

Prayers of the Bible

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EQUIPPING WOMEN TO CALL ON GOD IN TRUTH

Leader's Guide

SUSAN HUNT

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P U B L I S H I N G
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PREFACE

Dear Discipler of Women,

“I thank my God in all my remembrance of you . . . because of your partnership in the gospel” (Phil. 1:3–4).

I am grateful that God has called you to disciple His daughters. As I state in the text, I am committed to Titus 2 discipleship. T2D is life-on-life discipleship. It is a nurturing, mothering ministry. Paul captured the idea in his first letter to the Thessalonians.

We were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us. (1 Thess. 2:7–8)

This Leader’s Guide is designed to help you teach the gospel and encourage women to share life together. It includes more than lesson plans. There are also suggestions for building community among the women. This relational component is essential to cultivate a safe, loving context to study the Word and to pray together.

PREFACE

The lesson plans are not intended for a lecture format. These are interactive studies that help you expand and apply the material in the text.

My prayers are with you as you disciple women to be true women who call on God in truth.

For God's Glory,
Susan

INTRODUCTION

PREPARING TO TEACH

The following suggestions should be adapted to your group, schedule, and style.

USING THE MATERIAL

- Text (student book): Encourage women to read the text in advance.
- Reflect and Pray: Each chapter concludes with suggestions for reflection. Encourage the women to use notebooks to record their thoughts and prayers. Suggestion: Many women are in seasons of life where they feel overwhelmed. Emphasize that reading the material in advance is not a requirement.
- Lesson Plan: The lesson plans review, reinforce, and expand the material in the text.
- Handouts: The handouts at the end of each lesson plan in this Leader's Guide correlate with the lesson plan. Make copies and encourage the women to keep them in their notebooks, since you will frequently refer back to handouts from previous lessons.

PREPARING THE LESSON

- Read the Scripture and the text.
- Do the assignments in the Reflect and Pray section of the text.
- Read the Leader's Guide and handout.
- Prayerfully read the Scripture again several times.
- Pray for the women you teach as you plan your lesson.

PREPARING FOR PRAYER

- Pray for wisdom to help the women grow in their corporate prayer life. Do not just study about prayer. Be intentional in spending time learning to pray.
- Suggestions: Have several prayer times—a time of praise, another time to use a prayer sheet listing church needs, and a time when women can share their prayer requests and pray for one another. Encourage women to use their notebooks to record requests and the date. Later you can go back to these and record answers to prayer. The lesson plan sometimes suggests prayer times during the lesson.

BIBLE STUDY COMMITTEE

A committee involves more women in leadership and relieves the teacher of responsibilities other than preparing the lesson. You may ask women to assume responsibility for the following:

- Greeting: Welcome women and provide name tags.
- Refreshments: Organize volunteers to provide snacks.

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- **Prayer:** Have a prayer sheet each week with church prayer requests. Also list a staff member, elder and deacon, and their families. List a missionary your church supports. These prayer sheets can also be kept in the notebooks.
- **Building community:** This is an essential element to give women an opportunity to share their joys and sorrows and to pray for one another. Women are unlikely to do this with strangers. Providing ways for women to build relationships will transform your Bible study from an academic atmosphere to a loving and safe place. Ideas for building community are listed below.

SUGGESTED CLASS FORMAT

- Gathering, refreshments
- Welcome and opening prayer
- Community building activity
- Lesson and prayer times

You may want to include singing. Idea: Sometimes use a hymn as a prayer.

Be flexible. If a woman arrives who is distraught because of a crisis in her life, forget your format and gather the women around her to pray for her.

IDEAS FOR BUILDING COMMUNITY

This is an intentional way to help women build relationships. This segment should not be more than ten to fifteen minutes. Here are a few ideas:

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- Ask someone who enjoys crafts to plan an activity for the women to make bookmarks with Psalm 145:18.
- Use the prayers at the end of the text to make prayer cards. These may be personalized, put on index or business-size cards, with holes punched in the corners and tied together with ribbon.
- Life-giving prayer stories: After the women have read two or three chapters, ask any who have or know similar stories to write them. Schedule volunteers to read their stories.
- Ask someone from the missions committee to have prayer cards of missionaries supported by the church. Distribute these and ask women to “introduce” the missionaries whose names they received. Ask them to follow up by praying for and corresponding with the missionaries and to give updates whenever they receive prayer requests from them.
- Do the same with the names of shut-ins, church staff, elders, deacons, Sunday school teachers, and others who serve in the church. Assign names to women and ask them to contact the persons and find out whether they have specific prayer requests.
- Sign cards of appreciation for families of church staff, elders and deacons, college students, etc. Have a time of prayer for those who will receive the cards.
- Box talks and testimonies are excellent ways for the women to know one another. Explanations and guidelines are below. When someone volunteers, give her a copy of the guidelines. Emphasize the time limit. These ideas can be used frequently.

GUIDELINES FOR BOX TALKS

What is a box talk? It is a “show and tell” for grown-ups. It is a delightful way to get to know one another.

What do you do? You place in a container (a box, bag, basket, etc.) objects that are representative of you and your life, and then you show the objects one at a time and tell why you included them. A box talk should be short and concise, giving a glimpse into who you are and what you love. It should be a catalyst for further conversations. The guidelines below are intended to help you prepare.

The purpose of box talks:

- To nurture community among the women in a group by helping them to know one another better.
- For the woman who is reporting to have the opportunity to learn to speak concisely, intentionally, and purposefully. This is an important aspect of our discipleship.

Guidelines to keep these talks interesting and lively:

- Choose five to seven items that represent who you are. Pray about these items and choose them carefully. Pray for wisdom to know which parts of your life will help you connect to the women in the group.
- Use items that tell something about yourself, and let the item do the talking. A couple of sentences of explanation are sufficient. Women can talk with you afterward about specific points of interest.
- Use pictures sparingly because it is difficult for everyone to see the picture and awkward to pass around too many pictures. Other items that make a box talk stronger include a favorite book, or something that depicts a hobby or vacation spot,

something that recalls a special moment or a future dream, or an item of clothing that recalls a special memory. For example, an old spoon that belonged to your grandmother who taught you to cook and to pray for the people who would sit at your table communicates a myriad of messages. Be prayerful and creative as you select items to show.

- Although your box talk is not a testimony, consider including a single aspect of your testimony or a specific spiritual lesson you learned from another person or an event in your life.
- Decide the best order to show the items and then list them in that order. Do not emphasize details (too much information is too much information!).
- **A box talk should not exceed five minutes.** It is important to plan carefully because it is easy to think you have talked for five minutes when it has actually been twenty-five minutes. PLEASE, do not mention time. References to “they only gave me five minutes,” or “I think my time is up but . . .” take time and deflect from your box talk.

GUIDELINES FOR TESTIMONIES

An essential part of discipleship is learning to give a testimony, and an essential part of community is sharing these stories of God’s grace.

Guidelines to help you prepare:

- Time: 3 to 5 minutes
- Pray
 - That your words will point to Jesus and glorify Him.
 - That God, who knows your audience, will give you the words and love for the specific women who will hear.

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- Gospel orientation
 - A testimony should focus on the gospel. It should include a clear statement of the gospel and the impact of the gospel in your life.
 - A testimony should not glorify sin by giving explicit details.
- Prepare
 - Write the testimony, then ask yourself these questions:
 - (1) Will an unbeliever hear this and know how to become a Christian?
 - (2) Is the testimony more about my feelings and experiences, or about God's Word and His work in my life?
 - (3) Is the focus on Jesus or on myself?
 - Practice and edit the testimony until it is 30 seconds shorter than the time allotted. This will not detract from the message. A clear, focused testimony is much more effective than a rambling, repetitive one.
 - When you share a testimony, it is suggested that you read what you have prepared.
 - Do not refer to the time—"My time is up but . . ." takes time and distracts the hearers.



*The LORD is near to all who call on him,
to all who call on him in truth.*

Psalm 145:18

REDEEMED: LESSON PLAN

GENESIS 1–3

1. Refer to the Introduction in the text, and begin with a brief discussion about Titus 2 discipleship.
 - Do you think that women need opportunities to learn from other women? Why or why not?

The following excerpts from *Women's Ministry in the Local Church* may be helpful to expand this discussion.

We ought to have an intentional, deliberate approach to female discipleship because men and women are different, and these differences need to be recognized, taken into account, and addressed in the course of Christian discipleship.¹

1. J. Ligon Duncan and Susan Hunt, *Women's Ministry in the Local Church* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2006), 115.

Biblical discipleship is not simply imparting facts or inculcating personal habits of Bible study, prayer, and evangelism, as helpful as those disciplines are. It is transmitting a way of thinking and living that unites all the parts into the glorious whole of glorifying God. It is passing on a legacy of biblical faith and life to the next generation.²

Godly women who have embraced the truth of God's creation design and redemptive calling for women are called to train other women to think and live according to biblical principles of womanhood. This is the kind of life-on-life discipleship that guides and nurtures to maturity.³

Titus 2 gives legitimacy and limitations to a women's ministry. There is an unmistakable mandate for women to train women, but the extent of this training is somewhat limited. There are many times and places in church life where men and women study and serve side by side, but a primary task of the women's ministry is to train women in the biblical principles and practices of womanhood. This does not mean that biblical womanhood is the only thing that women study, but it does mean that there should be a resolute commitment to weave these principles throughout the entire women's ministry.⁴

- Read 1 Thessalonians 2:7–8. Explain that the various elements planned for your time together (fellowship, community building, prayer as well as study) are intended to help you share the gospel as well as your lives with one another.

2. *Ibid.*, 123.

3. *Ibid.*, 124.

4. *Ibid.*, 127.

2. The principles in chapter one lay the foundation for our study of prayer. Each prayer we will consider has its roots in truths we see in Ephesians 1 and Genesis 1–3.
3. Read the first paragraph in chapter one: “Biblical womanhood . . . amazing gospel story.”
 - We must be careful not to take any topic and lift it from the context of the whole of Scripture. To do so minimizes the scope of a passage. Throughout this study we will look at passages in light of the redemption story.
 - Handout question 1: Read the quotation from Dr. Edmund Clowney.
4. Handout question 2: Before the Beginning
 - The Father chose us in Christ before creation.
 - The Son redeemed us through His blood.
 - The Spirit seals and guarantees our inheritance.
 - What is the triune God’s purpose? To praise His glorious grace.
 - What is this agreement among the persons of the Trinity called? The covenant of redemption.
5. Text, Reflect and Pray question 1: Spend time thanking God for the splendor of salvation. Ask volunteers to read their prayers based on Ephesians 1:1–14. You may want to ask three or four women in advance to be prepared to do this.
 - Suggestion: Whenever you have times of praise, you may want to ask the women to say “Amen” together after each woman prays. It may feel awkward at first,

but explain that it is a helpful way to keep our minds and hearts engaged as others pray.

6. Handout question 3: What is a covenant?
 - Briefly discuss the idea of covenant by summarizing the quotations, or ask women to read them. Another option: Encourage women to read this on their own.
7. Handout question 4: The Beginning
 - What are the three foundational realities discussed in the chapter?
 - (1) Our authority is God's Word.
 - (2) Our purpose is God's glory.
 - (3) Gender distinctiveness is God's plan.
 - Text, Reflect and Pray question 2: Discuss each of these questions.
 - (1) How does this differ from the cultural perspective of authority? The world tells women that we are our own authority and that independence is power. Submitting to God's authority in every area of life is essential for growth in Christ. Prayer is an act of acknowledging God's sovereignty and submitting to His authority.
 - (2) How does this differ from the cultural perspective of our life purpose? A young woman once asked me whether it wasn't egotistical of God to create us for His glory. This was an honest question by someone steeped in this world's perspective that we exist for our own pleasure. My answer: There is no other purpose that could give us true significance. We are created to live in personal relationship with the

majestic King of kings. As we live face-to-face with Him, we begin to look more and more like Him. Any other purpose is pitiful compared with that.

Paul David Tripp writes:

Perhaps you're thinking . . . "How does it help me to have God's zeal for his own glory be greater than his zeal for anything else?" This is a very good question. . . .

If God were to deny his own glory, he would by that act cease to be God. To be God, he must be above and beyond every created thing. Willingness to subjugate himself to anything other than himself would cause him to no longer be Lord over all. God's zeal for his glory really is the hope of the universe. . . . God's unshakable commitment to his own glory is the most loving thing he could ever do for us. It's what redeems us from us and breaks our bondage to all the things in life that we wrongly think will give us life but lead only to emptiness and ultimately death.⁵

- (3) What is your reaction to the quotation from Wayne Grudem? Emphasize that the world minimizes gender distinctiveness and says equality means sameness. This is absurd. It minimizes the value of our femaleness but, far worse, it minimizes our capacity to glorify God.

You may want to clarify that biblical headship and submission have reference to the home and church, not the marketplace. Also, a woman is never to submit to sin. We are to obey God and not man. For example, a woman who submits to abuse, or

5. Paul David Tripp, *Whiter Than Snow* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008), 127.

who hides her husband's drug addiction, is not a true helper to her husband. His actions are not her fault, but her response is her responsibility.

- The Westminster Shorter Catechism succinctly summarizes the first two foundational realities. Refer to these on the handout. Read the questions and ask the women to read the answers.

8. God's Female Design

- Briefly summarize this section and ask for reactions.

9. Sin

- Summarize this section in the text and emphasize that apart from a relationship with Jesus we do not have the desire or ability to glorify Him.
- Handout question 5: The True and the New—What's the Difference?

The True Woman's purpose is God's glory, and her authority is God's Word.

The New Woman's purpose is her happiness, and her authority is herself.

10. Redemption

- Handout question 6: The gospel. Read Genesis 3:15. Emphasize that man did not seek God. God took the initiative in reestablishing this relationship. God said, "You can't, but I will." Ask the women to circle the

words “I will” and to write in the margin: sovereign initiative/sovereign grace.

- Ask volunteers to read the covenant promise verses and to notice how this promise runs throughout Scripture. Note that in most of the verses we read the words “I will”—it is always God’s sovereign grace that reaches out to us. God bound Himself to us with this promise. The promise was kept when Jesus came (Matt. 1:23; John 1:14).
- Suggestion: Process the amazing grace of this promise by asking two or three women to lead in prayer, thanking God for keeping His promise.

We will see the significance of this covenant promise in the prayers we will study.

11. Handout question 7: Eve means life-giver.

- Use the True Woman/New Woman chart to discuss the contrast. Also use Reflect and Pray question 3.
- Since the true woman lives for God’s glory, she will be a life-giver in her relationships and circumstances. The new woman lives for self, so she will be a life-taker.
- Encourage women to think of specific applications of each helper description. Some examples:

Women breathe life into the church when they support the decisions of elders. They drain life out of the church when they weaken the leadership by criticizing decisions.

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A woman gives life to her marriage when she protects the reputation of her husband rather than complaining about him to her children and friends.

- Refer to the question about a difficult relationship and explain that it may not be appropriate to share this. Nothing should be shared that would expose the sin of another person.
 - How were the women in the Life-giving Prayer story life-givers? They were “stalwart defenders” in prayer. Each of the helper words can be seen in the prayer life of a true woman.
 - You will refer to the True Woman/New Woman chart throughout the study.
12. Read the true woman statement in the text.
 - Read the question “How Do We Call on God in Truth?” and the answer.
 13. Ask whether there are comments or reactions to the material you have covered.
 14. Conclude with a time of prayer. It is important for women to have a time to share their prayer requests. If your group is large, you may want to divide into smaller groups for this.

REDEEMED: HANDOUT

GENESIS 1–3

1. Edmund P. Clowney wrote:

“The Greatest Story Ever Told”—this title has been used for the Bible, and with good reason. The Bible is the greatest storybook, not just because it is full of wonderful stories but because it tells one *great* story, the story of Jesus. . . .

Anyone who has had Bible stories read to him as a child knows that there are great stories in the Bible. But it is possible to know Bible stories, yet miss *the* Bible story. . . . The Bible has a story line. It traces an unfolding drama. . . . The story is God’s story. It describes His work to rescue rebels from their folly, guilt, and ruin. And in His rescue operation, God always takes the initiative. . . .

Only God’s revelation could maintain a drama that stretches over thousands of years as though they were days or hours. Only God’s revelation can build a story where the end is anticipated from the beginning, and where the guiding principle is not chance or fate, but promise.¹

1. Edmund P. Clowney, *The Unfolding Mystery: Discovering Christ in the Old Testament* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1988), 9–13.

2. Before the Beginning

vv. 3–6: The Father _____ us in _____ before creation.

vv. 7–12: The Son _____ us through His _____.

vv. 13–14: The Spirit seals and guarantees our _____.

vv. 6, 12, 14: What is the triune God’s purpose? _____.

What is this agreement among the persons of the Trinity called? _____.

3. What is a covenant?

O. Palmer Robertson:

A covenant may be defined as a bond in blood sovereignly administered. Life and death are at stake in the divine covenants. God has bound himself to humans and them to himself.²

Michael Horton:

God’s very existence is covenantal: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit live in unceasing devotion to each other, reaching outward beyond the Godhead to create a community of creatures serving as a giant analogy of the Godhead’s relationship. Created in the image of the Triune God, we are by nature outgoing, interdependent relationship establishers, finding ourselves in the other and not just in ourselves. Unlike the persons of the Trinity, we at one time did not exist. But when God did decide

2. O. Palmer Robertson, *Covenants* (Norcross, GA: Great Commission Publications, 1993), 11.

to create, his decree was not that of a lonely monarch, but of a delighted Father, Son, and Holy Spirit establishing a creaturely, finite analogy of their eternal giving and receiving relationship. We were not just created and then *given* a covenant; we were created *as* covenant creatures—partners not in deity, to be sure, but in the drama that was about to unfold in history.³

4. The Beginning

What are the three foundational realities mentioned in the book?

- (1) _____
 (2) _____
 (3) _____

Westminster Shorter Catechism:

Q. 1. What is the chief end of man?

A. Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever.

Q. 2. What rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him?

A. The Word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him.

5. The True and the New—What's the difference?

	<i>The True Woman</i>	<i>The New Woman</i>
Purpose:	_____	_____
Authority:	_____	_____

3. Michael Horton, *God of Promise* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2006), 10.

6. The gospel: “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel” (Gen. 3:15).

God’s covenant promise is woven throughout Scripture:

Genesis 17:7	Ezekiel 36:25–28
Exodus 6:7	Zechariah 8:7–8
Leviticus 26:12	Matthew 1:23
Deuteronomy 29:10, 12–13	John 1:14
Jeremiah 24:7	2 Corinthians 6:16
Jeremiah 31:33	Revelation 21:1–4
and Hebrews 8:10	

7. Eve means _____

<i>The True Woman</i>	<i>The New Woman</i>
<i>Helper/Life-giver</i>	<i>Hinderer/Life-taker</i>
Exodus 18:4 Defends	Attacks
Psalms 10:14 Sees, cares for oppressed	Indifferent, unconcerned for oppressed
Psalms 20:2 Supports	Weakens
Psalms 33:20 Shields, protects	Leaves unprotected
Psalms 70:5 Delivers from distress	Causes distress
Psalms 72:12–14 Pities the poor, weak, needy	Ignores poor, weak, needy
Psalms 86:17 Comforts	Causes discomfort