

THROUGH GOD'S EYES  
*Marriage Lessons For Women*

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## *Introduction*

I'm told girls dream of marriage; that they plan their wedding and playact it many times over. That was never my reality. I didn't dream much about Prince Charming but I knew he was rich and willing to grant my every desire. And, of course, we were madly in love – what we would do after the first rush of love was never defined.

Instead, I dreamed about traveling to far away places and living an exotic life. I devoured countless books. I read of Egypt and riding on camels. I lived in small towns and big cities as a dancer, librarian, actress... it all depended on the reality the author created for me.

My ideas about love came from books - Sweet Dreams, Sweet Valley High, Mills and Boon, and Harlequin books. The hero and heroine were always well-suited to each other. Their love was strong enough to overcome all challenges. What little conflict they experienced was resolved before the end of the book.

Fast-forward a few years – I was now the second half of a relationship. To my surprise, my partner did not know what I was thinking. He was thoughtless more times than not. I didn't miraculously change

into a sweet and perfect bride. We argued and our conflict wasn't always resolved in a jiffy.

As I matured, I realized life was a lot different than fiction. While girls grew up on romance novels and movies, boys grow up on video games, action films and the need to appear macho before their friends. There was a complete disconnect.

Was it just me though? Am I the only person who realized those fairy-tale endings don't happen in real life? I couldn't understand why the guy didn't show up when I decided I was ready for a relationship. And when the guy did show up ... he wasn't the Prince Charming I was expecting. My husband is wonderful but he's a man with flaws.

In ways, he seems to have different expectations for our relationship than I do. It can be challenging because neither of us can understand why the other isn't acting as expected. The result of this is discord between us.

I still consider myself a bit of a reluctant wife. I chafe at things like obedience and submission. I become slightly resentful because the bulk of the housework falls on me whether I have a full-time job or not. I am not Betty Homemaker. I resent anyone who suggests that's who I need to be to earn the title "Perfect Wife and Mother". I am a woman with

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flaws. Together we are learning to balance our expectations with the realities of marriage.

You may wonder what made me an expert in marriage. I'm not. I don't have a degree in psychology or 20-something years of coaching married couples. I'm just a girl who once spent 31 days examining what the Bible had to say about marriage and learned a whole lot of things. These things have increased as I now look at these teachings in the Bible in a new way. I'm no longer taking the stories at face value. I'm trying to understand what it meant then, so I can figure out how it applies to my now. I want to show you some of those things I learned in the hopes you will apply them to your marriage. We will get some marriage advice from the best resource in the world – the Bible.

As we walk through this book, we're going to see some of the mistakes which can happen in a marriage. We're also going to see what marriage should look like through God's eyes. This book explores seventeen couples from the Bible. I need you to commit to walking through the lessons from these couples with me.

Grab your Bible and get ready to dig deeper into these familiar stories. Keep a journal and a pen

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handy to write down your observations and the lessons God reveals to you.

Are you ready? Let's go.

*Aminata*



## One

### Match Made in Heaven

**O**nce upon a time, there was a beautiful garden. There were flowers of different shapes and sizes. The varied hues of color made it seem as if you were walking in a rainbow.

In this garden lived a man named Adam. He was very happy. He had more food than he could ever eat in his lifetime and a job he loved. He had a lot of animals and the Best Friend in the whole world.

But each day when his friend went home, Adam was all by himself. As beautiful as his home was, he was lonely. He noticed all the animals came in pairs: male and female. There wasn't anyone who seemed like a match for him. He was – different. And in his difference, he became lonesome.

Seeing how lonely he was, his best friend, decided to find a match for him. He found Adam the perfect woman.

It was love at first sight. They committed their lives to each other in a simple and intimate garden wedding. Everything was perfect –

Until after the honeymoon...

The fact you're reading this book leads me to believe you're married. Congratulations. Welcome to the oldest and most distinguished institution in the world. Because you're reading this book, I know you have questions. You're wondering 'where do I go from here.' You met the guy. Fell in love. Had the wedding of your dreams (hopefully) and thought life would be like a fairytale. Only it wasn't. Now that you have to live with him, you realize you don't know your spouse quite as well as you thought.

The fairytales didn't tell us "cute" little quirks can become annoying. Romance books don't tell you sometimes living with your great love will feel like having a roommate. We couldn't have known our "Pookie bear" could ever do anything to make us angry. Oh my darling, it's just the beginning. The sooner you accept his quirks are permanent, the easier it will be to move on to more important things.

Things like understanding what God wants us to learn from the Bible about marriage. That's an important task - one which will help us to become better wives and, better role models to our children. Our sons will learn from us what to expect from and look for in the women they marry. Our daughters will learn to be women of high moral standards.

They may even learn to be, gasp, the Proverbs 31 woman.

## **THE MAN WAS A WHOLE AND COMPLETE PERSON**

Read Genesis 2:8-25

There are many lessons to learn from this passage. Popular culture teaches that each person needs their “other” or “better” half for them to be complete. This creates in us a mindset that we need someone to “complete” us as if we were somehow incomplete. But God did not create any incomplete beings. He created male and female – independent of each other but craving connection with Him.

The first thing we notice is the man had a relationship with his Heavenly Father and a job. The media teaches us many things. It tells us a woman is “independent” and does not need anyone to take care of her. It teaches us we don’t need anyone – not even God. There is a belief in some sectors we are our own gods.

I wanted to start here because there’s a very real lure between the “good girl” and the “bad boy”. This tension appears often in romantic literature. Because of it, most of us girls grow up thinking if a

bad boy loved us, really loved us, we could reform him. This isn't true. Unless someone wants to change for themselves – their own personal reasons - the change won't stick. They will keep going back to their bad habits as a dog goes back to his own vomit.

I put that there on purpose. I want the image to be stuck in your head so you remember you can't change a man. Neither can your husband force you to change the things you're unwilling to change. You're not looking for a "good guy" either. You want a man who is in an intimate, passionate relationship with his Heavenly Father. That's the man who will love you and cherish you; the man your Heavenly Father wants you to partner with.

Now, let's talk about the whole job thing. Life's hard and unemployment happens. But if a man leans into unemployment, avoid him. It's important for a man to work, even more so than for a woman. 'For shame,' you're probably thinking. 'The International Association of Bra-Wearing Women should confiscate all your bras and burn them.'

Yes, well, I used to consider myself a feminist too, and then I read the Bible. God met me on the pages and taught me a few things. A woman was created to be an ezer. She was made to be man's companion. Immediately after creating man, God

put him to work as a gardener and caretaker. This desire to work and tend things is ingrained in men. That's a good thing.

There are a whole plethora of young men in my country who don't work. They leave school and start to "hustle" - which is sometimes a fancy word for begging and cheating people. Societies are overrun with gangs whose members are almost exclusively young men who don't work. There's a new breed of men who believe it is a woman's responsibility to take care of them.

This does not mean if your husband falls into hard times and loses his job you should leave him. After all, you did promise 'for better or worse, for richer or poorer'. What I am suggesting is you should choose a partner who knows God and who believes a man should work - one who seeks to be employed at all times.

My pastor puts it this way: an unemployed man should be a miserable man because he knows he is the main provider for his family.

### **WOMAN WAS CREATED TO BE MAN'S HELPER**

*And the Lord God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him."  
Genesis 2:18*

I remember reading this verse in high school. I had become angry because I thought God created women to be men's helpers – as in their maids. I had good reason to think this was the case. As an eighties child, there were many “girls are inferior to boys” sentiments. Of course, that's not what the Bible meant. Let's look at this verse through God's eyes:

The word translated as help or helper in the verse is the Hebrew word ezer. Ezer comes from the root word azar which means to surround, that is, protect or aid, succor.

The word ezer appears twenty-one times in the Old Testament<sup>1</sup>.

Let's look at a few of them:

*I will lift up my eyes to the hills— From whence comes my help? My help comes from the Lord, Who made heaven and earth. Psalm 121:1-2*

*You who fear the Lord, trust in the Lord; He is their help and their shield. Psalm 115:11*

*“O Israel, you are destroyed, But your help is from Me. Hosea 13:9*

The word “help” in those verses, (I've underlined them for you) is the English translation

for ezer. Here's the best thing: did you notice these texts are talking about God? If God calls Himself an ezer it must be a great thing to be.

The New International Version renders Genesis 2:18 this way:

*The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."*

Before God created woman, He wanted to make sure she would be a suitable ezer.

When something is suitable, it is considered appropriate for a specific person, purpose, or situation. God wanted man's partner to be acceptable, satisfactory, custom-made, well qualified, well suited, competent, capable, right, appropriate, desirable, and ideal.

I've included all the references to ezer below so you can look them up in your Bible. I wrote the word ezer in mine every time it appears, so when I read those verses I can remember what an ezer is. This is optional for you, but I hope you will look up the passages and make a note of what you think it means to be an ezer. Go ahead, I'll wait.

- Genesis 2:18
- Genesis 2:20
- Exodus 18:4
- Deuteronomy 33:7

- Deuteronomy 33: 26
- Deuteronomy 33: 29
- Psalm 20:2
- Psalm 33:20
- Psalm 70:5
- Psalm 89:19
- Psalm 115:9-11
- Psalm 121:1-2
- Psalm 124:8
- Psalm 146:5
- Isaiah 30:5
- Ezekiel 12:14
- Daniel 11:34

Now we understand being an ezer is not about being a maid. An ezer is a companion, defender, and protector all rolled into one. We get a better idea of what God intended when He created the first couple. Both of them had equal responsibility for tending the garden. Both had dominion over the other created things (Genesis 1:26-28).

## **GOD KNEW MAN WAS LONELY BEFORE HE DID**

Read Genesis 1:26-27, 2:18-20

*“God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness” (Genesis 1:26).*

What does it mean to be made in the image of God? Some believe it has to do with our physical makeup: two eyes, two ears, a torso, legs and so forth. This belief gets very confusing when we try to envision God as a being who can be everywhere at once. Our limited human understanding cannot fully conceptualize what God is like. For our purposes, to be “made in the image of God” means we have similar attributes. Some of God’s attributes are:

- Love - 1 John 4:8
- Justice - Isaiah 61:8
- Holiness - Leviticus 19:19
- Mercy - Psalm 145:9
- Protector and defender - 2 Samuel 22:3-4
- Capable of hatred - Proverbs 6:16-19

In Exodus 34:6-7, God says this about Himself:

“The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving

iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation.”

As people created in God's image, we have the capability to reflect all these attributes in our lives. God, who created us because He loved us (Ephesians 1:4), made mankind with the ability to love.

It was no surprise to God that man was lonely. It had always been God's intention to make male and female. That's why He said, “Let us give them dominion (Genesis 1:27).”

Before Adam realized he was the only one of his kind, God stated it was not a good thing for him to be alone. Why then did God not immediately remedy the situation?

Let's re-read Genesis 2:18-20:

*And the Lord God said, “It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.” Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name. So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field.*

*But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him.*

We recognize from Genesis 1:24-27 that God created animals before Adam. After making the observation that it was “not good for man to be alone”, God brought all the animals to Adam for him to name. I can imagine the animal parade lasted a very long time. During this process, Adam realized all the animals came in pairs. There were a male and a female version of every creature. Maybe he wondered why, or he asked God for the reason. More importantly, Adam realized there was no female version of himself.

I believe God wanted the man to want us. He wanted Adam to desire companionship. God wanted Adam to want a female counterpart of himself.

When we look at the creation of woman this way, we appreciate that we were created to fill a need man had. Not a need to cook, iron and clean, a need for companionship. It makes sense God would create an ezer –someone who could play all those roles in the life of man.

Through God’s eyes, the wife had a vital role. She was a desirable addition to the earthly family.

## **THE EXPECTATION OF INTIMACY**

When God decided to make woman by taking a rib out of the side of man, He made a deliberate choice. He could have followed the same steps He had when He made Adam.

*And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. Genesis 2:7*

Eve could have been formed from the dust of the earth out of original material but that's not what happened. God took a rib from man's side and used it to create his ezer (Genesis 2:21-22). You may have heard Matthew Henry's famous quote:

*"The woman was made of a rib out of the side of Adam; not made out of his head to rule over him, nor out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved."*

I'll put it another way, God wanted the woman and the man to have an intimate connection. He wanted them to be a part of each other. The bond between a man and his wife should be similar to the bond between parents and their children.

The husband ought to be aware of how his actions affect his wife. The wife needs to be aware of how her actions affect the husband. This completely shatters the belief that each of us is "independent".

Yet, if we are to have the kind of marriage God intends, we need to learn this key truth.

*And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed. Genesis 2:25*

Intimacy is an integral part of any marriage. If one person shares everything and there is no reciprocation, the other person will shut down and eventually close off their heart. Women tend to be more vocal than men. We have an intrinsic desire to talk about stuff. You may need to encourage your husband, especially in those early years, to share things with you. Make sure you are communicating the important things with him. It is imperative for him to share the significant things with you. For every couple, that's going to look a bit different, so the two of you need to figure out what your "big things" are. Some typical "big things" are:

- How will you spend your income?
- Where will you live?
- What are your beliefs about child rearing?
- Where will you go to church?
- What are the responsibilities each person has?
- How will you spend your days off?
- What do you have in common and what are your differences?

- When you have an argument, how will you resolve them?
- What does intimacy look like for you?

I did say intimacy was a big deal, right? That's why God says, "a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh." If you love hugs and kisses but your hubby thinks grunting at you is affection – you will have a challenge. Both of you need to get together early in your marriage and figure out what your "big things" are.

 **Journal:** Make a note of you and your husband consider big things" in your journal and refer to them periodically. Be sure to update this list as what you consider a "big thing" will change as you do.