

“Jen Hatmaker works out the glorious equation of God’s design for women in her new book, *Ms. Understood*. Not only does she cancel out the misconception that women are second-rate people but she does so with biblical truth, humor, and authenticity. If you are ready to be freed from the ‘feminine trend of self loathing,’ then Jen’s book is just the book for you.”

—SUSIE DAVIS, speaker; author of *Loving Your Man Without Losing Your Mind* and *The Time of Your Life*

“So much for my preconceived notion of godly womanhood. Jen Hatmaker has busted those long-cherished myths with solid, biblical truth. Don’t miss Jen’s witty, hilarious, and highly accurate survey of what’s right with women. Forget about the girls in my life—I’m recommending this book to all the guys I know. Here’s a picture of womanhood that we all need.”

—LAWRENCE W. WILSON, author of *A Different Kind of Crazy: Living the Way Jesus Lived*

“If at all possible, you should invite yourself out to dinner with Jen, because she’s smart and funny and godly and warm. That’s what I did. If, however, geography or fear of a restraining order prevents that, please read *Ms. Understood*. In it you’ll find the same spark, challenge, courage, and belief that Jen carries through life. Her vision for what God can do through women inspires me to live a better, brighter, more fearless life.”

—SHAUNA NIEQUIST, author of *Cold Tangerine*

“*Ms. Understood* surprised me. I was expecting a typical book about becoming a woman by God’s design. Before I completed the first chapter, I was captivated by the witty, engaging, authentic writing style of Jen Hatmaker. If you are looking for a contemporary understanding of misunderstood women of the Bible (who just might remind you of yourself), read this book. Better yet, gather a group of your favorite friends so you can read and discuss each chapter. You’ll laugh out loud, roll on the floor, and find yourself enjoying the study of some pretty intriguing female characters in the Bible. Jen Hatmaker is gifted, smart, and sassy. I love this book!”

—CAROL KENT, speaker; author of *When I Lay My Isaac Down* and *A New Kind of Normal*

JEN HATMAKER

*Ms. Understood*

Rebuilding the Feminine Equation

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*This book is dedicated to God, for blessing the world  
with women. You are the best Creator ever.*

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needed you, and I mean that in a good way. I love you so much. Please stay my friends forever. I'll try to stop airing your dirty laundry in print.

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## Introduction

In the spirit of full disclosure, I thought I should crack open the unwashed window of my mind and reveal the warfare I've been fighting with myself over this book. Historically, I've been my own worst critic, and the mere idea of this subject has caused an internal civil war. The beautiful, fantastical, misunderstood subject of biblical womanhood is so essential, my fear of mishandling it nearly kept me sidelined.

Here are the mean thoughts in my head that point and laugh and cause me grief on par with the three boys who asked my cuter, more developed seventh-grade girlfriends why they were slumming with a dork like me at the county fair in 1986 and then proceeded to drape all over my friends (who had fortuitously sprouted booby buds) while hiding from me, which caused me to cry for an hour after collapsing on the lap of my mom, who thereby netted me some contacts to replace the bargain-selection nerd glasses that contributed to the trauma, because my mom is basically a bleeding heart who, after bawling with me, swore to run every one of them down with her station wagon in the junior high parking lot, which is exactly what I plan on doing the first time some ignorant boy makes the fatal decision to cross my angel daughter (we're not a gracious family). But back to the mean voices in my head:

- You're not old enough to write about this.
- You're not a good enough writer.

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- You're hardly a model of superior femininity.
- Everyone else who addresses this subject is so much better than you.
- Everyone else who addresses this subject is so much more profound than you.
- Very definitely, you're going to screw this up somehow. Positively. Count on it.
- "Womanhood" is not a subject you're qualified for; try "How to Effectively Dodge Brownie Troop Leadership."

The mean voices have plenty to say about *you*, too:

- No one wants to read this.
- Everyone wants to read this, but only if Beth Moore writes it.
- Women will think you're trite, too irreverent, not eloquent, and probably special needs.
- The forty-seven women who might read this will compare it to a best seller, which we'll refrain from naming, and will find you rather urban with no appreciation for soft, flowing marital dialogue and blooming flowers.
- This book will tip women off, and they'll be on to you. You'll be exposed as the painfully regular, dysfunctional girl you are.

And every time enthusiasm raised its perky little head again, I'd do more research, meaning reading legitimate books on the same subject, then crawl back into my hole of insecurity and decide to write a funny book instead, because while other Christian writers *are* better than I am, they aren't a particularly funny bunch.

But that persistent God kept at it. Listen, if you don't know Him already, let me clue you in: He totally has an agenda, and He rarely takes no for an answer. A democracy our relationship is not. If you

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think you can ignore Him when you don't feel like doing something, I've got three words for you: The Holy Spirit. That guy can ruin your sleep patterns worse than a colicky baby. Oh, He pressed. This subject is seriously on His radar, and He has been whispering His thoughts on the matter until I simply couldn't *not* write this book. In fact, the ink hasn't dried on my contract (okay, I haven't even signed it yet), but I can't wait any longer. I must begin writing so I can start sleeping again.

So, girlfriends, I raise my voice with the wiser, more accomplished, and more experienced women who've gone before me. I join them in the worthy mission of reclaiming the utter loveliness of being a girl. While the Bible has been used to keep women subservient and silent, I believe that it is the textbook on femininity. Let's follow the surprising stories of the five women named in Jesus' lineage—Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, Bathsheba, and Mary—and expose some important myths and truths about what it means to be a woman. God is terribly passionate about His daughters. We are valuable, crucial, the highlight of the earth, and it's time we get that straight.

It's something of a slippery slope you've stepped onto, but you are so welcome here. Come with me, dear one, and let's get back in touch with our own favor. After all, we are women—beautiful, brilliant, beloved, blessed. God has declared it. The tidal waves of culture have raged against us since the garden, but a new day is dawning. Here comes the sun . . .

Wearing my shades,

Jen

## CHAPTER 1

# The Irrational Equation of Femininity

### You Think I'm *What*?

I've never taken well to being stereotyped. It bothers me endlessly when someone tells me who to be or assumes they know who I am. You know the saying about *assume*, right? It makes a real pain in the butt out of you, or something like that. I suppose I feel that way because of who I am on paper. Here it is, in all its predictability: white, middle class, daughter of functional parents, minister's kid, honor student, Little Miss Churchy Churcherton, former teacher, pastor's wife, soccer mom, suburban dweller, Bible teacher, Starbucks enthusiast.

Yawn.

Because of my vanilla pedigree, I've always been drawn to rebellion. Now, mind you, my version of revolt is pretty small-time — a pseudo-rebellion, if you will. To counter the image as a high school cheerleader, I got into grunge. As the starting shortstop, I wore a ribbon in my ponytail. Do you see how controversial I was? As a card-carrying Christian, I tried cursing for a while, but it was like Al Gore attempting

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humor on *Letterman*: rather unconvincing. As a teacher, I played Guns N' Roses in my classroom, because that's the type of nonconformist I am.

Recently, dismayed at the cliché that I am, I got the top of my left ear pierced and spent the day positive that everyone was staring at my over-the-top street cred. I wear jeans instead of slacks. I wear cowboy boots when I should wear heels. And I don't want to shock you, but I'm graduating from the straight ticket voting sector. In fact, I recently said to a left-ish friend, "I suspect I'm getting liberal, but I'm not sure. Ask me some questions and help me decide." After a brief inquiry on issues like environmental awareness and social reform, she labeled me a "lazy, unmotivated moderate." I felt like I'd practically been jumped into a gang.

So this morning, as I hung up my cell phone while driving my SUV with leather captain's chairs and drop-down DVD player, my \$4.37 mocha nestled in one of my thirty cup holders, I pondered how anti-establishment I am and thought about this book. (Roll eyes here.) The whole portrayal of a "godly woman" never set right with me. It's packaged as demure or matronly or subservient or highly precious, none of which I am and all of which ring hollow.

## HATERS

A girl in her twenties recently told me how when she was a teen, her church shamed girls for their beauty, chastising them for destroying their brothers in Christ though they were poster girls for modesty. She was encouraged to skip college because it would conflict with her destiny as being "the lesser figure in her household." Eventually, she and her mother were asked to leave the church, because as a divorcée, her mother was too tainted. The girl nearly skipped her SATs and, big shock, has struggled with her identity in Christ ever since.

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Lord in heaven, how can this still be going on? While hers is an extreme case, it illustrates a struggle that has raged since the garden. Women have been misunderstood, mistreated, and mischaracterized since creation deviated from perfection. We have struggled to find our place, to find our voice in what became a male-oriented world.

And let me say this: What you are reading is not a thinly veiled feminist book. I'm not trying to stick it to The Man. This is no battle cry for independence, because men are our beloved allies. We have equal standing at the gates of heaven, and together we are a force to be reckoned with. The confusion surrounding our identity does not rest only at the feet of men. There are many contributing factors to the feminine crisis, and that's what it is: a crisis.

What else can you call it when women have willingly given away their influence? When we've bolstered the objectification of our sisters? When we've huddled in passive silence doing everyone's bidding? When we bark and bite with a masculine swagger? While the Enemy claims our children, and men try to function without the tempering of our gifts, women slump on the sidelines, injured by guilt, frustration, and confusion. I see Christian women carrying a tension they can't alleviate: who they are versus who they think they should be. So they limp through life with the constant handicap of inadequacy.

## BAD TIMES

Observe the moving target of womanhood in a secular sense. Culture has defined its daughters in many disturbing ways.

Although there's some evidence to suggest that it wasn't so bad to be a woman in prehistoric times before people settled down to be farmers, the patriarchal system in the ancient Mediterranean world embodied a sad, sorry descent of women's position. Women were devalued in their communities, in their families, in the minds

of men. They were voiceless; men's natural aggression ran unchecked and was used against women rather than for them as God intended. Our sisters were possessions, a small notch above slaves.

Ancient Mesopotamia forced some women into ritual prostitution as part of their worship. The warrior Greek culture treated women as booty and property, and the later Greeks were downright contemptuous of women. They didn't educate them; the Athenians kept them locked away from the public; philosophers suggested that men take male lovers for intelligent communication while keeping women simply for childbearing.

The philosopher Plato wrote, "All those creatures generated as men who proved themselves cowardly and spent their lives in wrongdoing were transformed, at their second incarnation, into women."

Aristotle added, "The female is a monstrosity, a deformed male; a deformity which occurs in the ordinary course of nature."

The great Athenian orator Demosthenes commented, "Mistresses we keep for the sake of pleasure, concubines for the daily care of our persons, but wives to bear us legitimate children."<sup>1</sup>

And as my editor, Karen, said, "Don't even get me started on the Romans." Let's just say that Roman law allowed men to kill their wives for drunkenness (which would lead them to adultery, obviously) and forced families to raise all male babies unless crippled, while every baby girl could be disposed of unless she was firstborn. This was evidenced by burial records showing twice as many male adult burials as females.<sup>2</sup>

Obviously, I'm painting with a wide brush, and certainly there were loved women and daughters during those centuries. But the general rule was "Men first, women a very distant second." It was unquestioned, and we see its imprint in God's Word as it chronicles the flavor of those times. But be certain, dear girls, that recorded history in God's Word doesn't mean He approved. The Bible bears witness

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to the sin of mankind from the first page. And while other cultures suffocated the spirit of their women, God's Word holds countless examples of the favor He reserved for them. But we'll get there.

It's a sad commentary that the reduction of women lasted so long, lasts still in much of the world. When I hear of some of our Islamic sisters being beaten into submission and of the genital mutilation performed on the five-year-old girls of some African groups, my heart cries out for holy intervention. The baby girls of China are thrown out like garbage, and Vietnamese families are selling their daughters into sex trafficking for \$150 or less. It's tragically reported:

The enslaved girls must stay until their debt to their purchasers is paid off, or face beatings. This is difficult, if not impossible, since the owners consider the girls indebted to them for their constantly mounting expenses for food, clothing, medical costs and abortions. As a result, a brothel owner will hold a girl prisoner until she becomes too old or too ill to attract customers.<sup>3</sup>

Father, help us.

The LORD works righteousness  
and justice for *all* the oppressed. (Psalm 103:6, emphasis added)

The ramifications of this promise are boundless. Can we fathom how God deals with oppressed women raised in pagan faith systems? How does He judge the poisonous, hurtful woman abused as a girl? What will be eternally decided for the self-destructive daughter of the streets? If the Lord works not only justice but also righteousness for the oppressed, grace will burrow much deeper than we hoped.

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Someday we'll stand as the daughters of Eve, clothed in white, redeemed by our Savior, rescued from exploitation, violence, and centuries of dishonor.

"God is amazing," wrote Lisa Bevere in *Fight Like a Girl*, "for even now He is taking the sword of His Word and turning things around for His daughters. The very sword that has been at times used against us will soon battle on our behalf. He is carrying out His decree of everlasting love and restoring the correct order and position of honor for His sons and daughters."<sup>4</sup> God is not silent. The assault against women has not gone unnoticed. His intervention on behalf of His daughters is legendary. Yet a day is coming when vengeance will be entirely His.

Take heart, sisters. Restoration awaits.

## BURNED LAMB BONES

However, because women in the last century were anxious to speed up this process, the pendulum swung too far. A hopeful feminine awakening took a downward turn. And I get it. I get good ideas that tanked, since that is basically my life mantra.

For example, one semester in my small, living-room Bible study, my girlfriends and I studied Luke. We read about Jesus' crucifixion on Passover and evaluated every symbolic detail of that Jewish holiday. Well, with enthusiastic good intentions, I secretly arranged a Passover meal, scripted readings and all. I cannot tell you how pleased with myself I was. I felt so Jesus-y shopping in the kosher section for matzo ball recipes.

For a Passover meal, one element of the seder plate is a lamb shank bone. My online Jewish muses suggested I ask my butcher for a clean lamb bone, and it might even be free. Thank you very much, but it was \$2.13, a figure I remember because I paid it twice, but I'm

getting ahead of myself.

Evidently, you boiled the bone until it was clean, white, and presentable for the seder plate. I guess decomposing flesh rotting on the Passover table wasn't exactly WJWD. So the morning before, I put my lamb bone on the stove and realized it was time to take Caleb to preschool. Because it was only five minutes away, I decided to leave the lamb a-boiling.

But as I seem to have a short-term memory problem, when my Girlfriend Trina called en route begging me to come over for coffee, I said what any responsible, aware girl would say: "Lord, yes! If I stay home, I'll have to do laundry." And straight from preschool I drove, not to my house with the boiling baby sheep bone, but to hers.

As you can imagine, this story does not end well.

After sipping java for, count 'em, two hours, Trina asked the fateful question: "How's your big surprise Passover going?" And I got that feeling. That bad gut check when you know something is terribly wrong but it's fuzzy. Then, tragically, I knew. I flew out her door, my dad's words from the high school years echoing in the vacuous space between my ears: "Jennifer, for a 4.0 student, sometimes you're dumb as a board."

Clearly, he had a point.

When I threw open my front door, so much black smoke billowed out, I couldn't see, because apparently water will eventually boil out, leaving lamb skeleton and fire. I took a deep breath, ran to the kitchen, opened the back door, and threw out the charred pot. I opened every window, every door, and unplugged every smoke alarm. Three days and five bottles of Febreze later, the house still smelled like death with a hint of floral.

My girlfriends' husbands, who fancy themselves funny types, left messages on my cell phone: "Tell me, Clarice, when will the lambs stop screaming?" Oh, that's cute. Let's all laugh at the Bible teacher who lied during Lamb Bone Purchase Number Two by telling the

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butcher I was having two seder plates, that's all. And who was he? The  
Passover police? What did I look like? An idiot who burned the baby  
lamb bones symbolic of her Christian Lord and Savior?

## WHAT DID THAT STORY HAVE TO DO WITH ANYTHING, YOU ASK?

Anyway, my point is, sometimes an honorable nugget of an idea goes  
bad. That's what I think happened to the feminist movement, when  
women decided they had a glory to recover. This is pure conjecture,  
but I wonder if the seeds of change weren't initially planted by God.  
Before you gasp, declaring feminism a purely secular attack on family  
and womanhood, consider it. *Could* God have stirred up passion for  
the power of the feminine? *Might* He have begun unveiling the glory  
He intended for His daughters only to have it jerked from His hands  
and turned into a self-serving movement?

It wouldn't be the first time God enacted change only to have it  
polluted by mankind. The church was barely five seconds old when  
its congregants spread Gnosticism and other false teachings. And no  
sooner had the Holy Spirit inhabited believers than they misused the  
gifts He administered. Then the evangelistic commission was turned  
into a blunt instrument, widening the gap between the lost and found.  
These were all God's ideas, but as we'd stipulate, people have a knack  
for making a mess of things.

Yet God has this, well, godly way of turning even the largest  
wayward ships around. The speed with which He commandeered  
this voyage of feminism is what makes me consider its origins. We're  
less than a century from the time women first received the right to  
vote, half a century from more radical assertions of equality, and  
already women are rising up to participate with God in separating  
the wheat from the chaff. While male domination lasted for mil-  
lennia, this new breach of gender conduct is already being soothed.

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Could it be because this one had roots in the heavens and the other was birthed from rebellion? Perhaps what God began He can more quickly reclaim.

Not unlike the Babylonian captivity that Israel endured for seventy years. How many Hebrews believed *that* was God's doing? Surely they thought He'd abandoned them. They were oppressed, mistreated, strangers to their former glory. Yet God has a history of using short-term captivity to bring forth lasting change, captivity He not only allowed but commissioned. God can initiate a season—activated by sin—that appears worse than before. But as quickly as it started, He ends it. As God said of Israel's restoration,

Surely, as I have planned, so it will be,  
 and as I have purposed, so it will stand. . . .  
 [The] yoke will be taken from my people,  
 and his burden removed from their shoulders.  
 This is the plan determined for the whole world;  
 this is the hand stretched out over all nations.  
 For the LORD Almighty has purposed, and who can  
 thwart him? (Isaiah 14:24-27)

Could centuries of sins against women prompt God to birth feminism, harsh and misguided as it briefly was, only to recover the reins and execute justice? Rebellious sin (men against women), temporary captivity (feministic chaos), righteousness—it is indeed His pattern. Couldn't we define feminism as temporary captivity? While many women recoil at that, hindsight reveals women trapped between their hearts and the “new image” they were supposed to project. Men and children were caught in the carnage, left to fend for themselves. While women screamed and swore, the nation was tangled in a battle of the sexes.

Women were no longer defined by men but by each other. Men were the enemy, and war was waged. Women were told to be aggressive, loud, definitely furious. The differences between genders were dismissed as irrelevant—no, nonexistent. “The cramped little categories of personality and social function to which we assign people from birth must be broken open so that all people can develop independently, as individuals,” wrote Jo Freeman, editor of the *Voice of the Women’s Liberation Movement* in 1971. “This means that there will be an integration of social functions and life styles of men and women as a group until, ideally, one cannot tell anything of relevance about a person’s social role by knowing their sex. . . . No longer will humanity suffer a schizophrenic personality desperately trying to reconcile its ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ parts.”<sup>5</sup>

Say what? Love to the women’s libbers, but did they ever actually meet a man? One glance at little boys playing death-by-army-troopers while girls played house and wedding day was some indicator of design. An integration of social functions? Ladies, hands up if your man is remotely capable of doing half the things you do. And I don’t mean laundry and carpool; I’m talking about being the glue that holds your family together. And let me tell you something: If my gender tells you nothing about my identity, then go ahead and introduce my husband to a mistress and sign my kids up for therapy. If “wife” and “mom” have no discernable standing in my life, then I’m just an angry chick who’d sacrifice her family for a selfish movement.

Oh, wait. That *is* what happened.

But I did wonder if God started this thing, didn’t I? See, the thing is, there were a few crazy years when women abandoned their posts. But is my little eye the only one that spies the wheat that separated from the chaff? In progressive cultures, I see women valued for their backbreaking efforts again. I see pages of legislation enacted on

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behalf of women. I see moms who transitioned from the isolation of their homes into a sisterhood of togetherness. I see women standing up for the abused, the poor, the lost members of their feminine tribe. I see women rising up on behalf of the globally oppressed. I see an unprecedented support network for all facets of womanhood. Our issues are no longer taboo. We have the freedom to speak up, speak out, ask for help, lean on our sisters.

All that smacks of God.

Even as we speak, the radical extremes of the feminist movement are receding. I observe this with a modicum of detachment, because I was too young to march on the front lines. The battle was diminishing by the time I could comprehend it. On behalf of my generation, I believe we're pursuing center. We have the benefit of retrospection on the two extremes of the last millennium, neither healthy. We recognize the oppression of being subservient male accessories as well as the danger of turning into contentious, genderless semi-females.

## **"BE QUIET" — LOVE, THE CHURCH**

How did the church keep up with the trends? Not too well, I'm afraid. Or perfectly well, if you look at it from that angle. The one place women should've found relief from male domination perpetuated it. "You will immediately recognize women who are dominated," wrote Lisa Bevere. "To our shame, far too often their ranks overflow in the church. After so many years of intimate mistreatment, they seem to shrink within themselves. You can actually sense their husbands' disapproval or rejection in their physical demeanor."<sup>6</sup>

Imagine me crying a river knowing the weapon of coercion was God's Holy Word, my very favorite thing. Scripture was taken out of context and wielded as a bludgeoning tool. As simple as it sounds to cast blame on the fellas, most were simply behaving according to

current gender models (as were the women, I'll remind you). It was what it was, and no one questioned it. Scripture was interpreted in such a way, and all the players acted appropriately. That's the saddest commentary: Both sides really believed their limited roles. Women's silence was their loveliest offering—plus their obvious nursery and dining hall duties.

The church is jogging toward change, albeit slowly. I was recently asked to deliver the Sunday message at a very large traditional Baptist church in Houston. "Nervous" is a light treatment of my anxiety level. Think thousands of people, men in suits. During the prelude, I sat with the pastor's aide assigned to babysitting me. With shaking hands, I looked through my notes while talking myself out of projectile vomiting. The assistant leaned over, ever so nonchalantly, and offered up this little nugget: "You know, in all our history, we've had a woman deliver the Sunday message only once. The funny thing is, a bunch of people walked out."

Oh, that's real funny, you girl with the talking mouth who clearly has a discernment problem. I stared blankly at her, wondering if sheer will could undo the carnage she had casually unleashed into my psyche. I believe she will be punished for that comment someday, which brings me great pleasure, but merciful heavens! It's a wonder I walked up to their forty-foot platform and uttered one solitary word. Sources tell me it was mostly intelligible, though all I remember was waving my arms and smiling too much and one questionable comment on plastic surgery. (And no one walked out, thank Jesus.)

Perhaps the tides are turning even under the steeples. Not that I believe women should hijack every pulpit, but we are smarter and more educated, anointed, and biblically proficient than ever. Female scholars, apologists, theologians, writers, teachers, speakers, ministers, leaders, activists, visionaries—they exist in droves and are working beautifully with men to present the most balanced, unbiased

discussion on Scripture ever available. I've heard teaching from women that has altered the trajectory of my life. Women have much to offer the church beyond traditional service.

More about that in chapter 3 on Smart Girls.

## "YOU'VE GOT GAME" — LOVE, GOD

So it seems men, culture, other women, religious models, the church, and various movements have taken turns telling women who to be. The human static of anger, domination, inferiority, aggression, fear, and ego has made a clear interpretation impossible. But it occurs to me to ask a different question—or better yet, a different source:

God, who do *You* say we are?

Even as I write that, I'm flooded with relief. I've never been certain of my standing with men (Do they find me obnoxious? Loud? Book-smart, not street-smart?) or with women (I was once evaluated by a conference attendee as being "a little harsh"). I've never exactly matched a cultural or religious model of femininity. My position as a Bible teacher is met with applause by some enthusiasts, while one man stomped off upon hearing I was filling in for my pastor. So the church verdict is still out. And even some female leaders I admire offer a definition of femininity that wears like a big-sister's dress. I'd have to undergo a lobotomy to fit into it.

But there is another voice above the din of humanity:

Bring my sons from afar  
and my daughters from the ends of the earth—  
everyone who is called by my name,  
whom I created for my glory,  
whom I formed and made. (Isaiah 43:6-7)

J E N H A T M A K E R

Our design was invented in the heavens, sisters. We are uniquely formed for God's glory. We are deliberate and beautiful, diverse and powerful, sealed by the name of the Most High. He took great care to create us, every detail and facet. In Him our identity is settled. We are daughters of the King—valued, adored, crucial. Anyone else's take on us is irrelevant.

This is what the LORD says—

he who created you, O Jacob,

he who formed you, O Israel:

“Fear not, for I have redeemed you;

I have summoned you by name; you are mine.”

(Isaiah 43:1)

There is a superior opinion of us that exists.

With what can only be described as reverent holy fear, my aim is to open Scripture and discover what God thinks about His daughters. Who are we? What are we supposed to do? To be? What about when we add men to the equation? Are we secondary humans? When You look at us, You're thinking what? How should we cope with the assault on femininity? What's our responsibility for our international sisters? What pleases You about us? What value do we hold? What's so great about being a girl?

As you can see, the mental warfare I referenced has some merit. These are questions rooted in the ages. But as God eloquently put it, we've been summoned. It is time to rise up, girls. The call has been issued. I believe there is a holiness awaiting our generation. *We are the ones*. If we abdicate this responsibility, I shudder to think what lies ahead for our sisters behind us and abroad who are counting on our intervention. Yet there is a glimmer on the horizon of possibility if we

M S . U N D E R S T O O D

don the righteous glory of womanhood and claim our redemption. It  
is ours to recover.

Let the daughters return from the ends of the earth.

Shake off your dust;

rise up, sit enthroned, O Jerusalem.

Free yourself from the chains on your neck,

O captive Daughter of Zion. (Isaiah 52:2)