

*A Curriculum Series for Adolescent Girls
About Their Identity as Women Made in the
Image of God*

Ruth Powers

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for Graduation from the
Malone University Honors Program

Adviser: Marva Hoopes, Ed.D.

November 29, 2017

Acknowledgments

First, I would like to thank Marva Hoopes, Ed. D., my thesis advisor and professor for spending more than a year working on this project with me. While you were uncertain that you would truly be able to advise me effectively, your wisdom, experience, and biblical knowledge have continually steered me towards a better final work and better honoring of God. I thank you for listening to my ambitions and gently guiding me towards practical ways to achieve them. Thank you not only for advising me, but for hearing me and praying for me in times of joy and times of need. I appreciate so much how you have journeyed with me as I seek to find my own identity as a woman made in the image of God. Thank you for empowering me as I seek to empower others in Christ.

Second, I must thank my beloved best friend and husband, Louis Powers. One year before my presentation, he gave his own senior honors thesis presentation titled *A Straw god*, speaking about the problem of pain and God's character. His scholarly work, his tenacity, and his ministry have all helped inspire me to continue the work God has given me to do in a way that purely honors Him.

Thank you to the Honors Program at Malone University. Throughout my time at Malone I have constantly desired to be challenged in the area of academics. The senior honors thesis project gave me a chance to use all of the knowledge I have gained in my classes and in life in order to write a curriculum that will make a difference in adolescent

girls' lives. I am incredibly thankful that they have given myself and others the opportunity to grow and make an impact in the world through intensive academic work.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	pg 1
Table of Contents	pg 3
Chapter 1 Observed Needs	pg 4
Chapter 2 Theology	pg 13
Chapter 3 Purpose & Themes	pg 51
Chapter 4 Curriculum	pg 55
Chapter 5 Scope & Sequence	pg 67
Chapter 6 Conclusions	pg 98
Bibliography	pg 100

Chapter 1

Observations

While academics would agree that writing a thesis paper is a tremendous task, no one could have prepared me for how much work I have done spiritually, mentally, and emotionally to complete my honors thesis. My journey began as a college sophomore wondering what a woman's role *really* is in the church, pushing me to delve into researching Complementarian and Egalitarian beliefs. As my own views became clear, I began to wonder what kind of implications woman's identity has on the teenage girls that I teach and disciple in my church. Thinking about my own malformed views of identity and romantic relationships, I decided that young girls need better spiritual tools and foundations of identity with which to combat the confusion and heartache that can come with adolescence. Today, through my journey, God has led me to write a sampling of curriculum that begins to address the identity issues that I have experienced and watched girls face. While only two lessons will be included as samples, the paper will explain the scope and sequence of the entire curriculum and each topic that I will address in future lessons. Here you will find the theological and academic support showing how and why I chose to write these lessons. The end goal is a curriculum that better prepares girls to follow God and face the challenges of adolescence basing their identity and foundation in Christ and Scripture, instead the ways of thinking that the world offers. Whether you

were once an adolescent girl or know any personally, I hope the curriculum helps you better equip girls as disciples of Jesus and women with the strength and courage to fight for the Kingdom of God.

Explanation of Call, Passion, and Experience

As a Christian, my journey started at the critical age of 13 years old. My mother had passed away three years earlier, so my discombobulated pastor-father was left to raise me and my three quadruplet siblings. Over the course of the last nine years, I have grown tremendously in my faith and worked towards my call as a youth pastor. In my time both growing up in the church and working with high school aged girls, I have gathered much experience, knowledge, wisdom, and insight.

As a young adult woman, I realize that I was not taught how to be a woman during my youth. Logically, if girls are meant to grow into women, they must each be taught how to be a woman while each is still a girl. Although I had plenty of positive female figures in my life (even with the absence of my mom), I realize that no one ever taught me how to navigate romantic relationships. No one taught me how to recognize a godly man or recognize a godly woman. No one even taught me what it means to be a woman. I have had to backtrack spiritually because of mistakes that God has graciously walked me through and purposely used to bring me closer to Him. But, I wish I had learned lessons about womanhood sooner. I wish someone had taught me these lessons about womanhood more intentionally. I wish someone had not only asked me if I had gotten my period but asked me if I had good physical boundaries with my high school boyfriend. I wish someone had asked me whether that boy even believed in Jesus. I

learned when I broke up with him, after a year and a half that he did not. I wish people had not assumed that I was “ok” just because I professed Christian faith.

In regard to teenage girls, including the younger version of myself, I have realized many needs that are prevalent and do not seem to be readily met by the church programs I have experienced. For teenagers, the formation of identity is an essential component of their cognitive, social, emotional, moral, and most importantly, spiritual development. The ideas that teenage girls form about their personhood between age 14 and 18 drastically shape their sense of identity and operation as an adult.¹ If adults desire for youth to have an identity that is formed in Christ, they must realize how critical it is for them to understand their identity before they reach adulthood. When teens reach late-adolescence and early adulthood, they use the developmental patterns they learned in high school to navigate through life as an independent person.² Because the period between mid-adolescence to early adulthood is when children make many life altering decisions, it is critical they not only put their faith in Christ, but know what it means to be a made in the image of God.

Now as a young woman, I long to prevent the harm that I experienced because no one taught me about biblical womanhood. While no teaching will ever completely prevent a student from making mistakes or guarantee that they receive Jesus wholeheartedly, I am committed to writing a curriculum series that helps girls understand their identity as a woman made in the image of God. I believe Scripture teaches, and my experiences support, that there are clear differences between simply being a Christian that

¹ Saroglou, Vassilis. 2012. "Adolescents' Social Development and the Role of Religion: Coherence at the Detriment of Openness." *In Values, religion, and culture in adolescent development*, 391-423. New York, NY, US: Cambridge University Press, 2012. *PsycINFO*, EBSCOhost. October 4, 2016.

² Ibid.

goes to church and knowing what it means to be a woman made in the image of God. In my experience, youth groups tend to cover the topic of discipleship well for both genders. But, both genders need to distinctively learn how their gender affects their identity in Christ. While I do not agree with a patriarchal view of female-male relationships, I also do not agree that male and female are the same entity. Both genders have spiritual uniqueness that grows from the same root of Christ but must be taught, examined, and encouraged in order to grow spiritual fruit.

For my thesis project, I will be focusing only on biblical female identity. I have chosen to focus just on one gender because I have valuable experiences as a woman and I believe that God has equipped me well to understand teenage girls and minister to them. While I see a lack of biblical direction in the church for both genders, this curriculum will be most valuable when focused on females instead of focusing on males or both genders.

Observed Need for Proposed Curriculum

A. Lack of Resources

Since I did not have adequate instruction in my youth, I decided to look at what curriculum is available for girls in the year 2016. I searched Group publishing and *RightNowMedia*, two widely used curriculum resources for American churches. On Group's website, I found some curriculum for youth small group studies.³ Only two of these resources talked about issues of sexuality in teens. None of these resources were specifically focused on boys or girls. On *RightNowMedia*, I found only one video Bible study resource for girls.⁴ Since my current church is using this Bible study for our female students I can attest that Jennie Allen, the author, does intentionally dig into issues such

³ www.group.com

⁴ www.rightnowmedia.org

as divorce, porn addiction, selfishness, and eating disorders with girls.⁵ I was excited to look into this Bible study called *Dream Big* and her other resources. Another female author I looked into was Dannah Gresh. She writes books about sexual purity and marital relationships and puts on conferences for women and girls to learn about their identity as women in Christ.⁶ I actually attended one of her speaking tours as a junior in high school. I also read her book *And The Bride Wore White*. Gresh is an excellent author and godly example for girls who seek a God-honoring relationship with a man and possible husband.⁷ While Gresh and Allen both provide wonderful resources, I was disappointed that I only found two current widely impactful voices speaking into girls' lives.

When I was in high school my female leader went through a book called *Priceless* with me, which was supposed to teach me about my self-worth in Christ and godly dating. Unfortunately, even though I gave very God-honoring answers as a 16 year old, my later romantic relationships showed that I still did not know how to navigate life as a young woman made in God's image. According to developmental research on teen girls' needs, teen girls need intentional teaching and coaching about how to approach womanhood and relationships.⁸ Often they are taught to give the right answers but not how to actually process life situations and discern how they should act.

B. Personal Interviews

As a foundation to my research, I have conducted 11 email interviews with youth pastors in order to gauge the positions and experiences of youth pastors working with

⁵ Allen, Jennie. *Dream Big*. Rightnowmedia.org. 2014. November 13, 2016.

⁶ Gresh, Dannah. *And the Bride Wore White: Seven Secrets to Sexual Purity*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1999.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Boom, Jan. "Egocentrism in Moral Development: Gibbs, Piaget, Kohlberg." *New Ideas in Psychology* 29, no. 3 (2011): 355-63. doi:10.1016/j.newideapsych.2010.03.007.

high school girls.⁹ I have gathered permission to use their responses in my research from the IRB. Based on their responses I believe there is certainly a need for more comprehensive curricula that address girls' identities in Christ. While most youth pastors addressed identity in Christ as a male and female issue, most of them acknowledged that they needed better tools for addressing specifically female issues.

Interview Questions

- 1 How many years of experience do you have working with high school girls?
- 2 During this time, what teaching resources and materials have you used to help build girls' identity and faith in Christ?
- 3 If you write your own material, what themes and ideas do you focus on when teaching high school girls?
- 4 What have you done to uniquely teach girls what it means to be a woman made in the image of God?
- 5 Do you talk openly with your female teens about romantic relationships, sex, porn, abuse, harassment, pregnancy, menstrual cycle, etc?
- 6 Do you talk openly with your female teens about what a godly dating relationship and marriage look like?
- 7 In your experience, what do you observe to be things that teenage girls need to learn in order to acknowledge their identity in Christ? What are common roadblocks to them acknowledging their identity in Christ?
- 8 Do you think that there is curriculum that teaches these things well to high school girls, or do you think there is a need for curriculum that more directly addresses girls' identity issues?

⁹ Personal Interviews

Significant Responses and Statistics:

Question 1 Years of Experience:

- Range: 1-25
- Mode: 10
- Mean: 11
- Median: 10

Question 2: Type of Materials

- Use mainly pre-written curriculum (5)
- Used some curriculum, some of my own (2)
- Use my own (3)
- Use just the Bible (1)

Question 5 Open discussion with female teens

- Yes (5) Female: 2, Male: 3
- No (1) Female: 1
- Someone else (5) Male: 5

Question 6: Discussion about dating and marriage

- All yes!

Question 7: What they need to learn

- Who God and Jesus are, who they are.
- Self-worth, value.
- God is good, faithful, always loves us, hearts are fulfilled by the one who made them, made in God's image.

- "who they are, where they belong and what God has to do with it." Unconditional love,
- "equality" with boys
- Physical relationship issues

Question 8: Need for more specific girls' curriculum

- Yes 10
- No 1, female

Based on the above responses to the survey questions, youth pastors from a variety of experiences tend to agree that a curriculum specifically addressing female identity issues would be helpful. The lone negative response to a new curriculum series was a woman who believes that less curriculum and more relational ministry would be helpful. Although the survey pool was small, the selection of background information was diverse. Because of the interviewees' positive response to my curriculum ideas, I will use this survey to support the need that I have found for better curriculum for high school girls.

C. Personal Case Study as a middle class, white, American, female (Personal Experience)

As mentioned in my introduction, I have grown up as a middle class, white, American, female in the church. Although I had many women who cared about me in my youth, I was clearly not equipped to make healthy decisions regarding a romantic relationship; which reveals deeper issues regarding my identity as a woman made in the image of God. Had I fully understood my worth, and purpose, and had the tools to guard

and defend my worth, I could have been saved much heartache. Admittedly, the painful experiences that God purposefully allowed me to endure brought me closer to Him and have helped me better understand issues that youth ministers need to address in girls' lives. Even though I grew from these experiences, I would like to better equip girls to enter womanhood secure in their God-given identity and purpose.

Clearly, in order to equip girls regarding their God-given identity, we must first look at a theological basis for discipleship and Christian identity. The principles listed in the next chapter will show the spiritual foundation and guidance for each part of the lessons in the curriculum. Whether a person knows it or not, every person is a theologian because to do theology is to think about God. If the way we think about God is wrong, then clearly the way we view ourselves will also be marred.¹⁰ The next chapter regarding theology will give readers an understanding of how the curriculum will help girls view God and themselves.

¹⁰ Goldsworthy, Graeme. *Prayer and the Knowledge of God: What the whole Bible teaches*. Inter-Varsity Press, 2003.

Chapter 2

Theology

As a theology professor at Malone University taught me, theology is simply thinking about God, which makes everyone a theologian.¹¹ Since we should be allowing the Holy Spirit to guide us in everything we do, thinking about God is the first thing we should do when writing curriculum.¹² In order to help adolescent girls understand their identity in Christ, we need to first examine what following Christ actually means on a theological level. While these concepts may be fairly complex, they need to inform the structure, content, and methods of the curriculum, whether or not they are fully described to students. (This is called implicit curriculum, which is taught by actions instead of direct instruction.)¹³

In order to write a comprehensive curriculum for female adolescents, I have researched four subject areas- Who God is, Who we are, Theology of womanhood, and Theology of gender. Each of these theological ideas builds on the previous idea. In order to know who she is, a student must first know who God is, then discover the implications that God's identity has on her own. Once she understands God's identity and her own, she can begin to relate to her own gender, and then to men in a healthy, godly way.

¹¹ Dr. Moroney. *Attributes of God*.

¹² John 16:13 "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future."

¹³ Estep, James Riley, et al. *Mapping out Curriculum in Your Church: Cartography for Christian Pilgrims*. B & H Academic, 2012.

Obviously, learning these scriptural ideas takes a lifetime, but the basis for this knowledge needs to be taught while girls are teenagers.

Who God Is

As I have researched the attributes of God, I have learned much about who the God of the Bible is and is not. In the past fifty years, Americans have swayed between two reductions of God's character. In reaction to the peace and love of the 1960's "hippie" era, some Christians emphasized God's condemnation of sinners and strict standards for holiness. In recent years, Christians have focused more solely on His love and acceptance of people. Unfortunately, neither of these views show the whole of God. Instead they reduce God down to a few easy to swallow traits. In his thesis, *A Straw god*, Louis Powers discusses how the problem of evil makes the same mistake of reducing God to only three attributes of all loving, powerful, and good.¹⁴ To know God, we must instead look at the whole of Scripture and see God based on all of His actions and characteristics. This is a great task, since the Bible is very long and clearly states that God is too complex for us to fully know. While we can never fully comprehend God with our limited human understanding, this doesn't mean that we have to reduce God to an inaccurate caricature of Himself. As we look further at theological sources and biblical passages, I will attempt to show a more complex picture that includes both His frequently mentioned attributes and ones that Christians may try to ignore. In this way, I plan to give a picture of the God I believe is shown in Scripture and the God that teenage girls should desire to image in their own lives, with the help of the Holy Spirit.

¹⁴ Louis C. Powers. *A Straw god*. Malone University, December 2016.

The following list of God's attributes is based on Dr. Moroney's lecture notes on the attributes of God used for the Theology I course at Malone University. The lists of Scripture are from various sources. They are not meant to include every specific reference in Scripture, but to show that these attributes of God are well-evidenced throughout the whole of Scripture and completely in line with the whole of God's being. When I refer to the God of Scripture, I refer to a God who is all of these traits, all of the time. Although a list this long may seem over-detailed, the point is to allow readers to have a full view of God's complex character. The curriculum will be based on the fullness of God's revealed nature, not simply a few aspects of Him. If any of the following attributes are unfamiliar to the reader, I advise studying and meditating on the listed verses, as well as reading the whole Bible multiple times in order to better understand the God of Scripture.

God's Communicable Attributes

To be "communicable" means that something can be communicated through a vessel. So, the following traits are ones that God "communicates" through His human creation that images Himself.

1. Holiness- Exodus 15:11 Who among the gods is like you, Lord? Who is like you- majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders?

When describing God, there are many places to start. To begin, I have chosen holiness because this trait speaks to God as being set apart from all other things. In this verse from Exodus, Moses, the leader of Israel, proclaims God's otherness using the question "Who is like you?" The answer: no one. Stephen Charnock, in his book, discusses the attributes of God. When he discusses holiness, he emphasizes that Moses'

use of a question is the utmost literary affirmation of God's holiness.¹⁵ God is so much greater than everything else that no person, god, or thing can be compared to Him. The fact that God cannot be compared to anything else, either god or man, helps us understand that He is above our understanding and comprehension. Even though we cannot comprehend Him, He is majestic and glorious, working wonders. We are to be in awe of God. Because God is so vastly beyond our understanding, we cannot trust our own wisdom to understand or define Him. We must let Him reveal Himself to us and trust what He reveals through His Spirit and Scripture.

2. Justice/Righteousness- Psalm 89:13-14 You have a strong arm; Your hand is mighty, Your right hand is exalted. Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; Lovingkindness and truth go before You.

In this section of ancient Hebrew poetry about God, we find justice and righteousness in the midst of other attributes. The psalmist lists that "righteousness and justice are the foundation of [God's] throne." Clearly we glean from this verse that God is one who is enthroned, and His throne is built on righteousness and justice. But what does it mean to be righteous and just? In human wisdom, we may define these terms as being fair, treating everyone the same, or receiving appropriate consequences for our actions. Unfortunately, each human would define these things differently. We must see how God defines righteousness and justice.

In Romans 3:10-12, Paul the apostle writes, "No one is righteous— not even one. No one is truly wise; no one is seeking God. All have turned away; all have become useless. No one does good, not a single one." According to these verses, no one is

¹⁵ Charnock, Stephen, and William Symington. *The Existence and Attributes of God*. Baker Books, 2000.

righteous, only God is. Only God is right with Himself. Because He is right, He has the authority to enact justice according to His own holiness and perfect knowledge of what is right and wrong. We cannot in our humanness know perfectly what God considers right and wrong. But when we are made a new creation, the Holy Spirit reveals to us what is right and wrong. Later in Romans 12:9, Paul quotes the Old Testament saying “Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: ‘It is mine to avenge; I will repay,’ says the Lord.” So, Scripture is clear that because God is the one who is holy and just, that He is the one with authority to deal out vengeance and wrath. Only His vengeance is righteous. David Cho discusses God's righteousness and justice in light of the whole of Scripture in his book *The Nature of God*¹⁶ Cho emphasizes that just because God is good does not mean He is lax about our sinfulness. When we follow God, we must *completely* submit our will to Him. Cho says, we are not “genuine Christians” if we live as the world lives.¹⁷ Jesus did not die so that we could live our own way. Rather, He calls us to continually be perfected and made more righteous as we are transformed by the Holy Spirit.

In Ephesians 6:10-18, Paul talks about the “breastplate of righteousness” as part of the armor of God worn by Christians. Although we are not righteous in our own merit, Christ was righteous in our place, so we become acceptable to God through Christ. As Christians we must wear the righteousness given to us by Christ knowing that He who is truly good has saved us and will form us to His righteousness.

3. Jealous- Exodus 20:5 You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God.

¹⁶ Cho, Yong-gi. *The Nature of God*. Charisma House, 2001. Pg 5

¹⁷ Ibid. Pg 34

When people think of jealousy, they may think of a controlling boyfriend or clingy girlfriend. While these typical human behaviors are unhealthy, they still reflect the fact that God is jealous for a right relationship with His people. Fortunately, God is not clingy or controlling. Rather, He simply cannot accept worship of anything other than Himself. He is jealous for our worship. He demands that we only worship Him because to worship anything else would be to act as if there is something greater than God-this is not true. God demands our exclusive worship because He is the only object worthy of worship. To be righteously jealous, the object of the desire must belong rightfully to the one who is jealous. If God is holy, righteous, and just, among other attributes, then our worship solely belongs to Him, and He has the right to be jealous when we worship idols that are not worthy of our affection. When humans are jealous for things that do not belong to them, such as dating relationship, or a desirable physical object, their jealousy is unrighteous. But, when God is jealous, He is always righteous, because our worship does belong to Him, even though He allows us to choose idols other than Him.

4. Wrath- Romans 1:18 “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.”

God’s wrath is likely the least mentioned trait of His, because this trait seems very harsh, unloving, and contradictory to the nature we portray of Him. But, according to the Bible, God is wrathful, both in the Old and New Testament. This verse from Paul's writings says that God’s wrath is revealed against *ungodliness* and the *unrighteousness of men*. Paul says that these things suppress the truth about God. If God wants people to know the truth about Him and worship only Him, He has every right to be wrathful

against ungodliness and unrighteousness. When parents raise their children, they aim to eradicate behaviors that are harmful, such as running in the street, or consuming household cleaners. If ungodliness and unrighteousness keep us from knowing who God is and that He loves us, made us, saves us, etc., then God has every right to be wrathful towards and destroy what is sinful. Furthermore, we should be glad that He so strongly opposes the things that keep us separated from Him! In the end, God will destroy everything that does not honor Him in a fire because He is an all-consuming fire.¹⁸ If we are in Him, we are saved with Christ, and our sinfulness is burned away. Whether we see God's wrath poured out against people groups in the Old Testament, against our sinfulness in the New Testament, or the whole world in the end times of Revelation, God's wrath is a part of who He is as a holy and righteous God. His wrath is an act of holy cleansing, not an uncontrolled human emotion.

5. Patience/Long-Suffering/Grace- Numbers 14:18 “The Lord is slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, forgiving iniquity and transgression.”

After discussing God's wrathful destruction of sin, we should also look at how patient, then gracious our same God is. In the Old Testament, God is continually patient with Israel even when they continually turn against Him. The more they rebel, the more severely He punishes them until finally He exiles them from the land that He gave them. God could have simply banished them the first time they collectively disobeyed. He

¹⁸ Isaiah 66:15-16 “See, the LORD is coming with fire,
and his swift chariots roar like a whirlwind.

He will bring punishment with the fury of his anger
and the flaming fire of his hot rebuke.

The LORD will punish the world by fire
and by his sword.

He will judge the earth,
and many will be killed by Him.”,

Deuteronomy 4:24 “The LORD your God is a devouring fire; he is a jealous God.”,
Hebrews 12:29 “For our God is a devouring fire.”

would have been righteous in punishing them for their disobedience since they did not deserve the land. But instead, He graciously and patiently gave them more chances to obey, even though they kept disobeying. He did not refrain from punishing them, but He also did refrain from completely destroying them like the other nations that did not worship Him. Even now, we receive consequences when we sin, such as broken relationships or ministries. But, God offers redemption, forgiveness, and restoration. We do not deserve these things for all have sinned, but He gives them to us in order to reveal His grace and patience.

6. Wisdom- Job 12:13 “With Him are wisdom and might; To Him belong counsel and understanding.”

Wisdom is an important aspect to understand. As God acts throughout the Bible, His actions may seem random or nonsensical to the human mind. But, the more we read and understand the whole narrative of the Bible; we understand that God’s wisdom and purposes are beyond our understanding. In the Psalms and Proverbs, God is often described as wise and powerful. In Isaiah 55:8, Isaiah declares that our “thoughts are not your thoughts” Lord. Again, in his letters to the Corinthians, Paul emphasizes that God’s wisdom is not like human wisdom. God uses the foolish things of the world to shame those who believe they are wise.¹⁹ So as we think about God, we must remember that He is wise above all human understanding, and that His ways are not our ways. God will not operate in the way we expect and often acts in ways we do not understand. Regardless, we must know by faith that He is wise in His plans for us individually and for the world He created.

¹⁹ 1 Corinthians 1:27 “Instead, God chose things the world considers foolish in order to shame those who think they are wise. And he chose things that are powerless to shame those who are powerful.”

7. Love- John 3:16 “For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.”

When thinking about God, His love is one of the most discussed and important aspects of His nature. While God exists as all of His attributes at once, love is the one attribute that unites all of these attributes. All of God’s actions in Scripture and history are motivated by His love for His people, which is neverending and cannot be changed.²⁰ A well-known verse, John 3:16, talks about how God sent His only begotten son to be sacrificed for the sins of the world, *because He loved the world*. God loves the world He created that has been torn by sin. His plan is to redeem the whole world, drawing His creation back to Him and repairing the broken image of Himself. God’s love is not only shown in His redemption of individual people, but by every work of His hand. When God punishes and disciplines, He is loving. When God saves and rewards, He is loving. When God creates He is loving, when He destroys He is loving. As we read Scripture, there are many verses and stories that may make humans think that God is not loving. But God’s ways are not our ways. We must look at all of the ways in which He acts in order to understand what love is and who He is. The whole of God’s being is love, not just part of Him. His love is a love that destroys what is broken in order to build something new in His perfect image. We *must* understand that God is love and interpret everything we see through an understanding of His love. But, we must also look at the whole of Scripture in order to understand this love.

²⁰ Psalm 100:5 “For the LORD is good.
His unfailing love continues forever,
and his faithfulness continues to each generation.”
Hebrews 13:8 “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.”

8. Goodness- Psalm 119:68 “You are good and do only good; teach me your decrees.”

In *The Nature of God*, Cho also discusses the goodness of God. He says that some people may think God is distant and mean because of what Jesus had to go through on the cross. But, if one reads the whole Bible from Genesis to Revelation, it is clear that God is good.²¹ Cho uses examples of Jesus healing, forgiving, rebuking evil spirits and raising people from the dead as acts and proofs of God's goodness.²² Jesus shows us God's goodness because He is God. In the Old Testament God's goodness is shown by His providence to Israel, such as sending Moses to rescue them, and giving them food and water.

9. Mercy- Luke 6:36 “Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.”

In the Gospel of Luke, Luke includes a portion of Jesus' teachings similar to that of the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7. In Luke 6:36, Jesus tells the people to “be merciful just as your Father is merciful.” When thinking about God, mercy and grace may seem to be the same trait. Cho again helps us understand God's mercy by including this descriptive verse by King David, “Yet [God] was merciful; he forgave their iniquities and did not destroy them. Time after time he restrained his anger and did not stir up his full wrath.”²³ Again, God's full mercy cannot be known or understood without understanding the fullness of His wrath. If we do not understand how violently God could rightfully choose to destroy us, how can we know the depths of the mercy He shows by holding back destruction from us and allowing us to be forgiven?

²¹ Cho, Yong-gi. *The Nature of God*. Charisma House, 2001. Pg 4

²² Ibid. Pg 4

²³ Cho, Yong-gi. *The Nature of God*. Charisma House, 2001.

10. Truthfulness- 2 Timothy 3:16-17 “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

Here, Paul writes to his coworker Timothy in order to encourage Him in leading a new church. Although the canonical New Testament would not be finalized for another 300 years, today, we can understand this passage to refer to the whole Bible, both the Old and New Testament. Although the Bible is beyond our full comprehension, the only option we have as faithful Christians is to believe that is true. God has shown Himself over and over again to be faithful in His word and in His work in history. While we cannot understand every aspect of Scripture, we must trust the God that inspired the living Word. If we believe any part of the Bible is true, it must all be true, or else we make ourselves authoritative over God and deny what He has revealed about Himself.

11. Faithfulness- Psalm 100:5 “For the Lord is good. His unfailing love continues forever, and his faithfulness continues to each generation.”

Throughout the Bible, God makes promises to, and covenants with, His people. From the beginning, He promises Adam that he will die if he eats the fruit from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. This is fulfilled when sin and death enter the world after he and his wife eat the fruit, disobeying God. To Abraham, God makes many covenants concerning descendants, land, and authority. All of these covenants are fulfilled in the Scriptures or are waiting to be fulfilled in the end of time. Today, Christians depend on the promises made through the whole Bible in order to remember that God loves us, fights for us, and has a plan for our lives. No matter what the promise,

God is faithful to all His covenants and promises, stating in Psalms 89:34 "No, I will not break my covenant; I will not take back one word of what I said."

12. Personal- Matthew 6:26 "Look at the birds. They don't plant or harvest or store food in barns, for your heavenly Father feeds them. And aren't you far more valuable to Him than they are?"

Cho discusses how God is personal through the Holy Spirit. He reviews how in John 14:16-17, Jesus tells the disciples that He will send a helper who the world cannot accept or know. But the disciples will know the helper because He will be in them. This helper is the Holy Spirit who dwells within believers, fulfilling Jesus' promise that He is always with us. Because Jesus died on the cross for every person's sins, and because God dwells within each believer, we can see that He is intimately involved with individual people. His personality is also seen in how differently He creates each person. God's unique creativity is shown through each person that God carefully creates.

God is personal because He is living, and because He displays characteristics similar to individuals on earth.²⁴ Even though He is not limited like us, He displays similar characteristics to us because we are made in His image.

God's Incommunicable Attributes

For God's aforementioned traits, humans can reflect who He is. However, there are some parts of God that we cannot reflect or act out even with the Spirit's help. These traits are called "incommunicable," and they set God apart from His creation.

13. Omnipotence- "all powerful"

Job 26:14 "These are just the beginning of all that he does, merely a whisper of his power. Who, then, can comprehend the thunder of his power?"

²⁴ Stewart, Don. "Is God a Personal God?" *Blueletterbible.org*. 2017.

Job 9:4 “His wisdom is profound, his power is vast. Who has resisted Him and come out unscathed?”

Zephaniah 3:17 “The Lord your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves.”

Throughout the Bible, God is shown performing mighty works, such as creating the entire world, saving the Israelites from enemy nations, and performing miracles and saving the world through His son, Jesus. As we think about God, it is important to remember that God is not just a powerful human. His power is beyond our comprehension. He can do anything He wills or desires, and is powerful enough to provide for the flowers and birds of the field, as well as move mountains and command armies. In following Jesus, we should remember that God has the power to help us in every way we need, from the “smallest” need to the “biggest” need. God cares for us as His children and uses His power to bring glory to His name and to draw us to Himself.

14. Omnipresence- “all present”

Psalms 139:7-12, “Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. If I say, ‘Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,’ even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.”

Jeremiah 23:24 “‘Who can hide in secret places so that I cannot see them?’ declares the Lord. ‘Do not I fill heaven and earth?’ declares the Lord.”

From reading these verses, we can see that God is present everywhere throughout the earth and heavens. David expresses that no matter in which realm he dwells, either in darkness or light, God is there, he cannot escape. As we think about who God is, it is helpful to realize that He is always with us in the world and in our hearts as believers. God is present everywhere at once. He is the only being who exists in this way. This helps us in our relationship with God to know that He never leaves us. As we seek Him, we know that He can always hear us, always speak to us, and always guide us. He is able to work in any and all situations we find ourselves in as we walk with Him.

15. Omniscient- “all knowing”

Hebrews 4:13 “Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.”

1 John 3:20 “If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.”

God's knowledge is vastly beyond anything a human could obtain or imagine. In Hebrews 4:13, the author tells us that nothing is hidden from God. John tells us that God knows everything, including what is in our hearts. When thinking about who God is, God's infinite knowledge is something we should keep in mind. Because God is above us in knowledge, we cannot fully understand Him. But we can fully trust Him because He knows all things, including what is best for us. While a situation in life may be painful or difficult, God works everything together for the good of those who love Him, and has

planned out the events of the world far ahead of time.²⁵ If God is not all-knowing, we have no grounds to trust Him. But based on Scripture, we know that He is great in knowledge, among all His other traits.

Who We Are

Based on who God is, teenage girls can now discover who they are. Throughout the Bible, God speaks to His people about who they are in light of Him. Beginning with Genesis, God tells His people that they are made in His image and likeness. He also gives them the command to rule and subdue the earth in order to discipline and care for the creation. Seen through the specific creation story of man and woman, God clearly creates Adam and prepares Him to care for the garden, ruling and subduing the creation. When no helper is found suitable for Him, God creates woman from man.²⁶ The woman joins Adam in ruling and subduing creation as they do the work God has set out for them. After sin entered the world and Jesus redeemed the world, God tells us through Paul that we are a New Creation.²⁷ In Greek, the word for creation means “creature.”²⁸ We are a new type of creation, different from that when we were enslaved to sin. While these themes of identity may seem broad, they must all be looked at in order to understand our identity as humans and women.

Image of God

²⁵ Romans 8:28 “And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.”

²⁶ Genesis 2

²⁷ 2 Corinthians 5:17 “his means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!”

²⁸ Lexicon: Strong’s G2937- ktisis. *Blueletterbible.org*. 2017.

Earlier in the chapter, we discussed an extensive view of who God is based on His attributes displayed in Scripture. In Genesis 1:27, God says “*Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.*”²⁹ According to Strong’s Hebrew lexicon, the word used here for “image” is the same word used throughout the Old Testament to refer to humans made in God’s image, but also to idols made in the image of other gods.³⁰ The word can also be used to mean a representative figure or resemblance, or illusion of an original object.³¹ In Richard Hess’s essay about gender equality, he illustrates the use of images in Near East cultures as being carved figures of kings that represented their power and ruling authority in the farthest reaches of their kingdoms.³² According to Ortlund, man is “God’s ruling representative. Man is the crown of creation.”³³ So, whether the image is of the true God or a false god, the word is used to describe a physical image of a more powerful being. In both of these circumstances, the image represents the being and can act in some capacity of the power of the being, but is not the being itself.

Clearly, to image something is an abstract concept that we must help both adults and youth understand since their identity is based in the image of God. In modern times, we may think of a statue of George Washington as *imaging* the real, non-present George Washington. We may also think of a young child *imaging* some trait of their parent, such as a child laughing like his mom or being mischievous like her dad. In reality, the way that we image God is much deeper and more complex than these merely human examples. God is not confined to a body, time, aging, or sinfulness. Yet, within the

²⁹ Genesis 1:27 (ESV) So God created man in his own image,
in the image of God he created Him;
male and female he created them.

³⁰ Lexicon: Strong’s H6754 tselem. *Blueletterbible.org*. 2017

³¹ *ibid.*

³² Pierce, Ronald W. *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity without Hierarchy*. InterVarsity Press, 2010. Pg 81

³³ *ibid.* Pg 96

limitations that humans live, God's attributes are both inherently present and divinely imparted through the Holy Spirit. Meaning, even without saving knowledge of Christ and rebirth in the Holy Spirit, humans created by God still display His characteristics, if only in a marred form.

The second way humans display attributes of God is when they are reborn as a new creation within whom the Holy Spirit dwells. The Spirit is perfect and lives and moves within us to compel us towards Christ and conform us more to His image. However, while we no longer are slaves to our sinful human nature, we must actively work to defeat our sinfulness as we grow in grace through Christ. As images of God, we are not fully God, but we are able to join in God's Work through the Holy Spirit to act in His power for His will. When we, compelled by the Holy Spirit, act in the Holy Spirit to accomplish God's will, God authentically works, lives, and exists in those very actions and words instead of our human selves. While we may stray from God's direction in our everyday walk and fail to image Him at times, the above theology helps explain how God is imaged through us.

Considering how God works through the Holy Spirit to image Himself through us, we must wonder how He manages to image all of His communicable attributes through His human creation. Obviously, sanctification- the process of becoming more holy and more in line with God's will- is a process, so no one fully images God all the time. We should not take this to mean that we must strive to be like all of God's communicable attributes or else we are failing. Rather, God, as He leads us to Himself, will reveal areas of our life that need to be conformed and transformed to His likeness. When someone is reborn, the first part of their humanness that is transformed is their

desires. God gives them a desire for Him so that they may be drawn to Him. After this transformation, the long work of transforming our thinking and actions takes place. As disciples, every person will have different areas of growth that God is revealing to them in their lives. Instead of expecting every disciple to be in the same predictable place of spiritual growth, we must join with the Holy Spirit in the work that He is already doing in that person's life. As God leads each newly created person towards Himself, He works through the whole of the body of Christ to display His attributes. While one believer may struggle to be merciful, another may be gifted in that area. One believer may be very patient, while another may struggle in that area. Humans should not feel burdened to perfectly display God's character. Instead, they should be burdened to perfectly follow God as He leads them to be transformed. In being diligent in our everyday walk with God, we will be transformed and God will image Himself through us despite our imperfect humanness. We should not try to perfect ourselves, instead we should work to follow God perfectly as He perfects us.

To Rule and Subdue

Genesis 1:28 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 over every living creature that moves on the ground."

Another basis for a Christian's identity in Christ starts with the commands God gave Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. After being made like God, God commands His human creation to *be fruitful and multiply, fill and subdue the earth, and to rule over the other organisms on the planet.*³⁴ Some Christians take these commands seriously and

³⁴ Genesis 1:27-31 So God created human beings in his own image.

some do not. Regardless of familiarity with these commands, Christians can learn to live them out as they grow in godliness.

While the principles here are not at the core of the theology I am presenting, there are some significant take-aways that I would like to include here. Namely, the implications of this verse are that God gave humans *power* and God gave humans *work*, previous to sin being introduced into the world. While animals and plants are also given the ability to multiply fruitfully, Richard Hess affirms that humankind is distinct from the rest of creation because of God giving humans dominion over the rest of creation.³⁵ Although intimacy with God is broken after Adam and Eve sin, the command giving humans dominion still stands.³⁶ God gave humans power to fill, rule and subdue the earth- clearly that would have taken an immense amount of work, regardless of the fact that sin had not yet entered the world. From this, we deduce that humans have great power and that work is good. Because of sin, humans use this power to hurt each other and the rest of creation. Because of sin people choose laziness and short-cuts over the diligence and discipline that God requires of us to bear His image. As we work out our salvation and are aligned with His will, we must remember that the work He calls us to is good. We must also remember that we have power over both the physical and spiritual

In the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

Then God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground."

Then God said, "Look! I have given you every seed-bearing plant throughout the earth and all the fruit trees for your food. And I have given every green plant as food for all the wild animals, the birds in the sky, and the small animals that scurry along the ground—everything that has life."
And that is what happened.

Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good!
And evening passed and morning came, marking the sixth day.

³⁵ Pierce, Ronald W. *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity without Hierarchy*. InterVarsity Press, 2010. Pg 81

³⁶ *Ibid* . Pg 81

world. When we choose godliness, Satan will do everything he can to stop us or convince us that His way is better.³⁷ We will also face physical opposition to God's call such as lack of resources, tiredness, or troubling relationships with people. Through all of these things, we have great power because we are made in God's image, and the work that God calls us to is good. Although basic, these principles will guide our thoughts in the midst of hardship and determine how we respond to the challenges we are sure to face.

Helper

Genesis 2:18 The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for Him."

In some Christian circles, Eve's role as helper may be minimized and ignored to prove that women's and men's roles in marriage are the same. Richard Hess states that "there is nothing in [Genesis 1] to suggest anything other than equality of male and female created together in the image of God."³⁸ While it is true that male and female are both created in God's image and equally valued within their marriage union, some authors use this to say that men's and women's spiritual roles in marriage are the same or nonspecific. Conversely, Eve's role as Adam's helper can also be used to limit women's roles in the household and church. Neither of these positions are godly. God is not abusive or oppressive. Richard Hess affirms that Eve's position as helper does not imply inferiority.³⁹ Raymond C. Ortlund, Jr also affirms that in a marriage of "two spiritually equal human beings... man has the primary responsibility to lead the

³⁷1 Peter 5:8 Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour.

³⁸ Pierce, Ronald W. *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity without Hierarchy*. InterVarsity Press, 2010. Pg 82

³⁹ Pierce, Ronald W. *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity Without Hierarchy*. InterVarsity Press, 2010. Pg 94

partnership in a God-glorifying direction.”⁴⁰ Furthermore, Ortlund also affirms that there is a clear distinction between male-headship, modeled after God’s headship of the Church, and male-domination, which disregards a woman’s spiritual equality, rights, value, etc.⁴¹ God empowers us to image and glorify Him through His Spirit, “both male and female display[ing] the glory of God’s image with equal brilliance.”⁴² So, the woman’s position as helper must be seen through the lens of God’s identity, not mankind’s fallenness. The relationship between a united (married) man and woman is meant to image God, so we must base our idea of this union on God’s character. Also, because only the married union of a man and woman is supposed to reflect God’s intimate union with us, we cannot use these ideas to dictate how all male/female relationships should operate. To treat every male and female relationship the same as a married union would be a gross distortion of biblical theology and godly design for relationships. John Piper affirms this in his foreword of *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* by emphasizing that a mature Christian is not complete only in marriage relationships.⁴³

In Genesis 2:18, the Hebrew word for “helper” is “ezer.”⁴⁴ While some may think that the position of someone who helps is a position of lesser value than one who leads, this simply cannot be true. Hess discusses Clines’ interpretation of “ezer” as implying subordination, rejecting Clines’ ignorance of further Scripture describing God as “ezer.” In Exodus 18:4, Moses’s second son is named “Eliezer,” which means “The

⁴⁰ Ibid. pg 95

⁴¹ Ibid. pg 95

⁴² Piper, John, and Wayne Grudem. *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: a Response to Evangelical Feminism*. Crossway, 2012. pg 97

⁴³ Ibid. pg xvii-xxviii

⁴⁴ Lexicon: Strong’s H5828 ‘ezer. *Blueletterbible.org*. 2017

God of my father was my help.”⁴⁵ The name “Eliezer” is a combination of the Hebrew word “el” which means God, and “ezer” meaning help.⁴⁶ The same word used to describe the first woman in Genesis is the same word that Moses uses to describe God. Do we perceive God as weak because He is a helper? Do we set God to the side as if He has no power because He helps His creation? Sometimes we do when we fail to know Him and know about Him properly. According to Graeme Goldsworthy, “Anything that substitutes for the knowledge of God as He reveals Himself is idolatry.”⁴⁷ When God’s revelation of Himself is set aside, people have permission to set aside women in the same way. But when we know God properly, we see that He has given both men and women positions of power based not on gender, but on their identity as created in His image and as a new creation.

Based on the power God has given both men and women, we must look at how this power shapes the relationship between a married man and woman. To clarify, a woman is not called to be a helper to every Christian man she meets. She is not subservient to every Christian man. She is only obligated to submit to God and then her husband, and no one else explicitly. The relationship between Adam and Eve is that of a marital union and is meant to reflect God’s union with us. To understand how Christians should operate in community relationships, we should look to the New Testament letters.

As a “helper,” who submits to her husband, the wife actually has a position of highly significant power in the marital relationship. In an ideal dynamic, both husband and wife live with their will submitted to God and live their lives based on the leading,

⁴⁵ Exodus 18:4 “His second son was named Eliezer,^[a] for Moses had said, ‘The God of my ancestors was my helper; he rescued me from the sword of Pharaoh.’”

⁴⁶ Lexicon: Strong’s H461 ‘Eliy’ezer. *Blueletterbible.org*. 2017

⁴⁷ Goldsworthy, Graeme. *Prayer and the Knowledge of God: What the Whole Bible Teaches*. Inter-Varsity Press, 2003.

work, and power of the Holy Spirit. God calls the man to lead and the woman to help. First, if both are submitted to Christ, then the man will lead the wife towards God's call for both of them. If the man is leading the woman towards God, then the only godly option for her is to submit to his leading. For her to argue, question, and subvert his authoritative, loving, sacrificial leadership would be ungodly and would keep the man from following God's call. The woman has the choice to follow her own way, or to help both of them follow God's call. This is the same choice every person has- to follow their own way or follow God's call. So, what God asks of the wife is no more absurd than what He asks of all of His followers- to give up their own way and accept His. Is this demanding? Certainly! God demands much of His followers. But remember, the work God calls us to is good- both the outward and inward work we must do. As well, we have the power through the Holy Spirit to complete this work despite the challenges we face.

In many Christian circles, married women are disempowered or the leader/helper dynamic that God has set up is ignored. Both of these positions are simply responses to ungodly people using God's commands to serve themselves instead of letting God transform them. When a husband gives up following God's ways and follows his own, he is no longer fit to lead the marriage. But, this is not an excuse to say that the wife *should* lead the marriage, or that God doesn't care who is leading. In this situation, the husband and wife must work to get back to the way God designed the marriage to work, not invent their own way. If a woman decides to take over leading because the man can't or won't, she is effectively choosing her own way over God's. Every way other than God's way is sinful and will lead to more difficulty, pain and heartache. This does not mean that

divorce is the only option. Simply, God has a design for marriage, and human failings are not a reason to scrap His plan and create a new one.

If a young woman has never seen a godly leader- whether that be in her own home or in another close family- she may have trouble imagining how this godly dynamic looks and actively plays out. If a young woman has learned to be very independent and intentional about her own faith, she may question why she needs a man to lead her or how this can possibly be a healthy dynamic. Especially in a world that encourages young women to date men their own age who are often developmentally less mature than they are, it can be confusing to think about letting a man lead. Fortunately, when we surrender our own ideas about marriage and relationships, God can show us the goodness in His design and is faithful to provide examples of godly relationships to us.⁴⁸

New Creation

In the beginning... God gives us an idea of how men and women should operate in an ideal marriage union that reflects His union with us. Jumping forward to the New Testament, God shows us what life looks like when we die to our old sinful selves and are made a new creation, restored to our union with Him. It's so exciting! We no longer belong to the world, but the Kingdom of Heaven. We are no longer bound to sin, but are told to be renewed by the transformation of our minds.⁴⁹ While we must start from Genesis to understand our God-given identity, we must also look at the picture the New Testament gives of believers who are restored to the union God originally had with us

⁴⁸1 Corinthians 1:9 "God will do this, for he is faithful to do what he says, and he has invited you into partnership with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."

⁴⁹Romans 12:2 "Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect."

before sin. Obviously, our union with God looks different in a world affected by sin than in the Garden of Eden, pre-sin.

Before sin entered the world in Genesis 3, nothing stood between God's relationship with humans. After sin entered the world, people became separated from God and chose their own ways over His. Prior to Jesus, the Holy Spirit had not come.⁵⁰ God mediated His words through prophets, priests, judges, and kings. The people had to offer sacrifices in order to be cleansed and able to communicate with God.

Now, after Jesus' death and resurrection and the sending of the Holy Spirit, those who put their faith in Christ and give their life to Him receive new life through the Holy Spirit living inside them. Again, this is the second way we are made powerful by God. The first is the fact that we are made in His image and given power over creation.

To understand their identity as a Christian, adolescent girls must understand some deep truths that are fairly complex. While fully grasping the depth of these truths may take years, or a lifetime, they are nonetheless true and must be expressed.

When someone accepts Christ, there are many spiritual processes working together in that person's life at once. First, everyone who accepts Christ as their Lord and Savior is only able to do so because God has placed that desire in their hearts.⁵¹ In their

⁵⁰ Acts 2:1-4 "On the day of Pentecost all the believers were meeting together in one place. ² Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm, and it filled the house where they were sitting. ³ Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them. ⁴ And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages¹ as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability."

John 14:16,26 "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you...But when the Father sends the Advocate as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you."

John 16:7 "But in fact, it is best for you that I go away, because if I don't, the Advocate won't come. If I do go away, then I will send Him to you."

⁵¹ Philippians 2:13 "For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases Him."

human nature, no one is able to desire the things of God or understand God.⁵² Someone accepts God only because He has chosen for and prepared them to.⁵³

When someone truly accepts God, they turn their life completely over to Him and are born again of the Spirit, not of flesh. This is how they are able to grow in faith because the Spirit desires the things of God and the Spirit knows the mind of God and the Spirit discerns spiritual things.⁵⁴ While the flesh does not completely dissipate, the Spirit within the new creation (new *creature* in the Greek) now leads that person on the path towards godliness.⁵⁵ Because the person is born of the Spirit, they are a completely new type of creature, completely spiritually different from who they were before Christ and completely spiritually different from those who do not have Christ. They can now desire the things of God and hear God's voice and obey Him because they are enabled to by the

⁵² Galatians 5:17 "The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions."

⁵³ Romans 9:14-18 "Are we saying, then, that God was unfair? Of course not! For God said to Moses,

"I will show mercy to anyone I choose, and I will show compassion to anyone I choose." So it is God who decides to show mercy. We can neither choose it nor work for it. For the Scriptures say that God told Pharaoh, "I have appointed you for the very purpose of displaying my power in you and to spread my fame throughout the earth. So you see, God chooses to show mercy to some, and he chooses to harden the hearts of others so they refuse to listen."

Ephesians 1:4-6 "Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to Himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave Him great pleasure. So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son."

⁵⁴ 1 Corinthians 2:14-16 "But people who aren't spiritual can't receive these truths from God's Spirit. It all sounds foolish to them and they can't understand it, for only those who are spiritual can understand what the Spirit means. Those who are spiritual can evaluate all things, but they themselves cannot be evaluated by others. For, "Who can know the LORD's thoughts? Who knows enough to teach Him?" But we understand these things, for we have the mind of Christ." John 3:3-6 "Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God." "What do you mean?" exclaimed Nicodemus. "How can an old man go back into his mother's womb and be born again?" Jesus replied, "I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life."

⁵⁵Lexicon: Strong's G2937- ktisis. *Blueletterbible.org*. 2017.

Spirit. Those who have the Spirit recognize others who have the Spirit, and the Spirit is in agreement among them.⁵⁶

If someone is not born again, they will not enter the kingdom of Heaven.⁵⁷ The Church today has a horrible track record of letting people believe they are saved without actually being born again and becoming a new creature born of the Spirit, not flesh. Not everyone who says “Lord, Lord” will enter the kingdom of heaven.⁵⁸ This is an incredibly paramount theological point that can literally send people to hell if people don’t realize they are not saved. But if we are born again, “We have been translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light.”⁵⁹

So, a part of the curriculum I will be writing is going to get down to the point and ask girls if they have actually become a new spiritual creature or not. If God has not called them to Himself yet, that is ok. But they need to know the truth about their spiritual condition. Whether this pushes them toward God or away from Him will be dependent on their spiritual condition. But this is good. I would rather people reject God knowingly instead of being deceived about their salvation. Just to make you aware, digging into whether people are *actually* born again or not is going to cause controversy and isn’t going to be good for church attendance. But I’ll get to why that is good later in

⁵⁶1 John 5:7-9 “So we have these three witnesses—⁸ the Spirit, the water, and the blood—and all three agree. ⁹ Since we believe human testimony, surely we can believe the greater testimony that comes from God. And God has testified about his Son.”

⁵⁷John 3:3-6 “Jesus replied, ‘I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God.’ ‘What do you mean?’ exclaimed Nicodemus. ‘How can an old man go back into his mother’s womb and be born again?’ Jesus replied, ‘I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life.’”

⁵⁸Matthew 7:21 “‘Not everyone who calls out to me, ‘Lord! Lord!’ will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Only those who actually do the will of my Father in heaven will enter.’”

⁵⁹Colossians 1:13 “For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son,”

the chapter. God is actually much more selective and has much higher standards than the modern church would have people believe.

Theology of Women and Gender

Based on the information presented above, we now know who God is, and who women are as both created in the image of God and for believers created new in Christ. Using a biblical theology of womanhood, I would like to address some ideas that women struggle with today regarding their identity. These issues need to be addressed both in this paper and in future curriculum in order to help girls navigate the beliefs presented to them in light of biblical truth.

In Christian circles, there are two belief sets that often govern people's ideas about women's identity in the home, leadership, and the church/life in general. While I have rejected the limited scope of these beliefs in search of deeper truth, they still must be presented and examined. **Complementarian** beliefs state that men and women are made equal but that men have inherent authority over women because of the creation order and God's perceived prerogative for men to hold authority and lead groups of people. **Egalitarian** beliefs reject this hierarchal view in favor of full equality between males and females, seeking to empower both sides. I believe both of these sides miss aspects of God's design that are essential to God honoring cross-gendered relationships. I propose that God did create Adam and Eve in a leader/helper relationship and that this relationship is a model for all and only marital and premarital relationships. I also

propose that Adam's maleness did not give Him inherent authority over Eve, but that a host of other factors allowed him to be a sufficient leader to her as she came alongside of him after being made from him.

Problem with the Current Debate

There is much more to womanhood than just marriage or marital roles, and Christian groups have two major camps of beliefs from which to draw their unified gender identities. These two belief systems are also used to define ministry roles and how each gender should relate to one another in everyday life beyond marriage. Even though people tend to think about these views in terms of marriage, they are used to determine gender roles for the whole adult body of the church.

Currently, the debate among evangelical Christians between complementarian views and egalitarian views has reached an impasse. Because both sides feel strongly about their views, they have polarized the discussion so that each cites valid scriptural interpretation for their views, but neither view can conquer or disprove the other. In a book called *Two Views: Women in Ministry*, Thomas R. Schreiner in Chapter 4 gives an argument for the complementarian side.⁶⁰ Although he believes in the dignity, respect, and value of women, he also states that Scripture forbids women from teaching and having authority over men.⁶¹ This theology would lead to saying that allowing women to lead is unbiblical and not true to the Christian faith. On the other hand, Linda Belleville explains her research that supports an egalitarian reading of the Bible. According to her evidence, she claims that the "thrust of Genesis 2 is the sameness of male and female," displayed by their both bearing God's image, ruling over the earth, relating to God, being

⁶⁰ Belleville, Linda L. *Two Views on Women in Ministry*. Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan, 2005.

⁶¹ *Ibid.* 265, 272

commanded to be fruitful and multiply, etc.⁶² She ascertains that Eve's creation as helper is not a lesser position, but one of power and significance. While some complementarians would point to Genesis 3:16 as exemplary of man and woman's proper relationship, she views this verse as exemplifying a dysfunctional relationship post-fall.⁶³ Each of these authors believe that their view is the true biblical stance, whereas the other stance is an invalid interpretation. Another example of the polarization of the debate would be current literature concerning egalitarian and complementarian beliefs. In recent years, two books, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*⁶⁴ and *Discovering Biblical Equality*⁶⁵ have been published in order to establish a Christian stance on either side of the complementarian and egalitarian debate. These books are both collections of essays by various authors that have analyzed biblical texts and argue either exclusively for complementarian or egalitarian readings of the Bible. These books show a clear divide between the two stances. The fact that these books are published in a manner of defending one side without looking for reconciliation between the two sides is the reason that I call the polarization unbiblical.

The polarization has led to some evangelicals accusing the opposite side of not being true to the Christian faith. Clearly, the kind of division between these two beliefs is not reflective of the unified Church Body that Paul discusses in his letters to the Corinthians.⁶⁶ If Christians are supposed to reflect Christ as a unified body, then the polarization of views on women in ministry needs to be reexamined.

⁶² Ibid. 25-26

⁶³ Ibid. 31

⁶⁴ Piper, John, and Wayne Grudem. *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: a Response to Evangelical Feminism*. Crossway, 2012.

⁶⁵ Pierce, Ronald W. *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity without Hierarchy*. InterVarsity Press, 2010.

⁶⁶ 1 & 2 Corinthians

To explain the complexity of both sides, four authors have written defenses of each side using varying biblical support and attitudes in the book *Two Views: Women in Ministry* by Linda Belleville.⁶⁷ Looking at multiple viewpoints for each side will help readers understand that even in the different camps of beliefs there are many nuances and variations.

Linda Belleville [Egalitarianism]- As stated above, she claims that the “thrust of Genesis 2 is the sameness of male and female,’ displayed by their both bearing God’s image, ruling over the earth, relating to God, being commanded to be fruitful and multiply, etc.⁶⁸ She ascertains that Eve’s creation as helper is not a lesser position, but one of power and significance. Men and women are gifted equally by the Holy Spirit.⁶⁹ Truly, she claims, it is the Church that has authority, not the specific individuals within it.⁷⁰ The difference is whether women are supposed to submit to men or if they should mutually submit in love. Belleville states clearly that Paul’s standard of Christian love is mutual submission, which should govern female-male relationships.

Craig Keener [Egalitarianism]- He takes the commonly disputed passages of the Bible and claims that women’s ministry is only prohibited in exceptional circumstances, so modern churches should treat the issue similarly.⁷¹ Paul’s ideal is mutual submission and servanthood.⁷² Even if he is advocating for submission to authority, that position of authority comes with a burden of servanthood tied to it. Keener separates the spheres of

⁶⁷ Belleville, Linda L. *Two Views on Women in Ministry*. Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan, 2005.

⁶⁸ Ibid. 25-26

⁶⁹ Belleville, Linda L. *Two Views on Women in Ministry*. Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan, 2005. 35

⁷⁰ Ibid. 65

⁷¹ Ibid. 207

⁷² Ibid. 241

home and ministry in his analysis.⁷³ Ultimately, mistaken parts of Scripture should not be used to restrain women who are gifted and called.⁷⁴

Craig Blomberg [Complementarianism]- Per his exegesis, women's submission is clearly a godly ordination, insofar as it is pleasing to the Lord.⁷⁵ He makes a distinction that women are not supposed to submit to ungodly leadership and that God is asking them to submit every area of their life, not every action and decision to the imperfect will of a man.⁷⁶ If leadership is provided in a way that truly enacts Christ's servanthood to His bride, the church, then the woman should want to submit to that leadership. Clearly there is a hierarchy created, but not the same one as parents and children and masters and slaves. God commands submission but not obedience from the wife.⁷⁷ Blomberg stresses that church leadership should reflect that of the home where leading men give themselves as sacrifices for the totality of the church body, thereby building up the women and sacrificing for them. About headship, Blomberg claims that this is also God ordained. The example of male headship is Christ, who is the head of the Church and sacrificed His entire life willingly for His body.⁷⁸ Regardless of one's stance on the ministry debate, men in leadership should be "bending over backwards" to help empower women in whichever positions they should be empowered in.⁷⁹

Thomas R, Schreiner [Complementarianism]- Scripture forbids women from teaching and having authority over men.⁸⁰ He goes on to explain that this specifically refers to whatever the highest position of authority is in the church, whether that be senior

⁷³ Ibid. 242

⁷⁴ Ibid. 248

⁷⁵ Ibid. 173

⁷⁶ Ibid. 73

⁷⁷ Belleville, Linda L. *Two Views on Women in Ministry*. Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan, 2005. 174

⁷⁸ Ibid. 181

⁷⁹ Ibid. 183

⁸⁰ Ibid. 265, 272

pastor or pope. While women are encouraged to teach and give instruction to men in informal settings, he claims that they should not hold the position of a regular, appointed teacher. Men should be open to their instruction, but women should not be regular teachers.⁸¹ Schreiner believes that simply being a hard worker in the ministry did not mean they were authoritative leaders.⁸² While he believes women should be encouraged to be deacons, he believes this term is vague and is certainly excluded from the term elder which specifically prescribes teaching and holding authority.⁸³ Only men were listed as elders, who held the responsibility for doctrinal purity of the church.

Current Answers to the Problem

In the current literature, several different biblical interpretations are given to solve the question of whether women should be allowed to hold any ministry position or whether they are limited. To talk about women's identity in Christ, we must look at the two dominant frames of thinking and unpack the identity implications that both have for women. Because a blanket assessment of "allowed in pastoral ministry or not" is used to sum up the identities of women on both sides, looking at the sides' claims about women in ministry will clarify what each side says about women's identity. Some academics, such as Craig Blomberg and Thomas R. Schreiner in *Two Views on Women in Ministry*, both interpret the Bible to say that because men are ordained by God to lead women, they must also be the leaders in the church, therefore, women cannot hold leadership positions over men.⁸⁴ Other authors, such as Stanley J Grenz, *Women in the Church*;⁸⁵ Carolyn

⁸¹ Ibid. 279

⁸² Ibid. 280

⁸³ Ibid. 281-282

⁸⁴ Belleville, Linda L. *Two Views on Women in Ministry*. Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan, 2005.

⁸⁵ Grenz, Stanley J., and Denise Muir. Kjesbo. *Women in the Church: a Biblical Theology of Women in Ministry*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995.

Curtis James, *Half the Church*,⁸⁶ the editors including of *Your daughters shall prophesy-Women in ministry in the church*,⁸⁷ and Linda Bellville, *Two Views on Women in Ministry*,⁸⁸ each believe that women taking on prominent leadership positions in the church is an important part of the functioning of the church. Alternatively, Michelle Lee-Barnewall, in her book *Neither Complementarian or Egalitarian*, steps in the middle of these two interpretations and asks if interpreters' focus should be on love, unity, and reversal of culture instead of equality and hierarchy.⁸⁹ As well, Sarah Sumner in *Men and Women in the Church* and Craig Keener in *Two Views on Women in Ministry* offer alternative perspectives.⁹⁰ While each of them affirm the Biblical language that ordains men as head and leader of the wife, they do not carry this theology into the church sphere and instead promote women in leadership in the church. Each of these alternative views destroys the polarization that complementarians and egalitarians fall into. Looking at these alternative views will help women to discover their true, full identity in Christ without denying inherent aspects of their God-given being.

Critique of the Current Answers

Although each author presumes to honor an accurate biblical interpretation of the debate, there tend to be issues that each interpreter overlooks. For complementarian interpreters such as Craig Blomberg and Thomas R. Schreiner, the Bible is clear about a hierarchal relationship between male and females. Blomberg has a rather moderate view

⁸⁶ James, Carolyn Custis. *Half the Church: Recapturing God's Global Vision for Women*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011.

⁸⁷ Toews, John E., Valerie Rempel, and Katie Funk. Wiebe. *Your Daughters Shall Prophesy: Women in Ministry in the Church*. Winnipeg, MB, Canada: Kindred Press, 1992.

⁸⁸ Belleville, Linda L. *Two Views on Women in Ministry*. Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan, 2005.

⁸⁹ Lee-Barnewall, Michelle. *Neither Complementarian nor Egalitarian: a Kingdom Corrective to the Evangelical Gender Debate*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, a division of Baker Publishing Group, 2016.

⁹⁰ Sumner, Sarah. *Men and Women in the Church: Building Consensus on Christian Leadership*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003.

of the hierarchy, emphasizing that God's imperative to the man is to lay down his life for his wife just as Christ laid down His life for the Church⁹¹. He also begins his argument by saying that he could be wrong, but above all else he values the unity of the church.⁹²

Schreiner, on the other hand, makes no apologies about his position that women strictly cannot lead men because of Biblical commands that Paul gives in his letters.⁹³ While he respects the value and dignity of women, he takes the disputed passages about women not being allowed to teach or have authority over men literally. He advocates for women teaching informally, but not as a regular appointed position.⁹⁴ He also discounts the argument that Paul affirmed women leaders in the early church, saying that these strong women were just hard workers, not authoritative leaders.⁹⁵ He advocates very strongly for male headship in marital relationships, which he believes inherently transfers to church leadership.⁹⁶

While both of these men advocate well for their positions, I think they both have room to deepen their understanding of why women holding leadership positions may be possible within the church. Based on my research and theological reflection, I agree that marital and home relationships should function under the model of the man as the head and leader, modeled after Christ's sacrifice and love for the Church. But, when historical and biblical accounts and current realities show that women are capable of offering much in the way of spiritual guidance, wisdom, exegetical work, organizational skills, preaching, education, nurturing, and a host of other gifts and abilities, I find it troubling to hear that women should be limited in the scope and exercise of these gifts. While

⁹¹ Belleville, Linda L. *Two Views on Women in Ministry*. Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan, 2005. 181

⁹² Ibid. 123

⁹³ Ibid. 267

⁹⁴ Ibid. 279

⁹⁵ Ibid. 280

⁹⁶ Belleville, Linda L. *Two Views on Women in Ministry*. Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan, 2005. 298

neither author implies that women should be disempowered, what often results from twisting these views is that women are dominated and controlled by men instead of led sacrificially. Lee-Barnewall advocates against the distortions that both views often fall into where women are disempowered and then must fight for their perceived rights. In ministry, she says that the concepts of inclusion and sacrificial love need to be placed above equality and individual rights. While people may be given authority in the Kingdom, it is not about who has the authority, but how they use that authority to build the Kingdom of God, per Lee-Barnewall. For complementarians, this means that authority should not be used to control people, but empower them. For egalitarians, the fight is not about rights but about unity and inclusion.

In the egalitarian camp, the idea is to bring women out from under the oppressive nature of male-only leadership and empower women to fully use their God-given gifts. Grenz, James, Toews, and Belleville each discuss the vital need for women to share the role of leadership in the church. Grenz comes from a background of watching his own mother and other women lead in the church, so he advocates for their ability to lead without a gender barrier. James cites her personal experience with worldwide tragedies to call readers to look past the gender debate at the need to empower women in their Christian identity worldwide. Toews, in his collections of various authors' works also calls readers not to look at the gender barrier but at the souls in need of saving. Belleville especially expresses how the process of human creation emphasizes equality between the sexes, not hierarchy.

While empowerment of women in their God-given gifts and identities is paramount to my proposed thesis work, I must question the biblical scholarship that

denies hierarchal relationship between a married man and woman. While Belleville interprets Genesis 1-3 based on a lens of sameness, Schreiner is much more accurate in pointing out the stark difference between men's and women's role in the creation narrative. Sumner also takes care to look at how the story operates as a narrative and what role each of the characters play. Both authors point to Adam's role in leading Eve, helping her obey (or not obey) God's commands, and taking responsibility when God confronts Him about both their actions. These scenes differ from the ideal of equality that egalitarians portray where everyone is on the same level and no one leads in a marriage. The concept of leadership in a marriage has been twisted by Satan (to be frank) so that instead of rejecting the way some people abuse God's design for marriage, egalitarians reject God's design for marriage entirely. What is clear based on Sumner's view, is that a biblical model of marriage can be followed, without negating women's ability to hold authoritative leadership in the church. In terms of helping women know their identity in Christ, this view emphasizes that men and women do have different roles based on gender, but these roles are for marriage. By acknowledging this difference in roles, women are actually freed to learn about their unique female identity instead of entangling themselves in a bland confusion that comes from denying these differences.

Conclusions

Clearly, there are many important theological points that help shape and inform a curriculum written for high school girls. If the theology behind a curriculum is not well-thought out and described, the curriculum "ship" will have no rudder and eventually float off-course. As I present the curriculum, all of the above theology will inform the

final lesson material and structure. Hopefully, the above theology helps give the reader a foundation for understanding the purpose and methods of the curriculum.

Chapter 3

Purpose

As stated previously, girls in America face a vast array of circumstances that can be painful and damaging during their adolescent years. While Scripture states that these trials are necessary and planned by God in order for girls to grow, the Bible cannot be used as an excuse to neglect spiritual instruction.⁹⁷ Purposefully equipping girls in their faith and spiritual identity is essential for their continual growth.⁹⁸ In many churches, true spiritual maturity can be overlooked in favor of students participating in the right activities and acting the right way. Church can very easily become a club or a twice-a-week social performance instead of a place where true disciples are challenged and nurtured. When youth groups fail to enact true discipleship, the gospel and God's Word as a whole become watered down and impotent. To combat the ways in which Scripture tends to be watered down in churches, the lessons offered will intentionally be designed to separate the way God calls students to follow Him and the way the world calls people to act and live. Making peace with worldly values is very easy to do,

⁹⁷ James 1:2-4 "Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing."

⁹⁸ Deuteronomy 11:18-20 "So commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these words of mine. Tie them to your hands and wear them on your forehead as reminders. Teach them to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up. Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates,"

especially for young girls who have not been trained to have the mind of Christ.⁹⁹ In order to become more like Christ, a girl's thinking must be transformed by Scripture.¹⁰⁰ The following curriculum will help girls navigate through the deeply significant differences between biblical and worldly thinking.

Themes of Proposed Curriculum

Underneath the topic of women made in the image of God, I would like to explore several themes. One major theme necessary for girls to understand their identity in Christ is to understand who God is. Often teens are not taught fully who God is. God's characteristics are vast and difficult to communicate fully, which means most people have a limited understanding of who God is. Therefore, we must continually explore all the aspects of God with them in order for them to understand who it is they are supposed to reflect. I also want to explore the theme of being an image of God. To be an image means to carry the attributes of someone and be able to carry out their work.¹⁰¹ Once people know who God is, they can know what attributes they are supposed to carry, reflect, and represent. Another theme I would like to address is the difference between a girl and a woman. In today's culture, teens do not seem to be encouraged to grow up and fulfill their roles as adults. I believe that to fulfill God's call on our lives we must accept the full responsibility of what He calls us to do, which includes being a mature adult in both our faith and our worldly responsibilities. To take responsibility in your faith means to be responsible for your own relationship with God and to take responsibility for others'

⁹⁹ 1 Corinthians 2:16 "For, 'Who can know the Lord's thoughts? Who knows enough to teach Him?' But we understand these things, for we have the mind of Christ."

¹⁰⁰ Romans 12:2 "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will."

¹⁰¹ Walton, John H. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary. O.T.: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009.

faith growth. You are mature in your faith if you can not only help yourself grow in your faith, but you can help others grow as well. This is the difference between young believers and mature believers. I also want to address fundamental differences between men and women. Although both men and women reflect God's image, there are parts of men and women that are distinct to their gender. Misunderstanding these traits and the purpose of them can lead to gender identity confusion, where people mistakenly put their identity in their gender, not Christ.

Some continuing themes that I would like to include are an emphasis on family relationships and mentorship. Family is a huge influence on a teen girl's faith and an important place for her to act out her faith in the presence of siblings, parents, and extended family. As well, there is rich value in a mentoring relationship especially for young teenage girls seeking to follow Christ and form their identity as a woman.¹⁰² Although mothers are a primary source of imagery for young girls, an older female who is committed and healthy in her faith walk can greatly enhance the teachings of family members and youth leaders through intentional encouragement, guidance, and life examples.

Finally, a topic that is not addressed enough in healthy contexts is sexuality. As girls and boys grow into adolescence, they experience physical sexual changes, feelings, and thoughts that are new to them and either frightening or enticing, depending on the adolescent's environment and personal experiences. When teens are not taught openly about their own sexuality in a healthy context with trusted adults, their options are to

¹⁰² English, Leona M. *Mentoring in Religious Education*. Birmingham, AL.: Religious Education Press, 1998.

either hide from their sexuality in an unhealthy state of fear, or to embrace their sexuality with little knowledge of the consequences and effects of their choices.

Conclusion

As a series, the curriculum will address all of the above themes. The theological themes will be broken down into sections while the relational themes will be dispersed throughout the material. These important themes will guide the construction and lesson aims of the curriculum. Using various teaching methods, I hope to effectively teach girls about their identity as women made in the image of God.

Chapter 4

Curriculum

Introduction

In order to build a well-rounded curriculum, I have researched various methods and approaches to discover which ones are most effective. Through the following chapter, I will list and explain the methods that I have found successful in my research, as well as discuss the pros and cons of each method. Finally, I will explain how each method will be used to construct my scope, sequence, and individual lessons.

Curriculum Methods

Mapping Out Curriculum

In *Mapping Out Curriculum*, the authors use imagery of cartography- “map making” -to help Christians understand the importance of using well-constructed curriculum in Christian education.¹⁰³ When making a plan to educate people in faith, an intentional and biblical plan is essential to making sure that learners are taught everything they need to know using a variety of methods. Whether a teacher buys curriculum or develops his or her own, using an exegetical and pedagogical idea, as well as lesson aims,

¹⁰³ Estep, James Riley, et al. *Mapping out Curriculum in Your Church: Cartography for Christian Pilgrims*. B & H Academic, 2012.

helps steer the teacher in a consistent and specific direction, instead of letting the teacher be swayed back and forth by outside forces.¹⁰⁴

Creative Bible Teaching

In *Creative Bible Teaching*, the authors discuss the importance of explicit, implicit, and null curriculum.¹⁰⁵ Explicit curriculum is the lesson material that is clearly expressed to the student. An example is teaching students a lesson stating that God loves them. Throughout the lesson, the point clearly is teaching students about God's love. Implicit curriculum is the material that is taught through the actions of the teacher. When a teacher presents the explicit lesson that "God loves you," he or she also must communicate through the classroom environment that his or her words are true. If a teacher teaches about God's loves but mistreats the children, the explicit and implicit curriculum are out of sync and the child will learn an incorrect message. Null curriculum is the lesson taught by exclusion of information. If a teacher only teaches about God's love but never talks about Jesus and the cross, then the child will know the importance of God, but not the importance of Jesus. By excluding information, a teacher teaches students that the information is not important. In order to teach students fully, teachers and curriculum writers must be aware of every level of the curriculum, instead of just the explicit lesson.

When writing curriculum, I will pay close attention to how the implicit structure and style of the lessons complement the explicit material being taught. I want to make sure that every part of the lesson time is congruent with the overall lesson material and

¹⁰⁴ Ephesians 4:14 "Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth."

¹⁰⁵ Richards, Larry, and Gary J. Bredfeldt. *Creative Bible Teaching*. Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1998.

curriculum aims. In the curriculum, I will also be purposeful about the information I do and do not include. There are many themes theologically, spiritually, mentally, and physically that teen girls need to be taught about, so I will work to include and teach to these themes throughout the entire lesson series. While each lesson may not cover all the themes at once, I want to make sure that all the themes are discussed during the whole lesson package.

Foundations of Youth Ministry

Another curriculum resource is *Foundations of Youth Ministry* by Dean Borgman.¹⁰⁶ In his book, Borgman helps youth leaders understand the theological basis for their profession and guides his readers towards a biblical understanding of ministry. Three major principles that he builds the book around are exegesis of the Word, the world, and yourself.¹⁰⁷ To minister to students, a youth pastor needs to deeply understand God's Word, the culture, and his or herself as a follower of Jesus. Looking at the world of youth ministry, there are too often men or women placed in leadership that lack deep understanding of any or all three of these areas. Ministry of any type is not to be approached haphazardly or half-heartedly. Borgman is wise to point youth leaders towards these principles. Each one may take time and work to understand deeply, but each is worth the time for any minister, and any follower of God. In my curriculum, I use my understanding of my own experiences to motivate my study of Scripture. Because of my exegesis of Scripture and self, I am able to apply what I have learned to the world in which female students live and struggle. Based on these three areas of study, I can speak

¹⁰⁶Borgman, Dean. *Foundations for Youth Ministry: Theological Engagement with Teen Life and Culture*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

to girls in a way that is both led by the Holy Spirit and powerfully relevant to their current condition.

Learning Styles

When teaching any age group, awareness of different learning styles is key to reaching each student. In *Learning Styles*, Marlene D. LeFever discusses the 4Mat System by Bernice McCarthy which categorizes styles of learning that reach most students.¹⁰⁸ When preparing lessons, including each of the four learning styles means each type of student is reached, while also learning in a capacity that may not come as easily to them. By reinforcing lessons in four different styles, each learner is reached in their “sweet spot” and challenged by other methods.

The 4Mat system includes four categories which will be used to construct each lesson.¹⁰⁹ Imaginative-

Imaginative learners are introspective and abstract. They often will think deeply about a subject for long periods of time and use their imagination to understand the subject material. They may have trouble applying what they know to everyday situations, but can do so through various creative means.

Analytical-

Analytic learners are the type-A test-takers. They are very facts-based learners who are generally concerned about finding the right answer. While they may remember Bible details well, they may need more help applying what they have learned practically.

¹⁰⁸ LeFever, Marlene D. *Learning Styles: Reaching Everyone God Gave You to Teach*. Colorado Springs, CO: Nexgen, 2004.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

Common Sense-

Common Sense learners want to know how a lesson affects everyday life. They want to know what it means to live and act based on what they know. Though public schools tend to focus more on analytic learning styles, these students' perspectives are a great asset to a class focused on living out biblical truth.

Dynamic-

Dynamic learners think about what a lesson can become. These learners are the ones who invent, plan, and make strategies based on what they know. They are the ones likely to come up with a new ministry idea or to talk about how the group can mobilize based on the lesson.

In order to teach to each of the learning styles, I will structure the lessons in a four-part outline that systematically teach to each type of learner. Although students may learn better through a specific method, each method is important in order to deepen a student's understanding. The structure will be based on the "Hook-Book-Look-Took" method from *Creative Bible Teaching*. Each part corresponds to a learning style:

Hook = Imaginative Learners

Book = Analytic Learners

Look = Common Sense Learners

Took = Dynamic Learners

By using this structure, I will help students to learn imaginatively, analytically, practically, and experimentally.

The Family

In their book, *The Family*, Jack and Judith Balswick spend time talking about marital and family relationships from a Christian perspective.¹¹⁰ For adolescents, healthy family relationships are important and should be encouraged. Many adolescents also face deep family relationship issues, which need to be addressed in light of their Christian identity. Multigenerational relationships within the church are useful for growing both younger and older disciples in their faith. While my curriculum is based on a small group setting with one female leader, helping girls build relationships with older godly women and people outside their nuclear family can greatly help them grow in Christ. As I write further curriculum lessons, I plan to encourage both family and multigenerational relationships as discipleship tools for adolescent girls.

Adolescence

When teaching adolescent girls, considering their psychological development is essential to communicating with them effectively. In *Adolescence* by Steinberg, the contributors discuss all of the mental, emotional, and physical changes that adolescents experience.¹¹¹ For girls facing puberty, the physical and mental changes that happen to them drastically affect their social and spiritual functioning. Because they are physically changing in ways they cannot control and do not yet understand, adolescent girls face challenges associated with confusion, changing hormones, and a lack of direction/identity. In this period of life, girls most need to answer the question “who am I?” as the world around and within them changes. Most girls grab on to shallow idols such as clothing, friends, or activities to give them identity. Since puberty involves rapid,

¹¹⁰ Balswick, Jack O., and Judith K. Balswick. *The Family: a Christian Perspective on the Contemporary Home*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014.

¹¹¹ Steinberg, Laurence D. *Adolescence*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Education, 2017.

constant changes for girls, an awareness of these effects can help teachers better relate to and understand how girls experience the world between ages 14-17. Most importantly, youth workers need to point girls to their identity in Christ amidst the confusion and constant change of adolescence.

Reviving Ophelia, When Kids Hurt

Part of the difficulty of growing up is that all teens face issues of identity, but often times, adults don't address the underlying negative situations that teens experience. In *Reviving Ophelia*, the author laments the issues that girls face in modern times and how culture needs to change to address the issues.¹¹² Mary Pipher points out that she has observed much more acute stress and trauma in the lives of adolescent girls over her extensive years as a counselor. She claims that the issues girls face today are deeper and more complex, proving a great need for adults to listen, care, and help girls work through these issues. Ultimately, she points to the need for the culture as a whole to change in order to help raise healthier teen girls. Although we cannot single-handedly remedy the brokenness of society, helping girls understand who God is and who they are will help them navigate the increasingly sexualized and social media saturated world in which they live.

When Kids Hurt author, Chap Clark, also addresses how many teens feel ostracized by adults and unable to get the help they need for the pain they experience.¹¹³ Clark interviewed hundreds of teens personally, many of them emphasizing how different the world of teens is from the world of adults. Clark also found that across the myriad of

¹¹² Pipher, Mary. *Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls*. New York, NY: Random House Inc. 2008.

¹¹³ Clark, Chap, and Steve Rabey. *When Kids Hurt: Help for Adults Navigating the Adolescent Maze*. Grand Rapids, MI: BakerBooks, 2009.

issues teens face, there is a significant level of abandonment and stress pervading their world. Because these two worlds are so different, adults can easily remain detached and unable to empathize with teenagers' experiences. However, Clark challenges youth workers, parents, and adults in general that the work of entering into the teens' world is possible and profoundly important. Kids today desperately need help amidst the issues they face, and God has put a heavy demand on adults to do the work of reaching them.¹¹⁴

Curriculum Setting

The curriculum will be written for a small group setting since intimate discipleship happens best in small group or one-on-one settings. To structure the lessons, a method will be used that takes an exegetical idea from a passage and then translates that idea into a pedagogical idea.¹¹⁵ The lesson will then explain 1. Why students need to know the lesson, 2. What they need to know, 3. How the lesson is practically lived out and 4. What they can develop that idea into as they grow.¹¹⁶ These lessons will be written so that the teacher knows the background of the Biblical text and the methods and materials for teaching each part of the lesson. Even though the lessons will address specific topics, they will each be exegetically drawn from a biblical passage in order to honor the authority of the Bible. Each of these lessons should take around an hour or so of preparation for the teacher. The lesson should take about an hour to complete. In the instructions for the teacher, the teacher will be encouraged to form relationships with the

¹¹⁴ Deut. 6:4-9 "Listen, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today. Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up. Tie them to your hands and wear them on your forehead as reminders. Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."

¹¹⁵ LeFever, Marlene D. *Learning Styles: Reaching Everyone God Gave You to Teach*. Colorado Springs, CO: Nexgen, 2004.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

students beyond a weekly hour meeting. The lessons can also be done with multiple leaders so that each girl is able to be better disciplined.

Curriculum Audience

While I would like to make this curriculum available to a wide range of churches, I know that it will fit into a specific niche audience. Having grown up in middle class, white, mid- to- large American churches, I know these cultures well, so I will be writing to church audiences that are in a similar setting. I have spent time over the past four years leading in two large (600-1000 in attendance) United Methodist Churches, one medium sized (200-400 in attendance) Presbyterian church, and two large (600-1000 in attendance) non-denominational churches. These types of churches should be well-equipped to lead a small group study for high school girls. As I write the lessons I want to make the material accessible to teachers. However, I am asking for a high level of spiritual understanding for those teaching the class. Since I want to include interactive elements for students I will either include them in the lesson plan or make sure they are low-cost. I will also include some use of technology within the lessons, but I aim to make this as simple as possible. In American churches most adults and teens are extremely busy, so I want to make the lessons easy to prepare while still encouraging the leaders to make serious, long-lasting investments in the girls' lives.

Theological Basis for the Curriculum

Clearly, the theological basis for the curriculum is extensive. The more a person understands about God, the better they are able to know, follow, and be transformed by

Him.¹¹⁷ Whether each theological point from Chapter 2 is listed in a lesson or not, each of the theological ideas will inform the explicit, implicit, and null curriculum in the series.

¹¹⁷ Goldsworthy, Graeme. *Prayer and the Knowledge of God: What the Whole Bible Teaches*. Inter-Varsity Press, 2003.

Blank Lesson Structure and Outline

The following is a blank lesson outline as an example of the structure.

Lesson #: Title

Date: Class: File Under: Key words

Target Group: High School Girls (14-18) (Mid-Adolescence)

Scripture: Cross Reference:

Materials: Handout Packet, pens

Bible Background:

Conclusions:

Exegetical Idea:

Pedagogical Idea:

Lesson Aims: The students will...

Cognitive (Head)

Affective (Heart)

Behavioral (Hands)

Part 1. Why do I need to know this? (Imaginative Learners)

[Goal:]

Materials:

Transition

Part 2. What do I need to know? (Analytical Learners)

[Goal:]

Materials:

Transition:

Content Outline:

Methodology:

Part 3. How does this work? (Common Sense Learners)

[Goal:]

Materials:

Transition:

Part 4. What can this become? Now what? (Dynamic Learners)

[Goal:]

Materials:

Transition:

Part. 5 Evaluate:

1. How did girls respond to each activity?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
- 2.
- 3.

Chapter 5

Scope & Sequence

In a curriculum, the “scope and sequence” helps readers understand the extent of the subject matter covered and in what order the material will be presented. Below is an outline of the 13-week curriculum series that I plan to produce based on the whole thesis. Due to time constraints, just two lessons will be produced in order to show readers the layout, content, and style of the lessons.

Curriculum Scope and Sequence

Exegetical Idea: John 10:27-28

“My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one can snatch them away from me.”

To receive eternal life, we must be saved by faith in Jesus. In order to walk out salvation and grow in grace, we must listen to God's voice and follow Him where He leads. To hear God's voice, we must recognize what He says and who He is in Scripture. Only then can we find true life and our identity. No one who listens to God's voice and follows Him can be snatched away.

Pedagogical Idea: This curriculum will prepare girls to follow God and face the challenges of adolescence basing their identity in Christ and Scripture, instead of worldly thought patterns.

Quarter 1

Section 1: Who God Is

Section Goals:

- Cognitive: Girls know as many of God's attributes as possible.
- Affective: Girls appreciate that God is complex, not simple.
- Action: Girls act based on a broad, biblical understanding of God's character.

Lesson 1: What God Says about Himself

- Looking at Genesis, the Old Testament, the Gospels, and the New Testament to understand how God describes Himself.

Lesson 2: Character of God

- Looking at the various attributes of God; holiness, justice, righteousness, wrath, patience, grace, goodness, love, mercy, wisdom, truthfulness, faithfulness, personality, omnipotence, omnipresence, omniscience.

Lesson 3: How God Acts

- Looking at how God's acts throughout Scripture display His attributes.

Section 2: Who We Are

Section Goals:

- Cognitive: Girls know what kind of change happens when someone gives their life over to God.
- Affective: Girls feel free to relate to God as a New Creation in Christ.

- Action: Girls pursue a relationship with God based on the work of the Holy Spirit in their life.

Lesson 4: Made in His Image to Glorify Him

- Understanding how humans with a sinful nature are meant to image a holy God.

Lesson 5: Flesh Vs. Spirit

- Understanding the difference between following the sinful nature and following the Holy Spirit.

Lesson 6: Giving up Yourself

- Understanding that true discipleship is about giving our own will over to God in exchange for His good plan for us. (Possible salvation invitation or affirmation)

Section 3: Theology of Womanhood

*These lessons are included as samples of the whole curriculum.

Lesson aims:

- Cognitive: Girls know how God intends for women to live.
- Affective: Girls are sensitive to the distinctions of biblical womanhood.
- Action: Girls apply their understanding of their roles as adults in biblical instead of worldly thinking.

*Lesson 7: Women of the Bible/Role Models

- Girls begin to understand the difference between women who follow God and women who do not follow God.

*Lesson 8: Unpacking Biblical Passages about Women

- Girls become familiar with difficult passages about women and giving them tools with which to interpret those passages.

Lesson 9: Womanhood Today: Heart Posture

- Girls understand that being a woman of God is about one's posture of obedience and humility to God.

Section 4: Theology of Gender

Section Goals:

- Cognitive: Students identify the differences between men and women.
- Affective: Girls desire to have healthy relationships with male peers.
- Action: Girls make healthy decisions about friendships and dating based on Scripture.

Lesson 10: Women and Men- Godly relationships

- Girls will see relationships with boys and men through a lens of friendship, brotherhood, and respect.

Lesson 11: Stepping into Men's Shoes

- Girls will see relationships from boys' and men's perspective.

Lesson 12: God's Design Vs. the World

- Girls will understand biblical marriage and friendship models compared to the sex-based ideas of the world.

Stand-alone Lesson 13: Questions: Explored and Answered

- Students will have space to openly discuss questions they have throughout the lesson series. This lesson can be used at any point as the teacher deems appropriate.

Sample Lessons

Quarter 1, Section 3: Theology of Womanhood

Lesson 7: Women of the Bible/Role Models

Lesson 8: Unpacking Biblical Passages about Women

Sample Lessons Introduction

These sample lessons will be for one 13-week quarter small-group Bible study in a weekly female-only setting that could be led by paid staff or volunteer women.

Guidelines will be included with the curriculum that can be used to adjust the teachings.

Connecting themes of female identity to the broader themes of discipleship will be a primary goal. Hopefully these teachings on female identity will build on what girls are already learning about following Jesus, but connect it to their image and situations as female disciples.

Lesson Plan 7: Women of the Bible/Role Models

Date: _____ **Class:** _____ **File Under:** Identity; Image Bearers

Target Group: High School Girls (14-18) (Mid-Adolescence)

Scripture: Genesis 1:26-31 **Cross Reference:** Gen. 2:15-25

Materials: Handout Packet, pens

Bible Background: Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary

Pg 20-21 In the time when Genesis was written, it was common to refer to a king as having the image or likeness of a god. This meant that their essential qualities and attributes mirrored or represented that god. Because they were the image of that god, they were equipped to do that god's work. Image refers to essence of God while likeness refers to similar substance.

Conclusions:

It is the same for all of us, since we are made in God's image, we are made to reflect His attributes and do His work. To understand who we are, we must first understand God more fully. Then, we can know who we are and what He requires of us as we bear His image. We are ambassadors and representatives of His Kingdom.

Exegetical Idea: All humans are made in the Image of God to bear His attributes and represent Him on earth.

Pedagogical Idea: As women, we must know who God is in order to reflect who He is and represent Him well on earth.

Lesson Aims: The students will...

Cognitive (Head)

Recognize what the image of God looks like.

Affective (Heart)

Desire to reflect the image of God in their own lives through their actions, words, and attitudes by following godly role models

Behavioral (Hands)

Develop the ability to decipher between images of the world and the image of God.

Part 1. Why do I need to know this? (Imaginative Learners)

[Goal: How Images of the World Vs. God's Image affect you]

Materials: Pens, page 1-3 of handout

1. Have girls sit in a circle or at tables
2. Pass out handout packet. Have girls turn to page 1-2.
3. Say: **Take time to look at the pictures carefully. What qualities do these women represent? Write down your ideas on page 3 so we can discuss them.**
4. Take time to talk about how the traits of godly and worldly women are different.
Ask: **What images are these women reflecting?**
5. Talk about how these traits affect our lives positively and negatively.
Traits: *hard working, advocate, wise, talented, performer, educated, leader,*
6. Discuss what the roots of these traits are. Guide students to evaluate the root of these women's identities.
Possible Roots: pride, humility, selflessness, selfishness, attention, servanthood, equality, breaking social norms, submission, wisdom
7. Transition: **God made us to root our identity in His image.**

Part 2. What do I need to know? (Analytical Learners)

[Goal: What the world's image looks like vs. what God's image looks like]

Materials: Page 4 of handout

Content Outline:

- A. Let us make human beings in our image.
- B. They will rule over the earth.
- C. He created them male and female.
- D. Be fruitful and govern.
- E. It is good.

Methodology:

1. Say: **Now we are going to read our Scripture passage. Please turn to page 4 of your packet.**
2. Pick 3 students to read the whole passage.
3. As the three girls read, Say: **Mark any phrases or words that stick out to you or questions that you have.**
4. Ask the girls to talk about what they wrote down. Guide them through anything they are confused on.
5. Explain the progress of human creation: **God created them male and female, He commanded them to rule and multiply, then He declared that His creation of humanity was good.**

6. Explain: **Today we are focusing on the fact that we were created in God's image, so we are created to bear His character.**
 7. Explain the Biblical background of how kings in ancient times were said to be the image of a god because they had the god's attributes and were equipped for the god's work. Connect this to the picture exercise. Explain: **We reflect a "god" no matter what, whether that be the true God or an idol that we worship instead of Him.** Connect people's actions with worship. Ask the girls: **What things do you worship through your actions, time and money spent?**
 8. Transition: We need to be able to discern the object of our worship.
- Part 3. How does this work? (Common Sense Learners)

[Goal: Show how to differentiate between the two images through Scripture]

Our actions reflect what we worship, and we reflect the gods we worship. As we follow people around us, we must be able to discern who they are worshipping and what image they are reflecting. To recognize whether someone worships the true God or an idol, we must know who God is.

Materials: pens, page 5-7 of packet

1. Students will already have pens.
2. Ask: **Girls, please turn to page 5 of your packet.**
3. Say: **Think about and write down as many characteristics of God that you can name.**
4. Using page 6-7 (Communicable Attributes of God), discuss which ones are true and which ones are not.
*Make sure to distinguish between *communicable* and *incommunicable* attributes. *Communicable* means we can take part in these traits, *incommunicable* means only God has those traits.
5. Say: **Now turn to page 6 and 7 of your packet.** Have each student pick an attribute of God. Tell them to write down and describe a person who displays that trait and one who lacks that trait. Call on them to share and compare their answers.
6. Transition: Say: **We need to be able to apply these things in everyday life.**

Part 4. What can this become? Now what? (Dynamic Learners)

[Goal: Give them ways to hold themselves accountable and process their everyday life]

In your journal time, talk to God about the people you look up to. Write down characteristics of those people. Use your Attributes of God handout and think about whether those people worship and reflect Christ or worship and reflect worldly things. Think about a person you know that does reflect godly characteristics.

Materials: pens, pages 6-7 of handout

1. Say: **Write down someone you look up to, whether it is a celebrity or someone you know personally.**

2. Tell them: **Write down what traits they see in this person.**
3. Say: **Then compare these traits to God’s character.**
4. Challenge them: **Consider if this person is worth following. If the person is worshipping/reflecting God, you should follow them. If the person does not worship/reflect Christ you should not follow them, no matter how “good” they seem according to worldly standards.**
5. Write down who these students follow and their evaluations of their role models.

Next week: If students have chosen to follow a godly role model, ask them one way they have chosen to reflect God in the past week. If they follow an ungodly role model, ask them next week one thing they have done to change who they follow.

Remind them: **Everyone is made to bear the image of God to represent Him. As women, we must know who God is in order to bear His image and represent Him well on earth.**

6. Challenge them to keep reading their Bibles and praying in order to pursue a relationship with Christ. Say: **As you continue to grow closer to God, you will recognize His attributes and He will help you reflect those same attributes to become more like Him.**
7. Tell the girls: **Pick a partner and pray with them. Pray for each other to recognize God’s image and desire to reflect it.**

Part 5. Evaluate:

4. How did girls respond to each activity?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
5. Did girls seem to understand the difference between worldly and godly traits?
6. Did you emphasize the difference between “good” and “godly”?
7. Were girls honest about the idols in their lives?
8. Did girls change their thinking and actions based on the lesson or are they “just showing up”?

Women Made in the Image of God

Lesson 7

Women of the Bible/Role Models

Student Worksheets

© Ruth Powers, 2017

[Lesson 7 Handouts Page 1]

Traits in Women

<http://st-takla.org/bible/commentary/en/ot/matthew-henry/ruth/ch2.html>

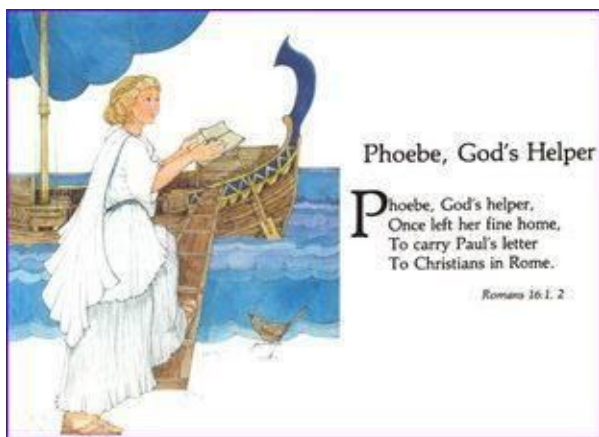
Ruth- (Ruth 1-4) Ruth was a Moabite foreigner who lived in Bethlehem with her widowed mother-in-law. She chose to stay with her mother-in-law Naomi and live among the Israelite people and worship their God instead of returning to her homeland to find a husband. She worked hard in dangerous conditions to provide for herself and Naomi and was noticed for her faith by a godly man named Boaz who redeemed her family. She was the great-grandmother of King David who is in the line of Jesus.



<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/454722893604159511/>

Deborah- (Judges 4-5)

Judges 4:4-5 Deborah, the wife of Lappidoth, was a prophet who was judging Israel at that time. She would sit under the Palm of Deborah, between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the Israelites would go to her for judgment. Deborah was a judge in Israel in the time before they had a king. She acted as a prophet, judge, and military commander for Israel during this time. She was wise and well respected, so people went to her to solve their disputes.



<http://christianwomenofworth.weebly.com/phoebe.html>

Phoebe (Romans 16:1-2)

Phoebe is one of Paul's helpers who he calls a sister and is a Deacon in the church in Cenchrea. A deacon was someone of prominent leadership within the house churches in the first century. He says she is worthy of honor and welcome among God's people. He says that she deserves help for she has helped many especially Paul in spreading the gospel.



[Lesson 7 Handouts Page 2]

<http://www.cnn.com/2016/04/23/entertainment/beyonce-lemonade-hbo/>

(Wikipedia) Beyoncé Giselle Knowles-Carter (born September 4, 1981) is an American singer, songwriter and actress. Born and raised in Houston, Texas, she performed in various singing and dancing competitions as a child and rose to fame in the late 1990s as lead singer of R&B girl-group Destiny's Child. Managed by her father, Mathew Knowles, the group became one of the world's best-selling girl groups of all time. Their hiatus saw the release of Beyoncé's debut album, *Dangerously in Love* (2003), which established her as a solo artist worldwide, earned five Grammy Awards and featured the Billboard Hot 100 number-one singles "Crazy in Love" and "Baby Boy".



<http://www.justjared.com/2016/01/08/emma-watson-starts-own-feminist-book-club/>

(Wikipedia) Emma Charlotte Duerre Watson (born 15 April 1990) is a British actress, model, and activist. Born in Paris and brought up in Oxfordshire, Watson attended the Dragon School as a child and trained as an actress at the Oxford branch of Stagecoach Theatre Arts. She rose to prominence after landing her first professional acting role as Hermione Granger in the Harry Potter film series, appearing in all eight Harry Potter films from 2001 to 2011, previously having acted only in school plays. The franchise earned Watson worldwide fame, critical accolades, and more than £10 million



(Wikipedia)

Jennifer Shrader Lawrence (born August 15, 1990) is an American actress. Born and raised in Louisville, Kentucky, she was spotted by a talent scout in New York City at the age of 14. She soon moved to Los Angeles and began her acting career by playing guest roles in television shows. Her first major role came as a main cast member on the sitcom *The Bill Engvall Show* (2007–09). She made her film debut with a supporting role in *Garden Party* (2008), following which she had her breakthrough with the acclaimed role of a poverty-stricken teenager in the independent drama *Winter's Bone* (2010).

[Lesson 7 Handouts Page 3]

Compare and Contrast

[Lesson 7 Handouts Page 4]

Genesis 1:26-31

26 Then God said, “Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground.”

27 So God created human beings in his own image.

In the image of God he created them;

male and female he created them.

28 Then God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground.”

29 Then God said, “Look! I have given you every seed-bearing plant throughout the earth and all the fruit trees for your food. 30 And I have given every green plant as food for all the wild animals, the birds in the sky, and the small animals that scurry along the ground—everything that has life.” And that is what happened.

31 Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good!

And evening passed and morning came, marking the sixth day.

[Lesson 7 Handouts Page 6]

Attributes of God- Dr. Moroney

Lesson 8: Unpacking Biblical Passages about Women

Date: _____ **Class:** _____ **File Under:** Identity;
Womanhood

Target Group: High School Girls (14-18) (Mid-Adolescence)

Scripture: 2 Timothy 3:16-17

“All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.”

Cross References:

Hebrews 4:12 “For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires.”

Materials: Handout Packet, pens

Bible Background: *The IVP Bible Background Commentary*; New Testament, Craig S. Keener.

Pg 622 (**2 Tim. 3:1-17**)

Belief in God-inspired works was common in Paul’s time. The Old Testament was considered inspired by the Jewish people. The law and prophecies in the Old Testament Scriptures were already considered divinely inspired, so the idea that the Scriptures Paul was helping write is not so huge of a theological jump for the people of ancient times. Teaching, correcting, and rebuking were all essential parts of Jewish culture and Greek educational culture, so Paul was not far-fetched in adding that the inspired Word of God is not just living but useful for the practical matters of desired growth in Christ.

Pg 645 (**Heb. 4:12**)

In Jewish culture, Jews already were familiar with the idea that God could search and know the depths of someone’s heart and thoughts. In the Greek culture, philosophers also often talked about a universal knowledge that could sever the parts of being into smaller and smaller pieces. Drawing from both Jewish and secular influences, Paul simply reiterated that God’s Word that he participates in writing is active in the same power that the Jews have always known God to be active.

Conclusions:

Jewish believers would have already been familiar with the powers of God’s inspired Word. In order to understand and follow God, we must acknowledge the power

and authority that God's Word has in our lives. We must also use the correct tools to discovering the meaning of God's Word.

Exegetical Idea: All of God's Word is useful for building up the body of believers.

Pedagogical Idea: All of God's Word is good, so we must learn how to interpret His Word properly.

Lesson Aims: Introducing girls to difficult passages about women and giving them tools with which to interpret those passages.

The students will...

Cognitive (Head) Learn how to properly study Scripture.

Affective (Heart) Accept that God's Word has authority over their lives.

Behavioral (Hands) Use Scripture to speak truth into their own lives and their peers' lives.

Part 1. Why do I need to know this? (Imaginative Learners)

[Goal: Show how context affects the interpretation of a story.]

Materials: Page 1, (2-3) of handouts.

1. **Find** page 1 of the handouts. Use the story included to help girls understand that right and wrong is not always a straightforward answer.
2. **Read** the story to the girls.
3. **Ask** them whether the son did the right thing or not when he began tearing down his house? If someone asked them to do the same thing, would it be wrong or right? Why was the son right in doing something that the world may consider wrong or foolish?
4. Next, **help them understand** that the "right" and "wrong" thing depends on our perspective and what we hear God saying through Scripture. Emphasize that God was testing Abraham's obedience and allegiance.
5. **Ask** them to think about a time they did something considered "wrong," but it turned out to be the right thing to do. These can be hypothetical.[Example- hiding Jews during WWII, telling about a friend who is hurting her/himself.]
6. **Tell** the girls that this story is actually based on the story of Abraham and Isaac in the Bible. God is the Father, Abraham is the son, and the house the son builds represents Isaac. **Help** the girls think about what this means to them as disciples who follow God.

Transition: Prepare the next page of handouts to give to students.

Part 2. What do I need to know? (Analytical Learners)

[Goal: Teach them the importance and validity of Scripture.]

Materials: Page 4 of handouts, Bibles.

1. **Tell** students that “we are going to learn about the importance of Scripture (the Bible) today.”
2. **Ask 1 student** to read the Bible passage, 2 Timothy 3:16-17
3. **Ask 1 student** to read the Bible passage, Hebrews 4:12
4. **Ask** what these verses mean to students.
5. **Tell** them about the Bible Background, how Jewish people believed that the Old Testament was inspired by God and authoritative, so Paul emphasized this when writing to the early churches.
6. **Ask** them to share some Scripture verses that they have memorized. How have these verses impacted them? [Example: Proverbs 3:5-6, Psalm 23, John 3:16]
7. **Help** them understand that Scripture is powerful and helps them know Jesus, know sin, know redemption, know themselves, and how to love God and others, etc.

Transition: Prepare the next handouts, pens, highlighters, for the lesson.

Part 3. How does this work? (Common Sense Learners)

[Goal: Teach students how to do basic exegesis in order to better understand Scripture in context of the whole.]

Materials: Page 5-8 of the handouts, Bibles, pens, highlighters (optional)

1. **Remind** students that when interpreting the meaning of a story, CONTEXT is very important.
2. **Ask** them, “When you read the Bible, what kind of context can you use to help you understand what God is saying?” [**Answers:** the church community, the whole Bible/ what other Scripture says, historical context, books that talk about the background of the Bible (commentaries and references books)]
3. **Teach** them that when reading the Bible, we cannot simply read one verse and then give that verse our own meaning. We must look at the CONTEXT in order to understand what God is saying through the authors.
4. **Tell** them that “Next, we are going to look at some Bible verses that people have trouble interpreting.”
5. **Ask** them, “Have you ever heard someone use Scripture to tell you not to do something?” **Leave** time for responses.
6. **Remind** them that “As disciples, our job is to follow Jesus and become more like Him each day.”

7. **Tell** them, “Sometimes, people use Scripture to say that women should and shouldn’t do certain things, just because they are women. Some of these verses are still valid today, some of them are not.”
8. **Ask** students, “What do you think about that? Are there things that women can’t do? Are there things that women should do? Are there things that you can’t do? Are there things that you should do? What do you think God says?”
9. **Remind** students that “The real question to ask is ‘what does God want me to do as I follow Him?’”
10. **Say** “Next, we’re going to look at the verses on page 5 of the handout. We’re going to use context and our knowledge of God’s Word to understand these passages better.”
11. **Give** girls the handout pages and give them a few minutes to write about their thoughts and questions from the texts.
12. **Work** through their thoughts and questions; help them come to a biblical understanding of the meaning of the text for modern Christians.

Transition: Next, girls will pair off to pray together and encourage one another with Scripture.

Part 4. What can this become? Now what? (Dynamic Learners)

[Goal: Give girls ways to hold themselves accountable and process their everyday life]

Materials: Bibles, space to gather in pairs.

1. **Place** the girls in pairs.
2. **Ask** each pair to discuss an area of faith in which they need encouragement.
3. **Instruct** each girl to find a Scripture passage that speaks to the other girl’s situation or need. (Phones or computers can be used to find the Scripture, but encourage girls to also open up their Bibles.)
4. **Instruct** each girl to share their encouragement and pray for one another.
5. **Transition:** End the class by praying for the students to always be rooted in Scripture and to continue to grow in grace and their knowledge of Christ (2 Peter 3:18).

Part 5. Evaluate:

9. How did girls respond to each activity?
10. Was this activity age-level appropriate? Why or why not?
11. This lesson is very advanced for high school girls. What did you learn from teaching the lesson?
12. Did you see girls understanding new concepts? What are they “getting”? What are they not “getting”?
13. Did girls change their thinking and actions based on the lesson or are they “just showing up”?

Women Made in the Image of God

Lesson 8

Biblical Passages about Women Unpacked

Student Worksheets

© Ruth Powers, 2017

[Lesson 8 Handouts Page 1]Story of Abraham told from a modern perspectives (Ruth Powers © 2017)

During a time not too long ago, a man and his son lived in a log cabin in the woods. Each day, the man and his son chopped wood for the fire, hunted for their food, and worked together to steward their home. The home was beautifully built and wonderfully constructed- the father had built it himself many years ago with his own hands.

As the son grew up, the father taught the son how to cut wood and create things they could use. The son learned how to build chairs, tables, and other useful things for their home.

One day, the father took the son out to a clearing and told him that he would build his own house. The son was amazed. He had a hard time believing that he could do what his father said he would do. But that day, the father and son began building the house that the son would call home.

Many years later, the son had grown into a man, and the house was complete. He moved into it with his wife. His father promised that as long as the son did everything that he had taught him, he would have a prosperous life, much land, and many descendants.

But one day, the father came to the son's home with an urgent message. The son must tear down the house he spent twenty years building because the father was now selling the land that he lived on. The son was shocked, hurt, and disappointed. He thought, "How could my father take away everything he has given me? How will I have what he promised me if I give up my home and my land?"

Still, even though his heart was broken, the son knew he must trust his father who had trained and raised him and given him everything he ever needed. The next day, the son began preparing to destroy the house. He asked his wife to pack up their belongings and move their furniture outside. He figured, "the quickest way to destroy the house will be to burn it down."

The son lit a match, then a torch made of sticks and leaves. Just as he was about to send his beautiful house up in smoke, his father came running to him. "Son, wait!" shouted the father.

"Do not destroy this home. I have great plans to use this home to build a city which I will rule forever. You have done what I asked by not even withholding your most prized possession, which I gave you. I have done this so that your faith in me would be tested and refined. Now you know that your faith is strong. I know you will be able to help me build this city."

The son gasped as his father spoke to him and wept as his father poured out his grace and mercy on the son and his home and his family. Although the trial had been hard, the son knew the father loved him and would continue to trust him all his life.

[Lesson 8 Handouts Page 2]

(For reference purposes)

Abraham and Isaac, Genesis 22:1-18

Sometime later, God tested Abraham's faith. "Abraham!" God called.

"Yes," he replied. "Here I am."

"Take your son, your only son—yes, Isaac, whom you love so much—and go to the land of Moriah. Go and sacrifice Him as a burnt offering on one of the mountains, which I will show you."

The next morning Abraham got up early. He saddled his donkey and took two of his servants with him, along with his son, Isaac. Then he chopped wood for a fire for a burnt offering and set out for the place God had told him about. On the third day of their journey, Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. "Stay here with the donkey," Abraham told the servants. "The boy and I will travel a little farther. We will worship there, and then we will come right back."

So Abraham placed the wood for the burnt offering on Isaac's shoulders, while he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them walked on together, Isaac turned to Abraham and said, "Father?"

"Yes, my son?" Abraham replied.

"We have the fire and the wood," the boy said, "but where is the sheep for the burnt offering?" "God will provide a sheep for the burnt offering, my son," Abraham answered. And they both walked on together.

When they arrived at the place where God had told him to go, Abraham built an altar and arranged the wood on it. Then he tied his son, Isaac, and laid him on the altar on top of the wood. And Abraham picked up the knife to kill his son as a sacrifice. At that moment the angel of the Lord called to Him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!"

"Yes," Abraham replied. "Here I am!"

[Lesson 8 Handouts Page 3]

“Don’t lay a hand on the boy!” the angel said. “Do not hurt him in any way, for now I know that you truly fear God. You have not withheld from me even your son, your only son.”

Then Abraham looked up and saw a ram caught by its horns in a thicket. So he took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering in place of his son. Abraham named the place Yahweh-Yireh (which means “the Lord will provide”). To this day, people still use that name as a proverb: “On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided.”

Then the angel of the Lord called again to Abraham from heaven. “This is what the Lord says: Because you have obeyed me and have not withheld even your son, your only son, I swear by my own name that I will certainly bless you. I will multiply your descendants beyond number, like the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will conquer the cities of their enemies. And through your descendants all the nations of the earth will be blessed—all because you have obeyed me.”

[Lesson 8 Handouts Page 5]Difficult Passages concerning Women:**1 Timothy 2:9-15**

9 And I want women to be modest in their appearance. They should wear decent and appropriate clothing and not draw attention to themselves by the way they fix their hair or by wearing gold or pearls or expensive clothes. **10** For women who claim to be devoted to God should make themselves attractive by the good things they do.

11 Women should learn quietly and submissively. **12** I do not let women teach men or have authority over them. Let them listen quietly. **13** For God made Adam first, and afterward he made Eve.

Questions to think about:

Why did Paul write this letter to Timothy?

What situations were going on in the church that Paul was writing to?

Do these statements apply to every Christian, or just the ones that Paul wrote the letter to?

If Paul was only writing to an ancient church community, do these verses still mean anything for Christians today?

Do these verses describe life back then or do they prescribe a way we should act now?

What other Scripture can we look at to inform our understanding of these passages?

[Lesson 8 Handouts Page 7]Other important verses:

1 Cor. 12:12-27 (the Body),

Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

Now if the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!” On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

1 Cor. 13:4-8 (love) (NIV)

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.

[Lesson 8 Handouts Page 8]
Information

Important Words, Concepts, and Background

The IVP Bible Background Commentary; New Testament, Craig S. Keener. Pg 605

“Dressing modestly”- In Greek, Roman, and Jewish culture, wearing excessive adornments was considered shameful. So, Paul is simply reiterating an appropriate custom of the time to dress plainly and focus more on the inward spiritual qualities of a woman rather than her outward appearance. (To think about what is modest or not, do a “heart-check” and think about why you are wearing a certain clothing or accessory. Are you expressing confidence and respect for yourself or are you trying to catch male attention?)

“Not braiding hair”- In Greek culture, braided hair was considered sexually provocative. Paul’s admonition is for women not to dress as to attract attention from men. This is still true for our culture today regarding proper conduct in a worship setting.

“Learning in quietness and submission”- In Greek culture, learning “in quietness and submission” was proper for those who were new to a subject. In Ancient Jewish and Greco-Roman culture, women were not often educated. So, in the new church, the fact that they were included in the service was already a tremendous step towards including women. Paul’s command here would have aided them in being good students as new Christians instead of hindering them from speaking up. So, his command is to women who were new believers and not well-educated, not women who were already on the same educational and social level as men. (Mary demonstrates this in Luke 10:38-42)

Other notes: In Greek, the word for “woman” and “man” can also be translated as “wife” and “husband.”¹¹⁸ So, an alternative reading of the passage could only be addressing married couples. Since the husband was the head of the household and would have been more educated than the woman, it would have been proper for her to learn quietly and to not try to assume authority over a man who had had much more extensive training in the Mosaic law than her.

In Greek, the word for “authority” also means to dominate.¹¹⁹ If, as Ephesians 5:21 says we should “submit to each other out of reverence and Christian love,” then no Christian should ever desire to dominate a peer’s life anyway. While for Christian peers there is no hierarchy of authority, that does not mean there are no hierarchies in Christian life. Parents have authority over children. Pastors have authority over a congregation. Husbands have the authority to lead their wives. But, as Christians, this authority is borrowed because it comes from God and we must submit to God and steward the power He gives us accordingly. To have authority is not an excuse to become power hungry- or abusive towards those that are under the authority. Authority is a gift used to build up a part of Christ’s Body for service in His Church.

¹¹⁸ <http://biblehub.com/greek/1135.htm>

¹¹⁹ <http://biblehub.com/greek/831.htm>

End Lesson 8

Chapter 6

Conclusions

Identity. Theology. Women. Ministry. God.

Over the past three years, these topics have consumed my thought process. As a young woman, youth minister, and college student, I have walked through struggles with girls and myself that have demanded answers. While we may not have all of the answers to the questions of pain and suffering in human life, I believe God gives people everything they need to walk through this life in His Word.¹²⁰ He is more than sufficient to bring people through the tests and trials that He gives them.¹²¹ In order to combat the pain and suffering of life, Christians must stay firmly rooted in Christ and His Word. Going to Church is vital, but of even further importance is diligent study of God's Word, and prayer and communion with Him. Jesus is the Bread of Life, the Living Water, and the Word of God made flesh. Christians cannot survive without the truth of His Word amidst the struggles of the current age. Christians cannot overcome social injustice or gender discrimination or any other world issue without the truth of the Gospel. For these reasons, the curriculum written here helps adolescent girls understand the God of Scripture so that they can be rooted in a right relationship with Him. In order to

¹²⁰ 2 Peter 1:3 "By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know Him, the one who called us to Himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence."

¹²¹ 2 Corinthians 12:9 "Each time he said, 'My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.' So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me."

Zephaniah 3:17 "For the Lord your God is living among you. He is a mighty savior. He will take delight in you with gladness. With his love, he will calm all your fears. He will rejoice over you with joyful songs."

understand Him, they must know about Him. Once they know about Him, they must filter all they do, see, say, think, and experience through Him.

I hope that the curriculum will be published and used in churches in order to instruct teenage girls. At the very least, I will continue to use the material written here as a guide to my own ministry as God calls me into various settings to work with teenage girls. I also hope to continue writing material for youth workers and teenage girls. While my experience in formal ministry is still in infancy, I know that as God leads me, I will continue to gain wisdom to share and lessons to impart to those coming after me. I am passionate about God and youth ministry so I want to see capable adults working with youth whether they are paid staff, volunteers or parents. God has given me this passion so that He can use me in this sphere. I look forward to the work that He will continue doing in and through me.

I could not have completed this curriculum without God's direction, guidance, and forcing me to face the fears and challenges in my path. I am incredibly proud of the obstacles I have overcome in order to do the academic and spiritual work He has called me to do in this thesis. I humbly hope and pray that the words written here and truth presented will continuously impact men, women, and youth. Anything that I have said that is rooted in Scripture will always be relevant, because God is unchanging. Any words I have written in my own human wisdom will pass away just as earthly bodies and mortal things die in their season. I pray that God's eternal truth is revealed here and that He would be revealed in this work. Amen.

In the future, I hope and plan for this curriculum to come to completion under further guidance from Marva Hoopes, Ed.D.

Bibliography

- Allen, Jennie. *Dream Big*. Rightnowmedia.org. 2014. November 13, 2016.
- Balswick, Jack O., and Judith K. Balswick. *The Family: a Christian Perspective on the Contemporary Home*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014.
- Becker, Carol E. *Leading Women: How Church Women can Avoid Leadership Traps and Negotiate the Gender Maze*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996.
- Belleville, Linda L. *Two Views on Women in Ministry*. Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan, 2005.
- Boom, Jan. "Egocentrism in Moral Development: Gibbs, Piaget, Kohlberg." *New Ideas in Psychology* 29, no. 3 (2011): 355-63. doi:10.1016/j.newideapsych.2010.03.007.
- Borgman, Dean. *Foundations for Youth Ministry: Theological Engagement with Teen Life and Culture*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013.
- Charnock, Stephen, and William Symington. *The Existence and Attributes of God*. Baker Books, 2000.
- Cho, Yong-gi. *The Nature of God*. Charisma House, 2001.
- Clark, Chap, and Steve Rabey. *When Kids Hurt: Help for Adults Navigating the Adolescent Maze*. Grand Rapids, MI: BakerBooks, 2009.
- English, Leona M. *Mentoring in Religious Education*. Birmingham, Al.: Religious Education Press, 1998.
- Estep, James Riley, et al. *Mapping out Curriculum in Your Church: Cartography for Christian Pilgrims*. B & H Academic, 2012.
- Goldsworthy, Graeme. *Prayer and the Knowledge of God: what the whole Bible teaches*.

Inter-Varsity Press, 2003.

Grenz, Stanley J., and Denise Muir. Kjesbo. *Women in the Church: a Biblical Theology of Women in Ministry*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995.

Gresh, Dannah. *And the Bride Wore White: Seven Secrets to Sexual Purity*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1999.

James, Carolyn Custis. *Half the Church: Recapturing God's Global Vision for Women*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011.

Keener, Craig S. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary New Testament*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014.

Lee-Barnewall, Michelle. *Neither Complementarian nor Egalitarian: a Kingdom Corrective to the Evangelical Gender Debate*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, a division of Baker Publishing Group, 2016.

LeFever, Marlene D. *Creative Teaching Methods*. Elgin, IL.: David C. Cook Publishing, 1990.

LeFever, Marlene D. *Learning Styles: Reaching Everyone God Gave You to Teach*. Colorado Springs, CO: Nexgen, 2004.

Lexicon: Strong's H461 'Eliy`ezer. *Blueletterbible.org*. 2017.

Lexicon: Strong's G2937- ktisis. *Blueletterbible.org*. 2017.

Lexicon: Strong's H6754 tselem. *Blueletterbible.org*. 2017.

Pierce, Ronald W. *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity Without Hierarchy*. InterVarsity Press, 2010.

Pipher, Mary. *Reviving Ophelia Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls*. New York, NY: Random House Inc. 2008.

- Piper, John, and Wayne Grudem. *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: a Response to Evangelical Feminism*. Crossway, 2012.
- Powers, Louis C. *A Straw god*. Malone University, December 2016.
- Richards, Larry, and Gary J. Bredfeldt. *Creative Bible Teaching*. Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1998.
- Saroglou, Vassilis. 2012. "Adolescents' Social Development and the Role of Religion: Coherence at the Detriment of Openness." *In Values, Religion, and Culture in Adolescent Development*, 391-423. New York, NY, US: Cambridge University Press, 2012. *PsycINFO*, EBSCOhost. October 4, 2016.
- Steinberg, Laurence D. *Adolescence*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Education, 2017.
- Stewart, Don. "Is God a Personal God?" *Blueletterbible.org*. 2017.
- Sumner, Sarah. *Men and Women in the Church: Building Consensus on Christian Leadership*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003.
- Toews, John E., Valerie Rempel, and Katie Funk. Wiebe. *Your Daughters Shall Prophesy: Women in Ministry in the Church*. Winnipeg, MB, Canada: Kindred Press, 1992.
- Tyndale. *Nlt Study Bible*. Tyndale House Publishers, 2014.
- Walton, John H. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary. O.T.: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009.
- www.group.com
- www.rightnowmedia.org

Personal Interviews:

Charles. "Girls' Curriculum Questions." E-mail interview by Ruth Clifford. November 7, 2016.

Frakes, Marty. "Girls' Curriculum Questions." E-mail interview by Ruth Clifford. November 7, 2016.

Hart, Matt. "Girls' Curriculum Questions." E-mail interview by Ruth Clifford. November 7, 2016.

Hixenbaugh, Todd. "Girls' Curriculum Questions." E-mail interview by Ruth Clifford. November 7, 2016.

Iman, Nathaniel. "Girls' Curriculum Questions." E-mail interview by Ruth Clifford. November 7, 2016.

Lees, Bryan. "Girls' Curriculum Questions." E-mail interview by Ruth Clifford. November 7, 2016.

Logemann, Sarah. "Girls' Curriculum Questions." E-mail interview by Ruth Clifford. November 7, 2016.

Price, Amy. "Girls' Curriculum Questions." E-mail interview by Ruth Clifford. November 7, 2016.

Schroeder, Cara. "Girls' Curriculum Questions." E-mail interview by Ruth Clifford. November 7, 2016.

Thorne, Martin. "Girls' Curriculum Questions." E-mail interview by Ruth Clifford. November 7, 2016.

Weed, Gary. "Girls' Curriculum Questions." E-mail interview by Ruth Clifford. November 7, 2016.