

JOANNA MEYER

# Women, Work & Calling

The book cover features a dark blue background with intricate, light blue line art. The art depicts several women's profiles and faces, some with long, flowing hair. In the center, there is a briefcase and a sewing machine. The overall theme is women's work and vocation.

STEP INTO YOUR PLACE  
IN GOD'S WORLD



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## Called Together

*Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."*

*So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.*

*God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."*

**GENESIS 1:26-28**

**One of the highlights** of Denver Institute's programming is our annual business leaders' event, Business for the

Common Good. Entrepreneurs and executives from across the country gather to learn how God works through his people to build healthier companies, design products that solve the world's toughest challenges, and serve their communities through their work. The first few years that we hosted the event, we noticed that there were hardly any women who attended. As one male guest observed, "Yikes! This feels like an old boys' club. Surely there are women who would benefit from being part of this gathering." But the imbalance extended beyond this single event. Whether we were inviting people to join our board of directors, finding panelists for events, or asking leaders to mentor young professionals, it was a challenge to find women to participate.

Observing the gender disparity in our programming forced us to examine deeply rooted expectations about gender roles, leadership models, and workplace dynamics—a learning process that led to the development of this book. As our understanding of the challenges Christian women face as we live out our callings has grown, our commitment to inspire and equip you for your work became stronger every day.

This commitment flows from the belief that women are vital players in God's redemptive purposes. The earliest pages of Scripture place women at the heart of his plan. Genesis 1:26-28 emphasizes three themes with relevance for any Christian's work:

1. God, as the Creator, is a *worker*, and his work is *good*.
2. Men and women are created in God's image, *an image they bear together*.
3. God entrusts creation to men and women, that they would rule it wisely, help it become more fruitful, and multiply—not only through physical reproduction but also by developing material goods, social structures, and culture.

Theologically speaking, this call is referred to as the creation mandate and represents God's first instructions to humankind.

We reflect the glory of our Creator by being like him—creators who work, as men and women, together. “[It’s] worth noting that this is God’s intention from creation,” says Denise Daniels, a professor of entrepreneurship at Wheaton College and scholar on faith, work, and gender.<sup>1</sup> When women hold back—when we neglect our God-given gifts and responsibilities—a critical piece of God’s design is missing. Aspects of God’s character will be hidden from the world, and the partnership between men and women is weakened.

This interdependence is what Paul is getting at: “Neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 11:11 KJV), or as it’s expressed in the New International Version, “In the Lord woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman.”

Authors Myk Habets and Beulah Wood elaborate: “The Pauline ‘not without’ suggests that the identity of one gender cannot be ‘without’ the other. Men cannot be defined simply as what ‘women are not’; women cannot be defined simply as ‘what men are not.’”<sup>2</sup> As the Bible sees it, no kind of human community—a family, a church, or a workplace—can thrive without men and women working together.

Denise Daniels points to research showing that organizations with both men and women in executive and board roles perform better financially and have fewer ethical violations than organizations dominated by a single gender.<sup>3</sup> Imagine how a similar impact could extend far beyond the workplace if women fully embodied their gifts in response to God’s broad call to care for and develop the world. In the chapters that follow, we invite you to discover—or reaffirm—God’s design, as you serve, lead, and influence others through your daily work.

## REFLECT

What does being made and called to work together tell us about God’s character and his design for human flourishing?

Think about your own work context. What do the men and women you work with have in common? What does each gender offer that is unique? What would be lost if either was missing?

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