

# Upright Woman



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## Pure Religion

by Lisa Reed



Lisa is a retired school teacher from Saint Joseph, Michigan. She, her husband Mark and daughter Kelsey attend services at the Benton Harbor church of Christ in the spring and summers. Mark and Lisa are members at Southwest in Austin during the winters. She loves to study God's word, garden, can vegetables, ride motorcycles, play tennis, camp and fish. Let's just say she enjoys the retired life!

Before discussing James 1:27, I would like to back up and examine the thoughts in verse 17. Think of all the spiritual blessings we have from our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. These gifts are not given to us because we deserve them. They are given because our Heavenly Father loves us and knows what we need. Keep in mind the magnitude of this concept and how much it should determine the course of our actions (2 Cor. 5:14-15; Rom. 2:4-5). If we want His continual care and forgiveness, we need to exhibit this to others (Matt. 6:14-15; 7:12).

When we became children of God, we were cleansed by Christ's blood. This is the Greek word Katharos, which means "pure" (1 Jn. 1:7). We need to continue pleasing the Father by showing love to those in need of help, the fatherless and widows (Jas 1:27). God has always been concerned with the helpless, poor, strangers, and elderly and so should we (Deut. 10:17-19; Lev. 19:13-15). Our helping others is not just for widows and orphans but all mankind. When we "visit," we are actually seeking to help others. This is not necessarily confined to the physical but also spiritual, which may include sharing the gospel (Lk. 1:68, 78-79; Acts 15:14). We are looking for an opportunity to do good (Gal. 6:10).

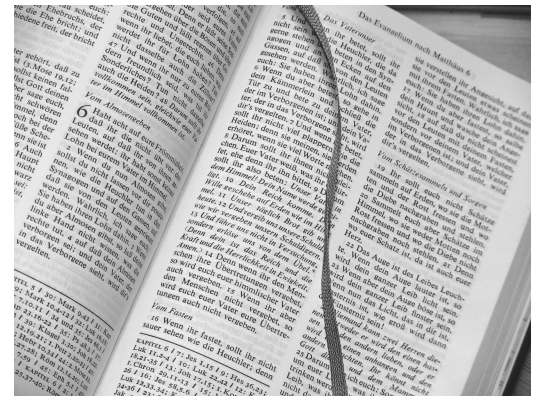
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Philippians 2:2-5 gives us a clear picture in regards to the condition of the heart. Having “the same love” for others with humility and “in lowliness of mind” means putting others first. You don’t do for others hoping to get something in return, nor should the reason of our actions be to make ourselves look good (Matt. 5:16, 6:1-4). That was the problem with the Pharisees in Matthew 23:5-7. When we serve others, we are doing it for God and not for the praise of men (Phil. 2:12-15, Matt. 25:34-40). The appearance of doing good may seem right in men’s eyes and still miss God’s standard if we don’t show mercy (I Cor. 13:1-3; Matt. 23:23). If we are not careful, we can entangle ourselves in worldly thoughts and become “spotted.” Then our religion has become “vain” or empty (Is. 1:11-18, 1 Cor. 3:20). Paul begs us in Romans 12:1-2 to be “holy” and “pure” in our sacrifice to the God. This transformation is ongoing. Think about the words in the song ‘Is Thy Heart Right with God?’ and remember it is God who will judge the hearts of men (Ps. 44:21, Rom. 2:16). How horrible it will be in the judgment if the heart is not in tune with God, and we hear the words: “Depart from me” (Matt. 25:41). Let’s focus on our actions so we can hear: “Come ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matt. 25:34).

## Strengthening Our Brethren

by Dana Stucky

Have you taken a look at the Church lately? Have you really taken a look? When you look past the elders, the deacons, the preacher, and the people you talk to every week, who do you see? So often there are Christians on the fringes of Christianity that get overlooked – the questioning, the struggling, the weak.



Are we truly seeing those that need our support? Romans 15:1 says that "We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves." We have a responsibility towards those who are not strong in the faith. Paul is instructing the brethren here to be patient with those who lack understanding. Not that we should be tolerant of doctrinal error, but that we should be understanding of their scruples. So what can we do to help our brethren that are less mature?

Romans 12:10-13 gives us a good list of ways to strengthen the bond between members of God's family, and the more of these we use with our weaker brethren, the better we can build them up. "Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality." Let us show hospitality by inviting them into our homes. The closer we are to our weaker brethren, the better we can see the struggles and trials they are dealing with, and the better we can help them. Pray for them, and WITH them when possible. Share your zeal for the Lord by inviting them to church events such as ladies' bible class and doorknocking campaigns.

Seeking out the members of our congregation that need our support is a way for stronger Christians to strengthen themselves as well. First Peter 4:8-10 reads: "Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace." Using our gifts and showing love to those who need it most can only serve to strengthen our own faith, and tighten the bonds of Christian brotherhood which is always a benefit.

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We must be actively seeking to bring in the sheep that are in danger of wandering away from the fold. Instead of seeing weak Christians as a liability, we need to see them as an opportunity for growth. Through our encouragement and involvement, we can aid our brethren in becoming mature members of the Lord's body.

## Words to Grow By

by Rachel Nash

Our society thrives off of finding dirt on people. Think about how quick we are to talk negatively about one another. We have to guard against this because our God commands our kindness.

How do we guard against this? We must start with our own hearts, by honestly evaluating the type of soil we are (Mk. 4:15-20). A good and responsive heart will go through the process and struggle of growth, while taking root in the scriptures. We continue to grow and the fruit of the Spirit, including kindness, begins to bloom (Gal. 5:22-23). Ephesians 4:32 says, "And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you." This is a verse which we often fail to self-apply.

Kindness is the spring board for many attributes and actions in Christianity. A wise woman separated the ideas of niceness and kindness as follows: "Being nice is doing something because you know you should; being kind is doing something because you have a genuine desire to be kind." That wise woman was my mother. Do we go through the motions because we know it is expected of us due to Christ's sacrifice for us? Or do we desire to serve, encourage, and forgive because we want to serve Christ in recognition that he didn't have to die on the cross for our sins.

We all want people to remember us for positive things, right? The woman of Proverbs 31, among many things in the chapter, is remembered for verse 26. "She opens her mouth with wisdom, and on her tongue is the law of kindness:" With what intent do we act? Does kindness lay on my tongue? On yours?

## Words of Wisdom

by Pat Surles

Grieving and rejoicing are not only a part of our physical life, but also our spiritual life. They are Biblical commands. Romans 12:15 says, "Rejoice with those that rejoice and weep with those that weep." In Galatians 6:2, Paul says to "Bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ."

It's easier to rejoice about good things. Weeping and comforting those who have lost a loved one or lost their job is not so easy. However, we must do both to fulfill scripture. We are to follow Christ's example and teachings. In John 13:15 Jesus says, "For I have given you an example that you should do as I've done to you." Jesus wept over Jerusalem's lack of repentance. Do we weep over the lost of this world? He wept at the death of Lazarus because of the sorrow of Mary and Martha. We can comfort simply by letting others see that we know they are hurting.

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## Be kind to one another

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Pat Surles is a mother of two sons, Greg and Garrett. She lives with Greg, Denise, and their two girls left at home (Hannah and Payton) in Big Spring, Texas where Greg preaches. She has 4 grandchildren and 1 great-grandchild, Nora, by Gregory II and her 2nd great is on the way to Jessica. Pat has taught Bible classes for 55 years and taught public school for 40 years. She enjoys reading as a hobby.

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## Upcoming Events

- September 8, 2018  
Adams St. Ladies' Day in  
Beeville, TX with LaKesha  
Garza
- September 15, 2018  
Ladies' Day at Southwest COC  
with Luann Rogers
- October 4-6, 2018  
Texas Ladies in Christ Retreat  
Brady, TX
- October 26-27, 2018  
Westhill church of Christ  
Ladies' Retreat

We need to do whatever we can to aid them in their time of need. Grief can weaken our faith providing an access for Satan to creep in. That's where Christian sisters can help. As Christians, we don't grieve as the world without hope does (1 Thess. 4:13). Showing compassion reinforces that hope, and it also demonstrates to the world that we are His followers (Jn. 13:35).

It should go beyond mere words. When my precious husband died in March, I was in a fog. I would forget to eat and take my meds. Family and friends would check to make sure those were getting done. My precious grand-daughter, Jessica, came and called all of Glenn's doctors to notify them of his death and cancel any appointments. She also called the life insurance company, Social Security, and Medicare. Ask what YOU can do to help! I thank God every day for those who took care of me in my fog. They not only prayed for me, they showed their love and care daily. Their light was shining (Matthew 5:14-16). Even though I mourned, I was comforted (Matthew 5:4).

Be the eyes, ears, hands, and feet of Jesus. Remember sorrow has no timetable. Some will need that extra care longer than others. 1 John reminds us that he who does not love does NOT know God. Love one another and fulfill Christ's law.

## About Upright Woman

The Upright Woman publication is intended to educate, promote, and encourage the women of the church to strive for righteousness in every aspect of life. It is the mission of this publication to provide women an opportunity to study the word and share articles about various issues and topics to encourage us to be upright women in an upside down world.

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**"FOR THE LORD IS RIGHTEOUS; HE  
LOVES RIGHTEOUS DEEDS; THE  
UPRIGHT SHALL BEHOLD HIS FACE."  
PSALM 11:7**

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We pray that with every issue and with every article all glory is given to God.

# Getting to Know...

By: Carol Tisdale

## Recci Dunn

Ladies, meet Recciandra Monique Dunn - known to most of us as "Recci". A native Austinite, Recci earned a degree in Sociology at Texas State University. Over 2 decades ago she was a member at SW and we grew to love her dearly. Recently she made the decision to return to work and worship with us and we are overjoyed!

Recci has two fur babies, miniature schnauzers named Hopper and Sophie. No doubt they give helpful "moral support" when she is involved in her hobbies of home improvement and outdoor projects. Cooking also interests Recci and her dream vacation is a cooking tour of Europe. When asked what her "signature" dish might be, she replied "Enchiladas, but based on the family's reaction to my 2017 Christmas lunch my signature dish just might now be prime rib"!

Encouraging and comforting scriptures that our sweet sister leans on are found in Romans 12 and 1 Peter 2:23. "Who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously..." And to go along with that, a hymn that particularly stirs her soul is the calming "It is Well With My Soul".

Since scripture teaches that older women are to teach the younger, we asked Recci if she has words to share with younger Christian women who are beginning their journey as an adult and she offers this: "When someone truly cares for and loves you, they will never ask you to compromise your faith. Don't force things to happen in YOUR timing or compare YOUR life to others. Our lives do not follow the same timelines. Let God's will be done and if you wait on Him, He will provide who and what you need."

Recci has not married...at least not YET! She speaks regarding living the Christian life as a single woman and shares these lovely words: "I don't know that I actually "chose" to be unmarried, rather I acknowledge that due to circumstances of my own making and some that I had no voice in, I developed a very guarded personality that is not conducive to fostering a relationship that would lead to marriage. If it is God's will or that to change, I am receptive but I've learned to not compare my life's timeline to others. My advice would be to not fret about being unmarried. It consumed me for years and took my focus off the most important thing - being a faithful Christian. The greatest gift I received in recent years was finally truly understanding what our purpose is for being in this world - to glorify God. As long as I wake up every day with that perspective and goal, then I know God will provide whatever I need, and I don't feel as though I am lacking anything." And we lovingly say thank you Recci for those heartfelt, wise words !!



**"Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor."**  
**Romans 12:10**