



Edited by
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YOUNG PRECIOUS SEED

is a supplement of *Precious Seed*, designed for those young in the faith. Its purpose is to restate timeless truths from the word of God for a new generation of Christians and to kindle a biblical approach to current issues in the world in which we live. YPS is published by *Precious Seed*, PO Box 8,829, Derby, DE1 0SY, UK, and is available separately from the main magazine.

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YOUNG.PRECIOUSSEED

Editor's Introduction

Welcome to the May issue of YPS. Perhaps this will provide a welcome break from exam preparation or other work pressures.

Thanks to Richard Smith for his series on the Kings of Judah – I hope you enjoy his last article on Hezekiah, along with the other articles in this issue..

Andrew Dutton

Seeing the world through a biblical lens – biblical femininity

STEPHEN G. BAKER, LIVERPOOL, ENGLAND

The previous article on masculinity focused on the uniqueness of being a man from a biblical perspective. This article is about what the Bible says about being a woman. As I start this article, let me remind you of a couple of general points:

- Humans are unique. The creation of humans on day six of creation week was the peak of the creation process. It is said uniquely of humans that they were created in the image of God, Gen. 1. 27. But, as we consider the characteristics of men and women, bear in mind that God is so great that we can never fully reflect His glory.
- We are distinct from animals. The cultural trend, because people have rejected God and rebelled against Him, is to see humans purely as a higher form of animal. The bullet point above has addressed that in part, but human memory, imagination, creativity, language, our ability to cook, our dexterity, our moral responsibility, and our spiritual awareness force us to consider how different we are.
- There is a distinction between the sexes. God has created men and women with distinctive qualities. We may have many similarities, but there is something very special about women. This is equally true about men, and if we miss this we lose sight of what an amazing work God did in creating people.
- An attack on these truths is an attack on God's glory and His creatorial order. He made us to be similar and yet different. To ignore this and force the sexes into the same mould is insulting to God and damaging to us, and wastes what we have to offer in life practically.
- The church should restore and reflect the order of creation. This will be done by practising the truth of headship and seeing the roles of men and women in the church and in the family as complementary. This topic will be addressed in more detail in a later article.

The creation of the 'first lady'

We do not really know how long it was after Adam's creation that God created the first woman, Eve. It doesn't look as if it could have been long, but we are not told. What we are told is that, despite their beauty, intriguing variety, and amazing

abilities, the animal creation did not 'fit the bill' when it came to satisfying Adam's needs. Scripture says, 'there was no helper . . . [just right for] him', Gen. 2. 20 NKJV. Animals could not provide the social interaction he needed; they could not stimulate him intellectually; they did not meet his emotional needs and would never satisfy his sexual needs either.

Basically, God created the 'first lady' because Adam was incomplete without her. He had a need and an emptiness without this companionship. It was declared that it was 'not good [beneficial] that man should be alone', v. 18 NKJV. So, God said that He would make him someone who balanced him – a counterpart who was suitable and complementary for him. She was going to be profoundly like him ('bone of my bones', Gen. 2. 23) and yet profoundly distinct.

Having looked at why the woman was created, let us, for the rest of this article, consider what type of person God created when he created a woman. Women are generally known (there are always exceptions) for their appreciation of beauty, their care for their appearance and dress sense, their ability to communicate, their empathy, their loyalty, their passions and emotions, and their kindness and care. They have gentleness where a man might be rough; they have perception when a man with his single vision can't see it, giving them additional insight and foresight. Working together, men and women can be a powerful combination; working against each other is a recipe for devastation and disaster. When sin came into the world, the devil sought to bring conflict and disagreement between the sexes, which sadly is still seen in our day.

In closing, I want to point you to a few passages that emphasize God's design for femininity.

Proverbs 31. 10-31

This is the most comprehensive portrait of a God-fearing lady in the Bible and a great example of womanhood.

- She is a person of great integrity who can be trusted, v. 10, 11, 12, 18, 25, 26.



- She is a strong person who handles many situations in life well, vv. 17, 18, 20, 21, 25, 27.
- She dresses herself and her family well and appreciates beauty, vv. 21, 22, 24.
- She is intelligent, perceptive and dignified, vv. 11, 25, 26, 27.
- She is careful with money and resources, vv. 11, 13, 16, 27.
- She is entrepreneurial and an organizer, vv. 13, 16, 18, 24.
- She has a care for family and the community, vv. 11, 12, 15, 20, 21, 25, 27.

- She is kind and thoughtful in how she does things and when giving instructions, v. 26.
- The fear of the Lord is her foundation, v. 30.

This is not a checklist but a celebration of Spirit-shaped womanhood. Other passages you could explore that describe biblical femininity include: 1 Peter 3. 3, 4 and Titus 2. 3-5. That can be your homework. If you are really interested, read the life stories of Miriam, Deborah, Ruth, and Mary, and you will see some great role models to learn from.

Gone, but not forgotten. Epitaphs of the kings of Judah

RICHARD SMITH, BRIDGE OF WEIR, SCOTLAND



All quotations are taken from the New King James Version

Hezekiah

The cycle of the kings is repetitive. The good kings tend to do similar things; the rascals do too. There was a pattern to their behaviour: the bad kings abandoned what was important to God – His word, His house, and His people, while the better kings invested their reign in reversing their predecessors' wickedness. In this final article, we will examine one of the great reforming kings, Hezekiah. 'He did what was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father David had done', 2 Chr. 29. 2. Hezekiah was not perfect but is one of the finest of the kings. It is good to see the order in which Hezekiah worked in 2 Chronicles chapters 29 and 30:

1. He restored the temple, 29. 3-19.
 2. He resumed temple worship, 29. 20-36.
 3. He remembered the Passover, chapter 30.
1. To achieve anything for God we must remove all obstacles in our life to God working effectively. These could include:
 - **Sinful behaviour:** God will not give the blessing He longs for us if there is known, habitual, unconfessed sin in our lives. 'If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear', Ps. 66. 18. Sin must be confessed and removed with the determination that it will not recur. God is faithful, 'If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness', 1 John 1. 9.
 - **Time-wasting behaviour:** How many of us spend too much time 'doom-scrolling' on our phones? 'Harmless' distractions can rob us of hours of time, 'All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful', 1 Cor. 6.12.
 - **Super-spiritual behaviour:** It is possible that we are so busy going to conferences, camps, young-people's weekends and gospel outreaches, that we don't spend the time we should nurturing our own relationship with God. We need to be careful that we aren't too busy to spend time on our own in the word of God and in prayer. We should also not be 'forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another', Heb. 10. 25. The fellowship of God's people is more important in these 'last days' than ever before. However, in 'your room', Matt. 6. 6, is where you experience God. JACK HUNTER used to tell us to 'read your **own Bible**, get to know your **own God!** Therefore, 'let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which

so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us', Heb. 12. 1.

2. Having removed what shouldn't be there, Hezekiah can introduce something positive: worship. There is no real biblical definition of worship. It is an acknowledgement of God, His nature, attributes and claims, expressed in praise, thankfulness, and action. Old Testament worship was visible and audible, 'Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet; Praise Him with the lute and harp! Praise Him with the timbrel and dance; Praise Him with stringed instruments and flutes! Praise Him with loud cymbals; Praise Him with clashing cymbals! Let everything that has breath praise the Lord!' Ps. 150. 3-6. The New Testament doesn't mention music; it is not forbidden in the church, but accompaniment should not be the focus, 'The hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth', John 4. 23. Worship is not prescribed by legal dictate; it comes from an understanding of truth. Worship is not an expression of emotion or feelings, rather an expression of what I know of God:
 - a. in His character, 'Give to the Lord the glory due His name', Ps. 96. 8.
 - b. in His actions, 'Sing praises to the Lord, for he has done gloriously', Isa. 12. 5 ESV.
 'What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits toward me?' Ps. 116. 12. What is the acceptable response? 'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service', Rom. 12. 1. Worship involves sacrifice – not of animals being offered, but of a life laid down for the Lord.
3. With worship comes rejoicing. The Passover was a celebration in the Jewish calendar, when they recalled the great redemption from Egypt, that the nation had known. Many gathered in Jerusalem in 2 Chronicles chapter 30. There was 'great gladness', v. 21, praise, and singing. They 'rejoiced', v. 25, and there was 'great joy', v. 26. To top it all off, 'their voice was heard; and their prayer came up to His holy dwelling place, to heaven', v. 27. God loves to hear His people's praise and worship, 'Whoever offers praise glorifies Me', Ps. 50. 23. Isn't that our chief desire? It makes Him rejoice; it also makes us glad!

Christian basics – spiritual gifts (continued)

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I remember, when I was younger, often hearing Bible teachers state 'all scripture is for us, but not all scripture is about us'. This remains good advice and a helpful starting point for Bible study. We need to understand **what** the scripture is teaching and **when** it applies to our Christian lives and service. This is important when approaching the subject of spiritual gifts.

Summarizing our last article, we emphasized:

1. every believer has received a spiritual gift, 1. Cor. 12. 1; 1 Pet. 4. 10.
2. all believers need to work together using their different gifts, 1 Cor. 12. 15-30.
3. that God has given individuals with gifts to benefit the people of God, Eph. 4. 12.

In this article, we are going to touch on gifts themselves. However, this is a big subject, covered in 1 Corinthians chapters 12 to 14, Romans chapter 12, and Ephesians chapter 4. The aim is to set out some principles and encourage you to dig deeper into these passages!

Are all spiritual gifts active today?

1 Corinthians chapter 12 provides a long list of spiritual gifts. Paul was teaching about gifts that were active at the time of the apostles and, in chapters 13 and 14, how they were to operate harmoniously in love – this is what we must strive for today and is the emphasis of the teaching. But many of the gifts listed by Paul were temporary; here are examples from verse 28:

- **Apostles** were chosen by the Lord Jesus, Mark 3. 13-15, and they were also personal witnesses to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, Acts 1. 22; 4. 33. Apostles also had the task of completing the written word of God, John 16. 13-15, and 2 Pet. 3. 2. This gift was therefore limited to the twelve (including Matthias), plus Paul, to whom the risen Lord uniquely revealed Himself on the Damascus Road.
- **Prophecy** revealed the mind of God, and was only necessary until the completion of the scriptures, Rom. 16. 26.
- **Miracles** as a gift, were limited to the early days of the church, and examples include the raising of Dorcas from the dead, Acts 9. 40.

Lasting gifts from 1 Corinthians chapter 12

Of the many spiritual gifts listed, the following are lasting and required until the Lord Jesus returns to take us to be with Himself:

- **Teachers**, vv. 28, 29, are those that explain and apply the scriptures practically to Christians.
- **Helps**, v. 28, seems to be a wider ranging spiritual

gift such as the ability to 'support the weak', Acts 20. 35, and to 'comfort the fainthearted', 1 Thess. 5. 14 NKJV. Phebe is described as 'a servant of the church', Rom. 16. 1, whose work was to protect and care for the believers, v. 2.

- **Governments**, v. 28, refers to guiding and leading through difficulty, just as a captain steers a ship.

In Romans chapter 12, there is service, v. 7, 'exhortation', v. 8, meaning to comfort and encourage, and showing 'mercy', v. 8; this is practically relieving the burdens of others.

Paul also speaks about 'evangelists and . . . pastors', Eph. 4. 11, focussing on men given by God to local churches. There is a sense in which all Christians should be involved in 'the work of an evangelist', 2 Tim. 4. 5, but recognizing that there are some that the Lord has specially fitted for this work.

Practical points to note

In considering the spiritual gifts in the scriptures, the following points may help you:

- Be serious about studying the scriptures to understand what is being taught.
- Pray for help to understand and base your convictions on the scriptures. This will safeguard you against other views that you will come across.
- Continue with the points from the last article: commit to God and be serious about your spiritual gift and ask the Lord for help in finding ways to serve Him; consider the guidance of older believers and be prepared to work at being prepared by God for service, Gal. 1. 15-18.



Saints' CVs: John Laing

BY JEREMY SINGER, BRIDGE OF WEIR, SCOTLAND

JOHN LAING 1879-1978

John Laing was a builder who positioned his firm to become one of Britain's largest civil engineering companies in the 20th century, with a listing on the London Stock Exchange. When Laing left school to join the Carlisle-based family construction business, it was simply involved in the local building trade. Although his father was the owner, Laing served as an ordinary apprentice for three years, learning bricklaying and other practical construction skills. After this, he was promoted to become a project manager in his late teens, rising to company director of John Laing & Son plc by 1920.¹ However, Laing had already made a much more important commitment in his life; he had taken the important step of trusting the Lord Jesus as Saviour when he was a child of seven.

An engineering contract in Barrow proved particularly challenging in 1907. There was a law case which, if he lost, would have led to the family being bankrupted. However, Laing emerged relatively unscathed financially; the legal finding was that the original contract had been unfair against Laing's company. During this stressful period of uncertainty, Laing made a solemn commitment before the Lord, to 'make Him a participating partner in his business'.² Once the legal case was concluded, Laing wrote down his 'programme for life', which he summarized as being: 'First, the centre of my life was to be God – God as seen in Jesus Christ; secondly, I was going to enjoy life, and help others to enjoy it'.³ He also drew up a financial plan, in which he pledged to give to the Lord increasingly large proportions of his money as his annual income grew.

Laing's company became a national player, moving from simple construction work into complex civil engineering projects. They put up large housing estates, major highways, and factories. This increasing success led to growing profits. During World War II, his company built airfields, secret RAF Bomber Command headquarters, and the famous Mulberry Harbours for the D-Day landings. Post-war reconstruction work included the new Coventry Cathedral, after the original cathedral was ruined by wartime bombing raids. Queen Elizabeth II



awarded
Laing a
knighthood

for this project, which he insisted his firm would complete on a non-profit making basis. He followed the same selfless principle for other church building projects.

The company looked after its employees well, in keeping with the philosophy of the director. Laing ensured staff enjoyed holidays with pay, a company pension, and bonus payments when appropriate. Such benefits were not common at the time.

His massive financial success led to increasing generosity in supporting Christian work in the UK and around the world. He set up several charitable trusts for this purpose. The gifts disbursed by his trusts total more than £200 million, according to publicly available records.⁴ The trusts continue to operate long after Laing's death in 1978. Despite all the wealth he had generated in his lifetime, when he died Laing's personal possessions were valued at merely £371.⁵

John Laing was first and foremost a builder. But he didn't only work in brick and concrete. His construction materials were also 'gold, silver, precious stones', 1 Cor. 3. 12. These durable contributions will outlast time and count for eternity. Laing's life experience teaches us that it's possible for believers to combine successful business ownership with Christ-exalting spiritual service.

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Laing_Group.

² F. R. COAD, *Laing: The Biography of Sir John W. Laing, CBE (1879-1978)*, Hodder & Stoughton, 1979, pg. 50.

³ *Ibid*, pg. 51.

⁴ A. MCILHINNEY, *The Service of Giving: Sir John Laing and his Trusts, 1922-2022*, OPAL Trust, 2022, pg. 298.

⁵ <https://www.johnlaingcharitabletrust.com/about-us/about-sir-john-laing/>.