

Woman of God

Topical Study



**8 TOPICAL BIBLE STUDIES FOR
SMALL GROUPS & INDIVIDUALS**

Woman of God

by Terry Blowes

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Introduction

In preparing these studies, I wanted to help the Christian woman clarify her identity, based on her relationship with God, and as a result of this, to be able to develop her values and priorities with a greater sense of confidence and security.

It is impossible to respond to all of the questions and difficulties that being a woman today poses. If a woman has a clear idea of her identity, her priorities and what is of greatest importance, she can make her life decisions more easily and with greater success.

We will never be able to solve all that causes us pain—individually, in marriage, in the family and the church—because all are affected by the fallen world in which we live. There are no easy answers. For this reason it is necessary that our confidence rests completely in our mighty, loving God, and that our hope is fixed on his glorious return.

Terry Blowes

How to make the most of these studies

1. What is a Topical Bible Study?

These ‘topical’ Bible studies are a bit like a guided tour of a famous city. The studies will take you on a tour through the Bible, looking at material related to the topic, in this case Godly women. We’ll point out things along the way, fill in background details, and suggest avenues for further exploration. But there is also time for you to do some sight-seeing of your own—to wander off, have a good look for yourself, and form your own conclusions.

In other words, we have designed these studies to fall half-way between a sermon and a set of unadorned Bible study questions. We want to provide stimulation and input and point you in the right direction, while leaving you to do a lot of the exploration and discovery yourself.

These studies are like a tour of a famous city in another sense—they don’t hope to look at everything, just the important things. We can’t cover in detail everything the Bible says on a given topic, but we do aim to finish our tour without having missed any significant landmarks.

2. The format

Each study contains sections of text to introduce, summarize, suggest and provoke. We’ve left plenty of room in the margins for you to jot comments and questions as you read. Interspersed throughout the text are three types of ‘interaction’, each with their own symbol:



For starters

Questions to break the ice and get you thinking.



Investigate

Questions to help you investigate key parts of the Bible.



Think it through

Questions to help you think through the implications of your discoveries and write down your own thoughts and reactions.

When you come to one of these symbols, you'll know that it's time to do some work of your own.

3. Suggestions for Individual Study

- Before you begin, pray that God would open your eyes to what he is saying in his Word and give you the spiritual strength to do something about it. You may be spurred to pray again at the end of the study.
- Work through the study, following the directions as you go. Write in the spaces provided.
- Resist the temptation to skip over the *Think it through* sections. It is important to think about the sections of text (rather than just accepting them as true) and to ponder the implications for your life. Writing these things down is a very valuable way to get your thoughts working.
- Take what opportunities you can to talk to others about what you've learnt.

4. Suggestions for Group Study

- Much of the above applies to group study as well. The studies are suitable for structured Bible study or cell groups, as well as for more informal pairs and threesomes. Get together with a friend/s and work through them at your own pace; use them as the basis for regular Bible study with your spouse. You don't need the formal structure of a 'group' to gain maximum benefit.
- It is *vital* that group members work through the study themselves *before* the group meets. The group discussion can take place comfortably in an hour (depending on how side-tracked you get!), but only if all the members have done the work and are familiar with the material.
- Spend most of the group time discussing the 'interactive' sections—*Investigate* and *Think it through*. Reading all the text together will take too long and should be unnecessary if the group members have done their preparation. You may wish to underline and read aloud particular paragraphs or sections of text that you think are important.
- The role of the group leader is to direct the course of the discussion and to try to draw the threads together at the end. This will mean a little extra preparation—underlining important sections of text to emphasize, working out which questions are worth concentrating on, and being sure of the main thrust of the study. Leaders will also probably want to work out approximately how long they'd like to spend on each part.
- We haven't included an 'answer guide' to the questions in the studies. This is a deliberate move. We want to give you a guided tour, not a lecture. There is more than enough in the text we have written and the questions we have asked to point you in what we think is the right direction. The rest is up to you.

1

The Lord, my Creator



For starters

1. How would you finish the sentence: “To me, being a woman means...”?

2. Can you think of specific experiences or people that have contributed to your sense of identity?

3. In what ways does today’s society challenge this?

Before we can answer the question, ‘Who am I as a woman?’, we need to deal with the more basic question, ‘Who am I as a *person*?’. What does it mean to be a human being on planet earth at the dawn of a new millennium? Why am I here? Is there a purpose to my existence?

To begin to answer these profound questions, we need to go back to our origins. The foundation of our identity, both as women and persons, lies in who made us, and why.

Made in the image of God

When God created the world, only humanity was made to reflect God's image. This gives the human race an importance and value far above all else that has been made. We are the culmination of God's good creation.

This is sometimes hard to understand or accept, as David says in Psalm 8:

When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,
what is man that you are mindful of him,
the son of man that you care for him?

Psalm 8:3-4

It is easy to take for granted the marvel that is the human being, how “fearfully and wonderfully” we are made (as Ps 139:14 puts it). Our incredibly complex bodies and physical abilities, our capacity for language, self-reflective thought, invention, and art—all these lead many people to believe that we are the handiwork of a wise and powerful creator.

But according to the Bible, these attributes are just the beginning of the marvel of humanity. God has put more of himself in us. Being made in God's image is fundamentally about something far more than being rational or moral or capable of language. Let's look at Genesis and find out.

Lords of the earth



Investigate

Read Genesis 1:26-31.

1. What aspects of the image of God are reflected in these verses?

2. In Genesis 1:28 God gave the man and woman an important job to do. Was it given as a blessing or a curse?

3. Also read Genesis 2:15 and Psalm 8:5-8. From these verses (and the verses above), how would you summarize the general purpose of the human race?

God is a God of creative power who cares for his creation. He has put mankind on this earth to act as his steward. As Psalm 8:6 says, “You made him (man) ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet”. One key aspect of being in the image of God is that mankind has dominion over the earth and is responsible to take care of it.

There is another important element that you may have picked up in Genesis 1.

One being, two parts

The human being ‘man’ (in the generic sense) is made of two parts—male and female. “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them” (Gen 1:27).



Investigate

Read Genesis 2:15-25 to see the more detailed account of the creation of woman.

1. According to verses 18 and 20, what was man's problem before woman was created?
2. What did God seek for him?
3. What was Adam's response when he saw Eve for the first time?
4. Summarize the relationship between the man and woman according to verses 24 and 25.

Just as God is a perfect unity, yet is made up of different persons, so in a similar way, the human race reflects his image in being one, yet of two persons.

God made us this way so that we would have company; so that we would have help; so that we would be complete in relationship with one another. This is one of the foundations of our identity, and the basis for thinking through what it means to be a woman.



Think it through

1. Try to answer the question: Who am I?

Does your answer reflect who your ancestors were, or other relationships you have, or what job you do, or what suburb you live in? Or do you find it very difficult to identify anything that defines who you are?

Think about the fact that you were made in the image of the almighty God to fulfil his purposes and to reflect his nature on this earth. Try a redefinition of yourself in this light.

2. How do you think of your job (in or out of the home)—as a blessing or a curse?

Have you ever related it to God's command to fill and rule over the earth? Do you need to change your attitude so as to be a more positive contributor to your community?

3. “The biblical picture is one in which man and woman are created by God for fellowship. Men and women are to live in whole and satisfying relationships with him and with one another in order to experience the fullness of what it is to be human.”²

a. How do you react to this quote?

b. Try to make a list of characteristics that you feel are essentially ‘womanly’.

c. Reflect on (and discuss) how these ‘feminine’ characteristics depend on relationships between men and women.

1. In these studies, I will occasionally use the word ‘man’, as the Bible often does, to describe humanity as a whole.

2. John Chapman in M. Orpwood, *Chappo—For the Sake of the Gospel*, p.186.