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MANUAL  
*for* WOMEN

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Danielle Bean

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To the perfect example of feminine genius lived out with perfection, my mother and yours, the Blessed Virgin Mary. Thank you for praying me through my stumbling journey toward home.

*The woman's soul is fashioned as a shelter  
in which other souls may unfold.*

**ST. EDITH STEIN**

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## HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL

e at TAN Books are honored to present Catholic women with this next installment in our Manual Series, the *Manual for Women* by Danielle Bean. As with our other manuals—those for Spiritual Warfare, Eucharistic Adoration, Men, Conquering Deadly Sin, and Marian Devotion—this book is sure to become a treasured and much-leafed through volume for those who read it.

But that begs the question: how to read it? The first answer is, of course, anyway you want. And anywhere you want: at home, in the adoration chapel, at the YMCA or playground while the kids play, in the chapel of your convent, in bed, on the couch, at work (okay, maybe not at work unless you work for a Catholic publisher). But, regardless of where or when you read it, we would urge you to begin with Danielle's wonderful opening essay. She is many things: wife, mother, writer, editor, television personality, brand manager at CatholicMom.com, and more. But most fundamentally, at the very core of her being, Danielle is a devoted Catholic woman, one who knows the faith and lives it. She is conversant both with the Church's grand tradition and

the best thinking and writing the Church offers her daughters today. She knows your triumphs, your failures, your joys, your sorrows. She is, in short, one of you.

As we don't want to keep you from the riches contained within any longer, let us close with the following advice which just might be the way you choose to delve into your *Manual for Women*. Enjoy!

Take this *Manual for Women* in one hand and a cup of coffee in the other . . . and get ready to pray, laugh, and receive the down-to-earth wisdom Danielle Bean has to offer in this book. Danielle has a delightful way of teaching us the beauty of the faith, while relating it to what's actually going on in our crazy-busy lives as women. You will find refreshment, hope, healing, and encouragement in the pages that follow!

**JACKIE FRANCOIS ANGEL, SPEAKER,  
SONGWRITER, AND AUTHOR OF *FOREVER: A  
CATHOLIC DEVOTIONAL FOR YOUR MARRIAGE.***

May this manual help you, dear reader, on your path to heaven.

PART ONE

Being the Woman God  
Made You to Be



## INTRODUCTION

eaven better be real good,” a struggling friend once complained to me over the phone as a stomach virus raged through her busy household. “Not just a bunch of people standing around talking to each other, but real good. Do you know what I mean?”

For sure I did.

Life is a messy thing. Sometimes, in the midst of pain and sacrifice, all we want is some tangible assurance that our efforts will be rewarded. As we struggle through piles of bills and car repairs, rebellious teenagers and cranky bosses, and all manner of foul weather and human weakness, we would just like a little dose of heavenly perfection now and then. Is that too much to ask?

There were no stomach viruses in the Garden of Eden. There were no rashes, no bug bites, no burnt toast, no anxiety, no depression, no exhaustion, no unpleasant work, and no sin. There were none of the evils and annoyances, big and small, that we post-fall humans find ourselves contending with every day.

Can you even imagine such a place? Most of us can't, because the world we are living in feels impossibly far away from paradise.

Do you ever think about original sin and get just a little bit annoyed at Eve? I mean, Eve had it made. There she was in her very own paradise, freshly created, beautiful, and intelligent. Her husband adored her, she knew no hunger or weakness, she had the perfect body, and she was surrounded by perfection and beauty in a natural world God had made just for her and her beloved man.

Why did she have to go and mess it all up?

In fairness to Eve, though, we must also ask why we continue to mess it all up. It is an inevitable part of the human experience to find out just how messed up the world is, sometimes in deeply personal and painful ways. We see it in war, broken families, addiction, violence, and abuse. But we see it in subtler ways too—sometimes in our own pride or jealousy, or our own temptation toward anger, lust, or greed.

### **What We Are Made For**

**A**nd yet those of us who believe not only in original sin but also in the redemptive power of God want to know and do God's will in our lives. We want to fix the ways in which we and others are warped, wounded, and broken by sin. We want to be what God made us to be and calls us to

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be, despite our fallen nature. We want to take seriously the mission God calls us to.

But what might that be?

Ultimately, seeking to know who we are and what we are made for as women brings us back to the Garden of Eden. To know God's plan for human beings, and in particular God's plan for us as women, we must look to Eve, the first woman, and find out what we can learn from her story.

In the familiar story we read in the Old Testament book of Genesis, we first meet Eve, in all her perfection, when God creates her from one of Adam's ribs. When Adam sees Eve for the first time, he is overcome by her beauty and perfection.

“This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.’ Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh” (Gn 2:23–24).

Adam's words of joy highlight the complementarity and connection between man and woman as God planned it and as it existed, in perfection, in our natural state. Woman is made for man; man is made for woman. The two become one. This beautiful description of the unity that God intends between the sexes is a popular reading at weddings. We like to be reminded that we were made good, we were made perfect, and we were made for one another. We like to remember God's original plan.