

The Helper

Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." (Genesis 2:18)

In Genesis 2, God states that "it is not good that man should be alone," and God makes an *‘ezer* for Adam. The Hebrew word *‘ezer* is translated as 'helper' in the ESV or 'help meet' in the KJV. The word is used twice in the chapter and then throughout the Old Testament to refer to God as Israel's helper. And in most cases, it is God who helps deliver the people of God from their enemies (Exo 18:4). In Hosea 13:9, God describes Himself as Israel's helper. Nothing is demeaning about being described as a helper when Yahweh, Himself, is the primary helper. The word does not carry the baggage of inferiority or subservience. There are no negative connotations associated with *‘ezer* in Hebrew. Psalm 146:5 says, "How blessed is the one whose helper is the God of Jacob" (NET).

Help is to give assistance or support. For Adam, there needed to be someone to assist or support him, who complements him. Thus, God put Adam into a deep sleep and formed the first woman from a rib from Adam's side. At this point, God has created one man and one woman: two genders. Everything that is needed to be fruitful and multiply is present in these two. The woman complements the man; she will be Adam's lifetime helper. She is the wife God chose for Adam. Women marry men, and men marry women. The helper God made for Adam was not another male. When Adam saw Eve, he knew without any instruction from God that she was perfect for him. She was bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh, yet she wasn't a man, but she was from the man. This one was from a man but utterly different. This one should be called woman (2:23). Adam was in love.

It is not until chapter 3 that the woman is called Eve. The name Eve highlights explicitly the fact that the woman is a mother (3:20). Eve is a woman, Adam's wife, and in chapter 4, she is pregnant with Cain. Wife and mother highlight two essential roles women play in a flourishing society – but not the only roles. The description of the ideal wife in Proverbs 31:10-31 is incredible. She helps her husband, children, and neighbors. She is a provider and protector. She is brilliant, wise, thrifty, and industrious. "She considers a field and buys it; from her own income, she plants a vineyard" (v. 16, NET). The woman has a life in her household and outside of it. Judges 4:4 describes Deborah as a prophetess, a wife, and a judge of Israel.

In the New Testament, women have instrumental roles in the ministry of Christ. If the Son of God is going to hang on a tree for the sins of humans, He must be a human, requiring that He be born of a woman. Women serve as helpers in Jesus' adult ministry. Luke 8:3 records that Joanna and Susanna helped Jesus financially while being wives and probably mothers. Matthew 27:55-56 records that "There were also many women there, looking on from a distance, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him, among whom were Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joseph and the mother of the sons of Zebedee." The words 'ministering to him' describe helping Jesus. They were Jesus' helpers. These helpers were the first to see the empty tomb and to hear the message that Christ rose from the grave (Luke 28).

Women help their husbands, their children, each other, their church, their neighbors, and society as a whole. Adam was alone, and it was not good. So, God made a helper complementing him. In John 14, Jesus is prepping the disciples for His imminent departure from the earth, and He lets them know He will not leave them alone. They will not be orphans. Jesus is going to ask the Father to give the disciples a *paraklētos* (Greek). Both the ESV and NASB translate this word as "helper". The Strong's Greek Lexicon states that the word *paraklētos*, in the broadest sense, is a "helper, succorer, aider, and assistant." The Holy Spirit is to the disciple of Christ what the woman is to the husband, the family, the church, and society.

Acts 18:26 records that when Priscilla and Aquila heard Apollos, "they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately." Priscilla helped her husband disciple Apollos. Women help in the church in a myriad of roles except for the office of elder and deacon (1Ti 3). Nothing in the Bible prohibits women from working outside of the home, and nothing in Scripture specifically identifies occupations and careers women, in particular, cannot pursue. Truly the man who "finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the LORD" (Pro 18:22).