



HighQuest

Women of Distinction

I *Knowing Christ Deeply*
Equipping women to walk with God for a lifetime

*His
Works*

HighQuest

Women of Distinction

His Works

I ***Knowing Christ Deeply***

Version 4.0 (2013)
www.highquest.info

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ email _____

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Navigators is an international Christian organization. Our mission is to advance the Gospel of Jesus Christ into the nations through spiritual generations of laborers living and discipling among the lost.

HighQuest is sponsored by the Church Discipleship Ministry of The Navigators.

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Author: Mary Bennett

HighQuest: Women of Distinction is a companion series to *HighQuest: Men on a Mission*. The basic skills and issues are the same in each series but the material is designed to be gender specific.

About the Author:

Mary Bennett and her husband have been serving on staff with The Navigators for over 40 years. Mary has also coauthored *Beginning the Walk* published by NavPress, 2005. She lives in Kansas City and is the mother of four grown children.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
<i>His Works</i> Introduction.....	1
SESSION ONE - Leader's Guide	3
Contact Information	4
Personal Profile Forms	5
Getting Started	7
Learning to Reflect	13
Meeting with God Samples	14
Meeting with God Assignment	16
Spiritual Journey Timeline	17
SESSION TWO - Leader's Guide	18
Practical Helps	19
Assignment for Next Week	22
SESSION THREE: God Is My Creator; I Am Wonderfully Made.....	23
SESSION FOUR: God Is My Father; I Am His Beloved Child.....	33
SESSION FIVE: Christ Is My Redeemer; I Am Set Free.....	43
SESSION SIX: God Is Merciful; I Am Forgiven	53
SESSION SEVEN: God Is Faithful; I Am Secure.....	63
SESSION EIGHT: Christ Is My Lord; I Am Dedicated To Honor Him.....	73
SESSION NINE: Christ Is My Leader; I Have Purpose.....	83
SESSION TEN: Christ Is The Giver Of Life; I Am A New Creation	93
SESSION ELEVEN: God Is Holy; I Am Set Apart.....	103
SESSION TWELVE: God Is Victorious; I Can Walk In Victory.....	113
APPENDIX	
Meeting with God Passages	124
Prayer Pages.....	126
Note Pages	128
<i>Women of Distinction</i> Overview	131

INTRODUCTION

A distinctively Christian woman is unmistakable! She is clearly different from her unbelieving friends primarily because:

Her personal identity is found in Christ

Her character is being transformed to reflect Christ

She is sharing Christ naturally with others

A woman of distinction spreads the fragrance of Christ wherever she goes. Speaking of fragrance, we often use flowers to fill our homes with a sweet scent. That scent is a reminder of the fragrance of Christ, filling every room with peace and joy. Flowers are also very beautiful, each with its own distinctive shape, color, and size. Columbine flowers are an example of this distinctiveness. Each kind has its own special enchantment. They symbolize to me what it means to be a woman of distinction.

Columbine look very delicate, but they can withstand the harsh mountain winters of Colorado as well as the hundred degree temperatures of the Midwest. They are much stronger and hardier than they look!

All through history women have proven themselves to be strong and enduring. I don't mean "muscle" strong like men – I don't want to look or act like a man and lose my distinctive feminine nature. I am referring to the inner strength to ...

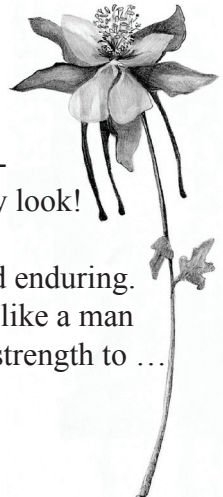
Endure hardship,

Bear and raise children,

*Create environments for the comfort, education,
and training of others.*

Women of distinction have a lasting impact on their world as they share God's love with those around them.

Columbine also symbolize the life-bearing quality of women. The centers of the flowers are filled with stamen and yellow pollen just waiting to meet their counterpart and form seeds for future plants. God made Eve physically different



from Adam so she could be a life-bearer. Much of a woman's life is affected by this physical difference as she goes through puberty and begins the monthly cycle, experiences PMS, bears children, and eventually menopause. Whether a woman has children of her own or not, this part of her God-given nature does affect her emotionally and socially as well as physically. It strongly suggests ...

Our God given purpose as women is to be "life-bearers" – not only in the physical sense but also in the emotional, social, and spiritual realms of life.

Most interesting of all, the columbine has 5 long colored spurs hanging from the bottom of the flower. The first time I saw them I was surprised and could have easily missed seeing them all together. The only way a person can observe this added touch of color and style is to bend down and look at the underside of the flower.

Women also have dimensions which may be hidden from view to the casual observer. Our culture is so driven by superficial, outward beauty that the real person is often overlooked and may not even be appreciated. But ladies, there is so much more to us than what can be easily seen on the outside. There is a deep spiritual dimension which can only be seen by looking at the heart and soul of every woman. It makes us *Women of Distinction*.

It is a dimension that is developed only by a close and daily relationship with our loving Creator and Heavenly Father.

You are about to embark on a journey (a quest) to become the woman of distinction God intended you to be.

Welcome to HighQuest: Women of Distinction!



SESSION ONE

LEADER'S GUIDE

Step 1 Get acquainted with the women in your group by filling out the Contact Information Form and Personal Profile Forms for each person in your group (pages 4-6). The *HighQuest* series is most effective with 2-5 women. If you have more than that, we recommend dividing the group.

Step 2 Read together the Introduction to *His Works* (pages 1-2).

Step 3 Read through Getting Started (pages 7-12).

Step 4 Read through the Learning to Reflect material on page 13. Do the exercise suggested in the material. Notice the same type of questions (who, how, why, when, where, what) are used with a verse in Step 5.

Step 5 As a group work through the Meeting with God Sample #1 (page 14).

READ the verse

REVIEW by reading the suggested summary

REFLECT by reading the list of questions and selecting one to discuss as a group. The answers may be drawn from the context of the verse or from previous knowledge.

RESPOND by writing a short prayer that captures the idea that personally stood out to you from the discussion.

Step 6 Individually work through the Meeting with God sample #2 (page 15). After the women have used the form to READ, REVIEW, REFLECT, and RESPOND on John 14:26, take a few minutes for them to share their reflections from the verse.

Step 7 Two assignments for the next week:

a. During the coming week use the Meeting with God form (page 16) to READ, REVIEW, REFLECT, and RESPOND using John 10:27-29. Be prepared to share your thoughts next week.

b. Prepare your personal Spiritual Journey Timeline on page 17. On the Timeline record significant events that have affected your spiritual journey from childhood to the present. You will share your Timeline in the next session.

(If possible the leader should take 3-5 minutes to share her own Timeline to give the women an example of how to share a Personal Journey Timeline in a clear and concise way.)

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name _____
Address _____

Phone _____
Email _____

Name _____
Address _____

Phone _____
Email _____

Name _____
Address _____

Phone _____
Email _____

Name _____
Address _____

Phone _____
Email _____

PERSONAL PROFILE

Name _____

Family _____

Birth date _____ Anniversary _____

Places lived _____

Hobbies, interests, employment _____

PERSONAL PROFILE

Name _____

Family _____

Birth date _____ Anniversary _____

Places lived _____

Hobbies, interests, employment _____

PERSONAL PROFILE

Name _____

Family _____

Birth date _____ Anniversary _____

Places lived _____

Hobbies, interests, employment _____

PERSONAL PROFILE

Name _____

Family _____

Birth date _____ Anniversary _____

Places lived _____

Hobbies, interests, employment _____

GETTING STARTED

What is the purpose of the “HighQuest: Women of Distinction” series?

Our purpose is to develop a transforming, life-long relationship with Christ. It is not simply to gain more knowledge but to deepen our relationship by spending time with Christ in his Word.

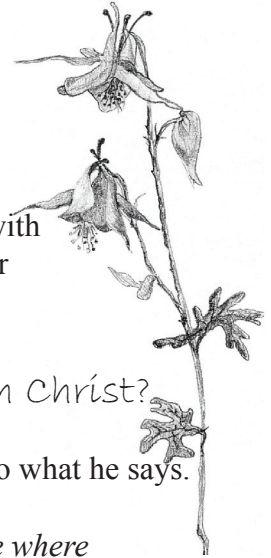
How do we develop this kind of relationship with Christ?

Our relationship deepens as we sit at the feet of Jesus and listen to what he says.

As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, “Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!” “Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her (Luke 10:38-42 NIV).

Have you ever thought about what it would be like to sit at the feet of Jesus as Mary did? In a way, Mary was on a quest – a personal, spiritual journey – to become a fully devoted follower of Jesus. She recognized that this quest was the most important thing she could do - worthy of all her attention and allegiance. And how did Jesus' respond to her quest? He was pleased and welcomed her eagerly!

He welcomes us as well, but like Mary we must take the time and initiative to daily sit at his feet, absorbing all he has to give us and then live it out in our daily lives. This will result in our knowing him in a deep and life-changing way, being transformed in our behavior, and changing how we think, feel, and make decisions. Sitting at the feet of Jesus is a life-changing experience, in which we



become *Women of Distinction*, distinctively like Christ and reflecting the light of truth in this dark world. However, developing this life-changing relationship with Christ does not happen automatically. Indifference, sin, distractions, and busyness keep us from pursuing that relationship. We understand that human relationships are never strong or stable without shared communication and experiences. But somehow we don't make the connection that the same principle applies in our relationship with Christ. Knowing him deeply requires honest and consistent dialogue as well as obedience in our lives. And just as with human relationships, this kind of personal relationship with Christ will not happen unless we take the time and effort to intentionally seek it.

That is why the *HighQuest: Women of Distinction* series was written. It is designed to teach us not only how to sit at the feet of Jesus and listen to his words, but it also provides a guided opportunity to actually do it.

Why should we sit at the feet of Jesus?

- Because it pleases him
- Because it is foundational for life-change
- Because it is an important way to feed ourselves spiritually

Let's be honest. Like Martha we are very busy women – distracted by many things. If we are not highly motivated, we are not going to meet with God on a daily basis. It will not happen. We may be satisfied with church attendance and perhaps even doing a little Bible study, but we are not going to take the time and effort to meet with God. That requires a high motivation. Allow me to suggest three reasons why meeting with God daily is important.

1. The major reason is because God wants us to meet with him. Just think about it. The Creator of the universe, our Savior, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords wants us to spend time with him! How can we possibly refuse him? Mary didn't and Jesus welcomed her.

Think about it from a human perspective. Have you ever tried to get together with a friend and she did not keep the appointment? It happens to everyone at some time, but when your friend consistently refuses to show up, it becomes rude

and aggravating. The Bible says we are “called to have fellowship” with Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 1:9). He wants to meet with us as our loving Lord and Savior. The question is, will we show up or will we disappoint him time after time? Good intentions are not enough; we must make the decision to do it and exercise the self discipline to follow through.

2. Meeting with God is also important because it is foundational for life-change. It is a spiritual habit that develops trust in God and sensitivity to his leading. Just as I cannot trust and follow someone who I do not know well, my ability to obey God and be transformed in mind and heart will only be as deep as my understanding of him – my personal relationship with him. The more I read, reflect, and respond to God’s Word, the more I will recognize and experience his faithful, loving hand in my life and be transformed to be like Christ.

3. Also, when we learn how to read, reflect, and respond to God’s Word, we are learning to take responsibility to feed our souls spiritual food just like we feed our bodies physical food. This is important because many women lack confidence to go directly to the Bible and gain insight for their personal lives. They do not know how to study the Word effectively or rely on the Spirit of God for understanding. Instead they are passive, relying on others to feed them spiritual food. They are much like a child who never learned to use a knife and a fork – relegated to eating Cheerios. However, teach that child to use utensils to feed herself, and all the wonderful varieties of foods are at her disposal. In the same way, give a woman the skills to discover truth for herself, and she will be equipped to “feast” on the Word of God for the rest of her life.

The *HighQuest: Women of Distinction* series develops the spiritual habits women need to explore and gain personal insight from God’s Word. It teaches them how to pick up a “spiritual knife and fork.”

How do we sit at the feet of Jesus?

To answer this question we need to consider two things: 1) how to prepare our hearts for sitting at his feet and 2) how to use our minds to reflect on Scripture.

Both mind and heart need to be fully engaged when we sit at the feet of Jesus. First, our hearts need to be open to hear what the Lord wants for us. This happens when we approach the passage in an attitude of prayer, asking the Spirit of God to not only teach us information but to REVEAL what our hearts need to hear. This attitude of prayer is foundational for everything else. It brings the Word from a place of theoretical knowledge to a place of new understanding and perspective. It gives the Spirit permission to build faith and give direction, hope, and courage to face life's challenges. It also opens our hearts to reproof and correction when needed (2 Timothy 3:16).

We must not underestimate the power of the Holy Spirit to use God's Word to change our lives. In fact, we should expect that to happen. The Word is described as the sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:17) which is further described as living and active (never dull, old fashioned or out of date), sharper than any double-edged sword (very capable of affecting our personal lives), and it penetrates deep to reveal our hidden thoughts and motives (Hebrews 4:12).

If I am struggling to sit at the feet of Jesus and hear his voice, I need to ask myself a question. "Am I asking the Spirit to be my Teacher and Counselor? Am I actively listening to his voice and allowing the Spirit to reveal his truth in a way that is much more than academic in nature?" In other words, am I approaching the Scripture passage with an attitude of prayer?

Second, we need to engage our minds in the process of reflection. We do this by utilizing some simple methods for sitting at the feet of Jesus. We call these simple methods spiritual disciplines, practices, or habits. Whatever you call them, the meaning is the same. Spiritual disciplines are simply what we do so God can do what we can't do. Cooperation with God is the key to spiritual growth because with all that God promises to do, there are actions required of us. We have a responsibility to do our part while waiting on God for him to do his.

Using an educational model, a teacher does not write the assigned essay for her students, but she does teach them how to write it. In much the same way, we will not "hear" the voice of Jesus without first learning spiritual disciplines including how to read, review, reflect, and respond to what he has said in his Word. The

Women of Distinction series teaches us how to do those 4 things in the Track I Knowing Christ Deeply books: *His Works and His Ways*. Other spiritual practices are taught in Tracks II and III. Refer to the Appendix for specifics.

MEETING WITH GOD PAGE

“Meeting with God” is simply a regular, daily time when we relate to God through his Word and prayer. It is the foundation for “Knowing Christ Deeply.” The *HighQuest* series provides a simple plan that is an effective outline for the time spent with him.

READ to discover what it says.

Each week you will be focusing on one theme. Read the given passage over several times asking God to give you understanding and insight.

REVIEW to summarize what it says.

Write a summary of the main idea of the passage. Capture what God is saying to you as you read the passage.

REFLECT to discover what it means.

Reflection is a synonym for meditation. Our culture has distorted the meaning of meditation so much that many are afraid of it. From a biblical viewpoint meditation simply means thinking about what a passage says, what it means, and how we can apply it to our lives.

One of the best ways to reflect on the Scripture is to ask “who, how, why, when, where, and what” type questions. Questions act like door-openers to bring understanding to a passage. For example, insight can be gained by asking questions such as:

How does this happen? Why does this happen? When and where does it happen? What would keep this from happening?

If you are not accustomed to asking questions, you may find it awkward or difficult at first. Be patient and give yourself time to learn this skill. The joy

of spiritually feeding yourself on God's Word will make the effort very worthwhile. Others who have found asking questions and reflecting on Scripture to be a challenge, have described the process as very "mechanical" at first but eventually a "delight to the soul".

In the "reflect section" of the Meeting with God page, space is provided to write down a few "who, how, why, when, where, what" questions from which you can choose one or two to thoughtfully answer based on the passage (or previous knowledge). Write your answer in as clear and concise way as possible.

Avoid trying to give a theological treatise regarding the verses you are reading. This is not intended to be an in-depth Bible study but rather a time of sitting at the feet of Jesus, reflecting on his Word, and allowing the Spirit to teach and guide in the reflecting process.

RESPOND by writing out a prayer expressing what you just learned. There are many ways to respond to God's Word in prayer. You may thank the Lord for something revealed about himself from this passage. Perhaps you need to confess a sin or pray for guidance or wisdom. Or you may want to pray specifically for someone else. At the end of the week, your application page may reflect some of what you have prayed each day.

What is the content of the "HighQuest: Women of Distinction" series?

There are six books in the *Women of Distinction* series and they are divided into three tracks or major themes: Track I is **Knowing Christ Deeply**, Track II is **Reflecting Christ Daily**, and Track III is **Sharing Christ Naturally**. These three themes are foundational and necessary for living the Christian life.

Each track has two books and each book has its own specific life-theme. The life-theme provides the focus for all the Meeting with God passages in a particular book. Refer to the Appendix for specific details.

LEARNING TO REFLECT

Reflecting on God's Word is not nearly as difficult as it may seem. The following exercise will show you how easy and fun it really is and all you need is a soda can (or another object) and a sheet of paper to write on.

INSTRUCTIONS: Place a soda can in the center of your group. With one woman acting as secretary, brainstorm and record all the "who, how, why, when, where, what" type questions regarding the soda can that the group can think of. For example, "What does it taste like? Why is it called...? Is the can empty and if so, who drank it? How many calories does it have?" Etc.

After 1-2 minutes (a sheet of paper fills up quickly), the secretary should read back all the questions the group has asked.

CONGRATULATIONS! Your group has just begun the first step of reflecting... using a soda can! If you chose to actually answer some of those questions, you would complete the process of reflection.

Do you see how easy and fun this is? Now apply the same process and reflect on the verse in Step 5.

MEETING WITH GOD SAMPLE #1

READ: John 15:5

I am the vine, you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

REVIEW *what it says* Briefly summarize the content of this verse. For example...
Jesus says he is like a vine and we are branches – we must remain in him and then we will bear fruit. In fact, we can't bear fruit without this relationship.

REFLECT *what it means* ...by asking questions such as

- *In what way is Jesus like a VINE?*
- *What does a vine do for the branch and vice versa?*
- *How do I remain in Christ in practical everyday life?*
- *What would my life look like if I didn't remain in him?*
- *What is fruit? Are there different kinds of fruit? What is needed in the natural world for a branch to bear fruit? Are there spiritual parallels?*
- *As I look at my life, what would keep me from bearing fruit?*
- *When and where do I bear fruit?*
- *Why is bearing fruit important? Is it optional?*

Choose ONE question and answer it as a group.

RESPOND *personally*

Write out a prayer that expresses your response to what Jesus has said to you.

MEETING WITH GOD SAMPLE #2

READ **John 14:26**

But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

REVIEW what it says. (Briefly summarize the content of this verse.)

REFLECT what it means (Write down FOUR “who, how, why, when, where, what” questions and choose ONE to answer.)

RESPOND personally (...in a prayer. You may thank God for something he revealed about himself, confess a sin, pray for guidance or specifically for someone else.)

MEETING WITH GOD ASSIGNMENT

READ **John 10:27-29**

My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.

REVIEW what it says. (Write a brief summary.)

REFLECT what it means. (Write down “who, why, when, where, and what” questions and choose one or two to answer this week.)

RESPOND personally (Write a prayer. You may thank God for something he revealed about himself. Perhaps you need to confess a sin or pray for guidance or wisdom.)

Discussion Notes

(An opportunity to take notes from the group discussion.)

YOUR SPIRITUAL JOURNEY TIMELINE

Encouraging Events

Challenging Events

Childhood

Teenage Years

Adult Years

SESSION TWO

LEADER'S GUIDE

Step 1 Share prayer requests and support one another in prayer.

Step 2 Ask each woman to share her Spiritual Journey Timeline – being careful to keep the sharing within a reasonable amount of time. Some may need to wait until the next week to share.

Step 3 Share reflections from the Meeting with God assignment on page 16 using John 10:27-29.

Step 4 Read and discuss the practical helps for doing *Women of Distinction* (pages 19-20) – especially as they apply to any difficulties the women experienced when reflecting on John 10:27-29

Step 5 Read the instructions for doing the Summary and Application to be completed on Day 6 of each week (page 20). Your group may want to suggest possible applications from the John 10:27-29 passage.

Step 6 Read the suggestions for developing an encouraging group experience (page 21).

Step 7 Assignment: During the following week, meet with God using Session 3: *God is my Creator; Therefore, I am Wonderfully Made*. Particularly note the questions on page 24 to help keep the focus on the topic.

PRACTICAL HELPS

Make it doable for you

It is very helpful to have a consistent time each day. There is no right or wrong time, but there is a time that is best for you. It may be early in the morning before anyone else is up; it may be when children are taking naps or away at school; it may be in the evening. The length of time is not as important as being consistent. *Women of Distinction* is designed to take about 15-20 minutes a day for 6 days and then meet as a group on the 7th day.

A consistent place is also helpful. It should be a place where you can be as free of distractions as possible. It may be a favorite chair or a special room. It is often helpful to have your Bible and *Women of Distinction* book sitting out available so you will not waste precious time looking for them.

For mothers with young children, flexibility is often required because children do not always conform to our schedules. However, be as consistent as possible. When children are old enough, they can learn to give mom 15-20 minutes by herself. A kitchen timer is a great tool for communicating to a child how long 15-20 minutes is. After it rings stop what you are doing and reward your child with a few minutes of focused attention. Remember, the Lord knows your situation and he is not trying to put you on a “guilt trip”. He simply loves you dearly and desires to have fellowship with you on a daily basis.

Relax and be patient

Give yourself time to learn how to reflect/meditate on God’s Word. You may have filled in answers for Bible studies before, but *Women of Distinction* is different. It is about spending time with the Lord by reflecting on his Word and praying.

Rely on the Holy Spirit for understanding

Pray for understanding and let the Spirit be your Guide and Teacher. You may not understand EVERYTHING you are reading, but he will help you understand what is IMPORTANT. Also, when you meet with your group, others may be able to help you with your questions.

Recognize you are in a spiritual battle

The last thing Satan wants you to do is to sit at the feet of Jesus. He will do all he can to make it difficult, but James tells us to resist the devil and come near to God (James 4:7-8). We must be determined not to give in to Satan's tactics.

COMPLETING DAY 6 ASSIGNMENT

On the 6th day of the week, you will be completing the Summary and Application page. The summary page provides an opportunity for you to collect your thoughts regarding the topic for that session. You may find it helpful to begin by recording one key thought from each day and then write a summary statement of what you want to remember from that week.

Life-change happens in the application section. Here you will focus on the lesson that God has been speaking to you about during the past week. To assist you in applying the principles of God's Word to your everyday life, it is helpful to use the acronym S.P.E.C.K. Is there a/an...

Sin to avoid?

Promise to claim?

Example to follow?

Command to obey? or

Knowledge about God to believe?

Based on your reflections from the week and your answer to one of the above questions, write how you can integrate this truth into your daily life and thus be obedient to God's Word.

OPTIONAL: PASS-IT-ON

Select one idea from your week and write out how you could share it with another person. The person you share with may be a child or an adult, a Christian or non-believer, a friend or casual acquaintance, a family member or a stranger. It can be anyone you wish to share with. The purpose is to help you become more comfortable sharing what you are learning in a clear and concise way.

Be creative in how you communicate. You may want to draw a simple picture, develop an illustration, write a brief statement, compose a poem, or choose a song ... whatever you wish. Don't forget to include a key verse or short passage regarding this idea and keep it clear and concise. Then pray for an opportunity to casually share it with someone else. You can simply ask someone, "Can I share with you something I have been learning from the Scripture this week?"

DEVELOPING AN ENCOURAGING GROUP EXPERIENCE

The *Women of Distinction* series can be done on an individual basis, but when possible, a group environment of 2-5 women is much more encouraging. Some practical ways to create an encouraging environment are:

1. Take every opportunity to show appreciation and respect for one another.
2. Encourage one another to participate in the discussion. This may mean asking the less verbal member a question such as, "I would really be interested in your thoughts regarding this passage. Would you share them with us?" It may also mean that the more verbal member will need to speak in a more concise manner and even at times refrain from talking to give others the opportunity to share. Also, remember that it is okay to have a few minutes of silence in your discussion because it allows women to think and collect their thoughts.
3. Try to avoid rambling and "rabbit trails". Side issues can always be discussed after the small group meeting as time permits.
4. Agree to keep information confidential so there is a safe environment for everyone to share and be supported by the group.
5. Everyone should make the small group meeting a priority and faithfully attend as much as possible. If a member is not there, she will not only miss the discussion herself, but the group will also miss her contribution.

ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK

Now it is time to begin Meeting with God using the weekly sessions in *His Works*.

The specific life-theme for *His Works* is to find our personal identity (understanding who we are) in the work God has done in us and for us rather than in our appearance, performance, or possessions. We begin this theme in Session 3 with the topic: God is My Creator, Therefore, I am Wonderfully Made. Keep this topic in mind as you sit at the feet of Jesus and reflect on the passages this week. Ask the Spirit to give you a clearer understanding and appreciation for all that the Lord has done for you. Recognize that he values you very highly and that should affect how you think of yourself: your personal identity.

Particularly note the questions at the end of each session's introduction. These questions are not intended to limit your thinking regarding the topic – only to stimulate your thinking process as you reflect on the passages.

Quick review

When you meet next week...

1. Begin by sharing concerns and supporting one another in prayer. There is a page for recording prayer requests at the end of each session.
2. Discuss any questions or thoughts from the introduction to each session and then share your reflections from days 1-5. Notice the space provided at the bottom of each page entitled "Discussion Notes". This space can be used for writing thoughts from the discussion time.
3. Continue to Day 6 and share from the Summary and Application sections and for those who did it, the Pass-it-on section.

Now enjoy your week, sitting at the feet of Jesus using *Women of Distinction: His Works*.

SESSION THREE

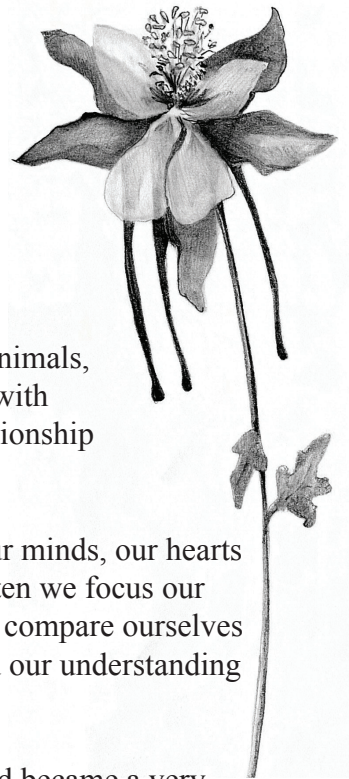
God Is My Creator; Therefore, I Am Wonderfully Made

It is humbling to realize that God chose to create people in his own image. He gave them characteristics like his own, such as the ability to reason and make choices, language communication, moral conscience, and creativity. Unlike animals, God created human beings to be the crown of his creation, with purpose, significance, and most importantly a personal relationship with himself (Psalm 8:3-5).

Even though we may acknowledge God as our creator in our minds, our hearts do not always believe we are “wonderfully made”. Too often we focus our attention on our poor upbringing and/or weaknesses. As we compare ourselves with others, jealousy, resentment, and discontentment cloud our understanding of who we are. But this does not have to happen.

Consider the example of David in the Old Testament. David became a very gifted and talented king, but his childhood did not reflect his future life. As a youth David is a shepherd boy taking care of his father’s sheep. Sheep are known to be stubborn and require protection from predators like lions and bears. This makes David’s job frequently frustrating and at times dangerous, but instead of begrudging his work, David takes the opportunity to depend on God and grow in his personal faith.

Another significant part of David’s childhood is his relationship with his family. When the prophet Samuel comes to David’s home for a special feast, all of David’s brothers are invited but not David. Samuel (not David’s father) insists on David’s presence before the celebration begins. At this time, God directs Samuel to anoint David to be the future king. On another occasion David brings food to his older brothers on the battlefield, and their response is to berate and belittle their younger brother. David’s family does not appear to demonstrate love, appreciation, or support for David.



Many people, who come from such an environment, view themselves as insignificant and even become bitter and resentful toward others. David, however, did not base his personal identity and value on how people treated him or what they thought about him. He found his true identity in his relationship with his creator.

God *created* him,
God *valued* him, and
God would *provide* for him (Psalm 139).

Thank You that You uniquely designed and created me...You formed me in love exactly to Your specifications...my looks, my abilities, and my personality are like a special picture frame in which You can portray Your grace and beauty, Your love, Your strength, Your faithfulness, to the praise of Your glory. I rejoice that You have gifted me for the special purposes You have in mind for my life... Your hands have made and fashioned me, I am one of Your original masterpieces.¹



As a woman of distinction, do you see yourself as “one of God’s original masterpieces?” Such a view does not result in pride but rather a grateful appreciation to God for his handiwork in your life. It frees you to be the “picture frame” by which Christ can reflect his grace and love to your world.

As you read the passages for this week, consider the following questions:

- Do I believe that God made me in a “wonderful way”? Why or why not?
- What are my weaknesses or disadvantages and how do they affect my personal identity?
- Is it possible to reflect Christ even when I am weak?

¹Ruth Myers, *31 Days of Praise* (Sisters, Oregon: Multnomah Pub., 1994,) p 56-57.

God Is My Creator; I Am Wonderfully Made

READ **Genesis 1:26-31; Colossians 1:15-20**

REVIEW what it says

REFLECT what it means

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper appears to be a standard notebook page or a sheet of stationery.

RESPOND personally

Discussion Notes



God is My Creator; I Am Wonderfully Made

READ **Psalm 139:1-18**

REVIEW what it says

[illegible]

REFLECT what it means

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

RESPOND personally

Discussion Notes



God Is My Creator; I Am Wonderfully Made

READ 1 Corinthians 12:12-31

REVIEW what it says

REFLECT what it means

[illegible]

RESPOND personally

Discussion Notes



God is My Creator; I Am Wonderfully Made

READ Isaiah 45:8-13

REVIEW what it says

[illegible]

REFLECT what it means

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

RESPOND personally

Discussion Notes



God Is My Creator; I Am Wonderfully Made

READ 1 Corinthians 1:25-31

REVIEW what it says

REFLECT what it means

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on its right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.

RESPOND personally

Discussion Notes



What did I learn this week?

[illegible]

How can I change to be more like Christ? (S.P.E.C.K. p.20)

PASS-IT-ON (p.20)



[illegible]