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— MY PLANS FOR YOU —

I knew you when you first loved Me
And sought to do My will.
Your hand took Mine as we traveled
Together up the hill.

The climb has not always been pleasant;
There've been storms and thunder and rain
And times when you thought the trip futile
Because of the trials and pain.

But the longer we trudged up the mountain
And occasionally caught sight of the view,
The more you ceased to wonder
At the plans I still have for you.

—Lea Fowler



Introduction

Due to pressures of women's rights, we often conform to the teachings of the day, not realizing the final outcome of our choices. God has great plans for His daughters. How it must hurt Him to see us cut off our blessings because of lack of knowledge or lack of love for Him.

“For I know the plans that I have for You,” declares the Lord, “plans for welfare and not for calamity to give You a future and a hope. Then You will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. You will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. I will be found by you,” declares the Lord (Jer. 29:11–14).

May our Father help us to understand that He will bless us “far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think according to the power that works within us” (Eph. 3:20).

It's not easy being a woman. It never has been. This book is for women and our relationships. Whether it is mother and daughter, sister to sister, or a Christian woman helping another Christian woman, we need to seek the word of God and see what our Father says about our roles.



MOM SAYS



Some ladies won't hear, and you can't “learn” anybody. Some will never want to learn. They would rather do it their way and suffer. So be it. But for those who want to learn and better themselves and be spared bitter reaping and be happier in the learning, then come and let us study together and reason together about a better way. I've heard young Christian women say, “I don't want the older women teaching me.” And I have heard older women say, “I don't want to teach the younger women. I've done my time.” However, I haven't heard God say, “How would you ladies like for it to be done?”

A Woman to HELP

I thank God that He made me a woman. Like the song lyrics croon from an old musical, “I Enjoy Being a Girl!” I call myself a “girlie tomboy” because when I was younger, I loved to play ball and get dirty, but I also adored dressing up, doing hair, and applying makeup.

I have never wanted to be a man. Well, I take that back. There were occasions earlier in life when I fervently desired to be a man so I could help the church in leadership. I now know better. God has seen fit to give those positions to men, not women, and I am so thankful for that! I learned to say to myself, “No, Becky. God has made you a woman. The Father has a plan for you. He needs for you to be a woman so you can help the sisters.” And the woman who showed me how to love God and help the sisters was my mom.

The Best Lap

I was raised on her lap. I was the third and last child, and Mom had little time to hold me and play with me because she was a busy mom, heavily involved with church, two older children, and a husband. So when we gathered to worship the Lord, I climbed up on her lap, took my place and reigned supreme—for at least forty-five minutes! Mom

even called these moments “our time.” A time for worship came to be synonymous with a time for love.

Perhaps you understand this. Maybe you are even nodding your head as you are reading. You too can recall the precious instances of childhood when you bonded with your mom, swaddled in love, and comforted on her lap. Or perhaps you remember these moments with your own daughter. It’s a woman thing.

Mothers and daughters—what a powerful bond is possible. It begins in the womb and ends at the tomb. Even when one passes away and the other is left to carry on alone, the bond is still there. It never departs. The connection runs from heart to heart, and God Himself put it there.

Here is a marvelous personal story from author Mary Farrar about her relationship with her mother:

We often talked for hours, debating and discussing the issues of life. She was always honest, open, and willing to listen at the drop of a hat. She mentored me by listening as often to my heart as to my words. I never went through a struggle that Mom did not sense it and offer wise input and encouragement. Most importantly, Mom mentored me by living in the Scriptures herself. When life was unclear, Mom always seemed to know where to go in Scripture to meet and address my needs. She had a firm grip of the teachings of Scripture when I most needed to hear them.¹

She's Just Like You

As the years passed, Mom became my confidant, my teacher, my disciplinarian, and my best friend. Now don’t get me wrong. She was always my mother, the woman in charge of raising me. She took raising her children as a serious job. But to me she was just Mama—the one who I could talk to, relate to, complain to—the only one who understood me. Later in life, she often told me the story of being at her wits’ end with a very young, energetic, and headstrong Becky. She was frazzled and helpless, finally pouring her heart out to her best friend Nita. Nita

calmly looked at her and said, “Why, Lea, she’s just like you!” I think Mom figured me out that day.

There was not one single subject that I could not discuss with her—not one. Be it personal, controversial, or even taboo, she had told me, “Becky, you can ask me anything.” And I did! When my children were teenagers, Mom advised me never to act shocked when they brought up questions about something lurid or objectionable. She said, “Just act normal, nod your head, and reply, ‘Oh, that’s interesting. Let me think about that a minute.’” She always reassured me that I could pass out later.

We delighted in one another’s company. Yes, we argued from time to time and had our moments, but for the most part we were on the same page spiritually and emotionally. Two peas in a pod. Let’s put a peg there—we will return.

Because I Said So

In the book of Ecclesiastes, Solomon was inspired to say twenty-nine times, “There is nothing new under the sun.” What does that mean? That is a great description of our world—everything from the sun downward.

What else can this phrase mean? There isn’t anything new in life. What goes around comes around. People still deal with jobs, marriages, and children as they did at the beginning of time. The Middle Ages rocked with problems just as much as we do in this twenty-first century.

As I have grown older, I have discovered that we can also say, “There is nothing new in life and in the church.” God has not changed. He has told us so in Malachi 3:6, “For I, the Lord, do not change.” And problems in the church still abound in this century as they did in the first century. I remember Mom’s wise observation “Becky, 99.99 percent of the time, the problems in the church have to do with authority.” She was so right. Since Adam, humanity has struggled with God’s “because I said so.”

People don’t basically change either, and what promoted Adam and Eve’s downfall in the Garden of Eden continues to promote mankind’s downfall today. Sin isn’t new. Temptation isn’t new either. The

same pitfalls that caused Adam and Eve to lose Paradise on earth—the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life (1 John 2:16)—still have the same power to separate us from God and destroy our relationship with Him some six thousand years since Eden. Satan is alive and well.

That is not news. You already know it. Mom and I surely knew this. But it seemed to me that whenever we were discussing problems in the world and in the church, bemoaning the issues Christians have with involvement, commitment to the Lord, loving one’s husband, and raising children, we continually perceived that the Christian woman’s role was as crucial as it had ever been. We were not alone in our quest for answers for the role of the softer sex in God’s scheme of things. Our world was asking questions too.

Surely my mom and I were not the first to wonder what God expects of women. Most women ask the same age-old questions: Where do I fit in this life? What is my role? What does God want of me? What is a Christian woman to do for Him in this current age?

And once again, Mom and I would find ourselves turning to the instructions Paul was inspired to write to Titus. It certainly is a given that God knew that His daughters across the ages would desperately need His words, His advice, and His divine instructions for living successful, peaceful, and pleasing lives for Him. Hence, He so graciously and kindly gave us chapter 2 of the letter to Titus.

Everybody Gets Instructions

Before we plunge into the depths of this marvelous chapter, let’s stop and realize a very important factor: Paul gives Titus instructions for godly living to *all* age groups: older men, young men, older women, and young women. The Supreme Author speaks to all ages. Where else in the Bible does the Father explicitly do this? Once again God shows that He is fair and just in having instructions for all, male and female, who desire to please Him. A male chauvinist, God is not! But here is the

real challenge for Christians: How many of us have read and pondered this amazing chapter? Trust me, God speaks to all of us here. No one gets a free pass.

~>>> PAUSE AND PONDER <<<~

Read Titus 2, Proverbs 31, and Ephesians 5:22–33.

Guidebook for Precious Women

When I was a young mom in the '70s, our country was embroiled in the Woman's Movement. Women were burning their underwear and constantly demonstrating in the streets. Mom and I were intrigued by these women, but we simply did not agree with them. So it was back to the Bible—the authority for everything. We continually sought God's Word to see what He had to say, as His say was final in our lives.

Titus 2 became a well-worn chapter in the pages of our hearts, mainly because we knew God had all the answers to the questions we were asking. (Read 2 Peter 1:3.) God's will was our will. However, we felt varied pressures from the world, friends, and even sisters who wanted nothing to do with what God said and everything to do with what their own hearts desired. So we would return once again to Titus 2, Proverbs 31, and Ephesians 5 and study God's plan for His women and evaluate our progress and standing. The above passages were our standard—our “how to” and “go to” in the “Christian Woman's Guidebook”—tucked inside God's marvelous Bible.

We studied God's plans for His women to evaluate our progress and standing.

What would I have done without Mom's help in my pursuit of being a woman of God? Without her guidance and encouragement, I probably would have become a completely different Christian than the ol' Beck

I know so well today. I'm still a flawed little sheep, but I am blessed because Mom showed fearless courage and persistence. She went the second mile to see that her children knew the importance of knowing God, His Word, and His commandments. She wanted only what all of us moms want: She wanted her children to make it to heaven.

That is why this God-given connection between mothers and daughters is so important. But it doesn't stop there. Please hear me out on this: This all-important connection does not have to be between blood relatives because God has given us many mother-daughter relationships with those who need us. And we need them.

Why This Book?

Mom was compelled to share Bible teaching about this ideal Christian woman in her book from 1986, *Precious Are God's Plans*. It has long been my desire for us women to re-examine and ponder timeless principles she wrote long ago. Many of you have inquired about her books and lessons. As her daughter, I wanted to add selections of her words to this book. You will find them easy to recognize because of the special treatment. Please, please, take your time with this study. Don't rush. Let the passages written to Titus change your life.

I pray that God will help me to help you. Titus 2 is a difficult passage for many women to read and heed. So I ask you, "What will you do with it, my sister? I pray that God will help me to help you. Will you keep an open mind?"

Motivation of Love

I have always loved God. I have never wanted to disappoint Him, but I know I have. I have always wanted to please Him and obey Him, but I know that many times I have done the opposite of what He wanted me to do. God is very real to me. He is the only one who knows me through and through. He is alive and well, and I know that He loves

me. The Bible tells me so. And I know that He wants me to love Him and do His will, not mine.

I also realize that I am human, and that humans sin: “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). But praise God, we can be forgiven of those sins because of Jesus’ sacrifice.

~ ~ ~ **PAUSE AND PONDER** *~ ~ ~*

Recite John 3:16. Read Romans 5:8 and 1 John 4:7–10. How are these passages linked? In your Bible, underline the common words or phrases.

Daily Bible Study Is a Must!

To be raised by Christian parents is the biggest blessing any child can realize! If you were so blessed, my sister, you ought to get down on your knees and thank God for it every single day! Not everybody gets that blessing.

In our home, God’s Word was, and continues to be, the final authority for everything for our family—daily lives, spiritual lives, and the lives the future holds. God was in charge of the Fowler home, and if God said it, that was it! No questions asked. God ruled!

From an early age, my parents encouraged me to begin a daily Bible reading routine. As I reflect on this, I am so grateful that they knew the importance of reading words from the mouth of God every single day. Do you have a Bible-reading plan for yourself and your family?

Do we always recognize the importance, the profoundness, and the power in the following passage written by an inspired Paul to a young Timothy?

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God [or woman of God] may be adequate, equipped for every good work (2 Tim. 3:16–17).

This is one of the most important passages in the entire Bible, and yet few Christians can tell you where it is found. How sad. This verse is our foundation. It tells others how seriously we take the Bible. This verse reveals who we are and why we follow God every day. Our Christian walk begins with this passage.

The Scriptures are inspired from the mouth of God, and they have the power to teach us, rebuke us, straighten us out, and teach us to do right things. Why? So we can climb the ladder of success, fame, and riches? No! So we can be glamorous and a trendsetter? No! God has given us the Bible so we can live like Him, look like Him, and be equipped to work for Him. Memorize 2 Timothy 3:16–17, my sister. Say it over and over. Remember, it tells you why you are what you are. It is your identity, and it is mine.

❧ PAUSE AND PONDER ❧

Read 2 Timothy 3:16–17 again. Ask yourself, “Is this verse my foundation for daily Bible study? How can I enhance my time with God’s Word?”

Power to Change

On the day of Pentecost two thousand years ago, Jews gathered from all over the world and asked the Spirit-filled apostles this question: “Brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37). Down through the ages, men and women still ask, “What do I need to do for forgiveness of my sins? How can I be saved? How can I make things right with God?”

God always tells His creation how to please Him, obey Him, and be saved. God never leaves us in the dark about our salvation. That is what we desire, isn’t it? To be saved? Then where do we go for our answers? To the Bible every single time.

Peter was inspired to write to the early church: “Seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence” (2 Pet. 1:3). *Everything* is the key word here. May we

never forget that the Bible has all the answers to all the questions in this life. Once again, how good God is to us to give us this marvelous Book.

Why? Because the Bible has the power to change any of us, from the hardened criminal and the hardest of hearts to the kindest of humans.

~ PAUSE AND PONDER ~

Read Romans 1:16 and underline it in your Bible. How do you show that you are not ashamed of the gospel?

The Greek word for power in Romans 1:16 is *dunamis*, from which we get the word “dynamite.” *Dunamis* means strength, power, ability. Now girls, we understand all these definitions, and we understand how mighty the gospel is, especially after reading Acts 2. On that day of Pentecost, Peter preached the first gospel sermon, culminating in the story of Jesus, His death, burial, and resurrection. What happened? A show of power like none other in history. The gospel changed the world! Nothing has been the same or ever will be. Why? Because it was all God’s plan. *Dunamis* surely is the right word for the gospel.

He never forces
us to keep His
commandments.

It is up to us to decide how badly we want to live eternally with the Lord. How important is heaven to us? We can love God and obey His powerful Word, or we can walk away and reject Him altogether. He never forces us to keep His commandments. That is entirely up to us.

God’s love for you and me and the whole world is indescribable and unfathomable. It is His earnest desire that no one be lost. Isn’t that what 2 Peter 3:9 says? “The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.”

How kind, merciful, and compassionate Jehovah God is! But we will never know Him or His plan for us if we only read excerpts from His marvelous Word. We must read all of it!

Someone has said, “God didn’t give us scripture to scare us. God gave us scripture to prepare us.” Open up the book, my sisters, prepare yourselves and find the treasures there.

The Satan Factor

How can we have any biblical discussion without acknowledging the presence of Satan? God doesn’t tell us everything about Satan. He doesn’t have to. But what we do know is definitely disturbing and fearful.

Recently a preacher and I were having a conversation about Satan and why he was thrown out of heaven. Remember Jesus commenting to His apostles in Luke 10:18: “I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning”?

My preacher friend made this interesting observation about a possible reason Satan the angel turned into Satan the devil: “He was jealous and angry. Satan, or Lucifer, was outstanding in the angel world and was a shining star! He loved his status. When he found out that God was going to create mankind and give humans minds to think and the freedom of choice, he just couldn’t handle it. Man was going to be created in the image of God and have a relationship with God, and that was more than Satan could bear. He was jealous.”

My preacher friend’s opinion does make sense, but we must remember that it is just his opinion. God has not given us the details about what all went on in heaven—He doesn’t have to! Just consider this theory for a moment. Examine the creation account in Genesis. The first appearance we have of the devil is not during the forming of the firmament or the creation of the animals and birds, but after Adam and Eve had taken their first breaths.

It is while the first couple are enjoying their time in the Garden of Eden and taking care of all their responsibilities that Satan sneakily slithers in. Why then? Could it be that his sudden exit from heaven had just occurred? Now Satan’s mission completely revolved around destroying God’s human creation. This was his immediate objective,

and it has never changed. From the first two humans in the beginning to the seven billion now on the earth, Satan's focus has never changed: he is after you and me.

Here we are, some six thousand years since Creation, and Satan is still as evil, murderous, and vengeful as he has been from day one. Think about it: Satan is jealous of us. God gives us second chances, but the devil will never get a second chance. He hates anything holy, and nothing is too evil for him to use to ensnare us and draw us to his side. He wants us. He delights in tempting us with sinful thoughts and deceitful lifestyles. He continually parades sexual temptations before our eyes and pulls our hearts and minds to dwell on him. The lure of illicit sex is one of Satan's powerful ploys.

The very last thing Satan wants is for us to read and study Titus 2. He wants us to serve him. And don't forget, he wants our children. They are his prey.

The Christian and Satan

When we study Jesus' temptation in the wilderness in Matthew 4 and Luke 4, let's ask ourselves, "Who won that round between Jesus and Satan?" Jesus did, of course, and would win any round to come. With the words, "It is written," Jesus stood in the presence of Satan and then quoted words breathed by God. You and I can do the very same thing. We can say, "It is written," and defeat any temptation Satan has in mind for us. However, we must have scripture in our hearts and minds, and this happens only one way, when you and I *know* scripture—by reading and studying it.

There is a big difference between reading and studying. It all revolves around two words: time and desire. When you take the time to dig deep, study and learn, and ask questions, then you will grow and mature in the faith. Just like in cartoons, a light will go on in your head as you begin to dig into the Word of God, and it is absolutely thrilling! You will become a pearl seeker. Jesus makes all of us this promise in the

Sermon on the Mount: “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied” (Matt. 5:6). When we hunger and thirst for God and His Word, we will get our answers. God will see to it. As we devour His Word, God becomes our source for all things: our hope and our deliverer in this life. “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble” (Ps. 46:1).

❧ PAUSE AND PONDER ❧

Find these four versions of the Bible to compare 2 Timothy 2:15: KJV, NASB, NKJV, and ESV. Which do you like best? Write that one on an index card and read it aloud every day for one week.

Am I a Worker or a Shirker?

For years I never noticed the word *workman* or *worker* in 2 Timothy 2:15. It takes a lot of work to become an excellent student of the Word. But it is a must that Christians handle the Word of God correctly. Can we make a mistake in interpreting the Scriptures? Oh, yes, we can.

For instance, I have heard of a person who thought Matthew 18:9, instructing us to pluck out our eye if it causes us to stumble, meant that we should literally tear out an offending eye. Another person felt that the only place to pray was in one’s closet, a literal interpretation of Matthew 6:6. Neither person was drawing out the meaning of the scripture. We must look at passages, taking the time to study and research the real meaning. That is called “accurately handling the word of truth.”

❧ PAUSE AND PONDER ❧

Reflect on an instance in which you or someone else misinterpreted a passage of God’s Word. How can this be avoided?

What Does God Want?

These things are foundational as to why we Christians do the things we do, why we treat the Bible the way we do, and why we are so passionate

about our Father in heaven. It is our earnest desire to “speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent.”

When God tells us what He wants of women, I sit up and take note! After all, He is speaking to four groups in Titus 2: old men, old women, young women, and young men. When I read the book of Titus, I want to know the circumstances surrounding this epistle and what was on God’s mind.

But above all things, I want to know what God wants and expects of me, ol’ Beck. If it was important enough for God to breathe His words about women into Paul’s pen, then it is of utmost urgency that I stop and handle this passage correctly! I don’t want to disobey God.

Several years ago, there was a very popular question passed around in spiritual circles: “What would Jesus do?” It still puts challenges and problems into the proper perspective of being Christlike. Don’t we all hold up Jesus as the supreme example to follow? Of course we do. Consider Jesus’ marvelous words in John 8:29: “And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him.”

Jesus was the Son of God, God in the flesh. So girls, if Jesus always did what was pleasing to God, why can’t we do that also? Why can’t we strive to please our Father in all things, especially in the qualities He has put forth for us? This is where Titus 2 comes into play. I want to please my Father, and I always will. I know you do too.

Get to Know Titus

Here’s an assignment for you! Find out Titus’ background, his surroundings, and his nature. Where is Titus when he receives Paul’s letter? Titus is referred to thirteen times in the New Testament, so find those verses and examine them. They have a lot to say about this fine young Christian. Titus had to be outstanding, dedicated, and knowledgeable for Paul to have entrusted him with so many responsibilities. However, God never tells us if Titus was married. But let’s remember that to this

unusual (perhaps young) missionary, the Father gives some of the most profound instructions a Christian woman can ever know, can ever obey, or can ever realize. Just stop and think about it: The task God laid on Titus' shoulders was certainly immense and absolutely essential. Titus' importance in every Christian woman's life is huge.

❧ PAUSE AND PONDER ❧

Find and record the thirteen times the name Titus is mentioned in the New Testament.

As you examine the Titus passages, ask yourself, "What is the Father saying to us women?" Also pray, "Thank You, God, for giving to courageous Titus these guidelines for women. We appreciate his love for You, the Father, and for Your precious women!"

❧ A WOMAN'S PRAYER ❧

Dear Father in heaven, we thank You for loving us and creating us. Thank You for the plans You have in mind for us. O Lord, please help us to work those plans with joy, knowing that we are pleasing You. And that is all that matters. Help us to be good daughters who obey You and honor Your Word. We love You so much. In Jesus' name, Amen."

❧ THOUGHT QUESTIONS ❧

1. Why do you believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God?
2. Are you a daily Bible reader? Give an example of two ways you will improve your daily study. How will you accomplish that?
3. Why did you become a Christian?
4. Quote a scripture that you memorized this past week.

🎵 **Song:** "Wonderful Words of Life"

INSIGHTS

You Are Unique

“You never outgrow the need for a mother.” What accurate words! I heard them on many occasions, spoken by my mother. Throughout my childhood and adult years, Mom spoke regularly of how much she missed her own mother. At the tender age of nine, she lost her to a debilitating sickness. Being the oldest of three children, Mom shouldered numerous responsibilities to help the family and a heartbroken father.

I cannot imagine what kind of loneliness, emptiness, and confusion a little girl could experience. Mom, of course, knew all about the love of a parent, but not the love of a mother. And she yearned for it as long as she lived.

Women are special. Of course, men are too. God created both: “God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them” (Gen. 1:27). Eve was not an afterthought or Plan B. God knew all along that Adam would need a mate, a helper suitable to supply all his needs.

It’s interesting that each day of creation ended with “and God saw that it was good.” This phrase is used after day one all the way through day five. Then Genesis 1:27 tells us that God created man and then woman, and verse 31 records these words at the end of the sixth day: “And God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good.”

Of course it was very good! Day six was the best day yet! Man was created, and then woman was created—very good!

God made the stronger first, and then, in His divine wisdom, He made the weaker, the one who would always need to be encircled. The word *husband* means the “house-binder,” the encircler. Just as God made the grass before He made the beast, so He made man before the woman, and then child. Wouldn’t you love to have seen Eve? Just imagine her beauty! Wouldn’t you love to have seen Adam’s face when he saw this woman, fashioned by the hands of God! How

happy that wedding day! And what a wonderful place to spend your honeymoon! God did not give Adam a child for a companion. Children are wonderful, exciting, and fill a very needed place in our lives, but they cannot supply what is lacking in man. God did not make another man for Adam. Another man would have removed some of the loneliness, but would still not have been able to supply all the needs. Woman's very femininity, her perceptions, and her tenderness are desirable qualities to a man. We know that whatever was lacking in Adam was supplied by Eve, for God made a helper suitable for him.²

One of the things I love most about God is that He cares about women. He loves us! He never treats a woman as a second-class citizen. Men may do that, but not God. He loves all of His creation and has certainly given men the position of leadership in the home and in the church, and I am eternally thankful for that. Believe me, I do not want to be in charge of either one.

But it is the woman who is the heart of the home and the church. God has made her more sensitive, more intuitive, soft as silk and strong as iron—but above all, more nurturing. She may be the weaker vessel (1 Pet. 3:7 KJV), but she certainly has many strengths that a man lacks.

Oh, I know someone wants to argue the nurturing part. But consider the animals and you will see it is the female who feeds, fosters, and fusses over the young for the most part. Please note that I did not make the claim that the male did absolutely nothing to raise the young because he is certainly in the picture, helping very powerfully. But it is the female that God has chosen to be the key player here.

Why? Because the male is to provide and protect, and the female is to take care of the nest—the home. That concept assuredly began when Adam and Eve were banished from the Garden.

Have you ever wondered what would have happened if Adam and Eve had not fallen that horrible day in the Garden? Can we ask that question? Hasn't it ever crossed your mind? If sin had never occurred

in the beginning, where would we be now? (Most likely, someone would have stepped over the line along the way and transgressed God's law!)

God had appointed Adam and Eve as caretakers in a paradise unparalleled. They had it made in the shade, literally, with God providing for their every need. But Satan deceived Eve. She tasted the forbidden fruit and then gave the fruit to Adam who also ate it. Suddenly the creation took a nosedive. Everything went terribly wrong the day Evil walked in. Innocence left the Garden, and Sin set up housekeeping.

Eve was the first sinner. No matter how you try to look at this, it still is hard to accept. At least it is for me. The woman was the first to break God's law—not the man. First John 2:16 springs to life as we contemplate Mother Eve: "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world."

[God] never
treats a woman
as a second-class
citizen.

She looked at the fruit, desired the fruit, believed Satan's lies about the fruit and dying, and stepped over the line. That was the day she started to die. And the same goes for Adam, the first man.

Evicted from the Garden, Adam worked hard for a living, farming in the heat and dust, among thorns and thistles. All men have since struggled continually with God's thorns and thistles. And Eve? Her punishment was pain in childbirth, and all women suffer this too.

God understood the temptation scene, all the ins and outs, all that was said, and the naïve emotions swirling in her head. God understood Eve. He also understood Adam. He knew His creation very well.

Another thing to wonder: What kind of people were Adam and Eve? Were they kind, loving, outstanding, and full of integrity? We don't know, do we? We never see them once telling others about Almighty God and His power and love for mankind, even though they had walked and talked with God personally. One thing is evident. Neither of them

❧ *Precious Plans for Precious Women* ❧

is mentioned in the Hebrews 11 Hall of Faith and Fame! Hebrews 11 lists those we hold up as marvelous examples of faith to emulate. Think about that for a moment or two. There are many theories as to why their names are not mentioned in Hebrews 11. But the fact is that God chose not to mention them as being people with outstanding faith in Him.

Some six thousand years have passed since Eve walked on this earth, and she is still a hot topic! I believe she will always be so—at least among us girls.

You are unique, my sister. Unique and loved. So was Mother Eve. Never forget that. God made you special, and that in itself should give you confidence. Each day is a new day full of opportunities to encourage others, to be salt and light, to learn and grow, and to start all over again.

Do something every day to draw you closer to God. Wouldn't the world be a wonderful place if we all took this to heart? Wouldn't the church, our spiritual family, experience more growth, strength, and kindness in its midst if we were more determined to seek the Lord daily? And wouldn't our own precious physical family finally realize the love and closeness we women long for?

Never forget that God has a plan for you and me. I don't know about you, but I am going to work His plan with all my heart, with all my soul and with all my strength.

“For I know the plans that I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart” (Jer. 29:11–13).

Take hold of the life God has given you and love yourself. God doesn't make any junk. Believe in yourself and the specific tailor-made journey the Father has personally given you to travel. Obey the gospel of Jesus, my sister, and you will find a life worth living. Stay the course, for a life lived without God just doesn't make any sense at all. Don't you think Eve had to learn that lesson too?



You Are the
PRECIOUS
Woman



“Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good” (Tit. 2:3).

Jump In!

The book of Philippians is often called the “Epistle of Joy,” because it focuses on finding joy regardless of circumstances. The book of Titus could be called the “Epistle of Practical Living.” Here is a book where the “rubber meets the road” when it comes to living the Christian life. God sets forth the qualities He desires all His children to possess. For that reason alone, Titus should be a favorite for us all. James Burton Coffman says, “The epistle to Titus is an epistle on the practical side of the Christian living.”³

Not only was Paul inspired by God to write Titus and give him instructions to help the church in Crete, but to “set in order” the workings of the church—the appointing of elders. First things first were on Paul’s agenda in writing this letter, as we read Paul’s greeting to Titus, and then immediately Paul launches into the matter of the qualifications