

*Do You
See This
Woman?*

**Seeing Women with
Heaven's Eyes**

by Aaron Kemple



Do You See This Woman?

Spiritbuilding
PUBLISHERS

By
Aaron Kemple

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Introduction

Here is the focus of this book:

- To “see” various women in Scripture in a variety of situations.
- To put on heaven’s glasses to view these women with God’s eyes.
- To reshape how we see God, ourselves, and others.

In this book, you will see women who are in a variety of life circumstances. You will see married women and those who are divorced. You’ll observe women who are rich, and in leadership positions, but you’ll also look at a woman who only had two coins left. Jesus is asking, “Do you see this woman?”

In every chapter, you will be challenged to see these various women of the Bible from God’s perspective. My hope is that through studying these ladies of Scripture that you will have a change in vision in 3 ways:

1. How you see God.
2. How you see yourself.
3. How you see others.

Let’s start the journey to see with a fresh, renewed godly perspective.

Lesson 1

Vision Correction: Turning on the Divine Spotlight

WE MAY HAVE GREAT EYESIGHT, but still have poor vision.

Everyone needs a new set of glasses.

In order to see the world properly, we cannot rely on our own human vision. Left to our own perspective, how we see others and how we see ourselves will only be distorted images. When the lenses through which we view all experiences and relationships are based upon man's wisdom, then we will always be out of focus. It's like when you stand in front of one of those carnival mirrors—the image is all out of whack.

When the elderly prophet Samuel was sent by God to anoint the next king, God had to correct Samuel's spiritual vision. God said:

Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart. (1 Samuel 16:7)

Samuel saw David's oldest brother, Eliab, and assumed Eliab was going to be the next king. But Samuel was looking only at the surface level. He was looking at the outward shell of Eliab. On the outside, Eliab looked like a king. But God knew Eliab didn't have the right heart. God saw the inside of Eliab and rejected him as king. God doesn't see as man sees.

In Luke 7:44, Jesus asked the question, "Do you see this woman?" He asked this of a man who clearly needed a change of perspective. Simon the Pharisee was one of the Jewish religious leaders. He, like most of the Jewish leadership, was self-righteous and did not see his own need for God's saving grace (Luke 18:9). Since Simon didn't see himself properly in view of God's grace, it altered how he viewed others, including the sinful woman who was in his house to see Jesus.

We'll go in depth on the events of Luke 7:36–50 later, but for now let's appreciate that Jesus was constantly shining the divine spotlight on outcasts for the purpose of training others to see with His eyes. During His brief 3½ years of ministry, He called people to focus on those who were treated with contempt or dismissed. If you read through the gospel accounts, you will regularly find Jesus directing attention to people counted as worthless. He publicly highlighted these people to showcase their value and amazing character.

Sinners. Tax collectors. Harlots. Roman Centurions. Gentiles. Samaritans. Lepers.

And... women.

These groups were not valued at all by the Jewish leadership in those days. In fact, Jesus frequently pointed out that the Pharisees treated livestock better than they did these children of God (Luke 13:15–16; 14:5).

How Jesus looked at people is not how we as humans view others. Jesus is the Creator, and He never lost sight of the fact that He made man and woman in His own image (Genesis 1:26–27). He saw people as sons and daughters of God and children in need of salvation and compassion. As God who sees the heart, He saw amazing character in those who were judged by appearances.

But even His closest followers, the twelve apostles, needed constant vision correction by Jesus. The Twelve apostles were constantly trying to send people away. They “rebuked” those who brought kids to him (Mark 10:13) and they “rebuked” blind Bartimaeus for crying out to Jesus (Mark 10:48). They begged Jesus to send away the Gentile woman who was crying out to Him (Matthew 15:23).

Jesus responded in a way that continued to surprise His disciples. He wanted the kids by His side. He healed the blind man they tried to silence. He commended the great faith of the Gentile woman they wanted to send away. It was during times like these that the spiritual blindness of His disciples was exposed. The apostles needed to see with Jesus' eyes.

And that is what Jesus wants to do for all of us. He wants us to have new glasses. The way we see ourselves, God, and others needs to be remodeled to a heavenly vision.

Why does this matter for you and me?

Have you ever seen someone in one way, only to realize you were looking at that person from the completely wrong perspective? Once you were given more information and background, you saw that person in a new light?

Have you struggled with how you see yourself? Have you allowed how others see you and treat you affect how you see yourself? And when you see yourself in the wrong way, how does that affect your relationships with others?

Have you seen God as a God only of judgment and condemnation? Have you needed to reshape your vision of God to include grace, mercy, and compassion? If you have done that, how did it affect how you see yourself and others?

—Lesson 1 Discussion Questions—

1. Why is it so important for you to see yourself through God's eyes?
2. Have you allowed how others see you to affect how you see yourself?
3. Is it possible that you are struggling in your relationships because of how you "see" other people?

Lesson 2

Vision Correction: Unhealthy Expectations

They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders, but they are not willing to move them with their finger. (Matthew 23:4)

AS MEN AND WOMEN OF GOD, we set expectations for ourselves and for others. Those expectations, however, must be realistic and biblical. Healthy expectations are set by properly understanding God's Word. Our expectations are shaped by our vision. How we see God, His Word, ourselves, and others, will determine the expectations we place on ourselves and others.

For starters—THE VIRTUOUS WIFE or the PERFECT UNATTAINABLE STANDARD?

Sometimes what happens in studying passages like the virtuous woman of Proverbs 31:10–31 is that we arrive at unhealthy conclusions and make unrealistic expectations. A passage like Proverbs 31, which is intended to be an encouragement to God's people (both male and female) can be used as a hammer to beat ourselves and others on the head with thoughts like, "You aren't measuring up."

When we dive into Scripture and do character studies, we must remember to have a balanced view. Let's set some things straight. Not one of those men and women of faith was flawless—all have sinned (Romans 3:23). Not one of the Bible "greats" always made every decision right. Not one of them always had it all together. We sometimes view our heroes in the Bible as "Super-Saints," and then we build up these unfair demands of ourselves and of others. We are trying to match ourselves and others up to some false picture we have concocted in our minds.

For example, those honestly seeking to please God may read about the Virtuous Woman of Proverbs 31 and turn her into Super-Perfect-Christian-Lady. Here's how it may play out in the believer's mind.

The “excellent wife” got all her chores done by 10:00 AM, had a multi-million dollar career in the clothing industry, and her kids were always well-behaved. She never lost her temper, she always cooked an extra casserole for the shut-ins, and she treated her husband with 100 percent respect and never neglected his “needs.” She taught Bible classes better than they had ever been taught before, she had potlucks in her home regularly, and she always said just the right thing in the right way. This woman was a perfect specimen of health and beauty. She never ran out of steam, she never misspent any money, and she budgeted her time with complete efficiency and precision. This super wife woke up a half hour after she went to bed. *And...* she never complained ... blah, blah, blah. If Mary Poppins was “practically perfect in every way,” then this woman crushed Mary Poppins’ record. Some of you may have burnt out your adrenal glands just reading this paragraph.

As well-meaning Christians study the Scripture, they may desperately spend all their efforts trying to live up to a standard that God never set for them. They keep falling short in their own estimation, and their other brethren “fail” as well. Those feelings can be sadly encouraged by leaders, teachers, parents, and demanding spouses that are looking down in disappointment because of their own internal issues and poor understanding of God’s Word.

What happens then? You know, don’t you? They (maybe even you) become drained, disabled, disillusioned, discouraged, and downright depressed. Haven’t you at some point thrown up your hands thinking you can never get it all right? It’s just painful sometimes, isn’t it? You can never “get it all right” if your standard is unrealistic and unattainable. “Getting it right” should at least start with establishing what is “right.”

Here are some additional points about the “excellent wife” of Proverbs 31—

She had help!

My wife, Anna, is very wise to point out that the woman of Proverbs 31 had “maidservants” (see v. 15)! So, a quick note to any husbands reading this, if you expect your wife to carry out all the jobs the Virtuous Woman did, then you’d better hire some help or help her out yourself!

She had a husband who trusted her, supported her, and praised her. His heart “safely trusted in her.” She had a lot of freedom in their relationship to do her “thing.” Look at all she did on her own while her husband was “at the gates.” His words were words of affirmation and praise, and he led the kids in doing the same. This woman was given wings to fly, and she was able to flourish and grow even more because she is in a healthy relationship. She grew into these qualities.

Whatever we see here about this virtuous woman, we must remember that she developed these qualities over time. This passage is intended (I believe) to be a general, composite picture of the great qualities of a godly woman. It was never intended to be used as a ton of bricks to lay on a woman’s shoulders. We are not to take this passage and expect that every godly woman excels at all of these things. The woman in Proverbs 31 grew into her skills and used them for her family and for God. She learned to be kind and wise. She’s not flawless, she has grown mature in God.

Good news!

God receives you, just as you are, and He receives your fellow sisters and brothers also (Romans 15:7)! Those expectations that you dreamed up in your head most likely are not from God. They might be from misguided, yet well-intentioned teachers (or books) in your past, or it might come from others very close to you (like spouses or parents) who hold a standard that is impossible to meet. Even when we are not meeting God’s expectations, remember that He is your loving Father, and His grace and mercy are with you every day as you grow in Him and walk with Jesus.

May God give us the spiritual vision correction to develop healthy expectations for ourselves and others.

—Lesson 2 Discussion—

1. How can the wrong expectations become a horrible burden that drives us to discouragement?

2. What must we remember about God's grace when it comes to expectations and our growth in Jesus Christ?

