



2026 Weekly Devotions

Week of: May 11th - 17th

Sermon: May 10th



SMYRNA BAPTIST CHURCH
building community ◦ equipping believers ◦ serving Jesus

May 11

Genesis 2:18-23

As we begin our “points to ponder” for this week, I want to begin by emphasizing the value and importance of a woman. Yesterday, we celebrated Mother’s Day and my hope was to encourage moms to be who God made them to be and to utilize their giftedness, personalities, and resources for the good of their families, their own joy, and the glory of God. Today, we will focus on a Hebrew word that first appears in Genesis 2:18 to describe a woman in relationship to her husband.

Genesis 2:18 says, “Then the Lord God said, ‘It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.’” The word for helper is the Hebrew word *Ezer*. It is rightly translated as helper, but it does not mean servant. The word is used twenty-one times in the Old Testament. On several occasions it refers to a woman, on a few more it refers to the people of Israel, and sixteen times it is used in reference to God Himself. Surely, we are not to think of God as a subservient helper who is there to serve the whims of those in need - as an inferior.

No, the word is used to describe one who is a source of strength. The *Ezer* is the one who can be seen as a rescuer in a complementary relationship where one person’s “weakness” is overcome by the presence of the *helper*. Another way that we could say this is that when God calls the woman a helper suitable for the man, He is not referring to her inferiority but to his inadequacies without her. In a complementary relationship, the man and woman are both strengthened and made better as they work and serve together.

It is unbiblical and hurtful for a man or any part of society to consider a woman as inferior or less necessary and important than a man. It is telling and extremely helpful to consider why God would say this, “He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the Lord” (Prov. 18:22). Or this one, “House and wealth are inherited from fathers, but a prudent wife is from the Lord” (Prov. 19:14). Then of course there is the more well-known verse, “An excellent wife who can find? She is far more precious than jewels” (Prov. 31:10). It is clear that God sees the value of a woman in the life of a man and considers her a precious gift to him straight from heaven.

Men, I implore you today to never consider your wife or a woman of God as inferior to you or as if she has no wisdom to offer. Never treat her in a demeaning way or as if she is a child who needs you to always tell her what to do because you deem her incapable or somehow less intelligent than yourself. In many cases, the opposite is true. As an *ezer* (helper), a woman is every bit as necessary and important as a man according to God’s design for humanity, for marriage, for family, and for exercising dominion over His creation. Thank you to all the wonderful women, wives, and mothers who have demonstrated the beauty of God’s design in womanhood and for the incredible and invaluable blessing you have been to all of us.

May 12

Psalm 139:13-16

I write this devotion today to remind each of you, especially moms today, of just how precious and special you are. I can only imagine how defeated women must feel at times. For those of you who are moms and mothers, I have witnessed the enormous pressures that you live under in trying to cover all the bases and get everything done. Far too often, you have been expected to take care of the kids, cook, clean, get groceries, keep the bills up, be beautiful and fixed up all the time, and take care of your sometimes childish and selfish husband's demands. The load is heavy and you only have so much time and energy in a day.

Then of course there is the unfortunate pressure of Facebook and other forms of social media that lie to you about how great everyone else is doing which causes you to feel even more defeated and inadequate. You wonder how they can get it all done and look so happy with their perfect little family and incredible lives full of fun and laughter. Oh yeah, and they all love Jesus so much too. Then you look at your house with toys everywhere, laundry piled up, dishes in the sink, a whining husband, and the woman in the mirror is just not who you want her to be. It is so easy to fall into despair and hopelessness.

Dear woman, today I want to remind you of how God sees you. David wrote in the beautiful 139th Psalm these precious words, "For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made...When I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance..." (Ps. 139:13-16). Please try never to forget that God formed you just the way He wanted to and His ways are perfect and good. He knew you before you were conceived and He planned the number of your days and your journey. In the eyes of God, you are more and better than some made up, photo shopped, make-believe picture on Facebook.

You dear lady are real, are genuine, and are special to your Creator. He knew that you would struggle at times and even fail along the way. But He also knew that He would give you the grace to keep getting back up and putting one foot in front of the other. He also knew that He would provide for you wonderful experiences and victories along the way as well. Don't forget how much you have done well and right. Don't forget the difference you have made in the lives of so many people. Some of them you are aware of and others you have no idea that you impacted them for good.

See yourself as an amazing creation fashioned by the hand of the Potter. You are fearfully and wonderfully made in the very image of God. Remember that you are an *ezer* – you are a helper, a strength, a rescuer, and even a savior (little "s") in the lives of some. Practice walking and living in the true identity that God gave you as His daughter. You are a princess and your Father is a King.

May 13

1 Peter 3:1-4

As you learn to live as the person God made you to be, you will find that your light shines brighter and more effectively than before. A good example of this is found in Peter's first epistle. In 1 Peter 3:1-4 he wrote, "Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, when they see your respectful and pure conduct" (1 Pet. 3:1-2). Before I finish this entry today, please know that I am aware it is not easy to be the kind of person the Lord wants you to be in some circumstances.

The point of this passage, and this devotion, is that you would come to understand the power of your Christian life lived out in the eyes of those around you. Namely, your own husband in this text. Far too many women exist who find themselves married to men who don't love the Lord, aren't interested in the church, and frankly aren't saved. This puts a woman trying to pursue Christ and holiness in an extremely difficult position. Often the pressure and frustration will cause her to be less than Christlike in that environment, and she will often succumb to the pressure not to attend church or outwardly pursue the Lord.

The text that I have chosen for us to ponder today tells a woman in such circumstances to do just the opposite. Here we learn that there is a good chance she may win her husband to faith in Christ simply by consistently and accurately living out true Christian faith in his presence. Peter is saying that it is still a woman's duty to maintain her God-given roles as a woman, wife, and possibly a mother even if he is not all that he should be. I have heard often a person say, "I will do what I am supposed to do if he will step up and do what he is supposed to do first." I understand that sentiment, but that is not what the Bible says.

In the sermon, I stated that when we pursue Christ and offer what we have to Him, this implies that we are intending to be obedient in everything that He calls us to. In other words, if we are counting on God to kick in and do His part, it is imperative that we truly learn to deny self, take up our cross, and commit to follow Jesus. Following Him means that we are committed to walking in His steps and in accordance with His Word. We cannot say we are doing our part when we choose to ignore or vehemently refuse to obey His marching orders. We must not fall into the trap of thinking it is okay to disobey when our circumstances are not favorable.

What I am honestly writing about today is having faith to trust God and to take Him at His word. Do you genuinely believe that if you obey God with your whole heart, mind, body, and soul that He will keep His promises? Do you believe that even if an answer takes years to arrive that it will eventually come? Peter said that you may win that husband or child or friend as they observe your conduct as respectful and pure. Your life and God's favor on it will be winsome in the eyes of those around you. Take your time and go the distance.

May 14

Psalm 15:1-5

This Psalm, along with the first 6 verses of the 24th Psalm, make up two of my favorites in the entire Psalter (Book of the Psalms). These psalms contain many of the expectations of God pertaining to a life worthy of His favor, His presence, and His blessings. Now, please know that I understand we cannot come before the Lord based on our own merit and that it was the perfect life of Christ, His death, and resurrection that tore the veil and provided us access to the Father.

This should not lead us to believe that our level of and pursuit of holiness does not matter to God. Certainly, you must know that He is more pleased with us when we are resisting sin, choosing obedience to our Lord, and bringing honor and glory to Him in our day to day choices. Consider the fact that when your children are behaving and honoring you as a parent, you are far more pleased with them than when they are not. Your love doesn't, or shouldn't, change and your relationship doesn't change, but surely the sweetness of the fellowship is strengthened or weakened based on the intimacy of the relationship.

With that in mind, I want you to consider today the lifestyle of the person who is more likely to have the privilege of standing in God's favor and thus may experience far more provision for each day. David wrote in the 15th Psalm these words, "O Lord, who shall sojourn in your tent? Who shall dwell on Your holy hill? She who walks blamelessly and does what is right and speaks truth in her heart; who does not slander with her tongue and does no evil to her neighbor, nor takes up a reproach against a friend...She who does these things shall never be moved" (Ps. 15:1-5). Why am I sharing this with you today?

The first 3 points to ponder this week were leading up to this one and the others to follow. Remember that you dear woman, wife, and mom were made in the image of God as an amazing helper (ezer). You were created fearfully and wonderfully by God, and your chaste and pure lifestyle can be a wonderful witness through which others see Jesus. In order for you to experience the incredible blessings of our great and mighty God, it is imperative that you know your lifestyle truly does matter.

David asks the question here as well as in the 24th Psalm, who can stand in the holy place where God is and where blessings flow? The answer is the person who is living in accordance with God's commandments, rules, and principles for His children. It is the person who is following God at a heart level and not simply with lip service. I desire for you to be the person described in these two psalms so that you really will experience the truth of God's favor in real space and time.

In my sermon, my goal was that you would be that person who pursues God like the woman in 2 Kings 4. I pray that you will be the person who prays fervently and who offers all that she has to God for His use in blessing you. I hope you remember that I tried to emphasize offering yourself to Him meant real trust in Him and obedience to His Word. The privilege to be in His presence is in part due to your faithfulness in living in His Word.

May 15

Matthew 14:15-18

In our text from Sunday's message, the widow woman and single mother, found herself in an awful predicament. Her husband, a good man, had died and she was left with some debt that she was no longer able to pay. The creditor, who we can assume was ruthless, was demanding payment and threatening to take her two children as slaves. There was provision in the Mosaic law that allowed this for a brief time as a means of payment, but it was being abused as noted in Nehemiah 5:5-8.

The woman knew to seek out the man of God, but she did not know beyond that what she could possibly do to keep her children. She was out of money, out of time, and out of ideas. The lesson for us today is like the one that Jesus taught His disciples in Matthew 14:15-18. It was in this event that the Lord taught them to bring what they did have to Him. In His hands, our little can often be enough. They discovered with only 5 loaves of bread and two fish He could feed thousands.

Jesus has a way of taking our little, multiplying it, and meeting our needs. What we offer Him is best offered in faith and even as worship if we expect Him to bless it by His grace as He turns our little into an abundance. I can't tell you how many times I have looked back and wondered how Johanna and I have been able to do what God has allowed us to do. The only answer is that God took our little in faith and turned it into more than enough.

The woman talking with Elisha had to think for a moment about what she actually did have left in her home. All she could come up with was one jar of oil. Elisha instructed her to bring that to him. Most of you probably know the rest of the story. In his instructions to her, she was told to go find as many jars as she could and pour the oil that she had into the first one. God, through Elisha, multiplied the oil until every single jar that they could find was filled to the brim. He then told her to sell the oil to pay off her debts and then live off of the rest. What an incredible miracle!

The point that I want us to consider today is the principle of bringing to God what we do have rather than worrying about what we don't have. We all understand how circumstances can be overwhelming and scary. Most of us have been in situations where we wondered how in the world we would get by. The lesson for today is that we should always factor in God and His ability to do far more than we can with our limited means. Our job is to bring what we have and to trust Him with it.

When the water is over our heads, He can make us walk on water. Isaiah wrote, "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you...when you walk through the fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the Lord your God: (Isa. 43:2-3). Never forget that He is near and that He loves His own. When you learn to trust Him and not let go, your faith will grow because you will have opportunities to experience His mercy, grace, provision, and incredible power to take care of you. Your part is to steadfastly walk by faith in total obedience.

May 16

1 Corinthians 10:13; 2 Corinthians 12:9

I am sure you have heard the old saying many times just as I have, that God will not put more on you than you can handle. I want to boldly say today, that statement is not in the Bible and frankly I find rather ridiculous and completely wrong. I think most people who say that from a “biblical” perspective use 1 Corinthians 10:13 to support it. Unfortunately, that is not at all what that verse is alluding to. In that particular verse, Paul is referring to God providing a way to either bear under or get out from under temptations that come our way. It says, “No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man.”

This part of the verse means that we all experience similar temptations and that when you find yourself tempted, it helps to remember others who have stood where you are and did not fall into sin. He continues to say, in the same verse, “God is faithful and will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, BUT with the temptation He will also provide the way of escape...”. We cannot simply say that the temptation was too much to handle and we had no way out. He provides the way out as we lean into Him and choose obedience rather than sin.

The widow in 2 Kings 4 was absolutely in over her head and was facing a situation that she could not handle apart from God making a way where she had none. He had allowed more to come upon her than she could handle. He was doing this to give her an opportunity to exercise faith and to show Himself mighty and capable in her life. We are limited in our resources, abilities, and strength by His perfect design so that we will learn to live by faith in Him.

Think about what Paul said in his second letter to the Corinthians. He wrote, “But He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness’” (2 Cor. 12:9). Consider this dear ones, Paul was stretched beyond His ability to change his circumstance and was fully aware of his weakness and inability to overcome or change his situation. Rather than his circumstances being changed by God to make things easier, He simply promised him the presence and grace to endure all the while he felt the sting and pressure of the “thorn.”

I am again reminded of what Paul wrote concerning his circumstances in Asia. He said, “For we were utterly burdened *beyond our strength* that we despaired of life itself” (2 Cor. 1:8). Honestly friend, does that sound like someone who would argue that God does not put on us more than we can handle? This man and his friends thought they were going to die because they were in over their heads. Why would God allow such pressure and difficulty to fall upon His own children?

The answer is provided in the next verse. He said, “Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead” (2 Cor. 1:9). A perfect and sanctifying reason exists for the circumstances in life that put us in dire situations that are more than we can handle. The purpose is that we might be broken from relying on self and learn to rely wholeheartedly on God and God alone. It is scary but oh so rewarding and necessary to get to this point.

May 17

1 Timothy 2:15

This verse that I have chosen for today certainly has some challenges for interpretation. It says, “Yet she will be saved through childbearing – if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control” (1 Tim. 2:15). I prefer to believe that her “being saved,” is in relation to the joy, fulfillment, and purpose that she will find in not only giving birth to a child but also to having a hand in raising a child in the admonition of the Lord and for His glory and honor. I landed here in part because of the context of this passage.

Paul has just finished writing about some of the God-given limitations to her assignments in the church. He then speaks to the fact that Eve was deceived in the Garden as recorded in Genesis 3. With this, if we were to stop there, we might conclude that woman has been forever restricted by her sin and failure. What we learn in our passage today is that God has made a way for her to still fulfill wonderful, eternity impacting, God-honoring accomplishments with her life. This is a recalibrating of the women in the church who had begun to find purpose, fulfillment, and even authority in ways outside of the will of God for her.

Dear ladies, I hope that today and always you will forever see the incredible gift that being a wife and mother can be. You are woman and you are a helper in the sense that God is our Helper in so many ways through life. You are necessary and priceless. I am reminded of a line that the great actress Viola Davis speaks in the movie *The Help*. She tells the little girl who is often overlooked and ignored by her parents these precious words, “You is smart, you is kind, you is important.” Maybe you needed to hear that today.

My hope for this final “point to ponder” for this week is that you will remember and believe that motherhood is an amazing privilege and an enormous part of how God has planned to raise generations of obedient Christ followers. When you consider the mandate given to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, you should recall that God told them to be fruitful and multiply and to fill the earth with people who will take His Name and glory to the ends of the earth. Mom, you are a major piece in the very will of God that was given to our first parents, Abraham, the nation of Israel, and now the church.

Paul told young Timothy to remind the women of their vitally important roles in Kingdom work and advancement and to work hard at continuing in real faith, love, and holiness. Woman, today you do not have to prove yourself in a man’s world. You certainly don’t want to think that there is freedom and fulfillment in trying to act like, work like, or become like a man. No, no, no! God made you precious and perfect just the way you are. There is little more wonderful on this earth than a woman who loves the Lord, loves her God-given assignments, and who lives all of this out in faith, love, and holiness with a gentle, sweet spirit. I know the Lord said that type of demeanor He considers “very precious” (1 Peter 3:4). Happy Mother’s Day every day.