

the best *you can be*

Lesson

2

A FULFILLED *woman*

"Then Peter said, 'Silver and gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.'"

Acts 3:6



OFTEN DURING OUR LIVES, we try to live up to other's expectations of us. We may even expect too much from ourselves at times. We can't always do things perfectly or just right because we are human, with the frailties we are born with. The world is full of messages which sometimes make us feel inadequate. If we consider others to be more successful, we will always feel inferior or not good enough. We need to claim who we are in Christ and look at what God might expect from us. Let's think more about this today as we contemplate what it really means to be a Fulfilled Woman.

Remember that God knows the situation we were born into and the talents He has blessed us with. Matthew 25:14-30 tells the parable of the talents. We are to use our talents to bless others and to bring praise and glory to God.

EXPECTATIONS FOR MY ROLE?

- 1. Parents and Grandparents.** What role did they provide for us? We may want to emulate the role our parents or grandparents set, or we may not. We may be able to accomplish some of the goals they want for us, but not others. Be realistic about your own talents.
- 2. Husband.** We can sometimes become frustrated trying to be everything we think our husband wants us to be. Or we can just relax and be the woman he loved and married.
- 3. Church members.** Often we try to live up to the expectations we feel the church members may have for us. Sometimes the pressure becomes too much. On the other hand, it is important to be involved and to



share one's talents. Be comfortable setting limits on how much you can do.

- 4. Children.** There is no way we can be all that our children may want us to be. We need divine wisdom to help us. And it is important to remember that our marriage partner is our first and foremost priority.
- 5. Culture.** Cultural expectations vary around the world. Moving to another culture can change the expectations for ourselves and others around us. We need to learn to be culturally sensitive—always listening, learning, and being patient. Seek first to understand before being understood.
- 6. God.** Trying to live up to the expectations of others around us can be very tiring and difficult. But what does God expect from us? Who does He expect us to be? What role does He expect us to fill?

THE G FACTOR

The G FACTOR (Gift Factor) is illustrated by the story of the beggar at the gate called Beautiful in Jerusalem. Two strangers, Peter and John, stopped and looked at him and gave him what they had, the gift of healing (see Acts 3:6).

We cannot give what we don't possess. God does not expect us to give to others what He has not first given to us. As Adventist women, we are to share with people, not according to their expectations but according to the way the Lord has gifted us.

GIVING WHAT I HAVE

Operating by the G Factor is freeing. Using our gifts to bless others is so much easier when we remember we can only give what God has given us. I might not have the gift of singing or music, but I may have the gift of a listening ear or of laughter that I can give. God does not expect us to give what He has not given us.

ESTHER'S GIFTS

Once there was a woman so lovely that she won a beauty contest and ended up in the king's harem. But Esther had more than beauty. She had a strong character and a love for the Lord and her people. She was willing to place all her gifts on the line. She understood that her gifts had brought her to the kingdom and "royal position for such a time as this" (Esther 4:14).

Could it be that we, as Adventist women, have also come to the kingdom for this hour in earth's history? We each have gifts, abilities, and dreams. We have talents and opportunities. What are we doing with what we have? Consider: What gifts, dreams, friendships, and interests do I have? What will not get done in my corner of the world if I do not do it?



RATE YOURSELF

Below are a few of the gifts Adventist women possess. Check those that you have and are thus able to share.

shopping	saving money	garage sales
speaking	relating to kids	sewing
singing	storytelling	crafts
cooking	playing instrument	gardening
organization	cleaning	parties
writing	baking	evangelism
decorating	flower arranging	encouragement
nature study	thoughtfulness	listening
helping	selling	visiting
sensitivity	common sense	driving
fixing things	conflict management	teaching
drawing	Bible study	prayer

PERSONAL GROWTH EXERCISES

1. Can you think of a time when you got into trouble trying to live up to other people's expectations?
2. Make a list of all the church offices you have held. Which ones were enjoyable experiences? Which were frustrating efforts? In which were you trying to give what you did not possess?

3. Read the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30. Then make a list of your talents, gifts, and abilities. Try to think of at least 10 items.
4. Read the chapter titled "Talents" in *Christ's Object Lessons* by E. G. White. What other talents does she suggest that you have not listed? Add them to your list now. What does she suggest you can do to increase your number of talents?
5. Choose one of your talents that you would like to see improved. How can you enlarge it? Are there classes you can attend, an online course you can take, books you can read, or someone you know who can help you grow in that area? Make a definite plan to strengthen and use that one talent. Take the first step this week.
6. Read 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12, and Ephesians 4. Make a list of the gifts of the Spirit. Circle those that you think you have. Do you see relationships between your gifts?
7. If you have never taken a Spiritual Gifts Inventory, ask your pastor to give you one. Better yet, if possible, attend a seminar about spiritual gifts.

God has gifted each one of us with many talents. There are special gifts that only you

have. Each one of us is unique, and when we use the special gifts that God has bestowed on us, we will be fulfilled. We need to cultivate those gifts and talents, using them to bring blessing to others and honor and glory to God.

SUCCESS PRINCIPLE

God does not expect us to give to others what He has not first given to us.

MY PRAYER FOR TODAY

Dear God, Thank You for the gifts and talents You have given me. I want to use them and multiply them for the blessing of other people and for honoring You. Please give me a willing and obedient heart to follow Your leading. Only in this way can I be fulfilled.



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