

She Shall Be Called Woman



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"She Shall Be Called Woman" (from "The President's Commission on Women," first published in 1998)

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Contents

INTRODUCTION ::	4
THE SINGLE WOMAN ::	6
MARRIED WITH NO CHILDREN ::	7
THE STAY-AT-HOME MOM ::	8
THE EMPLOYED MOTHER ::	9
THE ADOPTIVE MOTHER AND THE BIRTH MOTHER ::	11
THE SINGLE MOTHER ::	12
THE CHRISTIAN WIFE, MARRIED TO AN UNBELIEVER ::	14
THE DIVORCED WOMAN ::	15
THE WIDOW ::	16
GRANDMOTHERS ::	18
WOMEN IN THE PUBLIC EYE ::	19
CONCLUSION ::	21

INTRODUCTION

The Christian Woman in a Changing World

Where Have We Been?

Once upon a time, a discussion concerning the trials and triumphs of God's feminine creation would have been much simpler. Most women lived their lives married to one man, mothered their children, cared for the family's home and needs, and anticipated that the future would bring volunteer work, grandmotherhood, and quite possibly widowhood. A few women, either by choice or circumstance, remained single, often teaching the children of others. They were frequently labeled as the "old maid aunt" or "spinster." Although there have always been some Deborahs and Lydias in the marketplace and political arena, they were far more exceptional then.

Where Are We Now And How Did We Get Here?

Cultural changes in recent history have dramatically and rapidly altered the roles in which women now find themselves. Greater opportunity in career choices, as well as the inflated cost of living, has made women major participants in the world of work outside the home. Modern conveniences have granted greater freedom from household chores. In spite of all the time-saving technology, many lament that they simply lack the time to focus on what they believe should be the priorities in their lives: their faith and their family.

Technology, as is true with everything manmade, can be a blessing or a curse. While allowing us the capacity to "teach the Gospel to every nation" faster and farther, the electronic community has invaded what was the safety net of family. It has confused parents and children, often leaving them uncertain of what is right and wrong, moral and immoral.

Though one might argue that women are better off today than they have ever been, there is another side. While it is true that women are enjoying greater freedom and respect than at any other time in history, they are struggling with more complications from broken

marriages, blended families, fatherless children, long-distance grandparents, and frantic schedules—to name a few. We are all lost and condemned creatures living in a sinful world, totally helpless to save ourselves. When, by His Holy Spirit, our merciful God calls us by the Gospel, we receive the faith that enables us to confess and repent of our sin, and to receive the forgiveness bought by the suffering, death and resurrection of our Savior, Jesus Christ. He is the way, the truth and the life.

Regardless of her role, every woman is unique and, therefore, views her situation from a personal perspective, which may vary considerably from that of another who seems to share her role.

We cannot believe for one another. We can only witness to our faith. But how can we, as a caring church family, better reach out to one another? How can we understand one another's fears and frustrations, and celebrate our joys and blessings?

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It is not within the scope of this work to include all existing situations. In the following pages, many women may recognize themselves in more than one category at the same time or at various times in their lives. Let us take a closer look at some of our roles in life in order to offer encouragement, and to affirm and support one another, since each of us is precious in His sight.

The Single Woman

Single women cannot be stereotypically lumped together any more than can working moms, widows, professional church workers or any of those in the other roles discussed. God has made each of us unique.

Although personal perspectives vary, single women of all ages share some common frustrations. Among them are letting go of childhood dreams of a husband and children, getting past self-blame for being unattached, and assuming that others see them as defective or less capable. However, our heavenly Father sees us through the blood of Jesus. “[And you ...] he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him,” (COL. 1:22).

Single women may be frustrated in their search for trustworthy Christian men. Feeling on the outside of conversations with married friends whose lives revolve around husbands and children may add to their isolation and loneliness.

Some single women fear growing old alone, or being a burden to others, especially in old age. They may regret having no children and no hope of grandchildren. Living alone, with no one to share laughter, conversation or troubles can be a burden to bear. “Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself” (MATT. 6:34).

“But I have trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation. I will sing to the LORD, because he has dealt bountifully with me” (PSALM 13:5-6).

Yet, for some women there are no obstacles to being single; rather, there are advantages. Blessings include the contentment of enjoyable careers and the ability to make decisions on their own. Being unmarried is seen as irrelevant by some single women.

While some single women find sufficient comfort and support within the fellowship of their congregation, others find these needs more fully met through an active singles group within their church. Many fulfill their desires for a family by working with or caring for the