

Preface

Some of the material in this present writing is excerpted from an earlier book published in 1975, titled *A Woman's Worth*. Another writer has preempted that title to set forth a quite different agenda, therefore not to be confused with the theme of this book.

The compulsion to write this book was born out of my own experience in the business world, as wife and mother, as friend and counselor. At that time it appeared little attention was directed within the Christian community to the basic issues of identity and equality, and biblical terms such as "submission", "authority" and "headship" were in serious need of review. The church had long been remiss in giving honest and in-depth consideration to our sexuality. To fill this vacuum, many reactionary and polarizing views were being aired.

Our hope was that as Spirit-instructed and gifted men and women sought with integrity the biblical perspectives that would clarify and heal us all, the Body of Christ could address our wounded, confused society with the radical and revolutionary realities of Truth and Love which God has revealed to us through His Word, that our understanding of God would inform and correct our perceptions.

Twenty years later, it seems we are in danger of losing more ground than we have gained through the avid--sometimes morbid--and far too introspective discussions that have been spawned in the name of "religion." The system of hermeneutics once considered the norm for evangelicals, has been virtually turned on its head. Biblical interpretation is at the mercy of any who can offer academic degrees, and/or compelling subjectivity (the two combined are powerful, indeed), and it appears women are now being given preferential treatment as theological gurus. Overreaching for "equality," men have too easily abdicated their leadership responsibility and women have too eagerly replaced them. And once again the unity of the Body of Christ has been jeopardized as extreme positions are taken and categories are hardened. We have not yet learned the difference between compromise and the consistency of biblical Truth. Biblical truth is multi-faceted and dynamic. It is neither simplistic and rigid nor fanatical and arbitrary.

Is this issues-captivated church, consumed as we are with relational fever, the spectacle of God's character the world so desperately needs, even hungers, to see? Are the questions we raise, the answers we seek, coming from transformed minds, obedient wills and hearts hungry to serve purely for Jesus' sake? Is our discussion bringing healing to our brokenness, and are we now instructed to face our circumstances with godly contentment, knowing that God says who we are and why we are here?

Does the "city set on a hill" now more convincingly model a community that relates and serves like our Master? Has society benefited from our debate, from the role-shifting, lexicon-dueling, the "biblical" presumptions? Or have we premised our debate on the secular value system, simply cloaking it in religious biblical terminology? Are we self-deceived, religious entrepreneurs, in a struggle for personal power and prestige?

My husband, who faithfully pastored me for more than forty years, is now in the Presence of the Lord Jesus whom he served so well. It was his desire that I again address our mutual concerns for biblical coherency, and particularly for the straightforward, "simple" message of who are in Christ. It is this shared concern which prompts me to offer this revived and somewhat edited reprint of *A Woman's Worth*.

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