

Dealing With the (Overweight) Elephant in the Room

I watched a YouTube video the other day of a full-grown elephant strolling into a couple's backyard and schnozzeling up water out of their swimming pool. Then she casually strolled away like this was her normal routine.

To those taking the video this was not a normal day. There was an elephant in their back yard!

Today, I got an email from a woman I know. Even though her question deals with an elephant, it is similar to the ones people ask me all the time. Though I can't answer every email I receive, I'm answering this one in public because I think many will benefit.

Here's her question: "What brought you to the place of making real changes to get free of the elephant in the room? I know from reading your book you struggled with coming to that place of, 'Today, I will do this. I will deal with the truth of being unhealthy.'"

The idea of the elephant in the room is an interesting one. To whom or what does the elephant refer? When we answer that question, we may be able to get at the truth. So, let's go on an elephant hunt.

I Am the Elephant

We have met the elephant, and she is us. If we are overweight or obese and beyond, we think the elephant refers to us.

Every Sunday when I walked in the door of my church, I would automatically look around to see if I was the largest person in the room. If I was, I would cower as far back as I could. I didn't want my elephant size to be too overwhelming.

I truly hated being the largest person in the room. If there was even one person larger than me, I'd breathe a sigh of relief. Since losing weight, I know that most folk don't look around to see who the largest person is in the room. Most don't even notice.

Size is irrelevant to most. It's definitely more noticeable to us than others. We are the ones who have to live with ourselves. We know the difficulties our size brings.

If anything I find people are more considerate than accusatory. They are concerned for our health. They would genuinely like to help, but are afraid to for fear of making us angry.

She Is the Elephant

Someone else is the elephant. Someone made us angry, hurt our feelings, abused us, gossiped about us, hurt us physically, snubbed us, told lies about us, left us, fed us unhealthy food or didn't love us.

There could be any number of reasons we blame someone else for our weight gain. What they did seems like a difficulty that looms so large we cannot see around it nor can we get through it. So we stay stuck and we eat.

The reasons we turn to food can be many and varied. The truth is everyone has difficulties, but not everyone chooses to go to food to solve their problems.

This elephant remains in the room because we choose to keep it there. We feed it by rehearsing our victim status. It's easier to be a victim than a victor. It's easier to blame our pet elephant than ourselves.

Food Is the Elephant

An elephant eats a lot of food. The amounts vary from 150

pounds a day to 770 pounds a day. The larger amount of food is for elephants that live in the wild. They, of course, have to hunt for their own food, roam larger spans of area, endure the difficulties of temperature and terrain.

If an elephant eats too much or too little food, one of several things might be the reason. They don't need to consume so much food because of the environment: captivity versus free range. They can't find food or the right types of food aren't fed to them. They are sick.

All three things also effect us. Our environment dictates a lot of how we eat. If we are in an area that doesn't have access to highly processed foods, we will eat less. If we have the wrong types of foods, we will eat more. If we are sick, or metabolically broken, we will eat more.

A person who is metabolically broken can't mitigate the amounts of foods they eat, such as sugar, flour, highly processed foods and fast foods. This is typically what has become known as the American diet.

It's a mindless type of eating. Part of this is the craving mechanism in our brain is messed up or broken. It recognizes something high in sugar content or an item that will eventually turn into sugar, and once it has hit the blood stream turns on the craving mechanism for more. Once the "more" hits, there is a desire for more. It is an endless loop. It never stops.

Emotions Are the Elephant

Emotions can loom larger than an elephant in our lives. They take over everything. They invade the secret places where no one else is allowed to go. They take over our minds, wills and behaviors. They make us do exactly what we don't want to do.

We can try to reason with our emotions. We can try to force them to be silent. We can will them to be silent, but they

just scream all the louder.

Paul had something to say about this. "For what I am doing, I do not understand, for I do not practice what I will to do, but I do the very thing I hate. ... For the will to do what is right is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good I desire to do, I do not do, but the evil I do not want is what I do. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who does it, but sin that lives in me. I find then a law that when I desire to do good, evil is present with me. ... O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 7:15, 19, 24-25).

Our emotions become the backdrop of our life. Everything runs according to how we feel and yet, we're not really sure where those feelings came from.

God Is the Elephant

Sometimes we even blame God for our problem. We cry out to Him to fix our problem. We tell Him to make us not so hungry, to help us magically lose 250 pounds, to strike vengeance on those who wronged us. We feel if He would just do these things everything would be fine.

It's His fault for making us this way. He needs to fix us. Then all will be well with the world. We can continue eating the foods we love and be healthy if God only weren't so stubborn.

The Herd Is the Elephant

In essence, it feels as if we have not one elephant in our room, but a whole herd of elephants.

That brings us to the crux of the matter. The elephant in the room is really a complex conundrum of a set of issues that involve our physical body, our physical environment, our

reactions to situations and people, our emotions and our spiritual life.

When we understand how complex we are and how we have eaten ourselves to elephant size, we begin to believe there is no simple solution. We have eaten ourselves into a conundrum, an intricate and difficult problem.

We are like Paul in that we want to do good. We want to lose weight. We want to live and be healthy. We just can't figure out the answer.

We keep trying to get rid of the herd of elephants that seems to eat what is the equivalent of their weight. All we have to do is look down and understand the truth of this.

I tried pushing the elephants out of my life. Do you know how hard it is to push an elephant? They won't budge.

In order to solve the problem I had to embrace my elephants. I had to own the herd that is me.

Yes, I am the problem. Yes, others have wronged me. Yes, food is an issue for me. Yes, I am an emotional mess. Yes, I'm mad at God.

Admitting each one freed me to focus on the first step. For me, ownership of my issue meant I using the key God had shown me for years, if I want to live and I certainly did want to live to fulfill God's calling on my life, to use the gifts He gave me, to see my children grow up, to meet my future grandchildren, to love my husband.

I stopped looking for easy fixes and owned the fact that I am a sugar addict. That is where I started. This was the turn-around point for me.

Leading a Herd of Elephants

Then, I turned to one of the elephants in my herd and decided to once and for all make Him leader of my herd. I realized the one I had blamed for not fixing me and making me like this was the only one who could lead me to become whole, healthy and happy.

I surrendered to the one who said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness"(2 Cor. 12:9). I asked Him to lead me to the next right step and then the next and the next and the next.

I realized it was by His grace, which is and always has been sufficient, that I was able to make this decision. The dictionary says, sufficient means, "enough to meet the needs of a situation or a proposed end."

God being enough meant I needed nothing more and so, I surrendered to Him. I surrendered processed sugar through a series of stopping my various trigger foods and starting new foods or actions in their place. Later, I did the same with gluten.

As He leads me, I continue to stop things and start other things in their place. I stop what I want to do and surrender that to Him. I start what He wants me to do and He gives me the grace, power and peace to do that. "When I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor. 12:10).

My herd of elephants is corralled and led by my Creator God. There is little struggle now because I am finally Spirit-led.

If anyone can lead this herd of elephants, it's definitely Him.

If you are having difficulties navigating through the weight loss herd, Sweet Change Weight Loss Group can help you. Through Dec. 1, get our best discount for only a two-month commitment and the ability to extend at that price if you wish. We're going back to the basics starting Dec. 1. Join now

by clicking [HERE](#).

Teresa Shields Parker is an author, blogger, editor, business owner, wife and mother. Her book, *Sweet Grace: How I Lost 250 Pounds and Stopped Trying to Earn God's Favor* is available on Amazon in print, Kindle and Audible [HERE](#). This story is from her blog, .

When You Have No Answers

“These [trials] have come so that your faith ... may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed (1 Pet. 1:7, NIV).

What, or who, has ...

turned on the tap of your tears,

and tossed you in your bed at night,

and preoccupied your waking thoughts,

and blackened your hopes for the future,

and broken your heart,

and wrenched an agonized “Why?” from your trembling lips?

To our heart-wrenched cries of “Why?” God’s ultimate answer is, “Jesus,” as He is glorified and magnified in our lives through our suffering. Trust Him. When guilt takes the edge off every joy ...

when there are no answers to your questions ...

trust Him when you don’t understand.

Trust His heart.

Anne Graham Lotz is the founder of AnGeL Ministries. She is also the author of several books.

Where Are the Spiritual Mothers?

I have asked myself over and over the question that *Silver Threads*, by Kate Megill of Teaching What Is Good, opens up with: “Where are the Titus 2 women of today? Why have today’s young wives and mothers been left to figure out for themselves how to raise a godly family and how run an efficient home?”

I believe that this lack of true discipleship has not only left a gaping hole where Paul’s instructions have been ignored and pushed aside; it is also, I believe, one reason why we see such a rise of “mommy wars,” preoccupation with celebrity gossip and a misunderstanding of the true value of our role as stay-at-home moms. I also believe that it is one reason why moms are so lonely today. There are no older women teaching younger women what it truly means to love their husbands and children, “to be self-controlled, pure, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be dishonored” (Titus 2:5).

While this may seem to some to be unnecessary, the fact is that as a wife adjusts to married life and the role of motherhood, while she is battling sleep deprivation, toddlers’ self-will and her own insecurities as a young wife and mom, suddenly what seems so logical isn’t very logical any longer; and behaviors that she thought were conquered long ago suddenly rise to the surface. This is where an older woman

becomes invaluable!

Kate has written a comprehensive book on what the role of the older woman whom Paul addresses in Titus 2.

She correctly points out that while we can attribute that role to spiritually older women, or anyone who is older than the one they are discipling, the Bible clearly defines this woman as a physically older woman whose children are grown.

Kate goes on to outline the qualities this older woman should not only teach, but model in her own life.

She says about obedience: "Too often in our churches today we focus on obedience and leave out faith, joy and love. Please know that I'm a huge fan of obedience. But when obedience flows out of duty or legalism rather than out of faith and love, it has no lasting effects in our lives. Worse, it leads to a critical spirit, hopelessness and failure."

I was blessed to read this because I have seen repeatedly what happens when Christians obey out of duty or a desire to earn the favor of God. They adopt superior attitudes and begin examining the lives of others who do not live up to their personal standard of holiness. Even worse, they usually don't keep quiet about it.

And this is something Kate addresses in her book that made sense to me. She explains what Paul meant when he talked about the younger women going from house to house, and why he found this damaging. I won't ruin the surprise for you. If you want to read what Kate said (and really, you need to!) you need to buy the book. I promise, it will make that part make sense for you too!

The part I really loved the most was her instruction on how to become an older woman, or how to effectively disciple (and she explains at the front of the book the difference between life coaches/mentors and disciplers).

She brings up mistakes I often see in ministry in general, such as creating “mini me’s,” determining what God’s plan is for the person you disciple, or trying to become the Holy Spirit’s voice for them.

I was immediately reminded that my dad once shared with me how when I was still a baby that the Lord spoke to him what my purpose in life was to be. Yet, as I grew older, my father could see my tendency to be a pleaser and rather than try to be the voice of the Holy Spirit to me, chose to teach me how to hear His voice for myself—trusting that as I learned to hear the Lord’s voice, the Lord would tell me personally what He had told my dad so many years ago.

This is so important. In our desire to see people grow in the Lord, sometimes we get ahead of the Lord’s plan—yes, even get in the way of His plan—by being too swift to speak. There is a reason why God’s timing is often slower than our own. He understands that it takes time to cultivate a heart that needs to be ready to hear certain words. And while it may not appear to us that He is working in their lives, most often He is doing a hidden work we cannot see.

This last section of Kate’s book is vital for every Christian worker—young and old. By taking these words to heart, we will avoid many of the pitfalls that lead to the disillusionment and oftentimes exodus of young believers.

Are you an older woman? Do you ask yourself whether you truly fit the role of the older woman in Titus 2?

Are you a younger woman? Perhaps you are a new wife or mom. Are you looking for an older woman to disciple you in this role?

You need to purchase *Silver Threads*. I promise you, it will encourage, inspire and challenge you in whatever role you are in.

Rosilind Jukic, a Pacific Northwest native, is a missionary living in Croatia and married to her Bosnian hero. Together they live in the country with their two active boys where she enjoys fruity candles, good coffee and a hot cup of herbal tea on a blustery fall evening. Her passion for writing led her to author her best-selling book The Missional Handbook. At A Little R & R she encourages women to find contentment in what God created them to be. You can also find her at Missional Call where she shares her passion for local and global missions. You can follow her on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and Google +, where she can be found on a regular basis.

Facing Death

Why?

“God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying” (Rev. 21:4, NKJV).

In the beginning, we were never intended to die. Death was not a part of God’s original plan. He created you and me for Himself.

He intended us to live with Him and enjoy Him forever in an uninterrupted, permanent, personal love relationship. But sin came into our lives and broke the very relationship with God for which we were created.

When your loved one dies and your grief is tinged with anger, don’t direct it toward God. He’s angry too. Direct it toward sin and its devastating consequences. Dedicate yourself to sharing the gospel as often as you can.

Pray that through your witness others who face physical death will choose to escape the second death, which is hell, the ultimate separation from God, by placing their faith in Jesus Christ. As we face death, our only hope is in knowing there is genuine, triumphant, permanent victory over it that is available to us in Jesus' Name!

Anne Graham Lotz is the founder of AnGeL Ministries. She is also the author of several books.

The Danger of Being Trapped in Your Own War

I think one of the most dangerous consequences of any fierce fight is the way it shrinks our vision to primarily the soil of our own battlefield. Sometimes I feel that if I'm not careful, I'll get stuck inside an ALS bucket, where our issues are *the* issues. It's like living inside your own, personal 24-hour news cycle, and all the stories are about medical stuff and caregiving stuff and insurance stuff and sorrow stuff. And it can happen with any fight we face. I've known people who can't last six sentences in conversation without mentioning the ex-spouse who did them wrong. I totally get why this happens, but I firmly believe I need to work to get rid of the dumb bucket rather than justifying its existence.

This is a challenge in blogging. Writing helps me process what I'm experiencing and connect some of the emotional dots. It also creates camaraderie between those going through similar situations. I don't think writing about our war is wrong; I just want to be so careful that I don't become confined or defined by it. While people often tell me that what they're

going through is nothing compared to what we're going through—I actively and aggressively resist that idea. The minute I begin thinking that I've drawn the worst hand available, I am just one short hop away from life in that bucket, where I am all that matters. And ... Ew.

This morning, I read an article about the girls who were abducted in Nigeria. And I read this strong piece from Sarah Bessey about the issue of sexualized violence. Then I read a letter from the child we sponsor in Indonesia so she can attend school, and had so much fun writing her back and sending her some Christmas money.

My coffee money for one week is her Christmas. Her entire Christmas. I mean, l this is a child—a *real* child with hopes and dreams and gifts and fears—who cannot attend school without the help of strangers. These are global issues. Moral issues. Issues embedded into the fabric of our society that rampage and ravage tender hearts and innocent lives.

We cannot support every cause or defend every victim, but I cannot live in a world where the only victim is me. My life is hard, yes. I've written about a million words on the nature of a villain like ALS, and I'll write more. But as I've been processing burnout, I'm also seeing that one of the best ways to stay clearheaded in crisis is to realize there's a world beyond your war.

I cannot escape the battlefield of ALS. It is the ground on which I live and fight. But I will resist until my dying breath the natural tendency to build walls around my battlefield, walls that shut up our hearts and our compassion and our righteous outrage toward social injustices on the global stage. This is not just right, it's good. It's good for my heart and my outlook. It's good for my family and our army. It's good for my future, and it's good for the world that God so loves.

Feeling stuck in a bucket today? Push your vision out beyond your playing field and gain some quick perspective. And then do something. Pray, send money, send a note, send hope. Make a move in someone else's war and see how it changes the landscape of your own.

Bo Stern is a blogger and author of Beautiful Battlefields (NavPress). She knows the most beautiful things can come out of the hardest times. Her Goliath came in the form of her husband's terminal illness, a battle they are still fighting with the help of their four children, a veritable army of friends and our extraordinary God. Bo is a teaching pastor at Westside Church in Bend, Oregon.

How God Deals With Your Weakness

All you have to do is talk to a college student the week before Thanksgiving to know living is impossible. All the tasks we need to accomplish are more than a person can do.

Or ask someone how he's doing, with sincerity of heart that really begs an answer, and get the honest response that things are hard.

And as for me, it seems there is always a shortage of motivation to attack paperwork or to get on the treadmill like I know I should. I can't seem to pull myself to do the housework that needs to be done or to care for all the people I want to care for.

Last week I faced that trauma at school followed by a funeral, and the whole time I kept thinking about how weak I felt on

the inside—how crippled by the pain and not knowing how to endure the crush of it inside my weary heart.

So I read across a Bible verse yesterday that felt wonderful.

Like last Friday night, when my son came home from a football game with frozen toes, and I heated up the rice bag and wrapped it around his feet. (Of course, I wasn't thinking at the time that this would make the use of the rice bag unappealing to anyone else in the future.)

"Oh, Mom, you're awesome," he said. Sometimes I am.

This verse I found is like that toasty rice bag, *for when you're worn out and you can't feel your toes anymore.*

"I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the prophets, who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength" (Heb. 11:32-34, NIV).

Through faith ... their weakness was turned to strength. Doesn't the truth of this feel good?

Now, faith, that's something I can do while I'm still under the covers in the morning.

Faith that God can take a little college girl who is about to crater under four group projects (which are straight from the devil) and help her finish well.

Faith that God can take a weary friend and give him everything he needs to live a strong life. All the money, all the emotional energy, all the hope.

Faith that God can get my sorry self on that treadmill today and help me pay bills when I would rather be doing anything else.

Here is my secret to being a person of faith: First thing in the morning I groan as I roll over and say, "Oh, God, help me. I cannot do this day without you. I am pathetic unless you do a miracle and make me a bigger person than we both know I am."

God wants glory, and that starts with all those things we know we're too weak to pull off.

Feels like we aren't gonna make it?

Perfect.

We let the Almighty God step in and flex those muscles of His.

Christy Fitzwater is the author of A Study of Psalm 25: Seven Actions to Take When Life Gets Hard. She is a blogger, pastor's wife and mom of two teenagers and resides in Montana. Visit for more information about her ministry.

Why We Need to Be Pro-Life for Everyone

Often, when I hear others talking about abortion, the focus is on the innocence of the fetus. Moral outrage grows because of the innocence and defenselessness of the child. But I would submit to you that the true reason that abortion is sin is not because the fetus is innocent, but because the fetus is **human**.

You could make an argument from Scripture that the fetus is not innocent at all. All are guilty before God. Given the opportunity to live, any fetus would eventually act out in ways consistent with the sinful nature Scripture teaches we all have. But that baby in the womb has something that gives

it worth, innocent or not. It is human—unlike a dog or horse, or my beloved killer whales, humans reflect God. They bear His image. They are imprinted with something reflective of God that no other entity in creation shows.

We have a word for the actions around the inherent dignity of being human. We call it being **humane**. Humane means the sense of being human. The differences in how a lion treats a wounded human and a human treats a wounded lion are pretty big. For humans living in the essence of what it means to be an elevated ruler of creation, compassionate treatment of animals is a concern. It's not that we treat the animal like it is a human. It's that we treat the animal when it is weak or wounded inherently better than another animal would treat it. We treat it humanely. We respond with dignity and care befitting an image bearer of the Creator taking care of creation. And when mob mentality in riots results in people treating others more like animals than humans, we rightfully recoil in horror.

“He who oppresses the poor reproaches his Maker, but he who honors Him has mercy on the poor” (Prov. 14:31).

With immigration reform in the news, I have been thinking again of what it means to be pro-all-of-life, walking day in and day out reflecting the inherent dignity of what it means to be human, what it means to be the one part of creation who bears the image of God.

Immigration is complicated because of the legal, political issues, but what is not complicated is our day-in-and-day-out obligation to treat other humans in light of their dignity simply because they are human. In my own life, my test is not treating new babies humanely, but how I respond to the adult who is down and out. On the outside, they have clearly fallen short of the glory of God that He has called them to reflect. Yet, I remember that, though I look clean on the outside, I too fall short. Then I can turn to the poor man and treat him

in the dignified way God has treated me, and in doing so I call him and myself back to what God created us to be in perfection—reflections of Him.

Humane.

Adapted from Wendy Alsup's blog, . Wendy has authored three books including By His Wounds You Are Healed: How the Message of Ephesians Transforms a Woman's Identity. She is also a wife, mom and college math teacher who loves ministering to women.

The 1 Key to Reaching Your Child

Jesus said, “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks” (Matt. 12:34). Parents can use this principle to gain some understanding and insight into a child's heart. Listening becomes key.

It's surprising how many times we ask kids why they don't talk to their parents and hear the answer, “Because they don't listen to me.” Yes, it's true some children confuse listening with agreeing. On the other hand, we find some parents really don't listen to their children, whether they agree or not. They're irritated by the lack of logic, the different viewpoints, or the naïve opinions of their children.

Listening can feel like torture as a child goes on and on about things that don't make sense to the parent. It's in these moments, however, that parents can learn about a child's heart. Children may be wrong, but they're usually following some kind of internal logic. Listening allows you to figure

out what's going on and offer more truth where helpful.

As you listen to your kids talk, try to discern what may be distracting them from understanding the truth. Don't feel like you have to point it out on the spot. Take time to listen and make mental notes of errors in their thinking. Look for creative ways to help them understand truth more fully.

An accepting, safe, listening ear often opens the heart in ways that nothing else can. As you listen to your child, you'll learn about their dreams, goals and commitments. Good or bad, time spent listening to your children gives you a greater sense of what's going on inside, offering you ideas and direction about the heart change that's needed.

This parenting tip comes from the book Parenting is Heart Work by Dr Scott Turansky and Joanne Miller, RN, BSN.

Why You Feel Empty

"If you knew ... who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water" (John 4:10, NIV).

While the woman of Samaria and I have many differences, we have one thing in common. I too find myself from time to time running on empty.

In the busyness of ministry, the weariness of activity, the excitement of opportunity, I sometimes wake up and realize, "I am so dry and thirsty." Invariably, when I examine myself, the reason for the dryness of spirit can be traced to one thing. I'm not drinking freely of the Water of Life. I'm neglecting my Bible study. I'm rushing through my prayer time. I'm not

listening to the voice of the Lord because I'm just too busy to be still. At those times I carve out quiet interludes to confess my sins and read and meditate and pray and listen and just drink Him in. Thank You, dear God, for still giving us today, Living Water from the Well that never goes dry.

Anne Graham Lotz is the founder of AnGeL Ministries. She is also the author of several books.

Take the Limits Off

We all have them—beliefs, even unconscious ones, that hold us back. This is a little like driving down the freeway, 70 miles an hour, with the emergency brake fully engaged. You may be getting somewhere, but you are most certainly tearing up the car. The instructions in the owner's manual should read: "Locate the beliefs that limit you to release your inner brake."

When I began speaking professionally, I learned the hard way how beliefs impact performance. One of my self-limiting beliefs was: "It's very important for people to like you—to approve of you." With practice, I could take this belief to a whole new level: "It's the most terrible thing in the whole wide world if people don't absolutely love you, and they might not."

This belief drove my performance. Above anything else I desperately needed everyone in every audience to like me. I could receive thundering applause and wonderful feedback, but if I had one mediocre evaluation or if I didn't "feel the love," I would instantly turn that into a weapon and torture myself all the way home. This is ridiculous behavior—really ridiculous and really painful behavior.

The obsessive need to be liked became the primary focus of my performance. It was like a drug. I was an approval addict, and my performance suffered. I continued to struggle with this behavior until I identified the belief driving it. Then I understood: "It's not about people liking you. In fact, it's not about you at all! This is about them. It is about making a real difference."

"All things are created twice. We create them first mentally, then physically." –Stephen Covey

With an audible sigh of relief, I mentally crossed out the rule "It's important to be liked" and replaced it with "It's important to make a lasting difference." I was free then to focus on the audience and on making a positive impact. I enjoyed my work more, and my performance improved.

How do you locate your self-limiting beliefs? Begin with what you believe about your accomplishments, strengths and abilities. What are you really good at? What achievements are you most proud of? What skills have you mastered? Start with what you believe about yourself, and then listen to what you say to yourself.

Excerpt from A Softer Strength: Six Characteristics of a Godly Woman (CharismaHouse) by Dondi Scumaci.