

Biblical Women Weren't Always Submissive.

A review of some surprising women in patriarchal societies.

JOE E. LUNCEFORD

The author, who is a member of the faculty at Georgetown College in Georgetown, Kentucky, was selected to give that school's annual Cawthorne Award lecture this past spring. The article that follows is taken from the text of that lecture.

One of the things that led me to my subject was a promise I made to a pastor from Florida whom I met while at Oxford. His church struggles with a biblical basis for women in leadership roles. The church has female deacons and women in other positions of leadership in the church, but as often happens, he was being challenged with some regularity to give a biblical justification for this. We had several lengthy conversations on the subject, and he later asked me to write up for him the essence of our conversations. I readily agreed to do so once I got back to my office and personal library and had some time to give the matter serious thought.

As I began to do some research and writing, I became more and more fascinated with some things I was discovering, and so I decided to make this the basis for my Cawthorne Lecture. I cannot present nearly all that I have written, but I want to share with you some of what I have discovered.

Abraham and Sarah

The author of 1 Peter exhorts his female readers to be submissive to their husbands, invoking as an example Sarah who "obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord" (1 Peter 3:1-6). This is true—as far as it goes. But a careful examination of the biblical stories of Abraham and Sarah reveals that they are strongly tinged with hero/heroine worship. To demonstrate this, I will focus upon just a couple of passages in Genesis.

The biblical promise to Abraham and Sarah that they would have a son in their old age is so well known as not to require comment. Faced with the apparent impossibility of the fulfillment of this promise, Sarah took matters into her own hands by directing Abraham to go have sexual relations with her maid Hagar (Gen. 16:2). Out of this relationship a son named Ishmael was born (Gen. 16:11). The text tells us that Abraham listened to the voice of Sarah. To put the matter simply, Sarah spoke, and Abraham obeyed—as countless husbands have done down through the centuries!

Following the Abraham story, some thirteen years later Sarah miraculously gave birth to Isaac. As anyone could have predicted, family problems soon arose. Soon after Isaac's birth, Sarah saw Ishmael—who appears to have been a teenager by this time (Gen. 17:25)—"mocking" Isaac. Exactly what the Hebrew word translated "mocking" really means is uncertain. Gordon Wenham suggests the

possibility that Ishmael was making fun of Isaac's status and the circumstances of his birth, and Sarah saw Ishmael as playing the role of Isaac.¹

Whatever Ishmael may have been doing, it clearly displeased Sarah, prompting her to confront Abraham with the demand, "Drive out this maid and her son, for the son of this maid shall not be an heir with my son Isaac" (Gen. 21:10, NASB). Once again Sarah spoke, and Abraham obeyed. And if one should object that in the latter case God commanded Abraham to do as Sarah demanded, this is even more damaging to the chauvinistic claim that the Bible teaches unqualified submission of women to their husbands (cf. 21:12). God *commanded* Abraham to obey Sarah. And less one miss the obvious, Abraham was no ordinary Tom, Dick, or Harry, but one who is looked upon as the "father" of three world religions—Islam, Judaism, and Christianity.

Jacob's wives, Rachel and Leah

The next case takes us two generations later, into the story of the patriarch Jacob. The story of how Jacob acquired his two wives, Rachel and Leah, began when Jacob agreed to serve their father (and his uncle), Laban, seven years in return for Rachel as his wife. At the end of the seven years, however, Jacob discovered too late that he had been given Leah instead of Rachel. When he confronted Laban with this deception, he was given the lame excuse that giving a younger daughter in marriage before the elder was improper (Gen. 29:18-26). Laban then offered to give Jacob Rachel as well—in return for another seven years of service. According to the story we read in Genesis, Rachel was always Jacob's favorite, and this situation was exacerbated by the fact that Leah was the fertile wife, giving Jacob initially no fewer than four sons (Gen. 29:31-37).

One day Leah's son Reuben brought home mandrakes that he had found in the field. These were apparently plants, the roots and berries of which were edible and most prized in the ancient world for their alleged qualities as a fertility drug and an aphrodisiac; these are clearly in view in this story. Rachel asked Leah to share the mandrakes and was met with the testy response, "Is it a small matter for you to take my husband? And would you take my son's mandrakes also?" (Gen. 30:15). Rachel then "generously" offered to allow Leah to have Jacob for the night in return for some of the mandrakes. Jacob came in from the field that evening and was met by Leah with the words, "You must come in to me, for I have surely hired you with my son's mandrakes" (Gen. 30:16). Thus Leah spoke and Jacob obeyed, just as his grandfather Abraham had done before him. Again we are not dealing with a person of ordinary



status, but the man whose name was changed to *Israel* (Gen. 2:28) and gave that name in perpetuity to the covenant people of God in the Old Testament.

Deborah, the judge

One of the most fascinating stories of female leadership takes place during the time of the judges in Israel. Deborah, described both as a prophetess and a judge of Israel, summoned Barak to her, claiming that God had commanded an army to march against an oppressing Canaanite army led by one Sisera. She further informed Barak that God had promised to deliver Sisera into his hand (Judges 4:7). Astonishingly, Barak answered, "If you will go with me, then I will go; but if you will not go with me, I shall not go" (Judges 4:8). No unusual intelligence is required to see that the real leader of the Israelites at this point was the woman Deborah, not Barak or any other male. She summoned him (Judges 4:6)—and he not only came, but he openly capitulated to her leadership. Furthermore, there is not even a hint in the text that this was considered either improper or extraordinary. As judge, Deborah was in full control of both the military and political affairs of Israel; she is said to have given the land forty years of tranquility (Judges 5:31b).

Sheerah, builder of cities

Our next subject is tucked away in the genealogical section of 1 Chronicles—a safe hiding place in that very few people ever read the biblical genealogies. First Chronicles 7 contains a single verse in the genealogy of Ephraim that is mind-boggling in its ancient context. The verse reads: "And his daughter was Sheerah, who built lower and upper Beth-horon, and also Uzen-Sheerah" (1 Chron. 7:24). While the latter site has never been discovered, the two Beth-horons were prominent in Old Testament history. They controlled the easiest access from the coastal plain to the road linking Shechem and Jerusalem. The pass that these cities flanked was used by Philistine raiding parties in the time of Saul and by Pharaoh Shishak in the time of King Josiah, just to mention two of the facts that highlight the strategic and military significance of the two Beth-horons.²

The fact that 2 Chronicles 8:5 gives Solomon credit for founding these cities may indicate an attempt to refute the tradition that they were built by a woman. Some scholars have even questioned the authenticity of the passage on the basis that women just didn't build cities in those days. Clyde T. Francisco, a well-known Baptist scholar of another generation, cites Curtis and Madsen as taking this position, then adds: "This is exactly the point of the account. Here is a woman doing something that only men had done before."³

Attempts to avoid the obvious meaning of this passage were already present by the time the Greek version of the Old Testament came about in the mid-third century B.C. In it, Uzen-Sheerah has become one of the sons of Ephraim rather than a third city built by his daughter, Sheerah. Sheerah's name is not mentioned at all, but a third-person

singular form of the word *build* is a telltale sign that the text has been tampered with. There is no singular subject in the text as it now stands. I think there can be no reasonable doubt that the subject was Sheerah, just as the Hebrew text has it.

The image of a woman as a builder of cities was apparently too much for some to accept, both ancient and modern, if the Hebrew text is to be taken at face value. Sheerah was obviously not a submissive woman. That she could build these cities without being in a position of authority over numerous male workers strains the bounds of possibility, to say the least.

The prophet Huldah

Perhaps the most remarkable Old Testament story of a woman who was in a position of authority over men is the story of Huldah the prophet (2 Kings 22:8–20, cf. 2 Chron. 34:14–28). Her story is set during the reign of Josiah, king of Judah. The last king about whom the Old Testament writers had anything good to say, Josiah reigned from about 640 to 609 B.C. He undertook a thoroughgoing religious reform (which seems to have died with him, since it was only about two decades after his death until the complete downfall of Judah and the Babylonian captivity).

The beginning point of Josiah's reform was the repair of the temple and the reinstatement of the traditional temple worship. In the course of this repair a book was found (a scroll actually, as even the codex form of manuscript, which is the forerunner of our books, was not yet in use). The scroll was taken to King Josiah and read in his presence. The exact contents of the scroll are unknown, but most scholars think it was the central section of Deuteronomy, perhaps chapters 12–26. Josephus, the Jewish historian, says that Eliakim the high priest "lighted upon the holy books of Moses that were laid up in the temple."⁴ The singular word *scroll*, however, makes it very unlikely that all the

"books of Moses" were found inasmuch as several scrolls would have been necessary to contain all these books. Josephus ascribes to Huldah both a prophetic and a priestly function. According to him, King Josiah sent to her to request that "she would appease God and endeavor to render him propitious to them."⁵

Whatever may have been the exact contents of the scroll, it must certainly have been a passage that spelled out the judgment of God upon disobedience to the law in unmistakable terms. Josiah's response that "great is the wrath of the Lord that burns against us, because our fathers have not listened to the words of this book, to do according to all that is written concerning us" (2 Kings 22:13b) makes this abundantly clear.

After hearing the scroll read, Josiah commanded Hilkiah, the high priest, and four other men to go and inquire of the Lord as to what the scroll meant for him and the people of Judah. To whom did they go? Not to any male theologian or prophet, although Jeremiah (and possibly Zephaniah) was living at the time, but to Huldah.



Little is known about this woman. She is tersely described as the wife of Shallum, the keeper of the royal wardrobe. One scholar refers to her as a prophetess “ranking with Deborah and Hannah.”⁶ One Jewish tradition indicates that she taught publicly in a school. Another suggests (predictably) that her preaching and teaching were limited to women. The fact that the king and the high priest of Judah felt that she was the one to interpret the word of God at this crisis point in Judah’s history says more about her than any mere descriptive words could possibly convey. In that male-dominated, thoroughly patriarchal, society it was a woman that had to interpret Holy Scripture for the King of Judah, the high priest and three other men of distinction! Furthermore, it was a passage of Scripture that involved nothing less than the destiny of the Jewish nation. Her message was that the judgments contained in the newly discovered scroll were about to be visited upon Judah. Because of his genuine piety, Josiah would not live to see this happen; but the destruction of Judah was certain. Huldah’s prophecy was fulfilled less than forty years later when the Babylonian armies marched against Jerusalem and burned the temple and every “great house” in the city (2 Kings 25:9).

The prophet Anna

Leaving the Old Testament and entering the New, we first encounter Anna the prophetess (Luke 2:36-38). She is described as perpetually present in the temple, serving God night and day with fastings and prayers. She is said to have been of the tribe of Asher, which, according to Jewish tradition, was noted for its beautiful and talented women who, because of these qualities, were qualified for royal and high priestly marriage.⁷ We can scarcely consider her placement alongside Simeon, the aged priest who received the infant Jesus, to be accidental. This is a typical pattern in Luke. N. M. Flanagan has identified no fewer than thirteen man-woman parallel stories in the Gospel of Luke.⁸ As Aida Besançon Spencer points out, these two alone recognized in the infant Jesus the Savior of Jew and Gentile.⁹ As a careful analysis of the text will show, their roles were parallel, not vertical.

One of the stronger clues supporting this parallel status is simply the word *prophetess* (*prophetes*). We have previously seen this term applied to Deborah and Huldah in the Old Testament. When Anna saw the infant Jesus, she “continued to speak of him to all [not just to women!] those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem” (Luke 2:38b). In the words of Dwight M. Pratt “she became a grateful and ceaseless witness ‘to all them that were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem’ that the day of their spiritual deliverance had come.”¹⁰ In Edith Deen’s words, she “stands foremost among prophetesses in the New Testament.”¹¹

Many interpreters would limit Anna’s service in the temple to praying and fasting—that is, the service of worship.¹² The Greek verb for Anna’s service is *latreuo*. Of its twenty usages in the New Testament outside the present

passage, it is used of one’s total service to God six times.¹³ In six other cases it is not clear, but it seems to include worship and other service as well.¹⁴ Four times it refers to priestly service.¹⁵ Only four times is it unambiguously limited to the service of worship.¹⁶ Since 80 percent of the usages of *latreuo* outside Luke 2:37 go beyond the service of worship, to limit its meaning to worship in this passage is highly questionable exegesis.

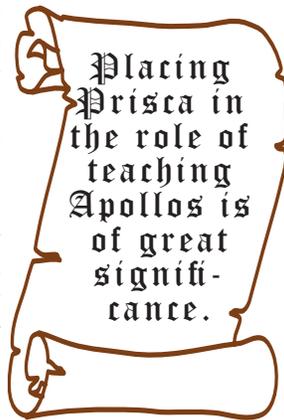
Priscilla

Our next excursus takes us into the arena of Paul’s ministry and a woman named Prisca. Three times she is referred to as Prisca and three times by the diminutive form Priscilla. We first encounter her in Corinth (Acts 18:2), having recently come from Rome because of the expulsion of Jews from Rome by the emperor Claudius. Prisca and her husband, Aquila, were tentmakers, and this seems to have been what brought them together with Paul, who was of the same trade. When Paul left Corinth for Ephesus, Prisca and Aquila came with him to Ephesus, where Paul left them (in charge of the church?). At any rate, when an Alexandrian Jew named Apollos, who was a powerful speaker but who knew nothing about Christianity except the baptism of John (Acts 18:25), Prisca and Aquila took him aside and “explained to him the way of God more accurately” (Acts 18:26).

What is striking in this account is the fact that, in defiance of all first-century conventions, Prisca is named before her husband, Aquila. Not only here, but in four of the six mentions of this couple her name appears first. Frank Louis Mauldin thinks this indicates that “probably . . . she was more important for the Christian community—whether by virtue of nobility, personality, or spirituality is unclear.”¹⁷ In a similar vein, James Dunn writes, “The most obvious deduction is that Prisca was the more dominant of the two or of higher social status . . .”¹⁸ Jacob W. Kapp refers to a number of conjectures based on

the order of the names and concludes, “The best explanation seems to be that she was the stronger character.”¹⁹

Placing Prisca in the role of teaching Apollos (even along with her husband) is a matter of great significance. The verb used for her teaching is elsewhere used of public proclamation of the gospel by Peter (Acts 11:4) and Paul (Acts 28:23). All this adds up to a rather strong argument that Prisca was a Christian teacher and leader on a par with, if not superior to, her husband. That Paul himself accorded her this status is demonstrated by his reference to Prisca and Aquila as fellow workers in Christ (Rom. 16:3). The term translated “fellow worker” is used in the Pauline literature twelve times, and only once in the rest of the New Testament. The list of those whom Paul designated as fellow workers includes, in addition to Prisca and Aquila, Urbanus, Apollos, the congregation at Corinth, Titus, Epaphroditus, Euodia, Syntyche, Clement, Aristarchus, Mark, Jesus Justus, Timothy, Philemon, Demas, and Luke. That Prisca is accorded any place whatever in this distinguished company is remarkable—and that she is placed in



a dominant role borders on the miraculous.

Phoebe, a deacon

Perhaps the most significant evidence that women were in positions of leadership in the early church is found in Romans 16. In verse 1, Phoebe is commended by Paul as a *diaconos* of the church at Cenchrae. The word *diaconos* is the direct source of the English word *deacon*. It seems to have originated as a term for table waiter, a very lowly form of service in the ancient world. In the New Testament it is used as a general term for *servant* eight times (Matt. 20:26, 22:10, 23:11; Mark 9:35, 10:43; John 2:5, 9; 12:26). It is used twenty-two times in the more specialized sense of an "office" in the church (Rom. 13:4 [twice], 15:8; 16:1; 1 Cor. 3:5, 2 Cor. 3:6, 6:4; 11:15 [twice], 23; Gal. 2:17; Eph. 3:7, 6:21; Phil. 1:1, Col. 1:7, 23, 25; 4:7; 1 Thess. 3:2; 1 Tim. 3:8, 12; 4:6). Of these 22 usages, the KJV translates *diaconos* as "minister" eighteen times, as "deacon" three times, and only in Romans 16:1 as "servant. The word is unambiguously applied to a female only in the latter passage.

What explanation can there be for translating this word twenty-one out of twenty-two times of its specialized usage as "minister" or "deacon," and but once as "servant"—except the chauvinistic assumption that females could not be in leadership positions in a church. Only in the recently published NRSV Bible and The New Living Translation is *diaconos* translated "deacon" in Phoebe's case.

An even stronger indication of Phoebe's function as a leader comes in Romans 16:2. There she is referred to as a *prostatis* of many, and of Paul himself. This word does not appear anywhere else in the New Testament, so we do not have the luxury of examining its usage in other New Testament contexts. We do, however, have five occurrences of the slightly variant form *prostates* in the Greek version of the Old Testament. In one of these usages it refers to the overseers of King David's property (1 Chron. 27:31). In another it is used of the overseers of the king's works (1 Chron. 8:10). In yet another it is used of Solomon's chief officers (2 Chron. 8:10). In still another it is used of King Joash's chief officers (2 Chron. 24:11). Its final usage designates the officers of the chief priest (2 Chron. 24:11). These were no ordinary helpers, but in every case highly authoritative persons.

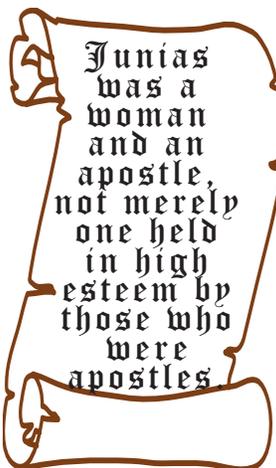
Though we do not have the noun form *prostatis* elsewhere in the New Testament, we do have the verb form. The basic meaning of this verb is "to stand before," "to preside," "to rule," "to govern."²⁰ In its eight occurrences in the New Testament, this verb consistently denotes one who is in charge, one who rules, one who governs. Thus, in the words of Spencer, "The most likely significance of *prostatis* is its common meaning of a leader and ruler." She further points out that "in the later church the term was used of civil rulers, ecclesiastical rulers and bishops."²¹

Junia, an apostle

Not only does Romans 16 confront us with a woman who

was a deacon/minister of the church at Cenchrae, but also a woman who was an apostle. In Romans 16:7 Paul wrote, "Greet Andronicus and Junias [or *Junia* (fem.), NASB note], my kinsmen, and my fellow prisoners, who are outstanding among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me." To support my claim that we find reference here to a female apostle, two things must be established: first, that Junias was a woman, and second, that she was in fact an apostle, not merely one who was held in high esteem by those who were apostles. As to the former, Spencer cites Origen, John Chrysostom, and Jerome as assuming that Junias was a woman.²² Even more significant may be the fact that the earliest manuscript of Romans, along with a few lesser manuscripts, reads "Julia" instead of "Junias." This alone is sufficient to prove that the status of apostle could be held by a woman, if I can demonstrate that Andronicus and Junias/Julia were in fact apostles.

I would point out that, in order to avoid the specter of a female apostle, some interpreters have taken the phrase "outstanding among the apostles" to mean only that these two people were held in high esteem by those who were apostles. Craig Keener casts serious doubt upon such an interpretation, saying, "Since they were imprisoned with him, Paul knows them well enough to recommend them without appealing to the other apostles, whose judgment he never cites on such matters [emphasis mine], and the Greek is most naturally read as claiming that they were apostles."²³ Spencer makes the grammatical point that "the preposition *en* which is used here always has the idea of 'within.'"²⁴ Keener summarizes the matter well: "Those who favor the view that Junia was not a female apostle do so because of their prior assumption that women could not be apostles, not because of any evidence in the text."²⁵



In conclusion, I have presented women from both Old Testament and New who held the highest positions of authority that existed at the time they lived. There are many people, I believe, who will have more to answer for in the context of God's judgment for the treatment of women in the church than just about any other single issue that we might name. ■



Joe E. Lunceford is professor of religion at Georgetown College in Georgetown, KY, where he has taught since 1981. He is also a former pastor and U.S. Air Force chaplain, a contributor to many Bible dictionaries and encyclopedias, and the author of *Bible Book Studies*.

Endnotes

1. David A. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker, gen. eds., *Word Biblical Commentary*, 52 vols. (Waco: Word Books, 1986), vol. 2: Genesis 16–50, by Gordon Wenham, p. 82.
2. *Mercer Dictionary of the Bible*, s.v. "Sherah," by George L. Kelm.
3. Clifton J. Allen, gen. ed., *Broadman Bible Commentary*. 12 vols. (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1970). Vol 2: 1 Samuel–Nehemiah, by Clyde T. Francisco, et al., p. 320.
4. *Antiquities* 10.4.2.
5. *Ibid.*

6. Edith Deen, *All of the Women of the Bible* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1955). pp. 141–42.
7. *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, 1956 ed., s.v. “Anna,” by Dwight M. Pratt; Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus Messiah* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, n.d.), pp. 200–01.
8. Cited in David A. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker, gen. eds., *Word Biblical Commentary*, 52 vols. (Waco: Word Books, 1989), vol. 35a: Luke 1–9:20, by John Nolland, p. 122.
9. Aida Besançon Spencer, *Beyond the Curse* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1985). p. 104. Cf. Alfred Edersheim, *ibid.*, p. 201.
10. *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, 1956 ed., s.v. “Anna,” by Dwight M. Pratt.
11. Edith Deen, *ibid.*, p. 173.
12. E.g., Ray Summers, *Commentary on Luke* (Waco: Word Books, 1972), p. 41; David A. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker, gen. eds., *Word Biblical Commentary*, 52 vols. (Waco: Word Books, 1989), vol. 35a: Luke 1–9:20 by John Nolland, pp. 122–23; William Barclay, *The Gospel of Luke* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1956), p. 23.
13. Matt 4:10; Luke 1:74; Acts 24:14, 27:23; Rom. 1:9, 2 Tim. 1:3.
14. Luke 4:8; Acts 7:7, 26:7; Phil. 3:3; Heb. 9:13, 12:28.
15. Heb. 8:5, 9:9, 10:2, 13:10.
16. Acts 7:42; Rom. 1:25; Rev. 7:15, 22:3.
17. *Mercer Bible Dictionary*, s.v. “Priscilla and Aquila,” by Frank Louis Mauldin.
18. David A. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker, gen eds., *Word Biblical Commentary*, 52 vols. (Waco: Word Books, 1988); vol. 38b., *Romans 9–16*, by James D. G. Dunn, p. 892. For the suggestion that nobility of birth placed Prisca first see William Barclay, *The Letter to the Romans*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1957), pp. 230–33.
19. *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, 1956 ed., s.v. “Aquila,” by Jacob W. Kapp.
20. G. Abbott-Smith, *Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament* 3rd ed., s.v. “*proistemi*.”
21. Spencer, *ibid.*, p. 101.
22. Spencer, *ibid.*
23. Craig S. Keener, *Paul, Women and Wives* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1992), p. 242.
24. Spencer, *ibid.*, p. 102.
25. Keener, *ibid.*



EQUAL TIME

Letters to the Editor

A “Recovering” Southern Baptist

Each time I see a reference to the Southern Baptist Convention Statement of Faith [Summer issue], I feel the need to write about my experiences within the Baptist church. I use lack of time as an excuse, but the truth is that it would be so hard to really express the depth of pain caused by growing up and then raising daughters in the Baptist church. For the past three or four years I have referred to myself as a “recovering Southern Baptist.” It is very difficult at times, but finding CBE was the significant turning point in beginning that recovery, and I appreciate so much all those who speak the truth through CBE.

Priscilla Papers, books, and other publications available through CBE are so liberating, yet at the same time, while reading them I am constantly reminded that for some 50 years I was misled. I am so thankful that I reached a point where I can dwell on Jesus’ fairness more and more rather than the suppression of the SBC. Thank you for your prayers.

SUE BAUGH MATTINGLY
Louisville, KY

We would like to hear from you. All letters are subject to editing for space or clarity. Please write to Priscilla Papers at CBE, 122 W. Franklin Ave., Suite 218, Minneapolis, MN 55404-2451; fax, 612-872-6891, or e-mail, CBE@cbeinternational.org.

Did You Know?

Futurist Faith Popcorn recently identified a major trend she calls “EVEolution”:

- Businesses owned by women employ more than the Fortune 500 combined: 18.5 million workers.
- They do \$2.3 trillion in sales annually.
- Women own eight million businesses in the U.S., or one-third of all U.S. firms, a figure that has risen 78 percent since 1987.
- A woman opens a new business every 60 seconds. Women are leaving corporate America at twice the rate of men.
- By the year 2005, 40 percent of all firms will be owned by females.
- Four out of five Japanese small businesses are owned by women.
- Women control 80 percent of household spending.
- Women purchase 75 percent of all over-the-counter drugs.
- Last year, women purchased 50 percent of all personal computers, and they have reached parity in the online community.
- Women influence 90 percent of all car purchases.
- Women own 53 percent of all stocks.

The Strategis Group has found that women are now the driving demographic on the Internet. Its findings reveal that the number of wired women has tripled and now make up 49 percent of all Internet users. They purchase more online than men. They are now considered to be a major force to be reckoned with online.

—Adapted from “What Do Wired Women Want?” by Sean Carton, March 29, 2000, on the ClickZ Network.