

## **CHAPTER 1: The Ultimate Meaning of True Womanhood (John Piper)**

### *Getting Started*

Be sure everyone in the group has been introduced. Share what drew you to this study and/or what you hope to get out of it.

What words or images come to mind when you think of a “true woman”?

Pray and ask God to direct your study and to give you His perspective on your design and calling as women.

Pastor Piper calls the True Woman Manifesto “a faithful, clear, true, and wise document.” This document, which will be referred to throughout this study, can be found on pp. 165–69. As you open your discussion time, read the introductory paragraph of the Manifesto and the “We Believe” statements (p. 165–66).

Invite three women to read the key Scripture passages that Pastor Piper highlights in this chapter: Ephesians 1:4–6; 5:25–27; Revelation 13:8.

### *Talking It Over*

1. John Piper observes that, “Wimpy theology makes wimpy women . . . . Wimpy theology simply does not give a woman a God who is big enough, strong enough, wise enough, and good enough to handle the realities of life in a way that magnifies the infinite worth of Jesus Christ.” He concludes that wimpy theology is “plagued by woman-centeredness and man-centeredness.”

What does Pastor Piper present as an alternative to a “woman-centered” mind-set and how does this prepare women to navigate through difficulties in a manner that magnifies Christ?

2. On pp. 17–19, Pastor Piper holds up several women as examples of “the opposite of a wimpy woman.” What similarities did you find in the descriptions of these women?

How do these women illustrate the essence of “true womanhood”?

3. What is God’s ultimate purpose for womanhood? How are masculinity and femininity at the center of God’s ultimate purpose? (The three texts which were read at the opening of your discussion will help.)

4. Share your thoughts on Pastor Piper’s observation:

*“God did not look around and find manhood and womanhood to be a helpful comparison to His Son’s relation to the church. He created us as male and female precisely so that we could display the glory of His Son. Our sexuality is designed for the glory of the Son of God—especially the glory of His dying to have His admiring bride.”*

5. How is marriage intended to display the relationship between Christ and the church? What implications does that have for married women?

6. According to Pastor Piper, what are some truths about Christ and His Kingdom that can “shine more clearly through singleness” than through marriage?

How can single women bring glory to God, in spite and because of the unique challenges they face?

7. How has Pastor Piper’s explanation of the ultimate meaning of womanhood and your God-created mission to magnify Christ influenced your perspective on your calling as a woman?

### ***Making It Personal***

1. What did you receive from this chapter that will help you fulfill your purpose as a woman?

2. Pastor Piper describes the antidote to wimpy theology as “*the granite foundation of God’s sovereignty or the solid steel structure of a great God-centered purpose for all things.*” Would your theology most accurately be described as “wimpy” or “God-centered”? What does your answer reveal about your view of God? How is your daily life affected by your theology?

3. Have you ever struggled to embrace your design and calling as a woman? Consider the significance and purpose in your creation as a woman and spend some time thanking the Father for His wisdom. Ask Him to reveal how, at this particular season in your life, you can live out your womanhood in ways that will glorify Him most.

### ***Living It Out***

1. Pastor Piper’s thesis is that “*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.*” What are some practical ways you can use your womanhood to display the beauty and heart of Christ?

2. If you’ve struggled with anger or bitterness (perhaps due to issues related to the fact that you are a woman) take those things to the Father. Confess to Him your need to release resentment or hurt. Ask Him for grace to forgive any who may have harmed or offended you. Ask Him to help you develop a God-centered theology and to remind you of women like Marie Durant and Joni Eareckson Tada when tempted with self-pity.

3. Many women today—particularly younger women—are not familiar with the biblical perspective on the meaning of womanhood. What are some ways you can encourage other women to embrace their calling as women? Possibilities to consider:

- Invite a few young women to your home to view John Piper’s message from True Woman ’08 on DVD. Be sure to leave time for discussion afterward.

- Share what you're learning with a small group at your church. Use the opportunity to inspire younger women to live out their ultimate purpose in displaying Christ.

### ***Looking Ahead***

1. Read chapter two by Nancy Leigh DeMoss. Highlight significant statements and jot down any questions that come to mind.
2. Read the opening "We Believe" section of the True Woman Manifesto along with the supporting Scriptures for each.
3. Read and meditate on Romans 11:33–36. What bearing does this passage have on what it means to be a true woman?