

Five Aspects of **Woman**

A Biblical Theology of Femininity

Volume One

Barbara Mouser

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• *Five Aspects of Woman—Volume One*
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• Dedication **Francesca Louise Mouser**
• *October 27, 1987—April 21, 1997*

I dedicate the *Five Aspects of Woman* to my third daughter, Francesca, who in her short life, lived every aspect—*redeemed*.



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Five Aspects of Woman is one course, published in two volumes for the convenience of our students. Neither *Volume One* nor *Volume Two* is a stand-alone study. *Volume Two* should be studied after *Volume One*, in accord with the guidelines provided.

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• **Preface: How to succeed with this course**
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Dear Student,

Welcome to the *Five Aspects of Woman* course, a study that I hope will bless you for the rest of your life. The following information and instructions, if heeded, will help you gain the most from your study. Please read them carefully.

Five Aspects of Woman (FAW) is a study course which develops a theology of femininity. It is designed to edify and ground committed Christian women in the Bible's teaching about gender. When mastered, it serves as both a foundation and a framework which will guard you against error and free you to serve God more fully and more joyfully.

Type of Study

Five Aspects is not an inductive Bible study or a casual devotional. Students who attempt to process this study through one of those grids will in all likelihood suffer frustration and gain less than this course has to offer. As a Biblical theology of womanhood, *Aspects* is organized around definite gender passages woven together with relevant Bible themes. *Aspects* students are expected to be serious Christian women who will examine the Scriptures to see whether the teachings offered are Biblical (Acts 17:11).

Jesus says, "Therefore every scribe who has become a disciple of the kingdom...brings forth out of his treasure things new and old" (Matt. 13:52). The old things in this study are the insights and formulations of Scriptural truth which took former generations centuries to affirm, such as the Creator-creation distinction, the undiminished deity and true humanity of Jesus Christ, and the Trinitarian nature of God. The meat of the *Aspects* course is totally dependent upon these great doctrines. These are not doctrines that I discovered in personal Bible study. They were handed down to me primarily through the local church by faithful men who have done the heavy lifting of language study, exegesis, and theology. As the teacher, I bring to this course my years of personal study, yes. But more importantly, I bring the things I have learned from my pastors and my Bible teachers under whom I have studied.

Jesus says the scribe brings forth new things as well. What are the new things? Our ancient foes—the world, the flesh, and the devil—are the same from generation to generation; yet, the shape and form of the battle changes. Nothing quite like the early twenty-first century amalgamation of modern feminism, pseudo-science, and ancient idolatries has been seen before in history. As my husband often says, "We are not supposed to teach new doctrines; we are supposed to teach the old doctrines, fresh for our day." *Five Aspects of Woman* is an attempt to provide ancient answers for today's women, but with a freshness which will renew them for today's battles. Thus, I have attempted to make this edition as classic and as accessible as possible for women of various generations and cultures.

Five Aspects is not heavily footnoted because it is not primarily a work of research. To be sure, this study stands on a foundation of theology, but it is not its purpose to annotate this theology. Likewise, *Aspects* was written against the backdrop of the great gender wars of the last half of the twentieth century, but it is not its purpose to delineate those wars. My purpose is to lay out what the Scriptures say about the nature of woman as plainly as I can, that we as women might know and obey our Creator.

Guidelines

High commitment: *Five Aspects* is comparable to a Bible-college course in difficulty and commitment, requiring three to five hours weekly, including personal and class time. This course is suitable for a committed, serious study group which schedules adequate class time. It is not suitable for a casual, low-commitment group whose primary purpose is social.

Leader approval: Gender is a controversial subject in our generation. Hotly debated intellectually and theologically, these are subjects about which most people hold deep personal views. *Aspects* gives answers and takes positions. If individuals do not want to take a stand on Biblical gender issues, the course would not be suitable for their group. If you would like to conduct an *Aspects* class in your church, mission group, Bible study group, or any other organized body of believers, **ask the leader(s) of the group to approve the course.** It is better not to begin, than to begin and reap confusion or undermine your leadership.

Leader training: While the *Aspects* course can be taken individually as a personal home study, most women prefer to take the course in a class. **An individual should not attempt to lead a group through this course until she has completed the course in its entirety. Allow six months to complete the course.** If you are a student planning to take the course under a group leader, be sure the leader has already completed the course, and that she has availed herself of the leadership supplements available (*Answer Guide, Facilitator's Manual*). As an integrated whole, *Five Aspects* builds from lesson to lesson while introducing, what may be for some, unfamiliar or controversial material. Knowing where the course is going and how it fits together is essential for leading a group to a successful and edifying conclusion.

Scheduling: *Aspects* fits leisurely into the school year. Many groups have success studying three aspects between September and Thanksgiving, breaking until after the New Year, then completing the last two aspects and summations by May. Other groups prefer to start in January and conclude in June.

Materials: The course is one whole published in two volumes for the convenience of those using semester time-blocks and to aid students who want a stair-step approach. Volume One is the first part of the course, covering the first three aspects in 13 lessons. Volume Two is the completion of the course, covering the last two aspects in ten lessons. Volume Two also includes critical supplements on manhood, wisdom, and Deborah. The supplements can be studied as lessons or read as appendices; they are not in Bible study format. You have not completed the *Five Aspects* course until you have completed both volumes. Features of the course include:

- **Profiles** summarize the facts of each aspect. These parallel sketches allow the student to compare and contrast all the aspects easily through the review of essential content.
- **Icons and diagrams** reinforce the verbal content of the course with amazing detail. Do not fail to study these graphic presentations carefully using the keys provided. A complete set of the manhood icons is included in Volume Two, along with a brief overview of the *Five Aspects of Man* course.
- **Personifications** of each aspect are provided to make each view of femininity more clear and lifelike. Each aspect speaks as a woman in order to personalize and make more vivid the ideas studied in the lesson. These personifications are **not** to be understood as the testimony of the author or any specific woman. (Scripture uses this same technique repeatedly; wisdom, folly, Israel, Babylon, and the Church are all personified as women.)

- **Bible study questions** are designed to guide the student through the main Scriptures of the lesson, to review the theological content presented in the text, and to encourage application. Bible questions should be answered after careful study of all the lesson material listed above. Space has been left for concise answers. If you need more space, feel free to add pages.
- **Life lessons** require the student to express the aspect in her own words. As the final lesson in the four-lesson cycle (created, fallen, redeemed, life application), the life lessons give the student the most complete ownership of the material. Some classes combine the life lessons with personal projects related to each aspect.

Audio: Audio lectures are available but are not required to complete the course. It is the intention of ICGS to keep the audio version of the lesson texts available online.

Many thanks

Many thanks to Priscilla Fisher for her years of service as a graphic designer, close friend, and consultant. She has done for *Aspects* what no other artist has done. She has made the Biblical and theological content of this course her own in mind and in life. Beyond that, she has labored faithfully for years to render this content in a graphic language that is both intelligible to the mind and appealing to the eye. Thanks also to Woody Perry, our office manager, for her multitude of services to ICGS over many years, to the “California Team” for their encouragement and help in bringing this final edition to life, and to Jennie Gilchrist for her careful proofreading. Always, I thank my husband Bill for supervising the work of ICGS and for cultivating me as his very own vine.

As I have written in previous editions, the Bible’s truths remain water, milk, wine, meat, and honey for my soul. I praise God who made gender and wrote the Bible. Truly, strength and beauty dwell with Him. I pray that our masculine Father and King will bless you in your feminine path. May He teach you who you are and renew you with a vision of Himself.

In Christ,

Barbara Mouser
September, 2012

Five Aspects of Woman—Volume One

God created
woman to love
and obey Him.

*W*ith all my heart I have sought Thee; do not let me wander from Thy commandments. Thy word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against Thee. Blessed art Thou, O LORD; teach me Thy statutes. With my lips I have told of all the ordinances of Thy mouth. I have rejoiced in the way of Thy testimonies, as much as in all riches. I will meditate on Thy precepts, and regard Thy ways. I shall delight in Thy statutes; I shall not forget Thy word. Deal bountifully with Thy servant, that I may live and keep Thy word. Open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful things from Thy law. PSALM 119:10-18

LESSON 1 : Introduction



Four foundational questions

Five Aspects of Woman is an attempt to study the whole counsel of God on the topic of woman. As a course, it offers a way of seeing man and woman in the frame God provides in Scripture. This introductory lesson provides an overview of the plan and the purpose of the whole course by answering the following questions: What is the origin of the *Five Aspects* course? What are the five aspects delineated in this study? What principles of Bible interpretation are used in this course? What are the benefits of studying this course?

1. What is the origin of the *Five Aspects* course?

1.1 Early questions

I need to go back to childhood to find the beginning of the quest that led to the development of this course. When I was 11 and maturing early, I began noticing men and women as such. I was particularly fascinated by what makes a man manly and what makes a woman womanly. My father was a very masculine man, and my mother was a feminine woman. I saw dramatic differences in them and in other men and women, and I found these differences compelling. At times, I also saw a magic and special kind of relationship between my parents; it included a delight different from other relationships. I wondered why all this was this way. What makes a manly man? What makes a feminine woman? What makes the special bond between them? And then, even beyond these questions, I had other questions. Why do we have sexuality? Who made it and why? What does it mean? What is its purpose?

One event I remember at the start of my search is a short conversation I had with my father on the back porch of our farmhouse. Having come in from the field, he was taking off his boots with the help of his bootjack—something I had seen him do hundreds of times. I asked him, “Dad, what is a woman?” I do not think he had been out there on his tractor all morning pondering this question. Nevertheless, he paused and looked out into space for a few seconds. Then he said to me, “Well, a woman is a beautiful idea.”

I asked him, “Dad, what is a woman?” He paused, then said to me, “Well, a woman is a beautiful idea.”

KEY Five Aspects of Woman—*created*
mistress—CROWN
helper—HAND
lifegiver—HEART
wisdom—JEWEL, OPEN BOOK
glory—LONG HAIR, SUNBURST

I have always treasured that response, because in that one sentence, he said a great deal. There was no doubt in my mind, or his, whose beautiful idea a woman was. She was the idea of God. And yet, that answer, as rich and beautiful as it was, was not enough. I wanted to know more specifics about this beautiful idea of God’s. What was the idea, and why was it beautiful? As a girl reared in a Bible-believing church, I received a good grounding in salvation and in the authority of Scripture. However, many questions about the nature of the universe and its parts remained unaddressed.

1.2 Bible training and study

While in college, I went to a Bible-teaching church that put emphasis on theology and apologetics. Answering the big questions of life from a Christian point of view was very important at this church, and I was thrilled to be there. After college, I joined the church staff. I taught a womanhood class for college girls that lasted six years. The purpose I set for myself in this class was to teach through the Bible very methodically, asking this question—what is God saying about woman and femininity in this portion of Scripture? So we spent a year on Genesis—every verse and every passage that had anything to do with femininity or women or womanhood; another year on the Mosaic Law; a year on Joshua, Judges, and Ruth; and so forth.

Motivated by wonder at sexuality, I set out on a quest to understand femininity Biblically. *Five Aspects* is the fruit of that quest.

During those years, I came to the truths that satisfied me and answered my questions in ways beyond my wildest dreams. The methodical precept-upon-precept, line-upon-line approach—in which one goes book by book through the Bible following God as He develops His ideas—is my preferred Bible study method. The *Five Aspects* is built upon what I learned during those years of the womanhood-through-the-Bible courses. All this happened in the 1970s, an era of great debate about the nature of gender and sexuality. Feminism was building strength in America. The idea that sexuality was determined only culturally became increasingly prevalent. It was commonly believed that nothing definitive could ever be said about manhood or womanhood, because masculinity and femininity were viewed as relative ideas, fluctuating with culture and time. According to this view, manliness and womanliness were merely cultural phenomena with no absolute or created root.

anhood, because masculinity and femininity were viewed as relative ideas, fluctuating with culture and time. According to this view, manliness and womanliness were merely cultural phenomena with no absolute or created root.

1.3 Later questions

Coming to the end of these years, I looked back over the Scriptures I had studied and asked myself, “Can we say anything definite and absolute about man and woman? If so, what?” I believed that we could say something because God is beyond culture and time. He is the Creator of man and woman, and where He speaks about their nature, we have a definite and dependable word. I can know some truths about all women—the one across the street and the ones around the world, even though there are billions of us—because God has spoken definitively in the Scriptures.

The next question followed inevitably, “What are the passages in which God speaks definitively about femininity?” I settled on five passages. Someone else might choose other passages or organize them a different way. I am not presenting *Five Aspects* as the only way to study definitive passages on femininity. I am presenting it as one way that is tried and true; many people have found this course a helpful and useful tool for obtaining a Biblical framework for sexuality. The rest of the Biblical material on womanhood organizes easily around these passages because they do, in fact, represent great pillar truths of femininity. In the late 1970s, I was blessed with the opportunity to go to seminary and write my thesis in the area of Biblical womanhood. This was a time not only for reading the Bible, but also for reading what everyone else was saying about the Bible.

1.4 Life experiences

In the early 1980s, I married a long-time friend who was a minister. We got busy and had four daughters (each named for an aspect), so that my husband could have his own five aspects of

woman—one wife plus four daughters! We also did this so that I could continue day after day to have womanhood class, even as I had all through the 1970s.

After my husband had ministered for a while in East Texas, we moved to Vienna, Austria, where he was the pastor of the International Chapel of Vienna. To my utter amazement, I found that the question I had asked God in West Texas, “What is true of all women in the world?”—a question I thought more or less academic at the time—now became a very real and personal question. In this congregation, we had women from all over the world, from every continent except Antarctica. Those years of teaching and fellowshiping with women from various countries was a very rich experience, one of the most cherished of my life.

So, from where did this study come? *Five Aspects* came from my own search for answers to the questions of my own soul, from Bible study and seminary training, from fellowshiping with the woman next door and with women around the world. It has come from my marriage, my children, and life in the extended family, from the mission field, and from the Lord Himself. He is the One who has led me all these years and taught me things of which I’d never dreamed. *Five Aspects* is not a flawless work, but I believe it is a Biblical and helpful work which can, and I pray will be, meat and honey for your soul as it has been for mine.

2. What are the five aspects delineated in this study?

We have talked about the origins of the *Five Aspects* course. Now, let’s answer our second question, “What are the five specific aspects and the definitive Biblical passages upon which this course is built?”

2.1 Mistress of the Domain

The first definitive passage on the nature of woman is in Genesis 1. It is very straightforward and clear. Verse 27 says, *And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.* God made man and woman and gave them a domain over which to rule. He gave them the earth, the sky, and the seas, and told them to rule, to subdue, and to be fruitful and multiply. The first picture we see of woman is as a creature in the image of God, a creature created to rule a domain for God, with accountability to God. This is the first and foundational aspect. I call it the “Mistress of the Domain” aspect. Women need to see themselves as rulers in the image of God, responsible for the domains God has given them.

2.2 Helper-Completer

In Genesis 2:18, we see another definitive statement from God about the nature of woman. God said, “*It is not good for man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him, completing him.*”¹ Here is a second view of woman, called in this course the “Helper-Completer” aspect. Woman is taken from the side of man and is brought back to the man to help and complete him. Neither he nor his work can be complete without her indispensable help. Adam names the helper God brings him “woman” for just this reason—because she was taken out of man (Gen. 2:23). Genesis 2 reveals woman as made from a person and for a person. Man, on the other hand, was made from the earth and for the earth. He was brought to the garden to work and till it. Woman was

1. Gerrit Verkuyl, ed., *The Modern Language Bible, The New Berkeley Version* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, Old Testament copyright 1959). The Berkeley translation of Genesis 2:18 did influence the author at the time the aspects were named. However, of equal importance in the aspect name, helper-completer, is the biblical weight of Genesis 2:18 and Genesis 1:31. Woman was the difference in God’s work being “not good” and its being “very good.” Thus, woman completed both the creation and man.

brought to the man to help him in labor and to complete him in relationship. In this aspect we see woman as the final crown of creation and the indispensable complement of man. Woman's propensity for and facility with the personal is fundamental to her created being and purpose.

2.3 Lifegiver

Genesis 3 provides yet a third revelation about the fundamental nature of woman. After the fall, in the context of the curse, God tells Adam and Eve that woman will bear children (v. 16). In fact, it is through woman that Satan's conqueror will come (v. 15). Just as temptation came to Adam through Eve, so will salvation come from Christ through Mary. As woman was the means of the human defeat, so she will be the means to human victory as well. Adam was so struck by the new revelation about his wife, he turned to her and named her "Eve," which means life or living, for the text says, *she was the mother of all living* (v. 20). Adam named his wife again because he came to see her in a new light, in another aspect. The first time he saw her as one who came from himself, so he named her "woman." This time he sees her as the one who is going to give life. This is our third view of woman, "Lifegiver."

This aspect includes not only the physical lifegiving of woman but her partnership with God in spiritual life-giving as well. The Bible features a long progression of women lifegivers, some of whom were mothers, some were not. Nevertheless, they were all partners with God in battling the serpent by giving life.

Thus, in the foundational chapters of Genesis, we have three chapters and three definitive aspects of woman. She is Mistress of the Domain in Genesis 1, Helper-Completer in Genesis 2, and Lifegiver in Genesis 3.

2.4 Lady of Wisdom

As the years went by, I studied through subsequent passages, the rest of Genesis, the Mosaic Law, the histories, and on into the Wisdom Literature. For a long time I saw tremendous amplification and development of the first three aspects, but I did not see a dramatically new picture of woman. However, when I came to the book of Proverbs in the Wisdom Literature, I said, "Wait! Here is something dramatically new. Here is a new picture." In Proverbs 1-9, Solomon personifies both wisdom and folly as women. Wisdom is personified as a great and magnificent lady; she is God's helper and companion in creation. She is the reprover, teacher, and counselor of mankind, and the patron, helper, and glorifier of wise people. Folly is personified as a seductress; she deceives, enslaves, and takes her foolish victims down to death. According to Proverbs, life is a choice between these two women. In describing the roles and relationships of wisdom and folly, Solomon presents a bold new view of femininity. From these inspired personifications we learn new truths about wisdom and folly, and also about femininity. For this reason, "Lady of Wisdom" is included as an aspect of womanhood in this course, even though it is different from the other four. The other four aspects are based on Scriptural definitions. Wisdom personified is an archetype of femininity, not a definition. The difference in these two types of literature will be defined and discussed briefly in Section 3 of this chapter.

2.5 Glory of Man

Now let us turn to the fifth and final aspect. In 1 Corinthians 11, we find another definitive statement about the nature of man and woman. Paul says in verse 7, *man is the glory of God and woman is the glory of man*. In image, man and woman are the same; but in glory, they are

different. 1 Corinthians 15:41 states, *The sun has one glory and the moon has another glory, for star differs from star in its glory.* In other words, God has given different parts of His creation different splendors, different glories. One of the greatest glories of the human race is sexuality. The ultimate foundation of this glory is revealed in Ephesians 5:31-32 where Paul explains that from the beginning, the very model for man and woman in marriage was Christ and His Church. It is the glory of the man to picture Christ; it is the glory of woman to picture the Church. The culminating picture of this masculine and feminine glory is revealed at the end of the book of Revelation. Here Christ is the King with His sword in hand (Rev. 19:11-16). The Church is presented as His bride, adorned in jewels and garments, white and clean (Rev. 21:2, 9-27). This is the vivid and archetypal picture of the glory-of-man aspect.

2.6 Defining an aspect

In closing this section on the aspects, let me define an aspect. An **aspect** is a view, a way of looking at something. If we look at woman from the Genesis 1 perspective, we see her as a ruler in God's image. If we look at her from the Genesis 2 perspective, we see her as a helper, and so forth.

All the views are important, because if we leave some out, we short-change woman. We truncate her, making her less than she is. For example, some of the early feminists said, "It is most important to view woman as an independent entity; she must rule her own life." They probably didn't know it, but they were emphasizing the first aspect, but to the exclusion of the others. This view ignores the deep relational chords in woman's being. Having tried "individual" life for a while, a second generation of feminists began to re-emphasize the importance of relationships and family.

On the other hand, if you isolate and elevate the view that woman was made for man, appearance and marriage will be over-emphasized; woman will be reduced to the proverbial sex object. Or if you say, as some cultures have, that having babies is the most important thing, woman will be viewed only as mother (or worse, merely as a baby factory) and little else. The point is, whenever we leave out some of the definitive truths of Scripture, we reduce ourselves and turn away from the whole counsel of God.

Five Aspects presents five views of woman which turn into fifteen views of woman, because each aspect is treated three times. First, each aspect is introduced as it was created to be, as God intended it to be originally. Second, we study each aspect as it has been affected by sin and the curse. These lessons on the fallen aspects help us understand and guard against the dark side of our femininity. Third, we study the good news of redemption. Here we see what God has done to save us, and what He is doing to restore each aspect of our womanhood, bringing us to maturity in Christ.

3. What principles of Bible interpretation are used in this course?

3.1 Types of Biblical literature

Understanding four different kinds of Biblical material is essential to understanding this course. These types of literature are definitions, laws, narratives, and archetypes. To gain the whole counsel of God on womanhood or anything else, one must consult the whole Bible, comparing Scripture with Scripture, rightly dividing the Word of truth. Delineating these types of Biblical literature and their relationships to each other will greatly clarify the study of the *Five Aspects*. The following explanation of terms is offered only as a brief introduction. Much greater detail will be provided in the lessons which follow.

- **Definitions** are straightforward, categorical statements about the nature of something. Four of the aspects are based on such passages. For example, woman is the image of God. Woman is the helper of man. These are plain and definitive statements.
- **Laws of Scripture** give us absolute moral rules and boundaries. *Five Aspects* is not a course about ethics or behavior; it is about the nature of woman. We are not studying law per se, therefore the course does not emphasize how-tos or rules. However, the whole course assumes Scriptural morality and teaches from the framework of Christian ethics regarding virgins, marriage, divorce, fornication, charity to widows, etc.
- **Biblical narratives** are the stories and histories of Scripture given to us for examples. The stories always must be judged in light of God's Law and understood in the light of God's original archetypes. For example, we know that David's faith is what we should emulate, not his adultery. The Law makes this clear. Biblical narratives are used extensively as illustrations in the aspects' case studies.
- **Biblical archetypes** are original and exemplary patterns from Scripture which transcend culture and time. The feminine archetypes of Scripture include Eve, personified wisdom, Israel, Mary, and the Church. "Woman" folly and Babylon (the mother of harlots) are evil feminine archetypes. God often uses archetypes to reveal "the big picture" (e.g., Ezek. 16; Eph. 5:22-33), thus shedding a different light from that which comes from laws or narratives.

Both archetypes and narratives are important to our study. People with a philosophical turn of mind tend to think in transcending categories. Others more practical in their viewpoint think in specific and concrete details. One of these groups is not more intelligent or godly than the other. The Bible gives us both kinds of thinking, often expecting us to reason back and forth between the two. For example, in Proverbs 1-9, we see universal categories for feminine roles and relationships in "lady" wisdom and "woman" folly. However, at the end of the book in Proverbs 31, the advice of a specific mother and the portrait of an individual wife are showcased. These specific wise women are concrete and individual representatives of the universal "lady" wisdom. Understanding this interplay between the universal and the particular is essential to building a Biblical framework on womanhood or any topic.

3.2 Normal Biblical interpretation

Five Aspects is based on the view that the Scriptures are inerrant and authoritative and should be interpreted in a "normal" manner. **Normal interpretation** seeks in every passage the meaning that the author intended to put there. History should be read as history, natural fact as natural fact, poetry as poetry, hyperbole as hyperbole. **Liberal interpretation**, as contrasted with normal interpretation, removes the Bible from real history, science, and anthropology in an attempt to abstract only the Bible's moral ideas. For example, in the liberal school of thought, it is not important whether Jesus actually fed the 5,000 or rose from the grave; what is important is that His ideas feed us and revive us today. **Literal interpretation** is a third type of interpretation which does not recognize figures of speech or other literary conventions. If one attempts to take every word of the Bible literally, metaphors alone quickly make for absurd conclusions. For example, if Jesus is the door, does He have a door knob and threshold? One following the "normal" school would believe that Jesus actually fed the 5,000 and rose from the grave because these stories are presented as history in the text. One following the "normal" school would understand the statement "*Jesus is the door*" as a metaphor meaning that He is the way to God.

4. What are the benefits of mastering the *Five Aspects* course?

Why should you take this course? *Five Aspects* is not a how-to-be-a-godly-woman course. In this book you will not find ten rules for being a godly woman or eight ways to get your house better organized. How-tos are important, and some very good how-to material is available, applying Scriptural principles to our lives. But this course is not primarily about application. It is about a way of seeing God, the universe, and everything. Jesus says something very important in Matthew 6:22-23 about this point: “*The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. 23 But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!*” Our Lord is talking about our viewpoint.

4.1 The benefit of seeing more clearly

How do you see? Do you see God as great and loving and good, majestically sovereign and yet graciously disposed to you? Or do you see Him as mean and distant, motivated by some cosmic sadism? Or perhaps you see Him as a psychological down comforter, white and fluffy, for cuddling when you feel low. How do you see men? Do you see men as selfish and tyrannical, wimpy and passive, or both? You can't figure out why God made them in the first place? What about women? Do you see women as independent and dominant, rightfully the rulers of the race? Or do you see them as second-class citizens, silly and petty? Are you sorry that God made you a woman?

If you see God and men and women in the way just described, your eye is full of darkness and your whole body will be full of darkness, too. But if you see God as He really is—the great, majestic, and loving Father and Savior that He is—and if you see men as they were created to be, and if you see women as they were created to be, your eye will be full of light. Your viewpoint will be different, and with this new viewpoint, your ability to be different and act differently will be enhanced greatly. You will be able to incorporate and apply how-to principles much more rapidly, because the way you see and who you are will be different.

A missionary (and former police officer) friend of mine told me some years ago that before her 40th birthday she prayed, “Lord, I have always despised my femininity. I have never felt good about being a woman. I am going to be forty years old, and I pray You would do something for me in this area.” In about a year, a friend shared this course with her. She said it is the third most important thing that has happened in her life. She told me, “It changed my whole viewpoint of who I am. I have never had dignity as a woman. Now I see what a wonderful plan God has, what a wonderful creature woman is. I used to think we are not just a little lower than the angels. I thought humans were barely above the animals. But now I see the dignity.” She has three sons and a husband. She has seen the dignity that God intends for them as well. She is seeing what God has for her as a woman, and she is flourishing with a new joy because she has caught a new vision. She is seeing differently.

4.2 The benefit of loving God more completely

I emphasize *Five Aspects* as a way of seeing. But it is a vision which should lead to an application of the Christian life in a most profound sense. Jesus said that all the Law can be summed up in two laws: The first and great commandment is to love God; and the second is like it, to love your neighbor as yourself. I would like to close with how the *Five Aspects* can lead you to live the heart of the Law, which is to love God and others.

The first and great commandment is, “*You shall love the Lord thy God with all your heart, and all your soul, and with all your mind*” (Matt. 22:37). God wants us to give the totality of ourselves to Him, everything in our beings. *Five Aspects* can free you to love God more completely with all of your being because you will see and understand more fully your being as a woman.

Another way the *Five Aspects* can help you love God is to help you understand Him better, particularly His masculinity. Our God has revealed Himself to us as “He.” He is Father, Son, King, Bridegroom, Firstborn Brother, High Priest—just to name a few of His masculine roles. From one end of the Scriptures to the other, He teaches us to call Him “He.” Jesus is a man. He is the God-Man. The Holy Spirit is not “It.” He is “He.” If we are to be Biblical Christians, we must not be confused by those who would lead us aside and say, “God is an It,” or “God is a He-She,” or “God is our Mother.” We need to understand the masculinity of God, love Him as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and in all the other roles of His revealed and masculine Person. One reason people want to make God feminine is because they are looking for ultimate feminine categories. This course provides clear and understandable answers from Scripture on ultimate masculinity and femininity. We need these answers to keep us from falling prey to a whole host of doctrinal errors which are plaguing the Church in this sexually aberrant and gender-confused day.

4.3 The benefit of loving others more accurately

The second commandment is like the first, Jesus said. The first commandment is to love God; the second is to love others. All the “others” out there come in two kinds—male and female. How can *Five Aspects* help us love men? After Paul explains in 1 Corinthians 11 that our glories differ, he goes on to say that we have an interdependence based upon our differences. Verses 11-12 state, *However, in the Lord, neither is woman independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. 12 For as the woman originates from the man, so also the man has his birth through the woman; and all things originate from God.* Eve came from Adam; yet men come from their mothers. The way we come from each other is different; nevertheless, our lives are bound up with one another. To despise or to hate or be bitter against the opposite sex is suicidal. Whether or not you have

The purpose of *Five Aspects* is to love God, men, and women more—having seen them better.

a husband, a father, brothers or sons, your being is bound up with men; and the life of men is bound up with women because God has created us to be interdependent. This course emphasizes that we women should understand and forgive men, not just for the sake of men, but for our own sakes. To live at enmity with men is a kind of death for a woman, as it is suicidal for men to hate women. God has created our lives to be lived in interdependence. We spiral up and down together.²

What about loving women? Many women despise femininity, themselves, and other women. In fact, some of the worst misogynists in the world are women, as can be seen in the way women divide themselves into camps with much comparing, pettiness, and even scorn. This course is intended for all women. It is not designed specifically for singles, or the married, for those with children, or those without. These pages attempt to speak to all women about basic womanhood as God created it. I pray students of this course will see themselves and all other women afresh—as multifaceted and uniquely glorious feminine, female creatures from the hand of the God.

2. These wonderful principles of interdependence will be glimpsed as you go through the course; they are the focus of Lessons 9 and 10 in Volume Two, where the five different aspects of man are surveyed in parallel with the five different aspects of woman.

5. Review

In conclusion and for review, answers to the four main questions of this introductory lesson are summarized below.

1. What is the origin of the *Five Aspects* course?

Essentially it comes from my systematic study of Scripture, my life, research, and fellowship with diverse women over many years.

2. What are the five aspects delineated in this study?

- Genesis 1: Mistress of the Domain—woman is a ruler for God.
- Genesis 2: Helper-Completer—woman is from and for the man.
- Genesis 3: Lifegiver—woman is the giver of life and nurture.
- Proverbs: Lady of Wisdom—woman is teacher and counselor.
- 1 Corinthians 11 (also Eph. 5): Glory of Man—woman is a picture of the Church.

Each aspect is presented from three perspectives—*created, fallen, and redeemed*.

3. What principles of Bible interpretation are used in this course?

Five Aspects is based on the view that the Scriptures are inerrant and authoritative, and should be interpreted in a “normal” manner, seeking the authorial intent of every passage. In other words, history should be read as history, natural fact as natural fact, poetry as poetry, hyperbole as hyperbole, etc. The course delineates and depends upon the interplay of Biblical definitions, laws, archetypes, and narratives.

4. What are the benefits of mastering the *Five Aspects* course?

Five Aspects of Woman is offered to you who are students with the prayer that in God’s light, you will see Him, men, women, and yourself in new and more Biblical ways. All those who abide in His light and knowledge will walk with God and bear much fruit. These are the goals and intended benefits of this course.



Bible Study of *Five Aspects* Introduction

Before beginning this study, read the entire lesson, pages 2-11.

...**Y**OU SHALL LOVE THE
LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL
YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL
YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL
YOUR MIND.' *This is the
great and foremost
commandment.*"
MATTHEW 22:37-38

What is *Five Aspects of Woman*?

It is a systematic study of woman's nature based upon the whole counsel of God.

From where does the *Five Aspects* course come?

God is the Creator of man and woman, and where He speaks about their nature we have a definite and dependable word. We can know some truths about all women—the one across the street, and the ones around the world, even though there are billions of us—because God has spoken definitively in the Scriptures.

Five Aspects views the Bible as inerrant and authoritative, the sufficient standard for faith and practice, for life and doctrine. This course attempts to interpret Scripture in a "normal" and faithful method (as contrasted with the liberal method or the literal method).

1. What does it mean to interpret Scripture in the "normal" method (refer to p. 8)?

The expression of femininity varies over time and from culture to culture. Previous generations of women plucked chickens to feed their families, and wore corsets to be dressed properly. Most of us don't do either; nevertheless, we are concerned with nutrition and beauty.

2. How does the authority of God's Word relate to all generations and all cultures?

Five Aspects is an attempt to learn the whole counsel of God about femininity. It is based upon four different kinds of Biblical material: Definitions, laws, archetypes, and narratives.

3. Why are definitions necessary for clear thinking?

4. Why is a knowledge of the laws of Scripture fundamental to interpreting all the rest of Scripture?

5. Archetypes are original and exemplary patterns. How does seeing “the big picture” through Scriptural archetypes give us meaning and insight which transcend time and culture?

6. Why do Biblical narratives give life to the definitions, laws, and archetypes of Scripture?

7. Write a brief description of each of the five aspects.

a.

b.

c.

d.

e.

12. What do you think of men as a whole? What would you like to understand about them that frustrates, amazes, or intrigues you?

13. In a few sentences, describe how you view God at this point in your pilgrimage. Which of His attributes and roles are most vivid to you?

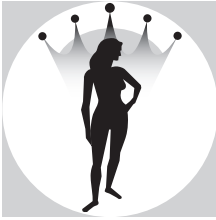
About Male Bashing

In the interest of gaining the most from this course, please accept this challenge: **Do not share anything negative about husbands and pastors in class.**

This course is not about changing or “fixing” our men; rather, it is a study about what God can do in **your** life. As you learn about the true meaning of femininity from God, focus on Him and on your growth, not on the faults of others.

Mistress of the Domain

- **Woman, God, and the world.** *Woman has the image of God, authority from God, responsibility in the world, and accountability to God.*



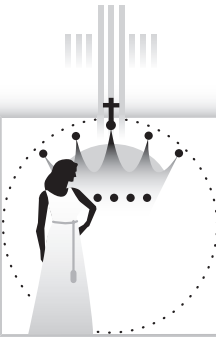
LESSON 2. Mistress of the Domain – *created*

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LESSON 5. Mistress of the Domain – *life lessons*

God created
woman to be
Mistress of
the Domain.

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. And God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

GENESIS 1:26-28



1. Woman in the image of God

God gives us a very clear and amazing statement in the first chapter of the Bible about the nature of man and of woman. Genesis 1:27 says, *God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.*

1.1 Finding ourselves in God

Most psychologies and religions tell us to find ourselves in ourselves. Real self-knowledge will come, we are told, when we look inside to the inner recesses of our own being. Yet here, at the very beginning of this course about knowing ourselves as women, I will state unequivocally that we will never find ourselves in ourselves. We will find ourselves only in God. Only knowing the One in whose image we are makes sense of our own image. For example, if I were to come to you and say, “You are the perfect image of my Aunt Myrtle,” several questions would probably go through your mind—“Who is Aunt Myrtle? What does she look like? What specifically is it about Aunt Myrtle that makes you think she looks like me?”

1.2 A spiritual replica of God

In first describing us, God does not speak about us, rather He tells us whom we are like. If we would be naturally curious about Aunt Myrtle, how much more should we crave knowledge about the God whose image we bear! The word **image** in Genesis 1:27 means statue. It is the same word used for **idol** later in the Bible. Each of us is a little statue of God, a tiny replica of God Himself. It almost seems blasphemous to say it, but it is true. Making images of God and worshiping them is wrong because we are, in fact, the only image of God He has authorized. Indeed, our very physical bodies reflect God. In Psalm 94:9, God says, *He who planted the ear, does He not hear? He who formed the eye, does He not see?* Sight and hearing—God’s sight and hearing—existed before He made eyes and ears. He created eyes and ears to embody spiritual realities. In fact, He created our physical bodies to reflect and even house Himself. When God became a creature in the person of Jesus, He became a physical man of the human race, not an animal, a machine, or a computer.

KEY Mistress—*created*
person—FEMALE FIGURE
 (“clothed” in nakedness
 according to her un-
 tested, unashamed, sin-
 less standing before God)
character—SQUARE
 (untested, sinless)
femininity—CIRCLE
 (untested, sinless)
role/work—CROWN
 (ruling authority is
 untested, sinless)

Our focus here will not be on our physical image, but rather, on the immaterial part of us, our spiritual image, as it reflects the Person of God. God’s eternal nature is comprised of His infinite attributes or character qualities. These divine attributes are what make God God. For example, God is, by definition, sovereign, all-powerful, and all-knowing. These are some of the characteristics which make up His divine nature. Just so, human attributes such as mind, will, and emotions are what make up our human nature. You, as a woman, have human attributes that are little replicas of God’s infinite attributes. This is what it means for us to be in His image. Our human attributes are little copies or models of God’s great infinite attributes. To understand more specifically what it means to be created in God’s image, let’s consider eight of the divine attributes and their corresponding human attributes.

1.3 Divine and human attributes

Righteousness/justice and conscience

First, consider God's righteousness. When some people think of God's righteousness, they see Him sitting on His throne surrounded by a legal library containing all the rule books of the universe. This is not an accurate view. From the Biblical viewpoint, right and wrong are not founded on dos and don'ts. Right and wrong are rooted in God Himself. It is wrong to lie because God is a God of truth. It is wrong to hate because God is a God of love. It is wrong to commit adultery because God is a God of faithful covenant love. It is wrong to murder because God is the giver of life. We could go on and on and see that all the basic moral and ethical standards go back to God Himself, to His own character. God's attribute of righteousness is the basis of all right and wrong.

Just so, God's attribute of justice is the root of all judgment. God is no respecter of persons and is therefore perfectly impartial. Whoever honors Him, He will honor; whoever rises up in pride and rebellion will be punished. One time my husband said from the pulpit, "All sin will be punished and all righteousness will be rewarded—every scrap of it." I sat stunned for a minute because I had really believed that some human actions would slip through the cracks of time. But finally God will judge all—at the cross, in history, or at other judgments. All human actions will be judged because God is perfectly just.

What in you is the image—little replica—of God's righteousness and justice? It is your conscience. In you, without any books or Bibles, there is an inherent sense of right and wrong. All over the world, people have a sense of right and wrong that corresponds to basic Biblical morality. They know it is wrong to murder, steal, lie, or commit acts of immorality. Bound up with our sense of right and wrong is a sense of justice. Even a flagrant unbeliever might say in great anger, "That was a raw deal!" But even as he says this, he is testifying to standards in his soul. Inherently he knows there are standards above us by which events and people can be judged. Even while denying God, he boldly announces what is a "raw" deal and what is a fair one. Righteousness and justice originate in God, but their outline resides in every one of us because God has created human conscience in the image of these divine attributes (Rom. 2:1-16).

Sovereignty and responsibility

For a third divine attribute, consider God's sovereignty. Some think of God as a divine puppet master. He has us on strings; He pulls the strings and makes things happen. This is not a Christian view. A more Christian analogy would be that God is like the divine chess master. He puts the board and the pieces before us; we can move anyway we want on the board. We have freedom, with limits. Yet, He is so wise and great, that whatever His creatures do, He still brings all moves to fulfill His purposes. This is what God's sovereignty means. No matter how rebellious human or demonic choices are, history is not out of control. God always has history and every event in it under His rule.

What about you? What do you have that is like God's great sovereign will? You have a human will and true responsibility. Your will doesn't control everything, but it controls some things—those things within history and creation which God has allotted you—your domain. You have a will that mirrors God's will. Your decisions and rulings actually affect history.

Love and personality

God is love. At the heart of His being, God is a Person—different from the animals, the rocks, and the machines. He is a personality, not only in His love, but in all the emotions and capacities of personality. To be moved by what is thrilling, tragic, grievous, horrifying, beautiful, or fragile is the characteristic of a person, not a monolith or an impersonal pantheistic being. We share these personal emotions and capacities with God because He has made us to be personal spirits in the image of His own personal Spirit. Of all the capacities of personality, love is the highest. God is love. We are not love, but we have the capacity to receive and give love on a finite scale. Beyond that, we have a full range of personal traits and capacities because we are made in the image of the God who is the Source of all personalities and relationships.

Omniscience and mind

God is **omniscient**. This means He knows everything. What do we have that mirrors God's all-knowing mind? We have an intellect, a mind that can reason, think, and store things in memory. We have imagination, logic, and creative abilities. All of these mirror God's great omniscient mind. We don't know everything like God does, but we can know some things truly. The Bible and prayer are based on the mind-to-mind compatibility of God and man. God speaks His mind to us in the Bible; we read and understand what He says. In prayer, we speak language to God and He understands us. A bridge of language and understanding exists between our little minds and the omniscient mind of God because He has created our minds in the image of His.

Omnipotence and power

A sixth divine attribute is **omnipotence**; this means that God is all-powerful. God certainly is the Creator of all power, and He has all power. We have such a tiny amount of power it is almost ludicrous to think about it compared to God's infinite power. However, we have some ability to change our world, to move things physically, spiritually, and intellectually. We can affect things around us because we have a portion of power, spiritually and physically, through our beings and through the animals, machines, and technology we harness.

Immutability and character

God is **immutable**; He is unchanging. In spite of what some people think, God is not a Trinitarian version of Mt. Rushmore where God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are etched in stone—never smiling, laughing, or feeling emotion. The problem with this view is that God's immutability has been attached to His personal responses instead of His character. His character is what never changes. He is always righteous, love, just, sovereign, omnipotent. These things never change. His personal responses change because they are personal, genuine responses, like ours. He responds moment by moment to the history He has created. Sin makes Him angry or sad. Love pleases Him. Funny things make Him laugh. His personal responses are fluid; His character is immutable.

You are a spiritual person created in the image of the great spiritual and personal God. This is the first and most basic thing the Bible tells you about yourself as a woman.

What about us is in the image of God's immutability? Compared to God, of course, we are as finite and unstable as a drop of water; and yet, there is a way in which we reflect God's unchanging character. Human personality remains basically the same unless something significant comes along to change it. For example, if I say, "Don't hire that man, he is a thief," what do I mean? I mean that it is basic to his character to steal. He has stolen before, he is stealing now, and we can expect him to steal in the future, unless something significant happens to change him—like a genuine religious conversion or an effective judgment. If I say my neighbor is a very kind man, I mean he is habitually kind. This is the concept of character stability which reflects God's immutability.

Eternality and immortality

Finally, let us consider God's **eternality**. God has existed forever in the past, and He will exist forever in the future. He does not have a beginning or an end. What could we possibly have that is in the image of God's eternality? We have immortality. Each of us has a beginning, but no end. Christianity does not teach the pantheistic idea that everything is eternal and one. It does not teach that we have been here forever, being reincarnated from body to body. These are not Christian ideas. The Christian idea is that God knew each of us individually in His mind. He created each of us individually in our mother's womb, building and weaving each body and giving each spirit. This is our beginning. After that, we are immortal; we will exist forever either in heaven or hell. *It is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment* (Heb. 9:27). Our immortality is in the image of God's eternality.

1.4 Summary of divine and human attributes

Every comparison of God's attributes with our human attributes is an overwhelming idea, but the point of emphasis is this: You are created in the image of God. You are a spiritual person created body and spirit in the image of the great spiritual and personal God. This is the first and most basic thing the Bible tells you about yourself as a woman. Here is a summary of God's attributes and the human attributes that "image" them.

- God is righteous and just; we have a conscience.
- God is sovereign; we have a will.
- God is love; we are persons with the capacity to love and be loved.
- God is all-knowing; we have minds.
- God is all-powerful; we have some power.
- God is immutable; we have character stability.
- God is eternal; we are immortal.

This is what it means to be human, whether male or female.

2. The purpose of life

If I could, I would stop at this point and ask you, "What do you think the purpose of life is?" If we had a Christian group, I probably would get answers such as, the purpose of life is to love God, to be conformed to Christ's image, to glorify God, or to fulfill the Great Commission. These would be very good answers because they are Biblical answers. But these are not the first purpose of life that is mentioned in the Bible. God's starting point is something different.

2.1 The focus of the World Mandate

Genesis 1:28 says, *God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”* The first purpose God mentions, surprisingly enough, is not upward toward Himself. Genesis does not say, “Let Us make man that he would love Us; or that he would glorify Us; or that he would know Us.” Neither is the focus inward to character development. It does not say, “Let Us make man and woman that they might be conformed to Our image.” God’s focus is outward and downward—outward to sky, sea, animals, fish, and birds. The focus is downward to the earth beneath our feet. New Testament (NT) Christians rightly emphasize the temporality of this world and the importance of keeping our minds on things above while avoiding worldliness. However, in so doing, some miss a primary and crucial stone in the foundation of their faith. This stone is the spiritual importance of loving and laboring in God’s created world.

2.2 The content of the World Mandate

Genesis 1:28 is called the World Mandate, the Cultural Mandate, or the Dominion Mandate. The Great Commission of the Old Testament (OT), this verse outlines the first great work God gave man to do. What we are supposed to do can be summarized in the three basic commands of Genesis 1:28—be fruitful, subdue the earth, and rule the animals. As a race, we need to multiply in order to rule and subdue the whole earth. However, for purposes of individual application, we will consider ruling first. We do this work in God’s natural world.

To rule

To **rule** means to make authoritative decisions regarding a matter’s course and destiny. I am reminded of a time in Vienna when I was teaching this lesson to a group of international women. After the class a lovely woman, wife of an established businessman, came up to me. She didn’t say anything by way of introduction. She just blurted out, “Does this mean I can throw away my fifteen-year-old Christmas cards?” Having recently moved to Europe from her New England home of many years, she had been paralyzed by those bundles of cards. Margaret’s dilemma illustrates a principle about ruling: “Not to decide is to decide.” Because Margaret couldn’t bring herself to decide about the cards, she did, as a matter of fact, decide. By default, she decided to pack them up, pay the freight to ship them seven thousand miles east, pay the customs to get them into Austria, where, after unpacking, she again had to decide what to do with them!

Closets are the same way. You take up an item and can’t think what to do with it, so you put it on the bed. You go to the closet and get something else and can’t quite figure out what to do with that. Pretty soon the closet is empty, your bed is full of junk, but you haven’t made any decisions. So the result is a big mess because you have not ruled anything. It might be a frivolous example, but I have gained much inner strength by remembering that I am the mistress of my domain and I **can** make decisions about things, even in my closet! One of my techniques is to say to myself, “All right, what are my options? I can keep this, throw it away, give it away, mend it, or I can store it somewhere else.” We must consider our options and make choices if we are to bring order to our domains. We rule our things by making decisions. The same holds true with time and with our thought life. To rule effectively over your domain, you must think of yourself as a decision-maker—a manager with authority.

To rule effectively over your domain, you must think of yourself as a decision-maker—a manager with authority.

To subdue

The second verb is subdue. To **subdue** means to bring under control by conquest and to keep under control by diligent maintenance. Think of the double trouble involved in turning a weed patch into a flower bed. First you must get rid of the weeds and plant the flowers. After the flowers are established, they must be maintained. Subduing always has these two big parts—the initial conquest (weeding and planting), then maintaining (tending and cultivation). This holds true for houses, cars, children, checkbooks, hair, weight, kitchen floors, relationships, and everything else in your domain. God commands you to bring all areas of your responsibility under control by conquest, and to keep them under your authority by diligent maintenance.

To be fruitful

Finally, the Scripture says, “*Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth...*” These verbs can be summarized by the verb **produce**. The first meaning of this passage is to have children. Motherhood is a unique and exalted category of productivity. We will talk more about it in the lifegiver aspect. Spiritual productivity, which includes evangelism and edification, should also be noted above other kinds of work. However, being productive in the earth is not only having a baby or sharing the Gospel. As important as these are, productivity involves **everything** we do to create value—whether it’s tallying an account sheet if you are a bank teller, playing a beautiful piece of music at your church, decorating your room, or milking a cow.

Dabbling is not being productive. One person takes piano lessons, but rarely practices; she spends much time and quite a bit of money, but never plays anything for anybody. This person is a dabbler, not a producer. Another person takes lessons, masters the art, plays for others, and increases the amount of beautiful music we have. He or she may compose new music or teach music to others. This person is the producer. The agricultural picture of productivity is classic. Buying a sack of seed and keeping it in the cellar is not productivity. Even planting the seed does not make one productive. Only a successful and completed harvest equals true productivity. The end result must be a crop which feeds others plus enough seed to plant new fields. This is the true multiplication which is basic to God’s command, “*Be fruitful and multiply.*”

2.3 Examples of the World Mandate fulfilled

God designed the world so men could complete what He started. As they complete what He started, their humanity is fulfilled and God is glorified. Let me give you three examples that illustrate how this works as the World Mandate is fulfilled.

From the beginning, there were little reeds growing by the streams. As boys, Cain and Abel probably learned to cut them off and blow across the top to make a sound. They may have even punched holes, and made little flutes. Genesis 4:21 says the early men developed pipes and woodwinds. Through the ages we have learned to make beautiful sounds with woodwinds, and with strings and horns, as well. It is a long way from the reed beside the stream to the symphony orchestra. The great music of the symphony is the result of man completing the works of God. Man was created to search out and cultivate the creation and its capacities. When man brings creation to the height of its purpose and beauty, he gives joy to mankind and glory to God.

It is the same with gemstones hidden in the hills. Nobody could see them, only God knew they were there. People had to find them, learn their qualities, their facets, and the skill to cut them.

Only after long human effort have the gemstones of the hills been turned into the tiaras of queens. But the bejeweled crowns of queens would never have existed had man not completed the works of God.

In like manner, from the beginning God hid radio waves in creation. They were here for thousands of years, but no one knew it. Finally, they were discovered and turned into a worldwide communications network. Proverbs 25:2 says, *It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, but the glory of kings is to search out a matter.* Some commentaries say this refers to politics, but I prefer a broader application. All creation is a game of divine hide-and-seek. God has hidden incredible things in His universe; this is a glory to Him. The great among us will search them out; this is a glory to man.

Reeds to symphonies, gemstones to tiaras, waves to networks—these are examples of man subduing the earth and completing God’s works. In so doing, man comes to know himself and God better. He glorifies God as Creator and does honor to himself by fulfilling his humanity.

2.4 Why does God focus our attention on the world?

If the study of the World Mandate is new to you, you may still be wondering, “Why would God want to focus our attention on the world?” For further insight, let us mention four more Biblical ideas explaining man’s relationship to the world.

We were made for the earth.

We need the earth. Imagine if God created us as human beings but hung us in space. There would be no air to breath and no food to eat. Neither would there be light to see, sound to hear, or gravity to hold us. This world allows us to exist by providing the basics such as air, food, and water. But it is also the place of wonders fit for humans. Music, science, humor, and art, in all their forms, lie embedded in this world. The appreciation and capacity for these things lie embedded in us. Without this world, not only could we not exist, we would not be free to experience and develop the whole range of our humanity. This wonderful earth contains everything from magpies to math, from kayaks to calypsos, from goldfish to glory. God made us for this world. Without it, we would and could not be human.

The earth was made for us.

The earth needs us. Isaiah 45:18 says, *For thus says the LORD, who created the heavens (He is the God who formed the earth and made it, He established it and did not create it a waste place, but formed it to be inhabited).* Some think the world would be better if there were no humans, that it should exist as one giant Nature Preserve. This is not God’s view. God desires the world to be full of human beings, enjoying the world, bringing glory to Him through human civilization.

The world is the gateway to God.

One reason God did not immediately say, “Look at Me,” is because we **cannot** immediately look at Him. He is too vast and great. He created this world so that by learning about this world, we would have little gateways to Him. The gateways of light, water, bread, marriage, family, kingdoms, gardens, armies, choirs—this world is a multiplex of poetic vocabularies which constantly speak (Ps. 19:1-4). These vocabularies of the earth are also those God uses in

Scripture. We cannot know the Bible if we don't know something of this world. If Jesus says, "I am the Good Shepherd," and we know nothing about sheep, what do we know? If Jesus says, "I am the True Vine," but we know nothing about horticulture, what do we know? If He says, "I am the Chief Cornerstone," and we know nothing about architecture, we are still in the dark. How can we come to know this infinite God? We can come to know Him through the gateways of this world. By learning this world, we come to know His Word. By learning His Word, we come to know Him (John 3:12).

This world is our proving ground.

This world is the place of character development. Jesus says if we are faithful in little things here, He will make us rulers over much later (Matt. 24:45-51; 25:14-30). To the degree that we rule and produce here in this temporal world will we become worthy to rule the world to come.

3. The Sovereign, His viceroys, and their dominions

Now let us consider the relationship of three entities: God, man and woman, and the earth.

3.1 We have *responsibility* for our world, our domain.

We are God's viceroys. A **viceroy** is someone who is the representative ruler of a sovereign or a king. The king and queen of Spain had a viceroy in Mexico; he ruled Mexico for them. The word viceroy may be somewhat unfamiliar, but it is a good word for explaining who you are as a human being in relationship to God. You are the delegate, or the representative, of the great Sovereign King. He is not here ruling directly; He wants you to rule His dominion for Him. In centuries past, the Emperor of the Roman Empire placed his image in his dominions to show that they were his. This applies to us. We are the image of God, this earth is His dominion, He has placed us here as His image to show that this is His creation. We are representatives of the King, and we are to rule His dominion for Him. This is our **responsibility**.

3.2 We have *capability* from God to do our work.

Not only has God given us responsibility to rule the earth, He has given us the **capability** to rule it. We are like the One who is the ultimate Ruler because we are created in His image. However, being made from the dust, we are also like that which we rule. Therefore, we are intermediary rulers between God and the creation, middle management, if you will. We have discussed already how our attributes mirror God's, linking us upward to Him. Now consider the compatibility between us and the world, linking us downward. It is amazing. The light—our eyes can see. The sound—our ears can hear. The textures—our skin can feel. The mathematics behind creation—our brains can understand. There is a union between us and the animals, not in the evolutionary sense, but in the sense that we can eat milk, eggs, and vegetables. The chemistry between us and the world works.

We are made in the image of the Lord for whom we rule, and are simultaneously fashioned from the earth over which we rule. Therefore, we make wonderful mediators. Jesus is, of course, the final Mediator between God and man. But there is a way in which we stand between the world and God as His stewards, viceroys, and intermediary rulers. This is basic to what it means to be human.

3.3 We have *authority* from God.

In addition to responsibility and capability, we have **authority**. Have you ever been in a situation in which you were responsible for something but did not have authority to rule it? You were supposed to make something happen, but every time you made a decision, someone or something overruled you, making your decision of no effect. This kind of situation is very frustrating. God does not do this to His creatures. He does not give people responsibility without commensurate authority. Genesis 1:28 sounds like a repeat of verse 26. It is not. In verse 26, the Trinity discuss Their idea for making man. Verse 28, however, is the World Mandate. It is a formal commission, an official delegation of authority from God to man and woman to rule the earth. It is wonderful (and as we will see later, frightening) to know that God has given us real and binding authority.

For a specific example, Genesis 2:19 says, *Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name.* God did not say, “Now this is My will for you to name this animal.” Adam does not pray, “O God, what should I name this one?” God gave Adam real freedom to make some decisions, and God let those decisions stand. Whatever Adam named it, that was its name. His authority was real and so is ours.

People attack God because of the suffering in the world. However, we must remember that God gave real authority to human creatures. Multiple billions of us run loose in the world every day making decisions. Many of these decisions are very sinful. God does not undo every decision just because it is foolish or sinful. He lets most decisions stand. He does sometimes limit our decisions or keep things from happening through His providence. But He has given us real authority in this domain, and He does not treat it lightly. Delegated human authority is real, and its consequences are cosmic, as we shall see.

3.4 We have *accountability* to God.

Part of the limitation on our authority is our **accountability**. We are not autonomous rulers answering only to ourselves. We are viceroys of the great King, and the King comes back to receive the accounts of His stewards. In two of Jesus’ steward parables, the great master goes away and leaves his stewards for a time to see what they will do. He leaves them with their charge, but then he comes back. The Deists used to say that God made the world and went off and left it. The Christians say that God made the world and went off and left it for a little while. He does not leave us in Spirit, but He has left us with our stewardships to see what kind of viceroys we will be. Then, as the parables describe, we will all give an account at the end of our lives (Matt. 21:33-41; 25:14-19).

Whether Christian or non-Christian, everyone will give account for his deeds done in the flesh. This is a sobering doctrine, but also a comforting one. The sin and suffering in the world will not go on forever. The delegation of authority will end and all accounts will be reconciled. Justice will be done. Then there will be a redistribution of authority based on prior performance.

4. The mistress-of-the-domain aspect and you

4.1 Why this aspect is named “Mistress of the Domain.”

We have been speaking of grand themes—what it means to be human, the purpose of life, and mankind’s relationship to God and the earth. Now let’s talk about you more specifically. I call

this aspect “Mistress of the Domain.” I use the word **mistress** instead of viceroy or steward, in order to connote a female ruler (see definition below). Two kinds of rulers are created in Genesis 1: One is the man, the lord of the earth (with a little “I”); and one is the woman. Man and woman are both in God’s image and both are commanded to rule, subdue, and produce, but they are not the same. God distinguishes them as male and female from the beginning.

Mistress, as defined in *Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, is “a woman who has power, authority, or ownership as the female head of a household; a woman who employs or supervises servants; a woman who is in charge of a school or other establishment; a woman of nobility or status comparable to a master; or a woman who has achieved mastery in some field.” “Of the domain” is part of this aspect title because our ruling is focused and circumscribed. Our **domain** is everything for which we are responsible in this life and for which we will answer at the judgment. Each of us is born at a certain point in time and lives our appointed years. During this time we have certain possessions, particular talents, opportunities, and relationships. Each domain is individual and unique. No two are alike. As we will see, it is as important to understand what is not our domain, as it is important to know what is.

4.2 What is in your domain?

Our domain is not merely physical things such as property or possessions. Jesus says in Matthew 12:36 that we will give account for every idle word at the judgment. The words that go out of our mouths, the attitudes of our hearts, and all our relationships are major parts of our domain.

Here is a suggested domain inventory which categorizes life’s responsibilities into twelve areas: thoughts, attitudes, words, body, time, talents, relationships, money, possessions, equipment, education, and opportunities. I challenge you to conduct a personal inventory of your domain. Ask yourself, “What specifics has God put in my life in these twelve areas? For what am I responsible? Am I being productive in these areas? If I die today and need to give an account to the Lord in these various areas of responsibility, what kind of account could I give?”

4.3 Personality type and outward style

The chief drives and motives of the mistress are to rule, accomplish, and produce. For herself, the mistress wants God’s approval. She wants to hear, “*Well done, My good and faithful servant.*” She seeks self-respect and the respect of others based on fulfilling her duties and completing her work. She is decisive, responsible, efficient, and persevering. You may possess these characteristics outwardly. You may like budgets and schedules and organizational charts. But for all your charts and schedules, you may actually be a ditherer who is accomplishing very little of real value. On the other hand, a woman who by personality type is very relational and laid-back in style may actually be majoring on majors in a way you are not. So don’t be fooled by outward style. The essence of the matter is producing things that count for the Lord and eternity. Every mature woman, as the mistress of her domain, will be productive—bringing her domain and resources to fruitfulness—whether her personality is highly organized and driving or whether she is easy-going and relaxed. Remember, the aspects are basic elements of created femininity. We are speaking of character essence and maturity, not personality types.

4.4 Dependence upon God

Some women are very independent by nature and others are very dependent. Mature and godly women learn to be independently dependent upon God. They trust Him in the central core of their beings where no other creature enters. The mistress focuses on God as her Creator,

the One who made this amazing world where she lives and works. She focuses on Him as her Sovereign, the Ruler over her ruling; and on Him as Judge, the One who evaluates the worth of her work now and forever.

Let me tell you the rest of the story about the lady with the Christmas cards. Margaret served on the charity benefit committee of the American Women’s Association (AWA) in Vienna that year. Working her way through the labyrinthine Austrian bureaucracy, she was able to secure the Vienna Boys’ Choir to sing a charity benefit for the AWA – something never before done. Working her way through the even more labyrinthine charity committee of that secular organization, she obtained a good portion of that money to send twenty-two Austrian boys and girls to an evangelical camp during the summer.

Toward the end of the year she said to me, “You know, it was that lesson last fall, when I realized I have authority from God to rule in my domain. I would often stand in the waiting rooms of the bureaucrats I had to petition, and I would remember that I am a ruler. I can make decisions; I have capacity and authority. I can influence my domain, even my city and country.” What a joy to see someone go from indecision about old Christmas cards to influencing a nation for Christ because she saw herself as a mistress of her domain, one who had authority from God to rule in her world.

4.5 Review: Mistress thought questions

a. What is your core identity?

b. What is your life purpose?

c. What is your domain?

• • • Profile of Mistress—*created* •

Key Bible passage

Genesis 1:26-28

Focus on God

Creator, Sovereign, Judge

Created basis of this aspect

Woman is created in the image of God—a responsible, moral, fully human individual—with capability and authority from God, and accountability to God

Roles of this aspect

Steward and viceroy of creation for God; ruler, leader, manager, subduer, conqueror, producer

Related Bible passages

- All commands of the Bible to human beings of both genders (Ten Commandments, Beatitudes, fruits of the Spirit, etc.)
- The steward parables (Matt. 12:36; 18:21-35; 21:33-41; 25:14-30; Luke 12:35-48; 16:1-13; 1 Cor. 4:1-5)

Chief drives and motives

To rule, succeed, accomplish, produce; desires God's approval, respect of others, self-respect, accomplishment, and recognition of accomplishments

Focus and/or areas of application

- God, as the mistress knows Him in her conscience
- The created world with its plants, animals, arts, sciences
- Her domain, responsibilities, talents, goals, body, time, money, etc.

Characteristics

Responsible, dependable, organized, efficient, decisive, independent, persevering, determined

Character emphasis

Responsibility, faith

KEY to diagram at right

SYMBOLS OF GOD

Person—HAND*—God is Creator (hand creates man). He is Spirit (hand is transparent), infinite (hand fades, as into infinity), and preeminent (hand's position—above creation; hand's size—able to hold world).

Character—SQUARE—God's character is holy (square suggests the cube of the Holy of Holies) and infinite in all His attributes (square fades, as into infinity).

Masculinity—TRIANGLE—The triangle represents the original Masculine—the Trinity. God is the Initiator who descends and enters into His creation (triangle penetrates world). His masculinity is infinite (triangle fades, as into infinity).

Words—GENESIS 1:26-28—God creates mankind in His image and gives them authority.

Roles/work—HAND, WORDS—God is active within His creation as Initiator, Sovereign, and Judge.

SYMBOLS OF CREATION

Femininity—CIRCLE—The circle reflects the spherical shape of the sun/moon/world/womb. Feminine in relation to God, the creation is designed to receive her masculine Creator (pale triangle at top of world). All femininity is created and therefore finite (bounded edge doesn't fade).

Mankind's dwelling—PHOTO of EARTH—The world is man's home (peaceable place full of life). The world is finite (bounded edge) and subordinate to God (position—below God; small size—fits in God's hand).

SYMBOLS OF MANKIND

Persons—SEX-DISTINCT FIGURES—God created man, male and female (sex-classic silhouettes). They are "clothed" in nakedness according to their untested, unashamed, sinless standing before God. Man is finite (bounded edges).

Character—SQUARE—Man is created in the image of God (squares smaller than but reflective of God's square). Both man and woman are created in the image of God (they don't share a square). Man's character is finite in all his attributes (bounded edges).

Masculinity—TRIANGLE—Man's masculinity reflects God's, but is finite (bounded edges).

Femininity—CIRCLE—Woman's femininity reflects creation's and is likewise finite (bounded edge).

Words—PSALM 90:17—Mankind responds to God with faith through word and deed.

Feminine role/work—**Mistress of the Domain**—CROWN—Woman is given ruling authority over her domain.

Masculine role/work—**Lord of the Earth**—CROWN, SCEPTER—Man is given chief ruling authority over the earth. The position of his icon—above and to the right of woman, and he faces outward toward the world—underscores his leadership in the work of ruling, subduing, and producing (refer to *FAW—Vol. Two*, p. 175).

*From the Sistine Chapel, "God creating Adam"

- **Mistress of the**
- **Domain – created**
-

God is the Sovereign Creator.

He is self-existent and transcendent.

He is active within His creation, ruling it with His sovereign will.

He created man and woman in His image.

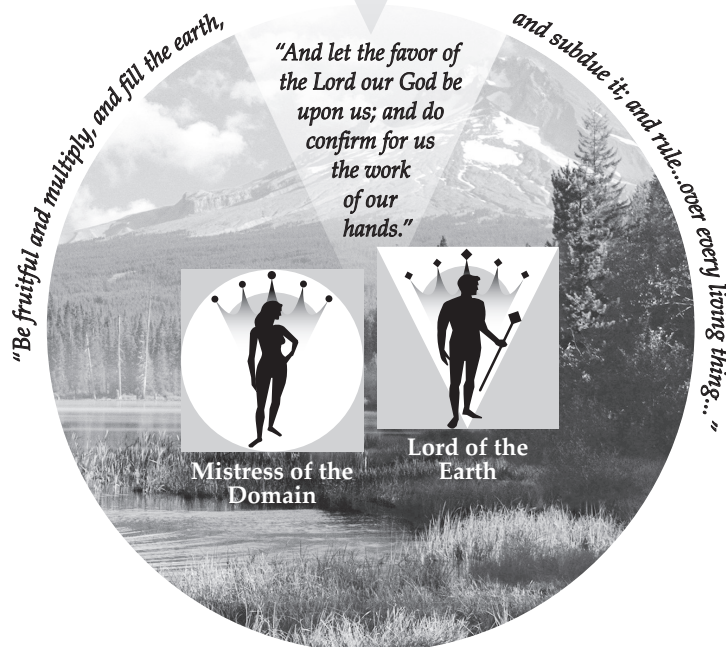
He commissioned man and woman to rule the world.

He will judge the stewardship of His creatures.

“Let Us make man in Our image...”

Woman responds to God’s sovereign rule by ruling her domain under man’s leadership.

Man responds to God’s sovereign rule by imitating His rule, leading humanity’s stewardship of the earth.



Woman is a ruler in the image of God.

Woman, like the man, is a steward and viceroy of God on the earth.

She has authority from God to rule, subdue, and be productive.

She has capability as a creature of dust and spirit.

She has responsibility in the world.

She has accountability to God for the stewardship of her domain.

• • • **Personification of Mistress—*created*** •

I am Mistress of the Domain—*created*.

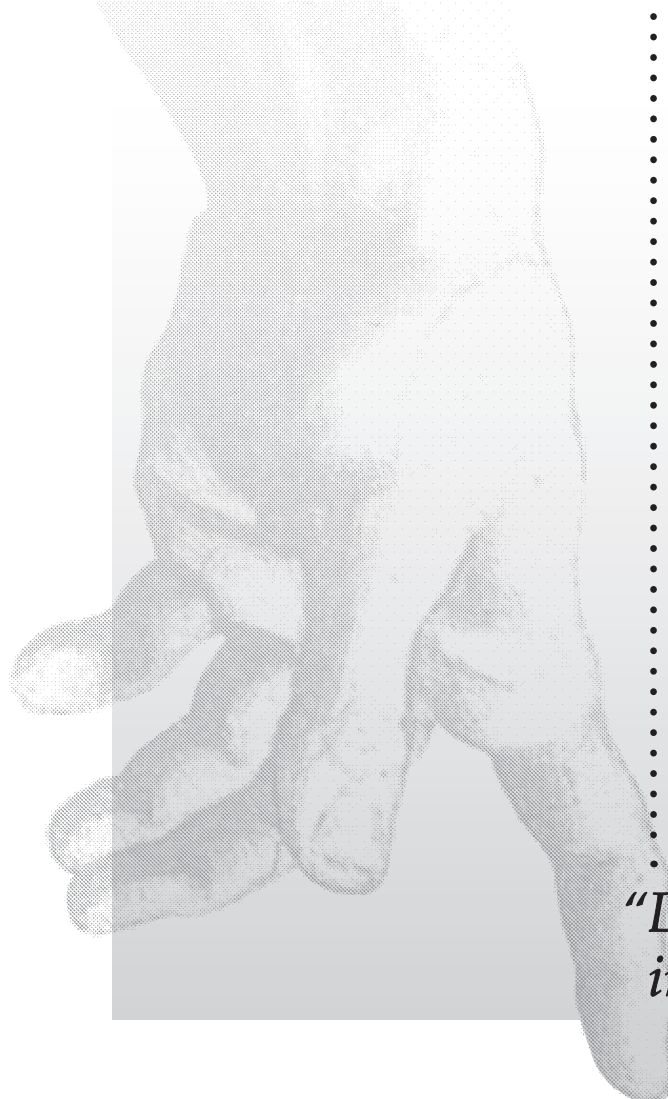
I am an individual person with a great range of qualities and capacities, created in the image of the personal God. With God, I share will, morality, thought, and emotion. I know God and His standards, for they are stamped within my very being. I know myself in ways no other person except God can know me. The world is important to me, for I was made for it, and it was made for me.

I am one of the two viceroys God created in His image to rule His creation for Him. God's Mandate for me directs my attention outward from myself to the vast world He has created for me to know, subdue, and rule.

Created to be a productive steward, I am highly motivated to be a responsible and faithful ruler of the world for God. I give attention to every area of life under my charge—my body, thoughts, speech, time, money, talents, skills, and possessions. Everything interests me—how could anyone be bored in this amazing and diverse world of ours? I plunge eagerly into arts, crafts, sciences, and technologies, for they are the stuff of my purpose.

I know how to make decisions and to live with their results. I know how to set goals and to work with perseverance toward their accomplishment. I am diligent, efficient, decisive, independent, determined, and responsible. I strive for self-respect, the respect of others, and finally, foremost, the approval of God.

“Every tub must sit on its own bottom” is a humble proverb, but true. I know that I am in the universe on a unique journey between my own birth and my own individual death. One day I will answer to God for the deeds I do in the flesh. In the face of these awesome realities, I have a core identity and purpose which give me strength.



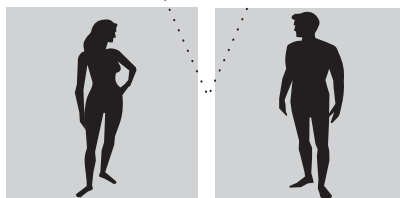
*“Let Us make man
in Our image...”*

- **Mankind Bears**
- **God’s Image**
-

**God’s image/
attributes**

1. **Righteousness**
His character is the basis for all morality, law, ethics
2. **Justice**
Impartially punishes evil and rewards good
3. **Sovereignty**
Never loses control; His purposes are fulfilled
4. **Love**
Always does the best for His creatures
5. **Omniscience**
All knowing
6. **Omnipotence**
All powerful
7. **Immutability**
Unchanging character
8. **Eternality**
Without beginning or end

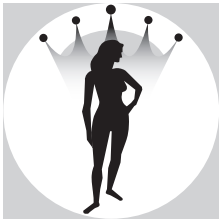
*“I will give thanks to Thee,
for I am fearfully and
wonderfully made;
wonderful are Thy
works, and my
soul knows it
very well.”*



**Man’s image/attributes
reflect God’s**

1. **Conscience**
Inherent sense of right and wrong
2. **Conscience**
Inherent sense of a higher standard against which justice is measured
3. **Will**
Responsible will makes real decisions, choices
4. **Personality/heart**
Capacity for love, joy, grief, wonder
5. **Mind**
Capacity for language, memory, logic, imagination, creativity
6. **Power**
Capacity to change our world
7. **Character stability**
Character traits become more fixed as we mature
8. **Immortality**
With a beginning but without an end

KEY
(refer to KEY, p. 30)



Bible Study of Mistress—*created*

Before beginning this study, read the entire lesson, pages 18-33.

And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

GENESIS 1:27

The first Biblical view of woman

Created in the image of God, woman is a ruler on the earth, responsible to God for her entire domain.

Woman in the image of God

Who is woman? What is her purpose? Why does she exist? Many voices answer these questions for today's woman. Some tell her what to do—have a career, have a family, do both. Some tell her what to be—healthy, self-confident, full of self-esteem. Others emphasize that spirituality and self-knowledge are to be gained by an inward journey—hence, the common advice “find yourself in yourself.”

The Bible's advice, however, is completely different. In essence it says, “Find yourself in God. Your nature and characteristics will only make sense in light of who He is.” God does offer us amazing identity and purpose as women and as humans. His answers are ancient and yet ever new, but we must be willing to start where He starts and follow where He leads to find these answers. This course is offered as an aid to women on this journey.

1. What model did God use when He created man and woman (Gen. 1:26-27)?

2. In Genesis 1:26-27, what does the word **image** mean? What does it mean to be created in the image of God?

3. Write the human attribute beside the divine attribute it reflects (refer to pp. 20-22, 33).

God's attributes	Reflecting human attributes
righteousness	
justice	
sovereignty	
love	
omniscience	
omnipotence	
immutability	
eternality	

4. Most models are valued according to two things: (a) The nature of the original (e.g., a model of the Sistine Chapel would be more valuable than a model of a dog house); and (b) the intricacy of the model (e.g., a model with much fine detail and many working parts would be more valuable than a static clay mold). In view of these principles, how should any one human being be valued?

You are created in the image of God; your attributes are patterned after His attributes. This is the first and most basic thing the Bible tells you about yourself as a human and as a woman. Indeed, it is a message of great wonder.

The purpose of life

5. What is the first purpose for man and woman revealed by God (Gen. 1:26)?

Both men and women were created to do something. Both were commissioned by God to be His viceroys, to rule the earth He had created. A viceroy is one who rules as the personal representative of a sovereign or king. In the World Mandate of Genesis 1:28, God designates the earth with its plants and animals as mankind's domain—that part of God's creation over which man and woman are to rule as His representatives.

6. From the dictionary, write out a definition for the word **mandate**.

7. In the World Mandate, God gives the man and the woman three basic commands which may be expressed as three verbs. Write the proper verb by each of the following definitions:

- a. Make decisions about a matter's course and destiny _____
- b. Bring under control by conquest and maintain control by diligent maintenance _____
- c. Create value by multiplying, filling, and expanding in every area of life _____

8. God's first commandment to both the man and the woman was to rule, subdue, be fruitful, and multiply—even before He told them to love and glorify Him. Give two reasons why you think He did this (refer to Ps. 19:1; Luke 16:10; John 3:12; Rom. 1:20; and pp. 25-26).

The Sovereign, His viceroys, and their dominions

9. What was the first task of ruling that God gave Adam? How did God respond to Adam's choices (Gen. 2:19)?

10. Select one of the areas listed below and explain how one would need to rule and subdue something in order to make this area productive:

- money management _____
- use of personal computer _____
- a flower bed _____
- musical talent _____
- health and nutrition _____
- rearing children _____

In the Bible, we see women ruling in many different spheres. Biblical women praised God, petitioned kings, and provided for their households. They ruled as queens, prophetesses, merchandisers, wives, shepherdesses, and mothers.

11. The following women ruled their domains for God through their attitudes and actions. They recognized their responsibility in their specific circumstances, and they also recognized their dependence upon God to accomplish His purpose through them. For each passage below, name the woman or women, describe their domains, and how they ruled for God.

a. Exodus 1:15-21

b. Exodus 35:25-29

c. Joshua 2:1-14

The mistress-of-the-domain aspect and you

The World Mandate comes from God, through Adam and Eve, down to each of us. None of us has the unique position Adam and Eve had. Nevertheless, each of us has her own part of the Mandate, and each of us has her own domain. Your domain is all that is in your charge, everything for which you are responsible and accountable. For example, it includes parts of God's physical world, relationships, finances, your body, talents, and time. All these represent valuables committed to us by God to be ruled for Him.

12. Think about what is in your domain. What do you expect to answer for at the judgment seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10)? Organize these things into six large categories.

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

e. _____

f. _____



1. The fall and the curse

Many years ago, when I lived in Europe, I had the privilege of going to Gdenia, a Polish city on the Baltic. I had been invited to teach the *Five Aspects* course during a week-long camp for some young Polish women. When I arrived, I was met by my translator, who took me to the apartment where I was to stay. After everything settled down and we were standing alone in the kitchen, she said, “I have been waiting for you to come for a year. Last year a friend told me about the *Five Aspects*, the created lessons. Initially, I was happy and enthused because the material answered some of my questions. I could see that this was what God intended woman to be. It was very beautiful. But after a while, I fell into despondency because I knew this is not really the way things are. This is not the way life is. I have been waiting for you to come, because I have a question to ask you in view of how things really are—**now what?**”

Mira’s thought process and question are totally on target. She represents both a spiritual and a realistic mind. Her heart responded to the created aspects—this is the way things **should** be. Yet reality says this is not the way they are. So now we have some hard questions to ask and answer. Before we get to Mira’s very important “Now what?,” there should be a prior question. What happened to the wonderful created aspects? What happened to get us into the mess we see around us?

What happened is the fall and the curse. These topics are not as positive or optimistic as God’s creation or God’s grace—at least not on the surface. However, we can study the fall with enthusiasm because the Bible’s answers for what is wrong with us are every bit as cogent and satisfying as its answers for what is right with us. The fall and the curse explain evil and suffering in a way more logical, more satisfying, and more hopeful than any other religion.

1.1 The fall

The fall is man’s choice to disobey God by eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thereby earning death, as found in Genesis 2:17 and 3:6-7. The fall is a historic event. Adam and Eve chose to disbelieve God. Eve chose to believe the serpent rather than God. Adam chose to follow his wife rather than follow God. Their choice was not so much a fall into sin as it was a plunge—a willful decision to choose against God and for disobedience.

KEY Mistress—*fallen*

person—FEMALE FIGURE
(clothed in fig leaves according to her fallen, ashamed, guilty standing before God)

character—DARK SQUARE
(polluted with sin)

femininity—DARK CIRCLE
(polluted with sin)

role/work—CROWN UPSIDE DOWN (abdicated/abused authority)

1.2 The curse

The curse is not something the devil did. It is something God did. The curse is the series of judgments God laid upon Satan, the woman, the man, and through him, the whole creation—in response to human and Satanic sin. God comes into the garden and speaks Genesis 3:14-19. He curses the serpent directly and unequivocally. He lays a curse on the domain of the woman. He lays a curse on the domain of the man. In the study section and subsequent lessons, we will examine details of this three-part curse. At this point, let us consider it in its broadest scope.

What is the essence of the curse? Creation originally tended toward life, health, and growth. However, at the curse, creation was changed to tend instead toward death, decay, and suffering. Now things are always wearing out, running down, getting old, falling apart, and dying. The scientists call this principle the **Second Law of Thermodynamics**, which means that everything is tending toward entropy. Simply stated, **entropy** means the tendency to disorder. Homemakers have no problem understanding this principle. Things don't naturally get neater; they naturally become more of a mess. Our bodies don't get more fit with time; they get older, wear out, and die.

If you look at Genesis 3:14-19, you will see that conflict, war, pain, sorrow, rebellion, thorns, thistles, sweat, and death are all elements of the curse. Each of these is a specific reality, and each symbolizes a whole class of evil. For example, sweat is a provision that God has made for the inefficiency of the body. Adam began to work in sweat after the curse because his fallen body was inefficient and overheated during work. If we and our world were perfectly efficient systems as before the curse, we would not overheat, become stressed, grow old, die, or decompose. Since the curse, everything is not beautiful. Since the curse, there is spiritual ugliness which is sin, and physical ugliness which is a result of sin.

1.3 God's curse is both retributive and redemptive.

The curse is not only comprehensive; it is retributive. We are God's domain, and we rebelled against Him. So He causes our domains to rebel against us. He has judged us in kind. We plant corn but get weeds in response. We drive a car, and the brakes go out. We correct our children, and they talk back. Our domains rebel against us as we have rebelled against God. By setting the principle of rebellion loose in our world, God gives us some of our own medicine. However, like medicine, God's judgment has a redemptive purpose, if we will receive it. Romans 8:20-21 says that God has subjected the creation to this curse **in hope**—isn't that interesting and somewhat unexpected? He has subjected the creation in hope. How can a curse bring hope?

Through the curse, God intensifies the battle with evil in order to resolve the problem of evil.

Imagine a family that is fiscally irresponsible. They are not diligent, prudent, or frugal. What might God do? He might send them financially difficult times. This intensification of the economic struggle will force the family character in one way or the other. Either they will starve to death or become thieves, or they will learn to become more frugal and diligent. Intensifying the struggle will resolve the issue one way or the other. A friend told me that the Lord took one of her babies at a time when she and her husband were drifting apart. Intensifying the struggle with the deep issues of life "forced" or caused the couple to choose between good and evil. The couple could renew their commitment to faith and family, or they could choose divorce and bitterness, as many do after the death of a child. This couple, who loved the Lord, came together because of their suffering.

1.4 Eternal evil excludes hope.

Humanism, ancient Eastern religions, New Age thought, and all sorts of "shopping-cart paganisms" have become prevalent and even dominant in lands previously Christian. People flee Christianity and embrace these false religions because they think they will escape the demands of the Christian God for a worldview that is more free or hopeful. Nothing could be further from the truth! These religions claim to offer release or power, but actually they offer a universe where evil is normal and eternal. These religions finally teach that what is—both

good and bad—is forever. There is no personal, good God who can bring us to Himself and end the curse. In these religions there is finally One impersonal monolith for which good and evil are only superficial. The so-called “hope” of these religions is for individuals to migrate continuously in an evil universe until they lose all identity in the impersonal One whose “dark side” is as real as its “light side.”

The Bible says evil is abnormal. It had a beginning; it will have an end. God is totally good. He has no evil or dark side. He created the universe good. He created creatures within the universe with an ability to choose both good and evil. Some of His creatures chose evil. Now we are moving in a parenthesis of time called history in which the issue of evil is being decided. But in the future, the struggle between good and evil will be over. Right will win, and the curse will be removed. All the prophets and apostles explain and predict this. Christianity says evil is both abnormal and temporary. Other religions say evil has been forever and will be forever.

The Bible says evil is abnormal. It had a beginning; it will have an end.

2. God’s curse is comprehensive in creation.

Murphy’s Law is familiar: “If anything can go wrong it will go wrong, and at the worst possible moment.” There are whole collections of these sayings. Here are some of my favorites: The shortest distance between two points is usually under construction; the phone never rings when you have nothing to do; the slow lane you stopped in starts moving as soon as you leave it. We usually find these amusing. Their humor is a testimony to two things. One, it is a testimony to the truth of the curse. Everybody knows that the curse exists. We all have experienced things going wrong at crucial moments. Yet the fact that we are still laughing is a great evidence of God’s grace. If the curse were as bad as it could be, none of us would be here, sitting up straight, let alone laughing. We laugh only because we understand—at least subliminally—both the curse and its limits.

Yet the ubiquitous nature of a contrary and rebellious principle in the universe is not finally a cause for levity. When Adam fell, the whole universe fell with him. When he was placed under a curse of death, the whole universe started dying, too. This is a deadly-serious matter. Paul writes in Romans 8:20: *For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it,...* Every part of man’s being and his relationships have been judged. His relationship with God, his wife, the animals, the plants, and even the soil under his feet—all were cursed with corruption. Understanding the comprehensive nature of the curse is essential if we are to understand the full scope of God’s solution for it later.

2.1 Man’s divine image is corrupted with a sin nature.

In the Mistress—*created* lesson, we emphasized that man and woman are created in the image of God. God has divine attributes—sovereignty, righteousness, justice, love, and so forth; and we have human attributes—mind, will, conscience, personality, etc. Our human attributes are in the image of God’s divine attributes. We are little replicas, little statues of God.

The first thing that happened to fallen man and woman was that their image of God became corrupted. The divine image was not taken away; we are still in the image of God (Gen. 9:6; Ps. 8:5-6). However, after the fall, this image is corrupted. The New Testament calls this corrupted nature *the old sin nature* and *the flesh*. It produces all kinds of evil—sensualities, idolatries, drunkenness, anger, and all kinds of sin (Rom. 7:14-19; Gal. 5:19-21).

Every human attribute has been affected by the curse. The Bible describes our condition with alarming language. Our conscience, made in the image of God's righteousness and justice, is hardened, defiled, and even seared. Our will, reflective of God's sovereignty, is in bondage and rebellion. Our heart is hostile, hard, blind, defiled. Our mind is ignorant, vain, in darkness, and enmity. Our character is fueled by the deceitful lusts of this old sin nature and bears fruit to death. Our immortality is destined for the Second Death in the Lake of Fire because we are separated from God and under His wrath (refer to diagram, p. 51).

Depravity does not mean that we are as bad as we can be. We can get worse! Being given over to sin comes in stages. **Depravity** means there is no good, uncorrupted part of us. Because the sinful nature permeates our whole being, we cannot get ourselves back to God. We still have a mind, but our mind is darkened. We cannot think our way back to God. We have power, but our power is imperfect. We cannot work our way back to God. We cannot moralize our way back to God because our conscience is hardened. We cannot emotionally feel our way back to God no matter how much we counsel or psychoanalyze ourselves. We cannot sexually reproduce our way back to God, even though in the past people have tried to create super races. With genetic engineering, we will probably see an onslaught of this attempt again in coming years.

In short, we are permeated with sin and cannot reach back to a holy God. He will have to reach down to us if the contact is to be re-established. The curse's effect on our image is this: We still have God's image, but it is corrupted in every attribute by a sin nature.

2.2 Fellowship with God is broken: Stewards are now traitors and enemies.

What about fellowship with God? The Mistress—*created* lesson developed the idea that God is the great King who gave His viceroys stewardship of the earth. They had authority to make decisions, but they also had accountability to God. That relationship was based on trust.

At the fall, Adam and Eve broke the trust. They said, "We do not believe You, God. We will not obey You." The human race went from being trusted stewards of God to being criminals and enemies against Him. It is as if we were old-time British sailors who set out upon the seven seas. Deciding to throw the captain overboard, we run up the skull and crossbones, thus changing our status from loyal subjects of the king to that of pirates and mutineers. The king sends out his loyal sailors to capture us as traitors to the crown. We are hauled back to London to swing from the yardarm for mutiny and treason. This is the human condition. We are out in our little boat, flying the pirate's flag. We are traitors to the highest crown, God Himself. We deserve to die, to pay the penalty for treason, which is death. We have gone from being trusted viceroys of God to being enemies and criminals, condemned by His justice.

2.3 The Mandate and domain are embattled.

Remember those wonderful commands from the World Mandate—to rule, subdue, and be fruitful? Before sin, Adam was working in the garden to fulfill those very commands. Work is not the curse. Unproductive, frustrating, inefficient work is the curse. For example, my dad loved pecan trees and filled our yard with them. He studied them, grafted them, and tended them for years. Often the crop failed because the nuts did not set, parasites ate them, crows got them, or the weather was uncooperative—all of which are part of the curse. Some years ago, we had a beautiful crop set. We could almost taste the luscious nuts that were hanging on the branches. All they had to do was dry a little bit and fall off. Guess what happened? It rained eleven inches the last week. Most of them were infected with a fungus and were ruined. It was heartbreaking. The curse is not work. The curse is what comes along and destroys all your labor, making it fruitless.

The curse affects our lives in massive and tragic ways as well as in small insignificant irritations. A messy house and an irritating neighbor form our character just as surely as do death or bankruptcy. Our lives are usually defined by how we respond to both the horrendous as well as the niggling blows of the curse. Do we seek God and His grace, or do we harden ourselves into bitterness?

To summarize, our ruling is blunted by the double-mindedness of our own hearts. Our subduing is embattled by a domain that not only is uncultivated, but which aggressively fights back. Our productivity is thwarted on every hand—spiritually, physically, economically, artistically, intellectually, and in every other way. The Mandate has not been taken away. Our ability to rule, subdue, and be productive has not been taken away. But rebellion permeates our whole world, corrupting our domain, embattling our rule, and thwarting our productivity. **This** is the curse.

3. Fallen mistress case studies

I explained in Lesson 1 that *Aspects* is built upon definitive passages illustrated by other portions of Scripture, particularly the narratives. Having considered the two definitive passages on evil—the fall and the curse—let us look at a profoundly-fallen mistress in action from the pages of Biblical narrative.

3.1 Jezebel: A major mover¹

The infamous Queen Jezebel is a classic mistress of the domain—*fallen*. A great and famous sinner, she was the daughter of the king and high priest of Sidon, a fanatical Baalite kingdom to the northwest of Israel. According to the Baal cult, Baal was the god of fire, rain, and crops. If you read the Elijah and Elisha miracles, you will notice that most of them have to do with fire, rain, and crops, as well as life and death. God demonstrates in these miracles that He is the One who has power in these areas—not Baal or his consort, Astarte, the wicked goddess of sex and violence whom Jezebel worshiped and resembled. Both Baal and Astarte were worshiped with sexual perversions and mutilations of the body.

Ahab, the Jewish king of the Northern Kingdom, married this princess, to God's great displeasure. Though troubled with the apostasy of Jereboam, Israel was still considered the Kingdom of God. Launching a frontal assault on the North for Baal, Jezebel introduced pure paganism to the Northern tribes. She slaughtered the prophets of God. They were all terrified of her, even the great Elijah himself. She brought in 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Astarte, for a bureaucracy of 850 people. The Bible says that they sat at her table. This does not mean that Jezebel got up every morning and fried eggs for 850 people. It means these pagans were on the government payroll. Jezebel succeeded in turning the whole government of the North into a pagan bureaucracy of Baal priests and priestesses.

One of her most infamous deeds is the stealing of Naboth's vineyard. Ahab wanted a garden that joined his summer palace in Jezreel. He offered to buy it from its owner, Naboth. Naboth, however, said no, which was his right under the Law of Moses—to keep his inherited lands for himself and for his family. Rejected, Ahab tromps back to the palace in anger. As a Jewish king, he knows that Naboth is fully within his rights under the Law of God. So Ahab pouts, turns his face to the wall, and refuses to eat. Jezebel comes in and says, "What is wrong with you? Are

1. Passages which tell the story of Jezebel: 1 Kings 16:29-34; 19:1-4; 21:1-29; 2 Kings 9:30-37; 11:1-21.

you not the king in Israel?" King, in her viewpoint, means autonomous king, one who can do anything he wants. So she promptly sits down, takes Ahab's royal seal, and writes a letter to the elders of Jezreel to frame Naboth with a trumped up charge of treason. Thus Naboth is stoned to death. This done, she goes back to Ahab and says, "Take Naboth's vineyard; it's yours." With pleasure, he does so.

God was very angry about this and later judges Jezebel and her whole house. Naboth had been taken out and stoned to death. God says that the same will happen to Jezebel.

1 Kings 21:23-25—Of Jezebel, also has the LORD spoken, saying, "The dogs will eat Jezebel in the district of Jezreel. 24 The one belonging to Ahab, who dies in the city, the dogs will eat, and the one who dies in the field the birds of heaven will eat." 25 Surely there was no one like Ahab who sold himself to do evil in the sight of the LORD, because Jezebel his wife incited him.

Jezebel incited and manipulated her husband in great wickedness. She instituted Baalism. She slaughtered the prophets of God. Not only was she a powerful queen, she was an effective mother. One of her daughters became Queen in the Southern Kingdom. This is much more serious, because the Southern Kingdom is David's Kingdom, the Kingdom of the Messianic line. Jezebel's daughter, Athaliah, exterminated the entire Davidic line except for one baby boy. Little Joash was hidden in the temple precincts for six years to protect him from slaughter. Thus, Jezebel multiplied very effectively after her own kind—her daughter was just like her.

Jezebel destroyed the royal house of Ahab and almost destroyed the royal house of David. A bloodbath ran in two nations because of this woman. She is the nearest thing in history to a female anti-Christ. She is a human embodiment of the great harlot of Revelation 17-18.

I always thought it would be interesting to give a devotional called "What I Admire About Jezebel." What do I admire? Jezebel was zealous for her gods. She was decisive, purposeful, and comprehensively dedicated to her causes. She never faltered from the training of her youth. She had poise and perspective in the time of crisis. She knew her mind, made decisions, and organized her domain to serve her purposes. She had long-term vision and persevered. All of these characteristics, which are basic to the mistress-of-the-domain aspect, Jezebel had in abundance. Unfortunately, she had all these characteristics going in exactly the wrong direction.

Jezebel, of course, did not have the last word. Purposing to eradicate the Baalites of the North, God anointed a professional killer, the military man Jehu, to be the next king of Israel. When Jehu comes to Jezreel, Jezebel sees him from her upper story window. (This is the famous passage which mentions her eye makeup. Considering everything else this woman did, why she should be famous for eye makeup, I have no idea.)

2 Kings 9:30-33—When Jehu came to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it, and she painted her eyes and adorned her head and looked out the window. 31 As Jehu entered the gate, she said, "Is it well, Zimri, your master's murderer?" (She is making an historical quip here, calling Jehu by the name of an assassin of a previous Israelite king.) 32 Then he lifted up his face to the window and said, "Who is on my side? Who?" And two or three officials looked down at him. 33 He said, "Throw her down." So they threw her down....

These officials may very well have been eunuchs of Jezebel's court. This woman, who destroyed and manipulated so many men, was finally destroyed by men who were eager to cast her literally out of their lives.

Returning to 2 Kings 9:33-37—...and some of her blood was sprinkled on the wall and on the horses, and he [Jehu] trampled her underfoot. 34 When he came in, he ate and drank; and he said, "See now to this cursed woman and bury her, for she is a king's daughter." 35 They went to bury her, but they found no more of her than the skull and the feet and the palms of her hands. 36 Therefore they returned and told him. And he said, "This is the word of the LORD, which He spoke by His servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, 'In the property of Jezreel the dogs shall eat the flesh of Jezebel; 37 and the corpse of Jezebel shall be as dung on the face of the field in the property of Jezreel, so they cannot say, "This is Jezebel."'"

Jezebel was a powerful and prideful mistress of her domain. She shook her fist in the face of God. God's response to her was to judge her quickly and fiercely, throwing her down with no monument. God did not want a great tomb in Israel commemorating Jezebel, so He removed her from the face of the earth. Of course, she lives in vivid color in Scripture as an example of evil. Many women do not identify with Jezebel, though we may have more things in common with her than we know. However, before we talk about identifying with Jezebel, let us look at another type of fallen mistress.

The fall impacts each aspect in two directions—we abuse it or we abandon it.

3.2 Lazy Lottie

The fall impacts each aspect in two directions—we abuse it. Jezebel used her mistress aspect for wrong purposes, but she certainly used it. In contrast, mistresses who deny this aspect tend to be passive, irresponsible, and frivolous. Not the powerful, dynamic, driving Jezebel-type, they are lazy, lukewarm, and self-indulgent. When I prepared this section, I explained to my husband that I was building a composite woman because there did not seem to be one Bible woman who fully captured the irresponsible mistress. He said, "What about Lot's wife? She was turning back and saying to Lot, 'Honey, look! There is a fire sale at the mall in Sodom. I have got to go back.'" Of course, he was making fun. Then he stopped his enactment of Lot's wife and said, "She really did not have a grasp of the gravity of the situation, did she?" What Bill said is so true. Worldly, irresponsible women focus only on the here and now. When the time of judgment and accountability comes, they are not ready. I call this composite woman "Lazy Lottie." Named for Lot's wife, her character is further developed from the following four passages of Scripture.

Women at ease

Isaiah 32:9-12—*Rise up, you women who are at ease, and hear my voice; Give ear to my word, you complacent daughters. 10 Within a year and a few days, you will be troubled, O complacent daughters; for the vintage is ended, and the fruit gathering will not come. 11 Tremble, you women who are at ease; be troubled, you complacent daughters; strip, undress and put sackcloth on your waist, beat your breasts for the pleasant fields, for the fruitful vines.*

Isaiah tells these lazy women to mourn because their judgment is coming. Our NASB calls these women **careless, women at ease, complacent**. Other translations call them **unconcerned** and **irresponsible**. We might also say frivolous, women who major on minors in life. They are not purposefully ruling their domains, helping others, nurturing life, or gaining wisdom. They are vacuous and blind, oblivious to the reckoning that is so near. Fun is sometimes appropriate, but the righteous mistress of her domain will have a serious core in her being. She knows what is important in life and majors on majors. Passive mistresses are lazy and take their ease.

Foolish and unprepared virgins

In Matthew 25, we have the parable of the bridegroom who is coming and the virgins who are supposed to be ready for him. Five take their lamps and extra oil.

Matthew 25:1-13—“Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins, who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. 2 Five of them were foolish, and five were prudent. 3 For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, 4 but the prudent took oil in flasks along with their lamps. 5 Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all got drowsy and began to sleep. 6 But at midnight there was a shout, ‘Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ 7 Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. 8 The foolish said to the prudent, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ 9 But the prudent answered, ‘No, there will not be enough for us and you too; go instead to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.’ 10 And while they were going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut. 11 Later the other virgins also came, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open up for us.’ 12 But he answered, ‘Truly I say to you, I do not know you.’ 13 Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour.”

Mrs. Lot was foolish because she was not prepared to leave her world. The virgins were foolish because they were not prepared to go with God into the next. When the time came, both were found wanting. The righteous mistress is aware that life is a timed test. This life, its tests, and its stewardships are going to be over! You have only ten years to be in your twenties and only ten years to be in your thirties. You have only ten years from the birth of your child until his tenth birthday. Then childhood is gone forever. We know the exact length of many facets of life. In other areas, we do not know how long we have. We do not know how long we will have our mate or how long we ourselves will live. But we do know life is a timed test. The prudent mistress thinks about her resources and makes preparation, knowing God will come to judge, to receive accounts, and to give rewards. But passive mistresses remain **unprepared**.

The lazy, blasphemous steward

One of the most famous steward parables in Scripture, Matthew 25:14-30, is the story of three servants. One is given five talents; from them, he makes ten more. One is given two talents; he makes four. The last is given one talent. He gives account of his stewardship:

Matthew 25:24-28—“And the one also who had received the one talent came up and said, ‘Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you scattered no seed. 25 And I was afraid, and went away and hid your talent in the ground. See, you

have what is yours.’ 26 But his master answered and said to him, ‘You wicked, lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I scattered no seed. 27 Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my money back with interest. 28 Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.’”

We hear a great deal today about poor self-image. However, a great deal that is called “poor self-image” is actually the slander of God. In Matthew 5:24 the servant says, “*I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you scattered no seed.*” This is not a true statement. The master had come, not where he had left nothing, but where he had left something. He had entrusted his servants with five, two, and one talents. The master had sown, and he was not asking anything unreasonable. In fact, he even said, “If you do not want to do anything, just put it in the bank and at least give me my interest.” He was asking only for a reasonable return on his investment. The wicked servant believed a lie and made a false accusation against his master. His fear was rooted in his false concept of the master. People who believe God is hard and unreasonable slander Him, become fearful, pity themselves, stop trying, and feel depressed.

Much that is called “poor self-image” is actually the slander of God.

Will more love and encouragement solve their problems? Will urging them to feel good about themselves actually help? No, in this case, the root problem will not be dealt with by encouragement, but rather by reproof. When we think God is unfair, hard, and not a good Master, we have embraced lies. These slanders must be challenged and forsaken. We cannot trust God as our Authority and Boss if we believe He is evil. God is good. He is not unreasonable. He asks us only to work with what He has given to us already. To do our best cheerfully is the reasonable thing to do, for we are not dealing with a hard or unjust Master. Basic to Lazy Lottie is a character that does not want to work

or serve the Lord in the stewardship of her domain. She believes a lie and accuses God of being a wicked God. Out of this unbelief flow all kinds of evil—excuses, blame-shifting, self-pity, and blasphemy. Lazy Lotties slander God. Passive mistresses **blame God** for their irresponsibility.

Lukewarm Laodiceans

Revelation 3 provides another group that belongs in our composite picture of a Lazy Lottie, the church at Laodicea. The Lord says to this church in verses 15-16: “*I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I would that you were cold or hot. So, because you are lukewarm and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth.*” The Laodiceans were self-satisfied, self-righteous, and smug. In addition to being worldly, trivial, foolish, and blasphemous, passive mistresses are **lukewarm**. A loose translation of Jesus’ words, “*I will spit you out of my mouth,*” might be, “You make Me want to throw up.” Do not be too quick to assume that Jezebel is much worse than Lottie. The lukewarm are repellent to God. God may judge Jezebel as better than Lottie. At least Jezebel was not lukewarm.

4. Review

The fall was an historic event wherein man chose to disobey God by eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thereby earning death, as recorded in Genesis 2:17 and 3:6-7.

The curse was a series of judgments God laid upon Satan, the woman, the man, and through him, the whole creation in response to human and satanic sin (Gen. 3:14-19). The curse is:

- **Retributive.** God judges us in kind, causing our domain to rebel against us, as we rebelled against Him.
- **Redemptive.** By intensifying the struggle with evil, God resolves the problem of evil. God's curse is not without hope because it has a beginning, an end, and a way out.
- **Comprehensive.** God's curse affects every part of creation. Our **image** of God is corrupted. The old sin natures pollutes our minds, wills, consciences, and hearts. Our **fellowship** with God is broken. No longer trusted stewards, we are now rebels and traitors. Our **domain** is degraded, rebelling against us. Our **Mandate** is embattled, making all our ruling, subduing, and productivity a struggle.

Fallen mistresses either abuse their stewardship as Jezebel did with murder, idolatries, and heinous crimes, or they abandon their stewardship like a Lazy Lottie, with lives of frivolity and complacency.

A mistress prayer

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Heavenly Father,

Help us not to be cold like Jezebel,

bending our wills against You.

Help us not to be lukewarm and lazy,

bending our wills to nothing at all.

Help us to be hot and zealous for You,

ruling our domains as we lock our wills

into You and Your purposes.

In Christ's name,

Amen.

•

: Testimonies: Lives of Contrast— : *fallen and redeemed*

Two women came to the country of God from foreign lands.

One came from the idolatrous land of the northwest. The daughter of a king-priest, she came to the court of her new country as a queen, bride of the king. With her she brought zeal for her gods. She slaughtered the prophets of God. The ones she did not slaughter, she terrorized. She gave to her adopted country a new state religion, manned with a powerful and pagan bureaucracy. Her dowry included experience in the exercise of ruthless and autonomous power. Her husband's sins of attitude were her stepping stones to deeds of royal lawlessness, perjury, murder, and theft. She stole ancestral lands with blood and deception. City elders were her lackeys in crime. She trained her children in her ways. They, too, killed prophets and those of Christ's line.

Her life resulted in the curses and judgments of God. She reaped the annihilation of her family, the death of her dynasty, and a bloodbath in two nations. She is an example of judgment and grisly death to wrong-doers everywhere, a name of infamy to the whole world. Her name is synonymous with idolatry, murder, theft, deception, witchcraft, and haughty pride.

The other woman came from the idolatrous land of the southeast. An unknown widow, she came in poverty, walking with another widow to an obscure village and its fields. With her she brought commitment to the God above all gods. She brought confidence in His care and respect for His laws. She sowed diligent labor where there was poverty, and reaped abundance. She sowed faithfulness where there was despair, and reaped the renewal of hope. She sowed humble submission where there was bitterness, and reaped blessings and love under the wings of God.

Through her, ancestral lands were restored. City elders called down blessings. Her husband became a picture of Christ through her kindness. Her community rejoiced. Her children became kings, and their dynasty is the greatest of ancient history and of future history as well. Her name is synonymous with loyalty, faith, service, joy, and love. She is one of the last whom God has made first, a mother of Christ, and a blessing to the whole world.

Jezebel of Sidon and Ruth of Moab came to God's country. They lived lives of utter contrast—lives suitable for study—lives which reflect the gods and God they served.

KEY to diagram at right

SYMBOLS OF GOD

Person—HAND, CROSS—God is Creator (hand creates man). He is Spirit (hand is transparent), infinite (hand fades, as into infinity), and preeminent (hand's position—above creation; hand's size—able to hold world). God is man's Savior (cross).

Character—SQUARE—God's character is holy (square suggests the cube of the Holy of Holies) and infinite in all His attributes (square fades, as into infinity).

Words

At creation—GENESIS 1:26—God creates mankind in His image.

At judgment—GENESIS 3:17—God judges mankind's disobedience by cursing his realm.

At redemption—EPHESIANS 2:8—God offers mankind salvation from his sin.

Roles/work—HAND, WORDS, CROSS—God is active within His creation as Initiator, Sovereign, Judge, and Savior.

SYMBOLS OF MANKIND

Persons—SEX-DISTINCT FIGURES

Created—God created man, male and female (sex-classic silhouettes). They are "clothed" in nakedness according to their untested, unashamed, sinless standing before God. Man is finite (bounded edges). Man and woman enjoy a right relationship (figures face each other).

Fallen—They are clothed in fig leaves according to their fallen, ashamed, guilty standing before God. Relationship between the sexes is broken (figures face away from each other).

Redeemed—They are clothed in white robes—Christ's righteousness—according to their forgiven, redeemed standing before God. Relationship between the sexes is restored (figures face each other).

Character—SQUARE

Created—Man is created in the image of God (squares smaller than but reflective of God's square). Both man and woman are created in the image of God (they don't share a square). Man's character is finite in all his attributes (bounded edges).

Fallen—The image of God is now polluted with sin (darkened squares).

Redeemed—The image of God is redeemed from sin (glowing squares).

Words

Created—PSALM 139:14—Mankind responds to God with faith through word and deed.

Fallen—GENESIS 3:6—Mankind responds to God with disbelief and disobedience.

Redeemed—ROMANS 12:1—Mankind responds to Christ's gracious gift of salvation with faith through word, deed, and worship.

- God's Image
- in Man—created,
- fallen, redeemed

*"Let Us make man
in Our image."*

God's image

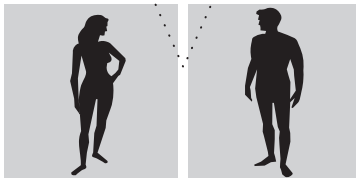
1. Righteousness
2. Justice
3. Sovereignty
4. Love
5. Omniscience
6. Omnipotence
7. Immutability
8. Eternality

*"For by grace you
have been saved."*

*"Cursed is the
ground because
of you."*

*enmity with Satan
pain in childbirth
conflicted desire
thorns, thistles, sweat*

*"I will give
thanks to
Thee."*



*she took from
its fruit and ate ...and he ate*



*present your
bodies a
living and
holy
sacrifice*



Man's image—created

Created in the image of God, man's attributes reflect God's attributes.

1. **Conscience**
2. **Conscience**
3. **Will**
4. **Personality/heart**
5. **Mind**
6. **Power**
7. **Character stability**
8. **Immortality**

Man's image—fallen

Defiled by sin, man's attributes no longer accurately reflect God's attributes.

1. **Conscience**—Hardened, defiled, seared, evil
2. **Conscience**—Hardened, defiled, seared, evil
3. **Will**—In bondage, rebellion
4. **Personality/heart**—Hostile, hard, blind, defiling
5. **Mind**—Ignorant, vain, in darkness and enmity
6. **Power**—Dominating, manipulative, apathetic
7. **Character stability**—Sin nature (every kind of evil, deceitful lusts, fruit to death)
8. **Immortality**—Second death, Lake of Fire

Man's image—redeemed

Redeemed by Christ, man's attributes are sanctified to conform to God's attributes.

1. **Conscience**—Purged of dead works, cleansed, pure
2. **Conscience**—Purged of dead works, cleansed, pure
3. **Will**—Freed from sin, submissive to God's will
4. **Personality/heart**—True, sincere, source of good, dwelling place of Christ
5. **Mind**—Renewed, enlightened, spiritual
6. **Power**—Harnessed by the Spirit
7. **Character stability**—New creature in true holiness, fruits of the Spirit
8. **Immortality**—Everlasting life, knowing God

• • Personification of Mistress—*fallen* •

I am Mistress of the Domain—*fallen*.

Because of rebellion, I am cursed with a sinful, dying nature which is hostile to God, and is the source of all kinds of evil. I fear God and push Him away. I know He is angry at me not only for the bad things I do, but more deeply, because of the bad person I am. I still make responsible decisions for which I am accountable. Yet my will is in bondage. I often cannot choose good even when I want to. Whatever I choose, I am utterly incapable of choosing to be the loyal and faithful servant of God I was originally created to be.

Separated from my Creator and liege Lord, I am separated from myself as well. My own efforts at self-discovery are thwarted by endless labyrinths of self-deceit. When I do glimpse some piece of the truth, I usually don't like what I see. I try to be true to myself and the captain of my own fate, but somehow it's not working.

My unhappiness, anger, and frustration are all greatly increased because God has cursed the world and work He originally created me to do. The very ground and all its materials—the plants, animals, and my own body—rebel against me even as I rebelled against God.

My work, originally an unmarred expression of my joyful service to God, is now vain and frustrating. Physically, mere survival on this planet is a struggle. "Murphy's Laws" are not a joke. Spiritually, I gyrate between feverish labors and irresponsible laziness, between pride in my accomplishments and guilt over my failures.

I don't know whether my center is a hollow core or a black hole. Sometimes I seem dense inside with hatred, anger, fear, and despair, bizarrely mixed with pride and an odd flippancy. On the other hand, I suck up God-substitutes like a vacuum seeking anything which might comfort my pain or reinstitute some meaning for my existence.

Meanwhile, over, under, and through everything is the knowledge and reality of death. I am vain. My work is vain. Everything is heading toward oblivion and an unhappy meeting with a Holy Judge whom I cannot please and whom I do not want to know.



Bible Study of Mistress—*fallen*

Before beginning this study, read the entire lesson, pages 40-52.

“...**C**ursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field; by the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

GENESIS 3:17-19

The second Biblical view of woman

Fallen in sin and under judgment, woman’s image of God is corrupted, her fellowship with God is broken, and her domain is cursed.

Our purpose in these lessons on the fallen aspects is to explore and elucidate from Scripture the nature of sinful femininity, its roles, activities, and final end. The broken nature of humanity is not as happy a subject as creation or redemption, but the doctrine of the curse is one of the Bible’s most convincing evidences of its truth. Nowhere is the self-destructive and corrupt nature of man and woman more clearly described and accurately explained than in the Bible. If we discern darkness and ditches for what they are, perhaps we will move toward the light and remain more steadfastly on the road.

The fall and the curse

1. What was God’s command to Adam in Genesis 2:17?

2. What were Satan’s appeal and promise to Eve in Genesis 3:1-5?

3. From Genesis 3:6-13, how would you describe Eve’s choices and their consequences?

The divine image is corrupted

7. For men and women, the fall and the curse are literally the root of all evil. All the beautiful human attributes, originally fashioned to reflect God's attributes, were corrupted by sin. In the space below, write a brief description of the fallen human attributes based on the Scripture provided (refer to diagram, p. 51).

heart and character (Ps. 51:5; Matt. 15:18-20; Gal. 5:19-21)

mind (1 Cor. 2:14; 2 Cor. 4:3-5; Eph. 4:17-18)

conscience (1 Tim. 4:2; Titus 1:15; Heb. 10:22)

will (Rom. 7:18-19)

Review

The fall and the curse did not remove the divine image from us (Gen. 9:6), nor did they make us as bad as we can be. However, because of these historical events, every part of our being is corrupted and incapable of reuniting us with God. We cannot think, work, moralize, sexually reproduce, or emotionally feel our way back to God.

The viceroy's domain is cursed

8. What, besides man, has been affected by sin (Rom. 8:19-21)?

9. From Romans 8:18-25, describe the effects and results of the fall and its curse on our universe.

10. Your personal domain, also under the curse, is continually rebelling against you. Consequently, your created drives to rule, subdue, and be productive are all the harder to fulfill. Life is a struggle. Select one of these areas—your body, your home, your life work as a homemaker, or some other specific job or task—and give at least one specific example of how you experience the on-going consequences of the curse as you attempt to rule this area.

Review

All the human attributes suffer from the fall and the curse. The image of God in man and woman is now corrupted and distorted. Their fellowship with God has been broken. Their domain, once flawless, now rebels against them, just as they rebelled against God. Creation originally tended toward life, health, and growth. However, since the curse, it tends toward death, decay, and suffering. Now, things are constantly wearing out, running down, getting old, and dying.

Fallen mistresses and evil stewards

11. Jezebel was a powerful mistress of her domain. Yet, she was one of the most wicked women in history. In the story of Naboth's vineyard, what characteristics of Jezebel made her such a powerful ruler (1 Kin. 21:1-15)? How could the characteristics which made Jezebel's life so powerful for Baal have been used for God instead?

For further study

Read Jezebel's biography in 1 Kings 16:29–2 Kings 11:21. (For an overview of her life, refer to pp. 44-46, 50.)

12. Woman was created to be a responsible ruler. How would you describe the women of Isaiah 32:9-11? What were the results of their choices?

13. Read the following parables. Who are the wicked stewards? What are their sinful attitudes and actions? How did the Master evaluate them?

Matthew 25:1-13

Matthew 25:14-30

14. How is the church at Laodicea described? What is God's response to them (Rev. 3:14-19)?

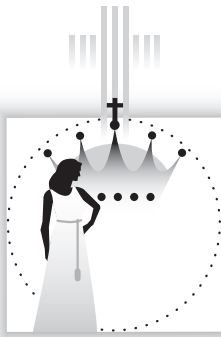
My fallenness and what to do about it

Each feminine aspect can be expressed sinfully in one of two general ways: A mistress can rule in a wrong way or in an extreme fashion, thus abusing the mistress aspect; another mistress may refuse to rule or subdue, thus abandoning this aspect of her womanhood. Jezebel and the composite Lazy Lottie are given as examples of these two kinds of sinful mistresses respectively. All women do both—we abuse and abandon our mistress aspect.

Consider the following questions based on abusive Jezebel and passive Lottie.

15. Do you have any of Jezebel's traits?

- Do you have any committed bitterness or unforgiveness in your life?
- Have you ever defended immoral actions or practices such as free sex, divorce, or abortion?
- Have you ever attacked the reputation or position of another because he stood for the truths or standards of God's Word?
- Have you ever pursued knowledge or insight into cults or occult religions?



1. The great salvation of the Triune God

In the Mistress—*created* lesson, we saw God’s good and awesome work as Creator. He gave us His image, His world, and a Mandate to rule it as His representatives. However, this “*very good*” state did not last. As we studied in the Mistress—*fallen* lesson, the rebellion of Satan and the fall of man broke the fellowship between God and His creatures. God came as Judge to the garden, and cursed the whole creation with corruption and death as a judgment on sin. Now in all the earth we see evidences of both the creation and the fall. We see beauty, wonder, and majesty inherent in the universe and mankind. At the same time, we also see ugliness, evil, and death. But God, we learned, cursed in hope. In this lesson we turn our attention to that hope—how God as Savior performs a work greater than creating or cursing. Salvation—the rebuilding and restoring of what is broken and spoiled—is the greatest of God’s works.

The *Five Aspects* course is not about salvation per se; it is about womanhood. However, five lessons of this course are devoted to salvation and how God rebuilds each fallen aspect of our lives. This is good and right because God’s greatness shines forth uniquely in redemption. This lesson focuses on the salvation of the mistress-of-the-domain aspect of womanhood. In it, we will see how God works to remake our image of God, restore our fellowship with Him, and finally how He will recreate our whole domain. Before we begin this third study on the mistress aspect, we need to know that salvation is more than an event; it is an event, a process, and a culmination. Three classic salvation terms—justification, sanctification, and glorification—delineate these stages of God’s redemptive work. Mastering these terms will greatly enhance our grasp of God’s great and complex work of redemption.

1.1 Justification event

Justification is our spiritual birth. This happens at the time we trust Christ to save us. This event may be vivid in our mind or it may be hazy. The important thing is that God knows it, for He is the One who justifies us by declaring us righteous in heaven. Our sins are marked off God’s ledger and credit for Christ’s righteousness is accounted to us. On earth, our spirits are reborn and indwelt by the Holy Spirit. From this point we are saved, our sins are forgiven, we are going to heaven, and we are new creatures. This part of salvation is an event.

KEY Mistress—*redeemed*
person—FEMALE FIGURE
 (clothed in white robe—
 Christ’s righteousness—
 according to her forgiven,
 redeemed standing before
 God)

character—GLOWING
 SQUARE (redeemed from sin)
femininity—DOTTED
 CIRCLE (redeemed from sin)
role/work—CROWN ADORNED
 WITH CROSS, JEWELS
 (redeemed authority)

1.2 Sanctification process

Sanctification is not a one-time birth. It is a growth process which takes place between the time we are saved and the time we die. During this time, God trains and teaches us to love and trust Him once again. Changing human character is a difficult process. Ideally we grow from being baby Christians to being mature ones who picture Christ’s nature in ever clearer ways. During this phase, some Christians are more obedient than others.

Sanctification literally means being set aside for God's service. We also call it growing in Christ, maturing in Christ, and being conformed to Christ's image. In this lesson we can think of it as having our mistress aspect redeemed. Sanctification is the part of salvation that is a process.

1.3 Glorification culmination

Glorification happens after death. Finally, our sin natures will be taken away, and no longer will we have to struggle against them. Our bodies will be resurrected and made incorruptible. Our deeds will be purged of dross, and we will be rewarded for whatever good service we yielded to Christ during our earthly lives. Then we will know God and ourselves as never before. Loving and serving God, we will take our proper place in the body of Christ and in the universe. This is **glorification**, and it is the culmination of salvation.

2. The divine image is reborn.

2.1 The corrupted spirit is made new.

Sin has corrupted every facet of our lives. Nothing in us can reach back to God and to His holiness. But we have a problem worse than a bunch of broken parts. The spirit that God breathed into us to animate our body and soul—the very center of our being—is dead. Since Adam fell, he and all his children are “dead in trespasses and sins.” What does it mean to be spiritually dead? Fallen people have physical eyes, but they do not see spiritual things; they have ears, but they do not hear the things of God; they have hearts (personalities), but they do not understand God or fellowship with Him.

If spiritual deadness cannot be defined easily, it can be described partially with an analogy. Man was created like a fabulous instrument, powered from an unlimited source, capable of receiving and transmitting in vibrant color a whole range of words and three-dimensional images. But, falling from its place one day, this fabulous instrument was damaged and broken in its most important facets. It can still receive pale black-and-white images in two dimensions with a few intelligible words coming through. However, the great disaster is this: All the vital and essential information explaining the use and purpose of the instrument came on the color and 3-D frequencies. Making matters infinitely worse, the power source with its unlimited reserves was severed irreparably when the instrument fell. Now, the instrument operates its greatly-reduced functions on a short residual power supply that quickly sputters and soon stops altogether.

According to this analogy, being born again and becoming a new creature in Christ means this: God miraculously and instantaneously re-establishes our power supply. Man, who was dead and dying even as he “lived,” is reconnected to the unlimited source of God's life and power. This happens not by a repair job on the old instrument, but by the miraculous creation of completely new hardware. At the point of salvation, God makes us new creatures. Secondly, God reactivates man's capacities to receive and transmit in color and three-dimensions. The born-again person now has eyes that can see, ears that can hear, and a heart that can understand. His receivers work! Now man can receive and understand all the vital and essential information that he needs about his own use and purpose. Not only that, his transmitters work. Through his life, work, and art, man can send his own unique response messages to God and others in words and colorful three-dimensional images.

2.2 The new spirit grows and matures over time.

It should be pointed out that while the reconnection to the power supply and the reactivation of the receiving and transmitting capabilities is instantaneous, the full deployment of these capacities must be learned over time. To use a computer analogy, God fixes our hard-drive and re-installs our software at a point in time; this is justification. But we must learn how to use them in a process that takes time; this is sanctification.

When we become new creatures indwelt by the Holy Spirit, we are commanded and led to bring every part of our being back under the power and rule of God. This command includes all of our corrupted human attributes. The defiled conscience must be cleansed progressively, made pure, and purged. The rebellious will must be submitted to God in order to free it from bondage. The hard heart, given to Christ as a dwelling, grows more true and sincere. The darkened mind is renewed progressively and enlightened as we study the Word. The unregenerate character changes over time from old sinner to new creature. Thus in the mature believer, the God-like image is restored. Once again we become a recognizable image of God Himself. This is called being conformed to the image of Christ; it is the goal of sanctification and all Christian growth. Through it we learn to love God with all our hearts, minds, souls, and strength. (For a concise outline of man's image of God progressing from *created-fallen-redeemed*, refer to p. 51.)

3. Fellowship with God is restored.

3.1 Penalties are taken away.

If the fallen mistress's image of God is reborn at salvation, what happens to her relationship with God? How is her fellowship with God affected? Remember, we are criminals, like mutinous sailors deserving to be hanged for treason against the crown. In economic terms, we are bankrupt and hopelessly in debt beyond any ability of ours to ever repay. Thus specific crimes and debts stand between every sinner and God. If God is to remain righteous and just, the penalty for these crimes and the payment of these debts cannot be waived. They must be paid, or God will cease to be the righteous and just God He is. Amazingly, by the ingenious plan of God, He does both. He justifies sinners, and yet remains perfectly just. How can He do this? As a substitute, Christ died the death of criminals for criminals. Out of the wealth of His righteousness, He paid our unpayable debts. Since our crimes, their penalty, and the debts of our bankruptcy have been paid, the objective barriers between us and God are removed. Fellowship can thus be re-established between the Holy God and the newly repentant believer. However, as we shall see, removing the crimes and debts is not the only work that must be done.

3.2 Trust is rebuilt over time.

Fellowship with God is indeed re-established when we receive God's offer to take away our sins. At that point, we re-assert our allegiance to Him as our overlord, and we are reinstated as His viceroys, stewards, and servants. However, removing walls and barriers between enemies doesn't insure that they love and trust one another. A spendthrift's debts may be paid in full, but would you trust him with your credit card? A traitor's crimes may be pardoned, but would you tell him the secrets of the kingdom? Even when justice has been done, the issue of trust remains. God did not break the trust; Adam and Eve broke the trust. The taking away of the penalty of sin is instantaneous, but rebuilding the trust between God and His stewards takes a lifetime.

The great irony is not that God does not trust us—it is that we do not trust Him! God has given us His beloved Son and with Him all things. In Him, all the promises are “yes.” God is ready and willing to enter into full and loving fellowship with us. We are the ones who must learn to trust Him. We are the ones who cling with great tenacity to our idols, our besetting sins, and all our slanders against His character. Like the lazy servant with one talent, we blaspheme God, insisting that He is hard, mean, and generally undependable. If you do not think this is so, consider how difficult it is, even for people who actually love God, to trust Him consistently with their finances, health, relationships, or work. The barriers of sin demanded by justice are gone in an instant; it is the relationship of trust and faithfulness that takes a lifetime to build.

4. The domain is rescued progressively.

4.1 The universe is saved in the order in which it fell.

Our domain has fallen with us under God’s curse. Tending toward death, decay, and suffering, it is rebelling against us, even as we rebelled against God. We might ask, if our domain fell with us, does it get saved with us? How does salvation affect the curse on our domains? If Jane Doe, who lives down the street from you, trusts Christ and receives new life in her spirit, it does not mean that all of a sudden she stops aging, all her wrinkles go away, and her hair stops turning gray. It does not mean that her roof never leaks or that weeds stop growing in her front yard. We know this is not the case. Her body continues to age, her garden continues to grow weeds, and her roof springs leaks just like anyone else’s. God does not immediately remove the power of the curse from her domain.

Creation will be saved in the order in which it fell. The hearts of Adam and Eve fell first, and as a result, their spirit-fellowship with God was instantly broken. Having eaten of the forbidden tree, their bodies began to die. Next, their domain was subjected to corruption, and thus, it began to grow thorns and thistles. God saves first what fell first—our spirits (refer to paragraph 2.1). During our lifetimes, our whole beings, our souls, and bodies are sanctified progressively. Next our bodies will be transformed. When we see Jesus, we will be like Him; mortality will put on immortality. At the judgment of Christians, our works will be purged. Beyond this, when Christ returns, our world and planet will be renovated physically. Culture and society itself will be transformed to holiness in the coming golden age when Christ reigns in justice and power. Finally, we look forward to the complete removal of the curse in the new heavens and the new earth. Salvation will come to the entire domain eventually, but this will happen in stages.

4.2 “Polytheists” learn godliness on pilgrimage.

Bringing our domain together under Christ is often harder than we expect. We don’t realize how fragmented our domains become through years of sinful living. Most of us, whether we claim to be monotheists or not, are polytheists in practice. We worship many gods. In the area of romance, we may worship sentimentality; in finances, security may be our god; in social matters, public convention and approval may dictate our actions. On the issue of eternal salvation, the true God may be God. We may truly be depending upon His grace to get us to heaven. But overall, our lives lack definition, thrust, and power because they are dissipated and scattered. Most practicing polytheists are going in several directions and strongly resemble a Lazy Lottie. On the other hand, Jezebel seems larger than life because of her focus. Though technically a polytheist, in practice she was a monotheist. She organized and focused her whole life around the worship of her gods.

How does God get us to pull our fragmented lives together under His leadership? How does He get us to change our deep-seated and ingrained patterns of idolatry and teach us to trust Him rather than resent His righteous authority? Most of the answer can be summarized this way: He leads us through trials and adventures in faith to perfect us as worshipers and stewards of the one true God. This answer brings another dimension to the domain concept. Our domains are not static, consisting only of the physical world around us that we touch, such as our house or furniture. Your domain and your life as a steward of God also has a linear dimension in time. It includes the experiences that God trusts you with over your lifetime. The classic word which expresses this truth is **pilgrimage**. A pilgrim is one who journeys to reach a spiritual destination. The destination is to know God, be like God, and finally live with God in His Holy City. Making this journey is a process. More than that, it is the adventure of life itself.

4.3 The path has a purpose.

We must consider our domain and life course, not only from the active viewpoint (I have the responsibility to rule well for God), but also from the passive viewpoint (God is the Potter and I am the clay). We are a substance in God's hands and He is shaping us. He is the Main Actor in the drama of salvation. We receive our domain and life course from His hands.

Like pot-casting, metal-working is another good illustration. Have you ever seen a blacksmith take a piece of metal and put it in the fire until it gets red hot? Then he takes it out, puts it on the anvil, and hammers it. Next he puts it in the cold water to cool it; it makes a loud hissing sound. Then he puts it back in the fire and repeats the process until he is pleased with the shape and temper of the metal. How would you like to be the metal? It does not look very inviting, does it? But we often see God doing something like this process with people, especially Christians. He puts them in the fire, hammers them on the anvil, sticks them in the cold water, and then does it all over again. The skillful blacksmith knows his metals, and he knows what he is trying to fashion. He places just the right stress on the material to make it come out in the shape he desires, whether a horse shoe, a sword, or a decorative grill. It is the same with God. He knows us, and He knows the destiny He has planned for us. God wisely plans the fires and hammer-blows of our lives because He knows what we are made of and what destiny He has planned for us. When we get to heaven, many of the things we have gone through will make sense, because then we will see the purpose and the setting for which we were fashioned in the hand of the master Craftsman.

God wisely plans the fires and hammer-blows of our lives, because He knows what we are made of and what destiny He has planned for us.

In Revelation 2:17, the Lord says that overcomers will receive *"a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it."* Those who receive the stone will have the thrill of seeing their whole lives fit together and make sense. Deep down they will know—this is my substance, this was my fashioning, and now, this is my name. You are a unique image of God. Your domain is a unique stewardship inside history, and your life course is a new version of the human story. These are the Christian answers to the question of identity, and very rich answers they are.

5. Case study of the Shunammite: A redeemed mistress

2 Kings 4 and 8 present one of the most complete portraits of a woman in the Bible. The Shunammite is probably familiar to you for her hospitality, but you may not know the rest of her story. Living during the time of Elisha's ministry in the Northern Kingdom, she was a wonderful mistress of her domain. The Scriptures concerning the Shunammite can be divided easily into three sections which reveal three main tests, or opportunities, which she faced as a ruler of her domain.

5.1 A test of opportunity

The first test the Shunammite faces is the test of opportunity:

2 Kings 4:8-13—Now there came a day when Elisha passed over to Shunam, where there was a prominent woman, and she persuaded him to eat food. And so it was, as often as he passed by, he turned in there to eat food. 9 She said to her husband, "Behold now, I perceive that this is a holy man of God passing by us continually. 10 Please, let us make a little walled upper chamber and let us set a bed for him there, and a table and a chair and a lampstand; and it shall be, when he comes to us, that he can turn in there."

The Shunammite and her husband represent a healthy marriage relationship. The Bible teaches the authority of the husband as the leader in marriage, and the subordinate role of the wife as his follower and helper. However, this does not mean the wife should be a silent or passive servant or that the husband is a dictator. As man is a viceroy to God, so the wife is a viceroy to her husband. She is a ruler under a ruler. Her domain is within his domain, but her authority to rule her domain under her husband is genuine and authentic, just as man's authority to rule under God is genuine and effectual, as we saw in Adam's naming of the animals.

When Scripture portrays godly couples, it is important to note that we see mutual respect and loving give-and-take. This pattern and relationship is modeled by Abraham and Sarah, Elkanah and Hannah, Priscilla and Aquila, and here by the Shunammite and her husband. Biblical submission is not servility; it is respect and honor for authority. We see the Shunammite actively ruling her domain, even as she honors her husband. Biblically these ideas are compatible, not contradictory.¹

To return to our story, the Shunammite sees an opportunity for service. The prophet of God is coming by. She has the time, money, and skill to minister to him. So she conceives the idea of adding a hospitality room for his use. Not acting in secret or autonomously, she proposes this idea to her husband. We know from context that he said something like, "Fine, go ahead." She probably took the initiative in adding the room. This lady is a very active person, not passive or lazy. Seizing an opportunity to do good, she thus deploys her domain. Later we will learn that the Shunammite is grieved about her barrenness. But notice that her lack of ministry as a mother does not keep her from doing the ministry that she can do. Some singles pout and squander time because they are not married. Some married people let the cares of marriage and family keep them from serving God. But the Shunammite is not letting what she **does not** have stop her from doing what she can with what she **does** have. She passes the opportunity-for-service test with flying colors.

1. Here in the mistress aspect we focus on woman as a ruler under a ruler; in the upcoming helper aspect, we will explicitly address and illustrate submission and obedience to authority (pp. 93-95).

5.2 A test of fear

In the next section, 2 Kings 4:11-13, the Shunammite faces a test of fear. Some time has passed and Elisha appreciates the Shunammite's ministry to him. So he says to his servant Gehazi, "I want to do something nice for this woman. Ask her to come here." The Shunammite comes and he says, "What may I do for you?" He says in verse 13, "*Would you be spoken for to the king or to the captain of the army?*" Elisha had power, not only with God, but he had power in the country. She responds, "*I live among my own people.*" Elisha is saying, "I have connections. Is there anything you want?" She is saying in a nice way, "I have connections, too. I do not need anything." Then Gehazi says to Elisha in private, "I know what she wants. She does not have a child, and her husband is very old." So Elisha has the Shunammite called once again and says in effect, I **really** have connections. "*At this season next year you shall embrace a son.*" Notice her strange reaction in verse 16, *She said, "No, my lord. O man of God, do not lie to your maidservant."*

Why does the Shunammite have this reaction? She knew Elisha to be a truthful man, who served with the very authority of God. So why does she accuse him of lying? I think it is because the Shunammite coped with childlessness by walling off her desire for motherhood. She coped with her unfulfilled desire and hurt by denying them. She did not want the desire reawakened because it was a desire she had never yielded completely to God. God perfected the Shunammite's faith by opening this unyielded closet of her life. She desired a child so much she could not receive one for fear of losing him. God did not want the Shunammite to desire or fear anything in a closet locked away from His faithfulness and sovereignty. He gave her her unsanctified desire and took her through her worst fear in order to be more completely the Lord of her life.

I heard my husband say one time that we should fear nothing more than God. I think it has been one of the most helpful things he ever said. We should fear nothing—not torture, or poverty, or childlessness, or death, or anything—more than God. He should be the greatest fear in our lives because He is the greatest Authority. He can give anything, and He can take anything. Jesus says in Matthew 10:28, "*Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*" The loss of a child is one of the great natural fears of my life personally. I cannot think of a greater trial or test of faith. Those who have been through it say it is a pain unlike any other. Yet fixing on earthly fears is the opposite of faith. Somehow we must strive to keep the attitude of Job about real trials and anticipated ones as well: "*The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD*" (Job 1:21).

The Lord gives the Shunammite a child, but then He takes the child away. Notice the Shunammite's response:

2 Kings 4:18-24—*When the child was grown, the day came that he went out to his father to the reapers. 19 He said to his father, "My head, my head." And he said to his servant, "Carry him to his mother." 20 When he had taken him and brought him to his mother, he sat on her lap until noon, and then died. 21 She went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut the door behind him and went out. 22 Then she called to her husband and said, "Please send me one of the servants and one of the donkeys, that I may run to the man of God and return." 23 He said, "Why will you go to him today? It is neither new moon nor sabbath." And she said, "It will be well." 24 Then she saddled a donkey and said to her servant, "Drive and go forward; do not slow down the pace for me unless I tell you."*

Continuing, 2 Kings 4:25-27—*So she went and came to the man of God to Mt. Carmel. When the man of God saw her at a distance, he said to Gehazi his servant, "Behold, there is the Shunammite. 26 Please run now to meet her and say to her, 'Is it well with you? Is it well with your husband? Is it well with the child?'" And she answered, "It is well." 27 When she came to the man of God to the hill, she caught hold of his feet. And Gehazi came near to push her away; but the man of God said, "Let her alone, for her soul is troubled within her; and the Lord has hid it from me and has not told me."*

Observe the Shunammite's behavior, especially her poise and control. The child dies in her lap. She puts him on Elisha's bed. She sends word to her husband, but she does not say anything about the child being dead. She saddles her donkey and gives directions to the servant. She greets Gehazi who has run to meet her. Far from being hysterical, she seems perfectly calm. She

There is a blunt talking to God that is based not in disrespect, but in the sure knowledge that God is God. Finally it is only He with whom we have to do.

has just one thing on her mind, and she knows exactly what she is doing. We could paraphrase it this way, "God, I did not start this. You started this, and I am going to see that You finish it." You might say, "That sounds disrespectful, maybe even blasphemous, doesn't it?" There is a fine line between plainly speaking our minds to God and disrespect. The books of Genesis, Job, and the Psalms are full of saints fiercely telling God their thoughts. The writer of Psalm 74 expresses impatience with God's slowness to judge the wicked and save His people. He cries out in verse 11 (New International Version), "*Why do you hold back your hand, your right hand? Take it from the folds of your garment and destroy them!*" This might be paraphrased, "What are you doing up there, God? Get your hands out of Your pocket!"

Some might consider this disrespectful talk to God. However, there is a blunt talking to God that is based not in disrespect but in the sure knowledge that God is God. Finally, it is only He with whom we have to do. This woman knew her husband did not give her this son. God gave her this son. She knew her husband could not raise the dead, so bringing him out of the field was pointless. Her servant could do nothing. Elisha's servant, Gehazi, could do nothing. (She may have discerned already the corrupt character of Gehazi, which is more than Elisha knew at this time.) No, this thing started with Elisha—not with Elisha the man—but with Elisha the representative of God on earth. So she goes straight to him. The Shunammite does not let go of the Lord until she gets a blessing. Fiercely laying hold of the Lord is good and right; much has been accomplished in history by it. Jacob (Gen. 32:24-32), Abraham (Gen. 18:20-32), and the Shunammite are alike in this. Their idea of being a steward includes intensity and even fierce determination before God.

So, she lays hold of Elisha's feet in verse 28, saying, "*Did I ask for a son from my lord? Did I not say, 'Do not deceive me'?*" In essence she says, "I did not want a child if it was going to mean losing a child. But you gave me a child; now I have lost him. So now what are you going to do?" In response, Elisha sends Gehazi to raise the child from the dead, but Gehazi cannot do it. The Shunammite perseveres. In 2 Kings 4:30, she says, "*As the LORD lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.*" And he [Elisha] arose and followed her. Finally, Elisha goes home with the Shunammite and raises her son from the dead. In verse 36, he says to her, "*Take up your son.*" The story concludes wordlessly in verse 37, "*Then she went in and fell at his feet and bowed herself to the ground, and she took up her son and went out.*"

Here is a ruling mistress who knows where the power is, what the issues are, and how to persevere in prayer. She got dramatic results. All earnest prayer is not answered this immediately or dramatically—most do not receive their dead back. Many have pleaded in prayer for a child, yet one has not been given. Others have prayed for a husband who never comes, or, like Paul, for physical healing which is not given. Yet, God’s answer to Paul in 2 Corinthians 12:9 is the same promise to all of us, “*My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.*” In this trial the Shunammite journeys through her worst fear and finds God sufficient to give, sovereign in taking away, and gracious to restore.

5.3 A test for expanded testimony

The Lord was not through leading the Shunammite through adventures of faith. After He had perfected her faith by giving her a son, taking him away, and giving him back, amazingly, God did the same thing with her wealth. I call this third scene from the Shunammite’s life the test for expanded testimony. The Shunammite was a prominent woman, well-off, and well-connected in the community of Shunam. But all this security is lost:

2 Kings 8:1-2—Now Elisha spoke to the woman whose son he had restored to life, saying, “Arise and go with your household, and sojourn wherever you can sojourn; for the LORD has called for a famine, and it will even come on the land for seven years.” 2 So the woman arose and did according to the word of the man of God, and she went with her household and sojourned in the land of the Philistines seven years.

The Shunammite is now a widow and the head of her household. As a strong woman, she had a good relationship with her husband while he was alive. She consulted him and worked well under his authority. But she also had a relationship with the most powerful man of God in her age.

Prominent and gifted women will often know the strong men of God in their day. (In our age this is much facilitated by the fact that we have books, audios, and videos which help us receive ministry from distinguished men of God.) In this passage, Elisha personally counsels the Shunammite concerning the coming famine. It is appropriate for single women and widows to receive this kind of counsel from godly men in certain situations. In this case, Elisha directs the Shunammite to leave her home and sojourn elsewhere in order to avoid the coming famine. Following this counsel means the Shunammite will lose all her security in society. Nevertheless, she obeys. She uproots her whole household (which may have been considerable), chooses Philistia, and lives there for seven years. Scripture does not tell us what she learned in that pagan and foreign society. No doubt, she had faith adventures in that part of her pilgrimage as well.

We pick up the story after she returns to Israel. Finding herself dispossessed of her familial estate, she goes to court to appeal for the restoration of her lawful due:

2 Kings 8:3-6—At the end of seven years, the woman returned from the land of the Philistines; and she went out to appeal to the king for her house and for her field. 4 Now the king was talking with Gehazi, the servant of the man of God, saying, “Please relate to me all the great things that Elisha has done.” 5 As he was relating to the king how he had restored to life the one who was dead, behold, the woman whose son he had restored to life appealed to the king for her house and for her field.

And Gehazi said, “My lord, O king, this is the woman and this is her son, whom Elisha restored to life. 6 When the king asked the woman, she related it to him. So the king appointed for her a certain officer, saying, “Restore all that was hers and all the produce of the field from the day that she left the land even unto now.”

The Shunammite stands before the king because God gave her wealth and then took it away. Appeal to the king is God’s provision for the redemption of her domain. Because she faithfully pursues this stewardship, God providentially expands her testimony to the highest court in the land. Notice that this expanded testimony about the raising of her son is built on the faithfulness of a lifetime.

5.4 The progress of a pilgrim

Passing the test of opportunity early in life, the Shunammite served Elisha and established a relationship with him. Serving Elisha, she received a son. Receiving a son, she lost him by God’s plan, thereby passing through her worst fear. Meeting her worst fear, she tenaciously pursued God. Fiercely pursuing God, she received an astounding miracle. Having received her son back, she loses husband and home by God’s design. Finally we see her stand before a wicked king to proclaim one of God’s greatest miracles in the entire Old Testament era. God planned this testimony for the Shunammite, and He designed her course so that she would grow to fulfill it. The Shunammite beautifully exemplifies the mistress of the domain—*redeemed*. We can well see the process and progress of her sanctification.

• • • **Personification of Mistress—*redeemed*** •

I am Mistress of the Domain—*redeemed*.

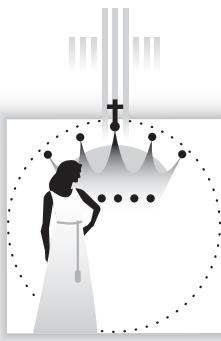
Because of Christ's work, I am restored to my Creator and Suzerain. My evil deeds are paid for, and my rebellious nature has been killed with Christ. I have a new righteous nature which loves God and produces righteous work pleasing to Him. My new spirit is even better than the original creation. My old nature was untested and mortal, that is, capable of dying. Now in Christ, I am immortal and perfectly approved, for Christ's life has been given and credited to me!

My rebirth is a miracle and mystery which only God understands completely. I know I am reconciled with Him forever. Freed from the root causes of my guilt, hostility, fear, and despair, I can now focus on working out in my whole domain an increasingly comprehensive expression of love for God.

The eternal value of my work has been restored to me. Whether a magnum opus or the giving of a cup of water, what I do for Him and in His power is earning me rewards that will last forever. I am neither proud nor guilty. Rather, I am secure and at peace. Increasingly, I know God and I know myself. I have His approval, authority, and power to do works uniquely created for me by Him.

Because I am one of the redeemed, my joy in this world is renewed and infused with hope. Though cursed and passing away, this creation still bears the stamp of God and His majesty. My interest in the arts, sciences, and technologies is intensified. No longer mere avenues of temporary survival, they now bring me rich pictures and tokens of the eternal truths and joys of the age to come. Living and working here are a wonderful means to knowing and glorifying my God.

I have the pilgrim's eye of faith. With it I see God's coming kingdom, the New Heavens, and the New Earth. I work and pray for His Kingdom to come and rejoice that remaking will touch all His works—not just my spirit. The lion will lie down with the lamb, His righteousness will cover the earth as the sea, and all creation will praise Him together. I look forward to this and work for the prize of His words, "*Well done, My good and faithful servant.*"



Bible Study of Mistress—redeemed

Before beginning this study, read the entire lesson, pages 59-69.

But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus, in order that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ... For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

EPHESIANS 2:4-7, 10

The third Biblical view of woman

Redeemed by God through Christ, woman’s image of God is reborn, her fellowship is restored, and her capacity to serve is renewed.

The great salvation of the Triune God

When Adam fell, his dominion fell with him. All men and women born after Adam are in Adam—estranged from God, struggling to live in a cursed, earthly domain. At the cross, Jesus satisfied God’s perfect justice by paying the penalty Adam’s sons and daughters could not pay. John 3:16—*For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.* In Christ, God and His rebellious representatives are reconciled, their natures reborn, and their capacity to serve God restored.

1. Many people know that Jesus saves, but they do not clearly understand the concept of **justification**. In your own words, explain what it means to be justified (refer to 2 Cor. 5:21; Col. 2:13-14; p. 59; and a dictionary).

2. God is both just and the Justifier of sinners who believe. How can He be both (Rom. 3:21-26)? Look up the word **propitiation** and include it in your answer.

Redemption in Christ is both an event and a process. Like physical life, spiritual life begins with the birth of something tiny, weak, and infantile. Physical life has a beginning and continues to develop and mature. Spiritual life begins with a new birth (at the time of justification) and matures over time. Jesus says, “*You must be born again*” (John 3:7). Peter says, ... *grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ* (2 Pet. 3:18). This process has many names—sanctification, learning to love God, growing toward maturity in Christ, and walking the Christian walk. We may also understand this process as being redeemed as mistresses of our domains.

3. Look once more at the diagram on page 51. Read the name of each human attribute and its fallen description. Then read the redeemed description. The character of every Christian should be moving from the list on the left to the one on the right. Ephesians 4:17-32 is a basic text on the transformation each Christian should make from fallen to redeemed life in Christ. Read this passage carefully, listing below characteristics of fallen life, redeemed life, and the imperatives which tell us what we should do to be transformed.

Characteristics of the fallen	Characteristics of the redeemed	Imperatives for me

4. Outline a short testimony about your own redemption. Be specific about when it began (if you can), your progress, the source of your spiritual strength, and your hope for the future. Use these four words somewhere in your writing: Justification, sanctification, glorification, and pilgrimage (refer to Phil. 3:20-21, Titus 2:11-14, pp. 59-63, and your work in question 3).

God is saving His creation in the same order in which it fell. The hearts of Adam and Eve fell first. Only later were their dominions cursed. Just so, with salvation, Jesus first saves the human heart by a work of regeneration. Only later will He save our bodies and our world. While we wait for the redemption of the physical world and our own bodies, we are on a pilgrim journey. As we journey, the Lord is using our domains to perfect us in our worship and service to Him.

The Shunammite woman: A steward and a pilgrim

The portrait of the Shunammite woman in 2 Kings 4 and 8 is one of the most complete feminine biographies of Scripture. In the three episodes recorded from her life, we see her as a mistress ruling her domain—as a steward and as a pilgrim. God perfected and matured this godly woman as He journeyed with her through life. Read her story and answer the following questions.

A test of opportunity

5. A prominent and well-to-do woman without children, the Shunammite ruled what we might call disposable income. What did she do with her opportunity (2 Kin. 4:8-10)?

6. In ruling her home and its ministry of hospitality, how did she relate to her husband's authority (2 Kin. 4:8-10)?

A test of fear

7. Do you think the Shunammite really wanted a son? Why did she answer as she did in verse 16 (2 Kin. 4:10-17)?

8. Why did the Shunammite accuse Elisha of deceiving her in verse 28 (2 Kin. 4:18-31)? What do you think she feared most?

9. Why does the Bible say we should fear nothing more than God (Is. 8:12-13; Matt. 10:28-31)?

God did not want the Shunammite to desire or fear anything in a closet locked away from openness to His faithfulness and sovereignty. In fulfilling her desire for a child, God took her through her worst fear in order to become more completely the Lord of her life. Unlike the Shunammite, not all of our great desires are fulfilled (2 Kin. 4:32-37). Many of us have not received back our dead. Vast numbers have pleaded in prayer for a child and yet, one has not been given. Others have prayed for a husband who never comes, or, like Paul, for physical healing which is not given. Yet God's answer to Paul in such circumstances (2 Cor. 12:7-10) is the same promise to all of us: "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness" (v. 9). There is room in the company of God for those who walk in broken bodies, with broken hearts, and for those who walk alone. His grace is sufficient.

Commit your way
to the Lord, trust
also in Him, and
He will do it. And
He will bring forth
your righteousness
as the light, and your
judgment as the
noonday.
PSALM 37:5-6

Between the printing of the fourth edition of this book in the summer of 1995 and the writing of the fifth edition in the summer of 1997, God took our precious daughter, Francesca, home to Him. She was diagnosed with a brain tumor on January 9, 1996, and died April 21, 1997. Over the months of her illness, I often thought of the following passage I had written in the *Mistress—redeemed* lecture:

"The loss of a child is one of the great natural fears of my life personally. I cannot think of a greater trial or test of faith. Those who have been through it say it is a pain unlike any other. Yet fixing on earthly fears is the opposite of faith. Somehow we must strive to keep the attitude of Job about real trials and anticipated ones as well: "The Lord giveth, the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1:21). (Refer to p. 65.)

Having now journeyed through this fear on our pilgrimage, Bill and I can heartily attest that God's grace was and is sufficient. His power is perfected in our weakness. We are grateful to God for giving us Francesca, for saving her, and for sanctifying her into such a beautiful person in nine short years. God gave us the grace to let her go, and He gives us the assurance of her safety day by day. Beyond that, and most precious of all, Christ's work gives us the joyful hope of seeing her again.

10. If we are honest with ourselves and God, we will acknowledge that we have faced something which we fear more than we trust God's power and faithfulness. What is one of these fears in your life? What do you think would help you overcome it?

A test for testimony

11. After God had perfected the faith of the Shunammite by giving her a son, taking him away, and giving him back, God did the same thing with her wealth! How did the Shunammite's legal needs result in an expanded testimony for the Lord (2 Kin. 8:1-6)?

12. What was the content of the Shunammite's testimony before the king (2 Kin. 8:5-6)?

Being redeemed in your domain and on your pilgrimage

13. Have you ever found that the most difficult things you have experienced in life become the basis for your testimony to others later on? Can you think of a specific example?

14. In the Mistress—*created* lesson, you were asked to inventory your domain by categorizing your life into areas of responsibility. Now inventory your life again, this time as a pilgrimage, a journey with forks and turns and different sections in the road. For example, parts of a pilgrimage might include decisions (to marry, to take a different job, to retrain), or eras of life (the empty nest, mothering toddlers, mothering teens, caregiving for invalids or the elderly).

Apply Psalm 37:5-6 to some portion of your pilgrimage. Commit "this section of the road" to the Lord and ask Him to make your righteousness as the light.

Learning...
to see God
and rule my
domain for
Him.



1. In one or two paragraphs, write how you would describe this aspect to your daughter or a friend. Feel free to incorporate other creative formats, such as a prayer, song, poem, recipe, story, skit, or even a sketch illustrating this aspect. Include all the basic truths about this aspect.

2. What part of this aspect has meant the most to your life? Why?

5. For each of the following categories, identify and describe one woman you think displays in a clear and obvious way the mistress-of-the-domain aspect. Briefly explain your choice—what you see in this woman’s life or character which illustrates this aspect. You may mention more than one woman, if you wish.

a. A character from the Bible

b. A woman from history (ancient to recent)

c. A fictional character in a novel, fairy tale, legend, etc.
