

# The Delight of Daughters: A Theology of Daughterhood

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Much has been written about “sonship” and being “adopted as sons” as descriptions of being brought into and belonging to God’s family. Focus is often on the privileges of adoption in Paul’s letters, noting the love, honour, and freedom that follow.<sup>1</sup> In light of this masculine language, we should ask whether women and girls experience daughterhood as bringing privileges and rights in the way men and boys experience sonship? More broadly, do we have a theology of daughterhood?<sup>2</sup>

One study analyses the context and the stories of daughters in the Gospel of Mark.<sup>3</sup> Another features father/daughter relationships in the OT and the honour/shame culture where daughters could maintain their father’s honour, as in some cultures today, by upholding virginity before marriage and faithfulness afterwards.<sup>4</sup> Still another study notes the prophet Isaiah’s strong criticism of the haughty upper-class Jerusalem women, Daughters of Zion with bangles, headbands, necklaces, earrings, bracelets, and veils (Isa 3:16–4:1).<sup>5</sup> Recently, a Western author published “A Theology of Daughterhood” focused entirely on the duty of adult daughters in the twenty-first century to attend to the needs of the increasing number of aging parents.<sup>6</sup>

Feminist theologians have commented on the “texts of terror”<sup>7</sup> and abuse of daughters in the OT. Daughters were at times traded like commodities in marriage, Aksah by Caleb (Josh 15:16–17; Jdg 1:12–13) and Michal by Saul (1 Sam 18, 25:44), for example. Lot offered his daughters to a mob (Gen 19); Jephthah sacrificed his daughter (Jdg 11); David ignored the rape of Tamar (2 Sam 13). Family law allowed a father to speak for a daughter or to discount her decisions (Num 30:3–5). Sons inherited the family land and carried on the family line. In the context of making a vow of dedication, an adult male was valued at fifty shekels but a female was valued at thirty (Lev 27:2–4). When a mother gave birth to a son she was considered unclean for seven days and purified after thirty-three days, while after a daughter she was unclean for fourteen days and purified after sixty-six (Lev 12:2–5).

In light of such negative stories and laws, should we conclude that being a daughter is a negative? This study draws attention instead to a high view of daughterhood in the kingdom of God, where God considers daughters a great treasure. The NT points to spiritual daughterhood as well as sonship as the passport to the heights of acceptance in the kingdom of God.

## Daughters in the Old Testament

The Bible was written by people who lived in hierarchical societies and accepted patriarchy to varying degrees. They did not see all of God’s increasingly observable plan for equal standing, so positive stories of daughters are infrequent. Nevertheless, they are there.

Fathers endeavoured to show their love by arranging good marriages for their daughters. Consider, for example, Bethuel

and his son Laban working for the advantage for Rebekah (Gen 24), and Laban, in his own way, for negotiating for the advantage of his daughters Leah and Rachel. Others had strong parent/daughter bonds. Jochebed and Amram placed considerable trust in Miriam watching over her infant brother Moses (Exod 2:7). Jephthah was an inordinately foolish, wrong-headed father, yet he was not entirely heartless. Though from a dysfunctional family where he learned nothing of inter-generational love, he grieved deeply, devastated over his crass promise and its presumed control over his dancing daughter (Jdg 11:34–39).

Two biblical women are named Abigail, which means “my father’s joy”<sup>8</sup>—the wife of Nabal and then of David (1 Sam 25), and a sister of David (1 Chr 2:16). Naomi and Ruth became inseparably bound together, supporting each other as mother-in-law and daughter-in-law. Esther was the adopted daughter of Mordecai, who loved her greatly and did everything he could for her (Esth 2:7–10).

One can also cite daughters who inherited property, starting with the daughters of Job, whom the Bible says were especially beautiful—Jemimah, Keziah, and Keren-Happuch (Job 42:14–15). The sisters Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milkah, and Tirzah had to argue three times for their inheritance, but the leaders of Israel, after asking God for advice, granted them the right to inherit from their father Zelophehad (Num 27:1–7, 36:1–13; Josh 17:3–6). Aksah persuaded her father to give her and her new husband, Othniel, additional farmland with a good water supply (Josh 15:16–19; Jdg 1:12–15). These accounts push back against patriarchy and are a model for us today. Indeed, daughters can and should inherit property.<sup>9</sup>

Not often noted is the unexpected indication of father/daughter affection in 2 Sam 12:3. In the parable told to King David, Nathan emphasised how much a householder loved a pet lamb. His explanation includes an entrancing image: “He raised it, and it grew up with him and his children. It shared his food, drank from his cup and even slept in his arms. It was like a daughter to him” (NIV).<sup>10</sup> The highest metaphor the story-teller could use about tenderly caring for a pet was to say the owner loved it like a daughter.

Surprisingly, the women of Bethlehem went against tradition, reminding Naomi, still grieving for her sons, that Ruth—not only a woman, but also a Moabite—was better than a son: “For your daughter-in-law, who loves you and who is better to you than seven sons, has given him birth” (Ruth 4:15b). Though they were often keepers-of-tradition, these women knew an exceptional woman when they saw one.

Indeed, Hebrew parents valued daughters so much that the idiom Daughter of Zion developed.<sup>11</sup> It reflects a double metaphor in which a city was personified as a woman and, in addition, the people of the city were as a group called her daughter. The two epithets Daughter of Zion and Daughter of Jerusalem occur as

alternative names for Jerusalem and the people of Jerusalem, connoting them with favour. This suggests that God and the Scripture-writer saw “daughter” as a metaphor for someone who is loved. If so, we may assume the label grew from the way Hebrew families appreciated their daughters—so much that, when God wanted to say he cared about his people, he said they were like daughters. Sometimes there were negatives around these two phrases, but at their best they pointed to positive examples, such as those found in Zephaniah and Zechariah.

Zephaniah asked the people of Jerusalem to sing because they were rescued: “Sing, Daughter Zion; shout aloud, Israel! Be glad and rejoice with all your heart, Daughter Jerusalem! The LORD has taken away your punishment, he has turned back your enemy. The LORD, the King of Israel, is with you; never again will you fear any harm” (Zeph 3:14–15). Desiring that his people feel warmly towards him, God called them his daughters. He continued, “The LORD your God is with you. . . . He will take great delight in you . . . will rejoice over you with singing. . . . At that time I will gather you; at that time I will bring you home . . .” (Zeph 3:17, 20).

Zechariah, eager to announce that the Messiah would come, urged God’s chosen and treasured people to be like happy daughters: “Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey. . . . The LORD their God will save his people on that day. . . . They will sparkle in his land like jewels in a crown. How attractive and beautiful they will be! Grain will make the young men thrive, and new wine the young women” (Zech 9:9, 16, 17). Again, God’s people are like his daughters, so delightful to him that they shimmer and shine in his eyes.

The word “daughter” in Zephaniah and Zechariah refers to the people of the land, both men and women. God, wanting to indicate that he loved his people, called them his daughters. And while we may often find daughters subsumed under the word “sons,” here God speaks in the opposite way.

The Gospel of Matthew quotes Zech 9:9, drawing the parallel and applying the words to Jesus’s entry into Jerusalem, inviting jubilation among God’s people. “Say to Daughter Zion, ‘See, your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey . . .’” (Matt 21:5). What warmth these words encapsulate towards daughters!

The daughter image was so strong that cities were blessed or cursed with daughter imagery. To bless, one prophet declared that the Lord said to his treasure, Jerusalem, “Come, Zion! Escape, you who live in Daughter Babylon! . . . Whoever touches you touches the apple of his eye. . . . Shout and be glad, Daughter Zion. For I am coming, and I will live among you . . .” (Zech 2:7, 8, 10). “Apple of his eye” indicates being cherished above others, the one on whom one’s attention and love is focused.<sup>12</sup>

### Daughters in the New Testament

Two passionately loving parents of daughters appear in the Gospels. A father, Jairus, fell at Jesus’s feet and pleaded earnestly, “My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live” (Mark 5:22–23). And the Greek mother of a troubled daughter came “as soon as she heard about” Jesus and also “fell at his feet,” arguing for the right to be

heard. “Lord,” she replied, “even the dogs under the table eat the children’s crumbs” (Mark 7:25, 28; cf. Matt 15:21–28).

Consider also the surprising statement about the crippled woman healed on the Sabbath. Jesus honoured this incapacitated woman whom proud and devious men claimed should not be healed. He reminded them she was every bit a member of the family line. “Then should not this woman, a *daughter of Abraham*, whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?” (Luke 13:16, italics added). Such a statement outwitted the synagogue leaders. Jesus roundly humiliated them by showing that the woman had high value, using the rare and powerful title, “daughter of Abraham.”

The symbolism around daughterhood is often about blessing. From the mouth of Jesus on the day of his crucifixion came another occasion to use “daughter.” With his kindest thoughts for his weeping women friends, Jesus turned compassionately to speak: “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for your children” (Luke 23:28b).

How was it that Jesus called women, at least some of them older than him, “daughter”? Perhaps the connotation of the word was stronger than that of “mother,” “sister,” or “friend.” He must have intended deep and deferential intimacy and sincere desire like a father. Similarly, he addressed the woman who had haemorrhaged for twelve years, “Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering” (Mark 5:34). Indeed, though he called Zacchaeus a “son of Abraham” (Luke 19:9), he does not even call his disciples “son” in the way he calls certain women “daughter.”

### Daughters Acting with Initiative

Even today, some mothers in traditional societies teach their daughters not to use their own mind or initiative since decisions will be made for them. To see a biblical opposite, let us consider the initiative and leadership shown by some biblical daughters.

In Exod 2, quick-thinking Miriam saved the life of Moses, her infant brother, and even ingeniously secured for her mother the task of caring for him. History does not name the parents of the maid in Naaman’s house, another daughter with initiative. She prompted Naaman, an Aramaean military commander, to seek help from Elisha (2 Kgs 5:2–3). In 2 Kgs 11, Jehosheba, daughter of King Jehoram, boldly stole Joash son of Ahaziah from among the royal princes who would be murdered. While Athaliah ruled the land, Jehosheba protected Prince Joash and his nurse for six years until Jehoiada the priest crowned Joash as king.

Sheerah, daughter of Beriah, was remembered in the national chronicles because she built two forts, Lower and Upper Beth Horon, and the village of Uzen Sheerah on the defence-strategic pass between Gibeon and Aijalon (1 Chr 7:24). Sheerah must have rallied people to the task and arranged materials such as stones, mortar, and timber. She took responsibility as a leader. Similarly, Shallum and his daughters took to building construction when Jerusalem needed a protective wall (Neh 3:12).

The four daughters of Philip acted with initiative as well (Acts 21:9). With help from the Holy Spirit, these four young women accepted the call to lead as prophets. And what is prophecy? It

is speaking God's message with authority and boldness.<sup>13</sup> When there is work and a woman takes the initiative and carries it out, leading others where needed, God and Scripture give approval.

## Daughterhood in Theology

If we study the significant aspects of daughterhood in theology, we find pearls of wisdom that point to how life may be for daughters in the kingdom of God.

### Inheritance

In Greek and Roman cultures, women did not usually inherit from a deceased husband, but could inherit as daughters and at times received resources to run a business or donate to a favoured cause. Perhaps this made possible the valuable pint of pure nard that Mary poured on Jesus (John 12:3). Notice that Martha was the house owner in Luke 10:38. Dorcas had the resources to make and give clothes away (Acts 9). Lydia could run an import and export business, bringing purple dye from Phoenicia, across the sea to Macedonia, and selling it there (Acts 16). Phoebe was so much her own agent that she would travel by sea from Greece to Rome and Paul could ask her to take a letter for him (Rom 16:1–2). Other NT female house owners may also have inherited—Mary mother of Mark (Acts 12:12), Chloe (1 Cor 1:11), Nympha (Col 4:15), and perhaps the chosen lady (1 John 1:2) and Lois (2 Tim 1:5).<sup>14</sup> They were leaders with fellowships of believers meeting in their home, where they were legally responsible.

### Picture Language

In OT times people believed a father lived on in his son and a man's life became worthwhile if he had a son (Gen 15:2–4). A son was also a symbol of his father's strength. Jacob, for example, said to Reuben, "You are my firstborn, my might, the first sign of my strength . . ." (Gen 49:3). Both sons and daughters brought honour to their parents. "Children's children are a crown to the aged . . ." (Prov 17:6a). "Her children arise and call her blessed . . ." (Prov 31:28a). In these texts from Proverbs, the Hebrew word *ben* ("son" or "child") becomes the Greek *teknon* ("child") in the Septuagint, thus revealing the translator's understanding of *ben* as gender-inclusive. Essentially all English translation reveal the same understanding by using "children" in these texts.

In the NT, the imagery of "sonship" includes daughterhood, more clearly expressing the truth that all believers in Jesus, both men and women, are God's children. This is not clear in some English Bible translations. As a result, this article utilizes the 2011 edition of the New International Version which, like certain other recent translations,<sup>15</sup> has taken significant steps toward a gender-accurate approach to translation. Numerous verses that have "son" in other translations are more representative of the original meaning when translated "children." Consider, for example, Rom 8:14: "For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God." Again, "For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed" (Rom 8:19). For those accustomed to the ubiquitous "son" language of other translations, such verses have the power to delight us with the gifts and honours heaped on God's sons *and daughters*.

The NT offers no hint that the honours and responsibilities of adoption by God apply only to sons. Indeed, there is spectacular welcome for both daughters and sons. "Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ . . ." (Rom 8:17a). Being heirs means being treated with all the rights of family but, extraordinarily, now in the family of God. Elsewhere, what was translated earlier as, "He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son" (Rev 21:7 NIV 1984), is now, correctly, "Those who are victorious will inherit all this, and I will be their God and they will be my children" (NIV 2011).

### Adoption

Adoption was rare among ancient Hebrews. The only OT examples are Mephibosheth, adopted as an adult (2 Sam 9), Esther, cared for by cousin Mordecai (Esth 2:7), and perhaps Eliezer of Damascus, a servant of Abram (Gen 15). In these cases, we do not have access to any specific legal arrangement, with designated rights and privileges. In fact, Hebrew law had no specifics for adoption.<sup>16</sup> In the culture of the Greeks and Romans, however, a man who had no son could legally adopt a boy and make him his son and heir. Thus adoption in the NT era was well-known with well-defined laws and ceremonies to adopt sons. As a result, adoption as a picture in the NT is full of meaning.

The inclusion of daughters in the NT theological metaphor of adoption has been, as explained above, hidden by translations that use the word "son." When English grammar formerly subsumed daughters under sons, it was not always clear whether daughters were included, or that sons and daughters were equally important. If asked, however, translators would likely have concurred that daughters are included. It is now increasingly recognised that gender-*exclusive* translation does not adequately teach the truth of the inclusion of women. It often leaves women and girls feeling excluded and men and boys thinking this should be so. Furthermore, it is no longer commonly accepted English to include women and girls under "men"/"man," "sons," or "brothers." Bible translators are increasingly providing gender-accurate language that does justice to Paul's (and the Holy Spirit's) intention, for God adopts all of us—women and men, girls and boys—when we seek his salvation. An important example is the 2017 Christian Standard Bible, a revision of the Holman Christian Standard Bible, which, though translated by complementarians, does take certain steps toward gender-accuracy.<sup>17</sup>

Here are some examples of recently improved translations: While Rom 8:19 in the KJV reads, "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God," the 2011 NIV has, ". . . for the children of God to be revealed." Similarly, the 2011 NIV has, "I will be a father to you, and you will be my sons *and daughters*, says the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor 6:18, italics added). However, as we will see below, difficulties in translation remain, for "sonship" still frequently appears.

The Greek word for "adoption" occurs five times in Paul's letters as Paul develops a theology based on the concept of adoption. Once he says Israel as a people has been adopted by

God (Rom 9:4). This and the other four that refer to the adoption of believers in Christ (Rom 8:15, 23; Gal 4:5; Eph 1:5) highlight the grace of God who generously chooses humans to become his offspring: “he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ. . . . in accordance with the riches of God’s grace that he lavished on us . . .” (Eph 1:5, 7–8a).

There are several results of this new relationship, this adoption that makes us sons and daughters. We receive forgiveness of sins and thus salvation; grace and protection are lavished on us (Eph 1 above); and we will become like Jesus: “when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is” (1 John 3:2b; cf. Phil 3:21).

Moreover, we become intimate enough to use the endearing name, *Abba*: “the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, ‘*Abba*, Father’” (Rom 8:15; cf. Gal 4:5). We receive inheritance with its rights and privileges: “heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ” (as noted in Rom 8:17). And, perhaps even more important for present-day living, we gain membership and belonging in the family of God, thus implying respect and honour.

Yet a problem remains. The word “sonship” still appears in the 2011 NIV in all five occurrences of the word “adoption.” To be gender-accurate it should include females, but the word for “adoption” in Greek, *huiiothesia*, contains in it the word for “son,” *huios*, and thus etymologically means “adopt as a son.” In Roman thinking, adoption typically provided a son, and there was no word that specified adopting a daughter. But Paul’s limitation in word choice does not dictate his meaning.

Consequently, the 2011 NIV has a footnote when Paul speaks of adoption, making clear that this is the strongest legal position possible: “The Greek word for *adoption to sonship* is a term referring to the full legal standing of an adopted male heir in Roman culture.” The masculine<sup>18</sup> term was the legally strong word and Paul used it. It now applies to all God’s children, his sons and daughters. The footnotes in the 2011 NIV give attention to the high privilege bequeathed to both daughters and sons of God, even though it is couched in the language of sons.

There is a parallel in the Hindi language of India. I have many times heard parents call their daughter *beta*, even though *beta* means “son.” The precise word for daughter is *beti*. Sons in that culture are highly desirable and considered more useful to the family. At first, I was frustrated by this custom. I argued, “Is it fair to tell a daughter she is as good as a son? Does that not actually make her feel that a daughter is not as good as a son?” But now, I wonder instead if this does the same as Paul did with Greek. He chose the highest word for privileged adoption in the language, in this case a masculine word, because that was the culture and he was satisfied to use this metaphor to claim the highest place for all who trusted in Christ. So he applied it to both daughters and sons. In God’s kingdom females are as completely lifted in status as males.

In fact, the Hindi word *beta* has become gender neutral to many people, referring to a son or a daughter. Similarly, *huiiothesia* means, theologically speaking, adopting a son or a daughter at the level of privilege of a son, and so is gender neutral.

In Greco-Roman culture, adoption was not for the sake of the child, but to carry on the family. In many cases, the household wanted a male who could serve as family priest to give prayers and sacrifices to the family gods and for the parents to live on into the next generation.<sup>19</sup> The adopted son received a new identity. His commitments to his old family disappeared and he took on the membership, honour, agency, obligations, prayers, and loyalty as the priest and representative in his new family. Does this have a message for us as sons and daughters in the kingdom of God?

In addition, as inheritor, the adopted child was more than simply the person who will eventually inherit. He was already an inheritor. In a wealthy Greco-Roman home, the children joined their father in controlling the property.<sup>20</sup> So when Paul wrote that we are “heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ” (Rom 8:17), he was not speaking of the future but the present. As sons and daughters, we are already adopted as heirs and do not have to wait for someone to die.

What difference do these historical observations make today? In God’s kingdom, adopted sons and daughters take on new responsibilities, such as accountability and decision-making for the group, and also new privileges. Adopted men and women are co-heirs, co-workers, co-beneficiaries, and co-authorities now and in the future inheritance.

This is the same for those who are children by birth or adoption, the same for girls or boys. If this were not so, the Bible would have to keep making distinctions such as “Sons inherit, but not daughters,” and “Sons will act as priests in their new family of God’s people, but not daughters,” or “Sons have precedence in decision-making over daughters.”

Here we daughters and sons of God our Father find acceptance, belonging, welcome, protection and love. “I will be a father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty” (2 Cor 6:18).<sup>21</sup> And what is the goal of all this? Bringing “many sons and daughters to glory . . .” (Heb 2:10).

### Baptism

There is a sign for this new status as children adopted into God’s kingdom. The old sign was circumcision, applied only to sons. The new sign, baptism, is able to include daughters in God’s kingdom. Where circumcision was for male Jews and converts to Judaism (Gen 17:12–13; Exod 12:48), baptism is available to all people. Importantly, the clearest statement of equality of male and female comes in the context of baptism: “So in Christ Jesus you are all *children of God* through faith, for all of you who were *baptized* into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, *nor is there male and female*, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:26–28, italics added). That is who we are as daughters and sons in the kingdom of God—children together in Christ.

### The clearest statement of equality of male and female comes in the context of baptism.

## Empowerment

We have built a strong case for the full status and value of daughters in the kingdom of God. Let us feature two more points. The first was foretold under the old covenant and flourished in the new—“Your sons and daughters will prophesy . . .” (Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17). Pentecost was meant to foster unity. Luke writes, “They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women . . .” (Acts 1:14a), and “When the day of Pentecost came, they were all” *together together* (that is, “together in the same place,” a deliberate redundancy in the Greek text of Acts 2:1).<sup>22</sup>

Four distinctions are erased here at Pentecost—distinctions of ethnicity, gender, rank, and class. The Holy Spirit would become available to *all people* of any ethnicity. Your *sons and daughters will prophesy*; the Holy Spirit would be available to both men and women. *Young men and old men* will see visions and dreams; that is, those higher and lower in social rank. On my *servants both men and women*, hence God would pour out his Spirit without regard to social class.<sup>23</sup>

At this time of crisis, the beginning of the church era, when the Holy Spirit was empowering for tasks for the use of the church through the coming centuries, our God called on all his people of any former standing to take their standing now as people who speak forth nothing less than the truth of God. Thus God through the Spirit affirmed authority for daughters and maidservants, along with sons and menservants. The result was not sameness, for men and women are different, but the same status. Does status come with authority? Yes. Can anyone suppose that someone may have equal status without equal authority? This would be a contradiction in terms, for the lack of authority would depreciate status.

The second point regarding empowerment for the present day is about the authority to judge. This responsibility of all those in the kingdom of God, women and men, is evident in the statement, “Or do you not know that the Lord’s people will judge the world. . . . Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life!” (1 Cor 6:2a, 3). This verse speaks of all God’s people. They will judge together. They are the same household, the same family.

## A Practical Theology of Daughterhood

So where has all this history and theology of the concept of daughterhood taken us? How can it inform our actions in daily life?

### A Time for Celebration

It has reminded us that daughters are greatly valued by God. This builds women’s self-esteem—physical daughters of our parents, and also cherished daughters in God’s family—loved, responsible, inheriting, given full status, able to act with initiative and personal agency, heirs, adopted, baptised into full membership, and empowered with authority.

Let women and girls bask in this wonderful thought—loved, wanted, precious, and no one can change that. This can help women stand against discrimination, stand and know that discrimination is wrong.

## A Time for Lament

As we look at the lack of honour, the exclusion from leadership and decisions, the suppression, the oppression and the abuse meted out to women and girls at varying levels in varying societies, we must admit it is time to lament the inequality. What sadness it has brought!

Her young women grieve, and she is in bitter anguish. . . . I weep and my eyes overflow with tears. No one is near to comfort me, no one to restore my spirit. My children are destitute because the enemy has prevailed. . . . Listen, all you peoples; look on my suffering . . . (Lam 1:4b, 16, 18b).

What I see brings grief to my soul because of all the women of my city. . . . LORD, you have seen the wrong done to me. Uphold my cause! (Lam 3:51, 59).

Lament is fitting. The shocking litany of evil may be told yet again—exclusions in church, putdowns in homes, sex-selective abortion, genital mutilation, starvation, neglect, physical and emotional abuse, sexual abuse, early marriage, forced marriage, dowry, dowry-deaths, manipulation, rape, harassment, prostitution, wage inequality, abusive control, verbal abuse, exclusion from decisions. There is so much pain and hurt when daughters in the kingdom of God and females made in the image of God are put down and deprived of the joyful privilege of receiving, alongside sons in the kingdom, respect, honour, authority, and freedom from harm.<sup>24</sup>

## A Time for Questions

How can recognising the value of daughters affect parents’ attitude to daughters in terms of: Delight in daughters? Duties toward daughters? Women’s self-esteem? Views of girls and women by brothers, friends, or husbands? What can churches do to demonstrate that they recognise the equal status and responsibility of daughters in the kingdom of God?

## Notes

1. See, for example, James M. Scott, “Adoption, Sonship,” in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, Daniel G. Reid (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1993), 15–18; for a historical, rather than theological, focus, see Scott T. Carroll, “Adoption,” in *Dictionary of Daily Life in Biblical and Post-Biblical Antiquity*, ed. Edwin M. Yamauchi and Marvin R. Wilson (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2017), 11–17 in the one-volume edition.

2. I deliberated what the English word should be—“daughterhood” or “daughtership.” I chose the more common “daughterhood” in spite of the fact that “daughtership” is parallel to “sonship,” an accepted theological term.

3. Sharon Betsworth, *The Reign of God is Such as These: A Socio-Literary Analysis of Daughters in the Gospel of Mark* (New York: Continuum, 2010).

4. Johanna Stiebert, *Fathers and Daughters in the Hebrew Bible* (Oxford: OUP, 2013).

5. Peter Leithart, “Daughters of Zion,” *Credenda Agenda* (2011), accessed Sept 21, 2017, at Credenda.org.

6. John Starr, “A Theology of Daughterhood: The Challenges of Modern Biology to Theology Today,” *Theology in Scotland* 23, no. 1 (June

2016): 6–18. I specify Western because this would be unexpected in South Asia where that task is still largely assigned to sons and daughters-in-law.

7. A phrase introduced by Phyllis Trible, *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives*, OBT 13 (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984).

8. BDB 4; HALOT 4.

9. Many cultures believe a daughter should not inherit because she will leave the family, taking dowry as well. What happens, for example, in South Delhi if a woman takes an illegal ultra-sound and learns she will have a daughter, especially a second, third, or fourth daughter? Another abortion.

10. Unless otherwise noted, all Bible quotations are from the 2011 edition of the New International Version.

11. The phrase occurs nearly thirty times in the Bible. It is prominent in Isaiah and Lamentations and occurs in the NT in Matt 21:5 and John 12:15.

12. As reflected, for example, in the CEV (“Zion is as precious to the LORD as are his eyes”) and NCV (“whoever touches you hurts what is precious to me”). See Andrew Hill, *Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi*, TOTC 28 (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2012), 144–45.

13. On the nature of biblical prophecy, see Wilda C. Gafney, *Daughters of Miriam: Women Prophets in Ancient Israel* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008), 23–25.

14. On several of these women, see Aída Besançon Spencer, “Leadership of Women in Crete and Macedonia as a Model for the Church,” *Priscilla Papers* 27, no. 4 (Autumn 2013): 5–15; Robert F. Hull Jr., “Constructing Euodia and Syntyche: Philippians 4:2–3 and the Informed Imagination,” *Priscilla Papers* 30, no. 3 (Spring 2016): 3–7; Margaret Mowczko, “Wealthy Women in the First-Century Roman World and in the Church,” *Priscilla Papers* 32, no. 3 (Summer 2018): 3–7; Jeff Miller, “What Can We Say about Phoebe?” *Priscilla Papers* 25, no. 2 (Spring 2011): 16–21.

15. Notably, the NRSV, NLT, and CEB.

16. In some cases a childless man married his deceased wife’s sister or married a second woman to obtain a son and heir. If a man died, his closest male relative was to sleep with his widow to produce an heir.

17. See Jeff Miller, review of Thomas Schreiner, David Allen, et al., eds., *Christian Standard Bible* (Nashville: Holman, 2017) in *Priscilla Papers* 31, no. 3 (Summer 2017): 29–30.

18. Though the term is masculine in the sense that it includes the word for “son” (*huios*), it should be clarified that the word itself (*huiiothesia*, “adoption”) is grammatically feminine.

19. David Neff, “Biblical Adoption Is Not What You Think It Is,” *Christianity Today* (November 2013), based on a book by Scottish law professor Francis Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons: Legal Metaphors in the Epistles* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984).

20. Neff, “Biblical Adoption.”

21. See Lee Magness, “The Significance of Paul’s Addition of ‘and daughters’ in 2 Corinthians 6:18,” *Priscilla Papers* 29, no. 2 (Spring 2015): 3–5.

22. Gilbert Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles: What the Bible Says about a Woman’s Place in Church and Family*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006), 91.

23. Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles*, 92–93.

24. On such tragedies, see Elaine Storkey, *Scars across Humanity: Understanding and Overcoming Violence against Women* (London: SPCK, 2015; Downers Grove, InterVarsity, 2018).



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