



Redefining a Woman's Place—Beyond Church Cliché

Doug Addison with Amber Picota [Episode 10]

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Welcome, everybody, to Spirit Connection. I am so excited about what God's doing right now. It is a time right now when God is moving like never before. He is moving on women, He is moving on people outside the church and inside the church. There is so much happening right now. If you have been following my prophetic words, I have been talking about God promoting people and sometimes the least likely people around you.

There is a movement coming right now on women like never before. God is raising up women to step on the scenes and do amazing things for Jesus. Maybe you have heard the jokes, "If you want to get something done," or if you need a map or directions, you know, "get a woman to help you," but it is true. God is using women to help bring direction, to help—I do not want to sound sexist at all with that—but He is raising women up right now to step in, not just as helpers here, but really to step in and help bring direction and help bring the solidity that we need for this new move that is coming right now.

God is on the move. We know that Acts 2:17–18, you know, that in the last days God says, "I am going to raise up and pour My Spirit out on all flesh," and He mentions sons and daughters, old men, young men, and then He says, the Lord says, "Even on My servants, both men and women, I will pour out My Spirit upon them and they will prophesy." That is what we are seeing today.

So, to talk about that, I have dedicated this whole episode on talking about promotion of women, and I have an amazing person with me to help bring insight and revelation to this, a guest, Amber Picota, author of the book, *God's Feminist Movement: Redefining a Woman's Place From a Biblical Perspective*.

Doug: Welcome, Amber.

Amber: Thanks so much, Doug. Glad to be here.

Doug: Yes. Wow! So, tell us a little bit about yourself.

Amber: Well, I am a wife and mother. My husband is Rene Picota, and we both do ministry together. We are the pastors of a church here in Winchester, Virginia. We have been youth pastors. We have done all kinds of ministry, and I just have a passion for teaching and preaching, writing. I really love being in God's presence and having a good time.

Doug: Yes. Well, it sounds like it. Anybody who can do all that stuff, that is like a juggling act to do all that and stay positive as well. Wow! So, you have this book and, believe me, some people might think it is a controversial subject, but I have read the book. I have actually endorsed the book. I just want you to know that it is very biblical. It has such a good foundation for something that God wants to do in this area of redefining the woman's place from a biblical perspective. So, tell us a little bit more about that. Why did you write the book?

Amber: Yeah, you know, even I struggled with the title. It was God who gave me the title, and I knew that He was asking me to kind of step out on a limb by using a little bit of language that might not be received by everyone, but I knew if God was leading me to that, then it was going to reach the right people.

You know, I believe there is a move of God stirring in the earth where God is stirring up the gifts and the callings within some unlikely people, and some of those people are women who have been fed really bad teaching and really bad doctrine their whole life. And what is happening is God is stirring these gifts and callings up on the inside of them, and it is confusing to them, because it is that conflict with the things they have been told by tradition and man-made religion their entire life.

So, what I see is these beautiful people that God is calling to do something amazing in the earth, and I see this giant obstacle in front of them. What I intend to do with *God's Feminist Movement*, the book, is just kind of crush that obstacle that is keeping these women that God is calling forward to lead and to come out into leadership and come out into ministry and minister in that special way that He has called them, and I want to smash the obstacles in front of them and just kind of clear the path so that they can go ahead and begin to do what they were called to do.

Doug: Wow! Now that says it all, "help smash the obstacles." Well, what are some of those obstacles for women?

Amber: Well, some of the obstacles are bad teaching. As I have mentioned before,

there is a lot of misinterpreted Scripture that is made into teaching, made into doctrine that limits women from being able to speak and teach and lead in the church. Another obstacle that is standing in the way of women is also their image of themselves. So, beauty, authenticity ... these are some of the things.

I also talk about a lot of topics in this book that tend to be misrepresented by religion and tradition within the church. So, we talk about marriage relationships in the book. I am not saying that marriage relationships are an obstacle, but some of the teachings surrounding those things can be an obstacle, as well as modesty, and just topics that seem to be really warped and twisted by religion in order to control and manipulate women instead of, you know, just freeing them and letting them be free in Christ.

Doug: Yes. So, there is like a “religious spirit,” so to speak, that can grab hold of some of these things. These are actually— just so people understand the language we are using right now—biblical truths that can be taken out of context or taken to an extreme. And anytime you take the Bible to an extreme ...that is not what God is doing right now. There is lots of grace. He has given lots of latitude. He is raising people up right now like never before, like Amber is saying. You know, it really is an amazing time to be alive. So, the old feminist movement from the 60s and 70s, it was political, right? This does not sound like it is political at all.

Amber: Right. Exactly. This feminist movement that I am speaking about is not exactly a political movement. Now, I think sometimes what we believe and what God is doing ends up trickling over into politics, but that is nowhere near the topic of my book. It is more about God restoring women to a place of equality in the church and coming back to the heart of the Father to raise women up and use them in leadership, as He has been doing since the beginning. We can read it all throughout our Bible.

Doug: Yes, that is so true. I know. You know, it is just amazing that some of the most powerful revivalists and earth shakers, you know, world shakers were women. What were some of yours? Do you have some favorites?

Amber: I do. I love Deborah, I love Junia, the apostle that is mentioned there in Scripture, and I really love Mary, the mother of Jesus. Those are some of my absolute favorite role models in Scripture.

Doug: Yes. A lot of times there is a biblical context based on, you know, the culture. And in the time of the apostle Paul the culture was different than we are in today. Now, the culture is different, but we are not really changing the truths here, are we?

Amber: Right. No, no, no. We are not changing the truths and, you know, the apostle Paul gets a bad rap, you know? He gets a bad rap, but if we continue to read and take all of the letters that he wrote, he endorses women as leaders such as Junia and different women that taught and prophesied, and he exhorted women so much as well.

Doug: That is exactly right. You know, Paul had a strategy. He would go into, primarily into the synagogues first. In the Book of Acts, you can read about it. He goes into the synagogue, which was a male dominant place. He goes in and releases a bomb about Jesus. Then he siphons out some people and plants a church in people's homes, and if you do your research on that, women were often the leaders of these home churches. It is just amazing.

Amber: Isn't that awesome?

Doug: Yes, it is awesome, and it is overlooked and it is not seen, so it is just a powerful thing to understand. So, anyway, how has been the response from your book from Christians in your community or even out online?

Amber: Absolutely amazing. You know, when I was working with the Lord and brainstorming and coming up with this title, I had in mind that I would receive so much more criticism than I actually have. What I have received is floods of emails from people saying, "This changed my life." One woman wrote me an email telling me that she just got divorced, it was a horrible divorce. She was being abused physically and mentally in ways that we do not even want to know, but she had just finalized this divorce and was ready to commit suicide, because she felt like she did not have anything else to live for. I tell you, after that email I thought, "Do you know what? I do not need to sell another book, because if that was the woman I wrote this for, I am happy."

Doug: Wow!

Amber: I am getting emails from women who tell me, "I wish I had read this book when I was a teenager. It would have saved me so much heartache," and I am getting emails from—actually this was very surprising to me—I have received several emails and contacts from people who are ... they consider themselves atheists. I was very surprised, because that was not the point of me writing the book. I never intended to try to convince anyone to be a Christian. However, for them one of the obstacles standing in the way of them believing that there could be a God was because of really bad teaching that taught them that God is not for women, that God is against women and that God is not considering women as equals to men. So, that really caught me off guard but, I mean, I received four different emails, so that tells me that is quite an impact that is having.

Doug: Wow! That is amazing, Amber, and, you know, as an outreach person—and I have been an evangelist for years—a few years ago I was sitting on a plane and, you know, I struck up a conversation with this woman next to me. Of course, I am prophetic, so I know something is going on with her, you know? I had a sense that she might have been wounded by the church. She looked like she might have been a really strong feminist. I interpreted a dream for her about her sister and she wept. She really did. She broke down. Then she found out I am a Christian and then she got mad, but then I just did this thing. I said, “Do you know, can I just ask forgiveness, just on behalf of all Christians for what we have done to you?” That opened something up and what your book is doing—it is almost like it is asking forgiveness for all that has happened to people, especially women, in the name of Jesus.

Amber: Wow. Yes. I think you are right. Wow!

Doug: Yes. It is a statement. I am so excited for what is going to come out of this, the fruit that is going to come out of it, even salvations. There are so many people, so many women, who are called to higher things, but they have never been given permission and that is what we are finding out. You know, a lot of my stuff that I do with dream interpretation and the prophetic, we even interpret tattoos and people think it is controversial, but really, we are giving Christians permission to reach our culture. With your book, we are giving women permission to reach out to the Lord. It is amazing.

Amber: Yes. Absolutely.

Doug: So, you know, there are a lot of bad words around the topic: “submission”. What do you have to say about it?

Amber: Yes. There sure are, you know, and some people might even hear rumors that I am against submission or something. I am actually a really huge fan of submission. You know in Ephesians 5:22, oftentimes we hear Ephesians 5:22 all by itself, but something really interesting about Scripture is that a lot of the Scripture that we read are actually letters that were written, although we read our Scripture with the little numbers that help us find things. So, Ephesians 5:22, 5 is the chapter and 22 is the verse. In most translations, there is a title or a chapter title change in between Ephesians 5:21 and 5:22, but is very important for us to note that this is all a part of the same letter, so some of the more modern translations—the more accurate translations—will actually have moved the title header one up which is much more accurate. So, Ephesians 5:21 says, “Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ,” and then we go on to read 5:22, Ephesians 5:22, which says, “*Wives submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord.*” So, I absolutely am in favor of submission in marriage but there is so much teaching out there that just calls for wifely submission only. The truth be told, you know, when

we are living in the Kingdom of God, the family of God, we end up submitting to one another. We end up living, not as a hierarchy, but as co-heirs, and people who work together for a common goal for the love of God.

Doug: Wow! You just struck something there because I have often heard Ephesians 5 taken out of context, but what they do not realize is you have to read this, like you said, as a letter. It also says, “*Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the Church ...*” Now here is what I notice. Wow! If you have ever seen a husband do that, you would not have submission problems first of all. You know what I mean. You would not have this whole issue. Also, listen, Jesus never demanded submission. So, if we are loving women as Christ loved the Church, first of all, demanding submission would not even be in our vocabulary and we would be building up. What I found in my life anyway—it has taken me years to do this—I wish I would have learned this a long time ago with my wife and my daughter and any other woman in my life, I wish I would have learned this lesson to build up, to be proud of and never tear down. Boy, it is like ... it just helps people so much like you would not believe.

Amber: Wow! That is so valuable. Absolutely.

Doug: All right. So, there are challenges today, you know, for women in the business and ministry world. What are some of them?

Amber: Well, some of the challenges that women face are being heard, being considered an authority on a particular topic. Many times, I see women who are actually not treated as though what they have to say really matters. A lot of times women feel like they are not being heard and their voice is not being heard. So really, I think some of the things that we can do in the body of Christ to kind of like correct that is to seek out not just male leaders in particular areas that we have of interest. So, whether that be a certain teaching or dream interpretation or any topic you can find, we should seek out the expertise of not just men, but also women.

Sometimes I think it is a subconscious thing that we do not realize we are doing sometimes. Maybe we were brought up to think, “Well, only men can do such and such,” and really, we kind of have to retrain that way of thinking and realize that when we include both the male and female perspective, we get a more full picture of a topic. When we can hear women in the pulpit preaching, we get analogies and parables about childbirth and childrearing. I mean, this beautiful symbolism comes alive that we might have been missing otherwise.

Doug: That is exactly right. I love that. You know, I have been a church planter, like you and your husband, you guys are planting a church, and one thing I have

always been aware of, and maybe it was my west coast upbringing, you know, spiritually, but I have always wanted to make sure that when people come in the door that they are going to identify with Jesus no matter what their background is. So, I have always made sure that there was a mix of women and men, young and old at the front, because you could see a little girl sitting out there in church week after week and there are only men up front and how does she see herself in the Kingdom later on?

Amber: Absolutely. You know, that is a really important point that you bring up. I know many pastors, and I have many colleagues who I consider close friends of mine, and there are some of them that in word they say that they endorse women leading, but if you look at their staff, it is all men and it does not send a great message to our daughters and granddaughters, because they need someone to look up to. Seeing a woman as a pastor or seeing a woman as a deacon or a prophet or apostle tells them, "Hey, I can do that, too. If God has called me to do it, I can do it, too."

Doug: Yes, and if that is too big of a hurdle for some leaders, then at least get someone up there with announcements who is a woman to lead on that point. We are not trying to be judgmental here, but we are just trying to open this up because I believe God is doing a pruning right now with the Church. We are in a time of a John 15 pruning. That is where Jesus said, that He is going to prune away the things that are no longer necessary, so that we can actually bear more fruit and good fruit and new fruit. So, just tell me about this. So, you see this happening as well, Amber?

Amber: Oh, yes. I definitely see a pruning taking place within the body of Christ. As a matter of fact, God has really been speaking to me on a very personal level about this. One of the things that God told me recently, and He likes to speak with me really plain. He talks with me in the way that I can understand Him, and the thing that He told me is that I was holding on to some things that God was trying to cut out of my life. He revealed to me that the only reason He wanted to cut this out of my life is because He wanted to bless me with something better.

So, you mentioned John 15, and that is so important right now, because in John 15:1–2 He says, *"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit."* So, what God highlighted to me was something I missed after all these years of reading my Bible, having read the story many, many times. What He pointed out to me was that every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it. So, pruning is not a punishment, it is actually a sign that we were bearing fruit.

So, bearing fruit is what we want in life, in ministry, in the day-to-day activity.

We want to bear fruit, and pruning is actually a sign that we have been doing what we are supposed to be doing. We are bearing fruit. So, what God told me is that, you know, when I was a much less-mature Christian, He would come and prune me and I did not know what was happening. I would be bewildered. I would be like, “What? Why is this happening? Why are these people walking out of my life? Why is this ending?” And these were all things that I wanted to keep, because it was comfortable, and it made me feel secure. What He told me is that right now, He is leading people to a place of maturity where we will know, we will begin to also know the things that need to be cut out of our lives, so we will begin to see things and the Holy Spirit will begin to show us, “Hey, this does not serve a purpose in this season that I am taking you into.”

Some of these things that God will highlight and be showing us—“Hey, this does not really belong anymore”—the challenge will be that some of these things may look like good churchy, Christian things. Even for an outsider, it might even seem strange for them for us to turn down something like this, but God is saying not everything that looks good is for you in this season that you are going into, because there are people who will hold us back with negativity and dream killers, and they are just looking to stomp any positivity out of you. That does not mean that we put people down and put them out of our lives, it just means that they do not have the same place of influence as they did in previous seasons.

You know, God was showing me there will be even events and programs that might clutter up people’s lives and deplete our energy from what God is calling us to do, so for us to choose wisely the things that He is leading us to equip us for the work of the ministry that we are going to be doing in the next season. It does not mean we do not do anything, it just means that we begin to choose wisely. One of the things that God was speaking to me through is this method of cleaning out my closet. It is so funny that God loves to speak in parables, and He loves to speak to us through common situations. It might seem mundane, but He is speaking even through those situations.

So, I felt prompted by the Holy Spirit to clean out my closet. Now, I do not know if my husband was praying that God would ask me to clean out the closet or not, but I just felt like this urge from the Holy Spirit, it was so funny and bizarre, to clean out my closet. And as I began to clean out my closet, I just felt the Lord beginning to teach me, and I just felt the Holy Spirit right there teaching me through this situation. What God was telling me is to check out each item and ask myself, “Do I love it and does it serve a purpose?”

What He was showing me is that we can partner with the Holy Spirit to prune things out of our lives that are not bringing joy and that are not serving a purpose for the season to come that God is leading us into. That way our life

is not so cluttered up with things that do not matter just so that we can feel like we have stuff, whether it be physical or whether this be a symbolic act of removing items and things that are taking our time away from the ministry that God has called us to do.

So, I would just encourage people to begin to partner with the Holy Spirit. Ask the Holy Spirit what is for this season and what is meant to be pruned out of our lives, because we can grow and mature and partner with God through this pruning process, and reject the things that we need to let go of in the season to come.

Doug: Yes, that is so powerful. I love the metaphor of cleaning out a closet—I need to do that myself—and that God will help you sort things. What you just said, really, it was a modern-day parable for pruning, and it is not punishment. You are exactly right. I love that. Wow! That is so powerful. I love the simplicity that you have when you speak.

So right now, what advice would you give to a woman who they are recognizing they want to use their leadership gifts, but maybe they are in a situation in a home or a church where female leadership is frowned upon?

Amber: I would tell them to start wherever you are at. Start with whatever you can put your hand to do. So, start with where you already have influence. That might be with your children. It might not be in the church right away. It might be that you start a home group. It might be that you begin to minister to your neighbors and pray for them. I would really encourage them to just be faithful with what they have in front of them, because they might not realize, it but they already have an influence of some kind on someone, and they can begin to pray and ask God to show them new opportunities. Maybe they open up a Bible study at a local coffee shop. You know, God will show them what they can do if they will just begin to look around them, go ahead and serve and have influence in the sphere of influence that they already have, and he or she who is faithful with little can be entrusted with more.

Doug: Wow! That is really, really good. So, you were talking about children there and you have children, right? How many children do you have?

Amber: I do. I have three beautiful—they are not babies anymore—they are 7, 8 and 11. But they are my babies.

Doug: Yes. So, you have daughters, I assume.

Amber: I do. I have two daughters.

Doug: What would you say to your daughters to understand when they read this book?

Amber: I would tell them that they can do anything that God has called them to do, and I would tell them to not wait around for permission and approval from people to do what God has called them to do. I would tell them that their value and their calling is not dependent on what people say and the approval of humans.

Doug: Yes. That is great. Great advice. I am really proud of you. I am a trailblazer. You are a fellow trailblazer. I know you have taken some stripes and some blows for this as you were developing it, and it was amazing that, you know, you got the book published and got it out there. Patricia King actually did the forward on that, right?

Amber: Yes. She is such a role model to me and I was very honored. Very honored.

Doug: Yes. I saw your interview on XPMedia and so you can Google Amber's name, Amber Picota. That is her website, www.amberpicota.com. You can Google that interview with Patricia King and Amber Picota. It is an amazing interview and you will be able to see Amber and listen to that, plus Patricia is really behind what she is doing. I am really behind what she is doing. I believe God is doing something new right now and it is going to break forth this year. This is going to open the door. I believe your book, Amber, is not just a book that is going to help women recognize who they are, but it is also going to help usher in a new move of God. I just know that as women step up and as men embrace and do, it is not just about a woman thing or it is not just about a man thing, it is about a Kingdom thing and it is about the family of God. The Kingdom is going to expand over this and I feel a really strong and powerful move that is coming out of this. So, Amber, could you just pray and activate your message over our listeners.

Amber: Absolutely. Father, I just come to you today and I just speak over the hearts of everyone listening to this podcast today. God, I just pray that You would begin to stir them up. Stir them up inside their spirit and, God, I pray that You would just stir up new gifts and callings within them—gifts they do not even know they have yet, Father.

God, I pray that You would give men a boldness and a confidence to be able to exhort women and to support the women who are called to lead as well, Lord God. I just pray that You would give them a bravery and a boldness to do that as well, God. I pray that You would begin to speak to the women who You are calling into ministry in this hour and, God, that You would begin to make what You are saying, Your calling, what You have for them, I pray that You would begin to make it so clear, God. I ask that You would visit them in their dreams, Lord God, that it would be so clear what they are called to do in this season.

God, I ask that You would send support. I pray that You would send people into the lives of women who do not feel like they have any support, some people who would call out the gold in them, people who are not afraid of being outshined, that they would be able to come and just pour into their lives and just lift them up and teach them about how awesome they are to You, God. Lord, I just pray that You would just bless every person listening to this, and just bless their households with so much joy they cannot contain it, in the Name of Jesus. Amen.

Doug: Amen. That was powerful.

Well, we have been listening to an interview with Amber Picota. She is the author of the book, *God's Feminist Movement: Redefining a "Woman's Place" From a Biblical Perspective*. I want you to go out and get the book, www.amberpicota.com and share it with some friends. Also, consider sharing this podcast out on social media so this message will get out there because, you know, people hear the title or something like that and they might shy away, but once they hear the heart, once they hear the Lord speaking, we know God is doing something new in this season. So, I just want to say thanks so much, Amber, for joining us.

Amber: Thanks so much for having me, Doug. It was really an honor and a joy.

Doug: To all of our listeners, you can go to my website, www.dougaddison.com, follow me on Facebook at thedougaddison, Twitter and Instagram dougtaddison. See you next time.