



*More Than Enchanting:  
Breaking Through  
Barriers to Influence  
Your World*

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## Woman, Thy Name Is *Ezer*

The LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.” (Genesis 2:18)

This verse evokes a range of emotions, from satisfaction to disillusionment to sheer frustration and anger. Some women step back from the Bible at this point, writing it off as an archaic text and therefore irrelevant. Some go further, seeing this verse as one example of where the Bible—and therefore God—is misogynistic and has nothing positive to say about women, and considering the Bible a religious tool for their oppression.

Others have raised the concern that it suggests that a woman is incomplete and has nothing to contribute to society unless she is married. What happens if you are single, divorced, widowed? Does a woman have no worth or value outside of her marital status? It raises the issues of what this means for the women with high-power careers, with major influence in their companies, of the entrepreneurial businesswomen. Should they expect or desire to rise to the top of their profession if they are “helpers”? Others just find it a bit confusing in light of the Scriptures themselves, wondering how women like Deborah, Phoebe and Lydia were helpers in the contemporary sense of the word.

If ever there was a word lost in translation, it is the word “helper.” It’s a word that requires deeper study to grasp the depth of its meaning (not to find a meaning that we feel comfortable with, just simply to understand what it means). A closer look at the word “helper” in Old Testament Hebrew illuminates what has been at first glance an alienating verse for many men and women.

The Hebrew word translated “helper” or, in older translations of the Bible, “helpmeet,” is the word *ezer* (think “razor”). There are over a hundred references of the root of this word in the Old Testament, and about twenty-one references that use the identical word. Incredibly, the vast majority of times that this word appears are in reference to God, often when he is delivering his people. The woman is an *ezer*, and so is God. We’re made in his image, and his potential resides in us!

# CUT

## BOOK EXCERPT



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*Ezer* is a powerful word. Scholar R. David Freeman observes that it is a combination of two words, one meaning “to rescue,” “to save,” the other meaning “to be strong.” Dr. Walter Kaiser, theologian and author, notes that *ezer* appears in the Old Testament often in parallel with words denoting strength or power.

The word *ezer* does not mean that a woman should never be an assistant, an ally, a supporter. There is nothing pejorative about a man or a woman helping someone, or being called by the Lord to fulfill that role! It’s always a privilege to serve him as we serve others. But it is also crucial that we understand that in the biblical definition of “helper” the *ezer* can also fulfill a different role. It seems that *ezer* has more to do with what helping looks like, because it doesn’t seem to suggest anything about hierarchy. In some instances, *ezer* is a word with military connotations; the *ezer* is also a warrior. In this context, help comes from one who has the power and strength to provide it. *Ezer* is a verb as well as a noun, meaning “to defend, protect, surround and cherish.” The *ezer* is an amazing mix of strength, power, proactivity and vulnerability.

—Adapted from chapter one, “The Blueprint”