

God's Good Design (Matthias Media: Kingsford), 2012
By Claire Smith

Book Review by Louise Davies
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God's Good Design by Claire Smith takes a close look at some of the most spoken about passages in the Bible, those on the roles of men and women. The book is broken up into two sections; the first is the role of men and women in the church, and the second at home within a marriage. I have heard many sermons on a number of these passages, and yet the way Claire brings the truth of the passage to the fore is refreshing.

The opening chapter sets the scene well and explains the background from which Claire is coming from. She makes clear that her desire is to present God's word in a way that is not obscured by our own opinions, difficulties or reservations that we might have, but to draw out the truth of the passage based on the actual text of Scripture, allowing it to speak. Throughout the book it is clear to see that this is exactly what has been achieved. Each passage is approached sensitively, with much thought and care, whilst retaining the truth of the text.

The passages are closely looked at one at a time, each in a similar way. First she asks basic comprehension questions. This allows the reader to 'step back' and view the passage as a whole unit allowing the text to speak for itself. Secondly, Claire draws out difficulties that we might find and outlines several responses, reactions or even rejections that one might have. She does not ignore or disregard the difficulty that could be found with a passage, but acknowledges it in a way that is open and honest. She states several views that surround the passage, before then presenting her own. Claire goes through the text verse by verse, word by word, drawing out her conclusions in a way that is clear and stays true to the text. Each chapter is concluded with a word of application that is challenging and thought provoking.

God's Good Design is not only for women but for men as well. It would be helpful to both those who are married and single, raising issues that are applicable to each. Anyone who is eager to learn more about how God designed men and women for relationships within the church and a marriage would find this book extremely beneficial.

As I scanned the contents of this book for the first time several passages were listed that I had tried to tackle before, but was left confused and not really knowing what to think or how to respond. It was encouraging to read Claire's writing on these passages and come away with a better understanding of them. I look forward to continue reflecting upon them and allow their truths to take root in my life.