



In His Image

Jen Wilkin

WOMEN'S STUDY GUIDE

Welcome to your Mercy Hill Women's Summer Study!

We are so excited to see what God can do with the 6 weeks that we have set aside to pursue knowing Him deeper and growing in our understanding of how He defines womanhood. This summer, through the study of Scripture, reading of *In His Image*, independent study questions, Scripture memory, and group discussion, we will ask God to reveal to us who He is calling us to be.

In His Image is written in response to the question, "What is God's will for my life?" In the introduction, the author challenges us to focus less on the question, "What should I do?" and instead turn our attention to "Who should I be?" In short, the answer is that we are called to sanctification for the purpose of reflecting God's character.

As we seek to define biblical womanhood this summer, anything less than this calling to reflect God's character would fall short. We believe that God created man and woman with equal value, as co-heirs in Christ, yet with distinct design and roles. Uniquely created by God, both men and women possess distinct ways of reflecting His character.

What To Expect

For six weeks, you will gather with a small group of women to discuss what God's word says about biblical womanhood. As mentioned above, we will also be reading *In His Image* by Jen Wilkin.

Before each gathering, there will be assigned Scripture readings along with two chapters of the book, *In His Image*. Consider reading the chapters of Scripture multiple times during the week in hopes of uncovering things you haven't noticed before. Reading scripture repetitively gives God a chance to stir things in our heart, speak to us, and helps us move from comprehension to interpretation, then application. At the end of each chapter of *In His Image*, you will find questions for personal reflection. These are intended for you to complete on your own. While they are not the group discussion questions, they will help prepare you for meaningful discussion together.

In the pages ahead you will find a group guide for each week. This is meant to guide your time together as a group and will include:

- A light-hearted conversation starter
- Discussion Questions
- Helpful notes from scripture reading
- Application

Reading Plan:

Week:	Scripture Reading:	<i>In His Image</i> Chapters:
One	Genesis 2 & 3	Introduction & God Most Holy
Two	Luke 10:25-42, Matthew 5:13-16, Psalm 34	God Most Loving & God Most Good
Three	Genesis 6-8 & 18-19, 2 Chronicles 33, Romans 5	God Most Just & God Most Merciful
Four	Titus 2 & Proverbs 31:10-31	God Most Gracious & God Most Faithful
Five	1 Peter 3, John 1:1-18 & 1 John 1	God Most Patient & God Most Truthful
Six	1 Kings 3, Romans 12, James 3:13-18	God Most Wise & Conclusion

A Note to Leaders

We are so glad that you have stepped out in obedience to lead this summer study. Whether this is your first time leading something like this or you have led countless studies before, we are praying for you!

Our prayer is that, as you study God's Word to prepare to lead others, you would experience a sweet and deep connection with the Lord. We are also praying that, over the next six weeks, you would see fruit from the seeds being sown in the hearts of the women in your group.

And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. - 2 Corinthians 9:8

We want you to know that you are not alone. The Lord has called you to this and He is faithful to equip you both for it and through it. He will be with you every step of the way.

If you have any questions or need help throughout your study, please reach out to your campus pastor. We trust you to lead your group well throughout this summer study and to make decisions based on the unique dynamics and needs of your group. The suggestions included are simply meant to serve as helpful ideas and starting points as you lead.

Suggestions for Leading

- Start your personal study time with prayer, asking the Lord to reveal Himself to you through His Word, and pray regularly for the women in your group.
- Create a group text and use it to send simple reminders and encouragement throughout the study.
- At your first meeting, establish your group as a safe and confidential place for sharing.
- Keep your meetings simple and consistent each week, beginning with prayer and starting and ending on time.
- Lead by example in sharing and participation, while allowing space and silence for others to process and respond.

We're praying for you and excited to see what God has in store for your group in the weeks ahead!

Week One

Scripture Reading: Genesis 2 & 3

In His Image Reading: Introduction & Ch. 1 - God Most Holy

Start the Conversation

What is one trend or cultural moment you look back on now and think, “What were we all thinking?” (over-plucked eyebrows anyone?)

Helpful Notes from the Scripture Reading:

- Genesis 2 begins by completing the creation account, where God establishes the pattern of Sabbath rest by resting on the seventh day.
- Beginning in verse 4, the text zooms back in on day 6 to give more details about the creation of man and woman.
- Women are intentionally created in God’s image with equal value but unique purpose.
- God promises hope and redemption through the woman.

Discussion Questions:

1. We read our origin story this week in Genesis chapters two and three. You might have read these chapters before; did anything stand out in a new light as you considered God’s design for womanhood?

2. This summer, as we seek to discover how God’s Word defines biblical womanhood, why is this study so important? Why does it matter that we allow God rather than culture, feelings, or worldly expectations, to define womanhood?

3. We know that God places equal value on male and female (Genesis 1:27). How do we begin to see the beauty of God’s distinct design and roles for men and women in Genesis 2 & 3?

4. Why do you think our culture has such a hard time celebrating or even accepting the differences in God's design for men and women? In what ways have you personally been tempted to believe cultural lies about womanhood, identity, or fulfillment? How has God used His word to renew your thinking with truth?

5. "Growing in Holiness means growing in our hatred of sin." (p.28) How have you seen this to be true in your walk with Christ as a woman seeking to reflect God's character?

Application

Think through the cultural, family, or other outside influences that have shaped your view of womanhood. Take inventory of which ideas align with God's design and ask the Lord to reveal any thoughts or beliefs about womanhood that do not glorify Him or honor His perfect design.

Notes:

Week Two

Scripture Reading: Luke 10:25-42, Matthew 5:13-16, Psalm 34

In His Image Reading: Ch. 2 - God Most Loving & Ch. 3 - God Most Good

Start the Conversation

What's one small thing that instantly makes you feel cared for or loved?

Helpful Notes from the Scripture Reading:

- In the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus teaches us that to love our neighbor might come at a cost.
- Jesus uses this parable to help us see that our neighbor is not limited by preference, people who are easy to love, status, or ethnicity.
- We see from this parable that loving others how God calls us to might come at a cost. It is out of gratitude for the Love that our heavenly father has lavished on us that we are moved to compassion and able to love our neighbor no matter the cost.
- Immediately following this parable about loving our neighbor, God's word teaches us what it looks like to love our Lord and Savior well through the quick 5-verse exchange between Martha, Mary, and Jesus.
- Jesus values Mary's appreciation for sitting in His presence over the busy tasks that distract Martha and pull her away from Him.
- The verses in Matthew 5 are pulled from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. He is instructing a large crowd of people about what it looks like to live for God's kingdom.
- In the time that Jesus walked the earth, salt had high value for its preserving qualities and ability to enhance flavor. Jesus uses this analogy to teach how believers should preserve truth, goodness, and righteousness in a broken world.
- Jesus teaches believers to shine His light publicly. Christianity is not meant to be lived in isolation.

Discussion Questions:

1. How did the reading of God Most Loving paired with Psalm 34 help you deepen your understanding of God's love?

2. How does our culture's definition of love cheapen or distort our understanding of God's love? How can this impact the way women view relationships, identity, marriage, or fulfillment?

3. As women, how might we be uniquely susceptible to believing the world's lies about love? In what practical ways can we guard our hearts and minds with truth as we pursue biblical womanhood?

4. We are called to love God first and people second. Thinking back to Luke 10, what are unique challenges women face that keep us from loving God wholeheartedly or loving others faithfully?

5. Sometimes it's easier to show God's love and goodness to our friends, coworkers, or even strangers than to those closest to us. Thinking of our God-given roles in the family as women, how should God's love and goodness overflow into the way we serve, speak to, and care for our families?

Application

Share with the group an opportunity that you can take this week to shine the light of Jesus and show the goodness of God to someone in your life.

Notes:

Week Three

Scripture Reading: Genesis 6-8 & 18-19, 2 Chronicles 33, Romans 5

In His Image Reading: Ch. 4 - God Most Just & Ch. 5 - God Most Merciful

Start the Conversation

When you were growing up, what was one household rule that felt completely unfair at the time... but now you understand why your parents had it?

Helpful Notes from the Scripture Reading:

- Grieved by the wickedness of man, God determines to wipe out mankind. God is holy and just and must punish sin seriously.
- Noah was a righteous man, faithfully living for the Lord while rejecting the sinful culture around him.
- God gives Noah specific instructions for how to build the ark for him and his family to escape the flood.
- God promises to establish his covenant with Noah, and Noah obeys God to the fullest.
- The animals and all of Noah's family are safe in the Ark when the flood arrives. Despite not knowing the timeline of their departure from the ark, Noah trusts the Lord.
- Noah responds to God's deliverance by worshipping Him.
- King Manasseh leads the people of Judah into rebellion against God.
- God allows him to be taken captive by Babylon and Manasseh prays a prayer of repentance to the Lord. God Restores Manasseh to Jerusalem and he turns the heart of the people back to God.
- Refusing to humble himself before the Lord, Amon is killed by his servants.
- The story of Manasseh is one of repentance and restoration while his son's prideful heart leads to his own destruction.
- Romans 5 teaches about all that is available to those of us who are in Christ.

Discussion Questions:

1. Was there anything new that caught your attention as you studied the account of Noah and the flood in Scripture? How did this passage deepen your understanding of God's character and His relationship with humanity?

2. How do you see both God's justice and mercy displayed through the Old Testament passages from this week's reading?

3. How do you think God uniquely designed women to reflect his qualities of justice and mercy to the world?

4. In moments of conflict, are you quicker to justify yourself or humbly acknowledge and repent of your sin?

5. What have you learned about Christ and the gospel through forgiving someone who never asked for your forgiveness?

Application

Catch yourself this week before you give into the temptation of keeping score in relationships or justifying your own sin and pray instead to thank God for showing you mercy and ask Him to help you show His mercy to others.

The teaching on wise mercy (p.80-81) was helpful in drawing the line between forgiving how Christ forgave us and allowing ourselves to be a victim. If you are in a situation that you realize now is condoning yours or someone else's victimization, reach out to your campus pastor for help.

Notes:

Week Four

Scripture Reading: Titus 2 & Proverbs 31:10-31

In His Image Reading: Ch. 6 - God Most Gracious & Ch. 7 - God Most Faithful

Start the Conversation

What is your funniest “fail” of a recipe, craft, or DIY project that looked super easy online but didn’t turn out the way you expected?

Helpful Notes from the Scripture Reading:

- Biblical womanhood is learned and passed down from one generation of women to the next. God’s word gives high value and purpose to older women.
- Godly character matters more than outward appearances.
- Everyday faithfulness in our home deeply matters to God.
- God promises to establish his covenant with Noah, and Noah obeys God to the fullest.
- Our spiritual maturity is marked by self-control in our speech, emotions, desires, and reactions.
- God’s grace teaches us and strengthens us to walk humbly with God.
- God places high value on women and Godly men view them as valuable as well.
- Trustworthiness, dependability, and faithfulness lead to strong relationships and glorify God.
- God honors faithfulness in our ordinary responsibilities, using our gifts to serve others, and obedience.
- Outward beauty fades with age but character lasts.
- The fear of the Lord is the foundation for our life and everything we do flows from it.

Discussion Questions:

1. Scripture passages like Titus 2 and Proverbs 31 can sometimes feel like a long list of expectations and our attention goes straight to all the ways we don’t measure up. How did studying these passages alongside God’s grace and His faithfulness shape your perspective?

2. We learned that God’s grace is sufficient not only to save us, but also to teach, strengthen, and transform us. What has this looked like in your own walk with the Lord?

3. In Titus 2, we find specific teaching for how Christian women are called to live. Which aspects feel especially challenging? Did anything surprise you or convict you as you studied deeper?

4. As women, what are some “respectable” or “small” sins that we may be more tempted to excuse, minimize, or overlook? How can we encourage one another toward faithfulness in temptation over these things?

5. Read Philippians 1:6. How does knowing that God is faithful to complete the good work He began in us encourage you when you feel discouraged in your pursuit of Christlikeness?

Application

God’s will for our life is that we be faithful as he is faithful. Faithful to him. Faithful to others. Faithful in this moment. Faithful to the end.” (p. 107) Which of these areas do you find most challenging right now? If the Scripture or teaching from this week brought conviction, take this opportunity to share with the group and invite them to pray for you.

Notes:

Week Five

Scripture Reading: 1 Peter 3, John 1:1-18, & 1 John 1

In His Image Reading: Ch. 8 - God Most Patient & Ch. 9 - God Most Truthful

Start the Conversation

We're starting the conversation today with a light-hearted confession. What is one ridiculous thing that is more likely to send you over the edge than even a more serious offense? (Road rage like our beloved author, Jen Wilkin? Or loud chewing?)

Helpful Notes from the Scripture Reading:

- Biblical submission within marriage is not a matter of lesser value or importance, it is a high calling to a life of humility and respect.
- Submission is an opportunity to follow Christ's example as He submitted to the Father even to the point of death.
- Women are called to prioritize inner beauty (gentleness, quiet confidence, godly character, & peace in Christ) over outward appearance.
- The way that women are called to live their lives is a powerful opportunity to influence others for the gospel without using words.
- Women are called to speak truth with grace and humility.
- In 1 Peter 3:7, referring to women as the "weaker vessel" is not a statement of lesser value, but a call for husbands to treat their wives with honor, care, and understanding as co-heirs with Christ. These verses acknowledge the God-given differences between men and women while emphasizing their equal worth before God. In its cultural context, where women were often more vulnerable socially and physically, Peter calls men to sacrificially honor, cherish, and protect their wives in a Christlike way.
- 1 John 1 encourages us to be honest in our walk with the Lord. Walking in the light leads to freedom.
- Walking with Christ means walking in community with other believers.
- While hidden sin brings death to our walk with God, confession leads to freedom from sin and allows God the opportunity to transform us.
- Biblical womanhood is marked by humility and progress, not perfection.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why do you think moral relativism is so widely accepted in our culture today? Why is it dangerous for believers, especially women, to slowly adopt this way of thinking?

2. 1 Peter 3:7 was a controversial teaching in its time because it elevated and valued women in a culture that often did not. Today, this same verse can be controversial for very different reasons. Why do you think that is? Are you ever tempted to trust cultural messages about womanhood, marriage, or identity more than the truth of God's word? As truth-bearers, how can we help one another combat lies with biblical truth?

3. As you reflected on God's calling toward Biblical womanhood through this week's Scripture readings and considered His patience toward us, how were you encouraged? In what ways have you experience God's patience in your life and spiritual growth?

4. Discuss some seasons or experiences that can be uniquely challenging in womanhood that have the potential to produce long-suffering in us. When we compare the unique challenges or hardships of womanhood and manhood, there can be a temptation to resent our differences. How can our patience in these unique seasons become an act of worship to God?

5. Being able to identify what is false depends on knowing what is true. By God's grace, are you growing in your understanding of His word? Are you prioritizing time in Scripture and prayer? How have you seen your time in God's word over the last six weeks change your inner thought life and even your actions?

Application

Christ is our example of patience with sinners, patience in circumstances, and patience in suffering." (p. 117) Confess to the Lord and share with your group or a trusted friend which of these areas is most challenging for you right now. Ask God to reveal ways impatience may be leading you toward sin and invite others to pray for you as you seek to grow in Christlike patience.

Notes:

Week Six

Scripture Reading: 1 Kings 3, Romans 12, James 3:13-18

In His Image Reading: Ch. 10 - God Most Wise & Conclusion

Start the Conversation

Everyone answers: Over the past six weeks, we've studied ten characteristics of God. In this week's reading, God grants Solomon wisdom when he asks for it. Without overthinking it, if God instantly enabled you to perfectly reflect one of those ten characteristics in your everyday life, which one would you choose and why?

Helpful Notes from the Scripture Reading:

- Asking God for wisdom in humility is only possible when we have a right view of ourselves before God .
- Solomon's request for wisdom and discernment was for the purpose of leading His people well and glorifying God.
- God was pleased with Solomon's request, and He is pleased when our desires align with His heart.
- God's wisdom is needed for navigating difficult relationships, decisions, parenting, leadership, challenging trials, and everyday responsibilities.
- Our lives are meant to be completely surrendered to God as an act of worship.
- God transforms his children by renewing our minds.
- God has designed all of us with unique gifts and roles in which we are intended to serve His kingdom with.
- God's Wisdom is set apart from worldly wisdom and helps us to reflect His image in how we respond to those around us.
- Christians are called to be peacemakers.

Discussion Questions:

1. Read 1 Kings 3:9–12 and James 1:5. What is the difference between asking God for wisdom versus asking for more knowledge or information? How does walking in obedient wisdom honor the Lord, rather than delaying action while waiting for more complete certainty when God has already made His truth clear?
2. Have you ever struggled to move forward in obedience because you wanted more clarity even though God had already given wisdom through His word? Are you currently facing a situation where fear or uncertainty is keeping you from faithfully obeying God?

3. God honored Solomon's request for wisdom because it reflected God's heart for His people. What does it look like for a woman's desires to become aligned with God's heart rather than the expectations of the world?

4. God has uniquely gifted each woman for His kingdom purposes. How does comparison keep women from faithfully walking in the role God has given them?

5. Read 2 Timothy 1:1-5. How does Paul's mention of the generational faithfulness of Timothy's mother and grandmother challenge and encourage you to reflect God's character within your home and relationships?

Application

Over the last six weeks, we have been challenged to grow in holiness, love, goodness, justice, mercy, grace, faith, patience, truth, and wisdom so that we might more clearly reflect God's image to the world. This is God's will for our lives and an accurate picture of Biblical womanhood.

Which characteristic of God do you most desire to grow in right now? (It may be the same one you shared at the beginning of our time together, but it doesn't have to be.) Over the next four weeks, commit to praying specifically for growth in that area, meditating on related Scripture, and asking the Lord to transform your heart. Share your goal with a friend for accountability and set a time to reconnect in four weeks to encourage one another and reflect on how God has been at work.

Notes:



MERCY HILL
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