

WOMEN:
GOD'S SECRET
WEAPON

God's Inspiring Message to Women of Power, Purpose and Destiny

ED SILVOSO



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My wife, Ruth, is the inspiration for this book, and I dedicate it to her as well as to our nine granddaughters. Vanessa, Sophia, Serena, Isabella, Melanie, Mia, Emma, Addison and Lydia are indeed God's not-so-secret weapon—already transforming their spheres of influence, taking the transforming power and presence of God to the schools and colleges where they study or work.



Our granddaughters in 2018, at the time of updating and revising this edition



In 2010



In 2001, when this book was first published

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Introduction

One of the most fascinating verses in the Bible is Psalm 68:11, which describes a company of women who proclaim glad tidings. The intriguing part is not women preaching the Gospel but the fact that in this particular case these women are convened by the Lord to destroy His enemies. They do such a great job that kings and armies flee in total disarray, making it possible for the women to also loot the enemy camp.

The idea of women preaching is still polemical in some quarters, but the concept of women preachers defeating evil armies is novel and controversial, to put it mildly. As a culture we generally have a hard time picturing women playing a leading role in warfare.

However, at the beginning of the Bible, the first expression of spiritual warfare involves a woman and the devil (see Genesis 3:1–7). Apparently it was not meant to be an isolated incident, because immediately after the encounter, God decreed that the woman and her seed would oppose the devil forever (see verses 14–16).

The role of women in society, especially in the Church, is one that elicits passionate debate, much of it amplified by the breadth of the social and spiritual gap that separates the sexes.

In October 1998, I had the privilege of being on the program at the Promise Keepers' Stand in the Gap rally in Washington, D.C. It was a very moving scene to see more than a million men gathered on the National Mall to renounce sins of the past and to ask for divine power for the future.

Suddenly a small group of very vocal women, apparently members of the National Organization for Women (NOW), descended on the Mall. They exposed their breasts and shouted at the men, "Let's see how serious you are about religion. Look! Look here!" While this was going on, the president of NOW, Patricia Ireland, was giving around-the-clock interviews, relentlessly impeaching the motives of the men at the Mall. The contrast painfully illustrates the breadth of the gender gap.

On May 1, 2000, *Time* magazine published an article titled "The Preacher's Daughter," about Anne Graham Lotz, daughter of beloved evangelist Billy Graham. The writer reported that Mrs. Lotz's ministry has been opposed, and in some cases rejected, by those who otherwise wholeheartedly support her father. The *Time* article mentioned that at a 1988 pastors' conference "many in Lotz's audience turned their chairs around so as not to face a preaching woman."* She is quoted as saying: "When people have a problem with women in ministry, they need to take it up with Jesus. He's the one who put us there."† According to her father, Billy

*David Van Biema, "The Preacher's Daughter: Billy's other kid goes big time with a series of stadium revivals," *Time*, May 1, 2000, 56–57.

†Ibid.

Graham, Anne is “the best preacher in the family.” In response, Anne says, “I hope people look at my life and say, ‘If God could do it for Anne, he could do it for me.’ My daddy says that the only explanation for my ministry is the Holy Spirit. I agree.”‡

Whether it is a band of female desperados at the Mall in Washington, D.C., or a female preacher with impressive credentials, such as Mrs. Lotz, what women do easily causes passions to rise.

In the secular arena, I have seen feminists conduct private wars against men and society. Passion, not reason, often drives them. Vengeance, not reconciliation, comes across as their motive. These crusaders can always be found by following the trail of wounded people they leave behind.

I have also seen women in the Church deeply disappointed when the call to ministry they feel God has given them is not recognized, especially by men. Some have become religious feminists. Driven by their hurts, they state their case too strongly and end up adding to our cumulative societal pain.

On the other hand, the world is a much better place thanks to icons such as Mother Teresa, although the feminists dismiss her as irrelevant for not having taken up arms with them. They also look down on women who feel comfortable and satisfied to make home and motherhood their highest priorities in life.

There is a spiritual civil war going on. Even though those who fire the guns make up a relatively small portion of the overall population, the guns are loud and the bullets hurt a lot of innocent bystanders. I have written this book to encourage men and women caught in this spiritual civil war,

‡Keri Wyatt Kent, “The Reverent Maverick,” *Christianity Today*, October 21, 2008, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/et/2008/october/28.46.html>.

to highlight God’s awesome plan for women, and men as well, and to show how we are designed to complement, not to compete, with each other.

My credentials are very straightforward: I love God, I honor both men and women, and I want to see the world reached for Christ. I am also a serious student of the Scriptures who is totally committed to the Church, God’s agency to bring healing to the world.*

I was born and grew up in macho Argentina. Since my earliest days I have had close associations with other boys and men. My father was my best friend, my uncles were my mentors and counselors and my male cousins were my childhood buddies. With my cousins, I built treehouses, rode horses, played soccer, joined the army, went to school and ran corporations. I have always felt comfortable interacting with men.

On the female side of the family, I have a loving mother and only one sister (no brothers), and I lived in close proximity to five aunts. In an Italian-Spanish family such as mine, the term “proximity” carries a more intense meaning than in other cultures. When I say we were close, I mean *very* close. Such closeness provided me with a privileged window on the female world as I listened to them talk unguardedly and as I watched their behavior and reactions.

I am married to a remarkable woman, Ruth. On April 20, 2018, we celebrated our golden anniversary.† We have four precious daughters and nine granddaughters, in addition to three wonderful grandsons. Walking side by side with

*I discuss this in detail in my book *Ekklesia: Rediscovering God’s Instrument for Global Transformation* (Minneapolis: Chosen, 2017).

†Highlights of the celebration of our fiftieth wedding anniversary (and sixtieth anniversary of ministry) have been made into a video. You can view it at <https://vimeo.com/269108444/f03cb7bc4c>.

Ruth, I have been able to deepen my understanding of what a woman is. She has led me lovingly by the hand through what to me, a typical male, is an intriguing maze. It has been and continues to be a most enriching experience.

Together we have seen our daughters go from being babies to little girls to young ladies to mature women. We have watched them take their first steps in life and in the ministry. As parents we always believed that we were to give two things to our children: feet to stand on and wings to fly with. Today they soar so high that quite often they are our counselors of choice. More recently, from the comfortable position awarded by grandparenthood, we are observing as their own children take their first steps on the road of life. As it was for their mothers before them, they are finding that it is dotted with challenges and framed by both peaks of joy and valleys of pain.

I am fully persuaded that women are extraordinary creatures, that their God-given potential is way beyond anything we have tapped so far. But I am also aware that the road for women is not an easy one. I want my daughters and granddaughters to succeed. I want every woman to do well!

What does God say about women's role and position in society and in the Church? He is the one who created us male and female. He is the one who commanded us to marry and cleave to each other until we become one, and to remain united.

There are questions, too. What provision has God made to deal with the hurts and the pains resulting from the gender war? What word does He have for women who are oppressed and for men who feel confused and frustrated?

As I searched the Scriptures in my quest for answers, I found that God is deeply interested in seeing men and women

reconciled, first to Himself and then to each other. Obviously He is neither a feminist nor a bigot. We know that He is both male and female, because He created men and women to reflect that dual self-image (see Genesis 1:27). He wants full reconciliation, and He has plans for men and women to minister side by side to help bring an unprecedented world-wide harvest of souls into His Kingdom.

When the moment comes to put everything and everyone under Jesus' feet, God intends to use women alongside men in a surprise attack to crush Satan's head.

Women are fascinating. Eve's creation crowned the most intense period of divine creativity on planet earth. The way God went about it reveals that women are "twice refined." Such refinement has a lot to do with God's plans for them in the final days.

At any time now, God will give the command and an army of women preachers will do wonders for Him in the world arena, surprising everyone, especially the devil himself. In the meantime, God continues to restore the sexes so that they can be everything He intends them to be. Read on and be encouraged!

ONE

One of Satan's Greatest Fears

One of Satan's greatest fears has to do with women. As perplexing as this may sound, what women can do to him constantly torments him. The roots of Satan's anxiety go back to the very beginning of life on earth when he received the ultimate threat as part of a severe divine judgment—a threat that describes how God plans to use women to crush his head.

The Threat

The threat, recorded in the opening chapters of the Bible (see Genesis 3:15), was an elaborate one. It was not an idle fulmination, since God made it and He never fails to deliver. He first curses Satan (who is disguised as a serpent) “more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field” (Genesis 3:14). After relegating him to the bottom of the animal totem pole, God lowers him even further by cutting off his feet. He declares, “On your belly you will go” (verse 14),

downgrading Satan's mobility to crawling only. Finally, God ruins his diet as well, proclaiming, "Dust you will eat all the days of your life" (verse 14).

But God was not done yet! Next, He threatens the devil with the woman by decreeing that her anger will forever be focused on him (see Genesis 3:15). To drive home the point that it is not a sterile fulmination, God announces a rematch. He even reveals the results: The woman and her seed will defeat Satan, who will have his head bruised while inflicting minor damage to the heel doing the bruising (see verse 15).

Obviously, God is speaking about the advent of the Messiah, but the fact that female anger aimed at the devil occupies such an integral part of God's threat must mean that women have a significant role. Why else would God use it to frame the first messianic prophecy? I submit to you that there is much more here than what the evil one wants us to know.

Satan is a sore loser and a proud one, too. From the moment God uttered this devastating threat, the devil has been working overtime to twist its meaning. This is why so many people, especially women, have the false impression that Satan has singled them out for harm. Nothing can be further from the truth. It is the devil who has to watch out, since he is the one described with a bruised head. While women walk upright, Satan must always crawl, making his head vulnerable every time they set their feet down. He is the one who should be afraid, not the other way around.

An Army of Women

Women need to discover this liberating truth. The devil knows that God does not lie—what God promises always comes to pass. This is why Satan has spent centuries belittling

women and weaving a web of lies into a formidable world-wide network of oppression to hold them down. He knows that when women find out who they really are, his evil kingdom will come to an abrupt end. He cannot afford to have women walking upright. He desperately needs to keep them down.

But Satan cannot do this forever. The Scriptures tell us that the day is fast approaching when God will lift women up and release masses of them into ministry. Psalm 68:11 declares that at a strategic time God will give a command, and a company of women who proclaim the good news will defeat His enemies.* An all-female army will bring this about, and it will be a surprise victory.

Up to the moment of engagement these warring women will have been forced to lie low, hardly noticed, like gray doves on top of dirty sheepfolds (see Psalm 68:13). At the appointed time, God will tell these humbled women to rise up and fight. When they give chase, God will use them to “shatter the head of His enemies, the hairy crown of him who goes on in his guilty deeds” (Psalm 68:21). Psalm 68 describes the culmination of the rematch promised by God in the Garden, where the element of surprise will be important to victory.

*The NASB, NIV, ESV and a few other versions reflect the original Hebrew usage of the feminine plural participle to refer to “women.” The KJV, NKJV, RSV and others use gender-neutral words. The Hebrew in Isaiah 40:9–10 also attests to women proclaiming the Good News to Jerusalem, Judah and the ends of the earth.

Satan knows that when women find out who they really are, his evil kingdom will come to an abrupt end.

Schoolyard Bullies

I can relate to the divine metaphor of doves in Psalm 68 from an experience I had in grade school. It was painful and traumatic in the beginning but ended up defining the rest of my life.

Like many Argentines, I was raised a Roman Catholic. My mother was pious and devout; my father, a well-respected community leader, was an atheist. From their different perspectives, they each drilled into me the need to be exemplary and to excel at everything I did. In that context they also taught me, in no uncertain terms, never to fight with belligerent children. I was not to stoop to their level; rather, I was to be an example of self-restraint. Fighting was an absolute no-no, especially given my folks' high profile in the community.

As an altar boy and a very religious person, I had no qualms with the theory. But the practical side was not as easy, especially when it came to gangs and bullies in school. These schoolyard thugs constantly picked on me because they knew that I would not fight back. I was an easy target. To the bullies I looked like a wingless bird in a foxhole.

Life became extremely difficult at school. Everything I did was turned against me. If I got *As* in my classes, the bullies touted *Fs* as the "in" thing. *As* were for stupid people, they said. When I became the teacher's aide, a coveted privilege, I was derisively branded the teacher's pet. Every time the principal publicly complimented me, I was savagely booed in private. My books were stolen, my notepads were ripped off, and my lunch money was "confiscated" under duress. My *figuritas*, the Argentine equivalent of American baseball cards, were forcibly "traded," except that this trading was a one-way street into a bully's pocket.

Despite the harassment, I never felt crushed by the bullies because I was very successful in school. Deep down I knew I was capable of holding my ground with any of them if I so chose, but I felt restrained by my parents' strict orders. The fact that I had the highest GPA in the class and was entrusted to carry the ceremonial flag at public ceremonies reinforced the message that I was different and better than them. I could theoretically see that I should not lower myself to their level, but it was not easy.

The Fight

Things came to a head when my sister began to attend the same school and the bullies tried to take advantage of her. In the past, these thugs had repeatedly taunted me by referring to my father and mother with very insulting epithets. I was able to endure the false smears because my parents never heard them. But when the "tough guys" began to direct their barrage of filth toward my sister, it hit too close to home. She was on campus, next to me *and to them!*

One day, during a school break, the bullies surrounded and taunted me. They shouted out what they planned to do to my sister and called me a spineless coward who would not fight. Everyone in the schoolyard could hear their obscene slurs.

As the bullies closed in on me, ready for the kill, I felt tremendous tension mounting between the restraining orders under which I had operated all along and the danger fast enveloping me. When the tension reached its boiling point, I felt an unexpected release. Something inside of me commanded me to fight. At that moment I knew that I was no longer to hold back. "Fight" was the word. And fight I did!

In a very short succession the three top gang leaders were laid in a pile on the floor. I had not realized I could dodge punches so well or connect so precisely, but I did both. While I was surprised, the bullies were even more surprised. As I turned to the fourth bully, he froze in his tracks, dropped his fists and ran away. I slowly gyrated 360 degrees to face everybody around me. While holding their gaze I asked, "Who wishes to be next?" They averted their eyes, bowed their heads and quickly dissipated. The three out-of-commission bullies quietly got up and left, deflated and embarrassed.

A New Day

I was never bullied again. In fact, that was the day when my peers began to openly show respect for me. Word spread that I was not to be messed with. My school accomplishments were no longer derided. My opinions counted. I rose

from a position of forced humility to one of undisputed leadership. No one expected it to unfold the way it did, including myself. But it happened, and it changed things forever.

This is the picture we find in Psalm 68. Silvery-gray doves that have been forced to lie low on dirty sheepfolds are suddenly deployed into battle. They unexpectedly defeat an enemy who never thought

he would be destroyed by those he had abused so much and for so long (see Psalm 68:11–13). This is the culmination of the rematch promised by God in Genesis 3:15. The restraints

*When women charge
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that have held women back will be removed. They will hear the word “fight,” and fight they will. When women charge into battle, their enemy will be defeated in the most unexpected way. Surprise will be the key element.

Surprise as a Strategy

In the movie *The Patriot*, which is a fictional account of events during the American War of Independence, there is a scene toward the end that fully captures how deadly surprise can be in combat. The Americans were facing well-trained and superbly equipped troops under the command of British Major General Lord Charles Cornwallis.

The colonial army consisted of some regular soldiers, but it was mostly made up of militiamen who were, for the most part, untrained farmers carrying hunting rifles. The British commander openly despised the militia because he had seen it fail in combat so many times. Many of his American counterparts felt the same way, but their commander (superbly played by Mel Gibson) decided to use this well-established perception of weakness to his advantage. He positioned the militiamen as the point on the battlefield, which meant they would be the first ones to engage the enemy. As Cornwallis took stock of this maneuver, he did not feel threatened. He saw the militia troops advancing against his positions but *knew* they would break down under pressure as they had done in the past.

As he expected, when Cornwallis sent his troops forward, the militia turned and fled back toward the hill they had just crested. The redcoats charged ahead, confident that they were about to obliterate the Americans. However, as soon as the fleeing militiamen reached the other side of the high

point, they hit the ground and lay low, waiting in ambush. Then the colonial army fired their muskets at the unprepared redcoats, who were an easy target as they stood atop the hill. Most of them fell, never to rise again. This surprise attack turned the battle around, and the British left the field in defeat.

The Final Battle

I have written this book to bring home the truth that the devil is afraid of women and that God has kept them in reserve for a decisive role in the final battle. Christ, born of a woman, first bruised Satan's head at Calvary, mortally wounding him by descending to Hades and rising again. Next Christ commissioned His disciples to go to the ends of the earth to dismantle Satan's kingdom. They were assured that at the right moment "the God of peace will . . . crush Satan under your feet" (Romans 16:20).

The culmination to the rematch that began at Calvary is coming, when the devil will have his head crushed and women, by playing a key role, will more than even the score. Satan knows this because he heard God announce it in the Garden. He has worked hard to keep women down, oppressed and humiliated. He has twisted our understanding of the Scriptures so that women will not be released into ministry. But God is using this to lure Satan into a false, and eventually lethal, sense of security.

Because of God's threat and the female enmity that He established right after the Fall, there are few things the devil fears more than women moving in the power of the Holy Spirit and men working in partnership alongside them. It is about time for women to realize that they are God's secret

weapon for the final battle, as I will show in this book. It is also time for men to realize that “it is not good for [men] to be alone” (Genesis 2:18). *Deep* intimacy must be restored for men to reclaim their role as protector and for women to be *fully* released to do what God intended from the beginning: to torment the devil with divinely sanctioned anger in order to keep him down, eating the dust of defeat. This is what this book is all about.