



JAMES FORD, JR.

WHEN A
MAN
LOVES A
WOMAN

pursuing her heart



Chapter Three

when a man loves *a woman*

he shows his
appreciation

JACOB REALLY cared for Rachel! Genesis 29:10 states, “And it came to pass, when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother’s brother . . . that Jacob *went near*, and rolled the stone from the well’s mouth, and watered the flock of Laban his mother’s brother” (italics mine).

The words *went near* are actually one word in Hebrew. Moses used the word in Exodus 19:15 in the present perfect tense: “And he said unto the people, Be ready against the third day: *come* not at your wives” (italics mine). The word is *nagash*, and it carries an emotional connotation. Moses uses it to instruct the Israelites to

avoid romantic intimacy with their wives as part of their preparation to receive the Law of God.

REMOVING HINDRANCES TO HER SUCCESS

In regard to Rachel, *nagash* denotes the intensity of Jacob's loving concern that Rachel be able to accomplish the task before her. Jacob demonstrated that he cared about Rachel's ability to accomplish the work delegated to her by moving the stone from the mouth of the well so she could water her father's flock. His actions said, "As a woman, you should not have to move the stone, nor should you be hindered by it, Rachel. Please allow me to help you so that you can complete your work and fulfill the purpose your father has given you to accomplish today."

Help the Woman in Your Life Discover Her Purpose

In Genesis 2:23 Adam named Eve woman. Literally in Hebrew it means "from man she was taken."¹¹ So in essence he is identifying her by that which best corresponds to who he is. In Genesis 3 he names her Eve, mother of all living. Now it seems he is identifying her by her unique God-given purpose. You have a purpose God has given to you that I cannot fulfill and I want to give you the appropriate designation that demonstrates my awareness and appreciation of it. I heard Tony Evans once say the man who wants his wife to be exactly like him doesn't understand that if both of them are the

same one of them is unnecessary.¹² That's why I call Joseph in the New Testament "Mr. Mary." His schedule eventually revolved around God's call on Mary's life to give birth to Jesus, the Messiah. He was committed to seeing the Lord's will fulfilled in Mary's life.

The greatest way to destroy a woman is to distract her from her true purpose. Conversely, the best way to encourage your woman's success is to help her discover her life's purpose. It is the desire of God's heart that each person He has given life to would accomplish the purpose that He created them for. "The plans of the Lord stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations" (Psalm 33:11 NIV).

God has purposes that He has ordained will be carried out by humanity in general, as well as purposes for men, purposes for women, and purposes for children. God has specific tasks for men to perform and women to accomplish, work that is uniquely designed for each individual. We are not the result of some divine experiment. In fact, discovering God's purpose for our lives is the key to personal satisfaction and fulfillment. When a man loves a woman, he will be committed to helping her discover the life purpose that God has placed in her heart and mind.

THE WOMAN'S PURPOSE REVEALED

Receive Love. The primary purpose of the woman was to receive love from the man, just as God's major purpose for creat-

ing man was to receive love from God. God and man maintained their spiritual relationship, but God wanted man to have someone whom he could share soul-love with. Adam had a void of intimacy. He needed to share life with humanity socially, spiritually, emotionally, and physically. “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him” (Genesis 2:18 NIV). A woman’s body reflects her role as receiver. Her ability to receive complements the man’s role to give.

Perfect Match

Helpmeet as used in Genesis 2:18 (KJV) actually means that the woman was a perfect match for the man. It conveys at least two concepts: (1) someone who completes; (2) someone who complements. God took flesh from Adam and now he’s half the man he used to be. He forms Eve and brings her back to Adam and now he’s got back what was taken from him and more! (And it’s the “more” we probably have trouble dealing with. Just joking!)

As stated earlier, men and women need each other to fulfill our mutual purposes and for balance, whether married or single!

The vitality that comes from the contribution of women should not be ignored. Women frequently have an alertness or caution in their spirit. This is frequently referred to as “intuition.” There are many examples of this in Scripture.

The wife of a prosperous landowner in Shunem precisely dis-

cerned Elisha's godly character and urged her husband to assist him (2 Kings 4:8–10). The wife of a governing ruler in Jerusalem discerned the innocent character of Jesus and warned her husband not to proceed with rendering a judgment against Him (Matthew 27:19).

Have Faith. Faith is not “a shot in the dark.” Rather, it is discerning what God's intended purpose is and accomplishing that purpose. More often than not, God reveals His purpose gradually in direct correspondence to how well we obey.

I liken the exercising of faith to following a narrowly lit path. Obviously, we'd all love to have one of those huge searchlights that police use to illuminate an entire neighborhood from a helicopter. But, experience has taught me, however, that God usually gives me the amount of light that I can expect to have from a flashlight, just enough for the step in front of me. I get light for the next step as I take the one preceding in obedience! Faith is a dynamic enablement that gives an individual the desire and power to accomplish God's will.

Create

Creativity is the ability to see a need, task, or idea from a unique perspective, and then meet it. Incumbent in this is honing in on the natural gifts and abilities God has bestowed on each individual. When a man loves a woman, he observes and appreciates her

gifts and encourages her in them. Where is she going? What is she supposed to do? Remember, as I mentioned in chapter 2, the feminine heart wants to be a part of something larger than herself. A woman is looking to be fulfilled by committing her creativity to accomplishing a greater good.

THE KISS

“And Jacob kissed Rachel . . .” (Genesis 29:11)

The way Jacob kissed Rachel was very significant. In their culture, the way a person was kissed conveyed a specific message. If you kissed someone on the cheek, it was a kiss of cordiality. It was a standard greeting and an acceptable way to say hello. A kiss symbolized friendship and fellowship. This custom was encouraged by the apostles Paul and Peter in the New Testament with the admonition, “Greet one another with a holy kiss” (Romans 16:16 NIV).

Kissing on the lips was always a sign of affection. This possibly could have been going on in Genesis 26:8 when Abimelech realized Rebekah was Isaac’s wife and not his sister. The Bible says, “It came to pass, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out at a window, and saw, and, behold, Isaac was sporting with Rebekah his wife.”

Kissing someone’s feet was a demonstration of submission, an inferior to a superior, as in the case of subjects to kings. In fact, a king who won a war would have his feet kissed by the defeated

king. The victor would then place his feet on the head of the defeated king.

It was typical for a blessing to be bestowed with a kiss on the forehead, and a kiss on the hand was a sign of approbation. The text doesn't indicate what he kissed so I don't know whether it was a kiss on the cheek, a kiss on the head, a kiss on the face, or a kiss on the forehead. But this much I do know, that all of them have an element of affection. Every man who loves a woman will need to give her at least four things: (1) acknowledgment, (2) affection, (3) attention, (4) approbation. I think it's quite easy to imply that the kiss included the first three. What may be lacking is the approbation. I think that based on the fact that Rachel is watering her father's sheep is something that should be acknowledged and appreciated.

In those days men didn't have much respect or admiration for women. Jewish men frequently prayed thanking God that they were not born women.

There was much to admire early in the relationship. Admiration should be expressed for Rachel's willingness to do what a man was supposed to do without murmuring or complaining about the work. Earlier her soon-to-be mother-in-law, Rebekah, had demonstrated the same kind of commitment. When Abraham's servant was sent to find a bride for Isaac, he would identify her by her willingness to water his camels. He had ten camels, and of course, scholars aren't agreed, but the average camel can drink about two to

three gallons of water in one sitting. She watered them all.

In contemporary terms a man may express to a single mother, “I admire you! You have been abandoned and left with three children to raise all by yourself. Yet, you raised them, put them through college, and they have grown up to become respectable, contributing members of society. Please, let me do something men don’t usually do. Please let me commend you, because I appreciate and admire your diligence.” We need to affirm a woman’s activity.

Listen, married men. Does she know how much you admire her vocation? Her appearance? Her contributions to your success? If she wears her hair to one side, you ought to notice and tell her how wonderful she looks. “I notice everything about you. You got your eyebrows arched too, didn’t you? Looks good on you, girl! Kinda sexy.” Then when she starts walking away: “Girl, you walkin’. You walkin’, girl. Lord, have mercy, Jesus! I give in! I give up! I surrender ALL! Lookin’ good, girl! You GO!”

She needs that kind of admiration, and not just in regard to her physical appearance. A woman needs spiritual, social, and intellectual affirmation. She needs to know that you care about her and appreciate her as a person. The woman in Proverbs 31 is special, isn’t she? Well, she still exists today. God doesn’t put a model before you that does not exist. If you believe that your woman has a ways to go to live up to the standard, then speak what you want to see into existence! Remember, “Death and life are in the power

of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof” (Proverbs 18:21).

Proverbs 31:28 tells us that the children of the virtuous woman rise up and call her blessed. Let me tell you what her kids do. Her kids get up in the morning and say, “Ooh, Mama! You have breakfast on the table again. Thank you. Ooh, Mama, you have lunch for us today. Thank you! Thank you for putting money in our pockets and taking us to school and to our friends’ homes. We are so glad we can bring our friends to a clean house. A lot of my friends come to school dirty. I have clean clothes. Sometimes my friends don’t have food. I always do. Sometimes they go home and are all alone. They have no one to talk to or to help them with their homework, but I do! Thank you, Mama.” That is what her children say!

Proverbs 31:28 continues to say that the husband of the virtuous woman praises her. Here’s what motivated her, what kept her going: the praise and encouragement of her husband. Her husband said, “You go, girl! Look at you. A regular little bid-nez woman. Doin’ your bid-nez on the side. Doin’ your thang in the house. Got your bid-nez, takin’ care of the kids, keepin’ the house clean . . . You got it goin’ on! Oh, girl, I knew I had somethin’ special when I got you . . .”

All of a sudden she feels the anointing to cook a good meal. All of a sudden she feels led by the Spirit to do the ironing. She gets gumption for dishwashing. Why? You praised her! Husbands, try

to lift up your wives and tell them what you like about them, and I guarantee it will start turning—you will begin to see the things you desire to see. You will wonder what in the world is happening. You are letting her know that she is important to you. You are affirming her activity.

In fact, the statement in Proverbs 31:28 about her children rising up and calling her blessed also says that her husband praises her. Both statements are present tense. “Rise up” and “praise” are also the tense of continuous action. In other words, this was not a rare statement made after consuming an exquisite Thanksgiving meal. No! This was an ongoing, regular occurrence. Her children and husband established a regular habit of telling their mother and wife how much they appreciated her.

AN ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

When was the last time you sat down and took your fiancée’s or wife’s hand, looked her in the eyes, lowered your voice two octaves, and told her what you appreciate about her?

Jacob’s sensitivity to and comprehension of Rachel’s vocation seems to be intuitive. That ought not discourage any man, because we can grow in our appreciation just like Adam did for Eve.

In Genesis 2:23 Adam named Eve “woman” to show she was taken from him and intimately related to him. So he identified her by that which best represented him. In Genesis 3:20, he calls

her “Eve,” which means “mother of all living ones.” Adam finally grows to appreciate Eve’s distinctiveness apart from who he was. He recognized and acknowledged her uniqueness. Eve’s distinctive design is a designation that celebrates how uniquely God created her.

Gratefulness Defined

Gratefulness means “letting others know by my words and actions how they have benefited my life.” Etymologically, the central meaning of the word “gratefulness” is “to be pleased and make it known.”

Three Aspects of Gratefulness

Adam learned it as a married man. Jacob exhibited it as a single man and was a good husband for Rachel, because what he needed in marriage he practiced before marriage. He knew how to appreciate a woman so he would have no problem appreciating a wife. After all, Rachel was a woman before she became a wife!

1. Realization

We must be aware of the benefits we have received! Our natural tendency is to be constantly aware of the benefits we extend and take those extended to us for granted. The first significant aspect of gratefulness is to maintain an awareness

of the daily benefits we derive, versus being acutely alert only after experiencing a loss.

2. Response

After we identify how we have been blessed, our realization requires a response. I shared in a previous chapter about the value of blessings and how to give them. Also, I gave details about an annual special day I set aside to honor Leslie.

3. Responsibility

The most significant way to communicate gratitude to a benefactor is through our stewardship and generosity. “He who refreshes others will himself be refreshed” (Proverbs 11:25 NIV). The way we utilize the gifts given to us demonstrates the degree of our gratefulness.

The pioneer in discovering the impact of emotions on health, Dr. Hans Selye, concluded that vengeance and bitterness are the emotions most likely to elicit high stress levels in the human body, while gratitude is the single response most nourishing to good health.

Gratitude challenges us to keep our personal demands to a minimum and simplify our expectations of each other. Good character does not require that we allow our personal autonomy to be

trampled underfoot. Wisdom and discernment help us moderate expectations and self-seeking behavior, but not at the expense of personal care and safety.

When a man loves a woman, he cultivates the vision and purpose for his life, so that he can help cultivate and refine the life purpose of his beloved. This will be accomplished through giving her love; accepting her help, insight, and advice; and expressing gratefulness for these. He will encourage her to grow in faith and to maximize her natural gifts and abilities.

Think about it . . .

1. When it comes to your mate's ability to fulfill her God-given purpose, do you serve as a facilitator or a distracter?
2. How should a man build up his woman so she can accomplish her goals in life?
3. Does your woman know that you admire her? Explain how.
4. Are you satisfied that you are doing your best for her and your family? If not, in what ways can you improve?

Live by it . . .

Dear Lord,

I need Your help in understanding my duties as a husband.

Teach me how to show unending appreciation for my mate.

Please lead me and guide me in my efforts to support the love of my life so that she can discover her true purpose.

Amen.



Interested in the whole book?
Select your preferred book seller:

MOODY PUBLISHERS



AMAZON



GOOGLE PLAY



WALMART



BARNES & NOBLE



CHRISTIANBOOK.COM

