

Change the Picture: Reframing women as disciples of Jesus

What do women want?

Happiness
Love
Security
Relationship
Recognition

How do we get these met?

We try many things
Aim to achieve these things in our own strength
Even compete with each other
Pay huge prices/ spiritually/financially/ physically
Sometime in all our seeking we can also make those we love pay

But if we seek these things we usually miss what we are hoping for

If we aim to make ourselves happy we end up feeling the opposite
If we aim for love we can often frighten away what we want most
If we aim for security we find in the end all our efforts don't make us feel secure- we start to become afraid of losing the things that give us security, finances, love etc.
If we aim for recognition – most find it a monster that controls us.

God says:

Mathew 6:30-33

"If God gives such attention to the appearance of wildflowers—most of which are never even seen—don't you think he'll attend to you, take pride in you, do his best for you? What I'm trying to do here is to get you to relax, to not be so preoccupied with getting, so you can respond to God's giving. People who don't know God and the way he works fuss over these things, but you know both God and how he works. Steep your life in God-reality, God-initiative, God-provisions. Don't worry about missing out. You'll find all your everyday human concerns will be met.

Psalm 37:3-5

Trust in the LORD and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture. ⁴ Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart. ⁵ Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this:

Happiness:

Philippians 4:12

*I've found the recipe for being **happy** whether full or hungry, hands full or hands empty. Whatever I have, wherever I am, I can make it through anything in the One who makes me who I am.*

Psalm 106:1

*Hallelujah! Thank God! And why? Because he's good, because his love lasts. But who on earth can do it— declaim God's mighty acts, broadcast all his praises? You're one **happy man** when you do what's right, **one happy woman** when you form the habit of justice.*

2 Corinthians 8:1

*Now, friends, I want to report on the surprising and generous ways in which God is working in the churches in Macedonia province. Fierce troubles came down on the people of those churches, pushing them to the very limit. The trial exposed their true colours: They were incredibly **happy**, though desperately poor. The pressure triggered something totally unexpected: an outpouring of pure and generous gifts.*

Love

Psalm 32:8

*Let me give you some good advice; I'm looking you in the eye and giving it to you straight:⁹ "Don't be ornery like a horse or mule that needs bit and bridle to stay on track."¹⁰ God-defiers are always in trouble; GOD-affirmers find themselves **loved** every time they turn around.*

1 John 4:11

*My dear, dear friends, if God **loved** us like this, we certainly ought to love each other. No one has seen God, ever. But if we love one another, God dwells deeply within us, and his love becomes complete in us—perfect love!*

John 14:21

*"The person who knows my commandments and keeps them, that's who loves me. And the person who loves me will be **loved** by my Father, and I will love him and make myself plain to him."*

Security

Psalm 11:4

Even in darkness light dawns for the upright, for the gracious and compassionate and righteous man.⁵ Good will come to him who is generous and lends freely, who conducts his affairs with justice.⁶ Surely he will never be shaken; a righteous man will be remembered forever.⁷ He will have no fear of bad news; his heart is steadfast, trusting in the LORD.⁸ His heart is secure, he will have no fear; in the end he will look in triumph on his foes.

Psalm 140:12

I know that you, God, are on the side of victims, that you care for the rights of the poor. And I know that the righteous personally thank you, that good people are secure in your presence.

Isaiah 58:6

"This is the kind of fast day I'm after: to break the chains of injustice, get rid of exploitation in the workplace, free the oppressed, cancel debts. What I'm interested in seeing you do is: sharing your food with the hungry, inviting the homeless poor into your homes, putting clothes on the shivering ill-clad, being available to your own families. Do this and the lights will turn on, and your lives will turn around at once.

*Your righteousness will pave your way. The God of glory will **secure** your passage. Then when you pray, God will answer. You'll call out for help and I'll say, 'Here I am.*

Relationship

Hebrews 13: 5-6

Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."⁶ So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?"

1 John 1:7

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

Romans 5:9

*Now that we are set right with God by means of this sacrificial death, the consummate blood sacrifice, there is no longer a question of being at odds with God in any way. If, when we were at our worst, we were put on friendly terms with God by the sacrificial death of his Son, now that we're at our best, just think of how our lives will expand and deepen by means of his resurrection life! Now that we have actually received this amazing **friendship** with God, we are no longer content to simply say it in plodding prose. We sing and shout our praises to God through Jesus, the Messiah!*

Recognition

Luke 14:10

*"When you're invited to dinner, go and sit at the last place. Then when the host comes he may very well say, 'Friend, come up to the front.' That will give the dinner guests something to talk about! What I'm saying is, If you walk around with your nose in the air, you're going to end up flat on your face. **But if you're content to be simply yourself, you will become more than yourself.**"*

1 Peter 5:6

*So be **content** with who you are, and don't put on airs. God's strong hand is on you; he'll promote you at the right time. Live carefree before God; he is most careful with you.*

Summing it up- to gain happiness, love, security, relationship, recognition:

- Love and obey God
- Love each other
- Walk in the light
- Praise God
- Be content to be ourselves
- Form habits of justice
- Be generous

If we focus on these our needs will be met

Some suggestions to put this into practice close to home-that don't take a lot of time

- Make an extra meal when you make yours and give to someone that you know could do with encouragement
- Visit one person a month who is ill or shut in for one hour
- Put out AND return the neighbour's garbage bins.
- Walk the neighbour's dog the same time you walk your own. Take your dog to the closest nursing home to visit the elderly
- Make yourself aware of someone's birthday, and send them a card.
- Send an encouraging email to a different person each week
- Buy a Macdonald's meal for someone in need
- Organise a 'Dial an Angel' to do the housework for someone having a baby (if you're not available to do it yourself) so the house is nice and clean when they come back from hospital.
- Thoughtfulness - Pass on your old magazines to nursing homes and visit for a while etc
- Pay for a family pass to the zoo, theme park, or movies etc.
- Pay for a baby-sitter and for the parents to go out to dinner. Cover the cost of the whole night.
- Start a knitting group to knit for a cause and make friends at the same time

Or be involved further a field and support women and children who are suffering.

Here are some ideas-

Build A Village - in partnership with Gary and Marilyn Skinner and Watoto Uganda, the Colour Sisterhood is in the process of raising the finance to build houses, schools and infrastructure for the Watoto village in Gulu, Northern Uganda with the aim of rehabilitating and rescuing children affected by the war, including child soldiers. Find out more on www.watoto.com

Compassion - For just \$40 per month you can support a child living in poverty financially, in prayer and by writing. You can also become an advocate or write your child a letter online, find out more on; www.compassion.com.au

Operation Christmas Child - in 2009 Samaritan's Purse will put smiles on the faces of children all over the world. Be involved by putting together a shoe box for a child, or being a person who becomes an advocate in your local school, or be part of a group that helps out sorting the boxes. Find out how to pack your shoe box and become a volunteer on; www.samaritanspurse.org.au/occ

BE HER FREEDOM Is an initiative against human trafficking. It is about everyday women the world over, who want to raise awareness, bring solution and make a united stand against the unacceptable crime of human trafficking. Our desire is to hear the

cry of the captive, and with God's grace, play a tangible role in their freedom. BECOME PART OF THE MIRACLE BY:*Becoming a monthly sponsor by donating \$25 or more. You can do this by following the links to the Be Her Freedom website. www.beherfreedom.org .

Voice of the Martyrs Write to Prisoners -Simply print off the ready made letter, add a note of encouragement and post it:

When a prisoner receives a letter, whether they can read it or not, they know that someone cares, that they are not forgotten. Although mail may be opened, censored or blocked, it indicates to the authorities that we are aware of that Christian's situation, which may result in better treatment for the prisoner.

By becoming an 'advocate' you are entering into the vital and important ministry of intercession and solidarity with those who suffer for their faith in Christ. As an advocate for our brothers and sisters in chains you will be encouraging them when you write to them in prison and supporting them when you write to officials on their behalf. Find out more on; www.persecution.com.au

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