

International Women's Day of Prayer March 1, 2025

SERMON

Reach Out

Written by Charissa Torossian

WORKSHOP

Discovering the Joy of Being His Daughter

Written by Charissa Torossian



This sermon resource packet was prepared by the
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Seventh-day Adventist® Church

GENERAL CONFERENCE
WORLD HEADQUARTERS



WOMEN'S MINISTRIES

January 9, 2025

Dear Sisters,

Warm greetings from the General Conference Women's Ministries Department!
The International Women's Day of Prayer is approaching, and we are so blessed by the material written for us by Charissa Torossian.

Being a pastor's wife and a mother, Charissa is also a powerful preacher and likes to dig deeper into biblical text. Her sermon is about a woman who reached out to Jesus in faith. We all need to reach out to Jesus. We all have our own unspoken prayer requests or problems, challenges, and sicknesses. Will this story tell us something we need in our lives today?

The workshop is about how to discover the joy of being God's daughter. Do you enjoy being a woman? Does it mean a lot to you? What does God expect from us? Are His expectations too high? Can you identify with the woman from Proverbs 31?

May God bless the International Women's Day of Prayer in your locations! May His Spirit unite us all and show us new ways to reach out to God and people around us. May this day be brightened by Jesus' love and hope that with Him the best is yet to come!

With love,

Stele

Galina Stele, D.Min.,
Women's Ministries Director

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Program Notes

Please feel free to translate, adjust, and edit the resource packet according to your division’s needs, including the best Bible version for your use. Also, you are free to adapt the packet according to your cultural audience. When your division has translated the packet, please send us the digital files. We will share French, Portuguese, and Spanish with you when we receive it. Other languages will be uploaded directly on our website.

<https://women.adventist.org/women-s-ministries-emphasis-day>

About the Author

Charissa Torossian

Charissa began preaching at 16 years of age in Sydney, Australia. After finishing High School, she studied to be a High School teacher of English and History but love for ministry took her to Avondale College where she completed her graduate studies in Theology and worked for Adventist Media in their Discovery Bible School. She married Justin in January 2019, and together they have a 2-year-old son, Judah. They are now based in Newcastle, Australia, where they serve in the North New South Wales Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Charissa is passionate about presenting on the Bible and its relevance in our time. She has spoken to audiences around the world and is currently serving as the Prayer Ministry Coordinator for the North New South Wales Conference in Australia. She and her husband Justin love serving in ministry and seeing people join God's end-time church!

Scripture References

All scripture verses used by the author in this packet are quoted from NKJV, unless otherwise noted.

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Outline of Divine Service

Suggested Order of Service

Call to Worship

Opening Prayer

Scripture Reading

Mark 5:32-34, NKJV

And He looked around to see her who had done this thing. But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth. And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction."

Hymn: #326

Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal

"Open My Eyes That I May See"

Pastoral Prayer

Children's Offering and Story

"Wonderfully Made Giraffes"

Call for the Offering

Special Music or Hymn

Sermon

Hymn: #526

Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal

"Because He Lives"

Closing Prayer

-end-

Wonderfully Made Giraffes

Written by Charissa Torossian

Proposal: Pictures of giraffes would be helpful for this story.

Have you ever thought about what life would be like if you were a giraffe? Probably not. 😊 How many of you have seen a giraffe in the zoo or in the wild? Giraffes are beautiful and amazing creatures made by our amazing God. Let's learn some amazing facts about giraffes.

On average, giraffes only sleep for about 2 hours a day. That's not much is it? Since giraffes give birth standing up, when a newborn calf is born, they fall more than 5 feet or 1.5 meters (*demonstrate with your arms*) to the ground! How about that for a start in life. 😊 But guess what? Within the first 15 minutes after that baby calf is born, it struggles up and stands up on its long, gangly legs to its birth height of 6 feet or 1.8 meters. That's a tall baby isn't it!

Giraffes can move fast. When running away from dangerous predators like lions, a giraffe can gallop for a short time at speeds up to almost 40 miles per hour or 70 km/hr. That is faster than most of us drive to church! Sadly, many newborn calves do not survive their first year, but the ones that do survive can live up to 20 years in the wild. Adult giraffes usually try to avoid predators by using their high vantage point, swift gallop, and powerful kick, which can kill a lion. It is that strong. God made giraffes to have a brown and cream pattern on their bodies that helps to camouflage them from predators, meaning they can hide more easily and not be seen. And guess what! Even though the patterns on the hide of a giraffe might look identical to us, each giraffe has its own unique markings. How amazing is that? Did you know that no one else in the whole world has the same fingerprint as you? That's how special you are! God made you that way, and He made the giraffes special too. 😊

He made the giraffe to have a beautiful long neck, which is so it can find food for itself among the leaves of the trees by using its 20-inch/50cm tongues to pluck off the leaves. The giraffe also uses its long neck to communicate. It shows submission by stretching its neck straight and tall with nose pointed up, and it shows aggression by swooping down its neck to the ground. Male giraffes even use their long necks to fight for dominance. It's like they do an arm wrestle, but with their necks.

What sound does a giraffe make? Giraffes are mostly silent creatures besides a few grunts, but scientists have picked up low-frequency sounds, called infrasound waves, which they now think giraffes may use to communicate over long distances. That is incredible.

Giraffes are the tallest animal on land. Their lungs are 8 times larger than ours so that sufficient oxygen can be sent all the way up their long necks to their brains. God made them so special that they can raise their necks up and bring them down quickly without fainting or getting dizzy. 😊 Giraffes are truly amazing creatures, made by our amazing God. You and I may not be 5m/18feet tall like giraffes...but just as they can reach up high for food that gives them life, you and I can reach up to God in faith, because God gives us spiritual life! In our message today, we are going to learn about a woman who reached out to Jesus, and it changed her life forever. The next time you see a giraffe, remember that God made them special, and He has made you extra special and He loves you so much. Would someone like to close with prayer?

(Invite a child to pray.)

-end of story-

Sermon

Reach Out

Written by Charissa Torossian

*Now when Jesus had crossed over again by boat to the other side of the lake, a **great multitude gathered to Him**; and He was by the sea. And behold, one of the rulers of the synagogue came, Jairus by name. And when he saw Him, he fell **at His feet** and **begged Him earnestly**, saying, "My little daughter lies at the point of death. Come and lay Your hands on her, that she may be healed, and she will live." So Jesus went with him, and a great multitude followed Him and **thronged Him**.*

Mark 5:21-24

All verses in the sermon are from New King James Version unless otherwise noted.

INTRODUCTION

Anyone who has had a parent, been a parent, or watched a parent knows that when a child is sick it breaks the parent's heart. If your baby gets sick, you get help as soon as possible!

One day a man named Jairus, which in Hebrew means "God enlightens," **pressed through** a massive crowd to find Jesus. Everyone in Capernaum must have known who he was—at least everyone who attended the synagogue. They knew him and they knew her, his daughter. Jairus came to Jesus because all other medical help had failed him and at that very moment, his precious little girl was dying. Nevertheless, he *believed that if Jesus could come and touch her, she would live*. However, time was running out for her; he needed a quick answer. Anxiously, he begged Jesus to *hurry* with him to his home and lay His healing hands on her.

Like Jairus, if we want to receive answers to our prayers:

We, too, must put ourselves in the presence of Jesus.

We, too, must humble ourselves sincerely before Jesus.

We must lay our request before Him earnestly and have complete confidence in the power and goodness of God.

However, the crowd was not there for the same reasons as Jairus. They just had an appetite to see a miracle, and they were eager for the best view.

The Greek word for "thronged" is used only once by Mark in this story, and it implies that the crowd was pressing in about Jesus on all sides with **suffocating** pressure. In Luke 8:42, Luke used a different word which literally means "to strangle completely"—even to *drown* or *choke*! If you have been in a hurry to get somewhere in thick traffic, you know just a little of how Jairus' must have been feeling. What happens next would shake his faith to the core...

HER CRISIS

Mark 5:25-26: "Now **a certain woman** had a flow of blood for twelve years, and had suffered many things from many physicians. She had spent all that she had and was no better, but rather grew worse."

A *certain woman* is singled out from this crowd. We do not know her name, **but we know her crisis**. While Jairus had been enjoying 12 years of joy LIVING with his daughter, she, most likely unmarried and childless, had endured 12 years of DYING with a hemorrhage. That is a long time. Think of all the things you have accomplished in the last 12 years!

This *lingering, chronic* illness had led to a loss of vitality and continual social embarrassment for her. **She felt her life ebbing away every day**. The doctors of the day had done nothing for her except leave her penniless; Mark said she had suffered from them! Worse still, according to the religious teachers of the law, she was perpetually "**unclean**," subjected to "Levitical prohibitions," meaning *she was unable to touch or be touched by anyone!* Think about it: what she sat on was unclean; what she slept on was unclean. For everyone, but especially for women, relationships with family and friends are the stuff of life! For 12 slow years, she had lived in **appalling loneliness**—like a leper—cut off from a community who did not want to touch her. She knew that if she did not find a cure, it would be the end for her!

Her ceremonial defilement pictures perfectly how sin defiles us too. Sin separates us from God, and from each other. Our sin is just as embarrassing and costly as her predicament was to her. Just as her disease was slowly killing her, so, too, does sin sap us of our life forces, leading us to certain death. We try to treat it by seeing all kinds of "doctors": "Doctor Pleasure," "Doctor Entertainment," "Doctor Career," but just as her situation was hopeless, sin is likewise a hopeless problem apart from the Great Physician; there is no human cure for sin.

HER CONTACT WITH CHRIST

Mark 5:27-28: "When **she heard about Jesus**, she came behind Him in the crowd and touched His garment. For she said, 'If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well'."

Someone had told her about Jesus because somehow, she knew: ALL who **came** to Him were healed. ALL whom He **touched** were made whole. ALL who **reached out** to Him had their lives changed radically. Since she had exhausted every other option, she thought to herself, "**Jesus is worth a try!**"

But she did not think that someone like her could ask Jesus for help. But she supposes that maybe if she could just **reach out and touch the hem of His garment**, she could experience some of His miraculous, healing power in her life.

The Bible says she came *behind* Him in the crowd. No doubt, she could barely see His form among the masses of that multitude. Yet still she pushes her way through the crowd, edging closer and still closer to Jesus' side. The closer she came, the stronger and stronger her faith grew. Soon the Great Physician she had only ever heard about, only ever dreamed about, was but a few **steps away!** All around her, the current of the crowd pushed her back. But she was determined. It was now or never. She had nothing to lose, and everything to gain.

She was looking for God's touch in her life, and so in one DARING act, she took a leap of faith, and lunged forward, reaching between the legs of the multitude, managing to just barely touch the hem of His garment. In that moment was concentrated the faith of her life.

Her actions speak volumes to people like you and me. She was not putting her hand out for a handout. She was not following Jesus as a spectator there for the show. **She had one priority—she had to REACH Jesus.** She was not in the crowd for the atmosphere, or to watch the action, or to draw any attention to herself. They were the last things on her mind! She had not just bumped into Him. She was there because she had a need, and right then, all she needed was Jesus. That is why she touched Him. She had put her heart into reaching Jesus, and God saw her heart, just as He sees ours today.

HIS MIRACULOUS CURE

Mark 5:29-30: *"Immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of the affliction. And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that power had gone out of Him, turned around in the crowd and said, 'Who touched My clothes?'"*

When Jesus asked, "Who touched Me?" only one person in that crowd knew who it was, and she must have frozen. She was **immediately** healed, and Jesus **immediately** knew! Now I am not a doctor. My Handy Guide to Modern Science is simple. If it is green or wiggles, its biology. If it smells, it is chemistry. And if it does not work, it is physics. ☺ But there is no medicine in this story. Something SUPERNATURAL transpired that day; **it was a miracle.** And she did not even have to pay for it. ☺

Christ's power was greater than her issue. According to the thinking of the day, by her touch Jesus should have been made unclean, but instead, this touch made her whole. Nothing is impossible with God! As Spurgeon put it, "a piece of fringe and a finger sufficed to form a contact between a believing sufferer and an Almighty Saviour. Along that line faith sent its message, and love returned the answer."

I am sure she wanted to thank Jesus, but there was no way she was going to interrupt Him on His important mission to touch a dying girl. So quietly, she tried to slip back into that crowd, but Jesus suddenly stopped. Her faith had arrested His attention; faith in Jesus always does.

HIS CONCERN AND CALL

Mark 5:31-33: *"But His disciples said to Him, "You see the multitude thronging You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?' And He looked around to see her who had done this thing. But the woman, **fearing and trembling, knowing** what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth."*

Luke's gospel (Luke 8:45) says it was Peter who asked. It is no surprise; he was ever the one who said what everyone else might have been thinking. He said, *"Everyone is touching You, Lord! We have hardly been able to get closer to Jairus' house!"*

However, Jesus was not asking this question for His own information. **He knew someone had reached out to Him in faith.** Do not ask me how He knew, but He knew. And she knew. The unclean, unwanted, untouchable woman knew. He wanted His disciples, the crowd, this woman, and by extension, all of us, to learn an important lesson. While she took the initiative to approach Him, a saving relationship with Jesus does not come at OUR initiative. Romans 5:8: *"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."* She needed to know that Jesus had reached out to her! He wanted everyone to know He approved of her faith. To have let her go without doing so would have left her with only half a blessing.

The Bible tells us she was trembling because people like her were not supposed to be in this crowd. In my mind's eye, in the power of that moment, I see her falling to her knees with tears wondering, *"What will Jesus say when He finds out that I am the one who touched Him?"* The crowd was taking notice, and they were making judgments. *"She is untouchable! Unclean! Does not He know who she is?"* **But Jesus knew what He was doing. Jesus wanted to restore her in every way possible.**

She fell at Jesus' feet and told her story. Everything. To everyone. Her condition, the doctors, all her savings gone. She told how she had heard Jesus, watched Him, and schemed to touch Him. She told of her total cure. Don't you wish you could have heard **her testimony?**

Shackled by a heavy burden
'Neath a load of guilt and shame
Then I touched the hem of Your garment
And now I am no longer the same!
Something happened, and now I know
You healed me, and made me whole.

In the same way Jesus called upon that woman to confess what God had done in her and for her, God is calling all of us to be witnesses to His goodness and love and grace to the world. The gospel of Jesus reorients not just our hearts + relationships. **It changes and shapes our posture to the society around us.** Faith concealed must become faith revealed. Faith must be

confessed. Faith is always personal but never private. The gift of salvation is not to be the best kept secret!

Isaiah 43:12b: *"You are My witnesses," Says the LORD, "that I am God."*

A good witness is like a signpost. It just must point in the right direction to be understood. We are witnesses to Christ; we point to Him, and when the church service ends, that is when our service begins!

"Our confession of His faithfulness is Heaven's chosen agency for revealing Christ to the world." (Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages*, 348) I like to think of it this way: I am a nobody telling everybody about Somebody who will save anybody who will call on Him. ☺

Psalms 107:2, 21: *"Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, Whom He has redeemed from the hand of the enemy. Oh, that men would give thanks to the Lord for His goodness, And for His wonderful works to the children of men!"*

HIS COMFORT

Mark 5:34: *"And He said to her, 'Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction.'"*

Jesus did not see an untouchable. He saw 12 years of anguish and pain. He saw 12 years of shame and rejection. He saw 12 years of bitterness. And He saw the incredible risk she had taken to stand in the midst of the crowd. She needed more than just physical healing. She had a broken heart and dark memories that had lasted for 12 long years. **Somebody needed to heal those, as well, and so He did.**

Jesus insisted on drawing the attention of the crowd to her story for several important reasons: After 12 years, He wanted her to hear an official declaration that she was *healed*. When Jesus told her to "Go," that word was in the present imperative tense in the Greek, which is like saying, **"keep going in peace" or "go into peace"—let this be your continual state.** *There is no peace like the peace Jesus gives!* He wanted others to know she was healed and no longer an outcast or unclean. He wanted her to know WHY she was healed; it had nothing to do with superstition and everything to do with her faith in Him. He did not want her to think she had 'stolen' this blessing. **He wanted to be more than her Healer; He wanted to be her Saviour and Friend.** He wanted to bless and comfort her in a special way, calling her tenderly by a title that He did not give to anyone else. This is the only time in the Bible Jesus called someone "daughter." He wanted her to know that she was accepted, and she belonged in **His family!** By the way, whenever Jesus calls us, it is because He has something special for us. This physical daughter of Abraham had become a spiritual daughter of God.

For 12 awful years, she had been a **nobody**, and now she was a **somebody**! He literally put her in His family, stilled her fears, and secured her future with just one sentence, and joy flooded her soul! She could hold her head high; she was fully restored. She had not been orphaned by her Creator. She had a story to share! In Jesus she had found a FOREVER FRIEND!

The Greek word Mark used here for “well” also meant “**saved**” (sozo). Jesus did not just tell this woman, “Your faith has made you well.” He literally said to her, “Your faith has **saved** you!” **Her faith (not her finger) in Jesus’ power (not in His garment) had made her whole. It was His personal response to her personal faith in Him that cured her.**

OUR CHALLENGE

“We need to understand this lesson; for it has a deeper meaning than many realize. It is possible to be in Christ’s presence, and even to press close to Him, and yet receive no blessing, because we touch Him only with the casual touch of the multitude. There are hundreds and thousands who think they have faith in Christ; but they do not touch Him with the faith manifested by the suffering woman. ...The time has come when it is for our eternal interest to believe in Christ.”¹

Have you ever been in that crowd? I confess, I have. Like the multitudes, I have followed Jesus in the heat of the moment and pressed near to Him, yes, even touching Him. How many times have those encounters changed my life? How many times have I touched Jesus in the rush of religious activity but never really touched Him?

*The reality is that a casual faith will get you nowhere. It will leave you stranded! Some people profess to have enough faith to take them to heaven when they do not have enough to take them to church every week! **It’s not enough just to be in His presence! We can be close to His presence but far from His power. We can be in the building and still far from Jesus. It’s just not enough to believe about Jesus. You and I must believe IN Jesus.***

As Seventh-day Adventist Christians, we believe that God has a last-day message that **MUST REACH** every nation, kindred, tongue and people. Because Jesus is coming soon! The three angels’ messages are impressive and unique! However, there is an associated danger with this message. The danger is that because the message is so impressive, you and I could be impressed, but *only* be *impressed* like that throng of long ago.

Eugene Peterson, with reference to the gospel story, noted: “As the spectacular dimensions of this story slowly (or suddenly) dawn upon us, we could easily become enthusiastic spectators, and then let it go at that—become admirers of Jesus, generous with our oohs and ahs, and in our better moments inspired to imitate Him.”

¹ E. G. White, “The Touch of Faith,” *The Signs of the Times*, October 25, 1899, 2.

We have got to quit being like the crowd was that day. What made this woman's faith work was not that she was NEAR Jesus. The crowd was near Him and touching Him, too. What made her faith work was that **her faith made contact with Jesus**. It is the connection with Jesus that makes faith work. Even a wire is not "live" unless it is connected!

When faith connects with Jesus—it does not matter who you are—God will answer such faith anytime and anyplace, every time and every place! You may not have a strong faith—but **we have a strong Saviour, and He responds to even a touch of the hem of His garment.** 😊

Here's where this miracle matters to us today... I want to be part of a church where the people believe God! I want to be the kind of Christian that has a faith that connects with God. When God comes to sum you up, when God rewards you, He says, "According to your faith, be it unto you." Not according to your fame, not according to your fortune, not according to your friends, not according to your feelings, not according to your fate, but according to your faith be it unto you.

Oh, friends, do not you see? The time has come for you and me not just to seek to see Jesus, not just to seek to be close to Him as the crowd did. **The time has come for US to reach out to Jesus by faith and let God work a miracle in our lives!** The good news is that the hem of His garment can still be touched by faith! 😊 Jesus is still changing lives! God can do great things for, in, and through YOU! Do not be satisfied to "rub shoulders" with the Lord or follow Him at a distance! PRESS through the crowd and *reach out* to Jesus! You will find He is reaching out to you.

We almost forgot someone! Poor Jairus **had been waiting** for Jesus to hurry on to his dying daughter, when suddenly his servant arrived bearing tragic news. "Your daughter is dead, Jairus! Do not trouble the Teacher any longer." But at that moment, as grief surged in Jairus' heart, he looked into the loving face of Jesus. **Every life matters to Jesus**. Does Jesus care? Oh yes, He cares! I know He cares! Jesus said, "*Do not be afraid; only believe and she will be made well*" (Luke 8:49, 50). Jairus heard Jesus say those words. I am sure he must have looked at the woman who had just touched His garment, and with her testimony of Jesus' faithfulness still fresh in his memory, he chose to believe and hold on to Jesus. It is like Jesus called the woman to share her testimony for Jairus. Jesus rewarded Jairus' faith and raised his daughter from the dead. Psalms 34:8: "*Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him!*"

One stormy night, a boat could make no headway, and while the captain was struggling to get into port, a nervous passenger said to him: "Do you think we will get in all right?" The captain replied: "This is a leaky old boat, and we may go down; and the boilers are not in very good condition, so we may go up. But, **whatever happens, we are going on.**" And ladies and gentlemen, I believe that God IS going to bring this church to port. I believe that what God has started ... He will finish.

It takes faith to believe that the best days are ahead of us, but they are. God is ABOUT to do something GREAT for us! The latter rain is ABOUT to fall! However, if we want to receive the blessings God has in store for us, we must reach out to Jesus and claim them as our own. We have seen what that will do for a suffering woman; imagine what it could do for us as a church family around the world.

APPEAL

William Barclay said, "It happened in the middle of the crowd; but the crowd was forgotten, and Jesus spoke to that woman as if she was the only person in the world."

Do you need to touch Jesus today? The woman in the crowd had a faith which DROVE her to Jesus, and He changed her completely. Oh, that we would have a faith that would drive us to Jesus, too. You can reach out to Jesus right now and touch Him by faith like she did, and one day, when we get to heaven, we will meet that woman, learn her name, and we can share together what a difference Jesus has made in our lives.

If it is your desire to press through the crowd and reach out to Jesus, raise your hand and reach out to Jesus with me right now as we close in prayer.

CLOSING PRAYER

-end of sermon-

Discovering the Joy of Being His Daughter

Written by Charissa Torossian

All verses in the workshop are from New King James Version unless otherwise noted.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE FACILITATOR OF THIS WORKSHOP

Before you begin, ask participants to form groups of three or more. It is best to sit in a circle or around a table. Project the discussion questions and quotations onto a screen where able.

INTRODUCTION

This afternoon we are going to discover the joy and satisfaction that comes from belonging to Jesus and being a part of His family; we're going to unpack what it means to be a *daughter of God*. To do this, we must first explore the Bible's answer to a very fundamental question: What does it mean to be a godly woman? This is such a crucial question for which we need to have a biblical answer. We are living today in a world that no longer recognizes the binary genders of *just* male and female, and where the definition of what it means to be a "woman" is in constant flux. What a refreshing relief it is to have God's Word as a solid foundation; His Word stays the same.

Isaiah 40:8: *"The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever."*

God's Word stands forever. It doesn't change with social trends or societal fads. HOW does God define what it means to be a woman? What does this mean for your life and mine? God is the best Person to ask, as women were His idea.

MEN AND WOMEN

Genesis 1:26-27: *"Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.' So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them."*

Men and women are made by God, in the image of God, with the likeness of God, and He made us to have dominion over the earth.

Does this mean we have *deity*? No, it means we have dignity.

1. Mentally, we have the ability to reason and choose.
2. Morally, God made us upright, with a conscience; a moral compass to sense/discern right from wrong.
3. Socially, we were created for fellowship, to reflect the triune nature of God + His love. Whenever we create something, or whenever we recoil from something evil, or even whenever we make a friend, we are demonstrating that we are made in God's image! With His likeness.

God's assessment of His creation was that it was *good*. And of course, having saved His best for last, after He made woman, He said it was *very good*. ☺

I know it is obvious, but to be clear, God made men and women to be different. Being a godly woman isn't *the same* as being a godly man. ☺ It is different. Who is better? Who is superior? Women are infinitely superior to men at being women. Men are infinitely superior to women at being men. When God brought Eve to Adam, Adam liked her not only because she was *like* him, but also because she was *NOT like* him. How are we different? Where do we start?

Generally, women are physically weaker than men; this is because God made Adam with a stronger physical frame. Men naturally have more muscle mass than women. They actually also have almost 50% more blood than women and men also have a larger lung capacity than women! In fact, males have a higher oxygen demand in their tissues than females because of their greater muscle mass, so the blood-vessel diameter in males is larger than that of females. God is just amazing. *We are different on the cellular level!* Why? God made men this way because He intended for them to be protectors and providers. In the Garden of Eden, God put Adam in the garden to tend and keep it.

On the other hand, Eve, whose name means "life-giver" or "source of life," was made to nurture and to love. Men did not decide they would not be the ones to have children; God gifted women with that role. However, just because women are physically weaker does not mean we are inferior. Silk is weaker than canvas—but not inferior. God made us equal but different. We should celebrate this!

How else are we different? Women process information differently to men too. They say that the left hemisphere of the brain deals primarily with logic, reasoning and calculation, while the right hemisphere of the brain deals primarily with things like feeling, emotion, sympathy, love and intuition. Surprise, surprise! Studies show that men primarily use the left side of the brain, while women tend to use both sides of the brain. ☺ Men tend to be more logical and analytical in their thinking. Women also think logically and analytically, but they also mix in emotion at the same time.

- a. Women tend to be more detail-oriented.
- b. Men report, women share.

Ephesians 5:33: “Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.”

The deepest need of a woman is to be loved, while the deepest need of a man is to be respected and admired. Neither is better; we are just wired differently, and God made us this way. We should celebrate this difference. ☺

A doctor once said, “If women felt genuinely respected in their roles as wives and mothers, they would not feel the need to abandon them for something better. If they felt equal with men in personal worth, they would not need to be equivalent to men in responsibility. If they could only bask in the dignity and status granted them by the Creator, then their femininity would be valued as their greatest asset, rather than scorned as an old garment to be discarded. Without question, the future of a nation depends on how it sees its women, and I hope we will teach our little girls to be glad they were chosen by God for the special pleasures of womanhood.”

DISCUSSION QUESTION

- How do you think we can celebrate better and embrace the God-given differences between men and women in our families and in our churches? What do these differences teach us about our Creator?

GODLY WOMAN

We are *complementary* to each other by divine design. Women are intentionally designed by God to be different from men. Thus, what characterizes the life of godly women? A godly woman is a woman who identifies herself as *belonging* to God. Like the woman in our message today, godly women know they are daughters of God.

In Proverbs 31, Solomon famously describes what a godly woman looks like. And his target audience in this chapter is men: “Who can find a virtuous wife? For her worth is far above rubies” (Proverbs 31:10). In Jewish culture, men and children memorize this chapter to sing as a song of appreciation to the women in their lives because the God’s Word says godly women are *priceless*. Why?

1. A woman of God is priceless because of her CHARACTER.

Proverbs 31:11-12: “The heart of her husband safely trusts her; So he will have no lack of gain. She does him good and not evil All the days of her life.”

In Proverbs 31, we see that a godly woman is someone her husband can trust. He is blessed and affirmed by her presence in his life, and he reaches his full potential because of her. Martin Luther King Jr. once said he dreamed of a day when his children would live in a world where they would not be judged by the color of their skin, but rather, by the content of their character.

Do you know what the most important quality of her character is? We see THE CORE OF A GODLY WOMAN in Proverbs 31:30: *“Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing, But a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised.”*

Women, it is not about looks, charm, charisma, or sex appeal; what matters most is your relationship with Jesus. This is the bedrock of Christian character. Circumstances change, looks fade, but character endures. Godly women seek God first.

Proverbs 9:10: *“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.”*

To fear God is to know Him, to take Him seriously, and to walk with Him reverently. There is no substitute for the power of a life given to Jesus.

We must reject the lie that anything or anyone can satisfy. Matthew 6:33 says, *“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”* Making time each day to rest in Jesus and in our identity in Christ is so critical. Daughters of God, learn His righteous principles, so the Holy Spirit can work in and through your lives.

Think about it. Before Ruth got married and became a mother, before she ever became a wealthy and influential woman, Boaz said, *“... All the people of my town know that you are a woman of noble character”* (Ruth 3:11b, NIV). Ruth is identified as a virtuous woman because she lived her life with bravery, wisdom, and strength. She bore the fruit of Christian character in her life. And this is really the bottom line: godly women reflect the character of Jesus to others; they remind people of Jesus by how they live life.

DISCUSSION QUESTION

- A call to “Fear God” is the very first part of God’s special Three Angels’ Messages which must go to the world before Jesus comes (Revelation 14:6,7; Matthew 24:14). How can we, as women, fear God and give glory to Him in our lives? Give examples from Scripture to support your responses.

2. Godly women are INDUSTRIOUS.

Proverbs 31:13-18: *"She seeks wool and flax, And willingly works with her hands. She is like the merchant ships, She brings her food from afar. She also rises while it is yet night, And provides food for her household, And a portion for her maidservants. She considers a field and buys it; From her profits she plants a vineyard. She girds herself with strength, And strengthens her arms. She perceives that her merchandise is good, And her lamp does not go out by night."*

We must serve the Lord: Set your mind on eternal things, serve the eternal King, and live to please only Him. In Bible prophecy, God's church is pictured as a comely and delicate woman. In many respects, Proverbs 31 is as much a commentary on how God's church should be in its service to God as it is a commentary on the God-given role of women.

DISCUSSION QUESTION

- List the ministry capabilities and opportunities unique to women or to which women are especially equipped for. Discuss the ways in which these unique gifts and qualities could be used to reach out to your local church community.

Consider the following quotation as you formulate your answers:

"The Lord has a work for women as well as for men. They may take their places in His work at this crisis, and He will work through them. If they are imbued with a sense of their duty, and labour under the influence of the Holy Spirit, they will have just the self-possession required for this time. The Saviour will reflect upon these self-sacrificing women the light of His countenance, and will give them a power that exceeds that of men. They can do in families a work that men cannot do, a work that reaches the inner life. They can come close to the hearts of those whom men cannot reach. Their labour is needed."²

3. Godly women are COMPASSIONATE.

Proverbs 31:20: *"She extends her hand to the poor, Yes, she reaches out her hands to the needy."*

When God created woman, He gave her a compassionate heart. ☺ As women who have experienced the transforming power of the grace of God in our hearts, we have the opportunity to reflect His compassion to the world in a unique way. As we do, God's Word encourages us to do the following:

² E. G. White, "The Words to Lay Members," *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, August 26, 1902, 7.

- Speak faithfully: Love others with godly wisdom, boldness, and kindness as a faithful completer of others.
Proverbs 31:26: *“She opens her mouth with wisdom, And on her tongue is the law of kindness.”*
- Stay humble: Be constantly aware of pride and selfishness. Don’t think less of yourself but think of yourself less.
Philippians 2:3: *“Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.”*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- In what ways unique to women, can daughters of God bring compassion to
 - their homes?
 - their churches?
 - their communities?
- How important is compassion when it comes to fulfilling the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20?

4. Godly women are CONFIDENT.

Proverbs 31:21: *“She is not afraid of the snow for her household, For all her household is clothed with scarlet.”*

Godly women can be confident because they know they’re daughters of the King of kings. They know they belong to Him!

Remember, Proverbs 31:30: *“Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing, But a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised.”*

Daughters of God possess true beauty—beauty of character. Bodies deteriorate, but persons develop. We choose what we invest in. Let us invest in that which lasts.

Did you know that 32% of **teen girls say that when they feel bad about their bodies, Instagram makes them feel worse?** Instagram increases anxiety and depression. Among teens who reported suicidal thoughts, 13% of British users and 6% of American users traced the desire to kill themselves to Instagram. Instagram makes body image issues worse for 1 in 3 teen girls.

Too many times we are tricked into believing the lies society feeds us: you have to wear less to be heard, to have value, or to be appreciated. We are living in a world where 13-year-olds are getting lip injections! Friends, God does not see the way the world sees! He sees so much more and so much better. He sees our hearts.

1 Peter 3:3, 4: “Do not let your adornment be outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel—rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.”

“A modest, godly woman will dress modestly. ...The one who is simple and unpretending in her dress and in her manners shows that she understands that a true woman is characterized by moral worth. How charming, how interesting, is simplicity in dress, which in comeliness can be compared with the flowers of the field.”³

Jesus Himself lived a life of modest simplicity. Today, God is calling women and men to a counter-cultural life of modest simplicity. 2 Corinthians 3:18: “But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

DISCUSSION QUESTION

- What steps can daughters of God take to ensure they do not fall into the trap of seeing themselves the way the world says we should? How can we ensure we live beautiful, confident lives in heaven’s eyes?

In closing, I want to share with you an inspiring story about a woman who knew who she was in Jesus. She knew she was a daughter of God, and it impacted her life in a remarkable way. Anna Knight⁴ was born in Mississippi in 1874. Her mother was an emancipated slave, and her father was a white man. Actually, her dad was also her grandfather; he had raped his daughter.

Growing up in poverty and unable to go to school, Anna taught herself to read and it was because of this that she encountered Adventist literature via mail order. This led her to become a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1893.

She regularly went out into nature to spend time alone with God, and whenever she did, she took 3 things: Her Bible, her Sabbath school lesson pamphlet, and a gun just in case she met with some dangerous predator! ☺

In 1901, Knight attended the Battle Creek General Conference. While there, she was made aware of a need for missionary nurses in India, and she sensed the Holy Spirit calling her to go. She became the first Black Adventist woman to do mission work. After several years in India,

³ Ellen G. White, *Child Guidance*, 413.5

⁴ You can read more about Anna Knight in the Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia at <https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=7CF2&highlight=AnnalKnight>

Anna returned to the USA and again worked in her home community to reignite the Adventist school and church.

In her nearly 100 years of life, Anna Knight made 11,744 missionary visits and travelled around the world an equivalent of 23 times, founded dozens of schools, sponsored many students through their studies, and spoke at countless conventions on education. Despite her humble origins, Anna was a powerful force for the expansion of the Adventist message around the world.

“In the various branches of the work of God's cause, there is a wide field in which our sisters may do good service for the Master. Many lines of missionary work are neglected. In the different churches, much work which is often left undone or done imperfectly, could be well accomplished by the help that our sisters, if properly instructed, can give. Through various lines of home missionary effort they can reach a class that is not reached by our ministers. Among the noble women who have had the moral courage to decide in favor of the truth for this time are many who have tact, perception, and good ability, and who may make successful workers. The labors of such Christian women are needed.”⁵

CONCLUSION & APPEAL

I am convinced with all my heart that the God of heaven is longing and looking for, women like Anna who fear God long and desire to *live* for the glory of God. Women who recognize that they are daughters of God, and are His twice, because He not only made us, but He has redeemed us with the precious blood of Jesus. I believe that God is longing for you and me to be daughters of God, whose hearts yearn for the perishing world around us as God's own heart yearns for the salvation of our lost and dying world.

Revelation 14:7: “... *Fear God and give glory to Him...*”

Fearing God simplifies your life in the best way. You suddenly find yourself living for the audience of One. God is glorified when we fulfil the purpose for which He made us. Godly women still have problems, but they know how to handle them. As daughters of God, they take them to their heavenly Father in prayer. Will you join me today and say, “*Lord Jesus, help me see that my greatest joy is in belonging to You, in being a daughter of the King of kings!*”

—end of workshop—

⁵ Ellen G. White, “Women as Missionaries”, *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, Dec. 10, 1914, 3. {Evangelism, 466.2}