“I guarantee you will not be able to put this book down. Sisters Rosie and Rebekah write in a style crystal clear and magically engaging, all the while gleefully butchering sacred cultural cows and serving up a feast of rich, meaty delights for anyone, especially any Christian woman, who has found herself wrestling with what it means to be a child of God in today's world. You're gonna love this book, even as its wit and brainy argumentation stretch you to new limits of genuine Christian faith, love, and piety.”

—Rev. Matthew C. Harrison, President, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

“One of the best ‘hear and do’ pieces I've read, out of hundreds. Rosie and Becky are freedom fighters and, in the sacred sense, burden bearers of women's issues! Lost your voice amidst the chaos of 21st-century womanhood? Find it here. Not to scream or demand, but to follow Christ into contentment, fulfillment and with gusto resist the pull of lesser gods. It is impossible to put it down!”

—Phyllis Wallace, Author, Speaker, Broadcaster

“Adle and Curtis don’t pull any punches in their dash to ride the countercultural wave of biblical truth about womanhood as Christ designed and redeemed her. With a healthy dose of sardonic wit, spiced with the right dash of caregiving reserve, their work is a breath of fresh air in a world of women caught up in the maelstrom of not being ‘good enough’ unless they try to be men.”

—Rev. Jonathan Fisk, Pastor, Host of Worldview Everlasting and Author of Broken: 7 “Christian” Rules That Every Christian Ought to Break as Often as Possible
“LadyLike strips away all flowery cross-stitch stereotypes while exposing the burlap of what it means to be a Christian woman in 21st-century society. Adle and Curtis hold nothing back as they take an uppercut at the lies of our modern era, simultaneously weaving in the delicate ribbons of mercy found in Christ's timeless truth. These essays are at once strong and sassy, while maintaining the graceful art of what it means to be a woman in Christ. They contain the healing balm of Christ and Him crucified that is vital for staying the course on the lonely road of being a Christian woman, Christian mother, and Christian wife in today's world—a balm so soothing that the reader is left wanting more.”

—Meridith Fisk, Wife, Mother, and Homemaker

“In this well-written book, Rose and Rebekah challenge women with clever, yet honest truths served up with a ‘delicious gulp of Gospel.’ Their striking insights and crisp language encourage us to see our lives in new ways. You will be blessed!”

—Renee Gibbs, Teacher, Speaker, Mentor
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FOREWORD

Our society loves open and honest dialogue. We want to discuss the hard issues and to be challenged intellectually. And we appreciate the maverick, the innovator, and the one who brings fresh ideas to the table. Or at least that's what we tell ourselves. This book is bound to test our claims. Quite frankly, I can't say I've read anything like it. LadyLike is, quite simply, stunning. What a title! I might describe it as radically retro, freshly old-fashioned, and powerfully submissive. In light and lovely prose, Rosie Adle and Rebekah Curtis, two playful and mischievous sisters, challenge us to rethink everything we thought we knew about men and women. Like a jolt of espresso, or a polar bear plunge, their writing enlivens the senses, helping us to see the world, as it were, for the first time. In a society where conversations about gender have too often become stale and predictable, Rosie and Rebekah reimagine what it means to be a Christian woman in our feminized secular society.

For example, Rosie and Rebekah compare life to a pie-eating contest. I know it sounds crazy, and it is, but in a good way. Feminism encourages women to take in everything that life has to offer, with the result that they feel both bloated and unsatisfied, overwhelmed and empty. “We trudge along, fork in, fork out. We’re always looking for our Tums and wondering how we’ll handle the giant pile of plates accumulating in our kitchen sink,” they write. Can today’s woman have it all? Should she even want to have it all? Whatever you might think, after reading this essay,
you’re bound to want another slice of what they have to offer.

Each chapter is just a couple of pages, rich and satisfying. You might want to read an essay before bed, and let their words roll around your brain as you fall off to sleep. Or maybe, like me, you’ll devour the whole thing in a single sitting and then come back for more later. The topics are often provocative. Was Jesus a feminist? Was the Old Testament misogynistic? What about 50 Shades of Grey? And perhaps most intriguing, who’s supposed to wash the dishes? Each essay is sure to spark conversations, even debates. You might be taken aback, even shocked, but you sure won’t be bored. Rosie and Rebekah are a paradox, something our cultures tells us cannot exist. These women exude confidence but preach submission. They encourage the cultivation of the mind and yet treasure domesticity. They call us back to a time, as Archie Bunker used to sing, “when girls were girls and men were men.” And they do so with good cheer. It’s Christian girl power, a dose of empowerment, and a celebration of the feminine virtues rediscovered. In the spirit of the biblical Deborah, Rosie and Rebekah are warriors but also feminine to the core, and proudly so.

Some may compare this work to that of other contemporary Christian authors like Beth Moore or Joyce Meyer. But that would be a disservice. Rosie and Rebekah are at once more serious and much more fun, certainly more challenging and biblical to boot. Rosie and Rebekah love the Church, but they’re not church mice. Turn the pages, and you’ll hear them roar. They speak of what they call “women’s work,” and they do so unashamedly. They advocate for pastors who
are men, real men of God. They analyze our culture, and do so with lively illustrations, all along sharing the common frustrations of today's woman. And to bring it all home, they take us on a tour of what the Bible has to say about men, women, and marriage, including side trips in which they explore what it means to be celibate, what it feels like to be barren, and how to struggle against temptation. If you come to this book with modernist assumptions, you may, at times, become infuriated. If you come expecting bland reassurance, you’re sure to be jolted. You might, every once in a while, feel like your toes have been stepped on and ask, “Who do they think they are?” But you won’t be bored, and if you let down your guard, you might find yourself smiling, even laughing alongside these women. They’re funny and compassionate, and you get the feeling that they’re on your side. These women clearly love being women, but they also know how difficult, strange, and even absurd life’s journey can be. And they know the joy of the journey when Christ is by your side.

On a side note, when I was asked to look at LadyLike, Rosie told me, somewhat in jest, that I might be one of the only men who ever reads it. That would be a pity. While this work is clearly aimed at young, strong, smart, Christian women, any man would do himself a favor reading what these two women have to say. So buy a copy for your wife or girlfriend, mother or daughter, and when she’s done reading it, borrow it from her. After all, Christian women deserve good Christian men. And when it comes to God's will, we'd all do well to surrender, I happily submit.

—Dr. Peter J. Scaer
INTRODUCTION

We wrote this book with women in mind—all kinds! Single or married, young or not young, this or that, we thought of you. Not every essay will speak immediately to every woman’s own life. But we hope that all readers will find relevance and support particular to their circumstances somewhere in this book, and probably on several occasions. If it’s not about you, it’s about someone you love and would like to love better.

These essays aren’t devotions or inspirations. If you’re looking for instant insights in pretty fonts, we’ll be happy to see you on Pinterest because we’re girls too! But what we’re offering here are thoughts aimed to ground our functions, identities, and lives in Christ our Lord as He reveals Himself to us in His Word.

He is the Author and Perfecter of our faith, after all. Let’s fix our eyes on Him, right?

Adle and Curtis
LOOKING AT NOWADAYS
Out of Order

There is an order to the world. You (whoever you are) are not at the top. Satan lied when he said that we could be more like God by doing something that God explicitly forbade. When Eve and Adam sank their teeth in, they became aware of good and evil, and that they were on the wrong side of that line. This placed them farther from God, not closer. Instead of joining God for a stroll in the cool of the day, they ran and hid.

Genesis 1 and 2 detail the order: God > man > woman > animals. This is described in the New Testament too. First Corinthians 11:3 explains, “I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God.” This fuller description of the order is Father > Son > man > woman. Ephesians 5:23 speaks the same way: “For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, His body, and is Himself its Savior.”

This is the good arrangement designed by God. Even the Trinity has an ordering. It does not mean that the Son is somehow less God than the Father is, nor is woman less human than man, but there is order. God is a God of order, not of confusion. Order is good. Patriarchy is the earthly arrangement God ordained. Adam is created first and given charge. Eve is to help him. They are to subdue and rule the earth.
Then, in Genesis 3, one of the creeping things of the earth comes to tempt the woman. Hey! Isn’t she supposed to be above him? Why is she taking cues from him? Uh-oh. And hey! Where is Adam? He is with her (v. 6), but it is not reported that he says anything to deter her. In fact, he not only tolerates her disobedience, he joins her in it. Total overturn of the order! Now it stands serpent/Satan > woman > man. And none of them are paying attention to God. Disregarding the divinely established arrangement, Eve listens to the serpent instead of turning to Adam or God. Adam sits idly by while this goes on, and this causes all to fall (Romans 5:12).

This is terrible. It brings about death, infuses hardship in vocations, causes sin to spread to the progeny they would bear, and subjects the rest of creation to futility (Genesis 3:17; Romans 8:20).

Is everything wrecked, totally wrecked? Is everything permanently out of order? Thanks be to God, it isn’t. Order is what God reemphasizes when He shows up on the scene. When He comes looking for His fallen creatures, He calls for Adam (Genesis 3:9). Eve may have been the one who spoke to the serpent and first ate the forbidden fruit, but Adam is responsible because he is the head.

He finds them (He's God! They’re not! Who did we think would win the hide-and-seek game?) and it's time for punishment. Genesis 3:14–19 is often called “the curse,” and it is true that God speaks of bad things to come. All told though, it is a rather good sermon containing both Law and Gospel. During that speech, God puts things back in order because that is His gracious nature.
For the serpent who exalted himself, on his belly he would go (v. 14). For the woman who listened to one of the creeping things of the earth, her seed would crush the serpent’s head (v. 15). And even when she would desire to master her husband, the man would still rule over her (v. 16). For Adam, who listened to his wife and the serpent, he would still work and provide, but it would be through pain, toil, and sweat (vv. 17–19). There is indeed a curse involved, as man would return to the dust from which he was made, but this speech by God also tells of the coming defeat of the serpent/Satan, and it sets things back in order. Because of sin, the going would be tough, but there would still be going. Adam would still be the breadwinner, Eve would still be the mother and helper, and they could both look forward to the Seed promised by God.

How can this be, though? How can it be God’s plan that we live this way? Isn’t patriarchy the root of all evil and the reason we live in a sexist world filled with harassment, stereotypical expectations of women, and unequal pay for equal work?

A world where man is head of woman is a world where a sinner will be head of a sinner. That much is true. This is why we, along with the rest of creation, groan. The order won’t ever be occupied perfectly by us sinners this side of the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. Men won’t be perfect heads and women won’t be perfect helpers, and so often both reject the place in the order for which we were all created.

But is the system itself bad by design? Does it necessarily produce abuses, inequalities, and injustices? No. The
order God set up is not inherently bad. It was part of His original creation, and it, along with all the rest, was good. Furthermore, it was not just descriptive of Adam and Eve. It is prescriptive for all of us for all of time. Ephesians 5 confirms this. For all eternity, Christ will remain the Head of His Bride, the Church.

There will always be authority. There will always be an order of creation. To live otherwise is to be out of order. When we see a sign with those words printed on it, we know the ideal outcome is repair and restoration. That is exactly what God has promised us (Acts 3:21). So we keep at it, with God’s help! We women know our place, and we know it’s a good one because it’s the one the Lord lovingly and thoughtfully designed for us.
Have you ever played “Whac-A-Mole”? It’s an arcade game with blinking lights and dinging noises. A little mole sticks his head through a hole and you whack it with a mallet. It retreats while other moles pop their heads through other holes. Eventually, the game powers down and the moles are gone. It’s fun for a while, but it wouldn’t be fun forever. Eventually, you are glad to walk away from those crazy moles.

Daily tasks keep popping up in life. You can sit down at your desk and reply to every e-mail and get all caught up. But by the time you return to your desk with your cup of coffee, there’s another e-mail, isn’t there? The little sticker on your windshield reminds you that your oil may be fine now, but it will need to be changed again before long. The buzzer on your dryer may be about to sound, indicating that your last load of laundry is done, but your hamper is only going to start filling again.

Brush your teeth; then brush them again. Plan and prepare a meal; then plan and prepare another. Make your bed; then make it again. Mow the lawn; then mow it again. Pay the bills; then pay them again. Clock out and spend a handful of hours somewhere else; then clock in again. Wipe a little person’s nose . . . or something else . . . then wipe it again.
The relentless moles of life don’t power down. The lights keep blinking and the dings keep dinging and the moles keep popping up. There is this constant, overwhelming feeling of “can’t get it done, can’t get ahead, can’t get a break.” We want to put down our mallet because our eyes are tired of watching for moles and our arm is tired of whacking away at them and our brain is tired of having to direct the eyes and arms to complete these tasks. We want to walk away from the moles, but we can’t. If we walk away from them, they’ll keep burrowing and burrowing, and there will be a bigger mess when we finally come back to them.

Think how I feel! I write a period and then I lumber on to the next sentence, which is just going to need another period.

Anyway, the point is (and we should be arriving there soon if we want this piece to have a final punctuation mark): this constitutes life.

Our lungs fill with air and then they refill. That’s their job. They don’t get a break, and we wouldn’t want them to. We finish digesting one meal and our body needs another, so it sends more hungry signals. This constant feeling of undone-ness is actually a sign of life. Our heart finishes one beat and moves on to the next. Please, dear heart, do not take a break, at least not a very long one, or I will be dead.

We complete a task and then move on to the next because we have a life to live. We check one thing off the to-do list. Along comes another to take its place. This can lead to despair: “I’ll never be done.” Or it can lead to joy: “I’ll never be done!” There will always be something for us to do. This is what gives us a sense of purpose in the life the Lord has
given us. It puts a value on our work. It emphasizes the importance of our particular callings in life.

If the e-mails stopped coming, we’d be out of a job. If the car never needed an oil change, it would mean we never took a trip. If the laundry hamper never refilled, uh . . . well, that would be a problem of its own, wouldn’t it?

Our spiritual life looks about the same. We wake up and pray, “Grant, O Lord, to keep us this day without sin.” The next words out of our mouth acknowledge the impossibility of that, as we implore, “O Lord have mercy upon us, have mercy upon us.”31 We sin. We confess our sin. We receive absolution. And we wake up the next day and do it all over again. The life of the baptized is not a constant, steady climb to perfection. It looks more like a circle, as we return to our Baptism daily.

So if you feel like you’re chasing your tail, that’s to be expected. You’re alive! Period.

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31 Te Deum, (LSB, p. 225, st. 9).