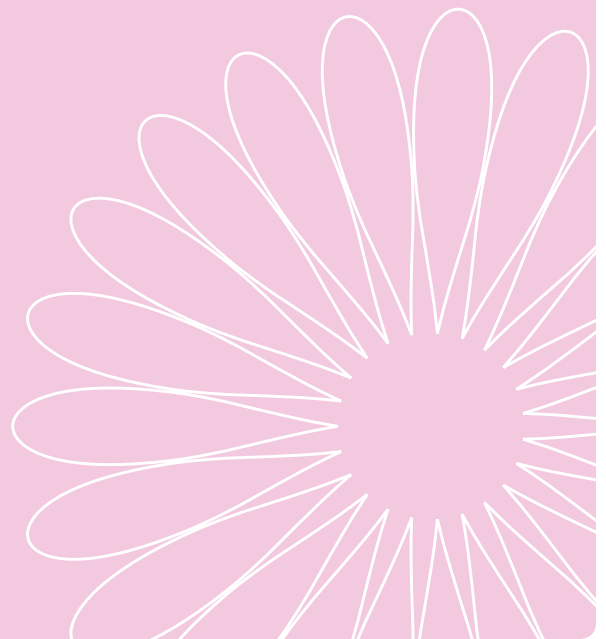




true wōman

discussion
questions

*for
small group
leaders*



based on “The Ultimate Meaning of True Womanhood” by Pastor John Piper

1. According to Pastor Piper, what is God’s ultimate purpose for all of history?
What is the ultimate meaning—or purpose—of true womanhood?

“The display of the glory of Jesus in dying for His bride.”

2. How do we know—from Scripture—that womanhood wasn’t an after-thought of creation or the cross?

Manhood and womanhood belong at the center of God’s ultimate purpose. In Ephesians 5:31, Paul quotes Genesis 2:24: “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is profound, and I am saying it refers to Christ and the church” (emphasis added). True womanhood is a distinctive calling of God to display the glory of His Son in ways that would not be displayed if there were no womanhood. Our maleness and femaleness display more fully the glory of His Son in relationship to His blood-bought bride.

3. If marriage was created to display the glory of Christ in relationship to His blood-bought bride, why, then, is it not an assault on God’s glory for Paul to lure people out of pursuing marriage?

In this world there are truths about Christ and His kingdom that can be more clearly displayed by womanhood and manhood in singleness. Single womanhood has ways to magnify Christ that married womanhood cannot, just as married womanhood has ways to magnify Christ that single womanhood cannot.

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4. In what ways can a single woman display Christ's glory that a married woman cannot?

The family of God grows by regeneration through faith, not propagation through sexual intercourse. Relationships in Christ are more permanent and more precious than relationships in families. Marriage is temporary and finally gives way in the end to the relationship to which it was pointing all along—Christ and the Church—the way a picture is no longer needed when you're face to face.

5. In what ways can a married woman display Christ's glory that a single woman cannot?

Marriage displays the covenant-keeping love and grace that exists between Christ and His Church. Men take their cues from Christ and are called to take primary responsibility for Christ-like servant leadership, protection, and provision in the home. Women take their cues from the Church (called to admire and stand in allegiance to Christ) and are called to honor and affirm their husband's leadership and help carry it through according to their gifts.

6. Piper claims that wimpy theology makes wimpy women. How have you seen this to be true in your life or the lives of women around you?

7. How does this teaching—that your womanhood is incredibly purposeful and puts Christ's glory on display—affect you? How does it change the way you'll live your life tomorrow? ☩

based on “From Him, Through Him, To Him” by Nancy Leigh DeMoss

1. How is this theologically-dense passage so foundational to what it means to be a true woman of God?

It provides a framework—a context—for our lives as women. It gives us a fixed reference point for our hearts. It tethers our hearts to God’s ultimate eternal purposes.

2. What is the specific context of the final chapters leading up to Romans 11:33–36? What is the apostle Paul so in awe of?

The mysteries of God’s sovereign, electing grace—His plan for redeeming both Jews and Gentiles. God is able to make even the unbelief and rebellion of man serve His final, eternal purposes. Even the sinful choices of human beings in the end will glorify God and demonstrate the greatness of His wisdom, His power, and His grace.

3. There is no limit to God’s wisdom and knowledge. As Nancy mentioned, He knows **everything**—everything about your past, your present, and your future. He knows your family situation, your challenges, your sins, and your insecurities. What does this truth do for you?

The wisdom of God knows how to deal with your situation, as complex, convoluted, and impossible as it may seem.

4. How does this fact—that God’s ways are inscrutable, or incapable of being understood—affect your life?

As Piper says, “God is always doing a thousand different things that you cannot see and you do not know.” We can *know* that God is at work. We can’t begin to fathom the means God has devised to fulfill His holy purposes!

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5. Paul asks three rhetorical questions in vv. 34–35: “Who has known the mind of the Lord?”; “Who has been His counselor?”; “Who has given a gift to God, that he should be repaid?” The resounding answer is **no one**. Which of these three questions describes your current or past approach to God? Are you judging God for something you don’t like or understand? Are you expecting something from God that you think He owes you? Are you trying to counsel God about how to handle a specific situation? If so, how?
6. How would people be able to tell if you truly believed that God owed you nothing, but that you owed Him everything?
They would see that I was free of criticism, doubt, fear, anger, second-guessing, arguing, or disputing God’s choices.
7. What truth(s) can help us when God’s ways don’t make sense to us—when they’re hard, painful, and confusing?
Remember Jesus. For Him, the ways of God meant divesting Himself of His rights, experiencing rejection, ridicule, and ultimately death on a cross—in order to fulfill God’s awesome purpose of canceling the record of debt against us. Remember that life only comes out of death. As Nancy said, “We want the end result, but we don’t necessarily want the process that it takes to get that—the process of brokenness, humility, emptiness, utter awareness of need.”
8. Do you agree with the following statement? Why or why not? “To resist or to resent the circumstances and situation in which you find yourself, is ultimately to resent and resist God Himself.”
9. Nancy’s three implications from this passage are that 1) a true woman lives a God-centered life; 2) a true woman trusts God; and 3) a true woman says, “Yes, Lord.” You don’t have to share her name, but is there a true woman you know who exhibits this kind of trust in God? If so, how have you seen this kind of God-centeredness on display?
10. As you say, “Yes, Lord,” what are some of the things you’re saying yes to, and what are some of the things He’s calling you to say “No” to? ☪

based on “You’ve Come a Long Way, Baby!” by Mary Kassian

1. What do the men of Issachar in 1 Chronicles 12:32 have to do with us and the history of feminism?

The men of Issachar understood the times and knew what Israel should do. It’s the student of history who understands current culture and is equipped to envision a path for the future. The reason we’re examining the history of feminism is so we’ll know what to do and how to live.

2. What are some of the changes that have taken place in the last 50 years?

The ideal of a happy, fulfilled woman has gone from one who serves and exalts her children, her husband, and her community to one who serves and exalts herself. Back then, heterosexual marriage and marital fidelity were highly valued concepts and the norm. Most agreed the primary role of the male was to lead, protect, and provide for his family; the primary responsibility of the female was to nurture and care for children and home. There was a low divorce rate. Almost no one lived common-law. There was no birth-control pill. Abortion was illegal, etc.

3. How does media tend to portray men and women today? Do you have an example from something you watched recently?

Women are now portrayed with as in charge. They have the mentality “I don’t need a guy; I’m powerful; traditional marriage and family and morals are outdated; I have the right to rule; how dare you tell me what to do.” Men are whiny, needy, not too bright, and totally unreliable. They’re marginalized and de-masculinized.

4. How did Betty Friedan suggest women should find fulfillment?

She believed that in order to find fulfillment, women should begin to question, challenge, and rebel against being wives and mothers. A woman could only be fulfilled if she had a life plan for herself that included education, a career, and work that was of serious import to society.

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Based on "You've Come a Long Way, Baby!" by Mary Kassian

5. What were feminists convinced was the problem?

Patriarchy, or the condition of having males in leadership. Feminists were convinced that this was the cause of women's heartache and heartbreak.

6. What do you think the problem is? Why are women unfilled, heartbroken, and needy?

Sin.

7. How did the leadership of the women's movement move women from simple awareness to all-out allegiance?

They "enlightened" women through consciousness-raising in the context of small groups. They sought to stir up pain and bitterness by speaking painful things.

8. Betty Friedan said, "There is no way any man, woman, or child is ever going to escape the nature of our revolution." Was she right or wrong? How do you know?

9. Feminists claimed the right to name self, the world, and even God. What does this mean?

Ultimately, it means they themselves are God. They believe they shouldn't bow or submit to any external power, but that's not the message of the Bible. It is God who made the earth and created mankind upon it. We have no right to question the wisdom of His directives for our behavior.

10. On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being the most positive) do you believe that God's instructions in the Word for women are good, pleasant, and desirable? ♀

based on “A Resolve to Believe” by Karen Loritts

1. Karen didn't tell anyone about her fear for a while. Why not? What eventually made her decide to tell her friends and husband?

She didn't tell anyone because she wanted to have a pity party for herself, and she knew they'd try to fix it. But, as she said, “God wouldn't let me stay there. I knew I was in big trouble. I needed to believe God and trust God with every single thing, with every fiber of my being.”

2. Karen thought she was prepared for her daughter to leave for college, but still fear crept up on her. How did she eventually respond?

She resolved not to embarrass God. She went to the Bible.

3. Is there something you're afraid to admit to anyone? How does the Gospel give you the freedom to be real about your inadequacies and sin?

The good news of the Gospel is that we don't have to try to be perfect any longer! Jesus Christ is our holiness and perfection. We are forgiven sinners with an awesome Savior.

4. Karen said that she felt all alone when her baby went off to college, and she thought, I'm no longer a mother anymore. What relationship or position do you find yourself basing your identity on?

5. Which of Karen's “fear buddies” have you encountered personally? What has helped you in overcoming fear?

Fear buddies: Fear distorts reality; fear victimizes the person; fear puts stress on the body; fear alienates the truth; fear cripples you; fear replaces faith; fear disappoints; fear is afraid of success; fear fills the heart with despair; fear destroys.

6. What did Karen mean when she said, “Instead of listening to myself, I started talking to myself”? What are practical ways that you and I can be sure that we're talking to ourselves and to God?

She took every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. She reminded herself of Truth, rather than being led by her emotions. ☩

based on “A Woman After God’s Own Heart” by Janet Parshall

1. How did God use Janet’s time as a mom to prepare her for the future?

God had her at home learning what family values were all about, by teaching her children the values found in the Word. Her classroom was her kitchen, where God took her experience as a mother and helped train her so she’d know how to speak the truth in love. Then, she ended up debating family values in the marketplace of ideas.

2. How is motherhood universal?

If you’re breathing, you had a mother.

3. What do you think? Can the prayers of a praying mother affect and change the course of a nation? Do you have any examples?

4. Janet reminded us that regardless of whether we have biological children or not, all of us are spiritual mamas to somebody, and we can be praying for them. Is this a new concept to you? Who can you “mother” spiritually?

5. Do you agree with Janet’s statement that our children have never belonged to us, but that they are God’s and that we’re simply in a lend-lease program? If so, how have you seen this to be true in your life or the lives of those around you?

6. What impresses you most about Hannah?

7. How could Hannah have prayed, “God, if You’ll give me the one thing I want more than anything on the face of this planet, I’ll turn right around, and I’ll give it back to you”?

Because she was God-centered.

8. Is it easier for you to say you love God than to say that you trust Him? If so, why do you think that is?

based on “God’s Jewels” by Joni Eareckson Tada

1. How do we become jewels that glitter and really shine?

Suffering. God gets out His toothbrush and gives our soul a hard scrubbing every now and then. Zechariah 13:9 says, “I will refine them like silver and will test them like gold.” As Joni said, “If you want God’s glory to be your shine, it will be on His terms. His glory will be the glow of His godliness in your life, His patience and perseverance.”

2. “Trouble is the textbook that will teach you who you really are.” What is your natural reaction when you’re in pain? When you’re “squeezed,” what comes out?

Joni said when she’s in pain she implodes and collapses in defeat. If she lets it simmer, without going to God’s Word or turning to Him in prayer, she becomes selfish, impatient, mean-spirited, and peevish.

3. Why is it so important for God to scour away our impurities?

The core of God’s plan is to rescue us from our sin. The Father is heaven-bent on conforming us to the image of Jesus Christ.

4. Do you feel as though someone’s taking a gigantic toothbrush and scrubbing your soul raw today? In what area are you bemoaning the fact that “Things are never going to be the same”?

“God is concerned about your poverty or my pain. He’s concerned about your broken heart or my broken neck, but these things aren’t His ultimate focus. He cares about that stuff, but those things are merely symptoms of the root and real problem.” “My wise and sovereign God takes one form of evil—that is suffering—and He turns it on its head to defeat another form of evil, and that’s my sin, my self-centeredness.” “The hurting and the hammering is not going to end until we become completely like Jesus.”

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Based on "God's Jewels" by Joni Eareckson Tada

5. How can we change? What is Joni's recommended two-step solution to your pain?

"You don't sit in front of a Bible and just hope that it happens to you through osmosis. No, when you obey in small and great ways, that's when you change." First, yield to the chisel. Second, serve and help others.

6. What did you find most encouraging from this message?

Grace abounds where suffering abounds. God's grace, the desire and the power to do His will, the desire and power to obey is sufficient for your pain and problems, because Jesus is your co-laborer. Also, the hammer and chisel will be put away, and just two minutes in heaven will be worth it all. ♀

based on “For Such A Time As This” by Nancy Leigh DeMoss

1. What are the two ways of looking at life, according to Nancy?

There’s the drama that you can see, and then there’s the drama behind the drama.

2. How does the fact that you’re not the star of the drama—but still an important player—affect the way you think about and live your life?

Rather than asking, “How will these circumstances affect me? How will it fulfill my desires, my needs, my purposes?” the question is “How does God want to use my position, my season of life, my place in life to fulfill His kingdom purposes in this world?” There are no chance circumstances in our lives. All we can see is this moment, but God sees the whole eternal span of the picture. That’s why we can trust Him. If something unfair happens, know that it’s just for the moment. God is going to right all wrongs.

3. What privileges, opportunities, and places in the human kingdom has God given you to further His heavenly kingdom at this time?

Encourage women in their sphere of influence—even if it seems remarkably insignificant to them.

4. How did Esther act in community rather than acting alone? On a scale of 1 to 10, how involved are you in community? What steps can you take this week to get more involved?

Esther calls for a three-day fast: “Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my young women will also fast as you do” (Esther 4:16a).

5. How do we know that Esther was willing to go for broke—to lay everything on the line in order to fulfill God’s purposes for her life?

“Then I will go to the king, though it is against the law, and if I perish, I perish” (Esther 4:16b).

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Based on “For Such A Time As This” by Nancy Leigh DeMoss

6. How is Esther’s example a foreshadowing of Jesus?

Esther was willing to leave the palace and risk her life in order to save her people. Jesus actually did leave His heavenly palace and did give up His life in order to save His people.

7. Have you ever gone for broke for Jesus? How can you do this right where you are?

8. Nancy reminded us that we’re in a spiritual battle. What are the world’s greatest weapons, and what are ours?

The world depends on weapons like worldly power, human laws and decrees, military might, self-sufficiency, anger, force, and deception. The children of God’s kingdom win the war with humility, prayer, fasting, sackcloth and ashes—victory is achieved by relying on God.

9. In what ways are you tempted to get your way by pushing, nagging, screaming, yelling, badgering, manipulating, whining, or shaming? How can you respond differently in a way that would win victory in God’s kingdom for your particular situation?

“Never underestimate the significance and the potential impact of your faith, prayers, faithfulness, and obedience.”

10. What can you do when you experience feelings of weakness, inadequacy, and fear?

Remind yourself of whose power will ultimately win the battle—God’s. As the angel said to the virgin Mary, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. . . . Nothing will be impossible with God” (Luke 1:35, 37). 