



Biblical Womanhood in a Postmodern Culture

Standing on Truth in
Our Shaky World



DISCUSSION LEADER'S GUIDE

Biblical Womanhood in a Postmodern Culture: Standing on the Truth in Our Shaky World
by Author/Teacher Linda Linder

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Acknowledgements from Linda Linder

Biblical Womanhood in a Postmodern Culture would not be in your hands today if God had not brought two very special, talented and godly women to Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis. Lori Bleth and Karen Heddle are humble servants who have contributed hours of time, creative talent, godly wisdom, prayer, and support to this project.

Lori, I know that when you called me in the summer of 2007 to ask about a Bible study on biblical womanhood you (and I) had no idea what the Lord had in store for us! The format of the Student Guide is yours. You took the initiative to write out the discussion questions with space for written answers. You visualized the need for note-taking aids for the teaching material, and you spent hours on your computer making these things a reality!

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And Ben, Steve, and Chris, our three sons—It’s the joy of my heart to see each one of you become a godly man who desires to live your life to honor Him. You encourage me, and give me the freedom to minister. Thank you!

Dear Sister-in-Christ,

Thank you for answering the call to be a group discussion leader in our study of biblical womanhood. This is a wonderful opportunity for you to serve the Lord and impact women's lives as you facilitate the discussion with the women in your small group.

Biblical Womanhood in a Postmodern Culture is a Bible study designed to encourage women by equipping them to joyfully live out, as well as clearly articulate to others, the principles of biblical womanhood found in the Scriptures. The study involves a three-fold process: individual personal study, group discussion, and a teaching session. Each segment is of equal importance and focused on the truth of the Bible.

Every student, including you, will individually prepare her lessons by answering the Personal Homework Questions provided in the Student Guide. Then you will meet together to complete the learning process. In the class session, after introductory remarks to the entire class, the women will divide into small groups to discuss the questions they have completed. You, as a small group discussion leader, will facilitate this discussion. After the small group discussion and a short break, the class will gather together for instruction from your teacher. I believe that this three-fold process is the very best way for one to learn biblical principles, so they will take root in the heart.

Biblical Womanhood in a Postmodern Culture is a foundational study that lays the scriptural groundwork for biblical womanhood that a woman will build on in her everyday life. It is intended to be somewhat academic in nature, although a determined effort has been made to weave application into every lesson. Ideally, this study should be used in conjunction with more traditional Titus 2 programs in your local church. Encourage the women in your group as often as you can to be a part of a mentoring ministry or group. The important work to be done during this study is to gain a clear understanding of what the Bible teaches about being a woman. I pray that the Holy Spirit will apply biblical truth to the heart and situation of every woman that participates in the study.

As a group discussion leader you have some specific responsibilities. This Discussion Leader Guide has been developed to help you with these duties. Before your study begins, read the "How to Use the Discussion Leader's Guide" in the Introduction section of this notebook and follow the guidelines laid out for you.

As a group discussion leader, you play a vital role in this Bible study. You are the one who has the personal contact with the women. You are the one who hears not only the answers to questions, but the heart of each woman.

I, along with many others, am praying for you as you lead your group. May you find this to be an enriching and joyful experience!

From one biblical woman to another, with much love,

Linda

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How to Use the Discussion Leader Guide

Confirm your Commitment

Turn to Appendix 2, titled “Commitment Page,” at the back of this guide and follow the instructions on that page. Your commitment needs to be confirmed before the first day of class.

Your Discussion Leader’s Guide is divided into several sections that are the same for each lesson. Below is an explanation of each of these sections.

Personal Preparation Before Class—This section provides you with a personal guide to help you prepare your own lesson homework and think through how you will lead your group for that particular lesson. A checklist is provided at the end of this section.

Small Group Welcome and Introduction—Here you will find helps to make the women in your group feel welcome, some ideas on how to introduce the lesson topic, and some discussion starters.

Explanatory Notes—The main portion of the Discussion Leader Guide is the section titled “Explanatory Notes.” These notes were developed to make you aware of the focus of each individual question, and to aide you in the timing of your discussion. Notes highlighted with a gray-shaded text box include personal comments to you and tips to aide and encourage you as you lead your group, including help with each of the following:

- **Focus of Question:** It is very important that you, as the leader, be prepared and so familiar with the material that you can easily lead others. Do your own personal study first and ask the Lord to teach you from His Word. Following your own study, carefully read the Explanatory Notes. If you have questions or something seems unclear to you, speak with your teacher before you come to class. Lesson goals are listed at the beginning of the Explanatory Notes. These

goals provide you with an overall focus for each particular lesson, and will aide you in summarizing the lesson for your group. Keep these goals in mind as you work through your discussion.

- **Timing of Discussion:** You will NEVER have enough time in your group! It will always be a challenge to complete every question. Because of this challenge, you will find a gray-shaded note in the section titled “Discussion Questions” identifying questions that must be discussed with your group. You should always aim to discuss each question, but if you simply can’t get to all of them, be sure to at least discuss each of these questions, which are also marked with a star.

Appendix 1: Helpful Hints for Leading a Discussion—To aide you in leading your small group, we have provided some “Helpful Hints for Leading a Discussion.” These hints are found in Appendix 1 at the back of this guide. Review this page often. Even seasoned veterans of group leading need to refer to these helps on a regular basis. Always keep in mind that as a discussion group leader you are neither in the role of a teacher nor a trained counselor. You are a facilitator. Your job is to be a catalyst for discussion so women will participate and learn from each other.

Appendix 2: Statement of Commitment—See the beginning of this section.

Introduction to Biblical Womanhood and Our Postmodern Culture

Personal Preparation Before Class

Be sure that you have completed the “Biblical Womanhood Statement of Commitment” in Appendix 2 at the back of your Discussion Leader Guide by initialing and signing where appropriate. Remember, your class teacher needs to sign this page, too.

Take time to look through the Student Guide, so you are familiar with the format of the study.

If you have the names of the women in your group before you meet for the first class, a personal contact from you by phone or email always helps to make women feel more comfortable and welcome on the first day of class.

Review the Goals for Lesson 1. These goals are provided to help direct and focus your small group discussion, and aide you in composing a summary statement to share with your group at the end of each small group session.

Review the Explanatory Notes for Lesson 1, and think through the timing of the activities for this first lesson. It might be helpful to write down a time frame for each activity.

At the end of your Explanatory Notes, you will find space to write your Summary Statement. Write this statement before class session, and then share it (but don't just read it) as appropriate with your group at the end of each discussion time.

Your Summary Statement should be based on the lesson goals. Don't attempt to write a statement until you have completed your own Personal Homework Questions and carefully reviewed the Explanatory Notes. As an example, this lesson's summary statement might read something like this:

“I'm really looking forward to getting to know each one of you during our study, and for us to discover together what it means to be a biblical woman. This is such an important study, and I hope you will make it a top priority to answer the Personal Homework Questions and attend each class session. Our teaching session will introduce you to some aspects of today's culture, as well as give an introduction to some foundational issues and terms regarding biblical womanhood. Remember to take good notes in your Student Guide.”

Pray that God will equip you to lead your group, and mold your heart and the hearts of the women in your small group to joyfully embrace biblical womanhood.

Relax and enjoy the privilege of leading a group of women into the truth of the Bible.

Preparation Checklist:

- Complete commitment page.
- Review student guide.
- Contact women in group.
- Review Goals for Lesson 1.
- Review Explanatory Notes.
- Write Summary Statement.
- Pray.

Welcome

Lesson 1 begins our journey to discover what it means to be a biblical woman. Because this is the first session of our study, the format will be a bit different than for the following lessons. You will meet with your discussion group only briefly after introductory remarks by your class teacher. Be sure your group understands that starting with Lesson 2 you will be discussing the Personal Homework Questions during your small group time.

As the women make their way to your group, have them stop by the refreshment table to pick up a drink or something to eat and bring it with them to the group.

Make sure each woman has a nametag. (You may want to have a couple of extra nametags for anyone who might arrive late.)

Begin your small group time by welcoming the women to the study and to your group. Explain that because this is the first day of the study, your time in the small group will be shorter than usual. And, of course, you won't have a lesson to discuss.

Explanatory Notes

Goals for Lesson 1:

- Get acquainted.
- Make the women in your group feel welcome and comfortable.
- Stir up enthusiasm for the study.
- Encourage the women to make this study a priority.
- Familiarize the women with the format of the study.
- Introduce the concepts of our postmodern culture.
- Introduce foundational issues and define terms.

Group Discussion (approximately 30 minutes)

Tell your group that this is a get-acquainted day, and you'd like each woman to introduce herself to the group.

As the leader, start and set the example in the introductions by giving your name and briefly sharing something personal about yourself. You could include such things as your family, job, length of time at your church, etc. Keep it short so each woman in the group will also share briefly.

I would suggest that you go around your group a second time and have each woman tell what drew them to a study of biblical womanhood. It would probably be a good idea for you, once again, to start this sharing by giving some background for your interest in biblical womanhood.

Pass around a roster sheet and have each woman record her name, phone number, and email address. This will help you get in touch with anyone who misses a class session. Ask the women if they would like to have each one in the group have a copy of this informational sheet. If so, tell them you will have that for them next week.

Review briefly what was said in the introductory remarks by your class teacher, and ask if there are any questions.

Have each woman turn in the **Student Guide** and locate ...

- The Personal Homework Questions for Lesson 2. Explain that this is where they will begin their study at home.
- The Teaching Notes for Lesson 1. This is where they will take notes during the Teaching Session. Explain that these notes are designed to help them follow along as the teacher speaks. Encourage the women to not only fill in the blanks, but take as many notes as possible.

Explain to the women that throughout this study they will be developing a personal resource, which will be a great help to them for many years to come. When they have completed the study, they will have recorded in their Student Guide their own thoughts regarding biblical womanhood. They will have charts, Scriptures, and notes they can and should refer to in order to aide them in their personal lives, as well as a resource when helping others.

This first session is an important opportunity for you to create enthusiasm for the study. Share with the women in your group how much you are looking forward to studying this very important topic with them.

Share your Summary Statement with your group.

Summary Statement for Lesson 1:

Close your group time in prayer.

It is best for you, as the leader, to pray today. You can use Ephesians 1:17-22 as your guide. In fact, you could read this Scripture aloud before you pray.

Ephesians 1:17-22—... that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

You will now return to the larger class for instructional teaching from the class teacher. Encourage the women to move quickly back to the class, as time is always a factor.

Biblical Truth in our Relativistic World

Personal Preparation Before Class

As a follow up to Lesson, 1 it would be a great encouragement to the women in your group if you would email or call each one sometime before the next class. Ask if they have any questions, and encourage them to complete their study. It's up to you if you want to have the women contact you or not. If you're comfortable with that, you can be a great resource as they work through the study.

The upcoming class (Lesson 2) will be the first time that you will lead your group in a full discussion of the Personal Homework Questions. It's important that you get off on the right foot. Before coming to class, review the "Helpful Hints for Leading a Discussion," found in Appendix 1. Become very familiar with these helps, so they grow to be second nature to you. Keeping these tips in mind will give you confidence as you lead your group.

After you have completed your own Personal Homework Questions, review the Explanatory Notes. If you have any questions regarding the focus of a question or need further explanation of an answer, contact your class teacher.

Think through the questions and make notes to help you lead the discussion. Rewrite questions in your own words so that you are more comfortable starting the discussion. Also, think through how much time you want to spend on a question.

Review the Goals for Lesson 2. This will focus your discussion and help you to keep your group on track. These are for your own personal use to put into your own words, and to help you summarize the discussion.

Write your Summary Statement. At the end of the Explanatory Notes, there is space for you to write some thoughts that will help you summarize the lesson at the end of your group time.

You will soon discover that one of your biggest challenges in leading a group is time management. It is difficult to cover every question. Be sure you are familiar with the questions that are identified in grey text and also marked with a star. Also, think about how to handle the other (unmarked) questions with just a sentence or two. The more prepared you are, the more smoothly your discussion will go.

Preparation Checklist

- Follow up by email or phone to women in group.
- Review “Helpful Hints for Leading a Group.”
- Complete Personal Homework Questions.
- Review Goals for Lesson 2.
- Review Explanatory Notes.
- Think through questions and make notes, rewording questions.
- Think through timing.
- Write Summary Statement.
- Pray.

Welcome

Start right away once the women in your group arrive. This will help keep the visiting from getting off track, and/or will make those who are shy feel secure in the structure of the discussion group.

Welcome the women back and introduce any newcomers.

Have the women turn in the Student Guide to the Personal Homework Questions for Lesson 2.

Tell your group members how glad you are that they completed the questions. (Hopefully, they did.)

Remind them of how important it is that everyone completes their personal study. This not only allows for individual discovery directly from God's Word, but also enhances the group discussion.

Ask the women to refrain from sharing on any question that they haven't completed. (This is hard, but it will really enrich the discussion, and it will encourage them to do their study before class.) At the same time, encourage each woman to share. If someone is uncomfortable talking in the group, perhaps she will be willing to read her written answer from time to time. (See "Helpful Hints for Leading a Discussion" in Appendix 1.)

Pray before you begin your discussion. Ask God to guide your discussion, give each one a teachable heart, and make His truth clear as you work your way through this lesson.

Explanatory Notes

Goals for Lesson 2:

- Understand that God is the Author of the Bible; therefore, the character of God and the truth of the Scriptures are inseparable.
- Accept the Bible as authoritative truth.
- Appreciate that obedience to biblical truth is vitally important.
- Find joy in the declaration of biblical truth through your words and your life.

Personal Reflection

Explain to the women that this section (Personal Reflection) is designed to encourage them to think back over the previous lesson, and solidify their thoughts before going on to the next lesson. The questions from this section will not always be discussed in the group, because they are truly personal.

Discuss only the questions referring to Colossians 2:1-10 and 2 Timothy 3:1-7.

- **Review Colossians 2:1-10 and 2 Timothy 3:1-7.**

Ask someone to simply read what she has written in response to the two questions in this section.

- **How do these passages help you understand our culture today?**

- **Write how these passages can also help you to stand against worldly ways.**

Don't discuss the other Personal Reflection questions.

- **After careful thought and prayer, answer each of the following important questions.**
 - **Do I trust the Bible? (Psalm 18:30)**

 - **Do I trust the Author of the Bible? (Psalm 33:20-22)**

 - **Do I like the way God made me? (Isaiah 29:16)**

 - **Am I willing to bank everything on the authority of Scripture? (Psalm 119:29-40)**

 - **Am I willing to allow the Holy Spirit to change my heart? (Deuteronomy 10:16)**

If you see that someone hasn't answered her Personal Reflection questions, encourage her to do so when she returns home. Emphasize that writing answers to these questions is foundational to personal discovery regarding biblical womanhood.

Discussion Questions

Be sure to discuss Questions 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, and 8.

You will notice that most of the questions in this lesson are listed as important to discuss. There are several reasons for this. First, because this is the first group discussion we want the women to become accustomed to preparing answers to every question, and discussing each question is the best way to do this. Second, there are not as many questions for this discussion as there will be further on. Third, each question is foundational to our study, so it really is important to discuss!

- ★ 1. In a dictionary or thesaurus, look up the words “relativism” and “truth.” (The term “relativism” may not be in your dictionary, so you may need to look this up online.) Note the meaning of each and contrast the two words. Give examples of how relativism and truth are (or are not) evident in our culture today.

Terms Defined:

Relativism—

The word “relativism” is not in many dictionaries. A definition of the word “relative” is a good alternative. The Encarta dictionary defines “relativism” as:

...the belief that concepts such as right and wrong, goodness and badness, or truth and falsehood are not absolute but change from culture to culture and situation to situation

Review the John Piper quote on relativism as part of the “Seven Tenets of Postmodernism.”

This is the essence of relativism: No one standard of true and false, right or wrong, good or bad, beautiful and ugly, can preempt any other standard. No standard is valid for everyone.

What does this imply about truth? Relativists may infer from this that there is no such thing as truth. It is simply an unhelpful and confusing category since there are no external, objective standards that are valid for everyone. Or they may continue to use the word truth but simply mean by it what conforms to your own subjective preferences. You may prefer the Bible or Koran or the Book of Mormon or Mao’s little Red Book or the sayings of Confucius or the philosophy of Ayn Rand or your own immediate desires or any of a hundred other standards. In that case, you hear the language of “true for you, but not true for me.” In either case, we are dealing with relativism.¹

1. Piper, John. “The Challenge of Relativism.” Ligonier Conference. Orlando, Florida, March 16, 2007.

Truth—

According to the Encarta Dictionary, truth is something factual:

the thing that corresponds to fact or reality; “true”—conforming to a standard, measure, or pattern

Terms Contrasted:

“Truth” is absolute and unchanging; “relativism” changes from culture to culture, or situation to situation.

Evidenced in Culture:

There are many examples in our culture today, let the women share freely. Two examples: The U.S. Constitution is the focus of debate over whether it is unchanging or relative to the times; certainly, relativism is a challenge to the authority of Scripture.

2. What guidance does Acts 17:11 provide when confronted by debatable issues? How can this be applied today?

This reference is an encouragement to search the Scriptures to discover Truth.



3. Read 1 Corinthians 1:23-25.

What two attributes of God (manifested in Christ) are mentioned here?

Power and wisdom.

How does knowing that God has these attributes (and many others) affect the way you respond to His Word, the Bible?

Make the connection between our view of God and our acceptance of His Word (e.g., if He is wise and powerful, then I can trust the wisdom of His Word, and trust God to do what He says). (This will be covered in the teaching time.)

★ 4. Look up the following Bible passages. Write what you learn from each passage about the importance of obedience to God's Word.

Question 4, along with Question 3, sets the foundation for what is to come in our study. When we get to the practical things, such as submission in marriage or women's roles in the church, we want to be sure we understand that God has given us His Word, which is true and dependable. And it is important for us and to Him that we obey His Word.

• **Genesis 2:16-17 and Genesis 3:1-19—**

Satan caused Eve to question God's command. Eve exaggerated the command (can't even touch the fruit). She then believed the lie. God punished them, and we still suffer today because of their disobedience.

• **Exodus 17:6 and Numbers 20:8-13—**

God told Moses to strike the rock, and he did (Exodus 17:6). God then told Moses to tell the rock, but Moses struck it. Moses disobeyed and was not allowed to enter the Promise Land (Numbers 20:8-12).

• **1 Samuel 15—**

Saul disobeyed God's full command and lost his kingdom.

• **2 Thessalonians 1:5-9—**

God takes seriously one's disobedience of the Gospel.

• **1 John 5:3—**

God loves us and wants the best for us. His commandments are not burdensome—they are full of love.



5. Read Genesis 1-2 carefully. Now focus on Genesis 1:26-28 and write as many truths as you can regarding the creation of the human race.

Assure the women that the material referenced in this question will be covered in the teaching time.

Go through and talk about the original creation of man and woman.

- Who was created first?
- What does it mean the woman is the “helper”?
- What does it mean to be made in the “image of God”?

Keep in mind that we are just beginning the study of biblical womanhood. For many, this will be the first time they’ve made a connection between Genesis and biblical womanhood today. This lesson introduces the idea that biblical womanhood is rooted in creation. We will return to this truth throughout the study.

Turning to Genesis 2:7-24, what differences do you find in the roles and activities of the man and the woman?

Man: (verse 15) to work the garden (provide) and to keep the garden (protect); (verse 20) naming of animals (leadership)

Woman: (verse 18) a helper to the man perfectly fit for him (complementary)

From these two passages, write a defense of the “complementarian” position as you would present it to one who takes an “egalitarian” view. (Review the definitions of these two views.)

Complementarian Position—

Egalitarian Position—

Be sure that women have written the definitions of both the complementarian and egalitarian position and understand these positions. (See definitions from Lesson 1)

A Defense of the *Complementarian Position* –

Be sure the women base their defense on the Genesis passages just discussed.

This exercise is challenging! We are trying to help women articulate the complementarian position, and practice how to explain this position to someone who takes a contrary view. We not only need to understand and accept biblical principles, we must be able to clearly present them to others. Reference: *By Design: God's Distinctive Design for Women*, by Susan Hunt.

6. Read Genesis 3. Describe in detail what is meant by the term “the Fall.”

It is important to understand the term “the Fall” before the next questions. *Sin entered the human race in the Garden of Eden through an attack of Satan, who led Adam and Eve to doubt God’s word and trust their own ability to discern good and evil (Genesis 3).²*

Also see Romans 5:12-21.



7. Review Genesis 1-3 and make a list of those things regarding the creation and expectations of the man and woman that occurred before the Fall, and those that occurred after the Fall.

This exercise is foundational to the understanding of gender roles today.

Before the Fall

Adam and Eve created, each in the image of God; Adam created first; Eve created as the helper; Man leaves mother and father and cleaves to his wife; man and wife become one flesh.

After the Fall

God calls to Adam and holds him responsible; Adam blames Eve and God for his sin; pain in childbirth for the woman; difficulty in work for the man; woman’s “de-sire” for husband; husband rules over wife; Adam names woman Eve; they couldn’t get back into the garden.

Why do you think this might be an important exercise when trying to decipher the truth about gender roles today?

This takes us back to the beginning—to God’s design and pattern for living. We will see further on in our study that both Jesus and the apostle Paul base their arguments for marriage and the roles and responsibilities for men and women on the pre-Fall, good creation of God.

2. *The English Standard Version Study Bible*. (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2008), 2530.

Again, encourage the women to be patient as they work their way through these biblical truths. There will be further teaching on the Genesis passage, and we will return to this subject throughout the study. If you sense frustration or misunderstanding in someone at this point, be gentle and encourage her to stick with the study and pray for a teachable heart.



8. Take time to read “The 10 Affirmations of the Danvers Statement.” Write each of the affirmations in your own words.

These affirmations are printed in the Student Guide directly below this instruction. You don’t need to go into detail here. Do make sure there is a general understanding of the Danvers Statement. Some women will, no doubt, have questions about or disagreements with some of these statements. Encourage them to be patient and prayerfully (humbly) continue through the next seven lessons of the study.

If you have some time left, ask the women to share one statement they’ve written in their own words. Then, if you still have some time before the teaching session, ask if anyone has a question about the Danvers Statement.

Summary Statement for Lesson 2:

Close your discussion in prayer. (You pray and ask the Lord to give understanding and open hearts to His truth.)

Encourage the women to move quickly to the full class for teaching time.

The Heart of a Biblical Woman

Personal Preparation Before Class

Lesson 3 is the central (and could be said the “most important”) part of Biblical Womanhood in a Postmodern Culture. This lesson takes us off the road of performance-oriented living, and puts our feet squarely on the path to a changed heart. We are often quite good at doing the Titus 2 “thing.” But here’s the question: Is my action a reflection of my heart, or am I just acting out of a sense of duty? The focus this week is on the attitude of the heart.

Because this lesson is so critical to true biblical womanhood, before you prepare to lead your group, prepare your own heart through careful and prayerful study of the Personal Homework Questions.

Once you have completed your own personal study, turn to the Explanatory Notes and read them in detail. If you are uncertain about any of the notes, talk to your class teacher.

Put together some notes to help you lead your group discussion including: introductory remarks, rewording of questions, a summary statement, and some guidelines to help you in the timing of the discussion.

Review the Goals for Lesson 3 to give direction to your discussion and to aid you in making a summary statement at the end of your group time.

Write your Summary Statement.

You now should have a roster of the women in your group. If you sense anyone needs a particular word of encouragement this week, contact her by phone or email.

Preparation Checklist:

- Complete Personal Homework Questions.
- Pray for God to touch your heart.
- Review Explanatory Notes.
- Make notes and reword questions.
- Think through timing of discussion.
- Review lesson goals and write Summary Statement.
- Contact only the women you sense need encouragement this week.

Welcome

Welcome the women back to your group, and congratulate them on doing their lessons. Hopefully, they did their homework!

In a couple of sentences, convey to your group the importance of this particular lesson on the heart.

Explain that only God, through the inner work of the Holy Spirit and the application of His Word, can change our hearts. We learn from each other as we share from our personal study, but God does the inner work. Encourage the women to share their thoughts and answers. Also, encourage them to help you work through the questions to completion, and then count on the Lord to apply their study and discussion to their own personal situations.

Pray before beginning your discussion.

Ask God to give everyone soft hearts to trust Him and to love Him more.

Explanatory Notes

Goals for Lesson 3:

- Joyful acceptance of God’s Word as a sweet authority.
- A heartfelt trust in God and His Word.
- A soft heart that hopes in God.
- Inner adorning of the heart to take precedence over outer adorning of the body.
- Fearless Tranquility—We want to be courageous and content women.

Personal Reflection

Start out the discussion by asking if anyone discovered something “new” regarding biblical womanhood—something they hadn’t thought about before.

Think through your study of Genesis 1-3 from Lesson 2. Did you learn anything new from that study? Why do you think it is important to go back to Genesis when studying gender issues?

Although this is in reference to the last of the Personal Reflection questions, it is a good place to start your discussion. Don’t spend too much time on this. Keep in mind that this subject of biblical womanhood, especially as it’s being taught in this class, may be very new to many women. Encourage the women to fill out their Personal Application section at the end of each lesson.

Now return to the first portion of the Personal Reflection section.

How could you use the concept drawn from the phrase *norma normans non normata* when talking with someone who is confused about the role of women today?

Review the meaning of *norma normans non normata*—the Bible is the plumb line, or the last word by which we judge everything.

Ask for someone to share how she might use the meaning of this phrase to help someone who is confused about some gender issue. Point out the importance of going to the Bible, rather than someone's opinion, to gain clarity on an issue.

Review the attributes of God discussed in Lesson 2 of our study, and write an argument defending the authority of Scripture based on the character of God.

Ask someone to share (or simply read) how she would defend the authority of Scripture based on God's character.

Remind the women that the purpose of this study is not only to equip and encourage them to BE biblical women, but to also articulate the truths of biblical womanhood to others.

Discussion Questions

Be sure to discuss Questions 1, 3, 4, and 6.



1. **1 Samuel 16:7b** tells us, ...the LORD sees not as man sees; man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart. Look up the following Scriptures and take note of what they teach about our hearts.

This question is designed to illustrate how often the heart is mentioned in the Bible.

- **Psalm 51:6, 10**—

The focus in this psalm is on verses 6 and 10—God is delighted when he sees truth in our hearts; He teaches our hearts. The verb “create” in verse 10 is the same word used in Genesis 1:1.

- **Romans 2:29**—

The verse is a bit complicated, but the point is this: It’s not the outward things that make us Christians, but the inward heart. If you are familiar with the verse you can dig deeper, but this is not necessary.

- **Matthew 12:33-34**—

This passage points out that our words give evidence of what is in our heart.

Look up the word “heart” in a Bible concordance, and select one or two other facts about the heart to share with your group.

Asking the women to look up some verses on their own is basically a discussion starter. Don’t be afraid to call on them!

What did you learn about the heart?

Again, this is an opportunity for the women to discuss freely.

2. **Pause to read Ephesians 1:17-18. Answer the following questions, and then stop to pray, making the words from the passage your prayer.**

What do you think it means to have the “eyes of your hearts enlightened”?

This is a deep comprehension or understanding of who God is, gained only through His Word and the inner working of the Holy Spirit in our inner being.

What does Paul want the recipients of his prayer to know?

Paul wants the Ephesians to have wisdom, knowledge of Him and hope. This is connected with Question 1 and God teaching our hearts.

How can knowing this affect your heart attitude regarding your role as a godly woman?¹

When we know Him, and gain wisdom through His Word and understand the wonderful hope that is ours in Him, we are more likely to embrace biblical womanhood (His pattern for us as women).

Question 2 is the question with the footnote regarding salvation. Pray for sensitivity to the women in your group. If you detect the possibility that someone in your group doesn't know Jesus as Savior, speak to her individually, or simply refer to the letter found in Appendix 2 of the Student Guide.

- ★ 3. **1 Peter 3:1-6 is our focus passage for Lesson 3. Take time to carefully read this familiar passage, which is a portrait of a godly woman.**

The 1 Peter 3 passage will be covered in detail during the teaching time. Have someone read 1 Peter 3:1-6 aloud.

Explain in your own words the difference between external “adorning” and internal “adorning.”

To explain the concept of “adorning,” think of adorning a Christmas tree. You put things on it to make it more beautiful. External “adorning” is the putting on of clothes, jewelry, arranging of hair, etc. Internal “adorning” is doing those things that make our heart more beautiful to God. (See Philippians 4:4-9.)

1. Do you treasure Jesus in your heart as your Savior and Lord? If you have never asked Him to forgive you, save you, and be Lord of your life, you can do that right now. Turn to Appendix 2.

Why do you think Peter draws this contrast in his word picture of a godly woman?

The main point is that God is more interested in our inside than our outside. Our primary focus must be putting our heart in order. (This does not mean we are to neglect our outward appearance. It just should not be our primary concern.)

Focusing on verses 3-6 of 1 Peter 3, how could you explain a connection between “hoped in God” and “submitting to their husbands”?

It’s important for the women to understand that if they are hoping in God and trusting Him, they are more likely to submit to their husbands (or accept male leadership in the church). The focus is on trusting God and not man. (Keep in mind that there may be singles in your group, but the same principle applies; God is more interested in their inside “adorning” than their outside “adorning.”)

How do you think your heart attitude and your actions relate to one another?

A heart attitude of hope in God directly affects our conduct. We do not put our hope in man or things. The dots are connected between heart and action. (See Matthew 12:33-37.)



4. After reading the verses listed below, what does it mean to you to hope in God? (Use examples from the Scriptures to explain your answer.)

Have different women read these verses out loud. Do everything you can this week to get the women used to hearing their own voices and participating. With each reference, talk about the times when we need to hope in God. What does that look like?

• **Job 13:15—**

Job’s trust in God helps him hold up under difficult circumstances.

• **Psalms 119:81—**

David puts his hope in God’s word, even when he’s suffering.

• **Psalms 42:5—**

When depressed, the psalmist determines to hope in God, and this helps him see the light at the end of the tunnel.

• **Hebrews 6:19-20—**

Hope in Jesus is the anchor of the soul.

How can “hoping in God” change your heart?

Hoping in God, trusting in Him, brings a certain peace, calmness, and confidence to the heart. Each of the Scripture references here are to help illustrate this point. This question goes to the heart of this week’s lesson—literally! It is vitally important to deal with the heart BEFORE we get to the conduct.

5. Read Genesis 16:1-4; Genesis 18:9-15, and Hebrews 11:11. What do these verses tell you about Sarah—her frailties, fears, and faith?

Sarah is a “real” woman. She is not some sort of super-Christian. She had a tough life. Her husband wasn’t perfect. She made mistakes. But in the end, she is remembered for her faith! This should be an encouragement to us all!

Is this an encouragement to you as you consider Sarah as an example of a godly woman? Explain why or why not.

★ **6. Read Hebrews 4:11-13. Based on this passage, why do you think we are focusing on the heart in this lesson’s study?**

Use this question to stimulate a free-flowing discussion about “why” we’re focusing on the heart.

The heart is critical to our actions, words, and relationships. God’s Word pierces to the deepest recesses of our very being—our heart. To accept God’s pattern and principles of biblical womanhood, we first have to accept God and His Word at the deepest level. Otherwise, we are only going through the motions of being a “good” woman, not a truly biblical woman.

Can you obey God on the outside, and not on the inside?

Certainly. Although our goal and our desire should be to be the same on the inside as we are on the outside, we can often be “sitting down on the outside and standing up on the inside.”

If so, why is this a risky thing to do?

There are two points to bring out here: 1) the importance of being in the Word, because it pierces through to not only our thoughts, but the very intentions of the heart; and, 2) there are no secrets with God; He sees it all, and we will have to give an account to Him. The heart is serious business.

Summary Statement for Lesson 3:

Close in prayer.

Biblical Womanhood in the Home (I)

Personal Preparation Before Class

Because of the extremely personal nature of the previous lesson (Lesson 3), take time to pray for each woman in your group. Ask God to work in every heart to create a softness toward Him and His Word. Ask Him to give every woman joy and peace, regardless of her circumstances, that will enable her to trust the Lord and put her hope in Him.

Personal emails and phone calls to the women in your group should always be considered, but they don't need to be made systematically after every class meeting. We certainly don't want women to think it's our duty to contact them. Let the Holy Spirit guide you regarding contacting your women. Do make an effort to connect with someone who missed a class session, especially if you don't know why she was absent.

As always, prepare your own personal study first thing, and then review the Explanatory Notes.

Check with your class teacher if you are uncertain about anything regarding this lesson.

Make notes to aide you in asking questions and in timing your discussion.

Prepare a quick review of the first three lessons to share with your group. Perhaps go to the table of contents and simply refer to the topics of the previous lessons. Review the progression from understanding the culture, the importance of the Bible, and the focus on the heart. Explain the importance of these first foundational lessons before moving into the following lessons of application.

Review the goals for Lesson 4 and write your Summary Statement.

Review the Helpful Hints in Appendix 1.

Preparation Checklist:

- Pray for women in group.
- Contact anyone who was absent last session.
- Prepare Personal Homework Questions.
- Review Explanatory Notes.
- Make personal notes.
- Plan timing.
- Prepare review of first three lessons.
- Review goals.
- Write Summary Statement.
- Review Helpful Hints.

Welcome

By now your group should be well acquainted, and the environment should be friendly. Give the women a couple of minutes to chat, but then move as quickly as possible into your discussion. It's sometimes hard to get started, but when you take the lead your group will follow.

Welcome back anyone who has been absent.

Refer to the notes you prepared, and give a brief review of the first three lessons as an introduction to the following lessons that focus on specific issues of womanhood.

Remind everyone to complete the Personal Application section after each lesson. If anyone hasn't done this, encourage her to do so before next class.

After your introductory remarks, ask one woman to read Ezekiel 11:19-20 and another to read Psalm 139:23-24. (Although these are the references from the third part of the Personal Reflection section, this makes a good starting point for your discussion time.)

Pray—asking God to work in each individual's heart through today's discussion.

Explanatory Notes

Goals for Lesson 4:

- Joyfully embrace our “helper” role
- Understand male/female roles and responsibilities in Creation
- See marriage as illustration of Christ and the Church
- Hold to the complementarian position regarding the home

Personal Reflection

Review 1 Peter 3:1-6 and jot down the words or phrases that particularly stand out to you. Then write the complete passage in your own words. Be prepared to share this with your group.

Since they were asked to be prepared to share the first Personal Reflection exercise with the group, this will be the only section in Personal Reflection to discuss today. Have two or three women simply read what they wrote on the 1 Peter 3 passage.

The following reflections will not be discussed. Simply refer to these exercises, and encourage the women to always complete the Personal Reflection section of the study. This section is designed to be an aide to help women engage with God on issues that directly affect their personal lives.

To hope in God is to trust in His Word and in His character. Write some thoughts from Lesson 3 that will help you have that kind of trust.

Read and contemplate Ezekiel 11:19-20, along with Psalm 139:23-24. Spend time in prayer asking God to prepare your heart to joyfully accept and obey His Word as you continue this study.

In this lesson there are more questions than usual, and each one is important. Keep moving through the questions in a methodical way so that you're sure to get all the way through the lesson. Remind the women that clarity will come through the discussion and the teaching that follows. Individual circumstances won't be addressed in this discussion. We will trust the Holy Spirit to make the application for each woman. Be sure to let the women know that they are welcome to stay after class and ask questions that pertain to their own personal situations. Also, this is a good time to encourage women to be a part of a Titus 2 group, or in a similar type of mentoring relationship where they can address their more personal situations.

Discussion Questions

Be sure to discuss Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, and 8.

- ★ 1. **Compare Ephesians 5:22, Titus 2:5, and 1 Peter 3:1. What three-letter word in each of these passages gives you a clue about men, women, and the topic of submission? (NOTE: If you are using the King James Version or the New International Version of the Bible, you may need to consult the English Standard Version or the New American Standard Bible for this particular answer.)**

The three-letter word asked for in this question is the word “own.”

Does this word clarify anything for you about “submission”? If so, explain.

The point is that a woman (if married) is to be submissive TO HER OWN HUSBAND—not to every man, and not all women are to be submissive to all men. This is the God-ordained, biblically established order in marriage—one woman, one man.

It’s important not to add to God’s Word. For example, Eve added that God said she shouldn’t even touch the forbidden tree. She added to God’s command and made it harder and more restrictive than God intended. We sometimes do this, too. God’s Word says that a wife should be subject to her own husband. Sometimes this is erroneously interpreted to say all women are in subjection to all men in general. That is not God’s command.

These next two questions on The Trinity may take most women into unfamiliar territory. The point of these questions is to show that Christ is/has always been under the authority of His Father (i.e., Christ submits to God the Father). This is the eternal makeup of the Trinity, and this should help us see that submission/authority is not an issue of equality or value. This is a good thing. In fact, it’s the way the Trinity functions.

There will be further teaching on the Trinity. Work your way through these two questions methodically, but don’t get stuck here. This is basically introducing what to most is a new, but hopefully helpful thought.

★ **2. Read and consider what these Scriptures tell you about “authority,” “submission,” and “headship” within the Trinity.**

• **1 Corinthians 11:3—**

An illustration of submission/authority as a vertical line, with God at top, then Christ, then husband, and then wife

• **John 5:19-23—**

Christ’s submission to the Father and the Father’s loving relationship with the Son (unity of purpose and action in the Trinity).

• **John 6:37—**

Father is in charge—he gives to the Son.

• **John 8:25-29—**

Have someone read these verses aloud. Verse 28 is the key: “I do nothing on my own authority...”

• **John 10:18—**

Jesus has authority, but His authority is given from the Father. The Father is the one in control.

• **Luke 4:1-2—**

Jesus is full of Spirit and led by the Spirit.

• **John 14:16-17—**

Again, have someone read these verses aloud, and then discuss the interchange between the Father, the Son, and the Spirit.

- ★ 3. **Try to apply the truths from the above Scriptures to the subjects of “authority,” “submission,” and “headship” in marriage. How can understanding more about the relationship within the Trinity possibly help us accept God’s directive regarding our human relationships? This is not easy! Work through this carefully, and pray that God will give understanding as we discuss this together in our groups.** “Submission” and “authority” are not bad words or bad for us. They are a part of the Trinity. It’s the way God is Himself, and it is the way He’s set up for us. The Father and Son are one (equal), but the Son is submissive to the Father. This doesn’t take away from who the Son is. In the same way, husband and wife are one (equal in value and worth), but the wife is submissive to the husband’s leadership. Submission is not a new thought. It’s not cultural. It’s not coming from some kind of biblical mistreatment of women. It’s rooted in the Trinity. It’s eternal. This should put a different perspective on the subject.
- ★ 4. **Now do your best to contrast what you know about the attitude of the feminist culture with the truth of the Bible toward these same three subjects: authority, submission, and headship in marriage.**

This is another question designed to help women articulate biblical truth. To verbalize truth is difficult and requires a lot of thought.

• **Authority—**

Feminist Position: any outside authority, especially of a man or possibly of God is to be resisted.

Biblical Truth: God’s Word and God Himself is our authority. God has set up from the very beginning authority or male leadership positions. This is God’s good and perfect plan.

• **Submission—**

Feminist Position: submission on the part of a woman is degrading and puts her in an inferior position.

Biblical Truth: submission to God, to His Word, and to male leadership in marriage and the church are God’s perfect and orderly way; to submit does not equate with inferiority.

- **Headship—**

Feminist Position: the concept of headship, particularly male headship, is to be disregarded.

Biblical Truth: God is the head of Christ, Christ the head of man, man the head of woman. This is a beautiful pattern.

Based on what you've gathered so far since the beginning of our study, formulate a defense for male leadership and wifely submission in marriage. Explain your position to your group as you would explain it to a woman who takes the evangelical feminist viewpoint.

The following is an example how one might explain the biblical womanhood position to an evangelical feminist:

The Bible teaches that in marriage the husband is to be the head of the family, and the wife is to submit to her own husband. This is a pattern that may seem unfair to us until we realize that it is the eternal pattern established before time in the Trinity. The Bible also teaches that Christ is under the authority of his Father, God. Christ seems to be quite fine with this. Nowhere do we find that this kind of relationship puts Christ down or diminishes him. At this point, we have to decide whether we're going to follow what the Bible teaches, and trust that God knows what's best for us (even if we don't totally understand it), or whether we are going to go in a way that seems better to us. I choose to follow the Bible.

5. **Ephesians 5:21 and Galatians 3:28 are verses often cited by evangelical feminists to argue against authority and submission in marriage. Read these verses in context (read the verses before and after), consult commentaries, and prayerfully contemplate the true meaning of these Scriptures. Write your understanding of what Paul is saying in each of these verses.**

These verses will be covered in detail during the teaching session.

- **Ephesians 5:21—**

In many Bibles, Ephesians 5:21 is in the section titled "Walk in love." It is a transitional verse emphasizing all human relationships and introduces the section on marriage. It is under this banner that a wife submits to her husband, and the husband loves his wife.

- **Galatians 3:28—**

Galatians 3:28 states simply that we are all one in Christ. No human distinction is an advantage, but our distinctions aren't obliterated either.

6. In Genesis 2:18, God says that he will make a “helper” fit for the man.

Again, this will be covered in the teaching session.

Who was this “helper”?

The female.

What does the term “helper” signify about the relationship between the man and woman?

The man is in the primary role, and the woman is to help him by using her gifts and talents to “complete” him.

Review Genesis 2 and 3 to find out if the creation of the “helper” occurred before or after the Fall.

Before the Fall.

Does this timing have any significance to the role of the husband and wife in marriage today?

This question takes the women back to the Genesis passages studied in Lesson 2. Emphasize the point that just as submission/authority are rooted in the Trinity, the idea that woman is a helper to man is rooted in God’s good creation. Because woman was originally created the “helper,” and this is not a result of the Fall, this truth should make women more steadfast in following this pattern.

Does it make any difference to you personally?

7. Read Matthew 19:3-6, Ephesians 5:31, and 1 Corinthians 11:8-9. In each case, Jesus and Paul are discussing the subject of marriage or gender roles. What is the reference point mentioned by both Jesus and Paul?

Genesis 2:21-24. Before the Fall.

How can this reference be significant to us today?

Again, the question is driving home the point from the previous question. If this reference is good enough for Jesus and Paul, it’s good enough for me.



8. Review 1 Peter 3:1-2, 5-6; Ephesians 5:22-24, 31-33; Colossians 3:18; and Titus 2:4-5, and make a list of every reason you find for why it is important for a wife to submit to her husband.

The emphasis of this question is on the “why” behind submission in marriage.

• **1 Peter 3:1-2, 5-6—**

Draws unbelievers (not just husbands) to the Lord.

• **Ephesians 5:22-24, 31-33—**

Illustrates Christ and the Church to the world.

• **Colossians 3:18—**

This is fitting in the Lord (see also Colossians 3:23-24).

• **Titus 2:4-5—**

To reflect positively on God’s Word.

Do any of these reasons give you more courage to stand on the Word of God in today’s shaky postmodern culture?

Point out that there are significant reasons for following God’s pattern in marriage. These reasons, hopefully, will provide a firm foundation on which to live out the truth of biblical womanhood in marriage.

9. Carefully reread Ephesians 5:21-33. After your reading:

• **Write the ways described in these verses that a husband is to love his wife.**

A husband is to love his wife:

- humbly out of respect for Christ. (verse 21)
- as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her (verse 25)
- as his own body (verse 28)
- by cleaving to her (verse 31)

• **How can this love for his wife affect a husband’s leadership role in marriage?**

This kind of Christ-like love creates what we call “servant leadership.”

- **Do you see a connection between “submit to your own husband” (verse 22) and “see that she respects her husband” (verse 33)? If so, how would you explain the connection between these two verses. If not, why not?**

No husband can love perfectly as Christ loved; therefore, every husband will fall short of the ideal. Whether or not a husband loves his wife as described above, a wife is called to submit to and respect her husband.

Submission and respect are both heart issues. A wife can outwardly submit, but not respect or even act respectful toward her husband. It is, on the other hand, nearly impossible to respect your husband and not submit to him. The two should go hand in hand.

- **What role does “respect” play in a wife’s submission to her own husband?**

When God enables a woman to respect her husband, her submission as his wife is heartfelt, and she becomes a wonderful, blessed helper.

Our actions eventually reveal our heart attitude, and when wives role their eyes or speak disdainfully to or about their husbands, not only does that undermine their attempt at submission, but it undermines their husband at his very core. This is not being a very good helper.

Summary Statement for Lesson 4:

Of all our lessons, this is the one that stirs up the most personal anxiety. Encourage your women to review this lesson at home, listen carefully during the teaching session, and take longer than usual to prayerfully think through the Personal Application section. Again, remind them that they can stay after class to talk with someone one-on-one about their personal situation. Encourage your women to get into a mentoring relationship or a “Titus 2” ministry. Remember: As the discussion leader you are not in the position of a trained counselor Your job is to facilitate discussion and lovingly guide the women in your group to the One Who has all the answers.

Close your group session in prayer.

Biblical Womanhood in the Home (II)

Personal Preparation Before Class

If you sense there needs to be some follow up from Lesson 4 with one of your women, prayerfully consider how best to do that. Don't get in over your head. If you think a simple visit is sufficient, make a phone call. If, after visiting with someone, you detect a serious problem, talk with your class teacher and/or someone in your church who can recommend a course of action.

By now, you have most likely developed your own personal preparation procedure for each lesson. From here on out the instructions in this section will be very brief.

Preparation Checklist:

- Pray for the women in your group.
- Complete your Personal Homework Questions.
- Review the Explanatory Notes.
- Make notes to help you guide your small group discussion.
- Reflect on the Goals for Lesson 5.
- Write your Summary Statement.

Welcome

As you welcome your group, remind them that you are past the halfway mark in our study. Complement them on getting this far, and encourage them to remain faithful in their own personal study and in attendance of the class.

(Suggested Scriptures you could use, if you like, as an introduction to your discussion time would be Psalm 19:7-14 and James 1:22-25. You could ask two women to read these aloud.)

Pray—Since you know each other pretty well at this point, you might ask someone else in your group to pray. Don't put anyone on the spot. Choose someone you're sure is comfortable praying aloud in a group. You might even give her a "heads-up" before you get to the group.

Explanatory Notes

Goals for Lesson 5:

- A desire to reach out to other women as mentor/mentee.
- Understanding that behavior can beautifully adorn God's Word.
- Accept that every woman is to be a "Titus 2 Woman".
- See Titus 2:3-5 as a guide to prioritizing life.

Personal Reflection

Since beginning this study on biblical womanhood, have you discovered any area where your thinking about submission in marriage is conformed to this world rather than to God's Word? If so, take a moment and ask God to transform and renew your mind to be in line with His good and perfect will regarding submission in marriage.

The first exercise in this section is quite personal and should not be discussed in the group. If someone wants to talk about this, do your best to encourage a one-on-one visit after class.

Start with the second activity in this section.

Write how you would explain Ephesians 5:21 to someone who believes this verse cancels out the following verses: Ephesians 5:22-33.

Have someone share what she has written about Ephesians 5:21. The point of this exercise is to give tools so that if/when we get into certain discussions, we will know how to speak up truthfully and clearly.

Write anything you've learned through the last lesson that enhances or changes your view of gender roles in marriage. Assuming that you've written something, be prepared to share one thing on your list with your group.

If someone is prepared and has a written response for the third activity, have her share one thing from her list.

Discussion Questions

Be sure to discuss Questions 1, 2, 3, and 8.

It is important to keep in mind that this study is not what one might call a traditional Titus 2 Bible study. Therefore, the focus of Lesson 5 is slightly different than what some expect. Our goal is to answer the “why” questions behind the activities of a Titus 2 woman. We are aiming to lay the foundation that underlies the conduct found in Titus 2: 3-5.

Continue to encourage the women in your group to be in a mentoring relationship with an older or younger woman, and to participate in the Titus 2 ministries that are available in your church. Also, refer women to the Recommended Reading List and Websites found in the back of the Student Guide. There, they will find excellent resources to apply the principles covered in this lesson.

★ 1. **Read Titus 1:9 - 2:1. What do you learn about the problems Titus faced in the church in Crete?**

This question is designed to help put the familiar “Titus 2 woman” into context. There are those who are contradicting sound doctrine in the church (verse 9). Verses 10-16 give a pretty good picture of what’s going on in the church. (Verse 16 is key.)

What does Paul say are some ways to combat these problems?

Ways to combat these problems include the following: hold firm to the Word; silence those who are upsetting whole families; sharply rebuke these false teachers; teach sound doctrine.

How can you apply these verses today?

Application: Keep from “naming names.” Be sure, though, to point out that Paul, and hence we, are discussing a problem WITHIN the church—not the divide between the church and the world. We must contend for the truth. This is difficult and very counterculture. Stress that we are not to be argumentative, but bold. And always in conversation move toward the heart issues.

What can you apply personally?

Give the women a chance to share personal experiences here.

Two cautions: (1) Again, keep from “naming names;” and (2) keep the sharing brief and move on to the next question.



- 2. Paul often addresses the problem of false teachers in the church. Read Titus 2:12; Ephesians 4:1; Philippians 1:27-28; and Colossians 1:10. There is a common thread in these passages regarding how we, as Christians, should live our lives, and at the same time combat false teaching.**

Titus 2:12—live self-controlled, upright, godly lives.

Ephesians 4:1—walk worthy of our calling (verse 2 encourages the point of living/ speaking the truth in love).

Philippians 1:27-28—live worthy of the Gospel, stand firm, strive for the faith of the Gospel, don't be frightened.

Colossians 1:10—walk worthily, bear fruit, do good works, increase in knowledge in Him.

What is the common thread?

The underlying truth of these passages is that we can combat false teachers by living our lives in accordance with sound doctrine. (This is a main point of our study.)

The COMMON THREAD is that we are called to live (walk) our lives in a way that is worthy (or illustrates the worth) of the Gospel.

How would you describe the connection between sound doctrine and godly living?

As biblical women, we must “connect the dots” between what we believe and how we live. In fact, God connects the dots for us in that, when our thinking is biblically sound, our lives will reflect that. “You know them by their fruits.” (See Matthew 7:15-20.)

John Piper quote from *True Woman* conference: “Wimpy theology makes wimpy women.”

What difference does any of this make to you?

This is another opportunity for women to share opinions and make application. Plan to allow time, but don't get stuck—keep moving to the next question.

★ **3. Read Titus 2:2-10 and note the instruction to both men and women in the church. Do you notice any similarities?**

The point of the first two questions in this lesson is to give the teaching of Titus 2 deep significance. Sometimes we don't think we can do anything to combat false teachers or false doctrine. But we can! How we live our lives makes a difference. It reflects on the Gospel. This is not just a teaching to women. The teaching is very similar for the men. (Why don't we have studies of the Titus 2 man? I've never heard of one, have you?) Women are not singled out. However, women are of vital importance as we display the beauty of God's Word.

Similarities:

Men are to be sober-minded and dignified; women are to be reverent in behavior.

Men are to be self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness; women are to teach self-control and purity.

Men are to be a model for good works; women are to teach what is good.

All are to adorn the doctrine of God our Savior.

Does your study thus far help you put the "Titus 2" woman in context? Explain why or why not.

Hopefully, the women will see that the passage regarding the Titus 2 woman, along with Christian men, is in the context of combating false teachers within the church. What the women are to teach is in accord with sound doctrine, which in turn reflects upon the Word of God. Titus 2 is not just a list of do's and don'ts. It has a wider context of the church and the Gospel.

Now focus in on Titus 2:3-5, and before continuing on, list those things the older women are to teach the younger women.

The list: love your husband and children; be self-controlled and pure; be busy (working) at home; be kind; submit to your own husband.

The rest of the questions in Lesson 5 are individually focused on the list made from Titus 2:3-5. Enjoy these questions, and let the discussion flow. This is a good time for the women to help each other apply the Bible to their lives.

4. Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-7 and 1 John 4:16-19. Write as many thoughts as you can that will help you love your husband and your children.

1 Corinthians 13 is pretty self-explanatory. In your discussion, ask for some personal examples of how you can apply some of these qualities of love to both husbands and children, but don't get stuck here.

The 1 John passage is a little harder. (Verse 19 is key.) None of us have the love for our families in us that will be enduring. We are a channel of His love to them. We must abide in Him (prayer, the Word) in order to love our families.

How do these passages support the idea that sound doctrine leads to godly living?

This (1 John 4:17-19) is sound doctrine. If we believe this (you can broaden this to include all of chapter 4), our lives should show it.

5. Read 1 Timothy 2:9-10; 2 Corinthians 10:3-6; Philippians 4:8-9; and 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8. What connection do you see between "self-control" and "purity"?

1 Timothy 2:9-10—understanding modesty (purity) and self-control will make a difference in how we dress. In our culture today, it takes some self-control to dress modestly.

2 Corinthians 10:3-6—we are fighting in spiritual warfare, and must exercise discipline (self-control) over our minds, which are prone to think ungodly (impure) thoughts

Philippians 4:8-9—again the point is the “mind”; we must use self-control and not just let our minds wander wherever they will

1 Thessalonians 4:1-8—We must exercise self-control over our bodies. Verses 7 and 8 are key to understanding the importance of this.

Why do you think young women need to be trained in these two areas?

We need to be trained in these areas because we tend to be lazy, which causes us to drift toward the natural worldly ways. To be pure, we must learn to exercise self-control. We are helped in this when others share their experiences and point us to the Word.

How does living a self-controlled, pure life reflect God’s Word to those around you?

When others know we are Christians, and they see the fruits of self-control and purity in our lives, this reflects a positive report on God’s Word to them.

6. Carefully read Proverbs 31:10-31, asking God to give you a fresh understanding of these familiar verses. Put in your own words how the “Proverbs 31 woman” is a model for us today.

Have a couple of women read what they’ve written about the “Proverbs 31 woman.” This question is designed to help us see this woman with fresh “today” eyes.

Would the “Proverbs 31 woman” be considered a countercultural woman today? Explain.

This is another opportunity for women to reflect and share opinions. Hopefully, they will see the Proverbs 31 woman as countercultural.

7. As you think through the description of the “Proverbs 31 woman,” specifically note two things:

How is she “busy at home”?

Verses 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 22, 24, and 27 are examples of how she is busy at home.

How does she demonstrate kindness?

Verses 11, 12, 23, 26, 27, and 28 are examples of kindness (especially to her husband).

Also, how do you think she models “kindness” while she is “busy at home”? What does this say to you about the importance of what you do in your home?

The point here is that we can so often be kind to everyone else, but not very kind to our husband, children, or those closest to us.

★ 8. **Titus 2:5, 10 and Titus 3:8 give three consequences of godly behavior stemming from sound doctrine. Write each verse in your own words.**

Again we go back to the reason behind the teaching.

• **Titus 2:5—**

To reflect positively on the Gospel.

• **Titus 2:10—**

To bring out the best of the Gospel, make it appealing to others.

• **Titus 3:8—**

To devote ourselves to teaching and living out what is good is the excellent way and profitable for us (contrast to verse 9 to see what is unprofitable).

Why, based on your study of this lesson, do you think it is important for older women to teach younger women “what is good”?

The above three verses give the answer to this question.

Summary Statement for Lesson 5:

Before dismissing your group, be sure to remind them that they are now more than half way through the study, and encourage them to stay faithful to complete all of the lessons and come to all of the remaining classes.

Close in prayer.

Biblical Womanhood in the Church

Personal Preparation Before Class

As you complete your own personal study for Lesson 6, ask God to examine your heart regarding your attitude toward biblical church leadership. If you have any questions or uncertainties in this area, talk to your class teacher.

As always, review the Explanatory Notes, plan how you will ask questions, and think through the timing of your discussion. Make special note of Question 10, and prepare your answers carefully so you can lead a quality discussion on this question.

By now, I hope that you are feeling quite comfortable leading your group. Nevertheless, you still need to think ahead so you are prepared and continue to do a good job. Remember, it is a great privilege to serve the Lord as a small group leader. Keep up the good work!

Look over the Goals for Lesson 6, and prepare your Summary Statement.

Preparation Checklist:

- Think through your personal attitude about church leadership.
- Complete Personal Homework Questions, giving special attention to Question 10.
- Review Explanatory Notes.
- Plan how you will present questions.
- Think through timing of discussion.
- Review lesson goals.
- Prepare Summary Statement.
- Check in with your women, and encourage them to complete their homework and come to class.
- Pray.

Welcome

Because Lesson 6 is a long lesson, encourage your group to settle down quickly.

Read Romans 12:1-2 aloud.

Romans 12:1-2—I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Pray that God will use His Word and your discussion to renew minds, so that each one will be able to discern what is His good and perfect will regarding the role of women in the church.

Explanatory Notes

Goals for Lesson 6:

- Consider outward dress important, but not most important.
- Accept male leadership with a tranquil heart.
- Focus on what women can do in service to the Lord.
- Joyfully trust the Bible's clear direction regarding roles in the Church.

This discussion is longer than usual. This will be a challenge for you as a leader, because each and every question is important. Do your very best to move through the discussion in a timely manner. Some suggestions: Don't read aloud each Scripture in each question; remind the women periodically that you want to get to the last question; keep in mind that the teaching time will address each one of these issues.

Personal Reflection

Keep the sharing in this section shorter than usual. Begin by having a couple of women share any encouragements they had after the last lesson.

Write a paragraph describing a "Titus 2 Woman" to someone who does not understand this term. Be sure to answer the who, "what," and "why" questions.

Did you learn anything new regarding the specific areas of instruction in Titus 2:3-5 that is an encouragement to you? If so, what? And why are you encouraged? How would you encourage another woman in this same area?

Ask if anyone would like to share what she wrote on the theme, "He is Most Glorified in Us When We are Most Satisfied in Him." If someone responds, have her read what she wrote under this title.

Think over what you've learned from the last two lessons, and then write your thoughts using the theme "God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him."

If no one responds, move on quickly to the discussion questions.

Discussion Questions

Be sure to discuss Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, and 10.

- ★ 1. **Read Acts 2:17-18. Adding these verses to what you've learned from Genesis 1:27 and Galatians 3:28, write what the Bible teaches about the equality of men and women.**

The Acts verses illustrate that the Spirit is poured out on ALL flesh—men and women alike. Again, we're making the point that difference in roles does not negate equality. To accept this really puts Romans 12:2 to work.

Why (or why not) is it important to understand the equality of men and women before God when thinking through biblical organization of the church?

Having biblically appointed leadership roles in the church doesn't make men "superior." This is simply God's good and perfect plan for the order of the church.

- ★ 2. **Review your notes from the last five lessons, and jot down some principles from the creation account, as well as other Scriptures that point to male leadership in the home, which you think would support the idea of male leadership (pastor/elder) in the church.**

Go back to Genesis—Adam formed first; woman created to be helper; God held Adam responsible after the Fall (i.e., everything that supports male leadership in the home is applicable to the church).

Do you see any connection between the organization of the church and that of the family? Explain.

This question is designed to help the women draw the parallel between the family and the church. If a woman takes the leadership role at home, it will be hard for her to submit (and for men to lead) at church, and vice versa.

★ 3. **What insights do the following verses give regarding women and teaching? In each case, describe the setting where the teaching is taking place.**

- **Titus 2: 3-4a—**
Women teach women.
- **2 Timothy 1:5—**
Mothers and grandmothers teach their children and grandchildren.
- **2 Timothy 3:14-15—**
Confirmation to Timothy of his mother's and grandmother's teaching.
- **Acts 18:26—**
A woman (Priscilla) teaching a man alongside her husband in a casual setting.

How do these Scriptures refute the argument that women are never to teach biblical truth?

The biblical truth is NOT that women can never teach. We must be careful that we do not to add a prohibition that isn't there (like Eve did). Women teach other women, children, and in casual settings.

★ 4. **1 Timothy 2:12 gives very specific instructions regarding the role of women in the church government. What does it say?**

You may want to point out that 1 Timothy 2:12 is not difficult to understand. It is, in fact, quite clear. The problem with accepting this teaching is not its vagueness, but the attitude of the heart.

Because we discovered from the previous question that women can certainly teach, what two qualifiers are in this passage?

The qualifiers in the church are:

- 1) women are not to exercise authority over men.
- 2) women are not to teach men.

These two things are very closely connected. In fact, we could say that women are not to authoritatively teach the Bible to men. "A woman is not to teach in a situation that calls for a strong, forceful pressing of men's consciences on the basis of divine authority" (John Piper).

5. What does 1 Timothy 2:11 tell us about the attitude of a godly woman in church?

In the church, a woman should learn in a way that respects the authoritative teaching and governing role assigned to the leaders of the church.

Basing your answer on our previous lessons of study, how would you explain this instruction?

Many, if not all, of the same characteristics that we have covered of submission in marriage also apply here.

One point to stress is that women ARE TO LEARN. Before this time in history, women were forbidden to be in a situation where they could be taught the Scriptures. This is a big step forward for women. This does not mean that a woman must never talk or ask a question in a church setting.

★ **6. Review your notes from Lesson 3, and apply what you learned about the heart to the entire 1 Timothy passage.**

Again we all have to go back and ask:

- Do I trust God's character?
- Do I trust His Word?
- When my heart trusts in Him, then I can obey His Word knowing that He knows best.

Write how one's heart attitude affects the acceptance or non-acceptance of this passage and the teaching of gender roles in the church. Be prepared to share what you've written with your group.

Example: Even though I may not completely understand God's Word, I will obey without being bitter or rebellious of heart because I trust Him. Psalm 33:21—***For our heart is glad in him, because we trust in his holy name.***

7. **Read 1 Timothy 2:13-14, as well as Genesis 2:18-23 and Genesis 3:1, 9-13. Paul supports his instruction by referring to Genesis. What point do you think Paul was making by taking us back to Genesis? This is difficult! Draw from your study notes, read commentaries, pray, and think hard.**

Because Adam was formed first, he had the leadership position. We know that God held him accountable—and we can assume God will hold men accountable for what’s going on in the church. Satan approached the woman, not the man. He, no doubt, knew the order of leadership, but from the beginning tried to invert it. So Satan pulled Eve out from under the leadership of her husband. In a sense, Satan was attacking the order that God put in place. Whenever this order is inverted, there is trouble. Therefore, we must keep the God-given order for the church structure. We see the same gender struggle in churches that we see in the home, and that began in the garden. (This will be covered in the teaching.)



8. **Read 1 Corinthians 11:3 together with 1 Corinthians 14:33a and 40. What context do these verses give for 1 Corinthians 14:34-35? What point is Paul trying to make—putting women in their place, or orderly worship?**

Paul is trying to establish order in the church. The issue of submission is established with God being the head of Christ. This is hardly ever disputed. In the same way then, Christ is the head of (authority over) man, and man head of woman. This is God’s established order—going back to the Trinity.

Compare the above verses with 1 Corinthians 11:5. Do you think Paul teaches that women should never speak in church?

1 Corinthians 11:5 tells us that women pray and prophesy in the church; therefore, they are not to be completely silent.

According to Wayne Grudem’s *Systematic Theology*, “...it is best to understand this passage as referring to the spoken evaluation and judging of prophecies in the congregation...” (This is the context from the above verses.) Paul does not allow women “to speak up and give evaluations or critiques of the prophecies that have been given, for this would be a ruling or governing function with respect to the whole church.”¹

1. Grudem, Wayne *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Theology*. (Leicester, England: Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing, 1994), 939.

9. From 1 Timothy 2:9-10 and 1 Peter 3:3-4, write some guidelines to help women prepare themselves for church.

1 Timothy 2—respectable apparel; use modesty and self-control when choosing clothes; don't show off your wealth; dress in a way proper for a woman who claims to be godly.

1 Peter 3—prepare your heart, as well as your clothing, for worship.

How are these principles counter to today's culture within the church, and what can you do about it?

We want the women to think about the difference between going to church and going just about any other place. Is there something to be said for dressing in your "Sunday best," or is this just an old-fashioned, out-of-date idea?

Again, we are talking about the corporate church worship service. The biblical teaching is on order in organization, attitude of the heart, and even appearance. All of these things impact how we worship together.

There are a lot of sub-questions within Question 10. The goal here is for the women to apply what they've learned in order to clarify their own thinking and to make the case to others.

Be sure that you leave time for this question. Suggested answers have not been given, as this should be a rather free-wheeling discussion. As the leader, encourage the women to go back to Lesson 1 and review the postmodern tenets. Encourage them to share their thoughts and opinions.

★ **10. Why do you think concepts like "submission" and "authority" are so difficult for us?**

What tenets of postmodernism (see notes from Lesson 1) do you think have influenced our attitude toward gender roles in the church today?

How would you defend biblical womanhood in the church to a postmodern thinker?

Do you think it's more difficult to defend the biblical womanhood position in the church than in the home? Why or why not?

Summary Statement for Lesson 6:

Encourage your group to move quickly to the full class teaching session. We have a lot to cover,

Biblical Womanhood in the Culture

Personal Preparation Before Class

Amazingly, our study is almost over. Before you begin your own personal study, pray that God will give you a renewed enthusiasm and joy as you discover from the Bible what it means to be a biblical woman. Pray also that He will give you His love for the women in your small group, and joy as you lead them through the last two lessons.

Preparation Checklist:

- Complete your Personal Homework Questions.
- Review the Explanatory Notes.
- Make your own notes—re-word questions, etc.
- Think through the timing of the discussion—this lesson is long, so pay special attention to this,
- Write your Summary Statement.
- Contact the women in your group, and encourage them to complete this lesson, attend the last two class sessions, and complete the Personal Application sections for each lesson.

Welcome

Welcome the women enthusiastically by briefly reviewing the last six lessons and reminding them of all they have learned thus far in our study.

Two observations to help you guide the women of your group through these last two lessons:

1) Many women have difficulty articulating what they, hopefully, are learning about biblical womanhood. It's good to be aware of this. As you discuss this lesson, emphasize those questions that ask for an explanation or application. One of our goals is to equip the women to be able to explain what it means to be a biblical woman. Point out that the group discussion session is a safe place to "practice" how to talk to someone who might think differently than you do.

2) Encourage the women to review, review, review! It's important to go back over the previous lessons, putting together what's been learned, and applying that material to the current question and/or situation. Remind your women to fill in the Personal Application sheet, and to draw their answers from previous lessons. THIS WILL BE ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT FOR LESSON 8, which is our last class.

Pray.

Explanatory Notes

Goals for Lesson 7:

- Understand that we live in tension with culture.
- Aim to be counter-cultural and courageous.
- Biblically informed decision making.
- Desire to reflect God's Word and glory to the world.

Personal Reflection

Begin your discussion by having someone simply read what she has written for the first reflection on "male leadership." If you discuss this, be sure to keep focused on Scripture, so this isn't just an exchange of opinions.

Review your notes from the last six lessons of our study, and then write a defense of biblical male leadership in the church. Be sure to back up your thinking with Scripture.

This second reflection is a bit harder. Again, maybe just have someone read her explanation and briefly discuss.

How would you explain 1 Timothy 2:11 (Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness) to someone who thinks this is an antiquated and chauvinistic idea?

The third exercise is pretty personal. Point out that the key word is joyfully. You might suggest that if they do have a big roadblock here they can talk to you or the class teacher sometime one-on-one. We don't want to get stuck here.

What have you learned thus far in our study of "biblical womanhood" that helps you joyfully accept the Bible's teaching on order in the church? Is there anything that still stands in your way of *joyfully* accepting this teaching? Explain.

Discussion Questions

Be sure to discuss Questions 1, 3, 4, 6, and 7.

- ★ 1. **Both 2 Timothy 3:1-7 and 1 Peter 4:7-11 speak about the “last days.” How does the Bible describe these “days”?**

Read aloud the 2 Timothy passage, and then discuss the description of the “last days,” which will be evident from the Scripture.

According to the above passages, what are we to avoid, and what are we to do?

We are to avoid people who have the appearance of godliness, but deny its power. (Read together the 1Peter passage to get a fuller description of what we are to do.)

How can you apply these passages today?

The application is pretty self-explanatory. Point out Paul’s words in 2 Timothy 3:1—“...understand this...” Why is it important to understand these things?

Discuss characteristics of the “last days” that we are experiencing today. In light of these observations, discuss what are we to avoid, and what we are to do.

2. **Matthew 5:13-16 and 2 Corinthians 5:11-21 both address the relationship between the believer and the world. Write everything the Lord reveals to you in these verses about our relationship to the world.**

We are salt, light, and "ambassadors for Christ" in this world.

What guidance do these Scriptures give about how to live in our culture?

Discuss application of the Matthew 5 passage today. What does it “look like” for us to be salt and light? Then discuss what it means to be an ambassador for Christ to the world. (An ambassador lives in a country that is not his own, representing the country where he has his citizenship. See Philippians 3:20.)

Note also any connection you see between sound doctrine and godly living.

The sound doctrine is laid out in the 2 Corinthians passage—“Therefore” in verse 20 refers to this doctrine.

- ★ 3. **A biblical woman is a woman who has a biblically-based, informed opinion on various topics confronting her culture. Read each of the following verses, and from each one apply a biblical perspective to the topic stated in parenthesis and contrast that to today's common cultural view.**

This exercise is to get us to “think biblically” (not culturally) about contemporary issues. Go to each passage, and then discuss how this Scripture might inform your opinion on the stated topic. You might brainstorm about other examples where Scripture should mold our opinion. Most are self-explanatory.

• **1 Peter 3:7 (military combat)—**

Men are to honor and protect women; today, women fight alongside men.

• **1 Peter 3:4 (aggressive women)—**

Women have a gentle and quiet spirit; today, “girls gone wild.”

• **Philippians 2:14 (workplace, home)—**

Philippians 2:14 can be broadened to read through verse 16, and you can tie into question 2. Whether at home or outside the home, we are called to stop grumbling and shine as lights in the world. Today, grumbling is a habit.

• **Ephesians 5:3-4 (social settings)—**

Do not even talk with sexual undertones or tell crude jokes; today, women talk with rough language and much sexual innuendo.

• **Colossians 3:12-17 (angry women)—**

We are to clothe ourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, forgiveness; today, many women are harsh, arrogant, and bitter.

• **Psalms 139:13-16 (abortion)—**

A baby is knit together in the mother's womb by the Creator God; today, there is arrogant disrespect for life in the womb.

• **1 Corinthians 6:12-20 (sexual freedom)—**

We are to marry only another believer; today, women are not discriminating sexually.

• **Romans 1:26-27 (homosexuality)—**

Homosexuality is a sin; today, homosexuality is to be embraced.

Based on these examples and others you might think of, explain how a biblical woman is a countercultural woman.

The culture is, in almost every instance, counter to biblical principles. If we live by these principles, we will be out of step with our culture.

★ **4. Read John 15:18-21 and John 17:14-18. Jesus says we are in the world, yet at the same time, not of the world. What does this mean?**

Be sure each woman understands the difference between of and in the world. Once we come to Christ, we are no longer of the world, even though we still live in the world.

What can we expect to experience from the world? Why?

Point out that as Christians we feel more tension in regard to the issues of the day than those who don't know Christ, because we are in but not of the world. Those who are not in Christ are both of and in the world; therefore, there is no tension.

What two things does Jesus ask the Father to do on our behalf? (John 17:15, 17)

Keep us from the evil one and sanctify us in the truth of God's Word.

Share how these texts give you perspective today.

Hopefully, the women will understand why they feel such tension when they attempt to live by biblical principles. This subject will be covered in the teaching session.

5. Carefully read and study Isaiah 32:9-20. From this passage, what do you discover to be:

• **The warning to women—**

Don't be complacent just because everything might be going well for you at the moment. God's judgment is coming; everything will become a wasteland, and things are not as good as they look.

• **The action to be taken—**

Pay attention, rise to action. Don't just sit there—repent, pray diligently for revival, and keep at it until God pours out His Spirit. (See James 5:16-17.)

• **The result of the action—**

Justice will be done; there will come peace and quietness to the land. Verse 20 is a beautiful pastoral scene of quiet happiness and tranquility.

Think about how God could be saying these same things to us today. Rewrite these verses in your own words, illustrating how God might speak directly to us today, including the warning, the call to action, and the resulting effects.



- 6. How do 2 Corinthians 4:17-18 and Romans 8:24b-25 give you a perspective that is not often found in women today?**

When we know that this earthly life is not all there is, we have a perspective that others don't have. This gives us hope and patience now. This is part of the metanarrative (the big story) that goes against the grain of the postmodern mindset.

Using 1 Peter 3:15-17 as your guide, write how you would explain your biblical perspective to someone who sees something "different" in you.



- 7. A biblical woman reflects the Word of God to the world around her. Meditate on 2 Corinthians 4:1-12. Go through this passage, and put each individual verse into your own words.**

This is an exercise to help the women articulate God's Word. It's important to have them actually read what they've written. Hopefully, you will have time for each woman to share her answer.

Does this Scripture encourage you? Share with your group why, or why not.

Summary Statement for Lesson 7:

Pray.

The Deep Significance of Biblical Womanhood

Personal Preparation Before Class

You are preparing for the last lesson of our study. Thank you for your faithfulness! May God richly bless you as you prepare for Lesson 8.

This is an important time of study, as you will be reviewing each lesson. Set aside a little additional time so you can thoughtfully complete your own personal lesson.

Once you complete your Personal Homework Question, review the Explanatory Notes. By this time you shouldn't have too many questions as you read through these notes. However, if you find you still have some areas of concern or you sense someone in your group is unsure about some issue, be sure to bring this up with your class teacher.

Look over the Goals for Lesson 8, and prepare your Summary Statement.

Contact anyone from your group who has missed a session, and be sure she has completed her study. Also, encourage her to come to the last class, even though she may have missed a time or two.

Review the "Helpful Hints" in Appendix 1 before class. This last discussion should be a bit more freewheeling, but you don't want it to get out of hand. If you're prepared and in charge, you can have a rich and satisfying group discussion.

Preparation Checklist:

- Complete Personal Homework Questions (set aside additional time).
- Review Explanatory Notes.
- Review lesson goals.
- Prepare Summary Statement.
- Make necessary contacts with the women in your group.
- Review Helpful Hints.
- Pray.

This session, you can more or less let the women guide you through the questions. Stop from time to time to see if anyone has a question she would particularly like to discuss, and then move to that question. Pray for a balance, so one person doesn't dominate the discussion and you can cover as many questions as possible. I'd suggest you discuss the highlighted questions first, and then let the women guide the discussion into the questions of their choice.

Welcome

This is our last session! Congratulate the women in your group for completing the study. Tell them how much you've enjoyed having them in class.

Encourage them to stay in contact with each other, join a Titus 2 group of some sort or start their own group, and study/discuss one of the suggested books in the Recommended Reading list at the back of the Student Guide. Remind them that we need to help each other apply the principles we've just learned, and that we all have a responsibility to reach out and encourage others.

Tell your group that you'd like to discuss every question from this lesson; however, you know it's a long lesson and the most important thing is for each woman to find satisfaction in her discovery of what it means to be a biblical woman.

Pray.

Explanatory Notes

Goals for Lesson 8:

- Understand Trinitarian roots of complementarity.
- Desire a life that magnifies God's Word.
- Embrace male/female equality of value and distinction of roles/responsibilities.
- See eternal (past and future) significance of belief and behavior.
- Satisfaction in God.

Personal Reflection

Cover all three exercises in this section. These are excellent opportunities for the women to practice how to articulate biblical womanhood to the culture. Be sure that supporting Scripture is used, especially in the first two exercises.

Write how you would explain the tension caused by being in the world, but not of the world. Base your answer on your notes from Lesson 7, and use supporting Scripture.

Review the "Six Distinctives of a Biblical Woman" (Lesson 7), and then pick one that particularly stands out to you. Be prepared to share with your group:

1. What the distinctive is.
2. An explanation of the supporting Scriptures.
3. How this distinctive is counter-cultural.
4. Why you selected this particular distinctive.

Write a paragraph titled "A Biblical Woman Reflects God's Word and His Glory to the World around Her!" Be as specific as you can in your explanation of this statement.

Remind the women that all the discussion questions for Lesson 8 were developed from questions submitted by women who previously took this class. Therefore, they should be particularly relevant and applicable to their own lives.

Discussion Questions

Be sure to discuss Questions 1, 2, 3, and 7.

- ★ 1. **Read Colossians 2:3-8, and then review your notes from Lesson 1. Describe in as much detail as possible today's dominant philosophy of "postmodernism."**
Don't get too bogged down in the discussion of postmodernism. Make the point that it's important we understand our times.

Now write why "evangelical feminism" is a "plausible argument" in the church today.

"Evangelical feminism" is a plausible argument because 1) it uses (misuses) the Bible to prove a point; 2) who can argue against "equality"? 3) this is feminism brought into the church—that makes it seem OK to some.

Lastly, apply Romans 12:2 to the statement, "We must think biblically or we will, by default, think culturally."

Point out that we must apply Romans 12:2, or not only will we think culturally, but we are at great risk of being "weak-willed" women as described in 2 Timothy 3:1-9.

- ★ 2. **Drawing on your notes from Lesson 2, give an answer to the question, "Is there a God?"**
Use the arguments given in Week 2 lecture to defend the existence of God. You might ask WHY it is important that we start with such a basic truth.

How would you defend "biblical womanhood" to someone who doesn't believe in the authority of the Bible?

Again, we're trying to help the women articulate their belief. When we can put into words what we believe, it not only benefits another, but it solidifies our own thoughts.

Write an explanation of the Latin phrase *norma normans non normata*.

Use the Latin phrase to defend the authority of the Bible. *Norma normans non normata* means the norm of all norms that cannot be normed (i.e., the Bible is the ultimate plumb line for every argument or thought). Somehow, we always have to come back to something in the Bible, even if we don't intend to or like that idea.

- ★ 3. **Based on Ephesians 4:17-18 and using other Scriptures as well as your notes from Lesson 3, share with your group why it was important to focus on “the heart” before continuing our study.**

The focus on the “heart” is one of the things that sets our study apart from others. We want to be absolutely certain that we are not just conforming to some so-called biblical standard of conduct without a heart that is convinced that the Bible is true and God is good.

Explain what it means to “hope in God.” Include in your explanation how one can have this kind of hope.

We hope in God when we trust in Him, and we trust in Him when we know Him

Read 2 Corinthians 3:12, and then explain how a biblical woman can be described as having *fearless tranquility*.

Because we have this hope in Him and His Word, we are bold and courageous without being angry or fearful.

4. **Drawing upon your notes from Lesson 4, as well as notes on Genesis 1-3 (from various lessons), how would you counsel a woman who wants to be a biblical woman, but her husband is not fulfilling his role as a biblical man leading in the home?**

Marriage is where the rubber meets the road, and there are many application questions. The questions within this question are designed to help a woman think through some common issues women face. Don't get stuck here, but do try to get some kind of clear, satisfying, yet sensitive answers. No suggested answers are provided, as this should be a time for sharing and encouragement suited to your particular group.

How can a woman be a biblical woman without being a threat to her husband and/or to others around her?

Can even an unhappy marriage illustrate the relationship between Christ and the Church? Explain.

5. Using Titus 2:3-5 and your notes from Lesson 5, how would you counsel a young woman trying to decide what degree/major to pursue in college?

These first two questions are loosely based on questions previously asked by women who have taken this study. They are sample questions to think through application. Use the last question as a guide to answering the first two.

Again based on the Titus 2 passage, describe what it means to have the woman's primary responsibility be related to the home?

How can Titus 2:3-5 help a woman set priorities and make decisions?

Titus 2 can serve as a guide or grid through which we filter our thinking as we make these decisions. The ultimate question may be, "Can I fulfill my primary responsibilities as a woman if I do...?"

6. Use your notes from Lesson 6 and 1 Timothy 2:8-15 to answer the following questions.

Why can't women be pastors?

The 1 Timothy 2 passage addresses the issue of women in the pastorate. If a woman is not to teach or have authority over men (which is what it clearly says), then the office of pastor/elder of the organized church would not be open to a woman.

What does it mean that women are to learn "quietly"?

"Quietly" means respectfully, with a heart attitude of submission.

Doesn't Galatians 3:28 say women can do anything men can do?

Galatians 3:28 maintains that we are all (male and female) equally heirs of all the spiritual riches in Christ. It has nothing to do with distinction of roles.

What can women do in the church?

Women can do anything in the church, as long as it's not a governing or authoritative teaching role over men.

- ★ 7. **Specifically review all of your notes from our study that refer to Genesis 1-3. Write a detailed defense of the *complementarian* viewpoint based on these foundational Scriptures. Be sure to include points from before the Fall, the Fall itself, and after the Fall.**

Be sure we get this. This is foundational to the understanding of biblical womanhood. Be sensitive to any misunderstandings and/or rejection of the truth rising out of Genesis. *Complementarian* supports both equality of men and women in Christ, and the distinction of roles in the marriage and the church.

8. **Now that you have completed this study on Biblical Womanhood in a Postmodern Culture, what have you learned that has been most helpful to you in understanding what it means to be a biblical woman?**

Have you changed your position on any issue regarding the roles of men and woman?

If so, what has led to that change?

Now what...

What are we going to do with all we've learned? Of course, we all start with application at home, but bring in the Titus 2 principal of mentoring also.

Brainstorm on ideas and, again, you could end the time with the discussion of A biblical woman reflects *God's Word & His Glory* to the world around her!

Summary Statement for Lesson 8:

Close in prayer.

APPENDIX I

Helpful Hints for Leading a Discussion¹

Personal Preparation Before Class

- Pray for sensitivity in your own heart to God's leading regarding the women in your group.
- Pray for the women in your group—that they will have humble and teachable hearts; thoughtfully prepared lessons; able to make application of God's Word to their lives.
- Think through lesson—which questions to expect best sharing; which might be more challenging. Carefully read through the Explanatory Notes
- Time Management—plan the approximate time you think you'll spend on each question. Review Explanatory Notes, and then mark/highlight in your Student Guide the questions you want to spend time on, and others that you can briefly touch on.

Small Group Discussion Time

- Nametags for everyone—every time
- Warm welcome, then start on time—get right into the lesson
- Welcome any latecomers (briefly), and tell them the question you are on
- After a question is asked, be comfortable while people read their answer.
- Smile and call on people if there is a lag/no sharing.
- Give short responses of appreciation for people's sharing:
 - "Thank you Anne. That was helpful."
 - "I appreciate your perspective (or honesty) about that."

Avoid Common Pitfalls

Teaching—Remember, you are the facilitator of the discussion.

Talking too much—The more you talk the less the group can.

Gushing over someone's answer—makes others not want to share.

Allowing someone to dominate discussion.

Answering questions yourself—but some personal sharing may be appropriate.

Long pauses—Repeat a phrase or question; or offer short comment, such as, "What were your thoughts on this? Who will get us started? This was challenging, I'm eager to hear your thoughts."

After Class

- Contact those who were absent; let them know they were missed, see if they need anything for the next class.

1. Thanks to Laura Lunger for these helpful hints.

APPENDIX II

Statement of Commitment

Because of the critical nature of this study's subject matter it is important that our group discussion leaders are in agreement with and support the foundational beliefs that underlie the material presented.

There is much confusion in our culture regarding the roles and responsibilities of men and women in the home and in the church. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that you as a leader have carefully and prayerfully thought through what it means to be a biblical woman so you can lead the women in your small group to the clear truth of the Bible.

Before leading a small discussion group in *Biblical Womanhood in a Postmodern Culture*, please read the Danvers Statement on the following page and put your initials after each of the 10 affirmations that you agree with and will support throughout this study and in your personal life. Following this statement, you will find a place to put your signature indicating your confirmation of the individual initialing.

If you have any questions or need clarification on any of the affirmations, please talk with your class teacher. If you'd like to know more about the Danvers Statement, see the footnote below the statement.

Have your class teacher sign off where her signature is needed.¹

Thank you for serving the Lord through the study of *Biblical Womanhood in a Postmodern Culture*. May you be blessed as you are a blessing to others.

1. If this study is being taught as part of the ministry of a local church, we assume that you will be in compliance with the guidelines of that church, as well as in agreement with the Danvers Statement.

APPENDIX III

The 10 Affirmations of the Danvers Statement¹

Based on our understanding of Biblical teachings, we affirm the following:

1. Both Adam and Eve were created in God's image, equal before God as persons and distinct in their manhood and womanhood (Gen 1:26-27, 2:18). ____
2. Distinctions in masculine and feminine roles are ordained by God as part of the created order, and should find an echo in every human heart (Gen 2:18, 21-24; 1 Cor 11:7-9; 1 Tim 2:12-14). ____
3. Adam's headship in marriage was established by God before the Fall, and was not a result of sin (Gen 2:16-18, 21-24, 3:1-13; 1 Cor 11:7-9). ____
4. The Fall introduced distortions into the relationships between men and women (Gen 3:1-7, 12, 16). ____
 - In the home, the husband's loving, humble headship tends to be replaced by domination or passivity; the wife's intelligent, willing submission tends to be replaced by usurpation or servility.
 - In the church, sin inclines men toward a worldly love of power or an abdication of spiritual responsibility, and inclines women to resist limitations on their roles or to neglect the use of their gifts in appropriate ministries.
5. The Old Testament, as well as the New Testament, manifests the equally high value and dignity which God attached to the roles of both men and women (Gen 1:26-27, 2:18; Gal 3:28). Both Old and New Testaments also affirm the principle of male headship in the family and in the covenant community (Gen 2:18; Eph 5:21-33; Col 3:18-19; 1 Tim 2:11-15). ____
6. Redemption in Christ aims at removing the distortions introduced by the curse. ____
 - In the family, husbands should forsake harsh or selfish leadership and grow in love and care for their wives; wives should forsake resistance to their husbands' authority and grow in willing, joyful submission to their husbands' leadership (Eph 5:21-33; Col 3:18-19; Tit 2:3-5; 1 Pet 3:1-7).
 - In the church, redemption in Christ gives men and women an equal share in the blessings of salvation; nevertheless, some governing and teaching roles within the church are restricted to men (Gal 3:28; 1 Cor 11:2-16; 1 Tim 2:11-15).
7. In all of life Christ is the supreme authority and guide for men and women, so that no earthly submission-domestic, religious, or civil-ever implies a mandate to follow a human authority into sin (Dan 3:10-18; Acts 4:19-20, 5:27-29; 1 Pet 3:1-2). ____

1. For further information on the Danvers Statement go to www.cbmw.org

8. In both men and women a heartfelt sense of call to ministry should never be used to set aside Biblical criteria for particular ministries (1 Tim 2:11-15, 3:1-13; Tit 1:5-9). Rather, Biblical teaching should remain the authority for testing our subjective discernment of God's will. ____

9. With half the world's population outside the reach of indigenous evangelism; with countless other lost people in those societies that have heard the gospel; with the stresses and miseries of sickness, malnutrition, homelessness, illiteracy, ignorance, aging, addiction, crime, incarceration, neuroses, and loneliness, no man or woman who feels a passion from God to make His grace known in word and deed need ever live without a fulfilling ministry for the glory of Christ and the good of this fallen world (1 Cor 12:7-21). ____

10. We are convinced that a denial or neglect of these principles will lead to increasingly destructive consequences in our families, our churches, and the culture at large. ____

After carefully and prayerfully reading the Danvers Statement along with the designated Bible references and discussing the statement with the teaching leader of this Bible study, I have verified my agreement with and full support of each of the 10 affirmations in the statement by putting my initials on the lines following each affirmation and signing on the designated line below.

Discussion leader's signature _____ Date _____

I have discussed the Danvers Statement with the discussion leader who signed above and am satisfied that she is in agreement with the statement and will fully support each of the listed affirmations.

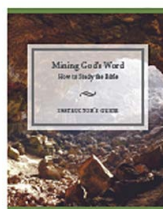
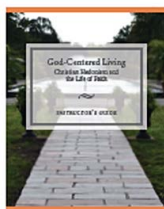
Teaching leader's signature _____ Date _____

Biblical Womanhood in a Postmodern Culture

Standing on Truth in Our Shaky World

Biblical Womanhood in a Postmodern Culture: Standing on the Truth in Our Shaky World is an inductive Bible study designed specifically for women. The purpose of this study is to encourage and equip women through the study of the Bible to embrace the truth about biblical womanhood so they will joyfully live out this truth in their personal lives and clearly articulate this truth to others. The eight-lesson curriculum is adaptable for use with large or small groups and for use in women's ministries within the local church or in a private home setting. The curriculum may be taught as an eight-week course or can easily be expanded to a longer time frame. Personal homework, small group discussion and direct teaching are all important parts of this study.

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