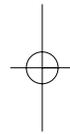
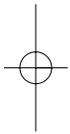


# DAMSELS IN DISTRESS



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Biblical Solutions  
for Problems Women Face

MARTHA PEACE

  
P U B L I S H I N G  
P.O. BOX 817 • PHILLIPSBURG • NEW JERSEY 08865-0817

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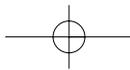
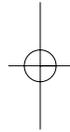
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To  
Patty Thorn  
*because she shows her love for the Lord  
by her servant's heart*



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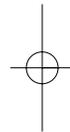
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impacted me so much at the time that years later, as I was developing my material, I remembered his sermons. Howard gave me a copy of his sermons and was glad for me to use it.

Lou Priolo is a biblical counselor in Montgomery, Alabama, where he is on staff at Eastwood Presbyterian Church and is the director of Eastwood Counseling Ministries. Lou, along with Howard Eyrich, trained me in biblical counseling at the Atlanta Biblical Counseling Center. It was there that Lou taught me to counsel someone who was being manipulated or manipulative. I am grateful that Lou allowed me to adapt some of his material for this book.

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# Introduction

It is a sunny, warm day in Peachtree City, Georgia, and I am up early preparing for the ladies who will be in my home today for counseling. I run around making sure everything is reasonably straight and that there is extra toilet paper in the bathroom. The special hazelnut cream coffee that I love is brewing in the coffee maker. My favorite place to counsel is sitting around the kitchen table with my Bible, counseling notes, and coffee in front of me. Before anyone arrives, I have to remove the giant ceramic rooster that sits in the middle of the table so that we ladies can see each other. One of the women coming for counseling today is new to me so I do not know what her problem is—but the Lord does, and I have already asked Him for wisdom to help her.

It is almost always difficult for a new counselee to come to me (a stranger to her) and begin to tell personal details of her life and her problems. If the problem were not distressful for her, she would not even come. So, I try to make it as easy as I can by offering her coffee and trying to make her comfortable around the table. After some general chit-chat, I usually begin the counseling session with a question such as, “How can I help you?” As she talks to me, and I ask further questions, often I will know by the end of the first session what her problem is, what she has already done about it, and what she would like for me to do about it.

*Damsels in Distress* is about some of those problems. And even though a counselee may feel overwhelmed at the enormity of her problem, there is always a biblical solution. So, for

the problems addressed in this book, my prayer for the ladies that sit around my kitchen table seeking biblical counsel, as well as the readers of this book, is that God will use these biblical principles and practical applications to greatly bless you and to glorify Himself.



## Casting All My Cares on Whom?

Shortly before I became a Christian, I had so many problems that it would have been difficult to name them all. Afterward, I realized that my biggest problem had been solved because God had cleansed me from and forgiven me for my sin. It would be wonderful to report that from then on I had no problems. However, that's not true. Fortunately for me, God provided resources to help me either solve or cope with those problems. The resources were being a Christian, the Scriptures, learning about the character of God, and my friend, Katrina Barnes.

### Being a Christian

At the moment I became a Christian, God supernaturally accomplished several things all at once. One accomplishment was that He cleansed me of my past, present, and future sins. Theologians call that Christ's substitutionary atoning work on the cross. In other words, the Lord Jesus Christ took the punishment for sin that I deserved and gave *me* credit for *His* righteousness.

All of us like sheep have gone astray,  
Each of us has turned to his own way;

But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all  
To fall on Him. (Isa. 53:6)

He [God] made Him [Jesus Christ] who knew no sin to  
be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the right-  
eousness of God in Him. (2 Cor. 5:21)

I knew I did not earn or deserve my salvation, but that God  
in His mercy had made me right with Him “as a gift by His grace  
through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus . . .” (Rom.  
3:24). (For a much more in-depth Bible study on how to become  
a Christian, see the Appendix: Salvation Work Sheets.)

God also gave me a new heart so that I would not only  
believe the gospel but also become aware of my sin, be motivated  
to glorify God, and want to obey Him. The new heart is given by  
the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit.

He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have  
done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by  
the *washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy  
Spirit*, whom He poured out upon us richly through  
Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His  
grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of  
eternal life. (Titus 3:5–7)

God literally indwells every believer to save them, help  
them, and keep them in His care. For those who are Christians,  
not only are their sins forgiven completely, but the grip that sin  
had over them prior to salvation also has been broken. Now they  
do not have to sin because God will supernaturally help them.  
The Bible says that *we are no longer slaves to sin* (see Rom. 6:6).  
Their motivation to solve problems biblically is out of *gratitude*

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to the Lord for what He has done on the cross. Their lives and thus their approach to their problems are lived out for His glory.

Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. (2 Cor. 5:17)

Next to being a Christian, the most precious resource God gave to help me was the Scriptures.

### **The Scriptures**

The Scriptures are God's Word, literally God-breathed, and profitable to teach us, correct us, and train us (see 2 Tim. 3:16–17). They are God's revelation of Himself to us. They contain God's commands and His encouragement. They tell us what He is like.

Reading the Bible as a new believer was amazing. Bible stories I had heard as a child took on new meaning. So did my problems. I found out that the Bible gives us very practical instruction on what to do about various problems. I discovered for the first time that I had real help and hope. As a new believer I worried that I would slip back into my old sins. What a tremendous relief it was when someone pointed out the following promise:

No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it. (1 Cor. 10:13)

The word for *temptation* in the Greek can also be translated *pressure* or *trial*. In other words, no *pressure* or *trial* has overtaken us except those common to others, and God is faithful to not allow us to be *pressured* or *tried* beyond what we are able to bear. He will ultimately provide a way of escape and in the meanwhile, give us grace to endure it. What a precious promise this is, written specifically to Christians to give us hope regardless of our circumstances!

Another special promise for Christians is found in Romans 8:28–30:

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.

Most of us are probably familiar with the promise that *God causes all things to work together for good*. What we might not be familiar with is the next phrase in that sentence—*to those who love God*. *Those who love God* are Christians who obey His Word. As a result, God somehow supernaturally uses good as well as bad circumstances to help mold us into Christlike character. There is nothing, however painful, that we must go through in vain. God will not only help us, but He will also use all things for our good and for His glory. What a comforting thought when we are in a trial or undergoing terrific pressure or temptation!

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## Learning about the Character of God

As a new believer, my pastor encouraged me to read A. W. Pink's book *The Attributes of God*. That book was a great blessing to me because it not only taught me about God's character but also helped me to begin to think through issues from the perspective of God's character. Instead of seeing my circumstances in a vacuum, I could remember, along with many of His other attributes, that God loved me, was compassionate, and was faithful to keep His promises. This always gave me hope even if my problem was not solved immediately.

God loves us.

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (Rom. 5:8)

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom. 8:38–39)

See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. (1 John 3:1)

We love, because He first loved us. (1 John 4:19)

God is compassionate.

Therefore the LORD longs to be gracious to you,  
And there He waits on high to have compassion on you.  
For the LORD is a God of justice;  
How blessed are all those who long for Him. (Isa.  
30:18)

Seeing the people, He [the Lord Jesus] felt compassion  
for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like  
sheep without a shepherd. (Matt. 9:36)

The LORD is compassionate and gracious,  
Slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness. (Ps.  
103:8)

So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the  
man who runs, but on God who has mercy. (Rom. 9:16)

But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love  
with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our  
transgressions, made us alive together with Christ. . . .  
(Eph. 2:4–5)

God is faithful.

God is faithful, through whom you were called into fel-  
lowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. (1 Cor. 1:9)

Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to  
pass. (1 Thess. 5:24)

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If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself. (2 Tim. 2:13)

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. (Heb. 10:23)

Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right. (1 Peter 4:19)

Learning about God and what He is like gave me greater stability and hope in my walk with the Lord. It gave me a compass to guide me as I thought through problems. And then God gave me another resource to cope, my friend Katrina.

**The Wounds of a Friend**

Katrina was my office mate when she and I taught nursing at a local college. She and her church family prayed for my salvation for the entire first year we worked together. In addition, Katrina witnessed to me on a regular basis. Instead of politely listening to her, I thought she was a nut, and I made my belief abundantly clear! She would often go home in tears, get all “prayed up,” and come back the next day talking about the Lord again. Being in that office with her was like being chained to the apostle Paul.

After the Lord saved me (Katrina said that was the happiest day of her life!), I wanted to hear what she knew about the Lord. She began to teach me many wonderful, precious truths from the Scriptures—and then one day something unusual happened. We had completed a day with nursing students at the hospital, and she walked up to me in the parking lot of the hospital with

her Bible in hand. She said, "I need to tell you something." So, we got in the car, and she read me the following verse:

Faithful are the wounds of a friend,  
But deceitful are the kisses of an enemy. (Prov. 27:6)

I had never heard that before, and I asked, "What does that mean?" She explained that a true friend will tell you the truth even if it *wounds* or hurts you, but an enemy will only tell you what you want to hear. She said, "I have to tell you something."

Perceiving it wasn't going to be good news and probably rolling my eyes, I said, "What . . . ?" Then she told me that as a Christian now I had to stop doing or saying whatever it was I had done wrong that particular day. Not wanting to believe her, I said, "Show me in the Bible." Well, Katrina was armed and ready. She showed me verses and gently taught me not only that day but also many other days the basic biblical truths I needed to know. She was, and still is to me, a remarkably faithful friend.

Katrina's *wounds* temporarily embarrassed me, but I knew she was right, and I wanted so badly to honor the Lord that I saw them as good for me and realized that she really did love me. It was humbling, but God poured out His grace on me and helped me to learn and grow in His grace. Since then, God has given me a desire to be this kind of true friend to other women and to teach them what He has taught me. That's why I wrote this book.

There may be times as you read parts of this book that you will feel uncomfortable or even embarrassed as you see how God wants you to respond in a different way to a particular problem. If that happens, pray and seek refuge in the Lord,

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and He will help you and give you grace to change your thoughts or actions so that you may better give Him glory.

If you become discouraged, it may help to turn back to this page and remind yourself of the following verses:

“Come unto Me [the Lord Jesus Christ], all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” (Matt. 11:28–30)

But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. (James 1:5)

“Peace I [the Lord Jesus Christ] leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.” (John 14:27)

“Do not fear, for I am with you;  
Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God.  
I will strengthen you, surely I will help you,  
Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.  
(Isa. 41:10)

But as for me, the nearness of God is my good; . . .  
That I may tell of all Your works. (Ps. 73:28)

God is our refuge and strength,  
A very present help in trouble. (Ps. 46:1)

This I recall to my mind,  
Therefore I have hope. The LORD's lovingkindnesses  
indeed never cease,  
For His compassions never fail.  
They are new every morning;  
Great is Your faithfulness.  
"The LORD is my portion," says my soul,  
"Therefore I have hope in Him." (Lam. 3:21–24)

Trust in the LORD with all your heart  
And do not lean on your own understanding.  
In all your ways acknowledge Him,  
And He will make your paths straight. (Prov. 3:5–6)

The LORD is my shepherd,  
I shall not want.  
He makes me lie down in green pastures;  
He leads me beside quiet waters.  
He restores my soul;  
He guides me in the paths of righteousness  
For His name's sake. (Ps. 23:1–3)

Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has  
passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us  
hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest  
who cannot sympathize with our weakness, but One  
who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet with-  
out sin. Therefore let us draw near with confidence to  
the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and  
find grace to help in time of need. (Heb. 4:14–16)

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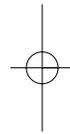
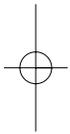
## Conclusion

Just because I had become a Christian did not mean that I did not have problems. I still do, as a matter of fact! It was an incredible relief and joy, however, to discover that God had provided resources to help me. Being a Christian gave me an entirely new perspective on life. The Scriptures became a light to guide me as I searched them to find answers. Thinking about the character of God comforted me and gave me great hope. And last, but not least, God provided my friend Katrina to teach me and disciple me. She is my true friend.

As we seek comfort and refuge in the Lord to cope and learn how to solve the problems addressed in this book, God promises to give us grace to help us if we humble ourselves before Him. He is the one upon whom we can cast all of our cares.

Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety on Him,  
*because He cares for you.*

(1 Peter 5:6-7)



# PART ONE



## Biblical Solutions for Problems with Others



*“Let all that you do be done in love.”*  
1 Corinthians 16:14