



CROWN

30 WIFE-CHANGING LESSONS

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 **ROMANS 8:28**
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For all His daughters and for mine

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INTRODUCTION

Whether you just returned from your honeymoon or recently celebrated your fiftieth wedding anniversary, you have never been in *this* season of marriage before. Your family dynamics, finances, health, emotional state, location, ministry, employment status—all the factors that equal your life—are in a perpetual state of transition. As a married woman, you are constantly *wife-changing*.

The marriage you are in today is not the one you will be in six years from now or even six months from now. You will be married to the same man under the same covenant you made on your wedding day, but he won't *be* exactly the same man, and you won't be the same wife either. You are both growing and changing, improving and regressing.

Brent and Nancy Kaser are not quite the same couple we were on our wedding day. Lovely holidays and vacations, joyous celebrations, and new babies and grandbabies have occurred between small and great trials, disasters, crises, and deaths of family and friends. We have been blessed with periods of perfect health, as well as medical emergencies, critical illnesses, and chronic pain. Great personal victories and deep failures, financial blessings and economic trials, ministry successes and failures, career advances and job changes—they have added up to the life we have built together.

Through it all, God's Word has been an unailing, all-sufficient guide. But it took me a long time to learn this. I was once a discouraged, bitter, defeated wife married to a selfish, prideful man. My first several years as a wife were spent in tears, self-pity, and self-righteousness. But God did something miraculous and beautiful through His Word and by His Spirit, and it changed both of us. I believe He can do the same in any marriage—especially yours.

The Sections Explained

This book is designed as a six-week Bible study that can be completed alone or in a group setting. It is structured so that you can read one day's worth of material, five days a week, for six weeks.

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Crown combines Bible teaching, humorous and humbling tales of my own marriage journey, and dozens of personal stories from real wives I have counseled over the years. Some of the names have been changed, but the testimonies are true and are written as practical examples for you to relate to and to learn from. In addition, I have quoted writers and speakers who have explained ideas more articulately than I can.

As a pastor's wife, I am often invited into the lives of women who are either struggling in their marriages or just wanting all of God's blessings in their families. Though these church ladies may be well versed in the Scriptures, many are unaware of how to practically transfer biblical principles and doctrines of being a godly wife into their everyday lives and marriages.

In this practical discipleship guide, the aim is to offer this hope to every Christian woman: in every season, a glorious and God-honoring marriage—to the same man she is married to right now—is absolutely possible through obedience to God's Word.

Build Like a Wise Woman

Proverbs 14:1 says, "A wise woman builds her house, but the foolish woman tears her house down with her own hands." As wives, we have tremendous power to build up our families or tear them down. Of course, we all want to say we are wise women building our houses, but is that really the case? Good marriages are built upon something sturdier than romance and attraction and are fortified by more than shared interests and hobbies. The following six chapters in this book examine the structural essentials of being a godly wife, and you will be challenged to examine and identify what is strong in your marriage and where you may need to do some repairing or fortifying:

YIELD—Laying a foundation built on the Word of God

HELP—Understanding and occupying your role as the helper in your marriage

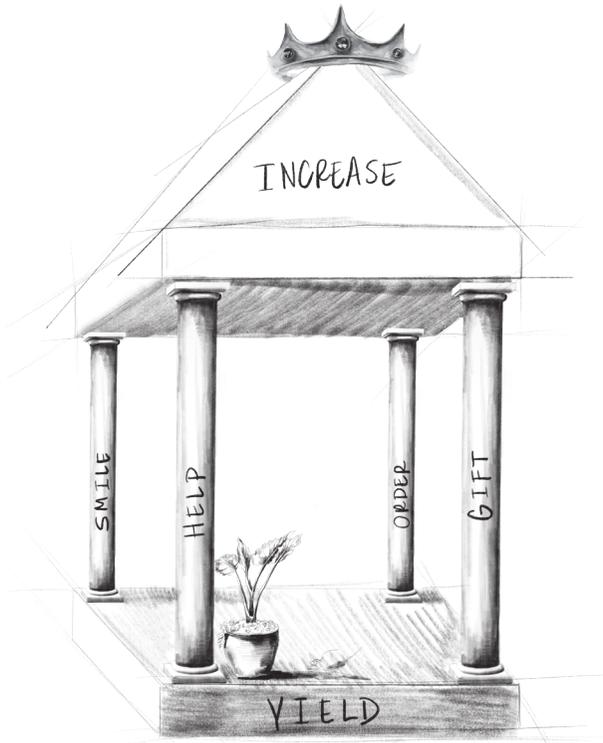
SMILE—Choosing to live in joy, forgiveness, and friendship with your husband

ORDER—Managing your life according to God's priorities for a wife

GIFT—Pursuing and guarding God's plan for sexuality in your marriage

INCREASE—Being married with your eyes fixed on your heavenly Groom

Introduction



Jesus said in Matthew 7:24–27:

Everyone then who hears these words of Mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.

A life built upon the unchanging Word of God is on a solid foundation. The Word of God is powerful, alive, and active. The truths and meaning of the Scriptures *never change*, but people and seasons of life do change. Life-changing seasons call for wife-changing scriptural knowledge.

Read with Expectation

Like sunscreen needs to be reapplied to prevent overexposure and damage from the sun, the unchanging Word of God needs to be reapplied again and again as our marriages are exposed to new seasons. The same verse you read as a

young bride may minister to you quite differently on your fifth, twenty-fifth, or fiftieth anniversary. I invite you to read these Scriptures and principles with fresh, expectant eyes, asking the Lord how He wants you to apply the truth in this season of your marriage.

Take Selfies

You know the little button on your phone camera that flips the image around so you can see yourself? I urge you to set your reading of this book on Selfie Mode. Self-examination is critical to becoming an excellent wife.

We are often very aware of what our husbands need to change, but we can often put a flattering filter over our own shortcomings and flaws. If we do this, we will miss the wife-changing work of genuine transformation God wants to do in us.

In Luke, Jesus told a parable about two men who stood before God in prayer, and only one was granted his request:

Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: "God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get." But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!" I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted. (Luke 18:10–14)

Be like the tax collector: vulnerable and willing to admit your own sin.

In the New Testament, when we sometimes read the phrase "He who has ears to hear, let him hear," Jesus didn't assume that all who heard His words would receive them. Only those who had "ears to hear" would accept the message and heed the words. Decide right now to have ears to hear what Jesus is speaking to you and determine to respond with a willingness to obey Him. Within the next thirty days, *plan* to do some wife-changing. For the Lord declares through Paul that He does "not desire . . . that you should be ignorant . . . lest you should be wise in your own opinion" (Rom. 11:25). Maureen Schaffer, my dear friend and women's Bible-study teacher said:

When we are people who know we need instruction, we will not be as critical or high-minded. No matter how much we know of any subject, it pales in comparison to the enormity of understanding available in that area. Being wise in our own opinion is often rooted in a misguided

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confidence that we know all we can know about a situation or person. Sometimes arrogance is a symptom of ignorance.

Crown

Proverbs 12:4 says that “an excellent wife is the crown of her husband,” and as I struggled with how to title this book, I worried you wouldn’t want to read my book simply because of what the name implies. I pictured your spirit scoffing at the whole idea of being a crown to your husband. Many women may say (although not out loud in Christian circles), “I don’t want to be the crown—I want to be the one wearing it!” Because we *don’t* like what being a crown implies, I wrote **Crown**.

Real Crowns Are Rare

Consider how many people you have seen in your life legitimately wearing a crown. You can likely only think of a handful of foreign royals or beauty queens. Real crown wearers are rare, and so are excellent wives. Proverbs 31:10 declares, “An excellent wife who can find? She is far more precious than jewels.” An excellent wife is a precious, hard-to-find treasure, and a man who has a wife like this is as honored as a king wearing a crown.

The word *crown* is both a noun and a verb:

crown—*noun*. A circular headdress worn as a symbol of authority or for one to whom respect or esteem is due by reason of authority or rank.

The king wore a gold crown on his head.

crown—*verb*. To bestow honor or to give a reward; to make complete by adding success.

They will crown the winner with rewards and honor.

As your husband’s wife, your goal is to *be* a crown to your husband. But *crowning* is also something you *do*; you can add to his success by bestowing respect and honor on him. *Crown* is designed to be an instruction manual for those who want to practically learn how to be the excellent wives they are created to be.

“What do you want me to do for you?”

In three of the gospels, we read the account of a blind man who cried out to Jesus, and Jesus turned to the man and said to him, “What do you want Me to do for you?” The blind man said, “Lord, let me recover my sight.” So Jesus gave the man exactly what he asked for (Luke 18:35–43).

Quite often, we cry out to the Lord, but we don’t ask Him to do anything specific. Jesus asked this man for a direct request, and the man requested something impossible—and miraculously Jesus gave him what he asked for!

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So, friend, let me ask you, in regard to your marriage, what specifically do you want Jesus to do for you? Are there some impossible, miraculous things you want to see happen in your marriage? Ask Him! What about ordinary, simple things? If He can do the impossible and miraculous, then how much more should you ask Him for the simple and ordinary?

If you could ask Jesus for three specific things in your marriage, what would they be?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

May you expect the same God who opened blind eyes to give you the desires of your heart.



LESSON 1

First Things First

Before we devote ourselves to the focus of being an excellent wife, there is one essential factor we must address. Second Corinthians 13:5 says to “examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith.” This means each of us should test ourselves to make absolutely certain we are in Christ. A woman who attends church, knows a lot about the Bible, or raises her hand during a salvation invitation isn’t automatically a real Jesus follower. Without the foundation of genuine salvation, the instructions in this book will not be applicable, as only a woman who is truly born again will be able to live them out. Read this testimony from Deanna:

I’d been in church my whole life. I was raised in Sunday school and knew all the Bible stories. Outwardly, I was a good girl. I followed the rules, sang the songs, and did the memory verses. But I didn’t follow Jesus inwardly. Christianity was my culture, but Jesus wasn’t actually my Savior. It wasn’t until I was already married with my own tribe of church kids that I sincerely admitted I needed a Savior. After twenty-eight years in church, I cried out to God with a genuine awareness of my own sin and my own need for His forgiveness in my life. After a lifetime in church, I had to come to Jesus like every sinner before me.

Charles Spurgeon said:

We should be very diligent to take heed that we really are “born again,” for there are many who fancy they are, who are not. Be assured that the name of a Christian is not the nature of a Christian; and that being born in a Christian land, and being recognized as professing the Christian religion is of no avail whatever, unless there be something more added to it—the being “born again” by the power of the Holy Spirit.¹

Lies and False Security

There is an attractive lie being spread from the pulpits of America today that is being used in Sunday schools and in prayer meetings and broadcasted on much

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of Christian radio and TV. It's the false teaching that proclaims, "You prayed the sinner's prayer; therefore, you are saved."

While it is often the catalyst to a true conversion, the "sinner's prayer," where a person "asks Jesus into his heart," has also been a very effective tool of Satan. It can be a false doctrine that promises, "All you have to do is say the magic words, and you get a free ticket to heaven!" Tragically, the sinner's prayer has given many people an unfounded assurance of eternal security.

I once counseled a woman whose thirty-year-old brother had been in a terrible accident and was on life support. She was sharing how he had been in trouble with the law, had been involved in several illicit sexual relationships, and had been using and dealing drugs. He hadn't been to church since he was in junior high school and had scoffed at her Christianity for years. Through tears, the woman said, "But I know he's saved because he prayed the sinner's prayer with me when he was eleven." There was nothing in this man's adult life that would lead anyone to the conclusion he was saved, and yet his sister clung to the hope that the words he had said as a child secured him for eternity.

I am not against encouraging people to pray for salvation, nor am I opposed to altar calls, hand raising, or other forms of answering an invitation to come to Christ. But what I *am* totally against is the notion that just because people "pray the magic prayer," they have a free pass to heaven, along with God's favor until they get there.

Jesus warned us there would be many people who would do things, even miraculous things, in His name, but that wouldn't mean they were saved:

On that day many will say to me, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and cast out demons in Your name, and do many mighty works in Your name?" And then will I declare to them, "I never knew you; depart from Me, you workers of lawlessness." (Matt. 7:22–23)

There will be many souls in hell who will cry out to Jesus, "But we prayed the sinner's prayer in Your name!" And Jesus will say to them, "Depart from Me. I never knew you."

What Is the Gospel?

Sadly, many faithful church attendees can't answer this question clearly, but it is simply unacceptable for those who claim to know Christ not to know how to answer this question.

If a woman told you she had five minutes until she would be dead and wanted you to share the gospel with her so that she could be sure she was saved, what

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would you tell her? Could you share with that dying woman the essential truths for her soul to be saved?

Just to be sure, I want to provide you with a very clear explanation of the gospel. Here is an acronym for GOSPEL to help you remember the key aspects of the good news and to make sure you have claimed them for yourself.

G—God

- There is only one God, Who created all things. (1 Cor. 8:6)
- God is perfectly good, perfectly holy, and perfectly loving. (1 John 4)

O—Our Sin

- God has given us His Word (the Bible), which provides us clear direction on how to live. When we disobey His Word, it is sin. (Eph. 5:1–21)
- Sin separates us from God because He is holy and must punish sin. (Isa. 59:2)
- Every single person on earth has sinned, and has therefore offended God. (Rom. 3:23)
- The Bible says hell is a place of eternal torment where unsaved sinners will spend eternity apart from God. (2 Thess. 1:9)

S—Savior/Son

- Jesus, God in the flesh, came to earth as a man. (Phil. 2:5–8)
- He demonstrated His great love for mankind in coming to the earth and living a perfect, holy, and sinless life. (2 Pet. 2:22)
- He performed many miracles to prove He was God. (John 21:25)

P—Paid for by Jesus on the Cross

- The greatest act of love ever performed was when Jesus was brutally beaten and nailed to a cross for sins He did not commit. (Rom. 5:8)
- He died on the cross to pay for the sins of every person on earth. (2 Cor. 5:15)
- He did this willingly, to make a way for us to be restored to Him. (John 10:18)

E—Empty Tomb

- Jesus proved that He is God by rising from the dead three days after He died on the cross. (Rom. 1:4)
- He was seen alive many times, by over five hundred people after the resurrection. (1 Cor. 15:6)

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L—Life Eternal

- By putting our faith in Jesus and following Him, we can be forgiven for our sin. (Rom. 10:9–10)
- Only those who turn from their sin and believe in Jesus will go to heaven when they die and live with God for eternity. (Acts 4:12; 20:21)

Essentially, an understanding of who God is, what Jesus did, and what man must do are the key components of salvation. If you are a professing follower of Jesus, you should be able to share the gospel message clearly and confidently.

The Test of a True Conversion

Salvation is an absolutely free gift, but being a Christian is not just about knowing the right information and agreeing with it intellectually.

I have known women who have come to our church and attended our women's Bible study. Who posted things on social media about being Christians and said they are followers of Jesus, but they also posted raunchy jokes and photos of themselves scantily dressed, and commented about being married to "the idiot." I have sat next to women in church who lifted their hands in worship, but later told me they have their tarot cards read in order to make decisions about their lives. There is a contradiction between what these women said they believed and how they actually lived. I have also known wonderfully moral women who had a vast knowledge of the Bible, did charitable deeds, used Christian lingo, and outwardly "looked" like Christians, and yet they did not sincerely follow Jesus.

There are surely women sitting in our churches who listen to the messages every week and piously perform ministry tasks, but are not yet truly converted. Remember, Judas Iscariot played the part of a disciple so well, and no one suspected he would be the one to betray Jesus. It is quite possible to be a moral person and still go to hell.

Genuine Salvation = Changed Life

Make no mistake—we do not do good works to earn our own salvation; however, if we are saved, then we will demonstrate our salvation by our good works. James declared, "Faith without works is dead" (James 2:20). A dead faith—one void of obedience and service to Christ—is not a faith that reflects the life of a disciple.

Being born again is not merely a name change, but a nature change. If we are truly born again, we will no longer be the women we used to be. Some changes are immediate, while others take time to develop, but we can't be born again and remain

YIELD - Lesson 1

the same. Charles Spurgeon said, “The grace that does not change my life will not save my soul.”²²

True conversion produces true change. Jesus doesn’t save us and then leave us where we are. No. He transforms us and conforms us into His image. If the Holy Spirit has taken up residence in a heart, the fruit of the Spirit will be evident in that person’s life.

If I told you I believed there was a bomb in the room that would detonate in three minutes, you would expect me to bolt for the door. But if I told you there was a bomb in the room and then sat sipping a latte and chatting with my friends, you would decide I really didn’t believe there was a bomb. My words weren’t backed up by my actions; therefore, my words were meaningless.

And so it is with Christianity. Only God knows what is in a person’s heart, but the following Scriptures give us clear standards that we can use to measure a profession of faith:

And by this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. Whoever says “I know Him” but does not keep His commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in Him. (1 John 2:3–4)

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of Him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome. (1 John 5:1–3)

For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not become partners with them; for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. (Eph. 5:5–12)

True salvation will be evidenced by a life that reflects a sincere love for Jesus. Jesus Himself said, “If you love Me, you will obey My commands” (John 14:15).

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Real Christians will be easy to spot by their obedience to Jesus. There will be an ever-increasing pursuit of holiness and a deepening love for the Savior, as well as a decreasing desire for the pleasures of this world and an increasing desire for the things of God. These are the standard by-products of salvation. Before we can be the excellent wives we are created to be, we must first examine ourselves to be certain we are in the faith.



LESSON 1 WIFE-CHANGING QUESTIONS

1. What is the gospel? How would you explain it to someone else? Write it out here.

2. Are you certain you are saved? How do you know?

3. Since professing to know Jesus as your Savior, how have you changed?

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4. Would others easily identify you as a Christian, or would they be surprised if you identified yourself as one?

If you examine yourself and realize you may not be saved, take courage! You're still breathing! You can still repent of your sin and surrender yourself to Jesus right now.

Salvation is available to you through repentance and faith. In your own heart (or out loud if you prefer), confess to God you are a sinner in need of salvation, and acknowledge that Jesus is the only way that you can be saved. Ask Jesus to be the Lord of your life, and then begin walking in obedience to Him.