

***TRUE
WOMAN***

by

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Introduction—The Woman of the 1990s

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It is very difficult to choose one out of ten studies to write on when each one offers us such good grounding for life. I have found it useful to think and be reminded at the start of each essay what purpose studying this course has for me. This eliminates the alternative of choosing the easiest topic for a quick way out!

For that reason I have chosen to write on *The Reality of the Woman—True Woman*—as I believe that there is a depth to life that every woman longs for, and in understanding this it will also encompass the message of all the other studies. It may seem strange to be searching for a ‘personal reality’ in the 1990s, in a world that seems to have an answer for everything. Yet without Christ—which is the same as saying without true love or true life—emptiness and loneliness are often the norm, and the pleasures of life shallow.

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If asked what are the most important things in life I'm sure most would answer something similar to: 'Love, purpose, identity, peace, health and wealth'. These are the things people are longing for. I guess that is why so many of us spend so much time working out how to get them. And this is no less so for the women in the 1990s. Much of the material written displays this. In just two magazines that I picked up, this is what it revealed:

Women are looking for love. It is plastered all over the front pages. 'Who is in love with who', followed by articles on 'How to fall in love', Hot Gossip columns filled with peoples love lives, segments from a sex therapist giving advice on 'Good Loving', yet amongst all of this, good relationships seem hard to find. Of course there are also innumerable sad stories of peoples' lives affected by illicit relationships.

Purpose, identity and peace are also high on the assertive woman's agenda today. No longer is it fashionable to be feminine and submissive. This is considered a weakness and women are sick of the image of being the weaker sex. Again magazines are filled with articles such as 'Meet the New Me', and on the next page 'Learn to Like Yourself' giving 'interesting' information for some on how to look good, feel good, be determined, think smart, have self-confidence, and end up successful—wealthy and independent.

I have mentioned these things not to be critical, but to show that no matter where you go or what you read or watch on TV, it is so hard to get away from the insatiable

appetite man or woman has to find real fulfilment. There is no doubt that in becoming feminists many have stopped being feminine, and in this are missing out on something very beautiful. This I see as a gift from God, for we can never be satisfied until we find the real Answer. It is one of the most wonderful things to discover what it is to be truly Man and truly Woman.

Finding Out About the True Woman

Since man and woman are not two separate races, it is true to say that the relationship woman has with man is of enormous importance in life. In the beginning no other creature was found suitable to be man's partner in all the earth, so God created woman out of man. She was therefore not a separate creation or another species to fill the earth, but derived from man. Perhaps this is the thing that gets to women today in their search for independence. Some women feel as if they want to be free of man (and God), yet they long for his love and companionship. It doesn't make sense. At the same time, some men act as if they made woman and have a claim on her against her will. They need to understand that Adam did not derive Eve from himself, but God did it.

It is a glorious thing to have been made by the hand of God. Since we did not make ourselves we belong to our

Creator. We are His creature, ‘This brings humility, comfort and security. It guards me against pride.’¹

Genesis 1:27 says:

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

To understand who man and woman are we need to understand the nature of God, since we are made in His image. Looking back in time this can be seen by the way God has acted in history, speaking through the Covenant, the Prophets, His Promises, and His Son. But back before the Fall, Adam and Eve had full fellowship with God as He walked and talked with them in the garden—the magnificent creation that also revealed the nature of God. By full fellowship, I mean that there was no sin, no shame, no guilt hindering their relationship with God. Here we can see the way He related to His creation.

Before the Fall, Eve was ‘True Woman’. This is how it was in the beginning for both man and woman—together the race of Man:

the Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being . . .

The Lord God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.’

¹ Bingham, Geoffrey C., *Man of Dust! Man of Glory!* NCPI, 1986, pp. 1–2.

Now the Lord God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name . . .

But for Adam no suitable helper was found. So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man’s ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

The man said,
‘This is now bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called “woman,”
for she was taken out of man’ (Gen. 2:7–24).

In the beginning we had it all. Purpose, identity, peace, health, wealth and most of all—love. Love that came *from* God and was *for* God. An appreciation for who we were made to be.

Along with this was the love of the man from whom she was made—no other response could have been really natural, since if she hated man she would also have hated herself.

And he, too, shared this love. They were one. As he looked at her, he said to her: ‘You are bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh.’ Deep down women long for this intimacy now from their relationships, but as we have grown apart, and greed has not only entered our lives but has become more a part of our very beings than love, it is almost too

painful to admit this. Selfishness was also not there in the beginning. This sinfulness separates us from God and in sinning we deny ourselves of the family relationship we can have with our heavenly Father and with our fellowman.

II Corinthians 6:18 says:

**I will be a Father to you,
and you will be my sons and daughters,
says the Lord Almighty.**

Woman was created to help man with the task that God had given him—to rule over God’s creation. God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it’ (Gen. 1:28). This was to be the purpose—she the mother and he the father of all mankind. What a high calling this is. It is something we can never get away from and most women will know something of this maternal instinct. There is also a feeling of incompleteness at some stage in their lives if they have not had children. It is one of the most asked questions of women: ‘How many children do you have?’, and of course one of the most commonly discussed topics amongst them-selves.

Man and woman were to be dependent on God, not on themselves, so it was never intended that they should worry about the future of their family. What God had ordained should never have been questioned. They had been given the whole creation, and everything in it, and they had authority over it. Yet as soon as they had died in

relationship to God there was unnatural fear and guilt—emotions man did not know how to contend with, other than to hide or to lash out in anger. This showed from the first day of sin and in the first generation of man—brother killing brother out of jealousy. Yet God loved us so much He did not withhold His intention for us to be redeemed—in Genesis came the first prophecy (Gen. 3:16). God did not wait for man and woman to change—in fact not even till the end of the Book of Genesis—before He proclaimed His continuing love for them and His plan for a way back to Him.

Psalms 139 says:

**O Lord, you have searched me
and you know me.
You know when I sit and when I rise;
you perceive my thoughts from afar.
You discern my going out and my lying down;
you are familiar with all my ways.
Before a word is on my tongue
you know it completely, O Lord . . .
Where can I go from your Spirit?
Where can I flee from your presence?
If I go up to the heavens, you are there;
if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.
If I rise on the wings of the dawn,
if I settle on the far side of the sea,
even there your hand will guide me,
your right hand will hold me fast.
If I say, ‘Surely the darkness will hide me
and the light becomes night around me,’
even the darkness will not be dark to you;
the night will shine like the day,
for darkness is as light to you.**

For you created my inmost being;
 you knit me together in my mother's womb.
 I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully
 made;
 your works are wonderful,
 I know that full well.
 My frame was not hidden from you
 when I was made in the secret place.
 When I was woven together in the depths of the earth,
 your eyes saw my unformed body.
 All the days ordained for me
 were written in your book
 before one of them came to be.

How precious to me are your thoughts, O God!
 How vast is the sum of them!
 Were I to count them,
 they would outnumber the grains of sand.
 When I awake,
 I am still with you . . .

In the light of this Psalm, which shows the intimate relationship that will bring fullness of life, it is devastating that in the world today a very determined effort is being made to do without God, to prove that He doesn't really matter. Woman today attempts to glorify herself and she looks for self-confidence and self-esteem. She substitutes 'self' for God and this ends up in disaster.

But if we know who God is, then—since we are made in His likeness—we know we don't have to do this. He has *given* us dignity, purpose and respect and our glory will not be found in beauty treatments or boutiques, but in the way we live. We have wrongly focussed on what we *achieve* in life, rather than on *what we have been given*. This is

the great human tragedy. We have become ungrateful and fail to see that we are utterly dependent on Him for life. We are experiencing tension and anxiety because of this.

There is no doubt that today we are suffering from the effects of not being True Man and True Woman.

The Justified Woman

In the Old Testament God called Israel His wife and He loved her compassionately. In the New Testament the Church is depicted as the Bride of Christ. No matter how unfaithful we have been, God has not divorced us.

I know that the way you view God will have a large impact on how you view life and yourself. But even more than this, I believe it is what you know about the way God views man that will have an even greater effect on how you live. Knowing that God sent His only Son—the Son who He loved so dearly—and abandoned him to become our sin so that we might again become His sons, is the greatest thing you can know about what God feels for us. This son, Jesus, was the only True Son because he was true to who he was. He knew he was the son of the living God and he never lost sight of that, even when he was crucified. He has been called the 'second Adam', the way back to true life.

To look at a life totally free of sin, with the freedom from shame and guilt, is to look at Jesus' life; not just the miracles, but the source of these—the love of the Father. When a woman is touched by this, it is an experience that cannot be contained. She is transformed. As seen in other studies this term, when she knows deep in her heart that her sins are forgiven, this is what happens to her:

- Her personal relationship with her Creator and Saviour is restored.
- Her role in relation to man becomes clear.
- She knows she has been purified and cleansed.
- There is peace of conscience and liberation in being justified.
- Wisdom and contentment come in living this way.
- There is enjoyment and fulfilment in being obedient in serving God and her fellow-man .
- True life comes from experiencing the love of God and having fellowship with Him.
- Then true life flows out of her as a person who is loved and so loves.

In all the world, woman—as one with man—must be the most beautiful creature God has made. This beauty will be seen when she glorifies man, and together they glorify God. Without this unity they cannot be True Man and True Woman.

Ultimately when we are glorified, we will all be sons—without gender—priests unto our God and King.

Conclusion: True Woman

Our true calling is to know God. This is God's intention for all mankind—to know Him and to love Him, not to pursue riches. Man will then be totally fulfilled and will enjoy what He has been created to be. We will delight in Him, trust Him, love Him, worship Him and obey Him. Mark 12:30 says:

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength and love your neighbour as yourself.

This is the way to wholeness, the way to being True Woman.