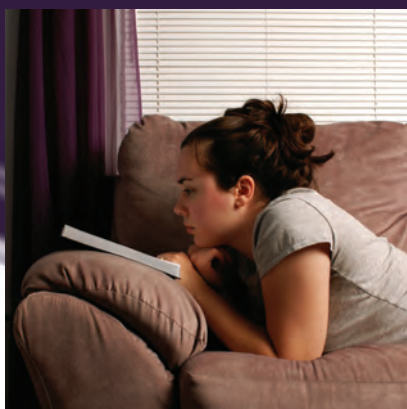


WOMAN OF GOD

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8 TOPICAL BIBLE STUDIES FOR  
SMALL GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS



INTERACTIVE BIBLE STUDIES

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SMALL GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS

TERRY BLOWES



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## » INTRODUCTION

**I**N PREPARING THESE STUDIES, I wanted to help the Christian woman clarify her identity, based on her relationship with God, and as a result of this, to be able to develop her values and priorities with a greater sense of confidence and security.

It is impossible to respond to all of the questions and difficulties that being a woman today poses. If a woman has a clear idea of her identity, her priorities and what is of greatest importance, she can make her life decisions more easily and with greater success.

We will never be able to solve all that causes us pain—individually, in marriage, in the family and the church—because all are affected by the fallen world in which we live. There are no easy answers. For this reason it is necessary that our confidence rests completely in our mighty, loving God, and that our hope is fixed on his glorious return.

Terry Blowes



## » HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF THESE STUDIES

### 1. What is a Topical Bible Study?

Topical Bible Studies are a bit like a guided tour of a famous city. They take you on a tour through the Bible, looking at material related to the topic (in this case, godly women), helping you to know where to start, pointing out things along the way, suggesting avenues for further exploration, and making sure that you know how to get home. Like any good tour, the real purpose is to allow you to go exploring for yourself—to dive in, have a good look around, and discover for yourself the riches that God's word has in store.

In other words, these studies aim to provide stimulation and input and point you in the right direction, while leaving you to do plenty of the exploration and discovery yourself.

These studies are like a tour of a famous city in another sense—they don't hope to look at everything; just the important things. We can't cover in detail everything the Bible says on a given topic, but we do aim to finish our tour without having missed any significant landmarks.



We hope that these studies will stimulate lots of interaction—interaction with the Bible, with the things we’ve written, with your own current thoughts and attitudes, with other people as you discuss them, and with God as you talk to him about it all.

## **2. The format**

Each study contains five main components:

- short sections of text that introduce, inform, summarize and challenge
- a set of numbered study questions that help you examine the passage and think through its meaning
- sidebars that provide extra bits of background or optional extra study ideas, especially regarding other relevant parts of the Bible
- an ‘Implications’ section that helps you think about what this passage means for you and your life today
- suggestions for thanksgiving and prayer as you close.

## **3. How to use these studies on your own**

- Before you begin, pray that God would open your eyes to what he is saying in the Bible, and give you the spiritual strength to do something about it.
- Work through the study, reading the text, answering the questions about the Bible passage, and exploring the sidebars as you have time.
- Resist the temptation to skip over the ‘Implications’ and ‘Give thanks and pray’ sections at the end. It is important that we not only hear and understand God’s word, but respond to it. These closing sections help us do that.
- Take what opportunities you can to talk to others about what you’ve learnt.

## 4. How to use these studies in a small group

- Much of the above applies to group study as well. The studies are suitable for structured Bible study or cell groups, as well as for more informal pairs and triplets. Get together with a friend or friends and work through them at your own pace; use them as the basis for regular Bible study with your spouse. You don't need the formal structure of a 'group' to gain maximum benefit.
- For small groups, it is *very useful* if group members can work through the study themselves *before* the group meets. The group discussion can take place comfortably in an hour (depending on how sidetracked you get!) if all the members have done some work in advance.
- The role of the group leader is to direct the course of the discussion and to try to draw the threads together at the end. This will mean a little extra preparation—underlining the sections of text to emphasize and read out loud, working out which questions are worth concentrating on, and being sure of the main thrust of the study. Leaders will also probably want to work out approximately how long they'd like to spend on each part.
- If your group members usually don't work through the study in advance, it's extra important that the leader prepares which parts to concentrate on, and which parts to glide past more quickly. In particular, the leader will need to select which of the 'Implications' to focus on.
- We haven't included an 'answer guide' to the questions in the studies. This is a deliberate move. We want to give you a guided tour of the Bible, not a lecture. There is more than enough in the text we have written and the questions we have asked to point you in what we think is the right direction. The rest is up to you.

---

## 5. Bible translation

Previous studies in our Interactive Bible Study series have assumed that most readers would be using the New International Version of the Bible. However, since the release of the English Standard Version in 2001, many have switched to the ESV for study purposes. For this reason, we have decided to quote from and refer to the ESV text, which we recommend.

## » STUDY 1

# THE LORD, MY CREATOR

1. How would you finish the sentence: "To me, being a woman means ..."?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Can you think of specific experiences or people who have contributed to your sense of identity?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. In what ways does today's society challenge the answers you've given?

---

**B**EFORE WE CAN ANSWER THE question, “Who am I as a woman?”, we need to deal with the more basic question, “Who am I as a *person*?” What does it mean to be a human being on planet earth at the dawn of a new millennium? Why am I here? Is there a purpose to my existence?

To begin to answer these profound questions, we need to go back to our origins. The foundation of our identity, both as women and persons, lies in who made us, and why.

## Made in the image of God

When God created the world, only humanity was made to reflect God’s image. This gives the human race an importance and value far above all else that has been made. We are the culmination of God’s good creation.

This is sometimes hard to understand or accept, as David says in Psalm 8:

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him? (Ps 8:3-4)

It is easy to take for granted the marvel that is the human being, how “fearfully and wonderfully” we are made (as Psalm 139:14 puts it). Our incredibly complex bodies and physical abilities, our capacity for language, self-reflective thought, invention, and art—all these lead many people to believe that we are the handiwork of a wise and powerful creator.

But according to the Bible, these attributes are just the beginning of the marvel of humanity. God has put more of himself in us. Being made in God’s image is fundamentally about something far more than being rational or moral or capable of language. Let’s look at Genesis and find out.

---

## Lords of the earth

**Read Genesis 1:26–31.**

4. What aspects of the image of God are reflected in these verses?

- 
5. In Genesis 1:28 God gave the man and woman an important job to do. Was it given as a blessing or a curse?

**Read Genesis 2:15 and Psalm 8:5–8.**

6. From these verses (and the verses above), how would you summarize the general purpose of the human race?

---

## One being, two parts

GOD IS A GOD OF CREATIVE POWER who cares for his creation. He has put mankind on this earth to act as his steward. As Psalm 8:6 says, “You have given him [man] dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet”. One key aspect of being in the image of God is that mankind has dominion over the earth

and is responsible to take care of it.

There is another important element that you may have picked up in Genesis 1.

The human being ‘man’ (in the generic sense)<sup>1</sup> is made of two parts—male and female. “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them” (Gen 1:27).

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**Read Genesis 2:15–25.**

This passage contains the more detailed account of the creation of woman.

7. According to verses 18 and 20, what was man's problem before woman was created?

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8. What did God seek for him?

9. What was Adam's response when he saw Eve for the first time?

10. Summarize the relationship between the man and woman according to verses 24 and 25.

JUST AS GOD IS A PERFECT UNITY, yet is made up of different persons, so in a similar way, the human race reflects his image in being one, yet of two persons.

God made us this way so that we would have company; so that we would

have help; so that we would be complete in relationship with one another. This is one of the foundations of our identity, and the basis for thinking through what it means to be a woman.

---

## » Implications

- Try to answer the question: Who am I?
  
- Does your answer reflect who your ancestors were, or other relationships you have, or what job you do, or what suburb you live in? Or do you find it very difficult to identify anything that defines who you are?
  
- Think about the fact that you were made in the image of the almighty God to fulfil his purposes and to reflect his nature on this earth. Try a redefinition of yourself in this light.
  
- How do you think of your job (in or out of the home)—as a blessing or a curse?



- 
- Have you ever related it to God's command to fill and rule over the earth? Do you need to change your attitude so as to be a more positive contributor to your community?
  
  - "The biblical picture is one in which man and woman are created by God for fellowship. Men and women are to live in whole and satisfying relationships with him and with one another in order to experience the fullness of what it is to be human."<sup>2</sup>
    - How do you react to this quote?
  
    - Try to make a list of characteristics that you feel are essentially 'womanly'.
  
    - Reflect on (and discuss) how these 'feminine' characteristics depend on relationships between men and women.

## » Give thanks and pray

- Thank God that we are made in his image and reflect his glory.
- Pray that God would help us to see ourselves rightly, and not as society portrays us.

### Endnotes

1. In these studies, I will occasionally use the word 'man', as the Bible often does, to describe humanity as a whole.
2. John Chapman in M Orpwood, *Chappo—For the Sake of the Gospel*, Eagleswift Press, Russell Lea, 1995, p. 186.

# WOMAN OF GOD



What does it mean to be a woman? What does it mean to be a woman who loves God and wants to serve him?

Amidst all the questions, frustrations and controversies that women battle with today, these are the really key questions. And in **Woman of God**, Terry Blowes takes us on an exhilarating journey through the Bible to find answers. She writes:

"In preparing these studies I wanted to help the Christian woman clarify her identity, based on her relationship with God, and as a result of this, to be able to develop her values and priorities with a greater sense of confidence and security.

It is impossible to respond to all of the questions and difficulties that being a woman today poses. But if a woman has a clear idea of her identity, her priorities and what is of greatest importance, she can make her life decisions more easily and with greater success."

An ideal set of Bible studies for individuals or small groups.

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