

# **“God’s Women.”**

## **Pastor Mary Blessing’s Course for women**

### **“More like Jesus?”**

My husband, Prophet Jim, once wrote a book for young people called “More like Jesus.” I asked him why he had chosen this title, and he replied “Every time Jesus asks me ‘Son, what can I do for you? What do you most want?’ I always reply ‘Lord, I want to be more like you.’ If Christians ask to be more like Jesus, they will never wander far from Him. This simple principle can keep every Christian right in the centre of the heart of God.”

The more I think about this, the more I see the wisdom in it. Being like Jesus will keep us close to him, and keeping close to him is safe, secure and fulfilling. So what kind of woman must I be to be more like Jesus? There are a thousand answers to this question, but I have chosen just five of them. I believe that any woman, trying to build her life around these principles will find herself becoming more like Jesus – what else could we ever want?

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## **1. The praying woman**

To begin, I want to look at the experience of Hannah, who learnt to become a praying woman through the troubles of her life. You can find her story in 1 Samuel Chapters 1 and 2. Hannah had a deep need – she wanted a child. So she began to pray. But it was not as easy as that. She had to learn to intercede, so that she could overcome. (Romans 8:37) In her intercession, we learn many powerful lessons about being God’s praying woman:-

### **Her prayer came out of experience**

The beginning of Hannah’s path to intercession is seen in one simple phrase “Peninnah had children, but Hannah had none.” (1 Samuel 1:2) This agony of childlessness became, for her, a doorway into a deep experience of prayer. It was the pain of her situation which

led her into intercession. If we want to overcome in prayer, the starting point will be our own life experience – a hurt, a pain, a disaster. God uses these experiences as the beginning of the intercessory road.

## **Her prayer grew in the bitterness of her emotions**

One day, Hannah could stand it no longer. Her feelings and emotions reached breaking point, so she went to the Temple, and “in bitterness of soul she wept much and prayed to the Lord.” All intercession begins in this deep emotional disturbance. It is very biblical. Jesus knew very deep emotional distress. Study these passages:-

**Matthew 9:36**          Jesus has compassion on the crowds.  
**Mark 3:5**                Jesus feels anger at the attitudes of his enemies.  
**John 11:35**             Jesus weeps at the death of his friend.

How long does this pain last? It lasts as long as it lasts. But we must be aware that intercession at this level is very exhausting.

## **She paid the price of intercession**

Intercession has a price to it. This is a very hard lesson for all those called into intercession. What was Hannah’s price? “Oh Lord Almighty, if you will only look on your servant’s misery and remember me, and not forget your servant, but give her a son, then I will give him to the Lord for all the days of his life.” (v11) She interceded, knowing the price which she would have to pay if her request was granted. In the same way, when Jesus said “The Son of Man has not come to be served but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many people,” (Mark 10:45) he was doing much the same. He knew the price he would have to pay if God was going to fulfill his salvation purposes through him. True intercessors know the price they have to pay, and still go on crying out to God. Only the Holy Spirit can call a man or woman to this painful position, and only the Holy Spirit can give a man or a woman the courage to pray in such a way. Yet without this kind of intercessory commitment, there would have been no Samuel, and the way of salvation would not have been opened to us. Intercession is a serious business.

### **Her prayer brought fruit.**

Hannah’s entry to the role of intercessor was blessed by God. “So in the course of time Hannah conceived and gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel, saying ‘because I asked the Lord for him.’” (1:20) She kept her promise, and Samuel joined the Temple community. But God honoured her faithfulness –

“And the Lord was gracious to Hannah; she conceived and gave birth to three sons and two daughters.” (2:21)

Intercession achieves that for which it intercedes. God answers prayer. But remember, Hannah was only at the beginning of her road. She interceded and received the fruits of her prayer quickly. As we mature, so the answers take a little longer, because we have to fight harder in the heavenly places, to break through the enemy, and move the heart of God. Look at Simeon. God promised him that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ. (Luke 2:26) He had waited a long time for this promise to be fulfilled. Anna also (Luke 2:36-38) had been praying and interceding for many years.

While we rejoice that Hannah saw fruit, we must not expect quick results too often. Intercession is warfare - long, hard and lonely warfare. We have to endure, so that we can triumph.

## **What should the praying woman do?**

### **1. Build her altar.**

A black Pastor once preached:- "Every intercessor must have their altar- that private place in their spirit which they dedicate to God, and to which they go to pray and listen." At first I thought this was a strange idea, but once I thought about it, I could see the value of his picture. I must set aside a place in my spirit, in my relationship with God, where I can spend my hours of intercession. If this picture helps you, then set aside your altar.

### **2. Pick up her burdens.**

The fuel of intercession is easy to find. It is the burdens of our family, our friends, our Church, our town and our Nation. These are the things which the praying woman uses as fuel for her prayers. She takes these things seriously, and seriously prays and seeks understanding from God.

### **3. Lifts the Nation before the throne.**

Praying women must pray for their Nation. It is essential that God is hearing our burdens and sorrows for our land. This moves His heart towards our Nations. But be warned – he will also expect you to share his burdens for the Nations, and these can be very heavy.

## **A final challenge**

Every woman can take up this task. It doesn't wait for any special sign from God. (Ephesians 6:18) If every woman did take up this challenge, then a river of prayer would be rising to God every day from all over Africa. This prayer would be the seedbed for a mighty move of God. He would remember Africa, and bless us. Praying women – rise up and pray.

## **2. The overcoming woman**

Recently, my husband had to make a series of decisions. Each one was very complex, and I could see that some of the decisions would be costly for him. I asked him to explain the principles for his decisions. “That’s easy” he said. “ Everyone else on a leadership team can refuse to make a decision, delay a decision, or even make a wrong one, knowing that the man in charge will have to take responsibility for any mistake. But the senior leader has no such luxury. He must deal with decisions. He has to be an overcomer in decisions, so that everyone else can be safe under his leadership.” I remember thinking at the time that as a woman, a wife, a mother, and a Pastor I also face many decisions, for myself and for the family. They look to me to be an overcomer in all these areas. God has called women to be overcomers in their walk with him, so that those who depend on us can be safe and secure. One of the finest overcoming women in the Bible must be this one:

“On a Sabbath, Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues, and a woman was there who had been crippled by a spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not straighten up at all. When Jesus saw her, he called her forward and said to her, ‘Woman, you are free from your infirmity.’ Then he put his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and praised God.” (Luke 13:10-13)

The enemy must have thought that he had defeated her, but Jesus would not allow it. He broke the enemy, and as she stood upright and praised her God, she became an overcomer, and I’m sure she stayed one for the rest of her life. Situations and circumstances must not defeat us. With God’s help, we defeat them. Think about this in the situations you find yourself every day. The Christian battle is not always fought out in the big things of life. Sometimes the battle is fought out in the small things. As we overcome in our daily lives, so the enemy grows in despair at his defeat, and as he grows in despair, the Church rises up to victory. Overcoming in your daily life can seriously help the wider work of the Church.

### **A special challenge to overcome.**

One of the key areas for overcoming women is to identify evil, challenge evil, to stand against evil and to overcome evil. She has to recognise where the enemy is at work, (Matthew 13:24-28) challenge his advance, (James 4:7) and overcome him. (Romans 8:37) What must we do to be able to enter into this ministry? We have to become “Ephesians 6 women.” (Ephesians 6:10-18) What does this mean for us? We must put on the spiritual armour, and stand in its strength:-

## **The belt of truth.**

The belt of the Roman soldier was where he carried his weapon, and his supplies. It was very important to him, and it is also important to us. Our belt is biblical truth - knowing the truths about Jesus, and having a life firmly built on those truths. To do this, we have to know them in our heads, know where to find them in the Bible, and apply them to our hearts, so that we naturally live by them.

## **The breastplate of righteousness.**

The Roman breastplate was a kind of iron coat. It protected the heart. We stand clothed in the righteousness of Jesus –this protects our heart. We face no condemnation and no judgment, because the righteousness of Jesus has dealt with these things. His blood has sanctified and cleansed us. We are seen by the Father as righteous. And our enemy has also to see us and accept us as righteous. He will hate this – but that’s just his bad luck. He lost, and we won. We are the victors through the righteousness of Jesus.

## **The gospel shoes**

The Roman soldier had strong sandals, so that he could march, and could stand firm in battle. We have gospel shoes. We will not be pushed over, or pushed backward. Our feet are standing on the rock of the Good news of Jesus. We own the ground on which we stand. We are not thieves – our enemy is the thief. The good news of Jesus is our title deed.

## **The shield of faith.**

The shield of the Roman soldier was a defensive and an attacking weapon. It protected the soldier from the blows of his enemy, but it could also be used to push his enemy down, so that he could be stabbed to death. By our faith, we are protected, and by our faith we advance. Incidentally, Roman soldiers stood shoulder to shoulder, so their shields looked like a steel wall to the enemy. Let’s make sure we fight together, and not separately.

## **The helmet of salvation**

The Roman helmet protected the head – the top, back and sides. In the spiritual realm, our spirit must be protected in the same way. The enemy will seek to attack our spirit, but with the helmet of salvation, none of his attacks can work. By our salvation, we belong to Jesus. No attack can succeed, although sometimes the battle may be hard and long. In the end we will overcome.

## **The sword of the Spirit.**

The Roman soldier carried a short sword, which could cut, stab and slash in the heart of battle, without damaging his comrades on either side of him. Our short sword is the word of God, which we must know how to use to stab, cut and slash against our enemy. We must know the Bible, and how to use it. This experience does not come quickly, but by daily practice and exercise. The older we get in faith, the stronger we should be, because we know more of the word of God, and how to use it.

## **Are you an Ephesians 6 woman?**

### **3. The servant woman**

The widow of Zarephath (1 Kings 17:7-16) was in a difficult position. As a widow, she had no one to provide for her, and the provision she had was running out. We can be sure she prayed about this, and God gave her an answer. It was not “I am sending you food” but it was the prophet Elijah, who was asking her to share the little she had with him. Would she serve, or turn away? She chose to serve, and as a consequence, “the jar of flour was not used up, and the jug of oil did not run dry, in keeping with the word of the Lord spoken by Elijah.”

She took the hard path of service, and so became part of God’s plans and purposes for his creation. The same is true of us today. We have a choice – to do things our way, or to serve the Lord. He also has a choice – to accept our service, or to ask others to serve him in place of us. I want to serve, and if I do, I can serve at different levels and in different ways.

**Personally:** Mary served the Lord. (Luke 1:26-38)

**Guests/family:** Peter’s mother in law served the guests.(Mark 1:31)

**God’s servants:** The widow served God’s servant. (1 Kings 17:7-16)

**Home:** Lydia served through her home. (Acts 16:15 )

**Community:** Dorcas served by the quality of her life.(Acts 9:36-42)

## **So what kind of woman must we be to be a servant women?**

### **1. Defeat self. Mark 8:34**

No one can serve until they have let Jesus conquer their self will. Study this verse, and ask the Lord to show you areas of your life where self still rules. Unless you do this, you will never serve at any depth:-

“If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself, take up his cross and follow me.”

### **2. Accept the servant position. Luke 17: 7-10**

We have to accept the invitation to be a servant. Read these verses –and ask yourself if this is your heart:- “Suppose one of you had a servant ploughing or looking after the sheep. Would he say to the servant when he comes in from the field ‘Come along now and sit down and eat?’ Would he not rather say ‘Prepare my supper, get yourself ready and wait on me while I eat and drink. After that you may eat and drink?’ Would he thank the servant because he did what he was told to do? So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say ‘we are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.’”

### **3. Giving, not receiving. Mark 10:45**

Serving is about giving, not receiving. This was how Jesus approached his calling. Read this verse. Does it describe your heart? “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” Take a close look also at John 13: 1-5.

### **4. Looking for the opportunity to serve. Luke 10:30-37**

God gives us opportunities to serve him in our daily lives. In this passage, three men were given service opportunities, but only one saw and accepted:-“But a Samaritan, as he travelled, came to where the man was; and when he saw him he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and water. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him.”

The chances are there. Serving women must train themselves to see them, and use them to serve. Remember, in serving those in need we are serving Jesus.

## 4. The witnessing woman

In John chapter 4, a woman has an amazing experience with Jesus, which convinces her that he is the saviour of the world. Then we read “Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony.” (John 4:39) Having met Jesus herself, she did what most women can do well – she gossiped! But in this case she gossiped about the things of Jesus, and her evangelism was fruitful.

Every woman can easily chat with other women. Those who follow Jesus must have the desire to speak about him. But what are we to say? There are two main areas in which we can minister.

### 1. Our personal testimony.

Everyone of us has a story to tell, and people like stories. Make sure you have thought about your story. You need to know:-

**Something** about your life before you came to Jesus.

**How you** came to Jesus.

**The difference** coming to Jesus has made to you, with some examples of what he has done now, today, this week. Unbelievers think that Jesus belongs to two thousand years ago. When we say “Yesterday..” it causes them to realise that Jesus is still active today.

### 2. “The Bible says...”

We need to have some Bible teaching to back up our testimony. It is the Bible which brings conviction. So what verses or parts of the Bible do we need to be able to use? Read and study these scripture passages. They are all very helpful when you want to speak about Jesus.

#### **The thief on the cross. Luke 23:39-43**

In this story, the Bible teaches us that men are helpless to save themselves. This thief could do nothing to earn his salvation. In this one story we see the clear difference between the Christian faith and all other religions. Other religions teach that we can earn our salvation by the quality of our good works. But we all know that this is impossible. It is impossible to lead a life good enough for God. But Jesus showed that we are saved by his mercy and love. That’s what the thief on the cross saw, and reached out towards. He did not reach in vain.

## **Peter walking on the sea. Matthew 14: 22-33**

The story of Peter walking on the water makes exactly the same point. Peter started off well, but as soon as he saw the wind and the waves, he began to drown. Then he had to cry out to Jesus “Lord, save me.” This is the biblical teaching on salvation. We have to reach out for the hands of Jesus if we are going to be saved. There is no other way.

## **By grace we are saved. Ephesians 2: 8**

The Apostle Paul puts these things well. He says that we are saved by grace, and by grace alone. A good way to remember the meaning of grace is to say this:- “ Grace is God’s Riches At Christ’s Expense.” It is the goodness and mercy of God which sent his Son to be the way of our salvation. We cannot possibly buy our way into the presence of God, which is what other faiths are telling us we can do. We are saved by the precious blood of Jesus, which on the cross gave us what we most needed - forgiveness, hope and a new beginning. In other words - salvation.

## **By the cross of Jesus (1 Peter 1:18-19) we are set free.(Ephesians 2:8)**

A man borrowed money for a project, and then found he could not pay it back. Day after day he worried about this, and day after day the one he had borrowed from would say “If you don’t pay, I will have you thrown into prison.” He tried everything he could think of, but still he could not repay. The one owed the money said “Tomorrow, I am coming for my money, and if you don’t have it, you are going to prison, and I will make sure it is the worst prison I can find.” The next day came, and the debtor was terrified. He hid inside his home, and would not even come out. A friend of the man he owed money came to the door and called out “Peter, come out. I have something to tell you.” Shaking with fear, the debtor opened the door. “It’s OK” the man said, “he forgives you this debt. You are free.” In the same way, Jesus has set us free from the debts of sin, and the power of the enemy, that we might be free and live in joy. This has all been accomplished on the cross.

It is not just by words that we witness. Our lives attract people to Jesus. Does Jesus shine through your everyday life?

## **5. The joyful woman**

One of the problems with Christians is that we spend so much time pushing on in our faith, that we seldom take time to stop and think about what God has done for us. But part of being God's woman is to have time to enjoy what God has done for us. We are complete and fulfilled when we are right with him. Let's look at that fulfillment, and then let's spend time rejoicing over it. This makes a real difference to our lives.

### **1. The joyful woman knows her Lord and Saviour.**

**(Study Thomas in John 21:28)**

Knowing Jesus is the greatest thrill of our lives. It guarantees our life, both here and in eternity. But we seldom take time to enjoy this wonderful truth. Just think of this – if it wasn't for Jesus, where would you be today, and where will you be when you die? If it wasn't for Jesus, who would hear and answer your prayers? If it wasn't for Jesus, what would be the point of getting up each day? Sisters in Christ, rejoice in your salvation. You are known by name and loved by the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He will never leave you or forsake you. **Read Philippians 2: 5-11.** Spend some time rejoicing that because of what is written here, we can be sure of our salvation.

### **2. The joyful woman knows her value.**

**(Study Luke 12:6-7)**

The Bible says that God knows every sparrow that is sold in the market. If he knows his creation so intimately, then he certainly knows and values his women. The problem is that we find it hard to believe. Either we are so busy rushing around, or we look at ourselves and think that God could find nothing valuable in us. Sisters, each of us is more precious to God than all the gold in the world. Stop and think about this for a few minutes. You and me – we are worth more than all the gold in the world! If God values us in this way, then it is time for us to lift up our heads and rejoice in our value and specialness to Him. And if we are precious to him, then we are safe. **Read and think about Psalm 150.** Turn this into a time of personal rejoicing.

### **3. She knows God's provision.**

**(Study the widow in 2 Kings 4:1-7)**

How often have we wondered, as women, how we will provide all the needs which face us – our own and those who depend on us? Many of us have been in the same position as the woman at Zarepath – down to our last meal, our last few coins, and wondered how we would manage? Once, as I walked home from Church with my family, I wondered what I would cook for our food. There was little food in the house, and little money. As I approached the house, I saw a package on the doorstep. When I looked closer, I saw that it was a complete meal for my family! I never found out who left it for us. Whether it was a friend or an angel- it doesn't really matter. God provided. Yet again and again God has provided. As women, we should not just be thankful to the Lord. We should learn to

rejoice at this constant provision of our heavenly Father. How many times has God provided for you in the last month? Once? Many? Then turn to rejoicing prayer. God honours his women. **Read this verse – Philippians 4:19**

#### **4. She knows God's protection. (Study Mary in John 19:25-27)**

On the cross, Jesus bought us our salvation. But at the same time, he was also doing other things, and one of them was helping women to understand that their protection was his responsibility. Seeing his mother, and knowing that she would be very hurt and damaged by what she was seeing, he entrusted her into the hands of one of his followers. Women are often very exposed in the world today, and even those who should protect them sometimes do not. But Jesus offers total protection all the time. I know we sometimes find ourselves in bad circumstances, but think how much worse they might have been without his arm around us. **Read Psalm 91:7** With him, we are safe. Let's rejoice at this blessing.

#### **5. Knows her forgiveness (1 John 1: 8-9)**

Jesus forgives. We all know this with our heads, but often it does not sink down into our hearts. We are forgiven. Whatever we have done, or said, we are forgiven. Even when we don't deserve it, or even expect it, we are forgiven. **Read these verses - 1 John 1:8-9.** Let's stop struggling along under a burden of guilt. Let's take our forgiveness, and rejoice.

#### **6. She can seek her healing (Mark 5:24-34)**

Women suffer from many sicknesses. But we do not have to let them beat us. Jesus can heal, and will heal. Sometimes, we have to wait for his time for healing. But he does heal. Let's not give up hoping and believing. **Read this verse - Exodus 15:26.** God can heal. Let us rejoice in our healing, and push on in prayer and faith until it becomes a reality for us. Let's rejoice that God can do this for us.

#### **7. She has the privilege to serve (Mark 10:45)**

We have already looked at the call to serve. But let's rejoice that we are in this position. **Read these verses – Luke 1:46-55.** Mary rejoiced in her service. Let's do the same.

#### **8. She can share faith and the goodness of God. (1 Peter 3:15)**

We have already looked at the opportunity we have to share Jesus. **Read this verse – Luke 15:7.** Let's rejoice at the privilege of serving.

## **The joyful woman - Mary's song.**

Here is Mary's song of praise. Use it regularly, as your song of praise and thanks to God, for being called to be His woman.

My soul glorifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for He has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me - holy is His name.

His mercy extends to those who fear Him, from generation to generation. He has performed mighty deeds with His arm; He has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things, but has sent the rich away empty.

He has helped His servant Israel, remembering to be merciful to Abraham and his descendants forever, even as He said to our fathers." ( Luke 1: 46-55)