

What Happened To Eve?

TODAY, THROUGH REVIVAL, WOMEN ARE RECLAIMING THEIR DIVINE DESTINY AND SEEING THEIR LOST INNOCENCE RESTORED.

At this moment in revival history, God is raising up women into roles of leadership and service that we never dreamed possible. We are like racehorse fillies straining at the starting gate, beating our hooves, waiting for the door to fly open and the race to begin. We're just chomping at the bit to start doing the work of the ministry God has called us to do!

But before that gate can open and the release can come—before we can embrace our destiny as ministers in Christ—we must embrace the Lord's original intention for us as women.

It has always been God's plan that women be life-givers. The first woman in the Bible, Eve, embodied His intention for womanhood. Eve's name means "life." She was the first revival—the first life-giver created by the Life-giver Himself.

INNOCENCE LOST

From the start, Eve was a wonderful creation, uncovered and innocent, free from evil and guilt, neither hampered nor constricted in her relationship with her husband or her God. That was God's original plan for womanhood!

But as we know, it did not last. Whatever happened to Eve? Through disobedience, she lost her ability to flow in divine life. By allowing herself to fall for the serpent's deception, she lost her innocence, forfeiting her God-given ability to give true life to others.

Eve's first misstep was to listen to the serpent and question her Creator's character: "Did God really say?" (Gen. 3:1). She

foolishly wanted to be like God—even though she was already created in His image! Instantly, she was filled with her own opinions and judgments. She became a “know-it-all,” full of herself.

After her disobedience, she tried to cover her nakedness. She became a woman she was never meant to be, separated from God in her self-made cloak.

Since then, we women have been trying to cover ourselves with our own masks of hypocrisy. We play games with one another and with God to keep from revealing who we really are. What a complicated way to live!

RESTORING INNOCENCE

God wants to throw open the gate and let us run the race of life and ministry He has appointed for us. But He won't release a stampede of self-centered, hypocritical women playing complicated games with themselves, with others and with God. His desire is to use women who are innocent and blameless, void of hypocrisy and self-interest, who can be life-givers to a dying world.

That is what God is doing in this season of revival: He is calling us back to innocence—innocence lost by Eve and doubly lost by our own sinfulness—so that we can be effective ministers for Christ. But how do we experience it?

1. We must be emptied of ourselves. The Hebrew translation for innocence is “to be empty, blameless, clean, clear and free.” We are innocent when we “empty ourselves” of our opinions, our attitudes, even our fears and insecurities that separate us from God and others. When we view people from a position of innocence, we're empty of all judgment against them. We are free to love them just as they are.

Only when we are empty are we free for the healing life of Jesus to flow through us to others without hindrance. The great revivalist Kathryn Kuhlman understood this. Her

biographers tell us that she constantly sought to empty herself, crying out to God to minister through her to the people who came to her in droves.

In the early days of my walk with the Lord, when I was freshly filled with the Holy Spirit, all I wanted to do was minister that new life to others. But instead of allowing the Holy Spirit complete access to my heart and mind, I held on to wrong judgments, unkind thoughts and bad attitudes that quickly eroded the innocence I had gained as a babe in Christ.

God was trying to empty me of me—but over time, I became even more full of myself. I was neither clean nor free enough to allow the life of the Holy Spirit to flow through me to other people. It was going to take a major work of God to bring me to a place of freedom and innocence.

2. We must peel back the mask of hypocrisy. Paul warned his new church of Eve's downfall in 2 Corinthians 11:3: "I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ."

Paul was concerned that the Corinthian church would be seduced by Satan to follow Eve's pattern and relinquish their single-minded devotion to Christ. Jesus had restored innocence and life-giving power to this brand-new church, but now the enemy was trying to goad them into pretense and hypocrisy.

Our word "hypocrite" is from a Greek word that means to put on a mask, like an actor in a play. When we lose our innocence, the only way we can live is with a mask in front of our face.

We have to pretend we are something we are not. We not only live a lie before others, but we lie to ourselves and lose the ability to hear or receive truth. We become hypocrites.

After many years of pastoring, I became tired of fighting other people who had lost their innocence. But mostly I found

myself tired of having to wear my own mask—having to pretend that I was loving, caring and free when, in fact, I was anything but. I had become a “professional” minister, able to give out biblical information but with no demonstration of life-giving power.

This hypocrisy made me vulnerable to the voices of the enemy: intimidation, fear and division. I was often bombarded with thoughts telling me to run away, to disappear, to desert my family, my friends and my God. I had no intention of going through with such a plan, but the voices were unrelenting. The battle became so intense that eventually I didn't want to go to church anymore and be forced to wear my cover-up mask. I may have been the pastor's wife, but I was incapable of ministering real life to anyone.

Finally I came to the end of my rope. Admitting my total helplessness to change and God's great ability to work in me, I experienced the revival power of the Holy Spirit in January 1997. Much to my surprise, the Lord did a deep surgery on my soul and ripped the mask of hypocrisy off me. I was enabled to let go of self-effort and my all-consuming attempts at self-justification.

I have not been the same since. Even though I started ministering in 1977, it has only been during the last three years that I can say I've had an authentic, life-giving ministry. It took me 20 years before I was emptied of myself, before God restored my innocence and freed me from my mask.

3. We must return to the simplicity of devotion to Christ. Once the mask of hypocrisy is gone, we are released to return to simplicity in our relationships with Jesus and with others. The complicated game-playing and pretending is over. Our mind becomes single, set on Him alone. Our heart is expanded supernaturally to become open and generous to others. The life-giving flow of the Holy Spirit can begin to move through

us.

The word “simplicity” in Greek is haplotes, which means “without self-seeking, generous and bountiful.” It means having an open and generous heart. Can we honestly say that our heart is open and generous?

How merciful are our opinions, our words, our thoughts, our attitudes and our reactions? If we want others to be merciful, openhearted and generous toward us, then we must begin walking in innocence and return to our first devotion to Christ. We must no longer seek our own good but must seek first the kingdom of God and the good of others.

READY TO BE RELEASED

Yes, Eve lost her innocence in the garden, and we have been paying for it for centuries. However, in this wonderful, historic hour of revival, the Lord is restoring our innocence. He is taking us back to His original intentions—to what He wanted us to be all along: powerful women of God who can give life to others. And that life is not something that falls down from heaven; it is something that pours out of us.

What a time to be a woman alive in Christ! We are God’s fillies, waiting at the starting gate with our newfound innocence, anticipating a massive release and a thrusting forth into powerful participation in the kingdom of God.

Do you want the authentic life of Jesus to flow through you to others? Don’t struggle for 20 years like I did. Ask God today to restore your innocence—to empty you, peel off your mask, and lead you back to simplicity in Jesus.

On your mark, get set; the race of a lifetime is about to begin!

Read a companion devotional.

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