

# Return to Eden

*Rediscovering Paradise within ourselves through the life of Christ*

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## Introduction

Several years ago, while I was in my quiet time with the Lord, I ran across a verse of Scripture that literally leapt off the page at me.

**Thus says the Lord God: I will cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will cause the cities to be inhabited and the waste places shall be rebuilt...and they shall say, This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden... *Ezekiel 36:33-35***

In the days that followed, I suddenly saw the words Eden, and Garden and Paradise everywhere in the way you do when your spirit is quickened. As time went on I realized that the Lord was saying something very singular to me. He was declaring quietly but unmistakably to my Spirit:

**"You are the Garden of the Lord: Eden is within you. You can return to Eden".**

When was a little girl, it became clear to me that I was born for two things. One was music, the other, design. I loved to craft and create. *Color, texture, sound, imagination:* these were the things that rocked my little world. While my sister and her friends were absorbed with the imaginary exploits and social life of Barbie, I was entirely entranced in creating outfits and accessories for her instead. At about the age of thirteen or so, I saw my first Vogue magazine, and as they say, 'that was that!' I was mesmerized by the masterful and what seemed to me, musical quality of the creations of the great couturiers. I followed with intense interest the ebb and flow of the fashion world, and eventually trained in that area for my career. For the next fifteen years, it was my world.

As a former custom designer and pattern drafter with my own business, I have dealt with many clients and many brides. At the same time as I had my business, I was deeply involved in the Church, especially in worship ministry. It may seem to you (as it did to me) that these two components of my life were totally contradictory to one another. My silent fear was that a love of beauty had caused me to be lead astray and waste precious years pursuing an industry that is essentially fueled by vanity. At times the clash between these two worlds was very marked, yet I had the unmistakable sense that God's had really was upon me. Their one common denominator, in my mind at least, was beauty. Unexpectedly, a day came when the call of God resonated upon my life in such a way as to confirm that my days as a businesswoman were ended. As I puzzled before the Lord over why I had struggled in this tension between the fashion industry and a ministry calling for so long, He answered in a way that stunned me.

He said *"You have been training for the ministry I have for you. You have been doing in the natural realm what you will perfect in the Spiritual....(you understand the process better than anyone): You will accoutre the Bride!"*

Out of this revelation, a teaching rose within me and came forth as "Return to Eden". Initially written as a Bible Study for women, I taught it several times to various groups. I am continually amazed at the way the Lord meets with us in the place of our open honesty and vulnerability, bursting forth with His grace and healing. We enjoyed a great fellowship with each other, sharing deeply significant and often unexpectedly vulnerable things. We forged strong ties of relationship.

Women adore the luxury and pampering of beauty treatments, at whatever age they are. I have formatted this teaching as an actual "Spiritual Spa Treatment". Think of the joy and excitement you would feel checking yourself and a few of your closest friends into one of the most exclusive spas in the country! Through this book, I hope to offer the spiritual equivalent. This treatment will be for the deep, hidden, inner woman of the Spirit, but its effects will surely have a profound effect on the beauty of the outer woman as well.

The Word says **"Look to Him, and be radiant..."** (*Ps 34:5*) and we will be tapping into that potential for perfect restoration. When the deepest and most sensitive and passionate parts of our being are nurtured in these places of the Word, we can expect profound changes of redeemed character and authentic beauty.

This truth is ours: In Jesus, women are no longer under the curse of the Fall and all its deadly effects. However, most women still deal with any number of serpents, thorns, shame and nakedness every day. "Return to Eden" is an intensive look at the relationship between God, Women and Beauty. It highlights the unique privileges He has lavished upon the Feminine. It examines how the finished work of Christ has returned our right and ability to live in Eden. He has given us back birthrights of joy, sound emotional health, perfect fruitfulness, and whole relationships. Identity and destiny have been cleansed and restored to us. Eden is within us. Whether or not we chose to live there will be made by the attitudes we entertain and choices we make every day. Where is the "Gate" of the Garden? How do I get back inside? How do I stay in this protected, hedged place of covenant and privilege, and walk everyday with the Lord? These are the questions this book will consider and answer through scripture as we move along the journey.

The Church everywhere is packed full of interesting women of every variety who have no idea how beautiful and precious they are, or the value of the gifts they carry. Any number of very powerful, high-quality, take-no-prisoners women of God abound, and they are treasures! It is my prayer that as you participate in this study, you will discover the one that looks back at you from the mirror every day. Hopefully, it will cause you to see the women around you with new sight, and long to see their latent beauty rise to the surface.

As mentioned, this book is written on the foundation of a Bible Study series. Please note that there is a workbook also available for delving more personally into the subject matter and facilitating discussion. The questions are designed to push comfort barriers of honesty within ourselves, and build an intimate trust between the women of your group, should you choose to use it as a corporate study.

When I think about what Satan has stolen from women, from the very beginning to the repeating pattern of the generations, I feel very, very angry. But something prophetic is arising in my spirit from the deep wells of salvation. It is the Holy Spirit, humming gently but surely "...Here comes the Bride...". In this era, there is an anointing for beauty restoration coming so heavily upon the Feminine, it can only be a precursor to The Bride. Something so powerful is arising that it will break old fetters that have quenched, subjugated, brutalized, and degraded the daughters of Eve. The untrammelled virtue of Christ will shine through His women everywhere, purified and undeniable.

Through all the misconceptions and pitfalls of the Feminine, the shining truth of authentic spirituality is beginning to emerge in her full colors. Somewhere, somehow, the massive spectrum of Beauty itself will become purified: it will submit again to the one who created it. We must have a renewed revelation of how to **"Worship God in the Beauty of Holiness"** (*Psalms 29:2*). No one is going to 'out-bling' Jesus, so we need not worry about defending His honor, or being snared once again in religious ideas of 'how to keep women in their place'. His splendor will ultimately take everyone's breath away. Woman of God, it is time to get in the flow of what Holy Spirit is doing creatively in a new era!