

Established by Unitarian Ministries, LLC 2009  
Written by Rev. Maurisa Brown-Latham



## **Lesson: Establishing a Gender-Friendly Devotion**

Gender biasness in scripture and theology has suppressed and/or stunted the spiritual progress of countless women throughout the ages. It is within the spirit of justice and equality that we extend the right to modify any bias or noninclusive language in the Bible to any woman seeking to improve her ability to establish a personal relationship with God.

### **Take Matters Into Your Own Hands**

Creating a gender-friendly devotion and praise can be as simple as changing or adding a few words when reciting the Bible or personal prayers. Here are a few suggestions for modifying your worship:

1. Whenever the Creator is referenced by masculine language such as **He, Father, Lord, or God** replace with a neutral attribute-**the Divine, the Creator, Most High, Our Divine Parent, etc.**

**The terms "God" and "Lord" which are grammatically masculine have gained a more universal and gender neutral meaning throughout the ages. Choosing to substitute these words when invoking the Creator is a matter of preference and personal sensitivity.**

Below is an expanded list of titles and attributes of God that you might want to consider when personalizing your devotions:

**God of Eternity**

**Everlasting God**

**Almighty God**

**God of Peace**

**God of Recompense**

**Lord of Hosts**

**The Lord our Banner**

**The Lord our Provider**

**The Lord our Peace**

**God of Peace**

**The Lord our Shepherd**

**The Lord our Righteous**

**The Lord who is Present**

**The Lord our Sanctifier**

**The Lord our God**

**The Lord of Recompense**

**The Lord who Heals**

**Holy One**

**Merciful One**

**Just One**

**Source of All**

2. If a person wants to express the Creator as having both masculine and feminine attributes, one can use phrases like- **Our Father(whom is also Our Mother), Father(Mother), Him(Her), etc.**

**This effort is aimed at balancing an exclusively masculine connotation of God in scripture or writings. Generally, in Christian theology, God is considered to be pure spirit. As a result, the Creator is conceived as being beyond gender, race, species, etc.**

3. If a Bible verse is specifically addressing a male audience add in parenthesis- **and women, and she, etc.** Further adjustments are required if the topic is referring to an act solely committed by men. Simply include the female equivalent behavior in brackets or in the commentary. Whenever possible, it would be great to pull from similar references to women stated throughout the Bible. This approach would, for some, change the tone of the Bible to reflect a more inclusive language. It is also highly effective to incorporate modern examples related to the specific topic that is male oriented. By showing how the issue may or may not relate to men and women of today, an open-minded, fair, and contemporary perspective of faith would be achieved.

**\*The point of this effort is to convey the Biblical message not necessarily to conform with Biblical accuracy which inadvertently get in th way of the Bible's ability to reach all readers. Furthermore, we must take into consideration the transient nature of the Bible. Many of the social norms throughout the scripture are not transferable to all times and places. The most important element of the Bible is its spiritual thread which runs throughout the pages of this sacred text. This is where the *Word of God* lies. It is the place where universal values and principles are found.**