

THE IDENTITY OF WOMAN

"We need distinction. Distinction can exist without discrimination. Enjoy who you are. One of the greatest tragedies occurs when women fight their way to the place of being treated like men. The tragedy becomes apparent as they realise that the real honour would have been to be recognised and honoured as women". – Bishop T. D. Jakes

IDENTITY CRISIS

Woman has always had an identity crisis. Unfortunately for us women, society and culture define our identity and status solely in relation to men, or by what a woman does or is expected to do, rather than who she is.

- Women often define or identify themselves by the roles they play as daughters, wives, or mothers. Womanhood is not about doing, but rather, being. I am not a woman because of what I do, I am a woman because of who I am, who I was created to be!
- We cannot have identity without having purpose because your identity and your purpose are two sides of the same coin.
- Knowing your identity also empowers you to fulfil your purpose

What is Identity?

- Name - (specification)
- Individuality - self, personality, character, originality, distinctiveness, uniqueness
- An identification - recognition, naming, singling out
- Who or what a person or thing is and the characteristics determining this.

Generally, all human beings are searching for significance and identity. We often seek for significance from what we do rather than who we are. But for us women the situation is grim.

THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS

- **Read: Matthew 16:13-17**

Jesus felt the need to clarify His identity with His disciples. He did not want them to identify Him just by the things they saw Him doing. Hence the question to them

"Who do men say that I am?"



- The response was – John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah or one of the Prophets. This is because the people were only looking at the things Jesus was saying and doing, rather than who He really was. So Jesus asks His disciples again,

“Who do you say that I am?”

- Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.” Jesus replied, *“Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you.”* “Flesh and blood” cannot reveal our identity to us.

WHO IS A WOMAN?

Dictionary

- An adult female person; a grown-up female person, as distinguished from a man or a child; sometimes, any female person.
- The female part of the human race; womankind.

Biblical

1. A distinctive human being, created in God’s image
2. A help-meet for man
3. The glory of man
4. Mother of all living

1. WOMAN IS A HUMAN BEING

Woman is a human being. There are cultures that say that women are not human beings and are inferior to men. The bible, on the other hand, affirms women as human beings created in the image of God, together with men.

- **Read: Genesis 1:26-27 Genesis 5:1-2**
- These two scriptures establish humanity as male and female created in the image of God. As human beings, men and women are:
 - a. EQUAL – Women are one and equal with men
 - b. DUAL – Men and women are two different and separate parts of a whole, and men and women are designed differently and function differently from each other.
 - c. MUTUAL – Men and women share a common goal and purpose, which they cannot fulfil independently of each other. Therefore, men and women are interdependent on each other



Equal, Different and Interdependent

As human beings, we project the image of God as male and female, since God is male-female in His totality. Any balanced projection of God, therefore, must include both the male and the female.

- The male (father) is to represent leadership, authority, and objective truth. The female (mother's) role is nurturing life in the framework of truth: love, compassion, and submission. These attributes are necessary to the role of nurturing life.
- It is in this reflection of God's image that women have the assurance of our equality with men.

As human beings created in the image of God, women, just like men, have:

1. The capacity to give and receive love
 2. Faculties of conscience, understanding, will and emotion.
 3. Power and place of authority over creation – *"Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; Let them have dominion"*. God gave Man (humanity) the ability to govern and, thus, raised Man above creation
 4. Purity and goodness – righteousness – a right standing with Him and true holiness.
- *These characteristics are not found in the rest of creation, only in humanity, who is created in the image of God as male and female*

Undeified

- Sin had not yet defiled their humanity and they were nakedness and not ashamed.
- Since their relationship with God was unbroken, and their identity therefore unthreatened, they had no need to mask their humanity.

2. WOMAN IS A HELP-MEET FOR MAN (See also, The Purpose Of Woman)

- **Read: Genesis 2:18-25**

"Then the Lord God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.'" – vs. 18

It Is Not Good For Man To Be Alone.

- Man alone did not, indeed could not, possess all the qualities of the divine nature that was needed to fulfil the purpose of taking dominion over and replenishing the earth.
- This says volumes about God's idea of the woman He would create.
- She was to be suitable for the man.



Some Definitions:**Good: Hebrew - *towb* {tobe}**

- Good, pleasant, agreeable,
- Excellent, rich, valuable in estimation, appropriate, becoming,
- Happy, prosperous, right (ethical),
- A good thing, benefit, welfare, prosperity, happiness

Should be:

- To exist, be in existence
- To abide, to remain, continue

Alone: Hebrew - *badad* {baw-dawd'}

- Isolation, withdrawal, separation, being alone, by itself, only
- Single, solitary
- Apart from, part

Help: Hebrew - *`ezer* {ay'-zer}

This same word is used in the Hebrew in reference to God's help – Psalm 146:5, Psalm 124:8, Psalm 121:1,2, Psalm 115:10.

- Aid, help, a helping hand, assistance
- Comfort, ease, relief, balm, reassurance, comfort, solace, consolation
- Support, backing, aid, helping hand
- Tranquillity, serenity, contentment, cosiness
- Weight bear, carry, buttress, reinforce, prop up, keep up
- Be of service to, come to the rescue, bail someone out, be of use, to lend a helping hand

Meet:

- Weight bear
- Has the meaning of being of "weight, value, worth;" also "befitting, becoming, right on the ground of fitness, a reward
- Sufficient, competent, fit, enough, necessary
- Good, well-placed, just
- To render fit, meet, to make sufficient, make able

'Help-meet: Hebrew - *ezer ke-negdo*:

- "A help as his counterpart" or a help suitable to him, a wife



- A helpmeet therefore is *a good, supportive, serene, buttress and reinforcement, who is reassuring, a helping hand, that is of weight, value and worth and is befitting, sufficient, well-place and enough* (just to name a few).

3. WOMAN IS THE GLORY OF MAN

"For a man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man." – **1 Corinthians 11:7**

Glory: Hebrew: doxa {dox'-ah}

- A good opinion concerning one, resulting in praise, honour, and glory
- Splendour, brightness, magnificence, excellence, pre-eminence, dignity, grace, majesty
- Weight, essence

Man – The Glory of Christ

Man is the glory of Christ – Man is Christ's weight, essence, splendour, brightness, magnificence, excellence, pre-eminence, dignity, grace, and majesty. In man (pre-fall and post-Christ and born-again man) the weight and essence of Christ is manifested. So man is glory revealed.

Woman – The Glory of Man

Woman is the glory of man – In other words, woman is the glory of the glory of Christ. If man is the glory of Christ, then woman being the glory of man is the glory of the glory of Christ.



In effect, not only did God crown man with woman, God put His signature onto the creation, when He created woman. A signature always indicates completeness and expresses ownership. The creation of the woman completed the whole work and purpose for creation. Hallelujah!!



GROUP EXERCISE

Time: 20 minutes

1. The Holy Spirit is described in scripture as our Helper. Are there any similarities between the nature of woman and that of the Holy Spirit?
2. If yes, name and discuss some of these similarities. Identify scriptures to support these similarities.
3. If no, explain why.

SIMILARITIES WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

God created Man in His own image as male and female. This means that both male and female reflect the total image and essence of God on earth, as demonstrated in a family. The earthly family represents God's heavenly one.

- In the Trinity, there is God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.
- In a family we have a man (father), woman (mother) and children(sons)
- If we truly reflect God's image, then woman's (mother's) role is representative of the Holy Spirit's within the Trinity.

The Personality Of The Holy Spirit

"And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Helper (Comforter), that He may be with you forever" – John 14:16

1. He is One summoned, called to one's side, esp. called to one's aid
2. He is One who pleads another's cause before a judge, a pleader, counsel for defence, legal assistant, an advocate
3. He is One who pleads another's cause with one, an intercessor, just as Christ in interceding for us before Father God.
4. He is a Helper, Aide, Assistant



After Christ's ascended to the Father, the Holy Spirit took His place with the apostles and disciples, to lead them to a deeper knowledge of gospel truth. He was also to give them the strength needed to enable them to fulfil the Great Commission, and undergo trials and persecutions on behalf of the divine kingdom. The Holy Spirit will continue to do that with us, if only we will allow Him.

Characteristics of the Holy Spirit - Similar In Women

1. Broods – *Genesis 1:1,2 (Compare mother brooding over her young)*
2. Helper/Comforter – *John 14:16; 15:26 (Compare helpmeet)*
3. Intercessor – *Romans 8:26 (compare women as intercessors)*
4. Pours out love – *Romans 5:5 (compare a woman's love and tender care)*
5. Gives birth – *John 3:5-8. To become children of God, we are birthed by the Holy Spirit.*

A Dynamic Force

The Holy Spirit is a dynamic force.

- **Read: Acts 1:8; Acts 10:38**

If women are like Him, then women are not weak, ineffective as usually portrayed. Women have a dynamic, comprehensive, powerful and awesome nature, similar to the Holy Spirit.

