

**Q&A with Dorothy Kelley Patterson, General Editor and
Rhonda Harrington Kelley, Managing Editor of
*The CSB Study Bible for Women***

Q: Is *The Study Bible for Women* a first-of-its-kind?

A: No, but we (Patterson and Kelley) did pioneer biblical reference tools for women, beginning more than two decades ago. However, we believe that this volume is the most comprehensive study Bible prepared by women for women. Interestingly, the apostle Paul placed with his discussion on church order a mandate for spiritually mature women to teach women who were new to the faith (Titus 2:3-5). ***The Study Bible for Women*** is prepared for women, by scholarly women in the arenas of biblical and theological studies, on subjects important to women. In the modern era women are devoting personal time and resources to the diligent study of God's Word and woman-to-woman instruction.

Q: What is the most unique feature of *The Study Bible for Women*?

A: In our opinion, the most powerful aspects of this Bible are the "threads" of specialized study thoughtfully woven throughout, pointing the reader to God's larger story. These "threads" can be utilized to reveal biblical truth, allowing the Holy Spirit to move in the heart, life, ministry, and calling of each woman. This edition also features "The CSB Concordance Featuring All the Women in the Bible." It is the most comprehensive concordance of its kind, including every named woman, every unnamed woman, and almost every reference to women in the Bible.

Q: What are some of the ways that women will notice this Bible is uniquely for them?

A: First, we use distinctive exegesis that pulls out the meaning of the text rather than reading into the text one's own personal opinions. Second, users will notice a sensitivity to apply Scripture to the particular needs and questions of women without using a feminist "gender lens." Third, we have used intuitive scholarship—the linking of discerning intuition with the discipline of scholarship. Fourth, we encourage the cultivation of mentoring friendships that offer common ground instead of polarity in the tasks of understanding and teaching the Bible. Fifth, there is a clear creativity in connecting mind and heart, doctrine and practical service, firm biblical boundaries and relevant life applications.

Q: How does the language a woman might use to explain a passage connect to a woman's heart more effectively?

A: In this Bible, readers will join a host of other women, academically trained in the original languages of the Bible, for a deep dive into Scripture that will equip them to unlock the riches and majesty of His Word, as well as to ignite a passion to mentor others in their lives to do the same. Women will find guidance for unfolding the clear meaning of Scripture as well as timely challenges to fashion their lives accordingly, written by believing and experienced sisters in the Lord.

Q: What is the best way to enter into this massive, potentially overwhelming, study experience?

A: We would tell any woman: "Come to Scripture with a teachable heart ready to hear God speak, respond to Him in obedience, and find your place in His story." The godly woman will seek to conform her beliefs and behavior to Scripture, not pick and choose which portions are most agreeable to her own desires. Attentiveness to the Word of God, willingness to explore its depths, and eagerness to meet and enjoy fellowship with its divine Author will inspire your readiness to become a wise woman whose life is securely built on the rock of God's Word and the commitment to do whatever the Lord says (Matthew 7:24-25). May the Lord grant to each woman who uses this study Bible a renewed commitment of personal time and the determination to pursue the riches found in serious study of God's Word—not only for herself but also for the women whom she will teach.

Q: How would you explain the difference between principles and solutions in Scripture?

A: The Bible is a book of principles and not merely a catalog of solutions for every situation. Principles are clearly stated in the Bible, but each reader must be sensitive to both what is explicit and what is implicit from a natural reading of God's Word since Scripture does not directly address every subject. The emphasis of Scripture is on inner commitment to holiness of life and obedience to God rather than a pseudo-spiritual cloak of outward acquiescence to whatever seems relevant. We are encouraging women

readers to make a distinction between what the Bible records (e.g., slavery) and what it approves (e.g., male headship in the home and church). Express commands to individuals in Scripture are not necessarily the will of God, nor is a literal reproduction of a biblical situation necessary to determine God's will. His principles, however, provide what is needed to respond to all life's problems.

Q: What is the challenging assignment you invite women to accomplish before they start studying the Bible?

A: Before embarking on serious study of a focal passage, we encourage women to read the Bible in its entirety so they can understand its flawless unity through the great central theme of the Lord's atonement and redemption. This compilation of sixty-six books—all inspired by the Holy Spirit—has a common purpose of reconciling God to women and men. Start and keep on reading—not for preparation to teach but to become familiar with Scripture—the broadest survey of the Bible as a whole in the shortest period of time.

Q: If someone is new to studying the Bible, how would you guide them?

A: Spiritual formation begins with setting apart a definite time for personal Bible reading and study—a “quiet time” not devoted to research, teaching preparation, or writing but to communication with God. In our own lives, we guard our Bible study time and use it wisely. We suggest first reading a book of the Bible as a whole, not once but several times, hopefully reading through the book in one sitting. I (Patterson) emphasize a different aspect of study with each reading. For example, my first reading is to gain broad acquaintance with the book, without making notes but underlining or highlighting key ideas. I focus on listening for the Spirit's direction and application without interrupting this reading with explanations from others. My second reading is to determine how the book is divided or outlined. I note in my journal recurring themes, terms of interest, and topics addressed. At this point you are ready to read the book by sections and summarize as you read, documenting the flow of the book's message prayerfully and reverently. By reading the text without consulting other sources, under the tutelage of the Holy Spirit, a woman can come to her own understanding of the text. Without being sidetracked, a disciplined woman can master the overall message of the words themselves.

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