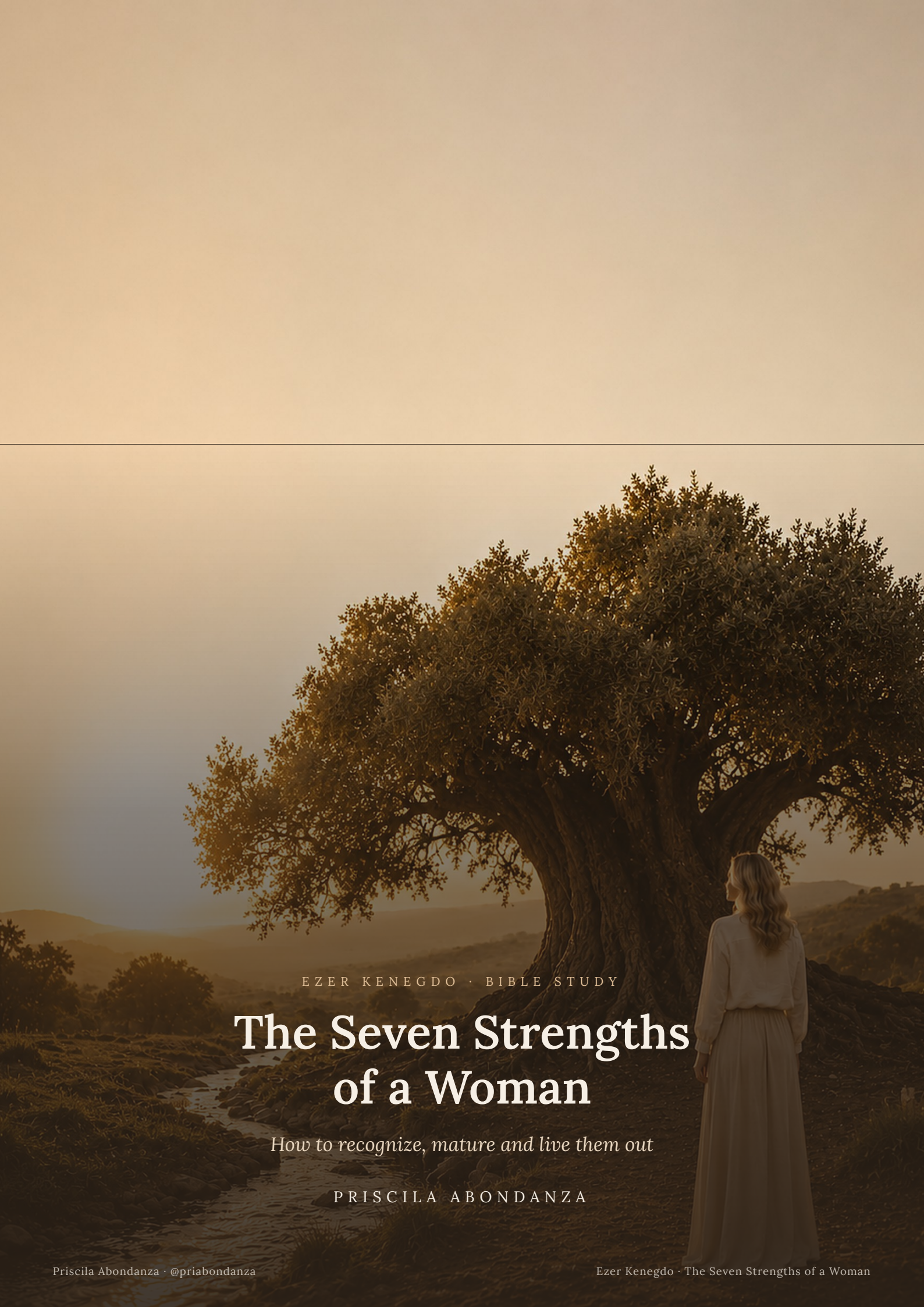




EZER KENEGDO · BIBLE STUDY

The Seven Strengths of a Woman

How to recognize, mature and live them out

PRISCILA ABONDANZA

How this map was born

This is the third study of a journey we began together. In the first, **Ezer Kenegdo, the Help of God**, we discovered that the woman was created as a strong, corresponding strength, a presence that stands before, face to face. In the second, **God's Purpose Where I Am**, we saw that this strength does not fit into a single shape of life. Now the question matures one more step: how can this design be recognized, matured and put into action in real life?

I need to be honest about the origin of what you are about to read. The seven strengths that give this study its name do not appear in the Bible as a ready, numbered list. They were born of a personal study I carried out while examining Ezer Kenegdo. I compared the biblical meaning of the expression, the stories of women in the Bible who inspire me, the patterns I recognized in those narratives, and the experiences I lived as a woman, mother, wife, executive, leader and person of faith. Reviewing my own history in the light of Scripture, I began to recognize dimensions that had been present in different seasons of my life, strengths I had exercised for years without knowing how to name them.

Naming a strength is not creating a new standard for women. It is learning to discern what is strength, what became distortion through pain, and what still needs to mature before God.

What this model is, and what it is not

This model is an authorial, biblical, personal and practical synthesis. It is a map of recognition and of maturing, and nothing beyond that.

A NOTE ON INTERPRETATION

This study is not a formal biblical doctrine, it is not a list the Bible presents enumerated, it is not a personality test, and it is not a rigid definition of what every woman must be. It also does not claim that these strengths do not exist in men. Each woman of the Bible who appears here is a window of observation, not the exclusive owner of a strength. One woman can display several.

I share this map because it strengthened me. And because I believe it can help you look at your own history with more clarity, gratitude and discernment. If at any point these pages sound like one more demand, stop and reread this: the goal is the opposite. It is to give the right name back to things that may have been called by the wrong name for a long time.

How to walk through this study

You can go through these pages in two ways. **Alone**, at your own pace, with a pen nearby: the writing spaces are part of the study, and what you record in them will be your true map. Or **in a group**, with other women: at the end you will find a guide with suggested sessions.

Along the way you will find some boxes that repeat. **Understand the context** brings history and culture. **Observe the text** highlights details of the biblical narrative. **A note on interpretation** flags the points that ask for a closer reading. **Bringing it to today** draws the text near to our lives. **Pause to reflect** opens space for personal questions. And **My next step** points to practical action.

ABOUT THE BIBLE TRANSLATIONS

This study was originally written in Portuguese, where I use the NVI and the ARA. In this English edition, Scripture quotations follow the wording of the New International Version (NIV). Where a passage is condensed for reading flow, it is marked as a condensed quotation, always indicating the reference so you can read it in full.

One last thing before we begin: this is not a study for you to finish with the feeling that you must become someone else. It is a study for you to place your life, exactly as it is today, before God.

The path of this reading

Before you begin

Part 1 — When strength gets a name

1 · The traits we learned to shrink

2 · From Ezer Kenegdo to the model of seven strengths

3 · The tree

4 · Strength, wound, distortion and maturing

Part 2 — The seven strengths

5 · Clarity: seeing the field without losing yourself to fear

6 · Alliance: staying with truth without abandoning yourself

7 · Truth: the courage of the face to face

8 · Environment: cultivating spaces where life flourishes

9 · Endurance: crossing long processes without hardening

10 · Fruitfulness: generating life, transmission and future

11 · Shalom: wholeness and well-being with a foundation

Part 3 — When the strengths work together

12 · No strength works alone

13 · Being Ezer is not being exhausted

14 · Perseverance before God

15 · My current map of the seven strengths

16 · Seven weeks of maturing

Manifesto of the seven strengths

Final prayer

A letter for you

Group study guide

My notes

References

About the author



PART ONE

When strength gets a name

About the labels we receive, the design that was already there, and the difference between a strength and its wounded version.

The traits we learned to shrink

Over the years, many times some of my strongest traits were treated as flaws. My intensity seemed like too much. My difficulty in giving up seemed like stubbornness. My sensitivity seemed like fragility. My high standards for myself seemed like perfectionism. Sometimes it was I who called these things a problem. Other times it was the people around me. And I spent far too long trying to shrink what I would later understand was strength.

Maybe you know this feeling. Throughout life, many of us receive labels that keep sticking to us.

- You are too anxious.
- You are intense, you take everything too seriously.
- You are difficult, too demanding.
- You are too sensitive, you need to toughen up.
- You don't know how to give up, you are stubborn.
- You worry too much, you control too much.

Some of these labels came from outside. Others we stuck on ourselves. And we came to believe we needed to fix ourselves, when perhaps we only needed to understand ourselves.

It was while studying the design of the woman in the Scriptures that I began to discover something. What if part of what I was trying to shrink was not a flaw, but strength still without a name? What if intensity was depth without direction? What if sensitivity was perception without rest? What if my difficulty in giving up was a perseverance I had not yet learned to govern?

PAUSE TO REFLECT

Which label have you carried the longest? Who placed it on you? Before deciding whether it is true, let the question sit for a while.

Naming a strength is not the same as approving it in every form. A strength can be healthy, it can be wounded, it can have been exploited to exhaustion. To recognize is not to let it slide. It is to begin to see with honesty, so we can care for what needs care and mature what is still immature.

I learned this in a way I have never forgotten. One of the leaders I had the privilege of working with told me a sentence I carry to this day: your greatest strength is usually your greatest weakness. That marked me deeply, because it is true. How many times the very thing that strengthens us is the same thing that puts us in hard situations, when it is not governed the

right way. That is why to recognize is not enough. We must adjust, refine and care for what is strength, so that it does not turn into a flaw.

*Before fixing what you think is a flaw, it is worth discovering whether
it was never a flaw, but strength waiting for a name.*

EXERCISE 1

The names I was given

Write honestly. No one will correct these answers. They are the starting point of your journey through this study.

Which of my traits have already been called flaws?

Who used to name them this way? And did I agree?

Looking now, could any of them be a strength still without a name?

From Ezer Kenegdo to the model of seven strengths

I do not want to retrace the whole path of the previous studies here, but I need to recover the essential, because everything begins there.

In Genesis 2, creation moves forward repeating that everything was good, until it stumbles on a first "not good." God observes the human being alone and says it is not good for him to be alone. The answer to that loneliness is the woman, presented with a Hebrew expression: *ezer kenegdo*.

GENESIS 2:18 · NIV

"The LORD God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.'"

The word *ezer* is usually translated as help, aid or rescue. But it does not describe an inferior help. In most of the times it appears in the Hebrew Bible, this word is tied to God himself, who is called the help of his people in contexts of deliverance and protection.

OBSERVE THE TEXT

The same word used for the woman in Genesis 2:18 appears connected to God in passages such as Exodus 18:4, Deuteronomy 33:29 and Psalms 70 and 121, always in the language of strong help, protection and deliverance. This does not make the woman a divine being. But it shows that the word chosen to describe her carries strength, not fragility.

The second word, *kenegdo*, carries the idea of something that is before, in front of, corresponding. Not behind, not below, but face to face. The woman is presented as a presence that stands before, able to correspond, to complete and, when necessary, to confront.

We also saw how the fall distorted that design, and how Jesus, throughout the Gospels, gave women back their voice, dignity, belonging, learning and mission. It is from that design, strong help and corresponding presence, that the seven strengths are born. They are my attempt to answer a simple question: if the woman was designed like this, how does it show up in concrete life, at work, in the family, in friendships, in faith?

It was by comparing the meaning of *ezer kenegdo* with the stories of women who inspire me, and with my own history, that seven dimensions took shape: Clarity, Alliance, Truth, Environment, Endurance, Fruitfulness and Well-being.

The tree

As soon as the seven dimensions became clear, I realized they were not seven loose things. They hold one another up. So instead of a list, I like to imagine them as a living system, a tree.



Clarity is the root. It gives direction and sustains everything underneath, in the dark, where no one sees.

Alliance is the trunk. The bond that keeps the tree firm over time.

Truth is the branches. They align, correct and open new paths.

Environment is the canopy and the shade. The space in which other lives can flourish.

Endurance is the bark. It protects and resists through the hard seasons.

Fruitfulness is the fruit and the seeds. The life that continues and is passed on.

Well-being, shalom, is the water that becomes sap. It reaches the roots and runs through the whole tree.

It is worth lingering on the seventh. Well-being is not merely a pleasant atmosphere around the tree. It is the water that reaches the roots and becomes sap, moving through trunk, branches, leaves and fruit. It is what nourishes the whole system from within. When it is missing, a tree may look strong for a while, but it begins to dry out from the inside, and sometimes we only notice when a branch has already broken.

None of these strengths was made to grow alone. A root without a trunk holds nothing up, and a fruit without roots does not last.

Holding this image helps us not to turn the study into an inner competition, in which a woman tries to score high on everything. A healthy tree does not have all its parts the same size at the same time. It has seasons. There are times of root, times of bark, times of fruit. The goal is not to maximize one strength, but to let them all grow together, each in its own time.

BRINGING IT TO TODAY

Think about the season you are living now. Perhaps it is a time of root, of discerning in silence before acting. Perhaps it is a time of bark, of resisting a long crossing. Perhaps it is a time of fruit, of passing on what you have learned. Naming the season already changes the way we press ourselves.

Strength, wound, distortion and maturing

If there is one idea that holds this entire study together, it is this: the same strength can present itself in very different ways, depending on what has been mixed into it over the course of a life. So before entering each of the seven, I need to offer four words that will accompany us from beginning to end.

A **healthy strength** operates with freedom. It serves life, adjusts to what is real, and knows how to step back when needed. A **wounded strength** is the same strength marked by an old pain. It still works, but it carries fear, and so it sometimes protects too much, or controls, or distrusts. An **exploited strength** is the one that other people or systems used beyond measure, to exhaustion, often praising the woman for the very thing that was draining her. And a **matured strength** is the strength that passed through the wound, was cared for, learned limits, and returned to serving life, now with discernment.

A NOTE ON INTERPRETATION

To recognize a strength does not mean approving all of its forms. Saying "this is strength" must never become an excuse to keep something that hurts you or others. The work of this study is precisely to separate what here is strength, what is fear, what is wound, and what needs to mature.

Let me give an example from my own life, because it is more honest than a theory. My capacity to sustain long processes is a real strength. It helped me cross hard seasons without breaking. But that same strength, wounded by fear, has made me stay in situations for too long, calling faithfulness what was sometimes only difficulty in letting go. The strength was good. What needed to mature was the discernment about when to stay and when to release.

In each of the seven strengths, then, I will try to show four things: how the strength appears when it is mature, how it distorts when it is wounded, which criteria help tell one from the other, and how it can mature. That will be the map of each chapter.

To mature a strength is not to have less of it. It is to have more direction, more limit and more freedom within it.

EXERCISE 2

Strength, wound and maturing

Choose a trait of yours that has already been called a flaw. Let us look at it through the four lenses of this chapter.

The trait:

How it appears when it is healthy and serves life:

How it distorts when fear enters:

What, in it, still needs to mature:

PART TWO

The seven strengths

*One by one, with the Bible open: the context, what the text says,
what it does not say, and how each strength can mature.*



CHAPTER 5 · FIRST STRENGTH

Clarity

Seeing the field without losing yourself to fear

The first strength is Clarity, the root of the tree. It is discernment, lucidity and protection. And the question it asks is simple to state and hard to live: how do I distinguish what I am perceiving from what I am fearing?

Let me begin with a story I carry to this day. When I was younger and lived in Rio de Janeiro, I would walk home from school at night. At one point, I realized I was being followed. A hooded man was behind me. My first reaction was to look around for someone. The street was empty, everything closed, no one there. I knew that screaming would make it worse, and that running would probably fail, because he would catch up to me.

Then something happened that I still try to explain. A strange calm came over me. I lifted my heart to God and asked for help with the plan I was about to carry out: to keep walking calmly toward the building where I lived, on the other side of the street. Without letting him notice, I slid my hand over and took the gate key, because there would be no time to ring the intercom. I set the key between my fingers, ready to hit the lock on the first try. I walked an entire block like that. When I reached the front of the building, I ran, hit the lock, opened it and slammed the gate shut behind me. The man ran when he saw me run, but when he put his hands on the gate, it was already closed.

That night, the clarity to see the best path spared me from a terrible harm. Notice what happened inside me. I did not ignore the danger, and I did not surrender to panic either. I separated the fact, someone following me on an empty street, from the reactions fear was offering, and I chose the response the situation truly called for. That is Clarity.

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

Our biblical window for Clarity is Abigail, in 1 Samuel 25. Samuel has just died, and David, still pursued by King Saul, lives in the wilderness with his band. Nabal is a very rich man, an owner of flocks, described as harsh and foolish. It was shearing time, a season of plenty and feasting, and a request for provision from someone who had protected the shepherds was socially reasonable. To refuse and, worse, to insult, was a grave offense.

David sends messengers with courtesy, asking for provision. Nabal answers with contempt and humiliates him. Enraged, David girds his sword and marches out with four hundred men, determined to kill every man of that household. This is where Abigail enters. The text presents her in a contrast that says it all:

1 SAMUEL 25:3 · NIV

"His name was Nabal and his wife's name was Abigail. She was an intelligent and beautiful woman, but her husband was surly and mean in his dealings; he was a Calebite."

The word translated "intelligent" describes good sense and practical discernment.

A servant seeks out Abigail and reports what happened, acknowledging that David's men had been a wall of protection for them. Abigail wastes no time. She prepares provisions, sends them ahead, and goes out to meet David. When she finds him, she makes a long and careful speech: she takes responsibility, acknowledges her husband's folly, and points to a consequence David was not yet seeing in the heat of his anger. Shedding blood without cause would leave a weight on him that he would carry forever. David blesses her, recognizes that she kept him from sinning, and turns back.

OBSERVE THE TEXT

Abigail acts on concrete information. She has no supernatural vision and does not guess at the danger. A servant informs her, and from the report she reads the size of the risk and decides. The narrator records her actions in quick succession: she hurried, took, sent, went. And her speech is not merely diplomatic: she hands the matter back to God, remembering that justice belongs to the Lord.

A NOTE ON INTERPRETATION

The text does not describe what Abigail felt. It shows what she did and said, and does not mention fear or hesitation. So any sentence about her anxious heart would be a narrative device, not biblical information. The text also does not present her as someone who sensed the danger before having proof. Her Clarity is born of listening and weighing, not of guessing. And we must resist the reading that turns Abigail into the exemplary woman who exists to fix the folly of the men of the house. She acted in a specific emergency; she did not sign a lifelong contract to clean up others' messes.

Clarity, in the sense of the model, is exactly this: the capacity to see what is real with sharpness and to separate what is happening from what is feared. It opens the way to protection, and it already touches, lightly, Truth, because Abigail's speech is confrontation with dignity, and Environment, because she quickly reorganizes the conditions so the outcome will be of life. No strength works alone, and we will return to this in Part 3.

Mature strength and wounded strength

MATURE CLARITY	WOUNDED CLARITY
Observes and separates fact, perception and fear	Anxiety that tries to foresee everything
Seeks confirmation and listens to others	Hypervigilance that reads a threat into everything
Is willing to revise its own reading	Constant suspicion disguised as discernment
Acts on what is hers and gives the rest to God	The need to control the future

BRINGING IT TO TODAY

In daily life, Clarity shows up in less dramatic ways than a dark street. It is reading a meeting before it turns sour, sensing that a child is different before they say anything, naming whether what bothers me is a fact, a perception or a fear, before reacting. The care is not to confuse discernment with constant suspicion, nor to treat every discomfort as if it were a revelation from God.

MANIFESTO OF CLARITY

I have learned the difference between seeing and fearing. I do not need to guess the future nor carry alone the weight of all I perceive. I listen, I separate the fact from the fear, I act on what is mine and I give to God what is not mine to resolve. This is not anxiety. It is clarity.

MY NEXT STEP

Choose a situation that is keeping you awake. Before reacting, write in three columns what is fact, what is perception and what is fear. Then ask: which column is governing my reaction?

EXERCISE 3

Fact, perception and fear

Think of a current situation that is worrying you. Abigail acted from the facts the servant brought, without ignoring the other layers. Do the same here.

THE FACTS (WHAT I ACTUALLY KNOW)	MY PERCEPTIONS (WHAT I READ BETWEEN THE LINES)	MY FEARS (WHAT I DREAD MIGHT HAPPEN)
-------------------------------------	---	---

One concrete action that responds to the facts, and not to the fears:



CHAPTER 6 · SECOND STRENGTH

Alliance

Staying with truth without abandoning yourself

The second strength is Alliance, the trunk of the tree. It is bond, conscious loyalty and commitment that crosses time. And the question it asks cuts deep: do I stay out of conviction or out of fear?

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

Our window is Ruth, in the book that bears her name. A family of Israel, fleeing famine, emigrates to Moab. The father, Elimelech, dies. The two sons marry Moabite women, Ruth and Orpah, and they also die. Three widows remain, without men and without provision, in a world where a woman depended on that structure to survive. Naomi decides to return to Israel and releases her daughters-in-law to go back to their families. It is worth remembering that Moabites and Israelites carried a long history of tension, which makes Ruth's choice even more surprising.

Orpah goes back, and the narrative does not condemn her for it. It was the reasonable choice, and Naomi had released her. Ruth, however, chooses to stay. And she speaks one of the densest declarations of loyalty in all of the Bible.

RUTH 1:16-17 · NIV

"Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried."

OBSERVE THE TEXT

The word that runs through the book of Ruth is the Hebrew *hesed*, a loyal love that goes beyond obligation. Legally, Ruth owed Naomi nothing. The bond of marriage had ended with her husband's death. To stay was a voluntary act, with a real cost: she gives up her land, her people and her security. Her loyalty has three layers, the place, the people and the God of Naomi. And there is a detail that often goes unnoticed: Naomi respected Ruth's freedom. True alliance coexists with freedom, not with coercion.

A NOTE ON INTERPRETATION

This is one of the chapters where I most need care. Ruth's story must never be used to tell a woman she must endure everything, stay in any situation, or erase herself in the name of loyalty. The Bible must never justify violence, abuse or staying in relationships that destroy. Ruth's alliance was a free choice, not forced submission, and it was born of conviction, not fear of losing.

Mature Alliance protects the bond without abandoning the truth, and knows how to set limits. Loyalty without discernment becomes silent submission. Loyalty with clarity becomes a covenant. Other women illuminate this same strength from other angles, such as Mary and Elizabeth, who sustain one another in each other's unexpected pregnancy.

Let me bring this into my own life, because Alliance is a strength that walks closely with me. One of the things I have always loved was finding people who inspired me. My husband is one of them. Entering a marriage alliance with him was born of an alignment of purpose, of what we wanted to build, of where we wanted to go. It was our dreams that united us, and we keep celebrating each new dream that appears along the way.

I lived something similar at work, with leaders who inspired me. I confess they were some of the best moments of my professional life. They were demanding, yes, but they pushed me to go further, and there loyalty was a joy, because being with them made me grow. I also lived the opposite: relationships without inspiration, marked by insecurity and fear. In those moments, it was often necessary to move. I recognize that, in some of them, I stayed too long in bonds that no longer blessed me. All of it made me grow, and taught me that today I can choose differently.

Mature strength and wounded strength

MATURE ALLIANCE	WOUNDED ALLIANCE
Stays out of conviction, with freedom	Stays out of fear of losing
Protects the bond and also the truth	Silences the truth to avoid conflict
Knows how to set limits	Self-abandonment and self-erasure
Distinguishes loyalty from dependence	Endures what wounds in the name of love

BRINGING IT TO TODAY

This strength shows up in the friend who stays without erasing herself, in the marriage that is built without either person disappearing, in the loyalty to a team or a cause that does not become servitude. The sign of health is this: can you tell the truth within the bond without fearing it will break because of it?

MANIFESTO OF ALLIANCE

I stay out of conviction, not out of fear. I protect what is sacred, I build bonds with honor and I know how to set limits. Alliance, for me, is not enduring everything. It is protecting the bond without abandoning the truth, nor myself.

MY NEXT STEP

Think of an important bond in your life. Ask honestly: do I stay here out of conviction or out of fear? And is there a truth I have been avoiding so as not to risk this bond?

EXERCISE 4

Conviction or fear

Choose a bond that weighs on you today. Answer honestly, without rushing.

Which bond am I choosing to look at now?

What keeps me here: conviction, fear, habit, guilt? Name it.

What truth and what limit does this bond need me to bring?



CHAPTER 7 · THIRD STRENGTH

Truth

The courage of the face to face

The third strength is Truth, the branches of the tree. It is confrontation with love, voice and alignment. It is perhaps the most misunderstood strength, because it has two false imitations that surround it: on one side, the silence that pretends to be peace; on the other, the aggression that pretends to be honesty. The Truth of the design is neither of them. And the question it asks reveals our intention: do I want to say this truth to restore the path, or only to prove I am right?

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

Our window is Priscilla, in the New Testament, alongside her husband Aquila. They were tentmakers and worked with the apostle Paul. In Ephesus, Apollos appears, an eloquent and fervent preacher, well instructed in the Scriptures, but whose knowledge had a gap: he knew only the baptism of John. He was a powerful communicator, with a weighty ministry. To correct someone like that was no small task.

Priscilla and Aquila hear Apollos and perceive what was missing. And what they do, and how they do it, is the heart of this chapter.

ACTS 18:26 · NIV

"...When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately."

OBSERVE THE TEXT

Notice three details. First, they took him aside, into their own home, without public exposure. Second, they explained the way more adequately: the truth came to complete and realign, not to destroy a brother. Third, in several passages Priscilla is named before her husband, which suggests a prominent role in teaching. Her truth was not an attack. It was a firm care.

A NOTE ON INTERPRETATION

Mature Truth is not sincerity without love, nor the need to win an argument. Nor is it the silence that disguises itself as peace. And the "face to face" of *kenegdo* does not authorize anyone's domination over anyone. It describes dignity and correspondence, the courage to deliver truth head on, with presence and respect, and not from a distance, by manipulation or hint.

The truth that comes from the design does not humiliate. It illuminates, realigns and gives responsibility back. Other women show this strength in situations of risk, such as Abigail, whom we have already seen, and Esther, who chooses the right moment to speak before the king.

Mature strength and wounded strength

MATURE TRUTH	WOUNDED TRUTH
Speaks head on, with love and respect	Aggression that wounds in order to win
Seeks to restore the path	Seeks to prove it is right
Chooses the moment and the tone	Explodes or humiliates in public
Also knows when to speak rather than stay silent	Silence disguised as peace

BRINGING IT TO TODAY

How many times have we silenced an important truth to keep the peace, when in fact we were only avoiding discomfort? Mature Truth is the courage to say what needs to be said looking someone in the eye, in private whenever possible, with the intention to realign and not to win. Before speaking, it is worth checking the intention: do I want to restore or to prove?

MANIFESTO OF TRUTH

I do not use silence to call it peace. I speak with love, I confront with dignity and I say the truth head on, to align the path and not to defeat anyone. The truth that comes from the design does not humiliate. It illuminates and realigns.

MY NEXT STEP

Is there a truth you have been putting off saying? Write to whom, and test your intention first: if the answer is to restore, pray and choose the moment. If it is only to prove you are right, wait and review your heart first.

EXERCISE 5

Restore or prove

Bring to mind a hard conversation you need to have.

What is the truth I need to say, and to whom?

What is my real intention: to restore the path or to prove I am right?

How would I say this head on, with love and at the right moment?



CHAPTER 8 · FOURTH STRENGTH

Environment

Cultivating spaces where life flourishes

The fourth strength is Environment, the canopy and the shade of the tree. It is the capacity to cultivate the conditions for life to flourish, and the question it asks is revealing: does the environment I am creating let people grow, or does it make everything depend on me?

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

Our window is Lydia, in Acts 16. Paul arrives in Philippi, a city of Macedonia, and on the Sabbath he looks for a place of prayer by the river, outside the gates. There he finds a group of women. Lydia is presented as a dealer in purple cloth from Thyatira, a city known for its dyeing industry. Purple was a luxury item, so she was a businesswoman. The text also calls her a worshiper of God, someone who already sought the Lord.

ACTS 16:14-15 · NIV · CONDENSED QUOTATION

"One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God, and the Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message. When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us: 'If you consider me a believer in the Lord, come and stay at my house.'"

OBSERVE THE TEXT

Two things stand out. First, it was the Lord who opened Lydia's heart; her strength does not replace God's action, it responds to it. Second, as soon as she believes, Lydia offers her home, and that home becomes the base of the first church in Philippi. What begins as a small prayer group by a river becomes a community, anchored in the environment a woman opened and sustained.

A NOTE ON INTERPRETATION

Creating an environment is not decoration, it is not hospitality for show, and it is not the obligation to keep everyone happy at the expense of yourself. Nor is it control. The distortion of this strength appears when care turns into perfectionism, when the woman becomes responsible for managing everyone's emotions, and when the environment, instead of freeing people to grow, makes everything depend on her.

To create an environment, in the sense of the design, is to cultivate truth, safety, belonging and order, a space where good can grow and chaos does not settle in. Other women illuminate this strength, such as Dorcas, who created a culture of care by sewing clothes for the widows, Martha, who opens her home to receive Jesus, and the Shunammite woman, who prepares a room for the prophet.

This is one of the chapters that most touches me, because creating an environment is one of the things I love most. Receiving people, at home, at work or in a team, and preparing the best conditions for them to feel welcomed and at home, has always brought me joy. And there is one place where this strength concentrates for me: the table. Gathering friends and family, setting the house, preparing a special menu and spending hours there, in conversation, is something that renews me from within. It was there that I learned, in practice, that creating an environment is not about perfection. It is about presence.

Mature strength and wounded strength

MATURE ENVIRONMENT	WOUNDED ENVIRONMENT
Cultivates safety, belonging and order	Controls and centralizes everything in herself
Frees people to grow	Makes everything depend on her
Welcomes without erasing herself	Perfectionism and hospitality for show
Leaves room for necessary discomfort	Takes on everyone's emotions as her responsibility

BRINGING IT TO TODAY

You who organize without anyone asking, who sense when the mood of a place is shifting before anyone names it, who create order out of love for flourishing and not out of compulsion, are exercising the strength of Environment. The sign of health is when the space you create keeps standing even when you are not there, because it freed people instead of binding them to you.

MANIFESTO OF ENVIRONMENT

I cultivate the space where life flourishes. I create truth, safety, belonging and order, without controlling and without erasing myself. To create an environment, for me, is not to prevent all discomfort. It is to prepare the soil where good can grow, even without me.

MY NEXT STEP

Look at an environment you sustain, your home, your team, a group. Ask: what here flourishes, and what only works because it depends on me? Choose one thing to release this week.

EXERCISE 6

What flourishes and what depends on me

Choose an environment under your care and look at it honestly.

Which environment am I looking at?

What in it already flourishes with a life of its own?

What only holds because everything passes through me? What could I release?



CHAPTER 9 · FIFTH STRENGTH

Endurance

Crossing long processes without hardening

The fifth strength is Endurance, the bark of the tree. It is resistance, permanence through the hard seasons, and the capacity to cross long processes without hardening. It is the strength the world most underestimates, because it is not spectacular: it operates in time, in silence, over the long haul. And the question it asks calls for great honesty: does this process call for staying, for a new action, for a limit, or for the courage to end it?

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

Our window is Hannah, in 1 Samuel 1. She is one of the two wives of Elkanah. The other, Peninnah, had children; Hannah did not. In a time when barrenness carried enormous social stigma, Peninnah provoked her because of it, year after year. The scene takes place in Shiloh, where the tabernacle stood, before there was a temple in Jerusalem. Hannah carried a long, repeated, public pain.

At the height of that pain, Hannah does not close off or harden. She goes to the Lord and makes a vow: if God gives her a son, she will dedicate him to Him. She prays so intensely, her lips moving without sound, that the priest Eli mistakes her for a drunk woman. Her answer reveals what was happening inside.

1 SAMUEL 1:15 · NIV

"Not so, my lord ... I am a woman who is deeply troubled. I have not been drinking wine or beer; I was pouring out my soul to the LORD."

OBSERVE THE TEXT

Hannah's Endurance is not passive. She does not merely endure; she prays, weeps, pours out her soul, makes a vow, acts. And there is a detail that changes everything: after Samuel is born and weaned, Hannah brings him back and gives him to God, as she had promised. The same woman who persevered for a child had the courage to release him. To endure, for her, included both the holding and the giving.

A NOTE ON INTERPRETATION

This is another chapter that asks for special care. To endure is not to glorify suffering, it is not passivity, and it is not insisting without discernment. The Bible must never be used to tell a woman she must stay indefinitely in something that destroys her, and Hannah's pain is not a praise of pain, it is a crossing before God. Endurance is also not stubbornness: the difference is that stubbornness clings to the outcome I chose, and endurance stays before God, open to what He shows.

One of the longest crossings of my own life was the building of our family. My husband and I always dreamed of a full house. We had our first child, longed for, planned, awaited, and we lived a dream. But the desire to expand the family stayed alive in us, and there came more than eight years of attempts, fertility treatments and lost pregnancies, a process too painful for words. In parallel, a dream that had been with me since childhood was flooding the heart of my husband and my son too: the dream of adopting. We entered the adoption queue and remained there for more than four years. It was like a long pregnancy. The waiting forged us, but there were moments when it also broke us. To endure, in that time, was not to stay still nor to harden; it was to remain whole and hopeful while the days passed. And then the dream came true. After years of waiting, my daughters arrived and flooded our life with joy. They were conceived first in the heart.

Mature strength and wounded strength

MATURE ENDURANCE	WOUNDED ENDURANCE
Crosses whole and responsive	Passivity and resignation
Knows when to stay and when to release	Insisting without discernment
Asks for help without feeling like a failure	Treats asking for help as weakness
Stays before God, open to direction	Glorifies suffering as proof of faith

BRINGING IT TO TODAY

Facing a long process, an illness, a difficult child, a job that will not take off, Endurance helps to ask the right question, instead of simply enduring for the sake of enduring. Not every staying is faithfulness, and not every giving up is unfaithfulness. Sometimes to endure is to continue. Other times it is to change the form, ask for help, set a limit or accept a new direction.

MANIFESTO OF ENDURANCE

I remain without hardening. I cross time, I sustain crossings and I do not confuse resistance with stubbornness. I know that to endure can also mean to change, to ask for help or to release. I do not stay still: I remain whole and responsive as I cross.

MY NEXT STEP

Bring to mind a long process you carry. Ask honestly, before God: does it call me to stay, to change the form, to set a limit, or to have the courage to end it?

EXERCISE 7

Stay, change, limit or end

Choose a current crossing in your life.

Which long process am I crossing?

What in it has already turned into hardness, exhaustion or stubbornness?

Before God, what does this process seem to ask: staying, change, a limit or an ending?



CHAPTER 10 · SIXTH STRENGTH

Fruitfulness

Generating life, transmission and future

The sixth strength is Fruitfulness, the fruit and the seeds of the tree. It is the generation of life, transmission, continuity and future. The question it asks is generous: what has God already formed in me that can nourish, guide or open a way for someone else?

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

Our window is Mary Magdalene. The Gospel of Luke records that Jesus healed her of seven demons, and she went on to follow him and support his ministry. The text does not describe the nature of those seven demons, and it is worth avoiding the later traditions that confused her with other women or labeled her in ways the Bible does not support. What the Gospels show is a restored woman who stayed, even at the cross and by the tomb, when almost everyone else had gone.

It is at the dawn of the first day of the week that her strength reaches its highest point. Mary Magdalene is the first witness of the resurrection. And Jesus makes her the first to be sent to announce it.

JOHN 20:17-18 · NIV · CONDENSED QUOTATION

"Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.' Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: 'I have seen the Lord!' And she told them what he had said to her."

OBSERVE THE TEXT

In a time when a woman's testimony held little legal weight, Jesus chooses precisely Mary Magdalene to be the first to announce the greatest news in history. Later Christian tradition called her the apostle to the apostles, the one sent to the sent. Her word bore fruit that spans two thousand years. This is fruitfulness in its most radical form: one life, one word, one testimony that keeps generating life long after the one who spoke it.

A NOTE ON INTERPRETATION

Fruitfulness is far greater than biological motherhood, though it includes and honors it. We should not reduce this strength to having children, nor turn it into ceaseless productivity to prove worth, nor into comparing results. To be fruitful is not necessarily to build something grand. It is to let what we received from God keep generating life, in the size He determines.

Other women illuminate this strength, such as Lois and Eunice, the grandmother and mother who passed on the faith to Timothy, and Priscilla, who helped to form a preacher. Fruitfulness

shows up when you invest in someone without any guarantee of return, when you teach so the next person can go further, when you create something that will continue after you.

If there is a strength that runs through my whole story, it is this one. I have always loved to teach. At fourteen, I was already teaching children at church, and that has stayed with me all my life. Sharing what I receive is a privilege that renews me. At work, the passion to pass on what I know, and to keep learning, is among my greatest fulfillments.

Every now and then, life gives me a gift: someone with whom I shared something, long ago, comes back to tell me what it meant. It is one of the most impactful experiences I have ever lived. And when it comes from my children, then, it is like receiving the best gift in the world. To be fruitful is this: we plant, often without seeing, and life gives back in the form of a future.

Mature strength and wounded strength

MATURE FRUITFULNESS	WOUNDED FRUITFULNESS
Lets what it received generate life in others	Ceaseless productivity to prove worth
Invests without demanding a guaranteed return	Compares results and fruit with others'
Accepts fruit in the size God gives	Only values what is grand and visible
Passes on so the other can advance	Holds back so as not to lose the spotlight

BRINGING IT TO TODAY

To be fruitful can be forming a daughter, discipling someone, building a culture in a team, passing on a truth, leaving a record of what you learned. The sign of health is the intention: do you plant so that life continues, or to prove that your life was worth it? One sets you free, the other exhausts you.

MANIFESTO OF FRUITFULNESS

I do not live only to survive. I generate a future, I form people, I pass on what I received and I leave seed. To be fruitful, for me, is not to prove my worth. It is to let what God formed in me keep generating life, in the size He wants.

MY NEXT STEP

Recognize something God has already formed in you, an experience, a lesson, a skill. Choose one person who could be nourished by it and take a concrete step to pass it on, without expecting a return.

EXERCISE 8

What has already been formed in me

Fruitfulness begins by recognizing what already exists. Before looking at what is missing, acknowledge what God has already given.

What has God already formed in me, even if I tend to minimize it?

Who, around me, could be nourished by it?

A concrete step of passing it on, without demanding a return:



CHAPTER 11 · SEVENTH STRENGTH

Shalom

Wholeness and well-being with a foundation

The seventh strength is Well-being, shalom, the water that becomes sap. It is wholeness, peace with a foundation, and the circulation of life through the whole system. And the question it asks unmask a great deal: am I building a true peace, or only avoiding discomfort?

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

Our window is the woman who suffered from bleeding, in Mark 5. For twelve years she had been bleeding. She had spent all she had on doctors and only grew worse. Beyond the physical suffering, she lived an exclusion: according to the Law in Leviticus 15, this kind of flow made her ceremonially unclean, and everything she touched became unclean too. Twelve years without a cure, without the temple, without touch, without belonging.

In the middle of the crowd, she decides to touch only the edge of Jesus' cloak, certain that this would be enough. And she is healed. Jesus notices, asks who it was, and the woman, trembling, comes forward. His answer is the key to this chapter.

MARK 5:34 · NIV

"He said to her, 'Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.'"

OBSERVE THE TEXT

Jesus does not give back only the health of the body. He calls her daughter, restoring belonging to the one who was isolated. And he sends her in peace, in shalom. In the Hebrew tradition, shalom is not the absence of noise, it is wholeness, a life reordered and restored. The woman receives back not only her body, but her place in the community and before God.

A NOTE ON INTERPRETATION

Shalom is not the absence of problems, an artificial calm or silence in the face of conflict. It is not the obligation to keep everyone comfortable, nor an escape disguised as serenity. And care is needed not to spiritualize her illness nor to suggest that suffering like this is the fault of a lack of faith. What the text shows is the restoration of a whole person, body, bond and dignity.

Shalom, as a strength of the design, is the capacity to promote a true peace, the kind that is born of a foundation and not of appearance. It is a life that crosses the storm without losing its footing. Other women illuminate this strength, such as Mary of Bethany, who chooses to sit at Jesus' feet, and the bent-over woman, whom Jesus straightens and frees.

I want to confess something about this strength. For a long time, I thought well-being was a simple, almost minor subject. It was when I entered the study of neuroscience that I came upon discoveries that changed the way I see it. Well-being is not only a state that happens to us. It can also be cultivated, intentionally.

It is not the subject I will develop here, but I learned that it is possible to develop a peace and a presence that overflow to those who come near, a wholeness that makes people want to stay close. This stays with me, and it always reminds me that the shalom I offer to others begins in what I cultivate within myself.

Mature strength and wounded strength

MATURE SHALOM	WOUNDED SHALOM
Peace with a foundation that crosses the storm	False peace, of appearance
Faces conflict when it is necessary	Silence in the face of conflict, called peace
Cares for wholeness, body, soul and bond	Escape and avoidance of discomfort
Seeks real restoration	Appearance of harmony that hides the pain

BRINGING IT TO TODAY

Many women were taught to keep the peace by silencing what they feel and avoiding all friction. This is not shalom, it is avoidance with a mask of peace. The well-being of the design does not pursue comfort; it cultivates the conditions for life to flourish with depth, and sometimes that passes through a necessary conflict, a truth spoken, a limit set.

MANIFESTO OF SHALOM

I do not confuse well-being with comfort. I promote peace with truth, safety with maturity and joy with a foundation. Shalom, for me, is not a life without storms. It is a life that does not lose its foundation within them.

MY NEXT STEP

Identify a place in your life where you have called peace what is only avoidance. Name the discomfort you have been going around, and take a step, however small, toward a true peace.

EXERCISE 9

True peace or avoidance

Look at your relationships and environments honestly.

Where have I called peace what is only avoiding discomfort?

What conflict or truth have I been going around?

What step, however small, would lead me to a peace with a foundation?

PART THREE

When the strengths work together

No strength lives in isolation. Here they meet, balance one another, and reveal the axis that runs through them all.

No strength works alone

If you have come this far, you have already noticed that the seven strengths do not live in separate compartments. They hold and correct one another, like the parts of a tree. And it is precisely when one of them begins to operate in isolation from the rest that it tends to distort.

It is worth looking at some of these imbalances, because recognizing them is half the road to maturing.

Clarity without Alliance can become coldness: the lucidity that sees everything, but bonds with no one.

Alliance without Truth can become self-abandonment: the loyalty that stays silent so as not to lose the other.

Truth without Shalom can become aggression: the frankness that wounds instead of realigning.

Environment without limits can become control: the care that imprisons instead of freeing.

Endurance without discernment can become destructive permanence: resisting what should already have changed.

Fruitfulness without roots can become empty productivity: generating much on the outside, drying up on the inside.

Shalom without Truth can become false peace: the harmony of appearance that avoids all confrontation.

Notice that, in almost every case, the remedy for the imbalance of one strength is another strength. The cure for cold Clarity is Alliance. The cure for silent Alliance is Truth. The cure for harsh Truth is Shalom. That is why the goal of this study was never to develop one strength to the maximum, but to let them all grow together.

A whole woman is not the one who has one giant strength. She is the one who lets the strengths balance one another.

PAUSE TO REFLECT

Looking at your life, which of your strengths has been operating alone lately? And which other strength could balance it?

Being Ezer is not being exhausted

I need to devote a whole chapter to this care, because it is the pastoral heart of the entire study. There is a real risk in speaking of women's strengths: turning all of this into one more demand, one more list of things you must be, one more ruler to feel insufficient against. If this study has that effect on you, it will have failed.

Being Ezer, strong help, never meant being inexhaustible. And there are some truths that need to be said plainly.

Not every need around you is a call for you.

To help is not to replace God in anyone's life.

To care is not to manage everyone's emotions.

To endure does not mean to stay indefinitely.

Generating life also requires receiving care.

Setting limits can be one of the highest forms of faithfulness.

Many women had their strengths exploited precisely because they were strong. They were praised for the very thing that was draining them. They heard that they could handle it, that they were tireless, that they held everything together, and they were consumed chasing that praise. If this is your case, I want you to hear this with care: your strength was never meant to be burned as fuel for other people's projects and needs.

A NOTE ON INTERPRETATION

The very design of Ezer points to God, who is the help that does not run out. The woman reflects that help, but does not replace it. When a woman tries to be the God of everyone around her, she is not honoring the design, she is destroying herself. Rest, limits and care for oneself are not failures in the strength. They are part of it.

Your strength has roots, but it also has bark. It protects you, not only others.

Perseverance before God

We come to the axis that runs through all seven strengths. It is not an eighth strength; it is the spiritual posture that sustains and orients the others. I sum it up in one phrase: perseverance before God, until heaven answers.

If you reread the women of this study, you will find that common thread. Abigail acted at the decisive moment. Ruth stayed out of conviction. Hannah poured out her soul for years. The woman with the bleeding did not give up after twelve years. Mary Magdalene stayed when the others had gone. There is something beneath every mature strength, and that something is remaining before God.

I must confess that this axis is deeply tied to my history. I have a great capacity to persevere, and one of the hardest things for me is to give up. This trait helped me cross long processes, sustain people, build projects and fight for my family. But it also had to mature, because not every staying is perseverance.

OBSERVE THE TEXT

The phrase "until heaven answers" does not mean that our faith obligates God to confirm our desires. In the biblical stories, heaven answers in many ways: opening a door, closing a door, changing the circumstances, transforming something within the person, asking them to wait, pointing to a new direction, calling them to move forward, or asking them to hand over what they can no longer carry.

That is how I learned the difference between perseverance and blind insistence. Insistence clings to the outcome I chose and tries to force heaven to confirm it. Perseverance clings to God and stays in relationship with Him, open to what He shows. One tries to control. The other trusts. Not every staying is perseverance, and not every giving up is unfaithfulness. Sometimes to persevere is to continue. Other times it is to change the way I walk, to ask for help, to set a limit, to accept a new direction, or to hand to God something that is no longer mine to carry.

Perseverance does not control God. It keeps the person in relationship with Him, until heaven answers, whatever the answer.

BRINGING IT TO TODAY

Distinguish Endurance, which is one of the seven strengths and concerns crossing a specific process, from Perseverance, which is the underlying posture, the way of remaining before God in everything. Endurance asks whether this process calls for staying or changing. Perseverance ensures that, whatever the answer, you keep walking with God, and not only chasing an outcome.

EXERCISE 10

What I am asking heaven to answer

Bring before God an open question in your life.

What have I been persevering for?

Am I bound to an outcome I chose, or open to what God shows?

If heaven answers in a way different from what I expect, what in me needs to surrender?

My current map of the seven strengths

This chapter is different from the others. Here there is no new exegesis, but a mirror. Before we finish, I want to invite you to look at the seven strengths and recognize how each one is in you today.

An important request: this is not a test, and there is no score. We are not measuring who has more or less strength. We are only recognizing the present moment, with honesty and without guilt. Some strengths will be more developed, others dormant, others wounded and asking for care. All are within a process.

HOW TO FILL IT IN

For each strength, write a word or short phrase about how it is in you today: mature, dormant, wounded, exploited, maturing. Then, if you wish, note a care that strength is asking for. You do not have to fill it all in at once.

EXERCISE 11

My map today

STRENGTH	HOW IT IS IN ME TODAY	WHAT CARE IT IS ASKING FOR
Clarity		
Alliance		
Truth		
Environment		
Endurance		
Fruitfulness		
Well-being		

Seven weeks of maturing

To recognize is the beginning. Maturing happens in practice, over time. So I propose a journey of seven weeks, one strength per week, without rushing. It is not a test, it is an invitation. If one week needs two, that is fine. What matters is to practice, not to complete.

WEEK 1 · CLARITY

This week, before reacting to any situation that worries you, stop and separate it into three: what is fact, what is perception and what is fear. Act from the facts.

WEEK 2 · ALLIANCE

Choose an important bond and ask, honestly, whether you stay out of conviction or out of fear. Bring a truth or a limit that bond needs.

WEEK 3 · TRUTH

Identify a truth you have been putting off saying. Check your intention, choose the moment, and say it head on, with love, in private.

WEEK 4 · ENVIRONMENT

Look at an environment under your care. Find one thing that only works because it depends on you, and release it, so that someone else can grow.

WEEK 5 · ENDURANCE

Bring before God a long process you carry. Discern whether it calls for staying, changing the form, a limit, or the courage to end it. And, if needed, ask for help.

WEEK 6 · FRUITFULNESS

Recognize something God has already formed in you and choose a person to nourish with it. Take a concrete step of passing it on, without expecting a return.

WEEK 7 · SHALOM

Find a place where you have called peace what is only avoidance. Name the discomfort and take a step toward a peace with a foundation.

Do not rush. A strength does not mature because we pressure ourselves more. It matures because we practice it with direction, before God.

Manifesto of the seven strengths

Gather, in one breath, what we have crossed. Read it aloud, if you can. Not as a demand, but as a recognition.

*I do not lose myself in confusion. I see what is real, I listen to God, and I walk with lucidity. This is my **Clarity**.*

*I stay out of conviction, not out of fear. I protect the bond without abandoning the truth, nor myself. This is my **Alliance**.*

*I do not use silence to call it peace. I speak with love, I confront with dignity, and I align the path. This is my **Truth**.*

*I cultivate the space where life flourishes, with truth, safety, belonging and order. This is my **Environment**.*

*I remain without hardening. I cross time and I know when to continue, when to change and when to release. This is my **Endurance**.*

*I do not live only to survive. I generate a future, I form people and I leave seed. This is my **Fruitfulness**.*

*I do not confuse well-being with comfort. I promote peace with truth and joy with a foundation. This is my **Shalom**.*

*And beneath it all, I remain before God, without trying to control Him, until heaven answers, whatever the answer. This is my **perseverance**.*

Before God, with open hands

Lord, thank you because none of the strengths you placed in me is an accident. Each of them came from your hands, even the ones I learned to call flaws.

Teach me the difference between what I perceive and what I fear, between staying out of conviction and staying out of fear, between the truth that restores and the one that only wants to win, between the care that frees and the control that imprisons, between true peace and escape disguised as peace.

Where a strength of mine was wounded, heal it. Where it was exploited, restore it. Where it is still immature, mature it. And where I exhausted myself trying to be everyone's help, remind me that the help that never runs out is you.

Give me the courage to persevere before you, with open hands, until heaven answers, whatever your answer may be. Amen.

For the woman who still calls her strength a flaw

I wrote this study thinking of you.

Of the woman who heard, so many times, that she was too intense, too sensitive, too demanding. Of the woman who learned to shrink herself to fit into spaces that were small for her. Of the woman who held so much for so long that she forgot she also needed to be cared for.

I want to tell you something tenderly, looking into your eyes through these lines: what you spent your life calling a flaw, God may be calling a strength. Not a strength for you to display, nor to press yourself even harder. A strength to recognize, care for and mature, in your own time, before Him.

You do not need to become another woman. You do not need to reproduce anyone's story. The seven strengths are not a new measuring stick. They are an invitation for you to look at your own history with more gratitude and less guilt, and to discover that the design was always there, waiting to be recognized.

May you walk with clarity, stay with truth, cultivate life around you, and cross your crossings without hardening. And may you, in the midst of it all, not lose your foundation, because your deepest strength is not in your capacity to endure, but in the relationship you keep with the One who designed you.

With you on this journey,

Priscila

Walking together

This study can also be lived in a group. Gathering other women to walk through these pages tends to deepen what solitary reading begins. I suggest five meetings, but adapt them to the group's pace. Each meeting can follow the same simple structure: welcome, reading of a section, conversation from the questions, and closing prayer.

MEETING 1 · WHEN STRENGTH GETS A NAME

Read Part 1. Talk together: which trait did each of you learn to shrink? Where do you recognize the difference between strength, wound and distortion? Share Exercise 1.

MEETING 2 · CLARITY, ALLIANCE AND TRUTH

Read chapters 5 to 7. Talk together: how do you tell perception from fear? Do you stay out of conviction or out of fear? What truth have you been avoiding?

MEETING 3 · ENVIRONMENT, ENDURANCE, FRUITFULNESS AND SHALOM

Read chapters 8 to 11. Talk together: which environments do you sustain? What crossing are you going through? What has already been formed in you? Where have you called peace what is only avoidance?

MEETING 4 · WHEN THE STRENGTHS WORK TOGETHER

Read Part 3. Talk frankly about the chapter Being Ezer is not being exhausted. Where has each of you been wearing herself out? Share the map from chapter 15.

MEETING 5 · SEVEN WEEKS AND SENDING

Review the seven weeks of maturing and choose together where to begin. Close with the manifesto and the final prayer, read aloud, together.

What God spoke to me in this study

Sources and notes for this study

Bible references used

Genesis 2:18 · Exodus 18:4 · Deuteronomy 33:29 · Psalm 70 · Psalm 121 · 1 Samuel 1 · 1 Samuel 25 · Ruth 1:16-17 · Esther (general reference) · Leviticus 15 · Mark 5:25-34 · Luke 8:1-3 · John 20:11-18 · Acts 16:11-15 · Acts 18:24-26 · 2 Timothy 1:5.

About the model of the seven strengths

The model of the seven strengths is an authorial synthesis by Priscila Abondanza, developed from the study of Ezer Kenegdo, the observation of women in the Bible and personal experience. It is not presented as a formal biblical doctrine nor as a list enumerated in Scripture, but as a map of recognition and maturing.

Translations

In this English edition, Scripture quotations follow the wording of the New International Version (NIV). Where marked as a condensed quotation, the text was shortened for editorial purposes, preserving the content and indicating the reference for full reading. The study was originally written in Portuguese, using the NVI and the ARA.

Notes on interpretation

Historical and contextual statements were supported by the reading of the narratives themselves and by recognized biblical commentaries and dictionaries. Lexical claims about Hebrew and Greek were treated with caution: when a meaning could not be confirmed with confidence, it was flagged in the text and not used as the basis of an argument. The women of the Bible are presented as windows of observation for each strength, not as its exclusive representatives.

About the images

The images in this study are artistic representations created to support the narrative. They are not historical records nor portraits of the biblical characters.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Priscila Abondanza

Priscila Abondanza is a senior executive, founder of Mentisup and a writer. She spent thirty years in the corporate world, leading teams, digital transformation and customer experience, many of them in demanding, predominantly male environments.

With graduate studies in Neuroscience and Applied Psychology, she devotes this season of her life to uniting what she learned across three worlds: the science that explains the mind, the faith that sustains the soul, and the practice that transforms the day. She is the author of the book *The Garden of Abundance*, on positive emotions, a full life and well-being grounded in neuroscience and Christian spirituality.

Married for more than twenty-five years, a mother of three, she writes from real life, including its crossings. This study was born of one of them: the discovery that strengths she spent years calling flaws were, all along, part of the design.

Science, faith and real life, in practice.



@PRIABONDANZA