



## Living From the Heart

By Sue DeRaad

“Watch over your heart with all diligence for from it flow the springs of life.” Prov. 4:23

Let’s get real Ladies! My husband was the problem, right? I held life together at home, that was true, but I was the one who swept the dust under doorstep. He let me see the buildup of perfectionism, isolation, and rage in his life behind closed doors. But when stepping out, he insisted that *our* doorstep be the cleanest in town. I did what I was told, so we always appeared very well put together.

It was all very confusing for me because we were always best friends. There was a love between us that was very noticeable and real. The two lives just didn’t fit. I was feeling unloved by my husband, fear of rejection and abandonment, inadequate as a wife, and shame if anyone were to ever see what was under the rug on the doorstep.

I was so busy building and maintaining a false image of my children and marriage that I didn’t know who I was. A Christian from age 10, I had always been faithful and sought after God with as much of my heart as I understood to do so. I had a strong conviction of right and wrong, so I was obedient and was looked up to as a “woman of faith” both as a single woman and later as a wife and mother. I was all those things, yet I lost sight of who I was created to be. I lost the dream or maybe never had one.

I saw God only as the Heavenly Father to be feared. Christ was my plum line. Yes, I spoke of my Christianity as a relationship, but I didn’t really understand that kind of intimacy and that God, through Jesus Christ really desired relationship with me. He wanted to know me. He wanted to share life with me. He wanted to walk with me and talk with me, just like in the garden. Wow!

Not only did I have to get to know who I was as a person, but even more so as a woman. God created woman to offer something to man. Something that he needed. Adam and God walked in the garden together, sharing many things that only God and Adam would ever share, but still something was incomplete for Adam. A woman—a feminine heart!

What does that mean for me? It gives me great value! A feminine heart is valuable not just in a marriage, but in life, offering the deepest side of my heart which is God given, God created, to the world. The world needs what my heart in Christ has to offer! The relational side of God’s image!

Are you ready to trust God with truly living from your heart honestly? Here is an exercise that may help you to explore your heart with honesty (and relate these to yourself, not your husband and/or children):

- List 10 things that bring you joy personally
- List two of your greatest passions /dreams.
- List two of your greatest fears.
- List five of your deepest emotions that you feel right now and attach them to something:

I feel \_\_\_\_\_ about \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_

It is very important to live out who you are and being willing to take the risk. Is it time for you to be willing? God wants to share life with all of us—and that includes you.