

THE LEGACY  
*of*  
BIBLICAL  
WOMANHOOD

*Leader's Guide*

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# CONTENTS

<i>Part 1</i>	<i>page</i>
LESSON 1. Introduction to Part 1.....	1
LESSON 2. The Call—Legacy of Grace ( <i>Chapter 1</i> ).....	11
LESSON 3. The Covenant—Legacy of the Promise ( <i>Chapter 2</i> )...	19
LESSON 4. The Continuity—Legacy of Hope ( <i>Chapter 3</i> ).....	25
LESSON 5. The Commission—Legacy of Fruitfulness ( <i>Chapter 4</i> )	33

## OBJECTIVES FOR PART 1:

To know foundational principles of biblical womanhood.

To use these foundational principles to articulate a biblical apologetic\* for womanhood.

To cultivate an environment of grace among the participants in the study.

\*An apologetic is a defense (see Philippians 1:16.)

<i>Part 2</i>	<i>page</i>
LESSON 6. Introduction to Part 2 .....	41
LESSON 7. Daughter—Legacy of Gratitude ( <i>Chapter 5</i> ) .....	49
LESSON 8. Sister—Legacy of Unity ( <i>Chapter 6</i> ) .....	55
LESSON 9. Neighbor—Legacy of Mercy ( <i>Chapter 7</i> ) .....	63
LESSON 10. Wife—Legacy of Intimacy ( <i>Chapter 8</i> ) .....	69
LESSON 11. Mother—Legacy of Life ( <i>Chapter 9</i> ) .....	77
LESSON 12. Pilgrim—Legacy of Fruitfulness ( <i>Chapter 10</i> ) .....	85
Resources .....	95

## OBJECTIVES FOR PART 2:

To equip women to pass on a legacy of grace by:

- Submitting each relationship to the authority of God's Word.
- Applying foundational principles of biblical womanhood to relationships
- Thinking biblically and living covenantally.

This book was dedicated to our spiritual mother, Georgia Settle, with great joy for the legacy of Biblical womanhood she is passing on. We wanted each of you who teach the study to hear from Georgia:

*By God's mercy Christian women have a great legacy of faith. From Eve to Sarah and the mother of Moses, to Mary the mother of Jesus and the caring women who ministered to our Lord and His disciples, to the millions of women since who have experienced the love and grace of Christ and passed the truth on to following generations, God has graced women with His presence and used them in His service. Because Jesus Christ lived and died and lives again for us, we who have received the gift of faith live in and with Him now and to eternity. Such a great legacy has been given to Christian women! May we continue to live in and by His Word and faithfully teach it to those who follow after.*

*In His love,  
Georgia*

# TEACHER'S PREPARATION

## *Additional Resources*

*The Legacy of Biblical Womanhood* supports, reinforces, and expands the concepts taught in the Biblical Foundations for Womanhood series:

*Leadership for Women In the Church*  
*Spiritual Mothering*  
*By Design*  
*Treasures of Encouragement*  
*The True Woman*

- It is important for you as the teacher to explore the interface and amplification this series provides for understanding biblical womanhood.
- Lessons 7-12 will cross-reference these books. Plan ahead. See the suggestions given for using this material under Preparation for Lesson 7.

Two additional resources:

*Heirs of the Covenant*  
*Your Home—A Place of Grace*

- These books present a covenantal perspective of home and church life. They form a backdrop for a covenantal approach to specific areas of ministry such as a women's ministry.

## *Getting Ready*

1. **PRAYER:** Enlist specific people to pray for you and for the women. You may want to ask an elder and his wife, or the elders' wives, or some women who cannot attend the study.

- Ask them to pray Philippians 1:9-11 for you:

“And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.”

- Ask them to pray Colossians 2:2-3 for the women:

“My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”

- Update them regularly with specific prayer requests and answers to prayer requests.

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2. THE TEXT: Read the entire book so that you have an overview.

- See the content page of this Leader's Guide for an outline of the chapters that will be covered in the study.
- Prayerfully meditate on the Objectives. Keep these in mind as you read the text.

3. LESSON PLANS: As you read the text, scan the Preparation and Lesson Plan in the Leader's Guide so that you will have an overview of the course before you begin.

- Most lesson plans have suggestions that will need advance planning. Look for this graphic and determine whether you will use the suggestion and how much lead time you need.



- There are Handouts for each lesson at the end of the Lesson Plan. Make copies for the participants.

4. DISCUSSION GROUPS: The Lesson Plans include suggestions for discussion.

- Determine whether you will facilitate the discussions or if you will have small group leaders.
- If you have small group leaders, determine if you will have the same leaders and groups each session or if you will vary the groups.

5. CLASS PROFILE AND SCHEDULE: The Lesson Plans may give more suggestions and ideas than you will have time to use.

- Carefully consider the needs, relationships, size and maturity of your group as you make choices about which elements of the Lesson Plan to use. Discuss these choices with the women's ministry leadership or a co-teacher.
- Schedule well so that you are able to cover the lesson elements that you select.
- Pray for wisdom to know when a discussion justifies diverting from your Lesson Plan and how much time you should allow in order to cover other material.

6. RESOURCE SECTION: Look over the resources beginning on page 95.

- This section includes suggestions for a Titus 2 ministry. You may want to make copies and give to the leadership of the women's ministry.

7. PART 3 (pp. 192-217 of the text): This section is not covered in the Lesson Plans, but it is important for you to have a good grasp of this material. Be sure that you know how your group connects to the vision and goals of the women's ministry, and how the women's ministry connects to the vision of the church.

- This study should not be taught in a vacuum. It should be a part of the discipleship ministry of the church and it should support the ministry of the church.
- You may want to talk to the women's ministry leader or the pastor, to be sure that you understand their objectives for this study. It will be helpful to give them a copy of the content page of this Leader's Guide.

8. BOOKMARK:The pattern on pp.9 and 10 may be used to make a bookmark for the women.

This is to be used and distributed in Lesson 7. See the Preparation section for Lesson 7 for suggestions.

9. TEEN GIRLS:This study raises the question: Who is teaching girls in your church about womanhood?

This study is an opportunity to fulfill our covenant obligation as women in the church to pass the privilege and calling of biblical womanhood to the next generation.

You may want to invite teen girls to participate in the study, or you may want to encourage women in the study to establish one-to-one relationships with girls in the church. Whatever you do, make it a priority to enfold girls into nurturing relationships with women in the church.

If you include teen girls in the study, there should be coordination with the youth ministry so that there is no scheduling conflict.

Minimal adaptation is necessary. Most girls will exhibit the desire and ability for committed study and substantive discussions. Even if they are not verbal in discussions, they will be learning, they will benefit from your intentional inclusion, and they will establish relationships with women in the church. Enjoy the teen girls and learn from them.

## *Suggestions For Teaching*

1. This study is not designed as a lecture format. These are primarily interactive discussions that will help you expand and apply the material in the text. The discussions and exercises are designed to help the women develop deeper covenant relationships with one another as they process and apply what they are learning.

Teaching covenantally involves communicating content in the context of relationships that are growing in grace.

One privilege of teaching is to be a facilitator of building relationships that glorify God.

The teacher is not the authority with all the answers. As sticky issues arise, be quick to go to your designated authority in the church and to your husband if you are married.

2. The Lesson Plans give suggestions for involving other women in the study. Hearing one another's stories of God's grace will encourage and unite the hearts of the women. Prayerfully consider the needs and maturity of your group and adapt these ideas to help you accomplish your purposes.

When women are asked to share a testimony or be on a panel, it is important to clearly communicate its purpose, time allotment and to give sufficient preparation time. One- to three-minute testimonies are effective. Women should be instructed to write the testimony and then read it in order to stay focused and concise. A written request is helpful. For example:

On       (date)       we will study Chapter 4. Will you prayerfully consider sharing the story of how a woman spiritually mothered you? Please read Chapter 4 so that your testimony will support and reinforce this lesson. It is important that this testimony not exceed two minutes. In order to accomplish this, please write it out, time it and then read it for the group. I will be praying for you as you consider this request. I will call you in a few days. Thank you.

3. Consider your classroom environment.

The room should be a suitable size for the number of students.

Use round tables or no tables to encourage participation in discussion.

Have a hospitality committee responsible for greeting, making the room welcoming and attractive, and having name tags.

.....



## *To Be Fit for God*

THOU MAKER AND SUSTAINER OF ALL THINGS,

Day and night are thine,

heaven and earth declare thy glory:

but I, a creature of thy power and bounty,

have sinned against thee

by resisting the dictates of conscience,

the demands of thy law,

the calls of thy gospel;

yet I live under the dispensation of a given hope.

Deliver me from worldly dispositions,

for I am born from above and bound for glory.

May I view and long after holiness

as the beauty and dignity of the soul.

Let me never slumber, never lose my assurance,

never fail to wear armour when passing through enemy land.

Fit me for every scene and circumstance;

Stay my mind upon thee and turn my trials to blessings,

that they may draw out my gratitude and praise

as I see their design and effects

Render my obedience to thy will holy, rational, and delight fit

Rectify all my principles by clear, consistent,

and influential views of divine truth.

Let me never undervalue or neglect any part of thy revealed will.

May I duly regard the doctrine and practice of the gospel,

prizing its commands as well as its promises.

Sanctify me in every relation, of vice, transgression

and condition of life,

that if I prosper I may not be unduly exalted,

if I suffer I may not be over-sorrowful.

Balance my mind in all varying circumstances

and help me to cultivate a disposition

that renders every duty a spiritual privilege.

Thus may I be content, be a glory to thee

and an example to others.

(The Valley of Vision, p. 139)

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that renders every duty a spiritual privilege.

Thus may I be content, be a glory to thee

and an example to others.

(The Valley of Vision, p. 139)

## Directions:

Make two-sided copies of this page and the next. Use heavy paper or cardstock. Cut along the dotted lines and give to the women. Each bookmark should have "To Be Fit for God" on one side and "Continual Repentance" on the other.

## *Continual Repentance*

O GOD OF GRACE,

Thou hast imputed my sin to my substitute,  
and hast imputed his righteousness to my soul,  
clothing me with a bridegroom's robe,  
decking me with jewels of holiness.  
But in my Christian walk I am still in rags;  
my best prayers are stained with sin;  
my penitential tears are so much impurity;  
my confessions of wrong are so many aggravations of sin;  
my receiving the Spirit is thwarted with selfishness.

I need to repent of my repentance;

I need my tears to be washed;

I have no robe to bring to cover my sins,

no loom to weave my own righteousness;

I am always starting clothed in filthy garments

and by grace am always receiving change of raiment,

for thou dost always justify the ungodly;

I am always going into the far country,

and always returning home as a prodigal,

always saying, Father, forgive me,

and thou art always bringing forth the best robe.

Every morning let me wear it,

every evening return in it,

go out to the day's work in it,

be married in it,

be wroth in death in it,

stand before the great white throne in it,

enter heaven in it shining as the sun.

Grant me never to lose sight of

the exceeding sinfulness of sin,

the exceeding righteousness of salvation,

the exceeding glory of Christ,

the exceeding beauty of holiness,

the exceeding wonder of grace.

(The Valley of Vision, p. 136-137)

## *Continual Repentance*

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and hast imputed his righteousness to my soul,  
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I am always going into the far country,

and always returning home as a prodigal,

always saying, Father, forgive me,

and thou art always bringing forth the best robe.

Every morning let me wear it,

every evening return in it,

go out to the day's work in it,

be married in it,

be wroth in death in it,

stand before the great white throne in it,

enter heaven in it shining as the sun.

Grant me never to lose sight of

the exceeding sinfulness of sin,

the exceeding righteousness of salvation,

the exceeding glory of Christ,

the exceeding beauty of holiness,

the exceeding wonder of grace.

(The Valley of Vision, p. 136-137)



# Lesson 1

## Introduction to Part 1: The Legacy of Biblical Womanhood


*Our daughters will be like pillars carved to adorn a palace.*

PSALM 144:12

### PREPARATION

1. Read the entire book before you begin teaching. It is important to have an overview of the whole.
2. If possible, read Chapter 3 of *Heirs of the Covenant*.
3. Objectives for Part 1 of this study (Lessons 1-5):
  - To know foundational principles of biblical womanhood.
  - To use these foundational principles to articulate a biblical apologetic\* for womanhood.
  - To cultivate an environment of grace among the participants in the study.

*\*An apologetic is a defense (see Philippians 1:16).*

4. This is an introductory lesson.
  - Consider your group and schedule. If you need to cover the study in less than twelve lessons, or if you have a kick-off fellowship event and have a shorter lesson time, you may want to only use Segment 1 and 3 of the Lesson Plan.
  - The material in Segment 2 of the Lesson Plan is an introduction to a covenantal perspective of Scripture. If you have taught *Heirs of the Covenant*, or if you have used any of the WIC Bible Studies, you will have covered this material.
  - There will be an overview of the covenant in Lesson 3 (Chapter 2 of the book). This will not repeat the material in Segment 2 of this Lesson Plan. If the women in your group are not familiar with the concept of covenant, the two lessons will reinforce each other. If they are well grounded in the covenant concept, you may not want to use Segment 2.
5. Most of the information for Segment 2 of the Lesson Plan is on the Handout, numbers 3-7. Several options for teaching this segment are listed below.
  - Teach the material by reading and summarizing each section.
    -  • If you have students who are familiar with this material, you may want to ask three of them to prepare a summary answer to one of the questions on the Handout #2. Ask them in advance and give them two minutes each. You may want to suggest that they write their answers and read them to the class.
  - Divide the women into groups. Assign each group one of the questions (Handout, #4-6) to answer for the entire group. Appoint a facilitator for each group. You may want to encourage the groups to be creative—i.e. plan a skit, write a song, play a game such as tic-tac-toe or use visuals to make their presentation. This option will also build community.
  - Do not cover the material in class and ask the women to read it on their own.

Dear Sister,

Thank you for joining us on this quest to understand our legacy as redeemed women. We pray Colossians 2:2-3 for you and the women you teach: “My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love . . . in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ . . .” Please join us in praying this for your sisters who are teaching this study and for the women they teach.

*Susan and Barbara*

6. Read The Foreword and p. 14 in the text.
7. Read the Lesson Plan.
  - Read the Lesson Plan again and adapt it for your students and class schedule.
  - If you plan to teach Segment 2, decide on the approach you will use and make appropriate arrangements.
  - Decide how much time you will spend on each segment of the lesson.
  - Read the Community Building Ideas below. If you plan to use any of these, make the necessary arrangements.
8. Make copies of the Handout. You may want to have extra pens available.
9. As you teach Part 1 of the book (Lessons 1-5), the students will compile a list of foundational principles (see the Handout, #2). In each session you will add to this list.
  - This is not intended to be an exhaustive list, but it will give enough basic principles for women to be able to write an apologetic for biblical womanhood.
  - You will list the principles in the order they are presented in the lessons. In Lesson 5 you will put the principles into a systematic order to create a framework for an apologetic for biblical womanhood. You may want to look ahead to the Handout for Lesson 5 to see the systematized list. It is entitled “Foundational Principles of Biblical Womanhood.”
  - Lists are risky. They are incomplete and easily misunderstood. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list. These are not the only Scripture references that could be used. Obviously many of these principles are applicable to all believers and are not gender-specific. However, this exercise is important. The objective is to give enough basic principles in order for women to be able to formulate a biblical apologetic for womanhood.
  - You may want to create a visual or power point presentation of this list.
  - In Part 2 (Lessons 6-12), you will use these foundational principles as the grid to explore a biblical approach to relationships.



## COMMUNITY BUILDING IDEAS

1. Prayer Connection: Provide cards for each woman to write her name, address, email and telephone number. You may want to print Colossians 2:2-3 on the cards. Collect these in a basket. At the end of the lesson, ask each woman to take a card and to pray for that woman until the next study. Suggest that they build community by encouraging one another. They can send a note or an email message, bake cookies, or invite the woman to lunch. Two connections should be made for each woman—the woman she prays for and the woman who prays for her.
2. Box Talk: This is a delightful way for women to get to know one another. You may want to use this idea several times throughout the study. As an example for the first box talk, gather a few items that tell about yourself, such as a picture of you as a child that shows the home where you grew up, or you with the grandmother who told you about Jesus, or at a favorite family vacation spot. You may also have a wedding picture, something that represents your hobby or your favorite book. The possibilities are endless. Include items that are funny or sentimental and that represent milestones or future dreams. Put the items in a box or a basket. The container may even be a part of the story—i.e. a basket given to you by your mother. It is important for these talks to be a maximum of three minutes or they will begin to drag. When women have seen this done, many who would never “give a testimony” will be willing to do a box talk. Even women who think they know each other well find new areas of common interest and experiences.

## LESSON PLAN

### *Segment 1: Community Building and Introduction*

1. You may want to begin with a box talk.
2. We are about to embark on a journey to understand biblical womanhood. We may run into some rough places where this journey feels like an obstacle course. It is important to continually ask the Holy Spirit to guide us into the truth of His Word. Let's agree to pray for teachable hearts and to pray for one another.
3. Read or summarize p. 12 that begins, "September 11, 2001 . . ."
  - Part One of the book, the apologetic, gives foundational principles that will equip women to articulate what God's Word says about womanhood. In order to pass the legacy to the next generation, we must be able to articulate what God's Word says about womanhood. We must be able to explain why we live as we do.
  - Part Two explores some primary female relationships and will teach women biblical principles that should govern those relationships.
  - Part Three discusses how a women's ministry can equip women to live and leave the legacy of biblical womanhood. This will not be covered in the lessons. It is a resource to help us understand a covenantal approach to women's ministry in the local church.
4. Refer to the Handout #1 and read the Objectives for Part 1.
  - To know foundational principles of biblical womanhood.

Consider your current understanding of womanhood. This study will challenge us to reject worldly definitions of womanhood and to adopt biblical principles.
  - To use these foundational principles to articulate a biblical apologetic for womanhood.

We must understand these biblical principles so well that they inform our thoughts and actions. We must be able to articulate them so that we can pass the legacy of biblical womanhood to the next generation.
  - To cultivate an environment of grace among the participants in the study.

There will be times when our thoughts about womanhood will be challenged. Our group needs to be a safe place for us to explore what God's Word says about this topic. In Part 2 of the book we will discuss relationships. Some of these discussions may be painful for a variety of reasons. Our own sin, the sin committed against us, or our providential circumstances can make it difficult to face a discussion of some relationships. An environment of grace makes it easier to learn how to live out the realities of biblical womanhood and how to reflect grace in all of our relationships. (If you did a box talk, explain that you would like for them to consider doing one and that this will help the group get to know one another.)
5. Refer to p. 31 and read: "We're not sure which came first . . . The helper design is a covenantal concept."
  - As we work through Part 1 of the book, we will compile a list of some foundational principles of biblical womanhood.
  - Refer to the Handout, #2. This principle will be expanded in future lessons.

6. Read “The Foreword,” p. 9.

- Obviously, the concept of covenant is foundational to this book.
- The language of covenant may be new. Or, women may be familiar with the language but have limited understanding of what it means.
- The remainder of this lesson gives an overview of what it means to look at Scripture from a covenantal perspective.

*Segment 2: A Covenantal Perspective*

1. If this is new information for the women, encourage them not to feel overwhelmed but to realize that you will repeat and reinforce these concepts many times in the coming weeks. Assure them that in time, the cumulative effect of looking at Scripture from a covenantal perspective will begin to permeate their thinking and living.

2. Refer to the Handout, #3.

- Read the three questions.
- Teach the material on the Handout #4-6 using the option you selected. (See Preparation 5 above.)
- The illustration under Question Two, Handout #5, is a visualization of teaching the content of God’s Word in the context of covenant relationships that validate the gospel. Explain that this should be a picture of your Bible study group and that a safe environment is one of the objectives for this study.

3. Refer to Luke 24:13-35. Read this passage or ask a volunteer to read it.

- This passage summarizes what it means to study Scripture from a covenantal perspective.
- Refer to the Handout #7. Ask the women to answer the questions. You may want to do this individually, in small groups, or with the group as a whole.

Why were their faces downcast? (*Because Jesus had been crucified.*)

How does Jesus describe their hearts in v. 25? (*Slow of heart.*)

What did Jesus do? (v. 27) (*He showed them that the Old Testament tells about Him.*)

What difference did this make in the condition of their hearts? (v. 32) (*Their sad hearts were changed to burning hearts.*)

What did they do? (Vv. 33–34) (*They went and told others that Jesus is alive.*)

- Use the information below to expand on this passage.

The disciples had sad hearts because they had slow hearts. Hearts that are slow to believe God’s Word quickly become downcast and discouraged. But their sad, slow hearts became burning hearts when “beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he [Christ] explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.”

When they saw Jesus on every page of Scripture, they were transformed from lethargic, discouraged students to passionate, proclaiming heralds: “It is true! The Lord has risen . . .” . . . It would be simplistic to say that there is one unifying principle of Scripture. Perhaps a better image would be to say that many beautiful threads are woven together to make the rope that ties it all together. Some of the threads we can follow are *presence*, or *dwelling of God*, or

*covenant*, or *promise*, or *kingdom*. Whichever thread we unravel, it will point us to the same thing: Jesus. Scripture shows us Jesus.

. . . A covenantal perspective of Scripture helps us see the tree (redemption), not just the acorns (the particular story). We must see the overarching message before we dip down to teach any individual part. If we “dip” without the rope, we may well drown in our own speculations about what it means. Simply telling the story of a person or an event is a superficial, fragmented view of Scripture and generally results in superficial, fragmented lives. This fragmentation usually carries us in one of three directions—legalism, liberalism, or moralism.

When we trivialize Scripture, we reduce the Christian life to formulas (legalism), or we rationalize away the demands (liberalism), or we concoct a list of things we are going to do for God (moralism). This eliminates the need for the message of grace. A covenantal understanding of Scripture points us to God’s sovereign grace. This enables us to have a biblical view so that we see ourselves and our lives from God’s perspective. (*Heirs of the Covenant*, pp. 73–75)

4. Christian women are easily entangled in moralism and legalism. We read a few verses of Scripture such as Proverbs 31 and make a list of things we think godly women should do. Then we try to “perfectly perform” so that God will love us more and we legalistically impose our list on our sisters so that they will perform according to our expectations. We bypass the heart and go to the behavior. We become trapped in works-righteousness rather than reflecting the fact that we are saved by grace and we are sanctified by grace. This study will help us to see Jesus on every page of Scripture and then to think biblically and live covenantally. It will help us to have a gospel-focus as we consider our womanhood.

- “Legalism involves seeking forgiveness from God, justification before God, and acceptance by God through obedience to God. Legalism is substituting, in essence, my works for Jesus’ finished work. Legalism is self-atonement and the height of arrogance. It’s living as if the cross of Christ was unnecessary or insufficient.” (*Pastoral Leadership for Manhood and Womanhood*, Chapter 10, C. J. Mahaney, p. 192-193.)

### *Segment 3: Conclusion*

1. In the beginning we said that we are about to embark on a journey to understand biblical womanhood and that we may run into some rough places. In addition, some may also be making a paradigm shift as we learn to think biblically and live covenantally. We need to pray for one another as we begin this journey. Two of the characteristics of the covenant are:

- The covenant is relational. The God of heaven and earth is a personal God who enters into an intimate relationship with us. He binds Himself to us in covenant faithfulness.
- The covenant is corporate. Salvation is personal, but God does not deal with us solely as individuals. God also relates to us as His family.

As God’s adopted children, we are a family and there should be a deep oneness that reflects the unity of the Trinity. Though there are different kinds and levels of relationships, especially within the church family, our relationships with each other are to mirror His relationship with us.

One way that we live covenantally is to care for each other so much that we pray for one another.

2. You may want to conclude with Community Building Idea 1. Encourage the women to pray for and encourage each other.



# Handout for Lesson 1

## Introduction to Part 1: The Legacy of Biblical Womanhood

*Our daughters will be like pillars carved to adorn a palace.*

PSALM 144:12



### 1. Objectives for Part 1 (Lessons 1-5):

- To know foundational principles of biblical womanhood.
- To be able to use these principles to articulate a biblical apologetic for womanhood.
- To cultivate an environment of grace among the participants in the study.

### 2. Foundational Principles:

- Woman's helper design is a creational and covenantal concept.

### 3. Three questions that will help us to understand a covenantal perspective of faith and life:

Question One: What is a covenant?

Question Two: What is a covenantal approach to faith and life?

Question Three: How do we study Scripture from a covenantal perspective?

### 4. Question One: What is a covenant?

When God created Adam, He made a covenant with him. A covenant is a binding agreement with specific terms. The promise was God's presence. This is amazing because the Creator entered into an arrangement in which the creature had a claim. The Creator obligated Himself to the creature. The condition was perfect obedience. God would keep the covenant promise. Adam must obey the covenant obligation. He could not eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This was the test. This would demonstrate Adam's conscious acceptance of the covenant promise. This is called the covenant of works, but it does not mean that Adam worked to earn his relationship with God. God sovereignly initiated that relationship. It means that Adam had to make a choice to remain in God's presence by subjecting himself to God's authority.

While Adam and Eve lived in God's presence, they reflected His glory to one another and to creation. So they lived in harmony with one another and with creation.

But Adam ate the forbidden fruit. He broke covenant. His covenant-breaking severed his perfect relationship with God. Because God is holy, there can be nothing unholy in His presence. His holiness will consume anything unholy. Now when Adam and Eve faced each other, and when they faced creation, they reflected their own selfishness. Adam was our representative in the covenant agreement. The consequences of His covenant-breaking thundered through creation, through history, and into every human heart.

### THE COVENANT OF GRACE

One night after hearing the story of Adam and Eve, our three-year-old grandson Mac prayed, "Dear God, please let Adam and Eve go back to the Garden."

The good news is that God did just that. It was not a return to the literal Garden, but He made a way for them to return to His presence.

God was not obligated to do anything. He could have turned away from the creature and the creation. Instead He intervened. He came to the Garden. He called to the man. And He clothed Adam and Eve in garments of skin (Genesis 3:8,

9, 21). Here is the essence of the covenant of grace—God came, He called, He clothed. God comes to us while we are dead in our trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1–9). He calls us into a relationship with Himself (Acts 2:38–39). And He covers our guilt with the perfect righteousness of Christ so that we can once again live in His presence (Isaiah 61:10)—glorious, sovereign grace from beginning to end.

It has to be that way. The penalty of sin is death. And dead people can do nothing—absolutely nothing—to regain life.

As the *Westminster Confession of Faith* says:

The distance between God and the creature is so great, that although reasonable creatures do owe obedience unto Him as their Creator, yet they could never have any fruition of Him as their blessedness and reward, but by some voluntary condescension on God's part, which He hath been pleased to express by way of covenant . . .

..

When God came to the Garden, He made a promise to the man, and He pronounced a curse upon Satan. “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel” (Genesis 3:15)....

This was not the establishment of the covenant of grace; it was the revelation of that covenant. This covenant was not established with Adam, but with Christ. This covenant was not an afterthought. It was not made in response to man's sin. The divine agreement to redeem man was in place before man was created. Jesus, the Mediator and Head of this covenant, is the “Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world” (Revelation 13:8). Because redemption was in the divine will of God, it was the same as done. “He will crush your head” was not a hoped-for future event; it was an accomplished fact. Neither were the beneficiaries of the covenant an afterthought. “For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves” (Ephesians 1:4–6) . . .

In spite of man's performance, God returned to the Garden and said, “I will still be your God; you will be My people; I will provide the way for you to live in My presence; I will dwell among you.” This is grace. It is undeserved. Adam demonstrated his belief in the promise by naming his wife Eve, which means life. He believed that she would bear children, including the Child who would leave the glory of God's presence in order to secure a place for us in God's presence.

Throughout the rest of Scripture, God unwraps His covenant promise that He is our God, that we are His people, and that we live in His presence. (*Heirs of the Covenant*, pp. 24–27)

5. Question Two: What is a covenantal approach to faith and life?

A covenantal approach is a relational model that flows out of the realities of covenant theology. A covenantal approach to teaching Scripture seeks to balance an educational and a relational component. Biblical discipleship combines teaching the content of the covenant in the context of covenantal relationships that validate the gospel of grace. Biblical discipleship imparts a way of life as we live in community with God's covenant people.

The covenant motif runs throughout Scripture. The word is mentioned almost three hundred times. The biblical covenants give the framework of Scripture. Without understanding this framework, our approach to understanding and applying God's Word will be cursory and convoluted. The following two pages illustrate the covenantal approach.

Psaalm 78:5-7 He decreed statutes for Jacob and established the law in Israel, which he commanded our forefathers to teach their children, so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children. Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget his deeds but would keep his commands.

## CONTENT Covenant of Grace

Psalm 119:130 The unfolding of your words gives light;  
it gives understanding to the simple.



## CONTEXT Covenant Community

John 17:20-24 My prayer is... that all of them may be one...



Colossians 3:12-14 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

## CULMINATION Covenant Compassion

Micah 6:8 He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you?  
To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.



Colossians 2:2, 3 My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

## *Content*

People hide in caves of isolation and ignorance. The process of encouraging them to come out is both educational and relational. We are to shine the light of God's truth (education) and love (relational) so that it becomes safer to be outside the cave than it is inside the cave.

## *Context*

A part of the teaching process in Christian education is to help our students develop covenant relationships with one another and with others in the church family. Covenant life is intergenerational.

## *Culmination*

The learning process is not complete until our students become covenant keepers who "put their trust in God . . . [and] keep his commands" (Psalm 78:7), who "act justly. . . love mercy, and . . . walk humbly with our God" (Micah 6:8). Plan#2: Teach it in two quarters by teaching the bulk of the lesson one week and leaving a section such as Living Covenantally for the following week. The second week, use the same Responsive Reading, do a brief review, spend more time cultivating community in your class, and incorporate some of the ideas below:

### 6. Question Three: How do we study Scripture from a covenantal perspective?

The Bible is not simply a disconnected collection of stories. It is God's revelation of Himself. It is His story of the redemption of His people . . . .

The Bible is a covenant document. It reveals the Initiator, the promise, and the terms of the covenant. Christianity is not simply a moral code. It is a covenant relationship with the living God . . . .

In Scripture, God makes Himself known to His people. In the written Word, the living Word reveals Himself . . . .

In Scripture, God teaches me about myself. I learn that my sinful tendencies are a manifestation of my sinful nature. I learn that my sin separates me from God's presence. I learn of my desperate need for a mediator to go before God on my behalf.

In Scripture, I learn that Jesus, the Mediator of the covenant, is the fulfillment of the [promise] in Genesis 3:15. He is the Seed of the woman who crushed the head of the serpent so that we can live in God's presence. Jesus is the message of Scripture. We must see Him on every page of Scripture in order to understand God's message to us . . . . (*Heirs of the Covenant*, pp. 70–72)

### 7. Read Luke 24:13–35 and answer the following questions:

Why were their faces downcast?

How does Jesus describe their hearts in v. 25?

What did Jesus do? (v. 27)

What difference did this make in the condition of their hearts? (v. 32)

What did they do? (Vv. 33–34)

ASSIGNMENT: Read Chapter 1 and answer the questions at the end of the chapter.