



RESURGENCE

The Ideal Christian Woman: Part 4

She Ministers Grace to Others (Both Within and Without the Body of Christ)

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This is the final installment of this series, satirically titled the Ideal Christian Woman. We've tried to break down the stereotypes of Christian women and replace them with the things that Scripture teaches should characterize us all. First and foremost, the Ideal Christian Woman must be honest about her sin. Women who put on pretty faces and fake their way through the Christian life are of *no* value to the church. Confession and repentance are key to our growth in Christ. Secondly, we must deal with this sin in light of the gospel. We never graduate past a need to meditate on and avail ourselves of the benefits of the gospel. If we're honest about our sin and find our identity in Christ through the gospel, we are equipped to reflect the character of God as He originally intended. In particular, women were created in God's image as Helpers suitable to the needs of their male counterparts. It is a high and worthy calling to reflect the image of God in our lives by supporting, defending, and comforting those in our care as an *ezer*, or strong helper.

Finally, as women who have drunk deeply of God's grace in light of our own sin, we are equipped to be conduits of God's grace to the next person. Consider Paul's words in Ephesians 4:29:

Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.

In the King James Version, that last phrase is translated "**that it may minister grace unto the hearers.**" Now *that's* a phrase to park on for a bit. We should sit back in *awe* for a moment and contemplate that God equips us to speak to others in a way that "ministers grace" to them. I love that concept! Do you want to be a conduit of God's grace to others? Not His justice, not His law, but His *grace*? We aren't the sources of the grace. We can't give the grace of ourselves. But we can be the channels the Lord uses to give His grace to the next guy. What an honor to be God's agent sent to build up a hurting brother or sister in Christ through God's grace!

In contrast, I often find that my conversations with others are filled with words that reveal I haven't gotten a grasp of parts 1, 2, or 3 of this series. My words at time reflect my attempts to hide my sin. My words at times reflect my attempts to still try to earn my favor with God and others through my own human effort. And quite often, my words reflect that I have totally lost touch with God's purpose for me—that I'd reflect HIS image and HIS glory. Instead, my words reveal my attempts to spruce up my own image and reflect glory upon myself. But when I'm honest about my sin, find my identity in Christ, and embrace my calling to reflect the image of God, I see God begin to use me to channel His grace to others. What a privilege!

Where are you in this process? Have you confessed your sin? Are you honest about the shame of your past and the failures in your present? Are you attempting to clean yourself up through your own effort? Or do you live daily seeing your need for the cross? Have you

surrendered your own warped view of the good life and instead embraced God's calling to reflect Him in your life? If so, then you are ready to minister grace to the next lady who realizes her need to be honest about her sin. May each of us continue drinking daily of God's grace and ministering that grace back through our words to those God brings into our paths.