

TONY EVANS
CHRYSTAL EVANS HURST
KINGDOM
WOMAN

EMBRACING YOUR PURPOSE,
POWER, AND POSSIBILITIES

FOCUS[®]
ON
THE FAMILY



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CAROL STREAM, ILLINOIS

Kingdom Man Woman

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Editor: Marianne Hering

Cover design by

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

ISBN: 978-1-58997-743-3

Printed in the United States of America

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 / 17 16 15 14 13

There are four living generations of women in our family.

This book is dedicated to the three youngest of them:

Kariss

Jessica

Kelsey

kingdom women in the making

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I never imagined this life, one bursting at the seams with more goodness than any man could manage alone. Yet it has somehow been balanced with grace because of you, Lois. The greatest story in all the books of the world could never describe the affection and appreciation I have for you. Anything good I have ever accomplished has been because of you. What can I say, except, thank you.

Chrystal, I was a twenty-two-year-old young man, steeped in inexperience, the very first time I laid eyes on you. The doctor came through the double doors into the waiting room where I'd been frantically pacing, and he told me you were here. And when I saw you, I knew I would never be the same again.

I could never have imagined that forty years later you and I would sit down together, pens in hand, to write a book that would impact women everywhere. What a gift you have been to this project. What a gift you have been to me.

Tyndale and Focus on the Family: Finding publishers who carefully walk the fine line of ministry and business with grace and integrity can be a challenge. I've found that in you. Partnering with you on this book has been a joy. I can't wait to do it again soon.

—TONY EVANS

Daddy, thanks for the loving nudge in the direction of God's call on my life. You always see more in me than I do.

Mommy, I have had no better example than the one you have lived before my eyes, day in and day out, through the best and worst of times. So much of what I have learned about living as a kingdom woman, I have learned from watching you.

Kariss and Jessica, if you hadn't been willing to help me make dinner, clean up the kitchen, and watch your brothers, I wouldn't have had time to write. You are not just my daughters; you are my friends.

Silla, not a day goes by that I'm not grateful that you are my one and only

sissy. I know I don't always act like it, but I'm glad when you walk over to my house and come in the back door without knocking. You are wonderful with words both spoken and written. Thanks for letting me learn from you.

Many thanks to Kanika, Michelle, and Wynter who let me borrow their brains on a regular basis and granted me access to their insights and creativity. I appreciate every reply to my incessant e-mails, texts, and calls.

Sallie Clarkson and Zan Tyler, your words of encouragement echo in my mind on a regular basis. Your words of affirmation watered dormant seeds and reminded me of who I am.

Andrea, you understand my life—homeschooling, housework, and hungry boys—so your reflections have meant so much. We will eventually make more time to hang out with our crew!

Focus on the Family and Tyndale Publishers, thanks for the opportunity to work on a project with my dad.

And last but certainly not least, to my husband, Jessie, my kingdom man, you are the reason I have the freedom to find my path and try new things. Your deep and consistent love for this crazy wife God gave you makes my heart melt—over and over.

—CHRYSAL EVANS HURST

FOREWORD

A few women sighed in hesitation when we told them about this book. The thought of another manual to tell them what they aren't doing well and to give them instructions on how to change didn't sound appealing. The mere mention of a *kingdom woman* conjured up an idealistic image, one that instantly became a burden. Maybe, honestly, you feel the same way—a bit weary of having a finger waving in your face demanding that you do better—especially when you are already doing your absolute best.

We understand. Trust us, we understand—which is why we're glad you've opened this book.

This book, much like its companion *Kingdom Man*, will be unlike others you've read. It won't inform you and then leave you hanging to deal with a sense of condemnation and guilt. Every chapter will encourage and applaud you, and then show you theologically and practically how to have the kind of faith that will usher in the miracle you've been looking for—the one you've been longing to see unfold in your family, church, or community. It will hand you a sword and then inspire you to draw it in the face of adversity instead of shrinking back into complacency or even into despair. After you take in these pages, you will be encouraged and you will also be empowered for the journey ahead.

Merging two unique messages into a succinct and singular package would require a pair of people who have walked through the annals of experience together. Our husband/father and daughter/sister are just the duo to make it happen. With Chrystal's frank, authentic, real-life perspective punctuating Tony's biblically inspired teaching, you will find this read an eye-opening and enlightening adventure through Scripture and then into your own heart.

Chrystal's a bit new on the publishing scene, but she shines in the women's ministry at our church and in our lives personally. For many years now, she has led the ladies of our local congregation, training them to be women of purpose who are equipped to reach their full potential. In a Christian world filled with folks striving for the limelight and a microphone, she has esteemed and placed value on her place within the local church. That's something worth talking

about. Her ability to engage and inspire an audience is compelling, but her faithfulness to disciple women one on one is admirable and has inspired others to do the same.

Even more impactful than that, Chrystal has managed to keep her priorities in place, structuring her time and efforts to focus primarily on her family. Honestly, we don't know how she does it, and we stand in awe of her every day. As a homeschool mother of five children, she knows the juggling act performed by millions of women the world over and has demonstrated what it means to honor God as a wife and mother. To top it off, she makes a loaf of homemade pumpkin bread that will make your mouth water.

In between washing dinner dishes, creating lesson plans, and taking the occasional field trip, Chrystal has managed to find time to blog her thoughts and life happenings in a way that has captured the attention of women. The treasure you will uncover in this manuscript will come not only from Tony's teaching, but also from the story of Chrystal's life. Her deep, thriving relationship with Jesus is seen in every word, and her vulnerability and quick wit will draw you in and then cause you to see yourself in her life. You'll laugh at her stories and see the biblical truth she intended to share. Chrystal is great but refreshingly unassuming. Not perfect but purposeful. You won't feel pressured to emulate her, but you will want to walk alongside her.

Tony probably doesn't need any introduction. He has written over sixty books, so the one you are holding in your hands is a continuation of a long line of fantastic titles. His contribution in publishing has blessed millions of people the world over and made an indelible mark on the health of the global church. His desire to uncover and then relay theological truths in a practical, relevant way has been the mark of his ministry—a ministry in which He has served his entire adult life. He is a faithful man who has dedicated himself to the Lord, his family, and the local church.

For over three decades, he has pastored the same flock.

For over four decades, he has loved the same wife.

For nearly five decades, he has taught the same, unadulterated gospel of Jesus Christ. The depth of his integrity and character match the widespread reach of his ministry.

We wish we could have pulled you around our kitchen table to experience

the after-dinner devotions that happened most nights in our home. Or invited you along for our yearly month-long road trip through the States that he courageously took us on each August. Or had you join us for Sunday-morning service where we've sat under his inspired teaching for thirty-seven years. Then you'd see the real man behind the larger-than-life persona—the introspective and loving pastor, father, and friend who has a heart that will resonate with yours through every portion of this book.

So, here's the deal, this book is like a train track headed to a destination that is worth every ounce of energy spent making the trip. And, like any track, this one has two rails bound together by the rungs of wisdom and experience. At different points in your reading, you'll need to be willing to hop on each one of these rails in order to get the most out of your reading. Each will allow you a different vantage point that will enhance the other. One side is Tony's—biblical, thought-provoking, and appropriately intense. It will require you to look into your Bible and then into your own soul as you learn lessons from ancient women that you may never have gathered before. Then Chrystal will beckon you over to her side of the track. You'll grab her hand, steady yourself on her rail, and begin a personal journey that will allow you to apply the truths you've been reading about.

We'll be honest and tell you that the ride won't always be easy and seamless. There might be some turns on a few steep spiritual cliffs that might make you feel like you won't make it to the other side in tact—but you will.

You will.

Tony and Chrystal.

Father and Daughter.

The perfect combination to bring you this incredible manuscript that will mark you forever. You'll emerge richer, wiser, and more motivated to become the kingdom woman you were created to be.

Be blessed as you read.

—LOIS EVANS AND PRISCILLA SHIRER

INTRODUCTION

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF A KINGDOM WOMAN

When a kingdom woman's alarm sounds each morning, the devil tries to hit her snooze button. He'll do whatever he can to try to stop her from taking on a new day with the mind of God. But a kingdom woman won't stop doing all she can for God's kingdom until she makes the devil regret ever messing with her.

As the strong and eloquent Eleanor Roosevelt once said, "A woman is like a teabag. You never know how strong it is until it's in hot water."¹ When the hot water comes, we often witness the explosion of strength and inner resolve that would put many men to shame. In childbirth alone, women frequently endure and experience more anguish and pain than scores of men sent out to war.

Women are often the unsung heroes behind any major victory, discovery, or moral campaign. Throughout history, when the men were away at battle, women have held down the fort, assisted in creating and sending the supplies, run the businesses, maintained the economy and community, farmed—all while still managing the homes.

Women have always held a place of influence in culture, even if it hasn't been recognized publicly—or legally allowed. The nineteenth-century author Virginia Woolf wrote succinctly, "I would venture to guess that Anon, who wrote so many poems without signing them, was often a woman."² In fact, women have been equipped with such an innate capacity for influence that they can change the world for good or, unfortunately, for bad.

We are all too familiar with the negative influences. For example, Samson could defeat an entire army with the jaw of a donkey, but he became weak in the arms of one woman. Solomon had wisdom, riches, and power, but he still

bowed to the ungodly influence of his many wives. David killed a giant with all the bravery and bravado of a gladiator—with only one stone and a slingshot. Yet King David was taken down by just one look at a bathing lady.

Feminine influence doesn't solely come tied to sexuality, nor is it only used to gain a negative outcome. In fact, many women use their innate power to



Women have been equipped with such an innate capacity for influence that they can change the world for good.



bring about good on behalf of those around them. Women in general mature faster than men, giving women an opportunity to make decisions in their earlier years that position them more securely in life and in the workplace. More women than men are graduating at all levels of college. And women's earnings have increased fifty-six percent on average since 1963, but their male coworkers are earning less than working men in 1970.³

Not only are women influencing the workplace more than ever, but women are also often the impetus behind social change and transformation. The Center on Philanthropy found

that women of the Baby Boomer generation and older, across nearly every economic bracket, give more—up to 89 percent more—to charity than men, thus raising the volume of their voices with regard to strategy, vision, and approach.⁴

Beyond that, women are gifted with a winsome ability to be disarmingly charming, even without using additional physical appeal. This alone can guide conversations their way, or influence major decisions in many realms, even unknowingly to those involved in it. Women also often embody additional spiritual depth and insight that captivate men because those qualities reflect something that men crave for themselves.

Our culture often displays a mirage that shows men having all the power, control, and influence. And men, in their most raw form, do seek to create, explore, build, exploit, achieve, and conquer, then grab the glory for doing it all themselves. What is frequently missed: examining the motivation behind a man's ambitions, which is often the influence of women.

From early on, a man depends upon a woman in many ways—from the

womb to early childhood, to teachers and the influence of media that creates an ideal image of a woman. A man doesn't buy a car just because he wants that fast-looking car. He will often buy a car to impress a woman, even if he won't admit that's why he did it.

Men often learn as early as junior high that the guys who play sports get the girls. The guys who drive nice cars, have money, or ooze charm get the girls. As they grow into men, those lessons stick with them as they aim for good jobs, a certain reputation, or success. All you have to do is listen to a song sung by a man to discover one of the biggest driving forces behind

much of what men do. Here's an example you can find playing on today's radio stations, "'Cause what you don't understand is I'd catch a grenade for ya."⁵

Or from the soundtrack of the popular 1991 film *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves*, a character of great gusto, power, and strength battles enemies in difficult and dangerous scenarios while the lyrics point to a woman being behind all his forays: "Everything I do, I do it for you."⁶

Or take it back to my generation with lyrics from the hit song "When a Man Loves a Woman" by the one and only Percy Sledge: "He'll trade the world for the good thing he has found."

Rarely does an epic movie ever finish without somehow uniting or reuniting a man with a woman. Battles have been fought over women, history has been shaped by women, policy has been influenced or decided by women, nations have been run by women. Even in athletics women have power and influence. As recently as the London Olympics in 2012, American women won more *gold* medals not just over the American men, but over most nations' *total* medal counts as well (China won thirty-eight and Great Britain tied the American women with twenty-nine). In fact, the United States women won a total of fifty-eight medals, which is more than sixty-four countries' total medal counts combined, not including China, Russia, and Great Britain.⁸

Sojourner Truth, one powerful woman said, "If the first woman God ever



*Our culture often displays
a mirage that shows men
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made was strong enough to turn the world upside down all alone, these women together ought to be able to turn it back, and get it right side up again!”⁹

Eighteenth-century British essayist Samuel Johnson wrote at a time when women’s rights were greatly limited by law, “Nature has given women so much power that the law has wisely given them very little.”¹⁰

Thankfully, the legal rights and opportunities for women are no longer limited in America or in many countries as they were in the time of Virginia Woolf, Samuel Johnson, or Sojourner Truth, but the sentiment behind each of their statements remains true. Women are naturally gifted to influence and impact their world.

The First Woman

Women grace this planet with insight, sensitivity, and a spiritual beauty that has put them behind great accomplishments. The popular sayings ring true: The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world, and behind every great man is a greater woman. Or, in our case, behind every kingdom man is a kingdom

woman. No one ever goes around saying, “Behind every great woman is a great man.”

That phrase wouldn’t fly. There are scores of single women who are successful, competent, and satisfied. And there are scores of married women whose husbands are clearly not kingdom men yet those women remain every bit kingdom women themselves.

God created man out of dust from the ground. At a basic level, the Creator picked up some dirt and threw Adam together. The Hebrew word for God forming man is *yat-*

God has given women a diverse makeup that enables them to carry out multiple functions well.

*sar*¹¹ which means “to form, as a potter.” A pot usually has but one function.

Yet when God made a woman, He “made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man” (Genesis 2:22). He created her with His own hands. He took His time crafting and molding her into multifaceted brilliance. The Hebrew word used for making woman is *banah*, meaning to “build, as a house,

a temple, a city, an altar.”¹² The complexity implied through the term *banah* is worth noting. God has given women a diverse makeup that enables them to carry out multiple functions well. Adam may be considered Human Prototype 1.0 while Eve was Human Prototype 2.0.

Of high importance, though, is that Eve was fashioned *laterally* with Adam’s rib. It was not a top-down formation of dominance or a bottom-up formation of subservience. Rather, Eve was an equally esteemed member of the human race.

After all, God spoke of the decision for their creation as one decision before we were ever even introduced to the process of their creation. The very first time we read about both Eve and Adam is when we read of the mandate of rulership given to both of them equally. We are introduced to both genders together, simultaneously. This comes in the first chapter of the Bible:

Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let *them* rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created *them*. (Genesis 1:26–27)

Both men and women have been created equally in the image of God. While within that equality lie distinct and different roles (we will look at that in chapter eleven), there is no difference in equality of being, value, or dignity between the genders. Both bear the responsibility of honoring the image in which they have been made. A woman made in the image of God should never settle for being treated as anything less than an image-bearer of the one true King. As Abraham Lincoln said, “Nothing stamped with the Divine image and likeness was sent in the world to be trodden on.”¹³

Just as men, women were created to rule.

A Covenant for Dominion

When God created the heavens and the earth, He established an order. Although He is the Creator and the ultimate ruler over His creation, He willingly

empowered humankind to rule within His prescribed order. In theology this is known as the Dominion Covenant. It is where God turned over to men and women the immediate, tangible rule over His creation within the boundaries and stipulations that He has set forth. The Dominion Covenant is in Genesis 1 where we just read, “Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and *let them rule*’ (Genesis 1:26).

The Dominion Covenant is rarely taught or discussed. Yet it is no small thing. Fundamentally, it involves God’s willing removal of Himself over the direct management of what He has created on earth while releasing that management responsibility to humankind.

When we read that God created man in His own image, both male and female were created. The Dominion Covenant not only applies to men, but also to women. A kingdom woman is an essential part of God’s rule on earth. He has delegated this responsibility, empowering each of us to make decisions. These decisions come with blessings or consequences according to His boundaries and laws.

God has established a process whereby He honors our decisions—even if those decisions go against Him, or even if those decisions are not in the best interest of that which is being managed. God said, “Let *them* rule. . . .”



*A kingdom woman is
an essential part of
God’s rule on earth.*



While God retains absolute, sovereign authority and ownership, He has delegated relative authority to humankind within the sphere of influence, or dominion, that each person has.

One of the reasons that this rule and management has been neglected to such a large degree is that many people are confused about why they are here on earth to begin with. This has happened because of a culture that has been flirting with hedonism for decades. A hedonistic worldview promotes the notion that someone’s personal destiny exists to advance his or her personal happiness.

In God’s economy, however, personal happiness is a derivative—a benefit—not the goal or driving force of destiny for a kingdom woman. Happiness is not

the reason God created women. The reason He created women was to advance His kingdom and for His glory.

Dominion in the Kingdom

God has invested His image in His men and women and placed them on display. A kingdom woman is to reflect Him and His kingdom in such a remarkable fashion that people want to know more about the kingdom she represents. She has been put here to reflect God's image.

I noticed an example of this while my wife, Lois, and I spent time in New York City this year. When we do, we inevitably stop by Saks Fifth Avenue for an afternoon. Outside of Saks Fifth Avenue, windows line the street so passers-by can catch a glimpse of what is inside the "kingdom" of Saks. The owners invest major time and resources to display what their kingdom has to offer.

I wish that more people realized how much God's kingdom has to offer. One reason so few people truly grasp the significance that comes from the Dominion Covenant is because they don't know the true value of God's kingdom. They don't know exactly what they have been placed here to represent.

The body of Christ, in general, focuses more on the concept of the church rather than on the kingdom. So many lives don't visibly demonstrate the significance God has given them. They don't advertise God's kingdom well.

One reason for that is the church has settled for buildings and programs instead of teaching men and women how to access the authority of the kingdom.

We've had church, but we haven't experienced the kingdom. Without our churches functioning in a kingdom-minded manner, believers are not being disciplined to *be* the kingdom church that Christ came to build. In fact, Jesus only mentioned *church* three times in His earthly ministry, and all three times are recorded in the kingdom-focused book of Matthew.¹⁴ The word *kingdom*, however, is found fifty-four times in the book of Matthew.¹⁵

We usually hear more about the church than the kingdom. We "plant churches" rather than promote the kingdom. Our seminaries teach our future leaders how to *do* church rather than how to *be* about the kingdom. Now, we can't have church without the kingdom, and the kingdom carries out its agenda through the church. Yet without an open and accurate teaching on how to

live as kingdom men and women, we lack the direction to truly live out our destinies.

The Greek word used for kingdom in the New Testament is *basileia*, which means “authority” and “rule.”¹⁶ A kingdom always includes three components: a ruler, a realm of subjects under its rule, and the rules or governances. The kingdom of God is *the authoritative execution of His comprehensive rule in all creation*. The kingdom agenda is simply *the visible demonstration of the comprehensive rule of God over every area of life*.¹⁷

God’s kingdom transcends time, space, politics, denominations, cultures, and the realms of society. It is both now (Mark 1:15) and not yet (Matthew 16:28), close by (Luke 17:21) and removed (Matthew 7:21). The kingdom’s realms include the individual, family, church, and civil government. God has given guidelines for the operation of all four, and neglecting these guidelines results in disorder and loss.

The main component upon which all else rests in a kingdom is the authority of the ruler. Without that, there is anarchy. Knowing this, Satan made sure that his first move in the garden was to subtly and deceitfully dethrone the



A kingdom woman may be defined as a woman who positions herself under and operates according to the rule of God over every area of her life.



Ruler by failing to use the term *LORD* as God did when He referred to Himself in the beginning of Genesis as *LORD God. Yahweh*, translated “LORD God” in the Bible, means “master, and absolute ruler”¹⁸ and is the name God used to reveal Himself and his relationship to us. Prior to God revealing Himself to humans, He was introduced as Elohim, the powerful Creator.

When Satan spoke to Eve about eating the forbidden fruit, he did not refer to God as *LORD God*. Essentially, he stripped off the name *LORD* in Genesis 3:1, “Indeed, has *God* said. . . ?” Satan tried to reduce God’s rulership by beginning with a subtle but effective twist in His name. Satan’s goal in doing so was to push Eve out from under God’s kingdom definition and order.

When both Adam and Eve ate from the fruit in disobedience, they chose to change how they viewed God, removing the aspect of “Master, Ruler.” As a result, they lost their intimate fellowship with Him and with each other. Fortunately, on the cross Jesus Christ reintroduced this intimate fellowship through His sinless sacrifice and resurrection. We can enjoy unhindered fellowship with God now as a result of Christ’s atonement. However, this only occurs when you align yourself under God as *LORD God*—the Master and Ruler. Therefore, a kingdom woman may be defined as *a woman who positions herself under and operates according to the rule of God over every area of her life.*

Eve didn’t start out on such a great foot when she decided to act on her own rather than according to God’s rule. Many women today still struggle with turning over personal control in their lives, thus opening themselves up to heartache, loss, and chaos. Yet because of the grace and mercy of Jesus Christ, any woman can easily repent and align herself under God.

Chrystal’s Chronicles

Kingdom woman. Those words sound like some pretty high stilettos to walk around in all day. The truth of the matter is that I know I’m not her. She is someone I strive to become but whose roles and responsibilities seem like a lot to handle. The very definition of a kingdom woman sets a high bar. After all, where is this woman—who is this woman—who regularly and consistently positions herself under and operates according to God’s complete rule over her life?

Oh, I know. She must be my neighbor. She must be the woman who sits next to me at church or the lady who always seems to have the time to serve others. She must be the woman who has been married for fifty-seven years or the woman who is fifty-seven years old and has walked in unremarkable purity. She must be the woman who walks with the tattered and torn Bible or the woman who keep Jesus paraphernalia on her desk at work. She must be the woman who never yells at her kids and the woman who always cooks gourmet meals for her family. She must be the woman who has a work ethic beyond reproach and who lives in complete financial freedom because she regularly chooses frugality instead of fashion. She maintains a modest waistline and harbors no addictions. She must be every other woman, that is.

Just like Eve, we women tend to spend more time analyzing what we are not or what we don't have than recognizing who we were created to be. Satan's victory with Eve started way before she ate that fruit. The bite was only the culmination. Eve's demise began when she entered a conversation with the devil. And that's what we do a lot. We talk. We rehearse on a daily basis what we don't have or who we are not. We focus on the areas of our "garden" (our domain or our realm) that seem just out of our reach or control. We take the seed of discontentment offered by the evil one and inform our souls of our dissatisfaction, unhappiness, or displeasure.

Just like Eve we have a choice. We can choose to believe what God's Word says about who we are and who we are created to be or we can entertain the lies planted by the enemy of our souls and cultivated by the culture we live in. Romans

10:17 says that "faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ." And that's what this book is about—hearing (and reading) what God says about who you are as a woman created for His glory.

I desire to be the woman that He created me to be—not the woman whom I think I want to be or the woman the world tells me that I should be. It brings me great joy to think of the detailed design and intricate effort that God put

forth when making me. I'm so glad that I don't have to aspire to be anyone else other than that woman God wants me to be.

You don't have to seek anyone else's approval for the life God has given you to live. We don't have to apologize for the strength, fortitude, courage, talent, beauty, or intellect with which our Creator has given to us. Ladies, we all are " God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (Ephesians 2:10).

Kingdom Woman. Those four-inch red heels don't look easy to walk around in all day. But first looks can be deceiving. The right shoe made by the right designer and with the right materials can be not just wearable, but comfortable. God has designed a plan and a purpose just for you. We are not just fearfully and wonderfully



*You don't have to seek
anyone else's approval
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given you to live.*



made (Psalm 139:14), we are created in the image of a radiant, magnificent God who is full of beauty and splendor.

So wear His glory well. Walk on His runway.

More Than Helpers

And old saying goes “Women who seek to be equal with men lack ambition.” Think about that for a second because I don’t want you to miss the potency of its point. So many women have been taught that because God deemed women as a “helper” for Adam, that women are subsequently “less than” man. Women often hear that they are to be as the Holy Spirit in His role of “helper.” Yet a closer look at the word used for “helper” in Scripture should be eye opening for you.

The Hebrew words translated “helper suitable for him” in the creation story are important because they’re surprisingly powerful. They are *ezer* and *kenegdo*.¹⁹ The word *ezer* occurs twenty-one times in the Old Testament, with only two of those times referring to a woman. The remaining usages refer to help that comes directly from God the Father.²⁰

Here are some examples:

There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help [*ezer*]. (Deuteronomy 33:26, KJV)

Our soul waiteth for the LORD: he is our help [*ezer*] and our shield. (Psalm 33:20, KJV)

Yet I am poor and needy; come quickly to me, O God. You are my help [*ezer*]. (Psalm 70:5)

Our help [*ezer*] is in the name of the LORD. (Psalm 124:8)

To distinguish *ezer* from every other Old Testament use, which referred to a stronger help brought by God, the word *kenegdo* was added. It literally means, “before your face, within your view or purpose.”²¹ Some have translated *kenegdo*

to also mean “a completion of” or “counterpart to.” As you can see from the name that God gave to Eve, hers isn’t a role of subservience, maid service, or even that of being a slave. Hers is a strong help comparable to that of God the Father.

Those who feel that Scripture was created as a reflection of a misogynist worldview that oppresses and negates the value of women clearly haven’t looked at the original language and context. Evangelist-turned-skeptic, Charles Templeton, summarizes this view well when he wrote, “The Bible is a book by and for men. The women in it are secondary creatures and usually inferior.”²²

Yet the very word God chose to use for women’s purpose and intention is the same word used to refer to Himself as the primary person in the Godhead. Woman’s purpose is as a strong help and completion. God does not shy from referring to Himself or defining Himself through the use of feminine terms or imagery. Some examples include the following:

- God like a woman in labor (Isaiah 42:14)
- God like a midwife (Psalm 22:9–10, 71:6, Isaiah 66:9)
- God like a woman seeking a lost coin (Luke 15:8–10)
- God like a mother bear (Hosea 13:8)
- God like a mother:
 - nursing her children (Numbers 11:12)
 - not forgetting her children (Isaiah 49:14–15)
 - comforting her children (Isaiah 66:12–13)
 - birthing and protecting Israel (Isaiah 46:3–4)
 - calling, holding, healing, and feeding her children (Hosea 11:1–4)
 - God as a hen mother (Matthew 23:37)
 - God as a female bird protecting her young (Psalm 17:8, 36:7, 57:1, 91:1–4)

In fact, not only does God use feminine terminology to communicate major spiritual principles, but the primary reference to the church throughout Scripture is also made with feminine terminology (for example, the bride of Christ.)

When Jesus chose to use Mary as an example of personal discipleship, he affirmed her in a way that was contrary to the cultural norms of that day for women. Rather than uphold the cultural expectation that women ought to be about housework in the kitchen as Martha was doing, Jesus specifically stated that Mary had chosen “the better thing” by engaging in theological study at the feet of Christ, which was solely the practice of men learning at the feet of a Rabbi in that day. Jesus Christ not only esteemed Mary’s decision as a woman, but he also commended it.

In fact, God holds women in such high regard that He will not even listen to a man’s prayers when he does not honor her as an equal heir in His kingdom (1 Peter 3:7).

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God Created Woman, Adam Did Not

God’s creation of woman was not the result of Adam’s request. It wasn’t Adam who said he needed someone in his life. Rather, God said it. “‘It is not good that the man should be alone’” (Genesis 2:18, *קַיֵּן*). God saw the apparent need for a partner to fulfill the Dominion Covenant, so He created an *ezer kenegdo*. Adam took no part in the creation of Eve other than taking a nap.

Eve’s first calling was to God—to fulfill His purpose for her life, which in her case was to help Adam. Her role as helpmate was not just a role of companionship, but it included a significant role as collaborator in the dominion mandate.

Yet many women today—either because of divorce or a lack of kingdom men to even marry—do not have an Adam to help. If you are one of these women, take courage and pride in your calling because God alone is your purpose. You have been made for Him. As He says in Isaiah, “‘For your Maker is

your husband—the Lord Almighty is his name—the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer; he is called the God of all the earth. The Lord will call you back as if you were a wife deserted and distressed in spirit—a wife who married young, only to be rejected,’ says your God” (Isaiah 54:5–6).

Whether you are married on earth or Isaiah 54:5 applies to you, your worth is far above any treasure. One of the



A kingdom woman succeeds in conquering the enemy’s attempts to mess with her life and the lives of the people she loves.



most important truths you need to believe concerns your worth. You are significant. You are valuable. You are worth more than jewels. As a kingdom woman who fears the Lord, guard your value by first making sure you view yourself according to the value God has given to you. You are to do all you can to ensure that others treat you with dignity. You are to be treated as a treasure not as someone to be trashed or used.

I understand that there are situations where you may not be able to control how

you are treated, but that doesn’t mean you have to acquiesce to it. You do not have to internally accept someone else’s denigration of you. It should not affect your view of who you are. As Eleanor Roosevelt was purportedly to have said, “No one can make you feel inferior without your consent.”²³

You are first and foremost a kingdom woman created for God’s work. Your life, through His sustaining strength, ought to be one of great purpose, spiritual power, and possibilities.

When a kingdom woman retires for the evening, a frustrated and worn-out devil ought to be saying, “We messed with the wrong woman today.” A kingdom woman succeeds in conquering the enemy’s attempts to mess with her life and the lives of the people she loves. A kingdom woman succeeds in finding and fulfilling the purpose for which God has fashioned her.

PART I

THE FOUNDATION
OF A KINGDOM
WOMAN (PURPOSE)

1



A WOMAN OF VALUE

When a kingdom woman begins her day, heaven, earth, and hell take notice. When she nurtures and advises the man she loves, he can do little to resist her. When she offers care, comfort, and encouragement to her friends and relatives, they are able to go farther, faster, and in confidence because of her inspiration and reassurance. Her children rise up and call her blessed. Other women turn to her for wise counsel and a compassionate ear. Her church relies on her faithful service. She is a vital contributor to culture and a gatekeeper at her home to keep out the negative and promote the positive.

When we examine the history of the Christian faith, kingdom women (both married and single) are everywhere. Kingdom women throughout the Bible saved lives and nations. It was Jochebed who intervened on behalf of her son Moses. Because of her watchful protection, Moses was later used as the deliverer of Israel (Exodus 2). It was Moses' wife, Zipporah, who saved Moses' life when God was going to punish him for his refusal to follow a simple command (Exodus 4:24–26). Esther's bravery gave the opportunity for the Jewish people to defend themselves from what would have been utter annihilation. Ruth's refusal to return to her own people because of her dedication to her mother-in-law, Naomi, led to the on-going line of the Messiah (Ruth 4:18–22). Rahab was instrumental in the victory of Israel over Jericho. Mary carried God's Son in her womb.

The clearest profile of a kingdom woman that I have ever found in the Bible is in Proverbs 31. What is interesting, though, is that in all of my study of Scripture, I have never found a corollary passage for men like Proverbs 31

is for women. It could be that men need the whole Bible to get it right while women just need a chapter.

The Proverbs 31 woman is the hallmark of kingdom women. I like to call her a woman for all seasons. She is strong, intelligent, capable, giving, resourceful, efficient, spiritually minded and much more.

Now, don't close this book just yet. I know that sounds like she is a perfect woman, and you may feel that her standard is set too high to actually reach. But the Proverbs 31 woman is not the model of a perfect woman. Neither is a kingdom woman called to perfection.



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Let's use a stay-at-home mom as just one example. A kingdom woman is not someone who can multitask perfectly while also home-schooling three very different children, serving on four church committees, carpooling eleven neighborhood kids back and forth to soccer, keeping her home spotless, coaching the spelling bee team, functioning as a killer CEO in the workplace, making her husband have the best night of his life each and every evening, and maintaining a size six figure well into her fifties—all the while cooking only

organic, nongenetically modified foods and making every meal from scratch.

That woman doesn't exist. And we didn't put this book together to make you think that you should be her either. In fact, from my experience in pastoring a church for nearly four decades and in thousands of hours of counseling both women and men, the issue is often that women are trying to do too much—and all at once.

Women, you can be a Proverbs 31 woman and more—but that doesn't mean you do it all at the same time.

One of the most important principles for you as a kingdom woman is that your life flows through different seasons. Each of these seasons carries with it different time restraints, blessings, and demands. To try to do all things without being cognizant of the season you are in is the surest way to lead to burnout and even bitterness.

The primary foundation of being a kingdom woman doesn't include a million different things done a million different ways. The primary foundation is actually simple and straightforward. It is located at the end of Proverbs 31. After listing everything that this particular woman did, the verse says,

Charm is deceptive and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised. Give her the reward she has earned, and let her works praise her at the city gate. (Proverbs 31:30–31)

What sets a kingdom woman apart from any other woman boils down to her fear of God. Her reverence determines her actions, thoughts, words, and priorities. Without that, the demands of life would overwhelm any woman.

Fear the Lord

A woman who fears the Lord will receive the praise that is due her. Her works and the products of her hands will give her the recognition and validation that is hers alone. When a woman understands who she is and how God made her—when she pursues her destiny in light of how God created her to function—what she does will produce remarkable results. This is because it will be in line with God's will. What too many women frequently do is base their decisions on trying to please others, or trying to earn acceptance, appreciation, or sense of worth from their decisions, appearance, or actions. Yet God never said that you would receive praise for trying to please others.

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*The primary influence
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One she seeks to please.*

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The basis of how a kingdom woman functions comes out of her fear of God. How she prioritizes her home and family, organizes her life, makes decisions, chooses investments, and develops her skills all occur from her efforts to

advance God's kingdom. If it is rooted in anything else, it will lead to weariness and busyness rather than fruitfulness and abundance.

The simplest way I know to define what it means to fear God is to take God seriously. It means to place what God says and what God requires as the highest priority in your life. Fearing God does not mean that you are scared of him. Fear is better understood as reverence or awe. It means to hold in highest esteem. A kingdom woman fears the Lord in every area of her life.

The marketplace does not control a woman who fears God. The television, magazines, blogs, or social media sites do not influence her away from Him. Her friends don't dictate her emotions or decisions. The culture doesn't define her. Even her own ambitions don't dominate her. Rather, the primary influence in a kingdom woman's life is God. His voice is the loudest. He is the One she seeks to please. Her reverence of Him determines her choices.

The Results of Fearing God

Yes, the Proverbs 31 woman did a lot. She earned her husband's trust, she made clothes for her family, got her food from the choicest providers, and she invested in a small business with her earnings from planting a vineyard. She helped the poor, took care of those within her home, and dressed herself and her children in quality clothes. She brought respect to her husband and wisdom to those around her.

Keep in mind, she lived in a day and a culture where planting a vineyard did not mean that she did it all on her own. The passage said her arms were strong so we know she did do some of it. But based on the cultural norms of the day, it is likely that she hired others to work in her vineyard. She would have had maidservants who helped around the home, washed clothes, prepared food, and more.

When you break down all that the Proverbs 31 woman did and translate it into contemporary times, it really doesn't sound as lofty and unattainable. Essentially, she honored and respected her husband. She fed and clothed her family with the healthiest and finest she could afford. She invested the use of her skills in a personal business, spoke wisely and kindly to others, dressed herself

attractively, and helped the poor. All of those actions can easily translate into your world today.

I don't want you to feel like what she attained is so far out of reach from what God is able to do through you. Because it's not. What it comes down to is that her fear and reverence for God caused her to do the best she could with what she had to promote God's kingdom and goodness in her own life and the lives of those around her.

Help Is Not Bad

An important principle that is often overlooked when we examine the life of the Proverbs 31 woman is that she was not too proud to get help. In verse 15 we read, "She gets up while it is still dark; she provides food for her family and portions for her servant girl" (verse 15). *Servant girl* is not a term that we use today. In ancient Hebrew society, it referred to a handmaid or helper. It is a small reference to a very important truth. As I mentioned earlier, the kingdom woman in Proverbs 31 didn't try to do it all on her own. She had help. She was diligent, resourceful, and productive, yet she didn't do it all alone.

There is a stigma today for Christian women in particular about asking for or using help. For some reason people have come to believe that "exhaustion is close

to godliness" is written somewhere in the Bible. It is not. The fastest way to get yourself off track from fulfilling God's kingdom destiny for you is to view yourself as a superwoman who has to do it all on your own. The key to your destiny is humbly acknowledging your dependence on God and maximizing all that He provides you, even if that includes accepting or using the help of others.

For example, in the corporate world, a manager would not be considered a great manager if she tried to do everyone's job herself. A great manager knows



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how to draw out the best of those around her while simultaneously leading and complementing their efforts. You don't have to achieve your destiny alone.

Chrystal's Chronicles

I was crashing and crashing fast. After a wild holiday season followed by a trip out of state for our son's surgery, my household was spinning out of control. At the time I had a teenager, a preteen, a preschooler, a toddler, and an infant. Oh, and did I mention a loving, kingdom man as a husband who just so happened to work in the music business, which meant a lot of travel and time away managing concert tours? I was sleep deprived, short on energy, and short on hours.

Looking around my house, I knew I couldn't do it all. But I was determined to try. I was convinced that I shouldn't need assistance with my duties as a wife and mother. I'd always worked well under pressure and been able to keep a few plates spinning at the same time. Having been a mother from the early age of nineteen, I knew what it was like to juggle priorities and commitments to get everything done. I liked being capable and I definitely didn't want anyone else in the picture to get the glory, uh . . . I mean . . . be burdened with responsibilities that were supposed to be mine.

I would see other women who I just *knew* were superwomen and didn't ask for help. Little did I know that some of them were dropping their spinning plates too! We know how to mask things, don't we? Each of us in our own way finds a way make things look nice and tidy to outsiders while we know the truth about the mess behind closed doors.

I wasn't ready to admit that I needed help. I wanted to be superwoman, too.

I remember one night of that crazy-busy season, in those wee honest hours, sometime after the last child fell sleep and my husband dozed off, there was no sound except for the still, small voice of a God wondering in a whisper if He was somehow forgotten that day. I prayed with a metaphorical hand on my hip. "God," I said, "if you want me to have time for you too, then I need some help getting things done. And I need *you* to bring help to *me*." I didn't want to have to humble myself so much to actually go look for help—therefore acknowledging that I needed some.

But that's how great God is. Despite my ornery self, He heard my prayer in the middle of my dark and overwhelming night.

Now before I share the answer to that prayer with you, let me tell you about my philosophy on cleaning. I abide by the saying, “My house should be clean enough to be healthy, but messy enough to be lived in.” Because I homeschool our children, I don’t ever expect my home to look like it came out of a magazine. I—along with four to five children (depending on the time of year)—am home at least four days a week all day. My house isn’t going to stay pristine just because I clean all the time. Not possible. I strive for balance between being a good mom, teacher, cook, wife, and homemaker. I’ll trade a random opportunity to bounce around on the trampoline with my kids over scrubbing the baseboards any day!

Sure, I know a handful of ladies who are good housekeepers, great housekeepers in fact. I have tried to figure out with my husband how they do it. Here is what I have learned. We all have the same twenty-four hours in a day. If someone else’s home is always pristine, it has to do with how she spent her time. My friend with the beautiful home and four homeschooled children has children all over the age of twelve (Do you hear that moms of small children? She has no little people!). Sure, she is running around to basketball and soccer practice, but she also has lots of help with four other capable bodies in the house. Another friend of mine with small children has a gorgeous magazine-ready home. But her children spend three days a week at a mother’s day out . . . and she has nanny. My friend who makes gourmet meals every night has her kids in traditional school all day.

I also have a friend whose home is always in disarray, but she enjoys her little children and plays with them quite a bit more than I play with mine. They are always outside playing or inside working on some neat craft. Creativity and fun is their family’s highest value in their current season. Ladies, it’s all about how God designed you and what is important in your life right now. That determines how you choose to spend your time. No one can do it all.

So as a mom in the middle of mothering preschoolers on up to young adults, I just do my best. If I try to put housework first at all costs, something else that is important would suffer—building relationships with my children.

As a result of all my revelation, I have gone through a series of adjustments in my personal expectations over the last few years so that I can stay sane.

A few of my compromises are as follows:

I aim for a clean kitchen twice a day. Three times is a luxury. Even so, I always expect there to be dishes in the sink.

I shoot for a mopped floor two times a week, unless otherwise necessary. It's just too depressing to mop the floor only to find in just a few hours that it doesn't look like I did anything.

I try to hit each room in my house once a week on a rotating schedule. What does this mean? My house is not clean all at the same time.

I'm constantly training my children in caring for our home because I'm trying to work myself out a job. This means our "clean home" is not going to be perfectly clean.

Laundry is always going. I do about a load a day.

My carpet is never going to look new, no matter how many rules I make about food and drink staying in the kitchen. It just doesn't happen. What can I say?

We *live* in our home. My teenager does schoolwork at the computer, my little ones do school at the kitchen table, we congregate at the island—in short, we are all over the place. As we transition to the dinner hour, I shoot for things in their place. If I can't have that, then I shoot for neat piles.

Oh, and the baseboards? I get to 'em when I get to 'em. (Or I just wait until my little ones are old enough to do a good job—they are nearer to the floor anyway!)

But here's my problem. I am comfortable with the standards in my home. But when I have a visitor, I'm still completely thrown into a panic. Why? Because I don't want to leave a bad impression of the kind of housekeeper I am!

So imagine my dismay when my dad showed up for an unannounced visit and proceeded to inspect my house. I kid you not, he went from room to room, each time saying, "Oh, Chrystal!" This coming from a man who barely raises his voice (except to preach, of course.) Now, granted, the day he came was a bad day. Forget all my housekeeping rules. He wouldn't have known I had any!

In fact, it was a Monday. Mondays are always the worst. He commented on the spots in the carpet, the dishes in the sink, the stuff on my countertops, the baskets of unfolded clothes in the hallway, and then he even peeked in my bedroom and saw the confusion in there. When he looked in my refrigerator, Dad groaned at the sticky stuff on the top shelf too.

I found myself following him around the house, explaining, explaining, and explaining some more.

So, how does the story end? Well, the Lord sent me help. My Dad lovingly told me that I shouldn't try to do it all and that it wasn't a bad thing to have some

help every now and then, especially for a mother of five children. He offered to send over a housekeeping service. He also told me to get my carpets cleaned at his expense. Then he lovingly told me that I shouldn't try to do it all and that it wasn't a bad thing to have some help every now and then, especially for a mother of five children.

Now, I have a lot of pride. I hate the idea that I can't do it all. I hate accepting help. The truth is, though, that I needed and appreciated the boost he provided. It saved me hours (probably days) of work and gave me an opportunity to focus on things that needed my personal attention.

I had time to catch up on balancing our bank account and time to plan ahead for school. Instead of doing dishes, I was able to make some much needed phone calls to insurance companies and doctors. I got a chance to scrub that graffiti off the side of my house (long story on that one). I

had lots of time to thoroughly finish planning for my daughter's upcoming birthday. Those are things a cleaning service can't do, but I *could*. That little injection of more available time in my schedule got me going. I started barreling through my list and got caught up in getting things *done*!

Now, the point of this little illustration is not to say that everyone ought to dig into her pockets to pay someone to clean her home all the time or even every now and then for that matter. The principle here is that you and I don't have to do it all. The Proverbs 31 woman didn't.

She lived in a culture where children were instrumental in carrying out large duties from a very young age. (Put those kids to work!) She did not peel those carrots or cut those potatoes all by herself. She probably did not make all the trips to the market for food and cloth herself. (There's nothing wrong with shopping online, girls!) The field she bought was probably researched and recommended by a trusted friend (Use the expertise of others, Honey!). And she did have "maidens." Ladies, if you are in a position to curb some of the wants in your budget (shopping, cell phone, cable, eating out, hair, etc.) and that will allow you to hire a housekeeping service once a month—therefore helping you be a kinder, gentler person—by all



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means, do it! The Proverbs 31 woman did a lot, yes. But she did it with help. And that makes all the difference in the world.

The picture of the Proverbs 31 woman should never make us feel is guilty. OK, maybe we can agree that she was a woman who had it all . . . but let’s also agree that she didn’t have it all at the same time. Proverbs 31:10–31 summarizes her whole life.

Becoming a P31 woman is not unattainable, but she definitely is a model of a woman we can aim to emulate if we take the time to get to know her. The P31 woman keeps her priorities straight and in line with God’s priorities for her. She maximizes her gifts and uses everything and everyone at her disposal. She is a manager. She doesn’t do it on her own.



*As a recovering
do-it-all-aholic,
I am right there
with you in letting
those unrealistic
expectations go.*



Let yourself off the hook. Find out what God is doing, jump in the river of His will, and flow with the current of His plans. Accept help when it is offered from a friend, family member, church member, coworker, or even a stranger. You do not have to do all, be all, and have all, all at the same time. There are other people, right now, in your home, at your job, in your church, and in your community who can do a good job too. Share the load. We need to get off the I-can-do-it-all kick.

As a recovering do-it-all-aholic, I am right there with you in letting those unrealistic expectations go. Rest in the Lord’s expectations for you. He knows what you need, and He loves you greatly. He answered my prayer at dark-thirty when I told Him I just couldn’t do it all. He said, “Chrystal, I know that. I’ve been waiting a long time for you to know that, too.”

Remember Martha and Mary? It is so easy for us as women to focus on the *doing* rather than on the most important thing—*being* in a vibrant relationship with our Savior.

- Cooking and cleaning is important . . .
- Raising your children is important . . .
- Cultivating a healthy marriage is important . . .
- Doing a good job and building a career is important . . .
- Contributing in your community is important . . .
- Exercising wisdom in your finances is important . . .

Serving in your church is important . . .

Taking care of your health is important . . .

Spending quality time with friends and family is important . . .

Enjoying your life is important . . .

But none of those things should ever be a stumbling block that keeps you from fearing God, finding out what His priority is for you, and focusing on what matters for eternity.

Fearing God means that His program is your program. His plan is your plan. And His purposes are the purposes you live to fulfill.

Fearing God means that you are clear on the idea that your life is actually His life—that He is living through *you*.

A wise mentor once shared this thought with me, “Each morning before you allow your feet to hit the floor, lay in bed for one purposeful moment longer than you normally would, stretch your arms toward the ceiling and in effect toward heaven, and offer yourself to the Lord, inviting Him to show you what the most important thing is on His list for you to get done today. If you do not, your “good” will always get in the way of God’s “best.” Let Him know that you are willing to be interrupted, willing to be derailed, and willing to be surprised if He sees fit. Then get up, and walk in the knowledge that your day belongs to the Lord.

We all are all in different seasons with different responsibilities, demands, and distractions. But no matter our season, God sees us where we are and He hears our prayers in the middle of our dark and overwhelming nights—even when we pray with our hands on our hips.

And the best news is that when you are a kingdom woman who chooses to walk in the fear of the Lord, then it’s His job to find and provide the tools that you need to get His work done!

God Is Your Biggest Helper

Chrystal’s illustration might sound familiar to you. Maybe you’ve been there. Maybe you’ve gotten to the point where you wonder how you are supposed to do it all. But the lesson Chrystal learned and the help she accepted is a lesson for you as well. Wisdom entails recognizing what season you are in and living according to that. Never be ashamed to admit that you can’t do it all. The main

thing is that you keep God first and foremost, and His strength will give you what you need to make decisions that will glorify Him.

While the Proverbs 31 kingdom woman serves as the ideal, the reality of day-to-day life for a woman—whether caring for children or parents, holding down a job, taking care of her home, and even taking care of herself—might make that ideal seem impossible. But the goal is to let the fear of God be the overriding influence in your life. Let your actions, thoughts, and words reflect a heart that seeks to honor Him above all else. As you do, God will continue to give you what you need to develop into the kingdom woman you are destined to be.


Like Chrystal, when you call out to Him, He will send you help.

I lift up my eyes to the hills—where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth. (Psalm 121:1–2)

When you ask Him for wisdom, He promises to give it.


If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. (James 1:5)

He will never leave you. He has not abandoned you. In fact, He wants to see you develop into the kingdom woman He designed you to be even more than



Reverence for God serves as the foundation upon which your significance as a kingdom woman will flourish.

you may want to. God has a plan for you, and at times—I know—that plan may feel overwhelming. You may not see how you could get ever get to next year, let alone get through this week. Your plate is full, your energy is low, and the call to be a kingdom woman seems lofty.



But I want you to start right here with this very simple principle from Proverbs 31—fear God in all that you do. Honor Him with your heart, thoughts, words, and actions. Seek Him, look to Him, and accept the help He brings your way. Take your life one day at a time. Honor and revere Him today.

Fear Him in everything. Demonstrate that reverence through all that you do. If you will do that, you will be on your way to being a kingdom woman living out her destiny. Reverence for God serves as the foundation upon which your significance as a kingdom woman will flourish.