

## GOD: A MODEL FOR FEMININITY

### Introduction

Netflix has produced an adaption of Anne of Green Gables called “Anne-with an E.” Carrie and I really enjoyed this series with its drama, poetic language, and context. In Episode 4, Anne, a young teenage girl, was experiencing lots of negativity from her peers at school. Middle school problems. As a result, she stopped going to class. Instead she pretended to go to school each day. Much of her time was spent in the woods reading to pine cones and pretending they were her students. When Marilla, Anne’s caretaker, uncovered Anne’s scheme she arranged a meeting between her brother, Anne, the town preacher, and herself. During the meeting Anne expressed her desire to not attend school because no one liked her. After a little conversation, the preacher said, "I see what the problem is here. I have divined an answer. This problem is easily solved. If the girl doesn't want to go to school then she shouldn't go. She should stay at home and learn proper house keeping until she marries. Then the Lord God said, it is not good that the man should be alone I will make him a helper fit for him. There is no need for her to bother with an education. Every young woman should learn how to be a good wife." And to you I ask, Is this really what God had in mind when he made woman a helper? Is this what it means to be a *good* wife? Is helping confined to household chores? If it is, then is it truly helping if you’re doing it alone? (joke)

The sermon title of today is “God: A Model for Femininity.” Today's sermon is *not* about women's position within church leadership. This is a sermon on women's expression of God's image in everyday life. My aim is to magnify a biblical perspective of husbands as it relates to their wives and challenge husbands to adopt a collaborative approach to life and ministry with their wives. My aim is for single women and wives to take seriously and personally the scripture that says, "The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, *and he helps me*. My heart leaps for joy, and with my song I praise him" (Ps. 28:7). This text doesn't say he gives strength (although he does)...it says he is your strength, your helper. The identity you have as a helper is derived from God's function and identity as a helper. It is not an inferior title. My aim is for single men to have a higher view of women & to get their affairs in order so as to encourage and

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accommodate a godly woman. Today, the Spirit will speak in hundreds of ways I have not intended. So let the one who has ears to hear listen to what the Spirit will say.

### **WHAT DID YOU HEAR ME SAY?**

#### **I. Yahweh as Helper and the Theme of Dominion**

Psalm 146 shows us Yahweh as helper and it presents the theme of his dominion. Yahweh is praised for who he is and for what he has done. Because of his character, displayed in his actions, he is to be praised, and relied upon. Hence the common phrase, “Trust in the Lord.” As we survey this passage we see God’s command to not put confidence in human beings. Ultimately, from God’s perspective, people are powerless. The limitations of being human are magnified by our lack of permanence in the world. People die and their plans will die with them. Yahweh lives on and his plans are never derailed. Those who rely on, trust in, and have confidence in him are considered blessed or happy. “Blessed/Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord their God.” Notice in verse 5 help is not a verb, it is a noun. Help is what God is. The Hebrew for help is Ezer (Ay-zer). This word is used 21x in the Old Testament; 16 of those times it refers to Yahweh. In several cases it is connected to the theme of rescuing and acting powerfully. Ezer or help is also used to identify the woman when she was created in Genesis 2:18, but more on that later. Psalms 146:5 leads us to ask, how is God the help of his people? The answer is revealed in the following verses exploding with demonstrations of God’s help. He is maker of heaven and earth; he remain faithful; he uphold the cause of the oppressed; he sets prisoners free; he gives sight to the blind; he lifts up the lowly; he loves the righteous; he watches over the foreigner & he sustains the fatherless and the widow; he frustrates the plans of the wicked; he reigns forever. Wonderful word pictures of what it looks like for God to be our helper.

Now, lets move to the book of Exodus to continue exploring the theme of help & dominion. Moses named one of his sons Eliezer which means God is my helper. Exodus

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18:3-4 tells us why Moses gave him this name. It says, beginning at the end of verse 3, “One son was named Gershom, for Moses said, “I have become a foreigner in a foreign land”; and the other was named Eliezer, for he said, “My father’s God was my helper; he saved me from the sword of Pharaoh.” We see the word ezer once again translated as helper. Yahweh helped Moses by rescuing him from being killed by Pharaoh. My father’s God is my ezer, said Moses. What thoughts, feelings or images come to mind when you hear of God as Moses’ helper? Should you feel sorry for God since he is in the role of being a helper? Is this an inferior position? Should you feel sorry for God or for Pharaoh? Ezer, helper, is not an inferior role. What we want to find out is how God helped Moses by rescuing him? (Tell the story of Exodus 13:17-22; 14:1-29). Within these texts, I hear a story of dominion, power, and critical support.

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### II. The Woman as Helper and the Theme of Dominion

- **Genesis 1:25-28**

God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

- **26** Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that *they* may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”

- **27**

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

- **28** God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and

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over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

- **Genesis 2:18**
- **15** The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. **16** And the Lord God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; **17** but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.” **18** The Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a *helper* suitable for him.”

What do we see here? We see a man who knows his place in the world. He sees the responsibilities and opportunities that God has provided as a stewardship. The woman, his counterpart, is a co-ruler with him in those opportunities, responsibilities, and stewardship. Now, having learned *ezer* is not an inferior title, let's look at the woman, the helper. She is a strong and mighty helper that exercises dominion alongside the man. It's her identity not simply her function. She is to partner with man in ruling over the created world and implementing the commands of God. Married brothers, what kind of men ought we to be if this is our wives job description? In these texts we see that *she was created to be like God*. To rule over all that God has made. In Christ, her destiny is to reign with him, forever (Rev. 22:5). Dominion is experienced through implementing, putting into action, the King's commands. The man and woman are learning how to rule with God by obeying God's commands. They get to act out what is good and right in the eyes of God, dominion. The man was placed in the garden that God made in order to cultivate it. Therefore, the man is a steward of God's possessions. The man was given God's command. Therefore, the man is a steward of God's authority, which empowers him to act on God's behalf and from God's resources. After man was placed in the garden and given the command from God, God created a counterpart, the woman, as a helper. This leads us to a common sense question. *Help him do what?* To rule and implement, put into action, the commands of God.

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**III. Your Helper Will Rule the World**

“Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.” 1 Peter 3:7

God wants men to progressively study their wives and apply the knowledge. Don't wing it. We're commanded to value our wives as a co-inheritor of the gift of life (eternal life-Rev. 22:5). Why? So your prayers will not be hindered. Hinder means to block, impede, to cut in the way of a moving object, to detain. Synonyms for detain—hold, take into custody, confine, imprison. We are to value our wives as the people through whom God will rule the world; the people with whom we will reign, forever. Not honoring them equals having an unproductive, locked down, and quarantined prayer life. As C.S Lewis said, “It is a serious thing to live in a society of possible gods and goddesses, to remember that the dullest most uninteresting person you can talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship...” If you saw her now in the glory, which she will have in the future, you would be tempted to worship. In consideration of her destiny and present position in Christ, honor her. The home is the place where man learns to rule with his wife.

**IV. Parallels: God as Helper and Woman as Helper (Psalm 146 & Proverbs 31)**

**Psalm 146:6 - *Faithfulness***

He is the Maker of heaven and earth,  
the sea, and everything in them—

*he remains faithful forever.*

**Proverbs 31:11-12**

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Her husband has full confidence in her  
and lacks nothing of value.

She brings him good, not harm,  
*all the days of her life.*

### **Psalm 146:7-9 – *Helps the needy***

He *upholds the cause of the oppressed*  
and gives food to the hungry.

The Lord sets prisoners free,  
the Lord gives sight to the blind,  
the Lord lifts up those who are bowed down,  
the Lord loves the righteous.

The Lord watches over the foreigner  
and sustains the fatherless and the widow,  
but he frustrates the ways of the wicked.

### **Proverbs 31:20**

She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands *to the needy.*

### **Psalm 146:1-2 – *Worthy of praise***

*Praise the Lord.*

Praise the Lord, my soul.

I will praise the Lord all my life;  
I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.

### **Proverbs 31:28-31**

Her children arise and call her blessed;  
her husband also, and he praises her:

“Many women do noble things,  
but you surpass them all.”

Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting;

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*but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.*

Honor her for all that her hands have done,  
and let her works bring her praise at the city gate.

### **Psalm 146:8b – *Values righteousness***

...the Lord *loves the righteous.*

### **Proverbs 31:10; 30**

A wife of *noble character* who can find?

She is worth far more than rubies.

...a woman who *fears the Lord* is to be praised.

**Noble/Virtuous (meaning)** - strength, efficiency wealth, army. *Translations:* able; capability; excellence; elite army; mighty; power; valiant; wealth; worthy; great; warriors; strong; substance.

### **Application:**

God is your source of identity. WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO YOU? (Discuss) I am learning to seek my wife's help in my strengths and not simply my weaknesses. I am learning to seek her mind in regards to strategy, networking, and missions. I told her recently that I needed her because she bears the image of God and can reflect His image in ways, which make my limitations obvious. I am seeking to nurture humility and a collaborative approach to life and ministry.