

"More Precious Than Pearls"

Karen Barlow

Pearls: Pearls are a Healed Wound

- Pearls are a product of pain, the result of a foreign or unwanted substance entering into an oyster, such as a parasite or a grain of sand.
- Inside of an oyster shell is a shiny substance called nacre. When a grain of sand enters, the nacre cells go to work and cover the grain of sand with layers and more layers to protect the defenseless body of the oyster.
- As a result, a beautiful pearl is formed.
- An oyster that has not been wounded does not produce pearls, because a pearl is a healed wound.
- Benjamin West's mother was out shopping one day and he was home alone with his little sister Sally. So, as little boys do, he decided to entertain himself.
- He made up his mind to paint a portrait.
- Finding some bottles of colored ink, he set to work. Very soon stains were everywhere. A trail of smudges showed his progress around the room.
- When his mother returned, she surveyed the mess in absolute silence. She said nothing until she spotted the portrait, "Why it's Sally!"
- She kissed him.

- **My mother's kiss made me a painter, recalled Benjamin West in later years.**
- **He went on to become one of the most celebrated artists of the 18th century.**

Woman Mother Armor-Giver

- **A kiss is never just a kiss!**
- **Psalms 85:10-11 "Steadfast love and truth and faithfulness meet together; Righteousness and peace kiss each other. Truth springs from the earth and righteousness looks down from heaven."**
- **"To kiss" is identical to the Hebrew word meaning "to put on armor" and means to array oneself for battle. "Nashaq" Strong's #05401.**
- **To equip with weapons, to be equipped, to be armed.**
- **In scripture, a kiss is the means by which we are given armor.**
- **It's no coincidence that concealed within the armor of Yah/God mentioned in Ephesians 6:13-18, are references to peace, faith, righteousness and truth.**
- **This combination of virtues alludes to the kiss of Heaven and earth in Psalms 85:10-11.**
- **It is also meant to be a subtle reminder that, in Hebrew, "to kiss" is identical to the word "to put on armor"**
- **It might seem strange, but if you think for a moment, you will see the depth of insight in it.**

- A tender embrace gives us strength for the battles of each day.
- A hug tells us that we are not alone when life is reduced to a fight.
- A kiss is the finest combat gear available when we need to be equipped for our daily warfare.

Hugs

We are designed for Hugs!

- Our bodies produce chemicals that create emotional calm and assist with physical bonding.
- Oxytocin and Dopamine:
- Oxytocin is released by our pituitary glands. It lowers both heart rate and our level of cortisol which is released by our pituitary glands and is also the hormone responsible for stress and high blood pressure.

Dopamine is a hormone that gives us a sense of pleasure.

- When we don't receive enough warm, wholesome cuddles as babies, we crave affection as we grow older. When we are not held lovingly as toddlers, we grow up without armor to shield us from the world.
- Touch is life-giving.
- After birth, skin-to-skin contact is widely recognized as a helpful welcome for babies to assist them in adapting to a new environment.
- It is said that after birth, an hour of skin-to-skin contact significantly reduces the stress after birth.
- It improves their breathing, and heart rates are more stable; they cry less, and when they start to feed, they digest food better.

- A mother's chest is significantly warmer than the rest of her body. This will prevent the newborn from cooling down too quickly. Transition from the womb to this world could be equated with the feeling of getting out of a bath and needing to be dried quickly so you get warm.

- **Prayer #1**

- **Armor Giving**

- **Hora**

- Hebrew word for married is Nissu'in

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- Root word: "Nasa" Strong's #5375 means to "lift up".

- This dance tells the couple that Yah's intentions for marriage is that partners lift each other up.

- This dance is also symbolic of submitting.

- **Woman and Mother**

- **Armor Bearer**

- The Hebrew word for betrothal/married "nasu" (nissuin-marriage) which comes from the root word nasa-Strong's #5375, which means to lift up, also to carry, bear, and taken up.

- Yah's intention for marriage is that partners lift each other up.

- The Hebrew word for submission also comes from "nasa" to lift up.

Hebrew word for Submission Nasa

Means: to lift up

- Hebrew word for submission is opposite in the concept of its Greek counterpart, "hupotasso". While they both have military overtones, the Hebrew word has the sense of "lifting up", while the Greek has the sense of being "under or being put down". Over time, with our reliance on the Greek nuances instead of the Hebrew, "submitted" has become partnered with "subdued".
- Paul clearly recognized the possibility of a misunderstanding when it came to submission. He went to great pains to explain the mutuality (sharing a feeling, or action or relationship) of "hupotasso" straight after he said to the Ephesian women: "Wives submit to your own husbands." (Ephesians 5:22 ESV).
- These women had previously participated in the worship of Ephesus Artemis, known as the Greek Goddess "Diana" in Greek or fertility goddess ISIS.
- When they turned to Torah, together with their husbands, they burnt their scrolls of spell craft and sorcery as well as their objects of the ritual magic. (Acts 19:19)
- They renounced their devotion to the goddess of the city.
- Paul's choice of the military word "hupotasso", suggests that he was referring to their lingering loyalty in their thinking to the city's founders.
- Who were the fabled "Amazons"; female warriors, renowned for despising both men and marriage.
- Because of their background, Paul's selection of the word "hupotasso" makes perfect sense.
- He was telling them using marital language not to despise their male partners but support them and see marriage as a beautiful reflection of Messiah's love for His Body.

- **Submission is not the only possible translation of “hupotasso”. Support would also be a valid alternative. Most translations overlook it in favor of the traditional “submit” or be “subject to”.**
- **Brian Simmons who wrote the Passion translation renders “hupotasso” in Colossians 3:18, as “supportive and tenderly devoted”; he uses both the Greek and Aramaic texts in his version. When it comes to Ephesians 5:22, he gives us “...wives this means being tenderly devoted to your husband like you are tenderly devoted to your Savior”.**
- **It lacks the military flavor of Paul’s original words “wives lift up your husbands, be their companion for battle”.**
- **Not battle companion in the sense of attacking, but rather defensive.**
- **Embedded in the Hebrew idea of submission is a complex picture of a battle companion—a helper armed with initiative, courage and loyalty.**
- **Some believers want to reduce this image to that of a servile, obedient robot.**
- **A battle companion is never considered an unthinking automaton.**
- **In Hebrew thinking, submission is deeply tied to protection, covering, watching over and sheltering. It is the idea of safe guarding and cherishing one another.**
- **“Wives submit to your husbands” is not the only occasion that Paul goes from submission to talk about love and then to talk about the armor.**
- **He does the same thing in Romans 13:1 when he says “submit to the governing authorities”. Back in Ephesians, he goes into detail about the components of the armor of Yah while in Romans he talks about putting on the armor of light.**

- **Armor, as we've seen, is about a kiss.**
- **A divine kiss: the supernatural kiss of Yah that clothes us in invincible armor.**
- **In being called to submit, a wife is called to the role of a "paraclete".**
- **In a court of law, the paraclete was the person who stood beside you, advocating your case,**
- **On a battlefield, the paraclete was your partner; the teammate who'd trained with you so that in the thickest of combat, you'd become a single fighting unit; you would both maneuver so you could fight back to back protecting one another.**
- **If one of you fell, it was the role of the "paraclete" to stand astride the wounded body of the other, fighting on and providing a covering shield.**
- **When the battle was over, your "paraclete" would carry you off the battlefield, comfort you and tend to your wounds.**
- **The Hebrew equivalent of the Greek word for battle partner is "nasa keliy", Strong's #H3627 from H3615 "armor bearer". The armor bearer was the covenant companion, recognized as the keeper of the partner's head.**
- **When headship, under the curse of sin, is perverted into dominion, the armor bearer is restricted in their ability to perform their calling.**

The phrase Ezer Kenegdo in Genesis 2:18 translated as "help meet" is far from being derogatory in its original context. It denotes equality not subservience, power not subordination. Eve was to be a "power" or "strength" equal to Adam. She was taken from his rib, not to be lord

over him nor to be trampled under his feet; she was to be his equal, to stand by his side.
-Synokia Hibbert

- Throughout the world, domestic violence is rising sharply to unprecedented heights.
- The Body of Messiah has a considerable responsibility in this area. Paul's words have been so frequently taken out of context in the past, that a culture of male domination has grown. In many areas today, it still exists-sometimes subtly, and sometimes overtly.
- To destroy domination, whether it be male or female, we need to understand the biblical concept of submission and apply it to both marriage and government.
- In being called to submit to Yah, we're called to lift Him up. He's not a repressive, oppressive or suppressive King.
- He calls us to be rulers with Him.
- As we lift Him up, He lifts us up. One word for "chief" or "prince" is "nasiy" Strong's #5387 derived from the word "nasa". The Aramaic word for wives is "nasiyn".
- Paul's poetic thoughts when he wrote, "Submit to the governing authorities", combine the two derivatives of the same root, "nasiy" and "nasa" to say: "Lift up the rulers".
- The implication is to lift up the rulers of the people so that together you build a nation rising in greatness and drawing others to the holy uplifted Name of Yah.
- Wives lift up your husbands implication: Lift up your covenant partner so that together you can build a family who will mutually support each other and rise to draw others to the holy uplifted Name of Yah.

- When Yah revealed Himself as Yahweh/Yehovah Nissi, it was at a desperate time in Israel's history. The title "Nissi" from "nasa" means lifted up; however the name is usually translated as "The Lord is my Banner".
- In Exodus 17, the fierce desert dwelling Amalekites attacked the Israelites while they were wandering in the wilderness. Moses directed Joshua to lead the counter-attack.
- Can you imagine how exhausted Moses must have been physically and emotionally; he'd just dealt with a million people who'd been complaining bitterly about dying from the lack of water. In a stressful ordeal, Yah had told him to strike a rock with his staff to let the water flow.
- One crisis gives way to another as the camp is attacked. Moses goes up the hill with that same staff and raises it skywards, and as his arms are stretched to heaven, the Israelites prevail. As soon as his hands drop, the Israelites lose. Aaron and Hur have to stand at his side, lifting up his arms until such a time as the Amalekites were totally defeated.

Jehovah Nissi

The Lord our banner Ex. 17:15

- Yahweh Nissi refers to God who covers us in battle as we lift our hands in prayer and praise. It refers to working together as a team: Joshua couldn't do it alone. Moses couldn't do it alone.
- Moses had to call on the One who lifts up-carries His people to battle and bears them safely through the day of conflict.
- Joshua took the lesson of "Yahweh Nissi" -"The Lord is my banner" very much to heart. Many years later in the middle of a similar battle

against the Amorites, he called on Yah for a miracle; he asked for the sun to stand still.

- The word "Miracle"- "Nes", Strong's #5251 noun (masculine) standard, ensign, signal, sign (Late Hebrew id., flag, usually sign, i.e. miracle) is also derived from the word "nasa".
- Isn't it incredible? When spouses mutually support each other, when parents mutually support their children, they become part of the name of Yah.
- Miracles happen.

**Woman and Mother
Armor Bearer
Prayer #2**

**Woman and Mother
Watchman**

"The greatest reward for a watchman is seeing a complete protection and restoration, thorough breakthroughs, and life-transforming fruitful efforts of the persons being watched-a joyful contentment that comes from a surrendered life of praying and watching."

- "Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. Instead it should be your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hopes in God used to make themselves beautiful". (1 Peter 3:3-4, 5 NJV)
- The honor accorded to women in Scripture is often times obscured. The tendency is to uproot a verse and examine it outside the ground of which it is planted (out of context).

- Take for instance, Peter's words about women's beauty.
- A casual reader in almost any translation of the English translation would see these verses as prohibiting beauty shops, hairdressers, jewelry and expensive clothes.
- Over the centuries, that sort of ban is exactly what some religious people, both men and women, have insisted on.
- Such a literal interpretation can often make women feel like second class citizens.
- Ironically, an exact rendering of these verses would command women never to wear anything at all!
- The fact is, most modern translators have rightly looked behind bare words and universally inserted an adjective, so that it's clear Peter is not suggesting nudity.
- It's a pity so many of them have only done it at this particular point and missed the subtle allusion just before it.
- Ancient echoes of gender-specific faithfulness reverberate across this passage, all keyed into the words "gold jewelry".
- Some sixteen hundred years before Peter wrote this epistle, the people of Israel were camped around Mount Sinai. Moses was on the mountain talking to Yah/God and was taking so long, that the people got restless. Eventually, under pressure, Aaron told the men to ask for everyone's gold; their wives, their sons, and their daughters.
- Melting down this valuable jewelry that was collected, Aaron supervised the creation of the golden calf.
- Moses, when he finally came down the mountain after 40 days, was appalled.

- He threw down the sapphire tablets with the commandments engraved on them and they were smashed.
- Now it doesn't really matter which English translation you look at. I looked at over 50 of them, and there is absolutely no indication in even one of them that the women didn't participate in the golden calf.
- However, the fact is, they had nothing to do with it.
- Hidden in the pronouns, according to Jewish rabbis, is the clear indication that Aaron did not receive any gold for the idol from the women.
- Now perhaps you're thinking that they didn't want to part with any of the bling they had gotten from Egypt.
- You would be wrong. This was a matter of faithfulness. And that is made abundantly clear when later, at the time when Moses asked for gifts of gold for the adornment of the Tabernacle, the women led the way.
- Exodus 35:22 "All who were willing, men and women alike, came and brought gold jewelry of all kinds: brooches, earrings, rings and ornaments. They all presented their gold as a wave offering to the Lord".
- A more literal translation of the verse would read: The men came on the heels of the women and brought gold jewelry of all kinds.
- Yes, the same women who refused to surrender their gold ornaments for the golden calf were the first in line to offer them for Yah's Tabernacle.
- Not only that, but according to some Jewish commentators, they were the first to agree to the covenant of the Law.
- Interesting note here; Exodus 19:3-6 NIV

- Then Moses went to God and the Lord called to him from the mountain and said, "This is what you are to say to the house of Jacob and tell the children of Israel. You yourselves have seen what I did in Egypt...now if you obey Me fully and keep My covenant, then you will be My treasured possession."
- According to the same rabbis (see for example, David Patterson in Hebrew Language and Jewish Thought), the House of Jacob in this passage is not synonymous with the people of Israel.
- Although it's poetic parallelism, this does not necessarily mean that the phrase refers to the same set of people. These rabbis identify the House of Jacob as specifically referring to "the women of the tribes of Israel" and suggests the text indicates that, at Mount Sinai, the women stepped forward first to accept the covenant of the Law. The Israelite men, still smarting over the golden calf, were slow to follow that lead.
- English translations use "say" without any differentiation. However, the article "Gender in Medieval and Modern Jewish Translation of Exodus 19:3" - House of Jacob and Children/sons of Israel explores the widespread Jewish notion that "House of Jacob" refers to the Israelite women and notes the very different verbs used; one is gentle exhortation, the other is stern and echoing with punishment.
- God/Yah treated the women differently as a consequence. He instructed Moses to speak to them with gentle encouragement and to men with stern admonishment.
- Perhaps this is why Peter's exhortation in his epistle is full of encouragement towards women to emulate the holy mothers of the past, but changes to give a severe warning to husbands. It is lack of respect towards women, he reveals, that hinders prayer.
- "Likewise husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered". (1 Peter 3:7 ESV).

- In these words is another even more subtle allusion to the incident of the golden calf. Before this event happened, the men of Israel had the privilege of being priests in their own households. They are entitled to offer prayer directly to God on behalf of themselves and their families.
- But after their lapse into idolatry, that honor was stripped from them.
- It was given to the tribe of Levi-the only ones who heeded the call of Moses when he asked them to side with God.
- For over a millennium and a half, ordinary husbands no longer had unhindered access to heaven with their sacrifices. Instead, they had to make their offerings through the Levites serving in the Tabernacle.
- When the priesthood was restored through the finished work of the cross, it was once for all believers, women included.
- So there is this remarkable nuance in what Peter writes; he equates the respect given to wives with honor due to God.
- This priesthood came from that of Adam and Eve. Their priesthood over creation was part of their God-given purpose and identity. That restored priesthood today is given to all believers as a part of our calling. We are to represent Yah to our world through ministering the Gospel and represent it back to Him through prayer.
- According to Jewish teaching, while Yah punished the men of Israel, He rewarded the women.
- In perpetuity, that is, as an everlasting memorial for their repeated faithfulness at Mount Sinai, Jewish tradition records that Yah gifted women with their own special holiday. Once a month, on the day of the New Moon, women are to get the day off.

- Ladies, I have more than a sneaking suspicion that this is a tribute you've never heard of before!
- In addition, He also gifted mothers of Israel with long life. Jewish commentary also points out that, when Numbers 26:64-65 speaks of an entire generation who died in the Desert of Sinai, this specifically refers to the men except for Caleb and Joshua and not to the women. Rabbi Eckstein refers to the original Hebrew, indicating the verse specifically states "not one man was left".
- "Why didn't the women die in the desert as the men did?" He asks, "Is it because Yah took pity on the women over the men?"
- Not at all.
- The sages teach that the men had lost their faith on that dreadful night when the spies spoke negatively about the land of Israel, but the women did not. They kept their faith.
- Even though the spies reported enemies of large proportions, well fortified cities, and a land that swallowed its people, the women closed their ears to the men's words. Instead, they opened their hearts to the Word of Yah, who had promised to lead them into a good land. They had passed the test of faith.
- Jewish thought again and again celebrates faith and faithfulness of the women in Israel, and not just of Israel. To the great frustrations of historians, the book of Exodus honors two extraordinary Egyptian midwives who feared Yah by recording their names for posterity while ignoring that of the reigning Pharaoh.
- Peter's words about braided hair, gold jewelry, and clothes can be seen in this light: Simply an encouragement towards practical steps that puts Yah first, just as the godly women of past millennia have done.
- So, here is one of many hidden treasures of Scripture regarding a mother's blessing: She is to be an example of faithfulness to Yah. She is to be a model of whole hearted, unswerving, stand fast

faithfulness which allows Yah's favor to flow and overflow to her sons and daughters.

Woman Watchman Prayer #3

- **When it comes to reading Scripture, the full counsel of Yah should be our standard.**
- **All too often, we unconsciously allow our cultural biases, historical partiality, or generational preferences to sway us.**
- **We let our fallen nature dictate how we understand the Word of Yah. Sometimes, we even allow it to rectify the Scriptures.**
- **Ivan Panin pointed out there are only two passages of any substantial length in the four gospels that are disputed. The earliest manuscript copies we have do not include the last twelve verses of Mark or a major scene in John's gospel.**
- **Common to both of these scenes is Yah's grace to the less than virtuous women.**
- **In the first, Mary Magdalene, notorious for the person who had seven demons cast out of her by Yahshua, is honored by being recorded as first witness of the resurrection.**
- **In the second, a woman caught in the act of adultery is presented to Yahshua. Instead of condemning her, He writes in the sand, in some mysterious way, shaming her accusers. (Where was the accused man since they were caught in the act? John 8:2-3) What was the penalty for one caught? Once they have left, He offers her forgiveness and a second chance.**
- **Panin has noted that, at least in the case of Mark's gospel, while our earlier copies lack the last twelve verses, even earlier writings refer**

to them. He suggested that some scribes, like Uzzah, who reached out his hand to steady the Ark of the Covenant, felt the need to “right” the testimony of the apostle when it came to the place of women.

- Such remedies continue on, through the centuries down to our own day. (We have seen this in the last section of “submission”).
- Jerram Barrs has commented in his book Through His Eyes, God’s Perspective on Women in the Bible, on the curse of sin perverting headship not domination. While he comments on Nabal’s wife, Abigail, for being wise, discerning and generous, he reveals that some pastors have criticized her for not “submitting” to her husband. The fact that she saved his life is less important than the fact she went behind his back.
- The viewpoint sees “submission” as unquestioning disobedience. Ironically, once we understand the true nature of submission, Abigail is the epitome of it.

Cup Bearer Woman and Mother

- Cup-Bearer: A person who serves wine, especially in a royal or noble household.
- Historically they would have an officer of high rank in royal courts, whose duty was to pour and serve the drinks at the royal table. Because of the constant fear of poisoning, they would have been a person regarded as trustworthy to hold the position.
- Let’s meet Abigail. When we first meet her, she is in a quandary. (1 Samuel 25).
- Her home was about to be destroyed and her husband killed.

- For many months, Nabal's property, livestock and workers had been protected from marauders by both two legged and four legged band of volunteers.
- David and his men were camped nearby and, as part of a good neighborhood policy, they kept a lookout for thieves and predators.
- Of course, this increased security, especially because it was unpaid, meant that Nabal was able to increase his business profits substantially. He was already wealthy, but all the surveillance by David's men made him more so.
- Then the day came when David and his men ran short of supplies.
- They decided to ask Nabal for help.
- After all, Nabal had grown richer off the back of their efforts.
- David wasn't asking for wages; just sufficient food to tide his men over.
- But his messengers were rebuffed.
- Nabal unwisely added a few offensive comments about David to cap off his refusal.
- When David heard what Nabal had said, he was insulted,
- "To your swords! He said to his followers".
- When Abigail heard what Nabal had said, she just knew David would be insulted.
- She knew she had to move fast to avoid a massacre.
- Risking her life, she set off to save her husband and his workers.

- When she intercepted David and his men, offering them a whole range of fine provisions, David calmed down and recognized how deeply he was indebted to her.
- In his rage, he would have killed Nabal.
- Eventually, when Nabal heard what Abigail had done and how close he came to annihilation, Scripture says that his heart died within him, and he became like a stone. Then it happened after about 10 days, that Yah struck Nabal and he died. (1 Samuel 25:37-38)
- Regardless of Nabal's eventual fate in this story, Abigail protects both men.
- She acts to directly shield Nabal from the consequences of his action.
- In doing so, she also indirectly shielded David from the consequences of his action.
- David realizes she's stopped him from committing murder and is deeply thankful.
- Abigail is a perfect example of a "paraclete" who uses initiative, takes risks and defends those for whom she's responsible, and shields her husband from the battle he's provoked.
- Ironically, those who accuse her of not being submissive to her husband have missed the reality of the true submission as an act of protection.
- In acting as her husband's "armor bearer", she becomes the "keeper of his head" and the "one who provides covering" as well as the "one who lifts up".
- Just as a cup-bearer tests the king's drink to protect his life, Abigail stands in harm's way to prevent both Nabal and David from regretting the consequences of their sinful actions and reactions.

- In providing bread, meat, and fruit for David's men, she goes in with supplies to protect the lives of her husband and her household. This battleground is not metaphorical; it is very real. In fact, the Hebrew word for bread "lechem" is also the same root word for war (Milchamah-war same root as lechem -lamed, chet, mem). Yes, Bethlehem, "house of bread" could just as validly be translated "house of war".
- Much later, after David becomes king, another woman saves him from the full consequences of a terrible mistake.
- After three years of famine, David realizes that Yah is not answering prayer on behalf of the drought stricken land, so he asks heaven "why?"
- The answer Yah gives him is that his predecessor Saul has blood on his house for killing the Gibeonites that Joshua had made a covenant with many years before.
- David went to the Gibeonite leaders and asked them what they wanted. (2 Samuel 21).
- Not surprisingly they wanted revenge.
- David allowed them to have it. He handed over Saul's family except for Mephibosheth, because of the covenant he had made with Jonathan. He gave them the two sons of Rizpah and five sons of Mikal, the daughter of Saul. Only Saul's concubine, Rizpah, awakened David's conscience.
- Rizpah demonstrated self sacrificing devotion as she kept chasing away the birds and wild animals from the dead bodies of her sons. (2 Samuel 21:10). For a body to be exposed to the elements and eaten by wild animals after death was a sign of dishonor, and reminded David that he had neglected to take back the bones of Saul and Jonathan from the men of Jabesh-Gilead, who had stolen them from the public square of Beth-Shan, where the Philistines had killed Saul on Gilboa. He also gathered up the bones of those who had been hung and they

buried the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan in the land of Benjamin in Zela, in the tomb of Kish his father. They did all the king commanded, and after that, Yah responded to the plea for the land.

- As women and mothers, that's what we are called to do. Awaken the conscience.

Cupbearer Prayer #4

Woman and Mother Game-Changer

- Abigail and Rizpah are far from the first women to change events for good.
- At the beginning of Exodus, Yah isn't mentioned at all.
- At the beginning of Genesis, the book before it, His presence is inescapable.
- Andrew Reid says: In the absence of Yah, five women make their presence known. If there are heroes in the text, it is these, for they act to preserve Yah's future for his people through protecting male children in general- Moses in particular.
- Two ordinary women, midwives, are so honored in Jewish history that they are named while Pharaoh's daughter is not.
- In fact, to the great frustration of generations of historians, even the name of the reigning Pharaoh is omitted.
- By failing to preserve it, the worst nightmare of an Egyptian ruler had come to pass: that of having their name obliterated, their very existence erased by their successors.

- The motif of women as agents of rescue and salvation is an ongoing one. When Moses is returning to Egypt, another woman saves him from destruction.
- Her action, in fact, foreshadows Yah's covenant defense during the first Passover, as she uses blood to fend off the divinely appointed Angel of Death.
- Exodus 4
- Moses is on his way to Egypt with his wife Zipporah and his sons. They are going at Yah's command to confront Pharaoh and, on the way, Moses stops and enters an inn.
- There an angel tries to kill him. Only Zipporah's swift action in circumcising her son saves their lives.
- This seemingly bizarre episode is comprehensible once we recognize that, when Moses stepped over the threshold stone and accepted hospitality at the inn, he came into covenant with the host.
- Clearly that covenant had to be a betrayal of Yah.
- Note: In ancient times, to cross over a threshold was a vow that you would follow the rules of whoever owned the home or whatever entity it was dedicated to.
- Often times a sacrifice of an animal and its blood would be spilled across the doorway. It would have been considered a sacred boundary line.
- In Syria and Egypt at the present time, when a guest who is worthy of special honor is to be welcomed to a home, the blood of a slaughtered or a "sacrificed" animal is shed on the threshold of a home, as a means of adopting a new-comer into the family or making a covenant union with him. The blood also includes an appeal to the protecting deity to ratify it as between the two parties and himself.

- **When the sacrifice was removed, the guest steps across the threshold; this act causes them to become as it were, a member of the family of the Threshold Covenant.**
- **Crossing the threshold or entering the door of a house is in itself an implied covenant with those who are within. To trample on it would be a show of contempt.**
- **When Moses stepped over the threshold stone and accepted hospitality at the Inn, he came into covenant with the host.**
- **Clearly the covenant had to be a betrayal to Yah. A treachery so enormous that His protection was no longer in force.**
- **When Zipporah intervened by using a covenant token to reaffirm loyalty to Yah, the assault was over. It stops as abruptly as it began.**
- **The unwavering loyalty of the women foreshadows that of those who stood at the foot of the cross and who, on the third day after that sky-shattering, earth-shaking event made their way up to the tomb with spices to anoint the holy body of Messiah. They technically were the first to embrace the reality of the Resurrection.**
- **In Exodus 35:22, we see women are the first to embrace covenant at Mt. Sinai. "All who were willing, men and women alike, came and brought gold jewelry of all kinds: brooches, earrings, rings and ornaments. They all presented their gold as a wave offering to the Lord".**
- **The more literal translation of this would have read: The men came on the heels of the women and brought gold jewelry of all kinds.**
- **The same women who had refused to surrender their gold ornaments for the gold calf were first in line to offer them for Yah's Tabernacle. They also handed over the brass mirrors they'd been given by the Egyptian women to be reforged into the vast laver, the washing basin, for the Tabernacle entrance.**

- According to Jewish commentators, they were the first to agree to the covenant of the Law.
- Yah treated women differently as a consequence. He instructed Moses to speak to them with gentle encouragement and to men with stern admonition. (Exodus 19:3-6)
- As a result of the golden calf incident, ordinary men lost the right to be priests in their own household. Levites were exempt.
- Because they sided with Moses when he called for the people to come back to Yah.
- This was eventually restored through the finished work of the cross. It was no longer exclusive. All believers were invited to share in the priestly work of Messiah.
- "There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male or female, for you are all one in Messiah". (Galatians 3:28 NLT)
- Now naturally, not all Jewish men were as inclusive as Yahshua. Many thought like the Greeks.
- Today, largely in keeping with our Greek rationalist heritage, women are still relegated to second place.
- Some denominations restrict the priesthood to men. Even amongst those that don't, the average conference line up reveals an interesting preservation of privilege.
- The problem with having a skewed view of the value of the feminine- or the masculine-is simple. We are perpetuating the separation of man and woman that occurred at the Fall, instead of embracing the covenant oneness of the Bride with her Redeemer.
- When women are dishonored, prayers are hindered and remain unanswered. (1 Peter 3:7 NLT).

- On the other hand, when men are dishonored, their authority is weakened and their covering protection is muted.
- Mutual honor reflects the design Yah had for marriage, uplifting and upbuilding each other in love so the world itself begins to mend.

Game Changer Prayer #5

Woman and Mother Gatekeeper

- Some people struggle with the Bible as historical-they don't believe it can be verified by archaeology or ancient documents.
- Other people struggle with its contents-with a God who seems bloodthirsty; with its prescriptive directions for worship and right living and with its domineering view of women.
- I struggled with a different problem.
- My favorite kind of story is that of a hidden prince who overcomes incredible obstacles to win his kingdom and wed the heroine.
- So for many years I would prefer reading a good romance or mystery to reading the scriptures. Yes, the stories in it were good and exciting the first time I read it, but then it all sounded the same.
- So I asked Yah what was I missing, as I knew people who just devoured the word with such excitement and relish.
- What was wrong with me I wondered? After all, wasn't this book the ultimate story of the prince rescuing His bride and living happily ever after?

- The romance of the hidden king coming into His kingdom and winning, His bride there all along.
- So, I decided to follow the storyline of the bride in the garden.
- The first bride I found was Eve, the mother of all living.
- Born from the side of Adam, she was flesh of his flesh, bone of his bone.

“Women were created from the rib of a man to be beside him, not from his hand to top him, nor from his feet to be trampled by him, but from under his arm to be protected by him, near to his heart to be loved by him”. (Expose from Matthew Henry, **An Exposition of the Old and New Testament).**

- Adam and Eve were so completely caught up in harmonious oneness with each other and with Yah that it doesn't seem to have occurred to her she was a separate being. In the beginning she wasn't. They were one flesh.
- She did not even receive the name “Eve” until after both of them were expelled from the garden. (Genesis 3:20).
- Marriage and headship of Messiah is meant to restore this deep oneness in a kiss of peace, mercy, justice and truth.
- We know the story of Eve and the serpent.
- What many people forget is that in Scripture it records her as duped and deceived.
- “But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Messiah. (2 Corinthians 11:3 NKJV)

- Adam, on the other hand, knew exactly what he was doing. Throughout scripture he is the one to bear the responsibility for the first sin.
- How does Eve's gullibility affect the way we understand the serpent's suggestion that Yah's test wasn't what they thought it was?
- How did she interpret the line: "You will be like gods"? After she and Adam were already one with Yah?
- Here is the subtlety of the serpent's invitation; to "be like" implies separation, whereas Yah's intention was always that we "be one with Him".
- Are we called to be like Yah? Not if "likeness" is different from "oneness".
- In Colossians 1:15, when Paul talks about Messiah being the likeness and image of Yah, he immediately clarifies his meaning by referring to the Body.
- This is therefore not a mirror likeness which implies separation between persons.
- Rather, it is a likeness that refers to oneness between Yah, ourselves and Yahshua.
- This likeness also refers to the oneness between ourselves as individuals and the Body of Messiah.
- There are four types of covenants: Blood, Salt, Name and Threshold.
- Many people are familiar with the existence of the first two, even when they are unfamiliar with the implications of the oneness that characterizes them.
- Most people, however, have never even heard of the last two.

- Despite so many women actually having participated in a name covenant.
- Every woman who has ever changed her name at marriage has undertaken one.
- The ancient purpose of such a commitment is to give full family privileges to one another, including inheritance rights. In addition, they agree to be mutual covenant defenders.
- Yahshua Himself instituted a name covenant for His followers on the night before He dies. "Until now you have not asked for anything in My Name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete". (John 16:24).
- He goes on to explain that we are not to ask Him, but to ask the Father in His Name.
- This was part of the fourfold covenant of Blood, Salt, Threshold and Name that took place over a period of half a day, culminating in a betrothal between Himself and His new-born bride.
- Hints about this marriage appear all the way through John's gospel, from the wedding feast of Cana and onwards.
- This gospel has a very unusual literary design. It has a mirror structure: at the beginning, John testifies to Messiah, the lamb of God. At the end, another John testifies of Yahshua, who spoke of lambs and sheep.
- At the first, five disciples, including Simon Peter and Nathaniel, follow Yahshua to the Galilee. At the end, five groups of disciples, including Simon Peter and Nathaniel, follow Yahshua to the Galilee.
- At the start, Nathaniel expresses doubt, while at the end, Thomas expresses doubts.

- At the start there is a woman named Mary. At the end, there is an incident involving bridal language involving a different woman named Mary.
- Common to both of these incidents is that Yahshua stops and alters His plans. He says in John 4:4, that it's not yet the right time for Him to go public, but He stops, listens to the distress of His mother and changes His plans.
- In John 20:17, He reveals He is on His way to His Father, but He stopped on the way and changes His plan to comfort Mary Magdalene in her distress.
- The mirroring goes on and on. Each of these reflective incidents are clearly meant to inform and be formed by its' matching paragraph. Perhaps the most significant pairing involves Nicodemus.
- His first appearance is in the third chapter of John, where we are told he met secretly with Yahshua.
- Instead of getting his questions answered, he was offered cryptic statements about being reborn, which messed with his mind. Images of having to crawl back into his mother's womb surfaced.
- Yahshua clarified it for him; "I tell you the truth, no one can enter into the Kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit". (John 3:5 NIV).
- No doubt, Nicodemus remained baffled about this helpful new statement; What would the breaking of the waters of a spiritual childbirth look like?
- The final appearance of Nicodemus occurs at the end of John's gospel right after this statement: "...one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out". (John 19:34 NIV).
- Blood and water. The same elements as at birth. Perhaps Nicodemus recognized what was happening- that, as he watched Yahshua's side

being pierced, he was actually witnessing a birth. Particularly since the word for "blood" used in this verse is "haima" also meaning spirit.

- Admittedly, it's not the same word Yahshua used back in John 3:5 for spirit. That was "pneuma". However, the testimony of the ring like structural design tells us that these two stories are linked.
- Nicodemus was probably more baffled than ever as he witnessed a breaking forth of water and blood/spirit, the very things Yahshua had explained accompanied the new birth.
- For a start, Yeshua had just said "It is finished", and died. And secondly, birth doesn't normally occur through a man's pierced side.
- It's not impossible, but it's certainly not usual. Only one similar instance had ever occurred previously in all of recorded history; when Eve was born. As a woman taken from the side of the first Adam, so the Bride was taken from the second Adam-Yahshua our Messiah.
- Nicodemus, as an observant Jew, would have gotten the significance of the new birth in that moment. "It is finished", Yahshua said. In Aramaic, this word is "kalah".
- Brian Simmons in the Passion Translation points out this sounds just like "Kallah", which means bride.
 - "Kalah" in the Aramaic is a homonym with two meanings. It can mean "fulfilled" (completed), but it is commonly used as the Aramaic (and Hebrew) word for "bride". The translation has combined both concepts. The Hebrew word used for "bride" and "finished" with its universe of meaning. See Strong's #3615, #3616, #3617, #3618, #3634.
- Although the completed work of salvation was finished on the cross, He continues to work through His Body even today to extend the Kingdom of Yah on the earth and glorify the Father through us.
- He continues to work in us, for us, His bride. His crucifixion fulfilled and finished the prophecies of the Messiah's first coming to the earth.

There is nothing written that is not fulfilled now and offered to His Bride.

- **Even in His last words, Yahshua was thinking of us-His Bride.**
- **As we were about to be “born again” of water and the spirit: the way into new birth, to becoming a bride, to following Yahshua/Jesus of Nazareth, to entering a covenantal relationship with Him as Bride to enter His wounded side by faith.**
- **In practice, there’s been a tendency to reverse the process in the last century or so; the process of being “born again” has been seen as inviting Yeshua/Jesus into our hearts instead of accepting His invitation to be hidden in His.**
- **We have sought to bring Yahshua into our lives instead of bringing us into His.**
- **“The gospel as preached in the west no longer helped to turn the world upside down, but rather served to reinforce its false values and structure”. (Kenneth Leech We Preach Christ Crucified, Daton, Longman & Todd Ltd. 2006)**
- **My question to you is...Are you ready to embrace the romance and recognize Yahshua as the Bridegroom? Are you willing to ask Him if He would invite you into the new birth-His life-through His pierced and wounded side?**
- **Prayer #5.**

Woman and Mother Above Pearls

- **The gospels do not record her name.**

- A very early tradition suggests she was a Gentile called Veronica and that she came from Caesarea Philippi (which would have been where Simon confessed Yahshua was the Messiah and Yahshua had given him the name "Cephas" or "Peter").
- After Yahshua healed her of more than a decade of suffering, she was so grateful that she commissioned a statue of Him that, for centuries, stood beside the doorway of her house. It was renowned as only the likeness of Messiah and made during His lifetime.
- The early Christian historian Eusebius says that it was reported that this woman came from Caesarea Philippi, where her house was to be seen. At the time, there were displayed some wonderful monuments of the benefits conferred upon her by Messiah. At the door of her house was a statue of a woman in brass, set upon a high stone on her bended knees, and arms stretched out like a supplicant.
- Opposite of her was a statue of a man standing clothed in a tunic, his hand was stretched out to the statue of the woman. At her feet upon the pillar a strange plant grew. It reached the hem of the man's brass tunic and was said to be a remedy against all diseases. Eusebius says the statue was still to be seen in his times but Theophylact reported "...that in the days of the Roman emperor, Julian the Apostate, it was broken into pieces".
- This is the woman with the "issue of blood".
- For twelve years she spent all her money on doctors, trying to find a cure for her chronic hemorrhaging.
- Nothing worked. In desperation, she traveled to Capernaum, seeking a man named Jesus/Yahshua.
- His reputation as a miracle-worker, a teacher and a healer had made Him a celebrity.
- Now if Veronica was indeed a Gentile, she nonetheless was aware of Jewish religious law; she obviously knew she was "unclean" and could

not afford to brave a crowd and bare her problem publicly. However, if she was also from out of town—from Caesarea Philippi in the far north—she had an advantage. No one would know her problem, so she could make her way secretly through the crowd, and just as secretly, touch the hem of Yahshua's garment.

- Her plan was carefully crafted. If she could get close enough to brush her hand against one of the tassels on His prayer shawl, one of the Tzitzit, the symbol of his prayer-connection to the Jewish God, the source of His power—no one would ever have to know.
- In the jostling press of people surrounding Him, who would ever notice such a light casual touch?
- She would not reach out to Yahshua Himself, but only to the “wings” of His garment. If Yahshua was truly the Messiah, then He was the One with healing in His wings.
- It was a risk worth taking.
- She had nothing to lose. If she didn't receive healing, she would be no worse off. With everything to gain and nothing to lose, she set out.
- For the plan to work it would be necessary to join a moving crowd and negotiate her way through it towards Yahshua. In a stagnant crowd she'd be too obvious. Events favored her that day. Yahshua was on His way to the house of the leader of the synagogue. A little girl was on the point of death. (Luke 8 and Mark 5:24-34).
- But Veronica was stuck in “death” and had been for the entire length of time the little girl had been alive.
- The flow of life runs through well known seasons. When a grain of wheat falls to the ground, it “dies” as the cycle begins again with a multiplication of seeds.

- Rebirth, growth, death, new life, multiplication, on and on through the cycle. At any point, there is the potentiality of loss, into permanent death, one where rebirth is impossible.
- The "spiritual" life cycle for people is very similar.
- But what happens when we get stuck in a part of the cycle?
- This is basically what happened to Veronica. Her story occurs in the three synoptic gospels-Matthew, Mark and Luke.
- Where it is clear from the description of her disease that she was "unclean".
- This is not uncleanness as being ritually or ceremonially untouchable.
- In many respects, "unclean" here has the same sense of a "taboo" originally. Contact is forbidden because to do so is to violate the sacred.
- The Hebrew word for uncleanness is "tumah" a word also connected to birth.
- Uncleanness has the sense of emptiness.
- There was "tumah" when a child was born because the womb had been emptied of life.
- After the birth of a son, a Jewish mother was set apart for a week; for a girl, it was a fortnight.
- The period of "tumah" was greater for a daughter because the birth of a girl is seen as resulting in a greater emptiness.
- That may seem strange, but there's a certain logic to it.
- A baby girl effectively brings all her potential grandchildren into the world at her birth.

- Infant daughters are born with all their eggs, but infant boys are not born with all their sperm.
- A little boy does not have the potential for life-in the form of children formed in his own body-within him at birth, whereas a little girl does.
- She also has the potential for more and more death.
- Hence why the time of "tumah" for a daughter is twice as long as for a son.
- The true sense of "tumah" is that of a void of potential, an emptying, a giving out, a sacrifice-the experience of a loss that is not yet fully lost.
- It's unfinished, unreconciled.
- To be "unclean" is to suffer a loss without closure, without resolution.
- It's to be a season void of life.
- The Jewish laws pertaining to menstruation were a celebration of the marvelous cycle of life happening within a woman.
- They are meant as a constant reminder of the miracle of daily existence and to realize the function of our physical bodies is wondrous, not disgusting or even routine.
- The Jewish laws are there to enable us to realize the awe-inspiring potential of life as it regenerates itself within our very own bodies.
- But sometimes things go wrong.
- We don't pass through the natural seasons in their ordained order and timing.

- It's no coincidence that "dumah", which means to silence, rhymes with "tumah".
- The silence of death, mourning, and grief and God Himself after breaking the covenant are themes threaded through the Scriptural record. (Silence in the Bible, Paolo Torresan, Jewish Bible Quarterly, Vol. 31 No. 3 2003).
- When Veronica touches "the wings" of Yahshua's prayer shawl, she becomes instantly "unstuck" from the death stage where she'd been pinioned for twelve years.
- Her losses are instantly resolved and she is able to move into the next season of her life.
- No longer is she like a "dead man walking", but she's alive to potential again.
- It's as if she has been like a lifeless seed, buried in the ground for twelve years and her regeneration has finally begun.
- Yahshua heals her-not simply of a constant hemorrhage, but of a loss that she could find no one to help her resolve.
- When loss comes to us, especially when silence surrounds that loss and we can find no answers for it, then we can end up with all sorts of conditions-physical, emotional, and spiritual-that drain life from us.
- We bleed constantly. It's not that we're not plugged into Yahshua, but that we are constantly being sucked dry of the resurrection life and its fullness that He promised.
- Whether it's people, organization, land, or whatever our loss, it takes the fruit of the Spirit from us, squeezes out the juice and leaves us with the desiccated rind.
- But is the very opposite of the woman of valor in Proverbs 31 and what she is meant to be.

- She was meant to move gracefully within the life flow, not be stuck somewhere, unable to progress.
- Although most English translations compare her worth far above that of rubies, the Hebrew text compares her to pearls.
- The difference between the pearl and the ruby reveals the true nature of this woman of uniquely noble character.
- A ruby is a naturally occurring gemstone, created by reactive chemical processes.
- A pearl, however, is created through organic means and begins with an irritation.
- A speck of sand, an attacking parasite, even a damaged part of the oyster itself is coated with a creamy seal, building layer upon layer, until a beautiful smooth and rare treasure is formed.
- A woman who has overcome the annoyance, torments and trauma to develop a serene loveliness of personality is a woman of pearl-like grandeur.
- Like Mary, the mother of Yeshua, to whom it was prophesied that a sword would pierce her soul, many women have felt the stabs and spear thrusts of sudden, tragic loss.
- Or worse, the long slow agony of watching a loved one die or a relationship head into irreversible damage.
- These are "tumah" losses.
- Yet, as the result of such adversity, the woman who is "More Precious than Pearls" has soft edges, not hard faceted ones; she's been crafted into a different sort of gemstone altogether.

- She's become a jewel through adding layer on layer, as Peter advised in his second epistle: adding goodness to her faith, and to that goodness, knowledge, and to her knowledge, self-control, and to her self-control, perseverance, and to her perseverance godliness; and to her godliness, kindness and to her kindness, love.
- That's the rare transcendent beauty Yah sees when He looks down on our "tumah" and "dumah" and our death-loss and our silence as He waits for us to turn and seek His healing.
- What does Yah see?
- He sees a pearl.
- And, despite our feelings of alienation and distance from Him, that pearl is an ornament that He's always worn close to His heart.
- Prayer #7
- Aaronic Blessing:
 - The LORD bless you and keep you; The LORD make His face to shine upon you, and be gracious unto you; The LORD lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace. (Numbers 6:24-26 RSV)
 - YHWH will kneel before you presenting gifts and will guard you with a hedge of protection.
- BLESS
 - The Hebrew verb "Barakh", Strong's #1288 means to kneel as seen in Genesis 24:11.
 - When written in the piel form (piel is a verbal stem formation in Biblical Hebrew, usually indicated by a dagesh ((vowel point)) in the 2nd radical of the verb form), such as it is in the Aaronic Blessing, it means to show respect (usually translated as bless).

- However, as “respect” is an abstract word, we need to uncover its original concrete meaning, which we can do by examining other words related to this verb.
 - One such related word is the word “berekh” Strong’s #1288 meaning “knee”.
 - Another related Hebrew word is “berakhah” Strong’s #1293 meaning a gift or present.
 - It is to bring a gift to another while kneeling out of respect. The extended meaning of this word has to do with giving something of value to another.
 - Elohiym “respects” us by providing for our needs and we in turn, “respect” Elohiym by giving Him ourselves as His servants.
- KEEP**
- The Hebrews were a nomadic people raising livestock. It would not be uncommon for a shepherd to be out with his flock, away from the camp for the night. In order to protect his flock, the shepherd would construct a corral of thorn bushes.
 - The shepherd would then guard over the flock and the corral would be a hedge of protection around them. The Hebrew word for this is “shamiyr”.
 - Shamiyr, Strong’s #8068 and derived from the verb “Shamar” Strong’s #8104, which literally means to guard and protect, and is the word used in the Aaronic Blessing.
- FACE**

- The Hebrew word "paniym" Strong's #6440 means "face" but is always written in the plural form.
- Reflecting this idea of multiple faces of each person. This word can also mean "presence" or the "wholeness of being" of an individual.
- SHINE
- "Or" Strong's #215
- As a noun means "light" and as a verb, as it is used here, means to "give light" or "shine" and is equated with bringing about order as light illuminates or reveals what has been dark.
- GRACIOUS
- Most theologians will define "grace" as "unmerited favor," but notice the abstractness of these words.
- The Hebrew verb translated as gracious in the Aaronic blessing is the verb "chanan" Strong's #2603
- and is often paralleled with other Hebrew words meaning: help, being lifted up, finding refuge, strength and rescue.
- From a concrete Hebraic perspective, this verb means to "provide protection". Where does one run to for protection?
- The camp, which in Hebrew is "hanah" Strong's #2583
- a word related to "chanan".
- GRANT
- "Siym", Strong's #7760

- literally means to “set down in a fixed and arranged place.”

- **PEACE**

- When we hear the word peace, we usually associate this word to mean an absence of war or strife.

- However, the Hebrew word “Shalom” Strong’s #7965 has a very different meaning.

- The root of this word is “Shalem”, Strong’s #7999

- is usually used in the context of making restitution.

- When a person has caused another to become deficient in some way, such as a loss of livestock, it is the responsibility of the person who created the deficiency to restore what had been taken, lost or stolen.

- The verb “shalam” literally means to make whole or complete.

- The noun “shalom” has the more literal meaning of being in a state of wholeness, or being without deficiency.

- YHWH will kneel before you presenting gifts and will guard you with a hedge of protection.
- YHWH will illuminate the wholeness of His being toward you bringing order, and He will give you comfort and sustenance.
- YHWH will lift up His wholeness of being and look upon you and He will set in place all you need to be whole and complete.

- Many people are concerned about the phrase “kneel before you” as they cannot perceive Yah/God kneeling before us.

- We too often see Yah/God as the judge and ruler who sits high above us.

- But I see a more familial type of relationship with Yah/God being a Father along with a government type of relationship.
- Yah/God is the father of us all, agreed?
- Example: If my Grands came to me with a request, would I tower over them looking down upon them, or would I get down on their level by "kneeling" down and getting eye to eye with them.
- This passage may not be a literal kneeling down but a figurative one; but the common Hebrew way of expressing an abstract thought is through concrete means.

