

This Man Won't Disappoint You

The Lord loves women. Certainly, He always has. Jesus befriended a woman who was shunned by her entire community. He allowed a scandalous woman to anoint Him.

When Mary sat worshipping at His feet, He wouldn't permit the busy Martha to remove her. Even as He died on the cross, He was thinking of a woman.

John 19:26-27 recounts one of His final thoughts: "When Jesus saw His mother there, and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, 'Dear woman, here is your son,' and to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' From that time on, this disciple took her into his home" (NIV).

His beloved mother wasn't the only woman who crossed His mind in that moment of unbearable pain. He was also thinking of you and me. He couldn't imagine eternity without us, so He willingly surrendered His earthly life in our place.

I remember the day—even the hour—when I discovered His irresistible love. What man had ever shown me such faithfulness and dedication? Who had ever spoken so tenderly? When had I ever been forgiven so completely? In exchange for my broken body and empty heart, He offered me everything.

Before that moment, my life had been a series of shallow gasps. But when His love flooded my being, I was finally able to take a deep breath.

He's More Than a Man

Jesus is the only one from whom every woman—single or married—can honestly find her worth. God never meant for women to seek their value from men. He meant for us to look to Him.

Although Jesus came to earth as the Son of Man, He's also the Son of God. And even though His characteristics are overtly

masculine, He's more than just a man. Sadly, many women are suspicious of a God they see as manly. They mistakenly fear Him because of what men in their past have done to them. I can't begin to tell you the number of women I've spoken with who are afraid of approaching God as Father.

Let these words bring comfort to you: God is not a man. He's far more than both man and woman. He's the source of life to all.

Numbers 23:19 boldly declares: "God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should change his mind. Does He speak and then not act? Does He promise and not fulfill?"

Not long ago, while traveling to a conference, I found myself in the Dallas airport with a little extra time on my hands. I decided to browse through the women's magazine section and scan the latest topics. Suddenly, something caught my attention. "The Pursuit of Men" was a featured theme in one of the most popular magazines on the rack. Each article addressed one dynamic or another about how females could or should interact with males.

Articles focused on subjects such as cities with high male populations; spots men frequented in those cities; how to attract male attention; how to talk once you had that attention; and how to love a man and know if he loved you. I picked up the magazine to review its pages. Then I heard the Holy Spirit whisper, "But I am not a man."

I was riveted by the simplicity of this revelation. For all the independence these women's magazines espouse, they still tout the harmonious relationship of a man and a woman as the answer to personal happiness. Yes, there's fulfillment in an intimate relationship with a man, but men are not our ultimate source of contentment and joy.

God and the Feminine Heart

If we're honest with ourselves, we'll find that we inadvertently declare man to be our "god" on multiple levels. We express this through how we spend our money, our time and our energy. Advertisers prey upon our desire to be in a relationship by suggesting that if we look and dress like "this" (the desirable woman), we'll get "that" (the man of our dreams).

In a sense, we're invited to costume balls where only the perfect and beautiful ultimately win. Think Cinderella. She had the ideal dress, hair, accessories and even shoes. The underlying message is this: The perfect prince charming equals the perfect life. But there's no such thing as a perfect man (or woman). There's only a perfect God.

Let me address the married women. How many of you got the man, only to find out that no matter how wonderful he was he couldn't fulfill every dimension of your life? Most women who marry the man of their dreams are filled with high hopes and higher expectations.

Eventually, reality sets in. But these women are so desperate to keep the dream alive; they attempt to train the man by radically changing him. And if this doesn't work, they just decide to be the man!

I know this drama firsthand. Shortly after I married John, the love of my life, I began to fulfill what I thought was my life's purpose—to change him from the man he was into the man I knew he could be. All I needed was for him to work with me!

I was no longer patient and kind. Instead, I was focused on the flaws that had to be corrected. They'd escaped me during our courtship, but as soon as we were married, John's shortcomings became glaringly apparent.

I began to see my mission as a true gift to him. After all, wasn't it perfectly clear? I could be so helpful. Obviously, I

had mistakenly made John the sole source of my joy and fulfillment.

When John resisted my constant and rigorous attempts at training, I thought it best to simply displace him. Perhaps things would go more smoothly if I could just “be the man.” At least until he did it my way!

However, John wasn’t willing to be the woman. So, we actually ended up with two leaders going in two different directions divided on just about everything.

Needless to say, this wrestling match did a lot of damage to our early relationship. When my husband would disappoint me, I would withdraw my love and respect until he could somehow prove himself worthy again.

In those early years, I was afraid of so many things that I tried to control everything. The turmoil finally came to an end when I realized that I was looking for John to be things that only God could be to me. I expected him to be perfect when, clearly, none of us are.

We are designed to find our ultimate purpose in God alone. There are promises made to us that only He can keep.

Here’s a harsh fact: Men lie. Of course, women lie too. People even lie when they believe they’re telling the truth. They say they’ll never leave you, and they do. They say they’ll always love you, and they don’t.

Actually, all the lying can become a bit alarming. It should be a relief to all of us, male and female alike, that God is not like us. He cannot lie because He is truth. God is God and there is none like Him. His perspective is not skewed or obscured, and He cannot be bribed or deceived.

Seek Your True Source

There’s another way in which we elevate man to the level of a

god. It's when we incorrectly believe people to be our source of security and promotion. This dangerous mindset runs rampant in the business world. Many believe that networking and name-dropping are the quickest routes to favor and promotion, or provision.

Sadly, this same mindset also affects the church. Relationships aren't viewed as sacred, but rather as commodities to be exploited. It's immature behavior that reveals a displaced trust in people. As Christians, we should always desire God's favor, first and foremost.

The pursuit of finding favor with man is all wrapped up in public perception. This usually hinges on appearance and achievement. Therefore, the attractive and successful seem to be the ones "getting ahead." But if their popularity wavers, they suffer loss. Thankfully, God doesn't waver in His love toward us, no matter what others say about us.

Favor with God is realized in secret. Alone with Him, our motives are weighed and revealed. In His presence all expectations and disappointments are laid to rest. There, we're embraced for who we are, not for what we do. This is reality. Who we are with Him is much more important than anything we might accomplish for Him in the public arena.

Sometimes I run to the safety of His presence because I'm afraid and I've lost perspective. There, I'm reminded of His truth: "Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is kept safe" (Prov. 29:25). And, "In God I trust; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?" (Ps. 56:11). The psalmist raises a good question. People will come against us, but what can they actually do to us if we trust in God? If we believe God when He tells us that He holds our life in His hands, then we'll find ourselves unafraid of the threats of man.

If we're walking this earth, we will be misunderstood,

misjudged, misrepresented and mistaken by friends and enemies alike but never by God. “It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man” (Ps. 118:8, NKJV). This isn’t an admonishment to distrust people, but it’s a reminder of where to place your trust. It’s better to totally surrender to God’s mercy and fairness than to even think of relying on people.

The only way to trust God more is to know Him better. He’s unchanging and righteous. He’s truth. His honor is above question and His power is limitless. And, thank goodness, He is altogether different than us.

Read a companion devotional.

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