

# EMPOWERING WOMEN

**Editor's Note:** *I had the privilege of interviewing Trillia Newbell, an author and speaker who is teaching at the Critical Issues Summit at CCCA's Clarity Conference. She is passionate about empowering women to step into their gifts and lead — whatever that may look like. I believe that a lot of what she has to share will benefit the women at CCCA member camps and conference centers, and will also enlighten the men who work with those women.*

by Jen Howver



An Interview  
with Trillia Newbell

## Identifying a Woman in Leadership

**W**hen we hear the word “leadership,” we often think of “the one in charge” or “the one up front.” However, when Trillia Newbell discusses leadership with women, she encourages them to view the gift of leadership more broadly than those ideas. “Women who use their gifts can be examples of leading,” Newbell says. ▶

STEP UP AND USE THE GIFTS  
GOD'S GIVEN YOU

Photo courtesy of Word of Life Fellowship

# IN LEADERSHIP





**“WE HAVE AN ENEMY WHO’D  
LOVE TO DISTRACT US BY  
TELLING US WE’RE NOT  
USEFUL, THAT WE CAN’T  
WORK, THAT WE CAN’T SERVE.  
WHEN THE TRUTH IS THAT  
WE CAN, WE WILL AND WE DO,  
IF WE TAKE STEPS OF FAITH.”**

**—TRILLIA NEWBELL**

In Scripture, Newbell points out, we see Paul thanking women in Romans 16 for coming alongside him and risking their lives. In 2 Timothy 1, Paul comments that Timothy’s sincere faith first lived in his mother and grandmother. These examples show us how powerful and impactful the actions of these women were, and they were not necessarily “in charge” or “up front.” They were living out their faith and being obedient to God’s call on their lives. This is what every one of us is called to do, and Newbell believes that “women who are using their gifts to encourage the church and glorify the Lord are leading by example.”

So before we get any further into this article, if you’re a woman reading this, I encourage you to consider yourself a woman in leadership — no matter what your role or title may be. Everything you do at your camp or conference center provides you with opportunities to lead if you’re willing to step up and seize those opportunities.

## Identifying Your Gifts

It’s possible that you’ve taken some kind of personality test or assessment to determine your spiritual gifts. “Leadership gifts can look different in different people,” Newbell explains. She

believes there are a couple ways women can identify specific leadership gifts.

First, “If there’s something in you that desires to lead and be in front, or to be the one who organizes and instructs others, that’s a clear sign,” Newbell says. Another way to identify your gifts is to hear it from someone else who has noticed it in you. “If there’s a [leader] or friend who looks to you and asks you to do certain things that are in the realm of leadership, that is another clear sign.” When you encounter these kinds of signs or affirmations, Newbell says that you should recognize that “this is something the Lord must be doing.”

## Identifying Opportunities

Sometimes women feel a lack of support or opportunities to lead. It can feel like an uphill battle, but Newbell says there are ways to find what you need.

“We are all supposed to do the work of ministry,” Newbell explains. “There’s no reason why women shouldn’t be equipped or [utilized] by leadership to do the work of ministry.” If a woman is feeling like she’s not supported in her role, or isn’t being given opportunities to lead, Newbell encourages her to “talk to the current leadership or decision-maker to see how you might



use your gifts for the good of the body.”

When there isn't a clear leadership opportunity, Newbell encourages women to look a little closer. “We are one body with many parts and we need one another in order to function. I have never [seen a ministry] that doesn't need people,” she says. “Ask yourself what opportunities you're looking for versus those that are available. If the opportunity isn't there, create it.” Remember, if you don't ask for something, you'll likely never get it. Newbell encourages you to ask the leadership if you can take the lead to fill a void that you notice and to “step out in faith.”

## Identifying Challenges

It's often easy for a woman to become disenchanted as a leader. When asked how women can guard against this, Newbell says, “Preach truth to your heart. Pray that the Lord will guard your heart and mind so that you won't be distracted by lies.”

It's all too easy for us to buy into the lies that tell us we're not good enough or that God can't use us. “We have an enemy who'd love to distract us by telling us we're not useful, that we can't work, that we can't serve. When the truth is that we can, we will and we do, if we take steps of faith,” Newbell shares.

### EXTRA INFO

## THE ROLE OF MEN

### Three simple tips to encourage and support the women leading with you

Women don't only benefit from the support and encouragement from other women. The men in their lives also have the opportunity to build them up and empower them to succeed in whatever form of leadership they're taking on. Trillia Newbell offers three straightforward ideas for men:

**1 Check your view.** Do you see women as equal image bearers? Remember whose image we're all created in, and that God has given gifts to all of His people.

**2 Identify her.** If you see a certain gift in a woman you work with, call it out. Say it, acknowledge it, encourage her in it and put that gift to use.

**3 Speak up.** Use your words to encourage the women among you. We're told in the Bible to encourage one another, and we are all “one another.”

“I'd also encourage women to rest,” she says. “There's a reason God put the Sabbath in the Commandments. He doesn't need rest, yet He rested. If you don't want to grow weary ... one of the best self-care things you can do is to rest ... physically and mentally.”

You'll also likely encounter people who are discouraging to you, or even

tell you that you can't do something. Newbell shares a story about a pastor who once told her that she shouldn't pursue a degree in biblical counseling, which she had been considering, because she'll probably “be *just* a wife and mom.” Newbell says, “My pastor was right. I did become a wife and a mom, and it has been the greatest gift ▶

Photos courtesy of Word of Life Fellowship







Photos courtesy of Word of Life Fellowship

## “FIGHT COMPARISON AT EVERY TURN. IT ROBS JOY AND UNITY.”

—TRILLIA NEWBELL

to me apart from salvation. But at the time, his response felt terrible and deflating and wrong. But I wasn't angry. I had to ask the Lord, 'What would You have? What do You think?' I am now doing so much of what I longed to do because I trusted the Lord and stepped out in faith."

It's important to know that you will be told no. You will be shut down. But, Newbell encourages you to rely on prayer, affirmation of others and to look for the opportunities that God provides.

### Identifying Support

One of the greatest disservices women do to themselves is to compare themselves to others. It leads to envy, which breaks down relationships and teams. "Fight comparison at every turn. It robs joy and unity," Newbell urges. It's all too easy for us to look at another person (male or female) who gets promoted or is asked to take on a project and think that we should've been given the opportunity.

Newbell says one way to fight the temptation of comparison and envy is to think true thoughts. "Another way is through encouragement. Rejoice with those who rejoice. Rejoice with the person who gets a promotion or

is asked to do what you desire to do."

As you learn to rejoice instead of compare, you'll find opportunities to support others and find people who will support you. Newbell says she's always had women in her life "to look up to and disciple and mentor [her]. It's so important." She also has peers who serve as accountability partners. These are people with whom she can be truly honest. Newbell warns against looking to "Christian celebrities" as heroes, but instead to look to your own world to find people whose lives you want to learn from.



Reflecting on her own experiences as a woman in leadership, Newbell shares that there isn't a place where she hasn't struggled. "I've struggled with envy, comparison and finding my way. I believe ... God doesn't waste our struggles or victories. He allows us to use them to help equip others."

Take that as encouragement that no matter what you encounter on your path as a leader, even if you fall flat on your face or are told unthinkable lies about your role and worth, God wants to — and will — use you in the lives of those you serve and lead. ●



Jen Howver was once a camp kid who later spent two summers working at a camp in Michigan, where she met and later married her husband,

Jay. Fast forward 20 years and now Jen works as a marketing consultant and editor of *InSite* magazine. She and Jay live in Monument, Colorado, with their daughters, Noelle and Chloe, and way too many pets.