through her church. She had the blessing of growing up in a Christian home and is still a Christian! She loves the Lord and He is continually drawing her into deeper relationship with Him. Please visit her at her blog, [For His Glory Alone!](#)



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## Trusting God



Typically, devotionals include only one thought and one relative Bible scripture, but for this one time please bear with me. It is important for you to know that in the last two years I have been a semi-single mom without enough money most days, working at a job making half as much as everyone else but working just as hard, having a large amount of debt, dealing with a debilitating disease, chasing two young boys, and in the middle of a broken marriage which has been largely based on lies and affairs.

The final bough broke, though, when my mother kicked me out of her home Christmas Eve night because she didn't agree that my boys, her grandchildren, should spend Christmas Day with their father, my husband.

I share these descriptions of my life not to gain your sympathy or to complain, but so that you can appreciate the real story I am about to tell. The story of how I learned three simple words that are more powerful -- for me that is -- than any scripture I might have found in the Bible: TRUST IN GOD!

It was about three months ago, while working as a substitute teacher that I felt myself near an emotional/mental breakdown. I left my boys at daycare a little longer that day and went home alone to get myself together so they would not see me in tears which had happen before.

Honestly, I have only recently found myself in a good relationship with God; however, I am aware that it was and still is a work in progress. I hadn't yet given God a real chance to help me, to let Him take over the mess I found myself in. I am an independent control freak. Let's face it; I had not done such a good job on my own. I remembered my pastor telling me a week before my breakdown that I needed to give it all to God -- my life and my problems.

I came home that day and sat on the couch. I started crying more and harder than I had ever. I crawled up into a ball and cried and cried. At one point, I was yelling out my tears and pain. Then, I calmed down enough to say out loud in my empty living room, "God, I am done. I can't do it anymore. I give You my life and my husband and my pain. I know You gave everything for my sins -- for everyone's sins -- and I want to live by Your Words. Please help me to do better and to be better, Amen."

While I continued to pour out a few more tears, I felt a little bit of serenity come over me. I calmed down enough to go and get the boys. That next Sunday I felt pretty good about my cry and my prayer. I told only my pastor and my best friend about that day.

Over the last few months, I have been hired as a full-time, contracted teacher in a great school. My parents are helping with a loan for rent and watching the boys while I work at a new restaurant over the summer for extra money. My doctor has put me on some great new medications to get my rheumatoid arthritis under control. I am not yet paying much on my debt, but the plans are there to do so. My husband has done and said some incredible things on his own accord. He has committed himself to me, to our family, to a change in life, to seeking therapy, and to trying to find God for himself.

I am still a long way from being in a perfect state, but I am happy and not crying and not scared anymore. Most importantly, I am devoted to knowing and loving God. I know I didn't make these things happen alone. That's all any one person has to do and learn - know that they are not alone, listen to God, follow His Word, and TRUST IN GOD.

~ Tiffany Molina

Tiffany Molina has only recently developed a relationship with Jesus Christ. And while she admits it may be late in life to do so, she is equally devoted to making sure that the rest of her life follows His Word. She is a devoted mother to two beautiful boys, and the loyal wife of a dedicated and decorated soldier. Her friends and family drive her to be her best. She graduated from Texas A&M





University in 1999 and received an Honorable discharge from the United States Army in 2004. Now she is a High School English teacher hoping to make a difference in each of her student's lives.

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## Crown of Glory



*"Gray hair is a crown of glory; it is gained in a righteous life." - Proverbs 16:31 ESV*

Just what is the measure of a woman who has grown to an old age? When the joints hurt doing simple household chores? When she feels unable to help herself or those she cares about? What if she lives in a total care facility -- even has to wear a diaper? Or when Dementia or Alzheimer's or a stroke or heart attack has taken the mind or abilities away? From a physical standpoint, old age seems immeasurable.

The world measures by physical beauty -- slender figure, wholesome complexion, youthful hair color and agility. When so much of that worldly beauty changes, what is there to measure? Gray hairs, wrinkles, poor eyesight, hearing loss, protruding belly, mental slowness? The world's yardstick is tough on her. The moral and spiritual character often is torn asunder. Yet, God measures differently.

Creator God made His children in His Image. Can one allow the world to be the judge? God is Judge -- He sets the standard. No other. Beginning to end, He sustains, carries, and promises.

*"Listen to me, O house of Jacob, all the remnant of the house of Israel, who have been borne by me from before your birth, carried from the womb; even to your old age I am He, and to gray hairs I will carry you. I have made, and I will bear; I will carry and will save." - Isaiah 46:3-4 ESV*

*"LORD, make me to know my end, And what is the measure of my days, that I may know how frail I am." - Psalm 39:4 NKJV*

We are all called to grow in wisdom, in character, in faithfulness, in holiness, in love. As a woman grows older, God continues His call for her to mature more fully. The body is decaying. One day, she will return to dust. Yet the heart of God living within her never grows old, never decays. How glorious! We are learning from experiences, adding to our knowledge bank, adjusting judgments, acting with soundness and obedience, following His call to be holy as He is holy. Loving unconditionally are marks of our growing maturity.

*"So teach us to number our days, That we may gain a heart of wisdom." - Psalm 90:12 NKJV*



*"Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am the LORD your God." - Leviticus 20:7 NKJV*

The beauty of a woman is not merely her outward appearance. Her true beauty shines from her heart, especially as she ages, having gained spiritual wisdom. The quiet, gentle, meek spirit is not a fearful spirit, nor subdued or shy. It is a mild disposition that trusts in God's goodness and His control over life's situations. By wholly relying upon Him, He grows and purifies those who follow.

*"Your adornment must not be merely external-braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God." - 1 Peter 3:3-4 NASB*

God has set His child apart, sanctifying her. She is to protect her mind (that place of understanding, feeling, and desire) by caring about what enters in and what exits out. She is to keep her thoughts pure. She is to raise up her children well, be respectful and submissive to her husband, be prayerful, hospitable, a servant to the least, be sober, and obedient. She is to lean completely and set her hope solely upon the LORD rather than the world. God will guide and strengthen her as she walks the path to holiness.

*"You shall consecrate yourselves therefore and be holy, for I am the LORD your God." -Leviticus 20:7 NASB*

God measures in His own way as He is the Only Ruler. He is looking for much. He expects much. He loves much. God uses godly women to exemplify His character. Sarah knew her duty as a wife, honoring and revering Abraham, following him submissively to a land they knew not. As a woman, she certainly made her share of mistakes, yet God honored her. Anna, of an elderly age, was cared for by God in the temple. She served her God by praying and fasting, praising and thanking Him. God blessed her with the ability to see beyond human walls; thus, Anna knew the Messiah when He entered the temple as an infant. Holiness shines through these women who sought God.

*"For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands; just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear." - 1 Peter 3:5-6 NASB*

*"And there was a prophetess, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years and had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, and then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers. At that very moment she came up and began giving thanks to God, and continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem." - Luke 2:36-38 NASB*

The measure of a woman is the crown of glory she wears because of the life she leads---the life of righteousness, doing that which is right, wholesome, and holy. The beauty of her heart is by the grace of God. The Holy Spirit grows the inner person, magnifying the character of God. She wears a quiet, gentle spirit, a temper easily controlled, with a lack of pride, a becoming behavior towards all, even toward herself. She is lovely from the inside-out with a strength born of God. A woman's worth is measured in godly increments.

*"May we walk in Your holiness, LORD, in Your mercy and love. We pray that our adornment be Your grace and Your virtue. May the world we touch be able to see You in us, beyond the earrings, the makeup, and the clothing. It is the holiness, devotion, honor, reverence to You that needs to be seen and measured. May our crown be gracefully worn in our graying years because we have known You, grown in You during our youth and mid years. May we be thankful for each gray hair, LORD, and may we be precious in Your sight, worthy of Your love. Amen."*

~ Linda Gill

Linda Gill is a retired school teacher and children's librarian. Her marriage of 17 years is Christ-centered. They have no children. She cares for her 96 year old mother. Linda grew up as the oldest of three girls in a Navy family. Her father, a Navy doctor for twenty years, died at the early age of 46. Her mother raised the girls in San Diego, CA. Christ has been the well from which she drinks for over 17 years even though she grew up in a Christian home. She was not introduced to the incredible power of relationship with Jesus Christ until she was 45.

She seeks the Truth and wants to be a light of God in the world in which she is placed, whether it be the workplace, the assisted living, the nursing home, church, one-on-one spiritual mentoring, tutoring children. She loves writing these days and can be found at her blog: [Being Woven](#) where she journals her spiritual journey with Jesus. You can also find her at [Granola Bar Devotional](#) and [Quiet Time Ministries Cafe](#).



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## The Measured Woman: A Gospel Study



I have to admit, it is overwhelming to think of all the women from the beginning of time to understand the true measure of a woman. I thought of many women: the Proverbs 31 woman, Hadassau (a.k.a Queen Esther), Judge Deborah, Sara, Ruth, Hannah, the mothers never mentioned who raised up sons who would later become kings. What about David's mom? Or what about Timothy's mother and grandmother? There are many extraordinary women who have come and gone before us.

I just sat with my journal against my chest, closed my eyes and asked, "Lord, out of all the testimonies recorded in the Bible, what is your favorite testimony in regards to a measure of a woman? Lord, was there a woman after Your heart like King David?" I sat on my bed still closing my eyes and that is when I was led to the Gospels.

I read through the many parables Jesus spoke and the many cities and people that Jesus touched. I was amazed to find that all four Gospels record the act of a particular woman. The testimony of this woman in Matthew and Mark is recorded in just a few verses and her name is not mentioned. The book of Luke chapter 7 has the most detailed, yet still the name of the woman is not mentioned. Finally, in the book of John chapter 12:3, the woman's name is recorded.

The woman is Mary, the sister of Lazarus and Martha. I was absolutely astounded. The reason is because in Luke 7:37 this woman is recorded as a woman who sinned greatly. I had no idea that Mary the sister of Martha and Lazarus was a woman of great shame. Mary was a woman who was associated with 'sin,' which made her an outcast.

The act of this woman prompted Jesus to say, "I tell you the truth, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her" (Mark 14:9 NIV). Wow! How awesome to impress the Son of God as she did. This woman took her most prized possession; something that she could have sold and most likely made great profit from. Yet, she saw the greatest profit was to pour out the costly perfume onto the amazing, beautiful, and well traveled feet of Jesus. She not only poured it out, but she wept over him. She kissed his feet with passion continuously, and not wanting to get up to retrieve a towel, she used the glory of her head -- her hair -- to wipe his feet.

Reading this true story is so amazing, especially when reading it from the four different perspectives of the Gospel writers. From these different points of view, we know the recorded facts in this Testimony of God:

1. Jesus was in Bethany at the time when this amazing act of love took place.
2. Jesus by God's resurrection power raised Lazarus (Mary's brother) from the dead.
3. Soon after the resurrection of Lazarus, Jesus was invited to the house of a Pharisee named Simon.
4. In the book of Matthew, it is recorded that Simon was a leper.

Knowing the facts, I have wondered with romanticizing thoughts, how many people surrounded Simon's house in Bethany that day? The people most likely swarmed Simon's home as they knew this amazing, famous Jesus was with him. However, the question I had was, "How did a woman in that day, but not just any woman, a sinful woman, enter into another man's home? Especially without an invitation? How did she do it without someone making a spectacle of her?"

After reading all four written accounts of this story, I was reminded that she was the sister of Lazarus. This amazing life changing moment that affected her as her brother Lazarus whom Jesus raised from the dead was the pivotal moment of their lives! As Jesus went into Simon's home, Lazarus was also there. I believe that because of the immeasurable greatness of Jesus, Mary was allowed to enter into this home.

Her adoration and undeniably grateful heart was revealed in this very moment. It was such a transforming moment that I am sure not one sound was heard inside or outside Simon's house. I imagine that the only sound heard was the sound of Mary's passionate kisses and her groaning from deep within for this amazing Jesus.

Now the onlookers from Simon to Judas Iscariot were disgusted by this woman's actions, especially since she had 'wasted' such costly perfume. But their appalled thoughts led to the profound parable and truth that Jesus so eloquently articulated.

*Jesus said to Simon, "A certain lender of money had two debtors: one owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. When they had no means of paying, he freely forgave them both. Now which of them will love him more?"*

*Simon answered, "The one, I take it, for whom he forgave and canceled more."*

*And Jesus said to him, "You have decided correctly."*

*Then Jesus turning toward the woman, He said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? When I came into your house, you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has wet My feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You gave Me no kiss, but she from the moment I came in has not ceased to kiss My feet tenderly and caressingly. You did not anoint My head with oil, but she has anointed My feet with perfume. Therefore I tell you, her sins are forgiven her -- because she has loved much. But he who is forgiven little loves little."*

*And He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven!"*

*Then those who were at the table with Him began to say amongst themselves, "Who is this Who even forgives sins?"*

*But Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go into peace." \**

This woman's life was powerfully impacted by Jesus Christ, and she did not care what anyone else thought of her, except for Jesus. After studying her selfless act, I am reminded that the measure of a woman is realized when her value is not dependent upon what she has or hasn't done; but based on the One who values her because of who He is!

\*Dialogue based on Luke 7:41-50 (AMP)

~ Teresa Stevens Criswell

Encouraging. Passionate. Dramatic. Crazy. Funny -- these words describe Teresa Criswell. She is a wife, mom, writer and has a love of speaking forth God's Word with great encouragement. In her love for the Lord, Teresa shares encouragement through the Word of God and with personal experiences. She inspires others and offers hope in the midst of hopeless situations, utilizing the greatest weapons from God: His Powerful Word and our praises to God. Her love for people reveals a glimpse of the heart of God as she longs to see Truth and Freedom of God transform lives. Teresa enjoys living in Texas along with her amazing husband and two beautiful children. You can visit her at [Triumphant](#)



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Single Again



I divorced over twenty years ago. Time seems to go by so fast! I was twenty eight, and I'm fifty now. Did I ever imagine myself being single all these year? No. Have there been times when I wondered, "What is wrong with me?" and "Why doesn't anyone want to love me?" Yes. I wondered that many times before.

Did I long to be loved and have someone bring me flowers for Valentine's Day or dance with me at all the weddings I've attended? Sure. Did I ever spend lonely evenings alone on the couch wishing I had someone to hold me and

share the popcorn bowl? Yes, I did.

It's not easy being single in a world that has changed so much. I have seen dating rules change and ways of meeting someone go beyond what my grandparents would ever believe! But am I happy, you may ask? Yes!

I can be happy and lonely, sad and still full of joy. The emotions that I feel as a single person are the same that I felt as a married person. God has spoken to me, and He has made me realized that He allowed me to be single, not to sadden me, make me envy others or to punish me. In fact, He wanted to bless me.

Through the years as a single person, married couples have gravitated towards me to ask for advice. I have seen and heard just about everything. I have seen women give up dreams, family and friends to follow a man. I have seen women take abuse - physically and mentally - just to keep the feeling of "being loved." I have listened to stories of how marriages have turned cold and distant, harming the family unit. I am able to listen to couples in need without judgment. I'm glad I can be of service to those struggling marriages, and hopefully I can point them to God.

Yet, I still get lonely on Friday nights when I'm home alone. That is normal. We all want to be loved. Is finding a partner the top priority in my life? No. If you're a man, a woman does not make you a whole person. If you're a woman, a man does not make you a whole person. God does. If there was anyone I needed all these years, it was God. I have been a Christian most my life; but during those single years, I wish I would have made Him my sole purpose. When we begin to live life for God, He will bless us with whatever we need to compliment our life.

~ Bernice Rubio

Bernice S. Rubio is a single, divorced Hispanic from Corpus Christi, Texas. I have two grown girls: Erica 28 and Marissa 16. I teach Special Education and love my job; it is the most rewarding career ever. I am blessed daily to be able to see the accomplishments of my students and to be part of their lives, helping them reach their educational goals. When I'm not working, I love to blog, write, photograph, travel, look at art, and really do anything that lets me be creative. My walk with Christ has been a journey in which I have been





blessed in too many ways to count. You can also find me at my blogs [Texasoup and God](#) and [Texasoup](#).

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## A Mom's Identity: A Granola Bar Devotional



"Are you afraid of losing yourself in motherhood?" she asks as I cry. I nod. "Who are you?" she asks. Tears stream down my face as I search for an answer. I have no answer. The question rolls around in my head for days. Who am I? What is identity? I know what I do. I know my relationship to other people. I know my spiritual gifts. I know my personality. So who am I? Who does God say I am? I am righteous through Christ, redeemed, secure, filled with the Holy Spirit, blameless in God's sight and saved. I have access to the Fruits of the Spirit (patience, love, and kindness), boldness and power. I am a child of the Most High king. None of these things will be drowned by or lost in circumstance. My relationships, spiritual gifts and personality will not become lost in motherhood. Quite the opposite - through being a mom I'll grow closer to Christ, closer to my children, and will grow a rich inheritance of faith, hope and love for generations. Suddenly all the achievements, knowledge, experience and goals I'd hoped for doesn't matter. This task - this inheritance that will last for generations and impact eternity - will last forever. All of the sudden, the cleanliness of my bathroom doesn't matter. Whether my kitchen floor gleams or not is inconsequential. The stains on my stove are unimportant. C'mon kids! Jump on the bed while I empty the clean-laundry basket on you. C'mon! Let's mop the floor together. Come work in my office with me! It'll be messy, take way too long and may not get done properly, but we're going to have great memories and build a strong foundation of love. I finally embrace what has eternal value!

### Prayer Prompt:

"Lord, help me to value things according to Your priorities. Help me to know what has eternal value and then focus only on those things. Lord, my housework is not the reason for my existence. I was created for You. Help me to walk in the purpose for which You created me. You have a wonderful plan for me. Thank You for that. I pray You'd open my eyes to what's eternal and help me to fix my eyes on You and Your mission for me, including..."

### Memory Verse:

"Open my eyes to see the wonderful truths in your instructions."  
-Psalm 119:18 (NLT)

~ Kimberly Dawn



Kimberly Dawn Rempel is an active disciple of Jesus, mom to 2 toddlers and a writer. Join her in her journey to joyful motherhood and purposeful living at [Little Minute](#).

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