





Chapter 3

The Shekinah Glow

The virtuous woman's entire character is essential to knowing who God truly is, and who she is in Christ if she is to develop and maintain a personal relationship with HIM. Her character is also vital to her happiness in a sinful world. It is clear that Jesus enjoyed life to the fullest while here on earth: He had a social life as is demonstrated by His attendance of the wedding in Cana, a village of Galilee, where He performed His first recorded public miracle of turning water into wine [John 2:1-11]; His entire ministry was devoted to serving mankind leading up to His willingness to die "... that they [we] may have life, and that they [we] may have it more abundantly." [John 10:10]; and most importantly, He had a devoted prayer life and personal relationship with God, although He, Himself, is God [see John 1:1].

Why was Jesus all of these things? The answer is simple: God enjoyed creation. We know unequivocally that HE enjoyed it because Genesis 1:31 tells us that after HE was finished creating the earth and the heavens and everything in them, HE looked around and said, "Man, I am good!" Of course, that's just my translation, but you get the

point. Likewise, Genesis 3:8 tells us that our Father spent time walking in the Garden of Eden in the cool of the day. These two verses of Scripture are the reason why HE went to so much trouble to make a plan for the redemption of mankind and New Jerusalem. It was never HIS intention for us to live in perpetual sin; nor was it ever HIS intention that because of sin we would perish into eternal death as if we were never created. If those were HIS intentions, HE would have wasted a great deal of HIS time and effort for nothing . . . El Shaddai [God Almighty] always has a plan and purpose for everything HE does!

Wisdom's Vibrancy

This brings us to Wisdom's vibrant character. She is vibrant first, before all else. To be vibrant means to be pulsating with vigor. Therefore, Wisdom has a vigorous zeal for life and loves everything the Lord has created life to be. She looks beyond the tangible, habitually, for ways that she can be pleasing to the Lord; and finds enjoyment in the everyday things that the average person will miss or take for granted. She has the energy of youth all her days and carries sunshine with her wherever she goes. Yes, she is far above average in her thinking and doing, which gives her that "glow" women are said to have when they are in love or happily pregnant. That glow can be likened to the Shekinah of God—that is HIS glory—shining through her. Her skin takes on a certain radiance that not even Oil of Olay® can give. This is the stuff we wish

Helpful Hint to be Vibrant

Fellowship with the Father everyday in prayer and study of Scripture

we can bottle up and sell. Can you imagine being able to purchase a bottle of *Shekinah Glow*? If such a thing existed, then we would be able to compete with those runway and Hollywood beauties, right? Wrong! First of all, I want you all to recognize that we do not need to compete with anyone for our beauty because it comes from within through the power of the Holy Spirit. Secondly, there would never be such a thing on the world market because God is not for sale. Besides that, *Shekinah Glow* has already been purchased for us, by the Blood of the cross. If we're smart, we would smooth some on every morning before we take on life. Picture this: alarm clock sounds, smack it, smooth on *Shekinah Glow*, jump out of bed and dare anyone or anything to stand in your way! Don't you just love that God-infused empowerment?!?

Jimmie has a grandmother who I believe has discovered *Shekinah Glow*—Grandma Pearl. When I first met Grandma Pearl about 13 years ago, I was astonished to learn that she was at that time almost 87 years old. We had gone to Jimmie's hometown of Moultrie, Georgia for Christmas. On Christmas Eve, he took me around town visiting with all of the old-timers that helped to raise . . . eh-hem, discipline . . . him. When we got to Grandma Pearl's house and rang the doorbell, this spry, tiny, old woman who looked to be no more than about 65 answered the door. Her front door opens to a very large warm kitchen with the stove actually facing the door . . . talk about your inviting atmosphere! Ahhhh, I could still smell the glazed ham and fresh-baked spiced rum cookies. Anyway, Grandma Pearl looked up and saw Redd and grabbed his neck with one arm, and took my arm with her free hand and pulled us inside out of the cold. He had barely introduced me as his bride before Grandma Pearl started trying to feed me as if she had known me all my life.

A few days later, we went downtown to catch some after Christmas sales and saw Grandma Pearl high-stepping down the street. At first, we all laughed at the little old lady moving so fast, carrying her cane instead of using it for balance. Then Jimmie's cousin, Tammy, shouted, "That's Grandma Pearl!" Jimmie scanned the street for a parking space, but Grandma was too fast for us. By the time we parked and got out of the car, she had disappeared. We ran in and out of all the stores on the block, but could not find her. I later found out Grandma Pearl has



Helpful Hint to be Vibrant

Smile and laugh often

always been a woman on a mission. She did her own cooking, cleaning, gardening, and sewing; she visited the sick elders in Moultrie regularly; my mother-in-law has a standing lunchtime visit with her monthly and never leaves empty-handed. It is not unusual for Grandma Pearl to send her home with fresh picked tomatoes, cabbage, cucumbers, or leafy greens of some sort.

If I am not mistaken, Grandma just celebrated her 100th birthday this year. I guess she finally ran out of Shekinah Glow because my mother-in-law called in to let us know the LORD has finally put Grandma Pearl to bed. She has not gone to sleep, yet . . . only resting. According to Jimmie's mother, because of how vibrant Grandma Pearl was, many in the family truly thought she would outlive everyone. Grandma is a much-treasured matriarch in the Cornelius family and a fine example of what Shekinah Glow can do for you long term.

Optical Illusions

Have you ever known a woman whose appearance seems to be flawless? I mean her hair is gorgeous, her figure is dynamite, and her skin is as smooth as newborn skin? Women who possess this type of outer beauty but have none within are *optical illusions*. You see, the eyes of the beholder take a picture of what is immediately visible and the brain stops processing reality based on that momentary picture. Then she opens her mouth and all the banshees of hell fly out. At that point, the brain is shocked into functioning properly and the illusion is over. You realize this “flawless” woman is the most ugly creature walking the face of the earth. Proverbs 31:30 says “Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing . . .” (NKJV), meaning truth and the natural aging process will surely reveal your vileness if your heart is not pure. Throughout time many such beauties have existed. Sadly enough, they have sent many men to their graves with their illusions intact without a hint of remorse. Praise God for the *other* women who are true beauties that have existed!

A Friend to Jesus

Let's take a look at perhaps one of the most vibrant women of biblical times. She is so primarily because she had the distinguished honor of being a close and personal friend of our Lord Jesus. Her name is Martha, of Bethany.

To provide background for those of you who are new in Christ, Martha was the sister of Lazarus, whom Jesus called up out of the grave in John 11, and of Mary who, according to John 12:1-8, Matthew 26:6-13, and Mark 14:3-9, anointed the Lord's feet with expensive scented oils and dried them with her hair. This particular set of siblings lived in Bethany, which is a suburban village of Jerusalem,

known in modern times as el-Azariyeh [fr. Arabic “home of Lazarus⁴”]. I do want to point out that Jerusalem means “City of Peace” or “Holy City” in Hebrew⁵; while Bethany means “house of an unripe fig⁶.” Is it any wonder or coincidence that Jesus’ friends lived there? I think not! The stage was being set for the ripening of the fruit and His greatest miracle—that is Jesus’ ministry and His



Helpful Hint to be Vibrant

Eat to live; do not live to eat

eventual conquest over death, of which He gave us a preview when He called Lazarus whole from out of the grave. Although Jerusalem is called The Holy City, the city dwellers were some of the main people during His time that rejected Him. He spent a lot of time with Martha, Mary and Lazarus in their home sowing seed that would later bear much *fruit* [blessings of redemption and salvation].

Whenever Jesus was in the area, their house was a favorite stopover for Him and His disciples. Although we do not know for sure, it is reasonable for us to assume that Martha was the elder sister because Luke 10:38 says she welcomed Jesus into *her* house. If Mary had been the elder sister, the Scripture probably would have said *Mary’s* house, as the title of lady of the house is usually reserved for the more mature woman in the household. Luke 10:40 tells us that on a particular occasion when Jesus and the Disciples stopped in for a visit, Martha was left to prepare food and serve their guests alone and got a little agitated with her sister, Mary for this. I don’t know about the goings on in your house, but Wisdom says the lady of the house is responsible for ensuring the bills are paid, the grocery shopping is done, the house is clean and presentable in case



Wisdom's Composite Personality

someone happens to drop by, satisfying meals are prepared, godly relationships are developed, and guests are made to feel *at home*, and every emotional and physical need of the family are provided for. In other words, we should be more like the Energizer Bunny[®] that keeps going and going and going; and less like Peg Bundy[®] from the sitcom “Married with Children[®].” I am sure Martha had those same responsibilities . . . and then some! I can hardly keep up with everything in this world of modern conveniences we live in; so can you imagine the pressures Martha must have felt? Yet, her lifestyle and responsibilities were so satisfying to her that in Luke 10:40-42, Jesus had to remind her that servitude to God goes beyond hosting a dinner party. Martha’s diligence in the kitchen and in the home speaks of how serious she was about her responsibilities to her family and friends. She did the things she did, with or without Mary’s help, because she enjoyed taking care of people even at the expense of her own spiritual development.

Please do not be misled, Sisters. I do not condone the neglect of spiritual development at the expense of serving others; however, I am suggesting we do more to develop a spirit of service for the benefit of others as part of the commandment to love our neighbors. We are instructed in James 1:22 to “. . . be doers of the word, and not hearers only.” (NKJV) James 2:2-16 gives us the lesson that we cannot continuously preach to a hungry, homeless man about faith without taking care of his basic needs. Let’s take a

moment to absorb this teaching: if someone is trying to explain something very important to you and your stomach sounds like a busy bowling alley, are you



Helpful Hint to be Vibrant

Volunteer your time assisting others

going to really pay attention? You more than likely will not. You would probably be thinking about a Wendy's® double stack with bacon and a chocolate Frosty®. James 2:17 says plainly: "So also faith, if it does not have works (deeds and actions of obedience to back it up), by itself is destitute of power (inoperative, dead)." (AMP) What James was getting at is that in order to feed the spiritual, you have to feed the physical. A faint body does the human spirit no good if it has one foot in the grave!

Nonetheless, there also existed that faithful side of Martha, borne of her desire to serve and care for others. The Bible tells us in John 11:20-27 that when Lazarus died and Martha heard Jesus was on the way, she went out into Jerusalem to meet Him. At first, she was so distraught with grief that her brother died and attempted to justify her grief with believing if Jesus had come sooner, Lazarus would still be alive. You see, Sisters, she knew in her heart that Jesus was Lord and Messiah and that His presence alone would have saved Lazarus. Jesus made it clear to her, though, that He is Lord over life *and* death, and she



Helpful Hint to be Vibrant

Do something kind for a neighbor or a stranger daily

believed and witnessed just how powerful our Lord is when her brother walked out of that tomb fresh as the day he died four days earlier. The Word does not say much more than that regarding Martha, however, as a devoted friend and follower of Christ, more than likely she was one of the many women noted to be at the crucifixion. Because of Martha's vigorous love and devotion to Christ, I would not doubt that she prepared fried chicken and potato salad, or at least

spearheaded a feast for the Disciples and His followers after the funeral.

Miss Congeniality

It is not very often these days that we can honestly say we know of such vibrant women. Women who willingly serve others because it's her nature, or attack daily life like it's a walk in the park just don't seem to exist in abundance anymore. Friends, I have the pleasure of knowing one such woman [other than Grandma Pearl] by the name of Shirley. I liken Shirley to Martha because she has a knack for making people feel very comfortable in her presence and she is a hard woman to keep up with. Shirley is not quite a senior citizen; however, she is mature in years. Vibrancy aside, her big, bright smile alone is enough to melt away the anxieties we women can feel about the lack of hours in a day. When I met Shirley, we had just moved into the neighborhood. Jimmie was working in the front yard and Shirley was driving by. She did a u-turn when she saw him to introduce herself. Jimmie notified me that she and her husband would be stopping in a bit later to formally introduce themselves. Shirley and Al came by to welcome us with a favorite area recipe and a grocery bag containing the ingredients for the recipe. This was a first for me. I had only seen this kind of neighborly hospitality before on television. Her smile was so infectious that I realized I was still smiling several minutes after they had departed. A few weeks later, her son and his family came in from out of town and she brought them all over to meet the new neighbors. I remember commenting to Jimmie afterwards that I was glad God had moved us into such a welcoming neighborhood. Our family got to know her family over the next year, and neither of us has ever regretted knowing the other. Karl, found the couple so

endearing that I just recently learned he would check in on them often on the way home from school before he left for college. This is unusual for Karl because he has a tendency to hold people at arm's length. He said Shirley always makes him feel like he's in his own house when he visits with her. I'm sure having a crush on her oldest granddaughter had something to do with it, also.

As I already stated, Shirley simply cannot sit still! She does a lot of her own decorating in her home. She has the place decked out in a country motif straight out of *Country Living*[®] magazine. You are greeted at the front door with lots of outdoor plants on the front porch and a wall mounted antique bronze fountain that soothes away any tension you may be feeling before entering. She has made her own draperies for her sitting room, bedroom, and dining areas; as well as matching chair and table sashes. Each



Helpful Hint to be Vibrant

Rest in the Lord's peace

room is painted in different pastel colors that perfectly convey the mood she wants to accomplish for that room. For example, her formal room is painted peach with white satin trim around the windows and crown moldings to let the sun into the room. It is decorated comfortably with lots of pillows, eye-catching crafts, a piano, and an overstuffed couch that says "Please, park it here." The traditionally furnished, off-white coloring of the formal dining room transitions smoothly from the peaches and cream living room. A butler's pantry divides the dining room and kitchen. These walls and the family room that opens up from the kitchen are painted off-white, also. The kitchen and family room

face the backyard and is surrounded by large windows, giving an open-air feeling to that area of the house. Every time I go for a visit, she has done something new in one of the rooms, which I find exhausting just to think about it. As a matter of fact—and I say this while giggling—when I went to Shirley's immaculately kept home to interview her for this book, she was so engaged with my comfort, it took a good four minutes before we finally got settled in to begin.

Shirley is a retired nurse, but her bedside manner of hospitality was instilled in her by her grandparents. She was born out of wedlock in the late 1940's and was subsequently raised by her grandparents. Her grandmother was a strong, reserved Baptist woman; while her grandfather, an African Methodist, was the social butterfly of the family. When growing up, her grandfather always told her "You have to be independent. You need others, but be independent. And remember, when you smile at the world, the world smiles at you." These are lessons Shirley has obviously never forgotten.

For as long as she could remember, Shirley has always wanted to be a nurse. If you ask her, she would say she was born with that desire. When she was a little girl, she would play nurse with her younger cousins, the cats and dogs and bandage them up—whether they needed to be or not. While in high school, she was on the basketball team. It was discovered that she was a better nurse than player, and it was not long before she became the team trainer. After high school, she got married to an abusive man, had children with him, and let go of her dream to become a certified nurse. A favorite cousin she used to doctor on when they were growing up influenced her to pursue her dream after her children got older.

Shirley grew up in the church, but did not always have

the personal relationship with God that she has today. Her only regret is that she did not develop that bond with HIM sooner.

Shirley never completely left God, but like many of us living in a stressful world, her church attendance fell off some as she grew from childhood to womanhood. No matter what was going on in her life, though, she always knew she belonged to HIM. She turned back to God fully and completely after she read

the “Left Behind” series and her son started experiencing some serious legal issues. The prospect of being left behind when He raptures the church and hav-

ing to suffer through the seven-year period of trials and tribulations lit a fire under Shirley once more.

In the last few years, Shirley has been involved in several ministries both in and out of her church such as The Walk to Emmaus® spiritual renewal program, The United Methodist Women, and New Braunfels Bible Study Fellowship. She has held leadership positions in all of those ministries, on top of working as a part-time nurse for several of the elementary schools in the district and pursuing her decorating and crafts hobbies. All of this on top of being a wife to Al, big sister to her siblings, mother and grandmother, and spending time with friends.



Helpful Hint to be Vibrant

Walk for 30 to 45 minutes a few times per week for fitness



Helpful Hint to be Vibrant

Set priorities for your daily schedule and do not over extend yourself

Be Still and Know He is God

Shirley's fervor for service began to diminish after a while. She found herself involved in too many religious activities all at once and no longer felt the peace and excitement of spiritual growth she used to feel because she was too busy. She recalled the lesson that Jesus taught Martha and prayed to be operating inside of God's will. Shirley still had a problem, though: she just did not know how to say "No." She continued to make herself available to the ministries that had come to rely on her. The LORD finally answered her by saying "Be still, and know that I am God." (Psalm 46:10) Shirley ended up having back surgery a few weeks later to relieve her of pain from injuries sustained in an accident a few years earlier. During her recovery, she had time to think about ways to alleviate unnecessary burdens; time she had never made before. The bed rest forced her to turn over her excess responsibilities to others who were just as qualified as she was. Up until then, she felt pressured and made to feel as if the ministries would crumble and fail if she refused to step up.

Ladies, serving the Kingdom does not mean run yourself ragged. For every one person qualified to hold a position in any given ministry, there are at a minimum two or three others just as qualified. Some may not be as willing as others, but you should never feel pressured because of it. Our service to God should be because **we want to** serve and for no other reason. This goes back to the concept of free will. God is Creator and LORD over all things; we are just borrowing HIS belongings when we go through our daily lives. There is nothing we have that God could possibly want except our love. Even then, HE does not want it if we give it begrudgingly. The LORD, HIMSELF corrects us in Isaiah 1:11-13 that HE does not want any offerings from us that are full of hypocrisy, inflated egos, or half heartedness; for all of those

offerings are utterly meaningless and deplorable to HIM. The LORD also reminds us twice in Scripture that our flesh withers and fades away like the grass and the flowers in the fields (see Isaiah 40:6-7 and First Peter 1:24). This means that without proper care, rest, and nurturing, we send ourselves to an early grave. Our natural aging process is by HIS grace and design and therefore, we should take care not to abuse it. So Shirley, being gently reminded of the frailty of her flesh and the rest in HIS grace, has since restricted herself to the leadership role of the local chapter of Bible Study Fellowship and has found her peace again.

Let Him into Your Psyche

In trying to determine where her energy comes from, I asked Shirley how she relates God to her physical, physiological, and psychological being. She responded “My grandparents, my life and the experiences of my grown children have all taught me that HE created me for a purpose. I would hope I am fulfilling that purpose.” I believe she is for she has developed an awareness of the Lord’s presence she had never noticed before. Shirley also recognizes that one way the enemy works to steal your joy is through our need to be in control. When her

Helpful Hint to Acquire Reliability

Keep your home tidy and uncluttered of junk (this includes useless items, gossip and drama)

peace and joy were lost, she reclaimed them by acknowledging her overly packed schedule and spending time in relaxation with God. She spends her free time passing on all the valuable lessons she learned and instilling her same spirit of service to others to her grandchildren, and in particular, her

eight year old granddaughter, Katharine. They regularly spend time together in Christ simply through “Goddening” (as Katharine used to fittingly say when she was three years old), shopping at the Pottery Barn[®], and dining out.

Prepare Yourself for a Vibrant Life

Like Wisdom, Martha and Shirley have willingly submitted themselves for service, both physically and spiritually. You are probably thinking to yourselves “That’s fine for them, but I’m too busy as it is.” Well, I have great news! You can be of service to anyone who is need of your help whether it be at your workplace, in your social circle, a loved one, a neighbor, or in a ministry you are already involved in or are thinking about joining within or outside of your church. All you need is a right spirit and a heart for a fulfilling life. To prepare ourselves for service as Martha and Shirley have, we should ask God to develop Wisdom’s vibrant trait in us. Say this prayer with me right now:

Heavenly Father, I thank You that You have set this desire upon me to be a vibrant woman of service for Your glory. I ask that You renew a right spirit within me and help me to find ways that I can serve others in a manner that is pleasing in Your eye. I ask You also, Lord, that You help me to eat well and take care of Your holy temple within me, that I may have the energy required to carry out tasks You have chosen me for in the vibrant way that Wisdom has influenced me to do so. Thank You, Father, for I know that You have heard my prayer and will do as Your servant has requested for Your glory. In the mighty name of Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

Introspective Review Questions

1. Do you enjoy life? Why or Why not?
2. Are you generally a happy person or a grumpy person first thing in the morning? Why?
3. When is the last time you did something kind for someone without the expectation of something in return? How did you feel afterwards?
4. If you are feeling overburdened by your responsibilities and commitments, what are some ways you can relieve yourself?
5. Do you have scheduled private time with the Lord everyday? If not, why?
6. Do you think it is “proper” for a lady to laugh out loud? If not, why?
7. What do you think God is leading you to?