

Biblical Womanhood

(Getting Back to the Basics)

By Pastor Kelly Sensenig

I remember watching a parade that was connected with our annual street fair. One highlight of the parade was when a dozen skilled riders on unicycles came riding down the street. They were moving back and forward on the unicycles and putting on a real show. The people enjoyed watching them and cheered as they went riding on down the street. We all know that a unicycle is a vehicle with one wheel. We also know that a traditional bike is much more common and easier to ride because it has two wheels. However, when one wheel is removed the traditional bike is no longer a normal bike. It becomes a unicycle instead of a bicycle.

As I reflect on unicycles and how they differ from the traditional bicycles I also draw the analogy how today's sexual roles and the male/female distinctions are being blurred in our society and land. Instead of trying to maintain a dual sexual role and distinction within society, the two genders are trying to become one, much like a unicycle changes the concept of the traditional two-wheel bike and creates a one-wheel vehicle. So the unisex philosophy of today is comparable to a unicycle. This is because the unisex philosophy attempts to take traditional sexual distinctions and Biblical sexual roles, which were once practiced within a society, and make them into one. There is a blending together of sexual roles and distinctions today causing our society to become a unisex society that is comparable to a unicycle, which has taken the traditional concept of a bicycle and made it into a single wheel vehicle.

Today many are trying to ride on one sexual common wheel. They have broken down the common distinctions and roles between men and women causing a unisex look and equal roles within marriage. The unisex philosophy has also made its mark upon the modern-day church with a vast number of women preachers now preaching in church ministries and taking on leadership roles and positions that are forbidden by Scripture. Rebellious women preachers are the result of the unisex feminist philosophy that had paraded this land

since the 1960's. We see the unisex philosophy in the woman's liberation or feminist movement, the disintegration of sexual roles in the home, and in the common physical appearance between men and women of today in their outward dress and overall appearance. The point is this. When a society begins to blur the physical distinctions between men and women, when a society abandons the Biblical roles of men (manhood) and women (womanhood) by creating a unisex philosophy, it's then that a society becomes comparable to a unicycle that has only one wheel. Our world today is riding on one unisex wheel as it attempts to blur the traditional and Biblical distinctions among the sexes in every area and arena of life (home, church, appearance).

How would you answer this son's question: "Dad, what does it mean to be a man and not a woman?" How would we answer the daughter's question, "Mom, what does it mean to be a woman and not a man?" A lot of energy is being given to minimize the distinctions between manhood and womanhood but every Bible believer needs to have solid Biblical answers for their children concerning the God-ordained roles in the family unit.

John Piper said:

"The tendency today is to stress the equality of men and women by minimizing the unique significance of our maleness or femaleness. But this depreciation of male and female personhood is a great loss. It is taking a tremendous toll on generations of young men and women who do not know what it means to be a man or woman. Confusion over the meaning of sexual personhood today is epidemic. The consequence of this confusion is not a free and happy harmony among gender-free persons relating on the basis of abstract competencies. The consequence rather is more divorce, more homosexuality, more sexual abuse, more promiscuity, more social awkwardness, and more emotional distress and suicide that come with the loss of God-given identity."

Bible believers recognize how essential manhood and womanhood are to our personhood. Masculinity and femininity are rooted within us by nature. Our present-day society has distorted God's plan for the home and family. As a result, we find ourselves living in the very "upside down" world that the prophet Isaiah described in Isaiah 29:16:

“Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter's clay: for shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not? or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He had no understanding?”

The modernized society of today and the so-called “evangelical feminists” of our time have turned the world upside down by jettisoning the traditional and Biblical roles of manhood and womanhood through a type of unisex philosophy. We must return to Biblical manhood and womanhood and rediscover the full joy and blessing that comes from God when we obey His Word (Joshua 1:8). The Bible does not leave us in the dark about Biblical masculinity and femininity. God’s unchanging pattern of truth for both men and women can be witnessed in the creation order, validated throughout the Old Testament, and reconfirmed in the New Testament epistles. God has never changed His plan for the sexes. What God starts in Genesis He reconfirms in the epistles (church truth) allowing us to see God’s unwavering purpose for man and woman and His disgust with the unisex philosophy.

When man rejects Biblical authority (Tim. 3:16) and wrongly interprets the Bible (2 Tim. 2:15) he arrives at inaccurate conclusions regarding Biblical texts. Therefore, we must correctly interpret what God says about manhood and womanhood and not allow societal norms, human reason, personal experience, and individual situations to enter into our interpretation of the Bible, as we seek to discover God’s mind concerning the sexes and the unisex philosophy. Truth matters and is worthy striving for today (2 Cor. 13:8) in the midst of the sea of feministic interpretive confusion which emphasizes inaccessible data and complicated contextual problems, so much so, that they put others in despair and cause them to lack confidence in understanding Scripture. I’m tired of reading the hermeneutical oddities that are devised to reinterpret and corrupt (2 Cor. 4:2) the apparently plain meanings of Biblical texts to support feministic interpretations. The bottom line is this. Controversy is necessary where truth matters and serious error is spreading. We must take heart that the battle for truth is being fought. We must also get in the battle (2 Tim. 4:7).

One thing is certain, God alone has the right and authority (Dan. 4:34-35; Isa. 46:9-11) to determine the roles of men and woman. God

alone has the right to define how Biblical manhood and womanhood are to be expressed in everyday living. Today our world is promoting the unisex philosophy and because of this God's people need to rise above this movement and philosophy (Col. 2:8) and remember how God has designed the human race to remain distinct in relationship to their manhood and womanhood. The promotion of a unisex philosophy (the blurring of God-given sexual distinctions and roles) represents rebellion toward God and the natural gender order that He has established in creation. The unisex philosophy and feminist movement of today is rebellion and all rebellion is likened to the sin of witchcraft (1 Sam. 15:23).

The Bible teaches that men and women are to fulfill different roles in relationship to each other. God charges or commands the man with the unique role of leadership over the woman and bases this role difference on the permanent fact of creation and not cultural norms as many claim today (see 1 Cor. 11:3, 8-9, 14; Eph. 5:23, 31-32; 1 Timothy 2:11-14). Man has a unique leadership role over the woman and this is based on the permanent facts of creation – not temporary cultural norms. The different roles between men and women are not the result of culture or the fall of man as some suggest but they are traced back to the way things were in Eden before sin warped our relationships (Gen. 2:18-24). Roles for men and women were created by God and then became corrupted by the fall (Gen. 3:16). They were not created because of the fall. They were created by God from the beginning.

So what does it mean to be a man or a woman? Or we might ask what does it mean to be a man and not a woman. Or what does it mean to be a woman and not a man? Thank God that He has not left us without witness concerning the true meaning of masculine and feminine personhood. We will discover this as we study about Biblical manhood and womanhood and how God makes a clear distinction between the two sexes. The world has its own ideas but God has the absolute standard (Isaiah 8:20). Only as we study the sexual distinctions between a man and woman, as stated in Scripture, can we begin to erase the unisex or unicycle philosophy from our minds. In this unisex and androgynous age both adults and children are confused about their identities and the roles God wants them to fulfill in regards to their manhood and womanhood. This is due to the ever-

increasing worldly slant of society, the media, and feministic teaching. In the midst of this androgynous sea of lost identity God's Word tells us in clear and unmistakable terms His plan for the family unit and exactly how manhood and womanhood (sexual distinction) needs to be maintained.

Could this mean the end of feminism, as we know it? The January 20th issue of Time magazine had a cover story stating that men and women are different. Quote, "Because they are born that way." The Bible teaches that there must be sexual distinction in the marriage in relationship to God-given roles and duties. Over the years the media and society in general has been pushing the unisex philosophy into the home life. The man is no longer portrayed as the leader in the home nor is the woman expected to be a homemaker. In fact, roles are portrayed and promoted as being reversible.

In our day even the liberal element in the church is attempting to bring a unisex emphasis into the home and church by redefining the term "head" in the Bible (1 Cor. 11:3) and dismissing man from his leadership role and his God-given right to be an authority figure in home or church life. Christians who are faithful to God's truth must denounce the unisex push and feminist agenda targeted for their homes if they are going to have Biblical homes that honor God and which function according to God's established Biblical patterns. The nullification of distinctive male-female roles has caused the collapse of the traditional and Biblical home life as God planned from the beginning of creation.

Let's get back to the basics and remind ourselves of the major Biblical roles that a man and woman are to fulfill in home life. In doing so, we can rid our minds from the unisex philosophy, which is so prevalent in our society today. Please note that in this particular study we are going to focus on the subject matter of "Biblical Womanhood." For a study dealing with the role and place of men in the home setting see the author's study entitled, "Biblical Manhood."

Biblical Womanhood

In this study we want to consider the woman's roles and responsibilities in the marriage relationship and home setting. Our

focus will be on what God expects of the woman and how she is to function as a wife and mother.

Five-year-old Brian was impressed by the story of Simeon the Syrian hermit who lived in the 5th century. This man was admired as a saint because he lived for more than 35 years on a platform that was on the top of a high pillar. Little Brian was determined to follow Simeon's example. He put the kitchen stool on the table and started his perilous climb. When his mother heard some strange sounds in the kitchen, she came in, and shouted, "Brian! Get down before you break your neck!" As the youngster obeyed, he muttered, "You can't even become a saint in your own house."

Mom, if you hear strange sounds in the kitchen you had better check and make sure little Johnny is not climbing on your table and practicing skydiving or something else that he heard about or saw on TV. At this point of our study we want to investigate what God really expects of a woman in the home and family. We must remember that masculinity and femininity are rooted deep within our nature (Gen. 1:27 – "male and female created he them"). God placed our sexual identity within us (1 Cor. 11:14-15 – "nature") and as a woman you need to follow the God-ordained pattern and natural tendencies that God has placed within you regarding femininity and womanhood. The way God created your nature as a woman is unique. When you follow the natural inborn tendencies that God placed within you and rely upon the Spirit's work in your heart and life, then there will be order in your home and family.

I believe some women are failures as wives because they are first failures as women. They have not embraced what God says concerning womanhood. Mom, what does it mean to be a woman and not a man? This is a good question in the midst of a unisex and feminist society in which we live. As a Christian woman you must bypass the philosophies of humanism, secularism, feminism, and the androgynous patterns of our anti-God modern culture. Gays and lesbians shout about "alternative lifestyles" and proclaim that the traditional home is not the only way. This is the lie of Satan and those who are inspired by him (1 Tim. 4:1 – "seducing spirits and doctrines of demons"). God is calling every Christian woman back to Biblical

womanhood as He designed it in Genesis. God has called you to be a woman. This is a high calling and a holy calling.

What I'm going to proclaim in this study is not politically correct. It flies in the face of 21st century "liberated" women. It will never be the majority position and it will make some women uncomfortable. What we need today are women who are willing to pattern their lives after the Word of God instead of the world system (Rom. 12:2). As a woman you need to find out what the Biblical portrait of a woman is and then follow God's pattern and heart for womanhood. I believe we need an orchestrated counterrevolution of godly women today who want to know and practice the heart and ways of God for their lives.

Susan Hunt said:

"It is time for women of biblical faith to reclaim our territory. We know the Designer. If we don't display the Divine design of His female creation, no one will. But if we do, it will be a profound testimony to a watching, needy world. "

Ladies, you might have the attitude that says, "I'll do it my way." You may have your mind made up that you are going to do certain things your way in spite of what God or your husband says. If that's your attitude you will never be the kind of woman that God wants you to be. Nor will your marriage be all that it can be! Your attitude should be, "I'll do it God's way." When the final book and biography is written about your life as a woman, and you stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10) as a Christian, the front cover of your book will read one of two things: "She Did it Her Way" or "She Did it God's Way."

Ladies, you are accountable to God for living out the kind of life that God expects and when you practice Biblical womanhood you will experience deep and rich fulfillment in life. When you practice living out what God wants you to be there is great blessing (James 1:25 – "this man shall be blessed in his deed"). When you do things right you will be blessed in what you do! When you do something God's way then the flood waters of God's blessing will come upon your life. God says, "prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it (Malachi 3:10). Ladies,

do you want God's best and His greatest blessing upon your life, home, children, and marriage? Then do it God's way. You need to get back to the basics in a world that has lost its Biblical moorings on family values concerning femininity and womanhood.

What are the woman's roles and responsibilities?

1. The woman should be a homemaker in the family.

There is a bumper sticker that says, "A Woman's Place Is at the Mall." But this is not true according to what the Bible says. A woman's place is still in the home where the children reside and where God expects her to carry out her God-given duties as a mother and wife.

This truth among others is brought out in Titus 2:4-5:

"That they (the older women) may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed."

We will look at many of these points separately but for now I want the ladies to focus on what God expects of them in the home setting. The expression "keepers at home" suggests that the mother with children in the nest ("love her children") must strive to remain in the home and be there for her children. You can't be a keeper of the home if you are not at home! We learn from this verse that a wife's home is her domain and high calling. From scripture, we see that God intended for the wife to be a domestic engineer in the home. It's her responsibility and obligation to be a worker at home.

A lady with her career and future ahead of her once told me she could be a keeper of the home without being there! How senseless we talk when we do not take God at His Word! The problem in America today is that mom is not home! The little children no longer have a mom to raise them and be there for them. The greatest pressure on young wives today is the culture of feminism, which says that wives being homebound is a form of bondage by males, from which all women need to be freed or liberated. They insist that women should be as free as men to work outside the home at whatever job and to whatever extent they want.

For many years in the United States, more than 50 percent of mothers with children under six years of age have held jobs outside the home. For those with older children, the percentages are much higher. In the year 2000 ninety percent of all women between the ages of 16 and 65 had jobs outside the home. That trend is frightening even to many secular observers, who recognize the damage being done to young children who spend a large part of their time with others and receive a large part of their training, or lack of training, from adults other than their parents. Statistics also make clear that extramarital affairs increase greatly with women who work outside the home, simply because of greatly increased exposure to temptation. In addition to this, women working outside the home often find themselves under the authority of a man other than their husband and in an environment that is against Christian standards of morality and sexual roles.

The expression “keepers at home” does not suggest that her home is a prison where she must be kept! Actually, just the opposite is true. The home and children should bring a godly woman great joy and blessing.

Psalm 113:9

“He maketh the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children. Praise ye the LORD.”

The concept behind “keepers at home” means that a woman’s presence and ministry is found in the sphere of the home. She is to have a passionate desire to be involved with the affairs of home life and be there for her children to care for them and provide for their needs. This can be literally rendered as “one who works at home.” In the Greek, “keepers at home” is one word, “olkouros,” which comes from two root words. “Oikos,” which means “a dwelling, a home, or a household” and “ergon,” which means “to work or be employed.” So, a “worker at home” is someone whose job is in the household.” Of course, for the wife to “work at home” she must “be at home.” This is clearly understood by the expression before us.

This means that the wife with children is to be a good homemaker and housekeeper. She is domestically inclined and she has her priorities straight. She stays within the limits of the home when

children are there and keeps house and becomes the primary home figure in training and guiding the children. I have discovered through the years that if a person's value system is right then their priorities will be right. This means that if a mother truly values her children she will be there for them and raise them in the home. Stay-at-home moms make a statement about their values. Homemaking includes nurturing children, so when she is a stay-at-home mom she has her values right.

1Timothy 5:14

"I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully."

The word "guide" speaks of a house manager. This tells us that the woman's sphere of life is in the home. She manages the affairs of the household and specializes in home life with the children. She nurtures and cares for her children and is there for the spiritual guidance and training of her children. God wants wives to make homemaking a priority. A woman's home is the primary arena of her ministry. The emphasis of 1Timothy 5:14 is this. When children are in the home, then mom should be there, for children need a mother and a guide. Don't pawn your children off on daycare. Mom and dad, God will make a way! You commit yourself to living differently (having less) and make the priority to keep mom in the home. You will never regret it!

Paul was saying in this context that the young widows should remarry and become a caring mother in the home so that they do not get into trouble outside the home by meddling in the affairs of families and spreading gossip about the families abroad (1 Tim. 5:13). Too much time with not enough to do is dangerous for anyone except those too old to get into trouble. Therefore, the young widows were encouraged to remarry (1 Tim. 5:14) and bring up children so they would not become a troublemaker in the church and so the devil would have no ground to speak reproachfully against them.

When a woman is running around and gossiping about the family problems of other people (1 Tim. 5:13) it gives the enemy (Satan) an opportunity to speak against her ("occasion for the adversary to

“speak reproachfully” – 1 Tim. 5:14). The accuser of the brethren (Rev. 12:10) is Satan and he loves to accuse women of not living according to God’s pattern and design for womanhood. When you slander others before people on earth Satan slanders you before God in Heaven for not living a life that is pleasing to God. Satan loves to slander a woman before God when she takes on the activity of gossiping (vs. 13). Gossip is from Satan. It’s hellish (“it is set on fire of hell” – James 3:6).

The Scripture adds in I Timothy 5:15, "For some are already turned aside after (to follow) Satan." In other words, some of these young widows had forsaken their vows to serve the local church and they had become involved in gossip and unruly living. They were following Satan in this type of activity. Christian commitment is important to God and living a life free from gossip is also equally important. Satan is behind all gossip. Beware lest the hiss of the serpent’s tongue is heard coming from your own mouth! Not only were the young widows following Satan in the area of gossip (vs. 13) but they also had ignored the Biblical pattern for marriage and in this way they also had turned aside after Satan (vs. 14).

The design of the Creator for younger women’s bodies and their personalities is for them to bear children. The “barren womb” is never satisfied (Prov. 30:16). Under normal conditions bearing children is fulfilling and totally rewarding to a woman. To stigmatize this divine desire, or look at bearing children as something that is abnormal, as some modern liberationists and feminists have done, is to cause women to question God’s wisdom. Women who do this not only open themselves to the slander of Satan (1 Tim. 5:14b) but also turn themselves over to Satan (1 Tim. 5:15).

Ladies, let me put it to you straight today in the midst of a crooked world. Satan is out to get you as a Christian woman. He wants you to become sidetracked. He wants you to do your own thing and have your own fling in life so that you will ignore what God wants you to do. And what does God want you to do? He wants you to become a mother and stay within the sphere of the home setting where you can guide your children and bring them up in the way of the Lord (1 Tim. 5:14). If Satan can keep you from doing this, He has won a victory in your life. Here is the application of these verses to motherhood.

Anytime a woman wants to sidestep her motherhood responsibility she is following Satan. When a woman or wife has the desire to abandon little Johnny and Susie she is being influenced by Satan. When a woman fills up her day with business and activities that take her away from what God wants her to do, then her family, and ties her up to the point that she cannot perform her duties in the home, she opens herself up to Satanic accusation and temptation.

The result of following God's plan and high calling for womanhood is a good testimony that silences the accuser. Ladies, you must always remember that Satan (the adversary) is always alert to an opportunity to invade and destroy a Christian woman and her God-given role to bear children and become a homemaker (1 Tim. 5:14). The word "occasion" (vs. 14) is a military term that means "a base of operations." A Christian woman who is sidetracked from becoming a mother for selfish and carnal reasons, a mother who thinks homemaking is a drag, and a mother who is not doing her job at home gives Satan a beachhead for his operations, and the results are always tragic. When a woman is following Satan by ignoring her God-given role she will become sidetracked in her own fruitless and selfish manner of living. This is the message behind these verses in Timothy.

Martha Peace wrote:

"If a wife is working or is thinking of returning to work, she should examine her motives. What is it she really wants? What is her heart set on? Is it to avoid becoming a "non-person?" Is it more material things? Is it wanting to be out from under the demands of child care? (wanting to leave the taking care of her own children with someone else). Is it to relieve her husband from his responsibility to work? None of these motives are for the glory of God. They are self-serving and sinful. Godly motives would be "learning to be content" (Philippians 4:11), "gratitude to the Lord for what she does have" (I Thessalonians 5:18), and "whatever you do in thought, word, and deed, do all for the glory of God" (I Corinthians 10:31). Staying at home and organizing a clean, well run household is a MAJOR BIBLICAL emphasis in the God-given ministry of the wife."

Our feminist culture today urges women to become career women. There is an enormous pressure on women to enter the workforce. Many homes and marriages are wrecked today by working wives who want to live independent of their husbands and families. The Bible-ethic is still God's best for your marriage. The pressures of modern life are great but the blessing still comes when we obey God's Word! When there are children in the home a mother needs to be there. She is the keeper of the home. This involves more than washing the dishes and dusting. It means she has a large role in raising the children and pointing them in a spiritual direction. This is God's blueprint for raising children. Ladies, in light of eternity (eternal reward) the most important thing you can do is be there for your children.

1 Kings 20:40 says that "thy servant was busy here and there" and when a woman says that she is "busy here and there" and is no longer in the home she may wake up someday to the fact that her children are gone and that the world has taken them! Of course, women who have no children, or whose children are grown, obviously have fewer obligations in the home setting and therefore can work outside the home without adversely affecting home life.

The point is that a woman's place is in the home and her responsibility is centered in the home. An older woman without children in the home may have a reasonable outside job or choose to work in the church or to minister in a Christian organization, a hospital, a school, or many other ways. But the home is a wife's special domain and always should be her highest priority. That is where she is able to offer the most encouragement and support to her husband and is the best place for extending hospitality to Christian friends, to unbelieving neighbors, and to visiting missionaries, or other Christian workers (1 Pet. 4:9).

The home is where a wife can provide the best expressions of love for her husband. It is where she teaches and guides and sets a godly example for her children. It is also where she is protected from abusive and immoral relationships with other men and where, especially in our day, she still has greater protection from worldly influences. The home is where she has special opportunity to show hospitality and devote herself to other good work (1 Tim. 5:10). The

home is where she can find authentic and satisfying fulfillment, as a Christian and as a woman. There is no place like home! This is true when a woman loves God with all of her heart (Mark 12:30) and is willing to follow the heart and design for true femininity within the home. Following God's womanly design brings true fulfillment, lasting joy, peace, and a sense of completeness as a woman.

The true female victims of today are not women who are willingly bound by love to the Lord, and to their husbands, and to their children. The true victims are rather those women who have been deceived by unbiblical and satanic feminist ideas about being liberated from God and from the home.

The woman is then seen to be a "keeper of the home" (Titus 2:5) and the guide (house manager) in the arena of home life (1 Tim. 5:14). The home is the place where she is to thrive. It's her domain and the activities related to home life are to be her concerns. A man will never come up to a woman and say, "Honey, we need to paper the bedroom." This is always the wife's line. Women have a concern for the family nest or her household and we as men must listen to her. As men we know the need for weed whackers, a new set of socket wrenches and a new chain saw. But the woman sees when the fabric on the chair is worn and when the bedroom needs painting or new drapes. God has put a nesting instinct into the woman the same he put a leading instinct into the man. Both the man and woman should respect these God-given instincts.

As "keeper of the home" a wife should be ready and willing to provide the needs of her family. She should see that supper is prepared for her husband after a hard day's work and take care of the children while the man supplies the major financial needs for the family. As "keeper of the home" a wife should take care of home duties and make sure that the home remains a place of spiritual stability while the husband is absent. Her role is needed and necessary to maintain the right spiritual atmosphere in the home setting and keep the home functioning the way God intended. We will see this as we continue this study.

The woman as a homemaker has two priorities:

a. The priority of raising children.

1. She will be there for her children.

1 Thessalonians 2:7

“But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children.”

It's a natural God-given delight for a woman to want to nurse or take care of her little child. To have others do it becomes a travesty or mockery of a woman's calling and God's design for womanhood. I know that I am stepping on some toes at this point but I'm going to do it without apology. I never apologize for the truth. Mom, God expects you to raise your child – not someone else. Don't plan on having children so someone else can raise them in their home, at some daycare center, or by their value system. God's original and unchanging calling is for mothers to bear children and raise them in the home. Can a mother forsake her baby? Yes, she can. The Bible says she can.

Isaiah 49:15 asks:

“Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.”

I believe that women today are not committing themselves to their children in the way God has commanded them to do. They are bypassing their responsibilities as a mother. They want their fame, glory, and honor in the work world instead of the eternal honor, recognition, and reward for being a godly mother (1 Cor. 3:14). Every woman must remember that when she stands before the Lord she will be examined for the kind of mother she has been. She will not be rewarded for pension or raise but for her willingness to serve her family and take on the necessary motherly duties that God has called her to accomplish in life.

When a small girl was asked, "Where is your home?" she replied, "Where Mother is." This little girl knew more about the Bible than

modern American mothers. Home is where mother is and our problem in America today is that mother is no longer in the home for her children. The problem in many Christian homes is that mothers are not willing to follow God's high calling for womanhood which is to bear children and become a godly mother in the home setting. Biblical womanhood involves a commitment to home life. It is nothing less than a desire to do what is right, please God, and develop the best environment for your children.

2. She will teach her children.

I was browsing through a bookstore the other day and one of the book titles caught my attention. There was a picture of a mother on the front cover with the words: "How to Raise Children in a World that has Gone Stark Raving Mad." I liked this title. How do we raise children in times like these? The same way godly mothers have raised children throughout the history of time – by teaching and disciplining them.

Proverbs 1:8

"My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother:

Proverbs 6:20

"My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother."

Proverbs 31:1

"The words of king Lemuel, the prophecy that his mother taught him."

Both the dad and mother are to be teachers and authority figures in the home setting. When the Bible speaks about not forsaking "the law of thy mother" it means that she can lay the law down to the children and expect the children to respond to her authority. She is to be an authority figure to her children and a teacher. She should never contradict the father's authority but supplement and carry out the father's authority while he is gone. A mother has a great influence on the children's lives since she is normally with them more than the father throughout the day and their childhood years. There is no

replacement for a godly mother who is willing to teach her young children right from wrong and instill discipline in their lives.

Deuteronomy 11:18-21

“Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt write them upon the door posts of thine house, and upon thy gates: That your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth.”

Certainly a mother will take part in this teaching process within the home setting since she is to be the primary figure that stays with her children during the course of the day. She will seize many opportunities to teach her young children right from wrong. She will tell them why they should not lie and disobey authority. She will talk to them about God and His holiness and righteousness. She will share with them the importance of loving God, fearing God, and living a life that is pleasing to Him. She will pray with her children, have devotions with them and talk to them about Bible characters, stories, and principles that they can apply to their lives. She will sing to them the great hymns and choruses and teach the young children the value of godly music.

A mother within the home setting has a tremendous responsibility to leave a legacy and lasting impact upon her children through her faithful teaching and mothering ministry. Mom, you are to be a preacher and teacher within the home setting. This is where you are to shine. God will bless you and your children if you take the initiative to instill within their little hearts God’s wonderful truth in their formidable and impressionable hearts.

Susannah Wesley raised 19 children. She was educated and had strong convictions. She home-schooled all of her children individually and diligently. But the impact that she made on those children will never fully be known this side of eternity. Both John and Charles

Wesley came out of the home of Susannah and led great multitudes to the Lord and brought revival to the country.

Here are a few rules she followed in training her children:

- (1) Subdue self-will in a child and thus work together with God to save his soul.
- (2) Teach him to pray as soon as he can speak.
- (3) Give him nothing he cries for and only what is good for him if he asks for it politely.
- (4) To prevent lying, punish no fault which is freely confessed, but never allow a rebellious, sinful act to go unnoticed
- (5) Commend and reward good behavior.
- (6) Strictly observe all promises you have made to your child.

Dr. G. Campbell Morgan had four sons and they were all preachers. Someone once came into the drawing room when all the family was there. They thought they would see what Howard, one of the sons, was made of so they asked him this question: "Howard, who is the greatest preacher in your family?" Howard had a great admiration for his father and he looked straight across at him and then without a moment's hesitation he answered, "Mother."

We need more preaching mothers today! Not behind the pulpit but in the confines of their homes. We need mothers who are willing to train and teach their children what is right and how to walk in the midst of a sinful world. This is how we prepare them to face the world. By the way, one of the lies of Satan that many mothers are believing today is that if a mother shelters her children from the world the children will never be able to fit in to society and survive. That is a lie!! A mother's task is not to raise children who fit into society or merely survive in it. A mother's task is to bring children up who will love God with all of their heart and soul, who have a personal relationship with God, whose lives are bright shining lights penetrating the darkness around them, and who become mature adults who love righteousness and hate evil (Amos 5:15).

One important lesson mothers need to teach their children is about the fear of God. The Bible says, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom" (Ps. 111:10). Mom, if you teach your child to fear God that child will learn how to survive in a sinful world. You

don't thrust young children into the world so they can survive. This theory came from the devil's Bible! You don't throw a young child out into the street to see how they do with traffic. No, you teach them to fear or respect traffic so they learn the importance of staying away from the danger. You teach them how to cross the street in safety.

When you as a mother teach your young children the fear of the Lord, you are teaching them that there are some things in life that God is not pleased with. When you teach them the fear of the Lord your children will possess a wholesome dread of not pleasing the Lord and honoring His holiness. You will teach them that God's heart is broken when they sin and His holiness offended and that sin has consequences. "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom" (Ps. 111:10).

If you want to raise wise children, then teach them to fear God. If you allow your children to listen to rock music, watch suggestive movies, read improper books, view inappropriate pictures on computers, and hang out with friends that promote profanity, negative attitudes, illicit sex, rebellion, and violence, then you should not be surprised when your children adopt the world's philosophies. Mother, you have been given a sacred mandate or trust to teach your children to obey authority, to follow after righteousness, and impress upon their hearts the importance of submitting their lives to Jesus Christ. If you do this, you will never be sorry!

Psalm 103:17

"But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children."

This verse tells us that the righteousness of God will be passed down from generation to generation ("unto children's children") when the fear of God is passed down through the family line. There is a positive rippling affect that occurs when the fear of God is passed down from one generation to another.

Psalm 144:12

"That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; that our daughters may be as corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace."

David wanted children that are like well-nurtured plants and corner stones of his palace. This speaks of stable children, spiritual children, and children who wanted to honor God in their lives by the way they lived.

Isaiah 54:13

“And all thy children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children.”

There is a principle to be drawn from this millennial verse. When children are taught what is right they will experience peace in their lives and hearts. Mom, do you want this for your children? Do you want them to know the fear of the Lord, to live a righteous life, to be a well-nurtured plant, and a corner stone of spiritual stability? If so, you must remain steadfast and committed to teaching and disciplining your children according to God’s truth and way. When a mother gives up on her son and throws in the towel her son or children will shame her in the end.

Proverbs 29:15 says:

“The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.”

Shame! How often have we seen children shame their mothers outside the home setting when they call them degrading and disrespectful names and when they show no respect for them. Mom, you cannot afford to leave your child to himself. When dad is not there you must take the initiative to discipline your child for his or her wrong behavior and make the child obey.

Sarah Edwards was the godly wife of Jonathan Edwards. She was the mother of eleven children. Jonathan Edward’s memoirs reveal how she treated and taught her children to obey. He writes: “She had an excellent way of governing her children. ... She had need to speak but once; she was cheerfully obeyed; murmuring and answering again were not known among them. In their manners, they were uncommonly respectful to their parents. ... Quarreling and contention, which too frequently take place among children, were in her family wholly unknown. ... Her system of discipline was begun at a very early age, and it was her rule to resist the first, as well as every

subsequent, exhibition of temper or disobedience in the child, however young, until its will was brought into submission to the will of its parents; wisely reflecting, that until a child will obey his parent, he can never be brought to obey God.”

Proverbs 30:17

“The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it.”

We studied this verse under Biblical manhood. This scene of a dead animal having its eyes picked out by the birds reminds Solomon of an important spiritual lesson. Disobedient children get what is coming to them. Although they will not literally have their eyes eaten out by vultures he reminds us that there is a bad end for rebellious children. A bad beginning results in a bad ending. A son who defies his mother and despises her is heading for disaster in life. The birds will catch up with him and pick out his eyes. The vultures of the world system will surround them and consume them! When children throw away the chart, compass, anchor, and helm they are going to sink their ship later in life. Poetic justice will be served.

Mom, this verse teaches that you must never allow your children to rule over you. Rather, you must rule your children and be an authority figure in their lives. This means commanding them to do what is right and disciplining them when they do wrong (Prov. 22:15; 23:13-14). Children are expected to “obey” their mother (Prov. 30:17). You have authority over your children in the same way that your husband does. Your authority is very important in the home setting.

When dad is not home your authority must stand. It should never contradict God’s authority but supplement it. Mom, if your authority level breaks down the children will know it and they will begin to make mince meat out of you. When you no longer have authority over your children they will lapse into all kinds of behavioral problems that may go on into their later lives. The result of disobedient and defiant children, who have not learned to obey authority, will always bring a certain amount of shame and heaviness to a mother’s heart and life.

Proverbs 10:1

“The proverbs of Solomon. A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.”

Mom, there is another day coming. There is an afterward. Don't be short-sighted. There is always an afterward! If you fail to train your children, teach them discipline, and have a spiritual impact upon your children's lives right now, you can be sure that one day when they grow into adulthood, they will not live for the Lord. The birds will pick out their eyes and you will have heaviness of heart for your children.

b. The priority of her domestic duties.

Oppressed by the amount of work, which had to be crowded into her life as a mother, a certain old woman had chiseled on her headstone these words:

“Here lies a poor woman who always was tired,
Who lived in a world where too much was required.
Weep not for me, friend, when death doth us sever.
I'm going to do nothing for ever and ever.”

Proverbs 31 outlines what a mother should do and accomplish in the home life. In short, this proverb outlines her domestic duties. The proverb begins with a mother warning her son about women and alcohol. Apparently this is something she had instilled within her son while he was young. Now he was a king and as a mother she continues to remind him what he has been taught and what his relationship should be to wine and women. Let's begin our outline of Proverbs 31 since it fits under the heading of the woman's domestic duties in the home.

1. She has a burden for her children (vs. 1).

The book of Proverbs begins with the wise words of a father (Prov. 1:8) but it ends with the wise words of a mother (Prov. 31:1). Why is this? It's because the home setting is where godly dads and moms can fulfill their roles and responsibilities in order to provide a teaching and training environment that will educate children how to live and do what is right in a world that is morally adrift and out to sea. The home

is the preservation and fortification of any society. This lesson should be written in large red letters over all schools, courts, halls of Congress, television studios, bookstores, and homes. The home is the foundational structure for societal living. If the home crumbles, then the nation crumbles morally and ethically. Of course, this is what is happening today. The liberal judges in California, who are trying to run our country, are now saying that the people have no right to interfere with what the school wants to teach their children. I'm told that they are now pushing to teach kindergarten children about sex education. Have people gone stark raving mad! Some of these wicked and godless judges have no moral bearings left in their hearts or heads.

In Proverbs 31 we have a mother teaching ("taught" – vs. 1) her son how to live right in the world. The word for "prophecy" (vs. 1) is an oracle or utterance that is delivered with a deep burden. This should be a burden upon every woman's heart. She should want her son to marry a woman that would fulfill her God-given roles and serve her son and family in the marriage relationship. She should want her son to marry a godly woman who has character and commitment to her calling as a woman. She should want her son to steer clear of alcoholic drink because of the potential devastation it brings upon the lives of those who drink it. This is what this chapter is all about. It's about a woman who has a deep burden for her son and who is teaching him how to live right and marry right! What a responsibility you have as a mother. You must run with the burden that your son will marry a godly woman and that he will marry a woman who knows where her place is in the home.

2. She has dedicated her children (vs. 2).

In verse two we see how the mother realizes the responsibilities toward her own son by the words "my son" and "the son of my womb." Psalm 127:3 says, "Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward." God gave her this son and she remembers how that little man came forth from her womb that day long ago. He is now bigger and stronger than her but he is her son. She knew that God was behind this birth and that God now holds her responsible for teaching this boy how to live right and marry right. She calls him "the son of my vows" meaning that when that little

child came out of her womb she dedicated him to the Lord. Like Hannah, she made a vow to God that she would raise her son for the Lord and dedicate him to the Lord.

1 Samuel 1:11

“And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head.”

Ladies, have you turned your child over to the Lord? Have you given them to the Lord? Have you held them up to God and dedicated them to Him for salvation, service, and sanctification (holy living). Have you come before God and said, “Lord, this child is Yours. He is not mine. He is Yours. You gave Him to me. You have given him to me and I’m going to raise him for your glory and honor.” Mom, you may have dedicated your children to secular sports and hobbies. You may have dedicated your children to secular living and job training but have you dedicated them to the Lord? Have you committed them to the work and service of God?

Some of you mothers need to go home and make a vow to the Lord. The vow is this. “Lord, my children are Yours. Use them in Your work and service. I want them to do You will and live a holy life in the midst of a world that is increasingly wicked.” Ladies, when you make this vow as a mother, you are in essence committing yourself to your children and saying, “Lord, I will be there for them and raise them for Your glory and honor.” Mom, the time to dedicate your children to the Lord is right now and then assume the responsibility of being the kind of mother that God wants you to be.

3. She has taught her children (vv. 3-31).

The mother now teaches her son an important message. It is a three-fold message:

a. Beware of women (vs. 3)

“Give not thy strength unto women, nor thy ways to that which destroyeth kings.”

I've seen those signs that read, “Beware of dogs,” but I have never seen a sign that said, “Beware of women.” But this is the sign that the godly mother is putting before her son. Why? It's because women can lead a man far away from God. Lust for women can capture a man's heart and lead him down a path of no return. This was true in King Solomon's life and David's life.

The Scriptures say that Solomon “had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart” (1 Kings 11:3). Kings were known to have harems of women and multiply many wives to themselves and the mother of King Lemuel was warring him about this. Lust for women keep kings and men from following God's will for their lives. God has clearly said in Deuteronomy 17:17, “Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold.”

Women are the number one downfall of many men today. Men give themselves to having more than just one marriage partner in extramarital affairs. Men can practice adultery outwardly or even inwardly in their hearts as Jesus declared (Matt. 5:28). So this is a mother's message and warning to her son to keep himself pure (1 Tim. 5:22 – “keep thyself pure”). We live in the midst of a pornographic epidemic in our land. Men, looking at pornography on the Internet, at the movie theater, and in magazines is a sin. It is lusting after women and wanting women either outside of marriage (fornication) or while being married to another woman (adultery). The Bible says that we are to “flee fornication” (1 Cor. 6:18). Whatever you must to do in order to flee fornication then do it! Run, run, run! Run like Joseph ran from Potiphar's wife.

Genesis 39:10-12, “And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her. And it came to pass about this time, that Joseph went into the house to do his business; and there was none of the men of the house there within. And she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie

with me: and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out.”

Men, many times you have to run to get out of the way of sin! You can't stay where you are and just remain idle. You must get away from the TV, you must get away from Internet, you must get out of the place that is tempting you. You must run! You must run as fast as you can and as a far as you can. You must get out of the way of sin. Romans 13:14, “But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.” Stop setting yourself up to sin. Instead of setting yourself up to sin run and steer clear from the sin. Get out of the way of it and avoid it in every way. This is the advice that comes from a godly mother to her son. Proverbs 31:3, “Give not thy strength unto women, nor thy ways to that which destroyeth kings.”

As men, we need to obey the advice of this godly mother. We need to take the necessary steps to steer clear of the plaguing sin of pornography that leads men into fornication and adultery. Lusting after other women is a sin. This kind of sin must stop. It can't go on for it will destroy our spiritual lives and families as Christians. Women who want to physically flaunt themselves are more than willing to “destroy kings” (Prov. 31:3) as well as you and me. Later on in our study on Biblical Womanhood we are going to talk about the whorish dress and the mannerisms of a whore. The godly woman will seek to steer clear from this appearance in every way. So men, you need to heed mother's advice. You need to get yourself away from the stumbling blocks of women. Women can destroy your life if you allow them. The message of the godly mother is a call for her son to commit himself to purity and marry one woman who he can give himself to all the days of her life. Beware of women.

b. Beware of wine (vv. 4-9).

Proverbs 31:4

“It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink.”

A businessman had a placard on his desk, which read:

WHICH?
Wife or Whiskey?
The Babies Or The Bottles?
HEAVEN OR HELL?

This little sign sums up how alcohol ruins the lives of people and even sends them to hell because of their failure to repent over this terrible vice or sin and turn to Christ for salvation and deliverance.

The godly mother warns her kingly son about drinking booze especially since kings had the tendency to drink wine and throw parties that involved binge drinking (Daniel 5:1-4). A godly mother will warn her son of the dangers of alcohol. If this is true, then any mother who wants to have a godly influence on her children will not drink alcoholic beverages. A mother must practice what she preaches and set an example that will have a spiritual impact upon her children for the rest of their lives. The Bible gives repeated warnings about drinking wine and yet many young men still indulge in drinking booze. Why can't we accept the fact that God knows what is best for our lives? Furthermore, the old adage that says, "Mother knows best" is true when it comes to a godly mother warning her son about the potential dangers associated with alcohol consumption.

The godly mother knows this to be true. This is why she is warning her son against drinking wine and strong drink. The best way to avoid drunkenness is to not drink at all. This is the message of the burdened mother and the message of the Proverbs. A moral principle is involved when people drink alcohol. People violate a moral and ethical principle when imbibing ethyl alcohol.

Proverbs 20:1

"Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise."

Wine is called a mocker because of the potential harm that it can have in your life. Wine is a mocker because of the potential pitfalls and problems it brings into our lives. Alcohol mocks us when we drink it in any quantity due to its adverse effects that it can have upon our lives. Of course, wine also mocks men when it causes them to engage in adulterous relationships with other women, when it keeps

them from serving God, when it causes them to stumble and stray from God in life, when it causes them to become impoverished, and when it causes them to no longer support their family.

Alcohol mocks many people the whole way to their grave. They die of liver disease and other alcohol related problems. Homes are shattered and tattered from a dad who went the way of boozing. If you think you can drink socially and get away with it then wine is already mocking you (Prov. 20:1) and will make a mockery out of your life! In the end wine mocks us by making us objects of scorn. Wine is a mocker. It laughs at us the moment we begin to drink it, knowing what it can do to us, and it laughs at us when we follow its path and course. In the end it makes a laughing-stock out of us.

Wine is also called “raging” (Prov. 20:1). Alcohol is called raging because of the potential harm that it can have in our lives. The word “raging” speaks of commotion, tumult, and brawling. The primary meaning is that alcohol causes external conflicts or rage within families and relationships, since drink destroys the power of reason and causes a person to express fury and a fighting spirit. When drinking alcohol we have the potential of causing great tumult, brawling, and unrest in our families because of the kind of life we are living. Liquor results in many quarrels that end in wounds and blood.

Alcohol stirs up squabbles and fightings (Prov. 23:35). It is a raging drink because of what it does. People can't live peaceably with their families and dwell with their marriage partners in a suitable fashion when under the influence of alcohol. Instead of a peaceable home atmosphere there is bitterness and brawling in the household due to the control and influence of alcohol. Booze or alcohol brings disharmony and division into the family life. It is the number one home wrecker. It is a drink of rage.

Wine is also deceptive. The person who drinks alcohol has the potential of deceiving themselves (“whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise” – Prov. 20:1). The idea is this. Since wine is a mocker and raging substance those who drink it open themselves up for deception and a fall. The point is this. Alcohol can deceive a person mentally and cause them to stumble or go astray. So why drink it?

Alcohol makes promises that it can never deliver. What are some ways that alcohol deceives people? It promises the high life but brings the low life. It promises prosperity but brings poverty. It promises fulfillment but brings futility. It promises sensational feelings but delivers suffering and sorrow. It promises purpose in life but brings pain. It promises hope but brings helplessness. It promises release but brings ruin. It promises a new start to life but eventually ends a person's life. Alcohol is deceptive. People are continually being deceived by alcohol. Alcohol says, "Just one drink" but people who want to drink never stop at just one. Their drinking goes on and on throughout a lifetime until the drink finally it takes them under. "Just one." This is the deception of alcohol. Alcohol will try to be your master. Don't be deceived.

Proverbs 23:31-35

"Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things. Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast. They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again."

The word "look" in Proverbs 23:31 means to desire to drink alcoholic beverage. When someone looks at alcohol they are longing to drink it and have it become part of their lives. God says we should not look at alcohol with the desire to consume it because of the potential harm it can have upon our lives. The temptation to drink comes when one looks at the color of the wine, the movement and sparkle of the wine in the cup, and how the wine would taste if it were sloshed around in the mouth and consumed. I'm convinced that drinking alcoholic beverage is wrong because God is against it! You should be against what God is against ("I hate every false way" - Psalm 119:104).

The proverbs speak of alcohol as something that can bring us to poverty (Prov. 23:21), potentially poison our lives (Prov. 23:32) with all kinds of sins (Prov 23:33), bring spiritual heartaches and problems into our lives (Prov. 23:29), and result in bondage or addiction (Prov. 23:35). Who in their right mind would want to drink alcohol when

reading all the warnings that the Scripture gives concerning its evils? Every bottle of booze should have a warning label on it that reads: “I’m a Mocker, I’m Raging, I’m a Deceiver.” This warning label tells the true story of alcohol. Drinking will not make you into a man of distinction but a man of delusion (“whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise” – Prov. 20:1).

Repeated warnings against drinking alcohol are given in the Bible because of the effect and dangers that this drink has on people. The truth is this. The repeated warnings of drunkenness are given so that we might see the danger of alcoholic drink and not imbibe it. Alcohol is a mocking, raging, and deceiving drink because it has the potential for producing poverty, laziness, sorrow, strife, needless wounds, heartache, perverse language, and slavery or addiction. God counsels us to keep on remembering the end results of drinking alcohol. He gives us ample warning concerning associating with this type of lifestyle and the adverse effects that alcohol can have upon our lives. There is a high risk and cost that is associated with drinking alcohol.

The implication of Proverbs 20:1 and the other proverbs that warn against alcohol consumption is this. Don’t drink alcohol because of the potential harm and spiritually debilitating impact it can have upon your life. Stay away from it. Don’t even look at it with the intent to drink it because of the potential harm that it can bring upon your personal spiritual life and family. What part of this don’t we understand? The devil may give you his consent to drink but God doesn’t. God’s Word is very clear about alcohol consumption. Don’t do it! You are a fool if you do! This is why the godly mother gives her son the sound advice to not drink.

Proverbs 31:4

“It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink.”

The mother then gives another important reason why kings should not drink within this context and setting.

In Proverbs 31:5

“Lest they drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted.”

In Proverbs 31:8-9 she adds to this thought:

“Open thy mouth for the dumb in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction. Open thy mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy.”

The mother reminds her son to stay mentally alert because of his important role as king. Alcohol dulls the senses so that people are no longer mentally discerning (“forget the law” and “pervert the judgment” - vs. 5). Therefore, a king should stay off the booze for the simple reason that he needs to make sound and fair judgments for those who cannot speak for themselves (“the dumb” or speechless) because of their lack for words and their low status in society.

The words of the rich would often be heard but disregard for the poor and their needs in life would not be addressed. However, a king who defended those who could not defend themselves, and who made little contribution to him, would be noted as a just and gracious man who could “judge righteously” (vs. 9). He was to judge fairly, regardless of a person’s social status. The point of the mother is this. A king could not do this if he was drinking alcohol for booze clouds the judgment of those who use it. This is a known fact. Alcohol keeps people from making wise and discerning judgments. It also keeps people from focusing on the things that are important and of value. It causes people to become undiscerning and cloudy in their perception or way of thinking.

In short, alcohol keeps people from proper discernment. This is true in the spiritual realm as well. Alcohol keeps us from having our minds spiritually sharp and sensitive to God’s truth and direction for our lives. Alcohol dulls our spiritual senses so that we cannot think properly about spiritual things.

Shakespeare said,

“O God! That men should put any enemy in their mouths to steal away their brains.”

In Proverbs 31:5 the mother says:

“Lest they drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted.”

The godly advice of this mother cannot go unnoticed. Her advice with the other wisdom passages found in the proverbs teaches us the danger of alcohol and the lack of wisdom when we drink of this potentially soul-destroying substance.

The mother then concludes with the words found in Proverbs 31:6-7:

“Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts. Let him drink, and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more.”

At first it sounds like this mother is contradicting herself concerning the advice she has just said concerning alcohol. But this is not the case. Mother is not saying that alcohol is all right for dying people, or those who are depressed and who want to drown their sorrows in alcohol, in order to forget it all. A godly mother would never contradict herself in this way. Her statement was actually an explanation of what heathen people do as they try to get away from the realities of life and not face their problems.

It was a generally acceptable practice for a heathenistic society to give people drink who sense that they need an alcoholic stimulant or drug. This is why the mother speaks of giving strong drink to those people who crave it. She was not suggesting that her son give alcohol to others but was simply stating what a society devoid of God’s truth practices. They turn to the bottle instead of God in their attempt to overcome life’s difficulties. They want to exit this life without giving thought to dying, their accountability to God, and the afterlife.

It was the acceptable heathen practice for people to drown their sorrows in beer and booze. But let me say something about this. There is another way out! His name is Jesus! Philippians 1:21, “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” Philippians 4:13, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” When we allow Jesus Christ to be Lord of our lives He will take us through our problems by giving us His grace, strength, peace, and joy. A Christian does not

need to drown his sorrows in booze. He can take his sorrows to the “man of sorrows” (Isa. 53:3) who understands his problems in life and He will heal up his hurts and wounds.

“No one understands like Jesus
When the days are dark and grim.
No one is so near, so dear as Jesus;
Cast Your every care on Him.

No one understands like Jesus;
Every woe He sees and feels.
Tenderly He whispers comfort,
And the broken heart He heals.”

Jesus is the healer of broken hearts – not booze! Alcohol is a patch. People use alcohol because it makes them feel good. What they really mean is that alcohol provides an escape from reality and life’s pressures or problems. This is why people use and abuse alcohol. But when a Christian develops a close walk and relationship with Jesus Christ and “draw nigh to God” (James 4:8) he will come to realize that Christ will provide him with the peace, joy, strength, and stability that he needs in life, as he faces life’s problems and pressures. Christ will also give him complete fulfillment for He said, “I am come that they might have life, and that they might it more abundantly” (John 10:10). There is complete joy and fulfillment outside of alcohol since the Christian is “complete in him” (Col. 2:10) and possesses all that he needs for enriching life and godliness (“granted unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness” - 2 Pet. 1:3). Fulfillment and joy are not found in a bottle but in Christ!

When a person comes out of their drunken world of hide-and-seek (Prov. 23:34-35) the problems and perplexities are still there and they still can’t face them in their right mind. Dear friend, you need Jesus! Jesus is still the answer – not alcohol. The so-called Miller High Life is not a high life. It is the low life and it only leads to despair, misery, and emptiness. Alcohol is not the better way. Jesus is the better and only way that brings satisfaction, freedom, joy, and peace. This is why the godly mother teaches her son in Proverbs 31:6:

“Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts. Let him drink, and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more.”

The mother’s statement is not a statement of what people do who know the truth and dangers about alcohol. It is a statement of what people do who are heathen in their ways of living and ignorant about God’s wisdom and will for their lives. The statement was given by the godly mother to teach a lesson to her son. The lesson was simple. Don’t learn the way of the heathen (Jer. 10:2). Don’t occupy yourself with what others are doing. Just do what I tell you to do and follow what is right.

A similar expression was made by Jesus in Luke 9:60 when he said, “Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.” In other words, don’t occupy yourself with what others do. Instead, follow Me! In the same way this mother was teaching her son, “Let others who feel they have desperate need to indulge in intoxicating drinks or beverages do so. But you don’t touch the alcohol. You do what is right” The mother said, “Let him drink, and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more” (Prov. 31:5). This is what the heathen would do but the son was instructed by his mother to take the clean road instead of the booze road and refuse to drink alcohol. The burdened mother wants her son to stay away from the vice of drinking alcoholic beverage since it could potentially strip away his spiritual life and leave him empty, purposeless, worthless and godless in life.

Alcohol is a dead end street that leads to emptiness and misery and every godly mother knows this to be true. This is the message of a burdened mother (Proverbs 31:1-9). Mom, is it your message to your children? You better change your ways so you can change little Johnny’s ways! A godly mother will give this Biblical advice to her children for she knows the dangers of alcohol and will want to rescue her children from the path of destruction, misery, and sin.

Dear friend, we live in a hedonistic, sex-saturated, and alcohol-soaked society. Mom, your children are wanted by the beer barons. The kids are being told to drink beer because everyone is drinking it. Recent statistics tell us that 95 percent of college students drink beer.

Two out of fifteen become alcoholics who take their first drink. The other four will become problem drinkers.

Mom, you might say, "I'm going to teach them to drink in moderation." Oh really. Moderation is where everybody begins. Let me tell you something. Nobody drinks to become a drunkard. Nobody takes that first sip believing they will end up in the gutter. The Bible not only condemns drunkenness it condemns drinking. Preachers and churches today are opening up their children to the beer barons of Budweiser and to Beelzebub (Luke 11:15), the devil himself, who loves to drown people in drink. It is foolish to take that first drink and continue to drink in light of all the warnings related to alcoholic beverage. Every mother will heed these warnings and teach her son about the danger of drink.

Proverbs 31:1

"The words of king Lemuel, the prophecy that his mother taught him."

The message and burden of this mother was to share with her son about the dangers of alcohol. It was her burden that her son would steer clear of the devil's drink and realize the dangers of taking that first drink and what can potentially follow.

Proverbs 31:4

"It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink."

Let me tell you what you should do, as a mother, who still has beer and booze in your home. You should take it and pour it down the drain and get it out of your house. You say, "Come now, a little booze will never hurt the family? Surely it won't do any harm?" You tell that to the mom and dad who are weeping over a child who has just been killed by a drunkard in an automobile accident. You tell that to the mom who is in tears over her son because he has become addicted to the bar life of wine, women, and song. You tell that to the millions of alcoholics that took their first drink never intending to become drunkards. You tell that to a burdened godly mother who knows the potential evils and pitfalls that drinking alcohol brings into a child's life. You tell that to God who could not make Himself any clearer on the danger of drinking alcohol and the matter of drinking socially.

c. Beware of marriage (vv. 10-31).

Yes, beware of marriage. The godly mother is now advising her son about finding the right woman to marry. She reminds him of what to look for in a woman. In Proverbs 31 the mother continues to remind her son (the king) what kind of woman he is to take as his wife. She reminds him of the importance of finding the right woman for marriage. It was her burden that her son find a virtuous woman who wants to follow God's calling for her life in the home and express the beauty of womanhood before her husband.

A teacher gave her class of second graders a lesson on the magnet and what it does. The next day in a written test, she included this question: My full name has six letters. The first one is M. I pick up things. What am I? When the test papers were turned in, the teacher was astonished to find that almost 50 percent of the students answered the question with the word Mother instead of the word magnet.

Must a woman still perform those old-fashioned duties of a mother? Does God expect a mother to still give of herself to household duties? Feminism says these are bygone days and that women are now liberated from household work. That is another lie of Satan! In the book of Proverbs chapter 31 there are many verses that speak directly to the wife's ministry revolving around the home and family. Her world begins with her family and she knows that this is where God has called her. This is what the Bible teaches. I'm not going to tell you what I think but what God says.

The record of Scripture in both the Old and New Testament instills within our minds that God expects a woman to remain in the home with her young children so she can raise and care for them in their formidable years of life. A mother's absence from the home flies in the face of clear Scriptural commands and examples. A woman is expected to fulfill certain God-given mandates in the home. We must understand that the American home is under satanic attack and much of the attack has been directed against the role of women. Christian homes are under tremendous social and cultural pressure today. What is needed is for ladies to return to the first principles of Christian womanhood so that they might fulfill their God-given roles.

In the remaining part of this chapter we find how the mother should still practice her domestic roles and duties. Being a wife and a mother along with a helper to your husband (Gen. 2:18) involves taking on your God-given responsibilities as a keeper of the home (Titus 2:3). If you are going to have a ministry around the home, then God expects you to prepare for your family and meet their needs. Ladies, you must commit yourself to your family and serve them in the home setting. This is your high calling and responsibility as keeper of the home. To not fulfill your home duties is to miss God's call for your life and bring shame upon you as a mother and wife. Biblical womanhood is expressed when a woman is willing to fulfill her God-given roles in the home setting and when she is ready to give of herself wholeheartedly and unreservedly to her family.

Proverbs 31:10-11 is the ringing anthem to the virtuous woman and mother. It is actually in an acrostic poem, which was a literary learning device for the Hebrew people. An acrostic means that each verse starts with a succeeding letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Therefore, to put it in American terms, this poem spells out the ABC's of Christian womanhood. It was a poem written to teach a man what qualities to look for in a wife. We want to break this poem up so we can learn the unchanging truths related to womanhood. Biblical womanhood is expressed in these verses in a beautiful way.

Every woman and mother should take heart to what God's Word reveals in these verses for it reflects the message of the New Testament and what God expects of a woman when she is a keeper of the home (Titus 2:5). Ladies, take these things to heart and then put them into practice in your life. When you do, you will not only be a virtuous woman, but the kind of woman that will be a great blessing to her family and husband. Ladies, do you want to be what God wants you to be? This is the question that you need to ask as you begin this study. After your relationship with Jesus Christ the most important thing you could ever do in life is to be what God wants you to be. This chapter outlines what God wants a mother and women to be. Your life can be radically changed if you take these truths to heart and apply them to your life. Now let's introduce this part of our study.

The Definition of a Virtuous Woman

Proverbs 31:10

“Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.”

The term “virtuous” (vs. 10) literally means “strength.” The word suggests that the woman who is addressed in this poem and acrostic expresses both strength of character and strength or ability to perform her God-given role. She is a capable woman. Men, God wants you to find not only a woman of character but also a capable woman, a woman who can perform her God-given tasks and duties, as a mother and wife. This is important and is the prayer of this godly mother for her son. She wants her son to find a woman of right character and a woman who has the abilities and desire to become what God wants her to be in the home setting.

The term “virtuous” would then speak of a woman of strength (morally and industriously) because of the way she exhibits her character and conduct in life. She is a woman of both character and ability. Her strength includes both her character (spiritual excellence) and her ability to perform home duties (industrious excellence). She is then a woman of both spiritual and industrial excellence because of what she is (character) and what she does (conduct).

Martha Peace said:

“As a beautiful flower in the light of the morning sun reflects the glory of God’s creation, and excellent wife reflects God’s glory by her attitudes and actions.”

The same word is addressed later in this poem. Proverbs 31:29 says: “Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.”

Because of who she is (her character – godly virtues) and what she does (her conduct - service to the family) she is seen to be a woman that is excellent and a wife that excels above other wives. She is a virtuous woman that excels in the strength of her character and conduct as she fulfills her role as a mother or wife within the family setting. Ruth was called a virtuous woman and everybody knew it.

Ruth 3:11

“And now, my daughter, fear not; I will do to thee all that thou requirest: for all the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman.”

People are not blind. They know when a person practices the kind of living that the Bible endorses. They know when someone practices what they preach. When a woman exhibits godly character and fulfills her God-given roles she becomes a blessing to her husband, family, and a testimony to those she comes in contact with. Her husband is especially blessed to have a virtuous woman standing by his side and living in the home. This is brought out in various verses.

The Blessing of a Virtuous Woman

Proverbs 12:4

“A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: but she that maketh ashamed is as rottenness in his bones.”

Someone said, “Happy is the man who had a good wife; unhappy is the man who has a bad one.” This proverb is true. It is the first time the proverbs describe the potential impact that a wife can have in the home. She has the potential of expressing happiness or harm to her husband. The idea is once again seen in this verse concerning a wife of excellence. A virtuous woman, a woman of excellence in her character and conduct toward her husband, will become a “crown” to her husband. Ladies, you become a crown to your husband when you bring to his life the fullness of honor that is due him as the man of the household.

A crown speaks of honor and glory and when a woman is virtuous or strong in her character and conduct of service toward her husband it's then that she brings glory and honor to him and his position as the leader. This means that a woman who is truly spiritual and serving in her relationship with her husband will honor her husband and be a great blessing to her husband all the days of his life. A virtuous woman will demonstrate honor and respect to her husband and treat him with love, respect, and committed service all her days. She will stand by his side and be a tremendous blessing to him. She will enhance his life and be supportive of him. Only when she reaches out

to him can she be a crown to his life or a woman who brings honor and blessing into his life.

Ladies, only respectful and gentle attitudes toward your husband are fitting and proper before God (1 Pet. 3:4). This is the way God wants you to present yourself even when you disagree. If you continue to be disrespectful to your husband, showing outbursts of anger, rage, and expressing bitter remarks, the most likely consequence and response of your husband is that he will end up rebuking you (Gal. 6:1). But at the same time your husband will feel hurt knowing that his wife does not care about honoring him, following him, and helping him along in life. He will also be less motivated to be your leader and feel paralyzed from taking responsibility as the lead of the family. Scripture describes how a man feels when a woman is disrespectful and brawling. He will feel rotten! This is brought out in this Proverbs 12:4.

Ladies, you can either be a crown to your husband or a cancer. The next expression “rottenness in his bones” speaks of a physical disease like cancer. The ancient Hebrews may not have known much about bone cancer but the disease mentioned here would be similar to this. A woman who is not supportive of her husband, who does not want to serve him, who does not want to be a virtuous woman in the marriage relationship, becomes like a slow eating cancer in his life that seeks to destroy him. There are really only two kinds of woman – those who help and those who hurt. It’s important that you evaluate what kind of woman you have been at home and in your marriage relationship with your husband. Many women today don’t really want to serve their husbands. They want to use them to get their own way or what they want out of life. However, true Biblical womanhood is evidenced when a woman expresses genuine gratitude and loving service toward the husband. This results in crowning her husband with honor and respect in view of his position as leader (“A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband”).

The Absence of a Virtuous Woman

When a virtuous woman cannot be found in the home then chaos breaks out in the arena of home life. The opposite of a virtuous woman is a disgraceful woman. The Proverbs have much to say

about the disgraceful woman as much as they have to say about the virtuous woman. We want to examine some of these references before studying the details about the virtuous woman in Proverbs 31. The following verses portray a disgraceful woman that fails to be what God wants her to be. The woman we are about to study not only brings disgrace to God's design for womanhood but hardship and heartache to her husband. The absence of a virtuous woman in the home life created great tension and disharmony.

Proverbs 19:13 says:

"A foolish son is the calamity of his father: and the contentions of a wife are a continual dropping."

Sometimes we read such a verse as this and kind of snicker among ourselves and pass it off as being one of those funny verses of the Bible. But actually it is a very important verse that deals with relationships within the home and marriage. The word "contentions" speaks of a brawling woman who causes strife and division at home and in her relationship with her husband because she is hotheaded, angry, and has a short fuse. A woman can be a vexing or virtuous woman to her husband. It all depends on her spirituality and demeanor in the home.

Ladies, you need to remind yourselves that outburst of anger ('wrath') is one of the deeds of the flesh mentioned in Galatians 5:20. Along with wrath comes "strife" since this often the result of anger. Angry tempers, fierce indignation, passion, harping, rage, or wrath fall into this category of brawling. They all explain what it means when a wife becomes a brawler in the home setting and upsets the peaceful atmosphere by bringing division and strife. A brawling woman can create a very distressful home situation. Instead of comfort and freedom from fear and trial the home can become a place of turmoil and heartache when a woman is doing her brawling maneuvers.

Colossians 3:8 says:

"But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth."

The old garments represent the old way of life with its sinful deeds. We are instructed to put off certain sins like we would put off old

worn-out garments. Now that we have new life in Christ, we must walk “in newness of life” by putting off the old deeds and desires (Rom. 6:4). In this list Paul deals with speech sins and those sinful expressions directed toward other people that come from a heart and life that is controlled by the old nature instead of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:25). He makes no excuses for committing these sins toward other people such as emotional stress, psychological disorders, and a long day at work.

Anger is a spirit of animosity or vengeful spirit that begins to seep out over a period of time. Anger can be expressed outwardly in a person’s words, actions, and attitudes. Outbursts of anger come from the old nature. The idea of “wrath” is when a person takes their anger to another level. Wrath describes an intense form of anger involving violent outbursts and rage, when a person becomes uncontrollable. The word “malice” (evil or badness) speaks of an attitude of ill will toward people. If we express malice toward people, we are sad when they are successful, and we rejoice when they have trouble. This is sinful. It is a wrong attitude toward people that comes from an angry and resentful spirit. When a wife becomes angry or resentful toward her husband she may glory in his hurt and hard times saying, “He deserves what he gets.” This is malice.

The word “blasphemy” is an abusive type of speech or slander that is geared around hurting or wounding people. Gossip might fall under this category of sinful speech. The expression “filthy communication” is obscene or derogatory speech that is offensive – lewd, corrupt, and indecent. We can talk about others and to others in this way. The point is this. Any kind of wrong speech is sin. When we develop bad attitudes and harbor resentment in our heart toward others we sin. Dr. G. Campbell Morgan called these sins “the sins in good standing.” Many times we are so accustomed to anger, critical attitudes, and outbursts of rage that we are no longer upset or convicted about these sins. Friend, these are sins that cause homes to be torn apart and marriages to splinter. These sins cause marriage partners to drift apart and become tempted by other sins.

The virtuous woman is not a brawler or quarrelsome woman. She is not an angry woman who loses control. She does not have a short fuse. The virtuous woman has control over her emotions and

attitudes and she does not express anger and wrath. Many women walk on eggshells. They react to their emotions and attitudes without thinking of the damage, hurt, and consequences that they bring into the family relationships. They are ready to break at any moment because they are not a woman of excellence that is controlled by God's Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). Every little thing sets them off in life. When they feel like their husbands are not meeting their needs or listening to them they begin their brawling routine. When things don't go their way they go to pieces instead of going to God for help and strength. Women who live like this are prone to pick at their husbands like woodpeckers and become a proverbial nag to their husband. They become a "continual dropping" (Prov. 19:13) or like a continuous rainstorm that never ends. Some women just can't seem to stop their argumentative, quarrelsome, and contentious spirit. They are like the rain that continues to fall for days.

The constant dropping reminds me of the ancient Chinese water torture. Did you ever have a leaky faucet that you heard dripping at night? It was annoying and kept you awake as it continued to drip, drip, drip all night long. A brawling woman in a marriage relationship is like a nagging leaky faucet. She is constantly annoying to her husband because she continues to nag and complain much like a rainstorm continues to dump rain on the land. Instead of expressing herself in a godly way she nags and haunts her husband. Husbands resent a woman like this.

This kind of woman certainly is not a woman of excellence, or a virtuous woman, when she expresses herself in this way within the home and marriage relationship. Ladies, don't become a nagging, quarrelsome, and complaining woman. It will turn your home and marriage into a hornet's nest that has just been disturbed. God wants you to be a virtuous woman who makes life good for your husband instead of miserable. Making your husband's life joyous is your calling as a woman. God has not called you to be a nagger but a lover and dear friend to your husband.

Proverbs 27:15

"A continual dropping in a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike."

Again we see this analogy or comparison. A constant rainfall and a brawling or quarrelsome woman who causes strife by her anger and actions are alike. Both are annoying. Both are nonstop. No one can stop the rain from falling and no one can stop a brawling woman from complaining or quarreling. A vexing woman dulls a man. A virtuous woman sharpens a man.

Proverbs 27:17

“Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.”

As knives are sharpened by other tools of steel, so a wife will assist her husband by serving him and helping him in life, through her wise counsel and even constructive criticism at times. The point is this. A virtuous woman is not a vexing woman but a woman who seeks to honor her husband and help him along in life. She knows how to express herself and help the man.

Many women say, “I have a right to express myself in an overbearing dictatorial fashion so my husband will hear what I have to say. I need to ride him so that things get done around the house and things change.” This certainly is not the attitude or voice of the virtuous woman. A virtuous woman will not have this mindset to overpower and nag her husband to death. Ladies, when God begins to transform your life and mind (Rom. 12:2-3), you will stop causing contention or strife within your marriage with your bad attitudes and uncontrollable outbursts of anger or rage. God has called you to excellence and not contentions. God has not given you the right to become an emotional wreck and fireworks display of anger and outrage in your home.

Of course, we all know that women tend to have emotional days every month, which is normal. They pass through their seasons of life. Many women feel much more tense and nervous or irritable during these times. These are normal feelings. However, what is not normal is how women tend to express these emotions. When women express their emotions in outbursts of anger, rage, brawling, and words or attitudes of unkindness, which bring division and strife to a family, then they have committed a work of the flesh. Many women today blame their emotions instead of the old nature for their bad attitudes and actions. The lie that says women are the way they are

(emotional wrecks with bad attitudes and cantankerous spirits) because God made them this way is destroying marriages and homes. All the research being done on the seasons of a woman's life has caused women to believe they have an excuse to act sinful and be overcome by eating disorders, anger, rage, and bad attitudes.

Nancy DeMoss remarks on this research:

"However, it has also caused many women to become obsessed with themselves and provided them with an excuse for inexcusable attitudes and behavior."

Ladies, you need to stop blaming your emotional makeup or others for your fleshly outbursts of anger. If you are a shrew, or a woman that is out of whack with a violent temper and speech, then you need to take full responsibility. Every woman must take full responsibility for her actions and reactions. You can't blame your feelings and moods as the culprit for causing your meanness and quarreling or negative spirit on your physical makeup. You can't attribute your habitual negative moods and reactions to your seasons or cycles. You can't pass the buck on anyone else or anything else. This the oldest form of deception in the book.

Genesis 3:13

"And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat."

Ladies, beware when you allow your attitude and tongue to get on a roll. What have you recently done that you have not taken responsibility for? Eve was not willing to take responsibility for her sin. You are following psychiatric folklore if you believe that you are not responsible for your actions and reactions. I recall one saying that expresses it well:

"At three I had a feeling of ambivalence toward my brothers,
And so it follows naturally I poisoned all my lovers.
But I am happy; now I've learned the lesson this has taught;
That everything I do that's wrong is someone else's fault."

You cannot blame circumstances, hormones, or your husband for your anger, outrage, bad attitudes, eating disorders, or immorality.

You must blame yourself. It's you who decides to live the way that you do. No one forces you to live a certain way. One lady said that she was feeling very down and became moody and generally hard to live with it. She said that she began justifying herself and actions because of how she felt. Then, a godly woman who happened to be within the radius of her cantankerous spirit looked up at her and said, "Don't let tiredness be an excuse for carnality."

Ladies, did you know that you cannot express anger, outrage, and a quarrelsome spirit and love at the same time? It's impossible. Love is a wife's choice. She chooses to love instead of expressing bitterness, harshness, critical words, and brawling. I think we have developed the wrong perspective on what love is. Love is not something that is feeling-based; it is a choice that we make and one that Christ is calling every woman to make in their marriage. Godly love is not primarily a feeling; it is a choice.

Ladies, you must choose to express love to your husband instead of anger and a stress-related quarreling and mean-spirited personality. You must choose to love your husband, even if he does not respond in love to you or the way you think he should. Love is not based on the man's response but upon the virtue of love being worked out in your heart by the Holy Spirit. When a woman reacts in love she may or may not have feelings at the time. However, if she practices Biblical loving she will develop right feelings toward her husband. Ladies, there are times you don't feel loving right but God will change your feelings as you learn to think and act in a loving way.

Every woman has two thought patterns. One is sinful and the other is loving. You must choose the loving pattern if you want to be a virtuous woman instead of a brawling woman. Selfishness (I Cor. 13:5), bitterness (I Cor. 13:5), and fear (I John 4:18) are three big sins that keep women from loving their husbands, as they should. Women react out of fear, bitterness, and selfishness instead of love. This is why the love chapter specifically tells us how true love manifests itself. True love overcomes selfish, bitter, and fearful feelings. The wife can love her husband with the Lord's help. She may not think that she can, but this is a trick of Satan to keep her ruined in the sin of bitterness, anger, and depression.

The Love of a Virtuous Woman

The Bible says that “Love suffereth long” (1 Cor. 13:4). Love is patient. This means that a virtuous wife will not become aggravated when things do not go her way, or when something interferes with her plans, or when she does not feel well. By an act of her will, coupled with the Spirit’s power (Gal. 5:16), she can be patient (Gal. 5:22 – “longsuffering”), whether she feels like it or not. It is an active, humble, and dependent choice to obey God and be patient. As you express “Love is patient” during the trying times God will give you victory.

The Bible also says that love is “kind” (1 Cor. 13:4) which means that a wife should have a gentle tone of voice instead of an overbearing type of voice and demeanor that demands things. She is to express gentleness in the marriage relationship and home (Gal. 5:22) Kindness draws a husband toward his wife whereas criticism and harshness pushes him away. Love “envieth not” (1 Cor. 13:4). This means that love is not jealous. When a woman becomes self-focused and self-concerned on her needs she begins to be jealous of the man’s time schedule, his fishing trip, his health, or his promotion or praise that he might receive.

A woman can become jealous over these things when she fears that she is being left out or overlooked in some way. “Love vaunteth not itself” (1 Cor. 13:4). This simply means that love does not brag. Love is not linked to conceit where a woman might possess an excessive appreciation of her worth, that she deserves more out of the marriage relationship than the husband is giving her. The “I’m worth it” mentality is anti-biblical and unloving. It leads to division. Along the same line, love is “not puffed up” (1 Cor. 13:4). This means that true love is not arrogant. An arrogant heart is full of self-importance. This is the type of woman that has an inflated ego of herself. She is a “know it all” and does everything right because she is full of pride. This type of woman can hurt her husband and marriage. Ladies, it is difficult to tell an arrogant woman anything. She is so opinionated and defensive that you can’t reason with her. Love demonstrated itself in meekness (Gal. 5:23) – not by bragging and arrogance.

Love also does “not behave itself unseemly” (1 Cor. 13:5). This expression means to act in an unbecoming manner, a rude manner, or out of Christian character. A wife acts out of character when she is disrespectful toward her husband by not being submissive to him and when she becomes mean-spirited, quarrelsome, and angry with him. The virtuous woman is always consistent in her approach to her husband and responds in love to him instead of with harsh words and a grouchy, rude, and some times unbearable spirit. Love “seeketh not her own” (1 Cor. 13:5) which means that a woman should not be selfish in the marriage relationship. She should give in to the wishes of her husband and be more concerned with what she does for him than what he does for her.

A stubborn and selfish wife will provoke her husband to frustration and discouragement (Phil. 2:4). True love “is not easily provoked” to anger (1 Cor. 13:5). Love does not have a short fuse. Showing love means that a wife will control herself even under very difficult circumstances. If you become easily irritated and provoked to anger, then you must develop the character quality of self-control (Gal. 5:23). Love “thinketh no evil” (1 Cor. 13:5) which simply means that a loving wife or woman will not hold grudges against her husband or hang onto her bitterness. She will not take into account his wrongs and replay them before her mind and her husband as verbal reminders. “Honey, I love you, but I can’t believe you did this thing. I will never forget it as long as I live.” This is not love. It is female blackmail!

Love also “rejoiceth not in iniquity” but “rejoiceth in the truth” (1 Cor. 13:6). This means that a loving wife will always honor the truth and righteous living. She will deal honestly with her sin. She will not accept her sin and argumentative or brawling actions as something that is acceptable because of her feelings, moods, or circumstances. A wife expressing the marks of true love will never excuse her sin. Because she rejoices in truth, instead of iniquity, the godly woman will never influence, entice, or provoke her husband to sin. There is a particular type of woman who enjoys trying to light her husband’s fuse. She wants to see how much he can take before he explodes. The home can become a sort of testing ground or place of experimentation when a woman takes on this mentality. Love does not rejoice in doing unrighteous things or seeing another marriage

partner go down. Love will never prompt others to sin and do wrong so that another person can look better. Love wants nothing to do with sin and unrighteous living. Love hates every false way (Ps. 119:128). Love huddles closely around the truth and says, "Here I stand, I can do nothing else."

Love also "beareth all things" (1 Cor. 13:7). This means that when the husband is acting selfish, or is grumpy because of a long hard day at work, the wife can keep from exploding like a time bomb. This is because she has the Spirit's enablement. She can put up with a man's faults and failures because God has worked in her heart the grace to not be overcome by the faults of her husband. Love also "believeth all things" (1 Cor. 13:7) which means that the wife will paint her husband in the best possible light.

A wife shows love to her husband by believing the best instead of always assuming the worst about him. She does not try and read bad things into what he says nor does she try and dissect his motives. A woman's faith will tell her that her husband can change and that things can become better. Then too, a woman can continue to believe no matter what the circumstances are since she knows that God is working them together for her good (Rom. 8:28). Love always continues to believe or have faith. It never lacks faith. It always thinks the best, believes in the power of God, and never gives up. Love "hopeth all things" (1 Cor. 13:7).

A woman will have the confidence that her husband will change if necessary. She can look at her marriage and know that there is always hope when God is involved for He is the God of all hope (Rom. 15:13). She will know that God can change her, her husband, her marriage, and her children. He is the God of all hope! Lastly, love "endureth all things" (1 Cor. 13:7) which means that love puts up with a lot. A wife may not enjoy trials or a grumpy husband but she must learn to endure them with God's help (Heb. 12:2).

A wife can express love to her husband even when he is not showing love to her for she knows that with God's grace she can endure. Love is tough! It is not something that is here today and gone tomorrow. This is why the Bible says, "Love never faileth" (1 Cor. 13:8). I've heard many people say, "I don't love him any more. I lost my love for

her.” This is not Biblical love. It is not love inspired by the Holy Spirit. True love never dies. It lives on in spite of hard times, difficult trials, and tragedy.

Ladies, how do you react when you are having a rough day and you are cleaning? Do you react on your mood or by God’s standard of love? Let’s say your husband is watching golf on T.V. while you are slaving away. Do you lash out at him and say, “Why don’t you get up and do something instead of just sitting there watching T.V. It must be nice to do whatever you want. You are so thoughtless and careless.”

As a wife, if you react this way, you are being rude, unloving, and blatantly disrespectful to your husband. You might under the influence of the Holy Spirit say, “Honey, I’m having a rough day and need your help to do something. Can you help me?” This is the way God wants you to express yourself even when your days are challenging and difficult. Respectful tones and words can do much more than words of anger and disrespect. The Bible declares “the sweetness of the lips increaseth learning” (Prov 16:21). Respectful behavior before husbands is important to God (1 Pet. 3:1-2). When a woman exhibits disrespect through fits of anger and a quarrelsome spirit she has allowed the old nature to overtake her life.

Nancy DeMoss, speaking to woman, said this about feelings: “The Truth is that, due to our fallen condition, our feelings often have very little to do with reality. In many instances, feelings are simply not a reliable gauge of what is actually true. When we allow them to be tied to our circumstances – which are constantly changing – rather than to the unchangeable realities of God and His Truth, our emotions are prone to fluctuate wildly.”

Ladies, your emotions can fluctuate quickly at times and you must beware of out-of-control emotions that can overtake your life. God has given us the pure emotions of joy, delight, and sorrow but our emotions are tainted by the Fall and therefore we must regulate them by the absolute standard of truth. We must curb them at times by the Spirit’s power.

The point is this. A husband should not have to live with a brawling wife just because she feels like being a brawling wife or reacts to her

feelings and moods. Ladies, you need to ask yourself this question. Would you like to live with someone like yourself? Would it be easy to live with you at certain times and on certain occasions? In view of a woman's design the Bible warns the ladies about becoming a brawling woman who lives her life on her feelings and moods and then trying to excuse her actions of anger and unkindness on being a woman. Nowhere in Scripture does God teach us that it's "okay" to blame our actions on someone else or some uncontrollable feeling that we have. God's desire for you as a woman is that you grow spiritually and take responsibility for your own actions.

The Feelings of a Virtuous Woman

Each woman must remember one thing. You can obey God whether you feel like it or not. Your obedience to God and doing what is right is not dependent upon your feelings or moods. You choose to do what is right and can do so by the Spirit's power and enablement (Eph. 5:18). The feelings of a virtuous woman are centered upon truth. Many women today blame their anger and attitudes on their emotions and fail to see that all anger and rage are sinful expressions. Instead of saying, "The devil made me do it" women have come to say these days, "My emotions made me do it."

We have been taught that certain uncontrollable outbursts of emotional anger and rage are acceptable, and even necessary at certain times, due to our physical makeup and stresses in life. Ladies, brawling or anger is not acceptable to God under any circumstances. When women believe they have the right to exhibit anger and resentment toward their husbands they have believed the lie of Satan. There are times a woman must work extra hard at fighting off her emotions. They must think before they speak. They must think about what they are going to say and say what is right in spite of how they feel and remember that their emotions are not always right.

Emotions can be fueled by the old nature instead of the new nature. Whenever emotional anger, rage, and bitterness come forth from a woman's life you can be sure that it is not God-sent and God-approved. God never approves of sin. Ladies, you must stop approving of your anger and brawling actions. Instead of approving

these actions you must confess them to God (1 John 1:9) and lay the wrong speech aside.

The control of a wife's tongue and actions are very important in the home. What she says, how she acts, and her attitudes toward the family set the atmosphere of the home life. When mom is mad and short-tempered then the home becomes a place of strife and unrest.

Proverbs 21:9

"It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman in a wide house."

Men, your house may be big but if a brawling woman lives with you then it's not big enough. The point is this. No house is big enough to house a brawling woman or a woman who causes strife and division by her actions, anger, and attitudes. The only way a man can deal with a woman like this is to remove himself from her presence until she cools down. Here the "corner of the housetop" speaks of the corner of the home's flat rooftop. Houses in Bible lands had flat roofs. This proverb says that it would be better to live alone in a cramped corner of one of those roofs, exposed to heat, cold, rain, snow, wind, and hail, than to live in a house shared with a nagging, cantankerous woman. The storms from without would be more endurable than the tempest inside.

May I remind you ladies that when you belittle your husband before your children that you are teaching disrespect for his authority. It is much more difficult for the children to honor their father when mom is not honoring him. When you, as a wife, speak to your husband with a harsh sarcastic tone of voice, and belittle him in front of the children, you are setting a very bad example. Your children tend to pick up on this action and attitude and begin to think of their father in a disrespectful way, or even respond to him in the same manner you have responded – anger, rage, and bitterness.

Proverbs 25:24

"It is better to dwell in the corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman and in a wide house."

This verse repeats what was previously discussed (Prov. 21:9) because of the importance of this truth. A home is not a home when a woman is out of order. A home is a place of strife, division, hurt, and unrest when a woman does not take control of her emotions and allows the old nature to run her life. Wives with a quick temper and sharp tongue become a burden to their husbands.

One preacher remembers hearing a brawling woman through the walls of his hotel room. She was speaking to her husband. "I don't know what's the matter with you and that's the truth. You drag me all the way downtown. We go into that hardware store and there's that iron I have been wanting for years and you say we don't need it. It's too expensive. It's not a General Electric. You're just too cheap to part with the money. That's what's the matter with you. Well, I've had it up to here with that old iron. I'm just going to send your shirts to the laundry, that's all, or you can iron them yourself.

"I've never known anyone so tight with money as you. You begrudge me every nickel. Let me tell you something, I work just as hard as you do. And another thing: why did we have to have this cheap room? It only costs a few dollars more to stay in one of the cottages down by the lake. But, oh, no! You want to save a few miserable nickels. When was the last time you bought me a new dress? And look at your shoes. I'm ashamed to be seen out with you. Here we were in the shoe shop the other day and you couldn't make up your mind. You couldn't find a pair to fit or the right color. I know what it was. You couldn't bear the thought of parting with your money. But you are just like your mother. A regular old miser she was. I'll never forget the time we visited her in Chicago and she gave us canned pork and beans to eat!

"Look how I had to nag you just to come up here this weekend. You'd think, considering the way I slave for you, you could take me somewhere once in a while without making so much fuss over it. You always say you are retired and we have to cut back. What about all that severance pay you got when you left General Electric? It's as much my money as yours. And anyway, you never took me anywhere before you retired unless I nagged you into it. Well, I've made up my mind. Right after lunch you're going to take me back downtown and I'm going to get that iron. If you think I'm going to be satisfied with

another cheap one you're mistaken. The last cheap one didn't last three months before the steamer stopped working."

The preacher listening through the wall said, "The monologue went on and on and on and on. I was reminded of the man who was asked if he had ever considered divorce as a solution to the frequent squabbles with his wife. 'No, he said, but I've often considered murder!'"

Proverbs 21:19

"It is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and an angry woman."

This verse takes us one step further than the other verses where the man was told to dwell on his rooftop. Here the man with a quarrelsome wife is urged to live out in the wilderness or desert rather than simply a corner of the roof. The point, however, is the same. You can't get far enough from a cantankerous, argumentative, and brawling woman. Stay clear from any angry spouse until her anger cools down. Of course, this kind of lifestyle for a man can drive him to despair and misery. A man's world is difficult enough as he supports the family and a brawling wife makes a man's world much more difficult and draining to him.

Ladies, the last thing a man wants is to deal with a wife who is out of order in the home. Every husband wants a woman who is his helper and lover who takes control of her heart and life. A virtuous woman is a woman who has strength or excellence of character. She is a woman who excels in her spiritual life and who does not become a nagging burden to her husband. She is a woman who respects her husband and who does not chide him, derail him, and become argumentative, or offensive. She does not have a short fuse and quick temper. She does not have a sharp tongue and critical spirit about her. Rather, she possesses a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is a great price (1 Pet. 3:4). I might also add, a gentle and quiet spirit in a wife is also a great blessing to a husband.

Here are some good questions you can ask yourself. Am I willing to wait quietly for God to change the heart of my husband and something in his life that I feel is wrong, rather than pushing,

manipulating, or nagging? Do I seek to influence my husband by means of gentle words, rather than controlling or intimidating him with harsh words? Do I nag him about things and become like the brawling woman of the Proverbs? The Holy Spirit says, “Hold your tongue, what you are about to say is not kind or necessary.” The flesh says, “Tell it like it is!” The Spirit says, “Forgive.” The flesh says, “Hold a grudge.” Ladies, if you yield to the Spirit’s power and truth of God’s Word you can have victory over anger, your emotions, moods, and your negative spirit.

The Needs of a Virtuous Woman

Ladies, it’s true that the man is to seek to help his wife and meet her needs (Eph. 5:24; 28-29). He is to assist you and encourage your life in many ways. This is part of his call to Biblical manhood. However, if you are waiting around for your husband to meet all of your spiritual needs in life then you are going to be discouraged for only Christ can meet your deepest needs.

Philippians 4:19

“But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”

Philippians 1:21

“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”

Galatians 2:20

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”

Ladies, don’t fall into the trap where you mope around and wait for your husband to do something for you that only Christ can do! In order to be a spiritual woman you need to totally rely on Christ to meet your spiritual needs and deepest longings in life.

The Home of a Virtuous Woman

Proverbs 14:1

“Every wise woman buildeth her house: but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands.”

Few women are aware of how much influence they have on their homes and surroundings. Through your attitudes, words, and behavior (actions), you have the power to bless and build the lives of those around you, but you also have the power to tear them down and destroy them. You must look at your life today and see if some of your attitudes and words are tearing down your home or at least creating an atmosphere of division and turmoil. God wants you to be a virtuous woman. When you are tearing down the home you cannot be a virtuous woman. This is a serious matter for many women. We have grown accustomed to homes that are out of order and think it is the norm, so much so, that God says a virtuous woman is a rare find today.

Proverbs 31:10

“Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.”

Ladies, are you willing to change? Are you willing to take control and responsibility for your life and actions? God gives no excuse for being a cantankerous woman. He wants you to become a woman of virtue instead of vice. He wants you to change your attitudes and demeanor in life to reflect a woman who is submissive, loving, respectful, and kind. God can change your life and make you into a woman that is priceless – a woman of excellence in her character and living.

The Marks of a Virtuous Woman

Before studying the actual section of Scripture in Proverbs 31, I’m reminded of a little poem that I stumbled across some time ago. It speaks of a woman’s busy day as a mother.

“Mama, on a winter’s day, milked the cows and fed them hay, hitched the mule, drove kids to school...did a washing, mopped the floors, washed the windows and did some chores...Cooked a dish of home-dried fruit, pressed her husband’s Sunday suit...swept the parlor, made the bed, baked a dozen loaves of bread...split some firewood and lugged it in, enough to fill the kitchen bin...Cleaned the lamps and put in oil, stewed some apples before they spoiled...churned the butter, baked a cake, then exclaimed, ‘For goodness sake!’ when the calves ran from the pen, and she chased them all back in again...Gathered eggs and locked the stable, back to the house and

set the table...cooked a supper that was delicious, then washed and dried all dirty dishes...fed the cat and sprinkled clothes, mended a basketful of hose...then opened the organ and began to play: 'When You Come to the End of a Perfect Day.'"

In our outline of Proverbs 31 we are going to look at the marks of a virtuous woman – a wife that expresses excellence in her character and conduct. You will remember that the term “virtuous” speaks of a woman of strength (morally and industriously). In short, the virtuous woman is a woman of excellence because of her character and conduct in the home. Who she is and what she does points to her excellence. Ladies, God can help you become an excellent wife or woman because of His divine power that is available to you (2 Pet. 1:3). God has called every woman to a life of virtue or excellence. Any flower can bloom when it is tended by God’s hand. God can make you into an excellent wife.

Let’s repeat something we already said. In Proverbs 31 a mother is reminding her son (the king) what kind of woman he is to take as his wife (Prov. 31:1). It was her burden that her son find a virtuous woman who wants to follow God’s calling for her life in the home and express the beauty of womanhood before her husband. Proverbs 31 is actually an acrostic poem corresponding to the Hebrew alphabet. It was a poem written to teach a man what qualities to look for in a wife. This passage then presents the poetic picture of an ideal wife. Sometimes ladies will deceive themselves and actually think that a woman like this one mentioned in Proverbs 31 is impossible to duplicate. Of course, this is not true, since God’s commands are God’s enablements. God has promised His presence and power to assist every woman to live out the kind of life that He expects for them.

Philippians 2:13 says:

“For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”

Many times the modern woman bent on living her own life and doing her own thing will read Proverbs 31 with the mentality that this is out of date for 21st century living. But this way of thinking reveals that a lady is not ready to become the woman of excellence that God wants

her to be. Ladies, your heart must be one of submissiveness, tenderness, and readiness to be all that God wants you to be. This is not superwoman, but a Spirit-filled woman, a woman who fears God (vs. 30) and who wants to honor Him. This Proverb echoes the same truth taught in the New Testament about Biblical womanhood (Titus 2:5; 1 Tim. 5:14). The fact that it is called “her household” (15, 21, 29) indicates that her center of ministry was in the home with her children. This is a good reminder of what God expects of women who have younger children that are still in the home.

Someone said:

“The wife is in charge of the home whereas the man is the head of the home.”

This is true. God has called a woman to invest her time in the duties of home life. She is to take charge of her home duties whereas the man is in charge as the spiritual leader of the home. This chapter is the purest and best description of Biblical womanhood found in the Bible. So ladies, you must take it to heart and pattern your life according to God’s description of an excellent woman and wife.

This Proverb echoes the same truth taught in the New Testament about Biblical womanhood.

Titus 2:5

“To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.”

1 Timothy 5:14

“I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.”

In Proverbs we find that the home is actually called “her household” (15, 21, 29). This indicates that her center of ministry and responsibility was in the home with her children. This is a good reminder of what God expects of women who have younger children that are still in the home.

Now let's state our proposition very clearly. What are the marks of the virtuous woman or excellent wife?

1. She is rare (vs. 10).

“Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.”

This verse speaks of how an excellent woman is a rare find. Who can find a virtuous woman? She is like a rare piece of treasure that is unearthed. And yet her value or price is far above the cost of expensive rubies (Prov. 3:15). In other words, the value of a virtuous woman cannot be compared to material wealth. Her price and value to a husband and home cannot be compared to the cost or expense of anything else in life.

A virtuous woman is such a rare find in the midst of a humanistic, feministic, and materialistic society that her price is costly. Men, you don't have enough money to pay for a virtuous godly wife. Her character and conduct in the home is priceless to you. If you have a wife such as this, you may want to sit back and thank God today. You have a rare jewel. Excellent women are rare and for this reason there are not many to go around. Why is this? It's because women are not committed to excellence in their lives. They are not wholeheartedly committed to living out a life of character and conduct that is pleasing or honoring to God. The virtuous woman in her character and conduct within the home is rare since many ladies these days are not willing to sell out for God and be what God wants them to be. The songwriter wrote:

“To be what You want me to be, dear Lord,
I'll live so the world can see.
To be what You want me to be, dear Lord,
I'll live for eternity.
To be more like Your son, dear Lord,
Until the race is won.”

Ladies, where is your heart today? Is your heart committed to excellence? Do you have the desire to live out a life of excellence before God and in the home? When God gets a hold of your heart you will want to be what God wants you to be and abandon your

personal goals, agendas, and dreams in life and conform your future to God's purpose for your life (Luke 9:23).

2. She is reliable (vv. 11-12).

This is indicated in two ways:

a. She can be trusted with finances (vs. 11).

“The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil.”

The virtuous woman can be trusted with finances. Her husband can have complete trust or confidence in her when it comes to handling money. She will not waste money. She is a careful steward. The husband's money and possessions are safe with her. She will not become a spendthrift and drain the bank account. Because of the care she takes with money the man will “have no need of spoil” or monetary increase. Every woman must remember that money does not grow on trees and that stewardship is an important part of motherhood. She must use money wisely and not spend what is not in the bank account. She must learn the secret of being satisfied with less. She will not see any need to keep up with the Jones family down the street. The woman of excellence knows how to handle money and use it effectively for her home.

b. She can be trusted with service (vs. 12).

“She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.”

The virtuous woman has a servant's heart (Matt. 10:24; 20:27) and this will lead her to perform good works for her husband instead of evil ones throughout the marriage. If a woman has a servant's heart she will realize that she is called upon to be the man's helper (Gen. 2:18). This means that she will not be a rebel against his will. Her goal is to work with him and for her husband. When a woman does this “she will do him good and not evil all the days of his life.” This means that she will be there to help him through life to accomplish his goals and follow him.

The woman of excellence does not seek to work against her man but work with him. She is dedicated to her husband. All that she says and does is meant to support, built up, and encourage him. Ladies, life is difficult enough for a man who makes his way in the world. When a man must add the burden of a wife, who does not understand or support him, it makes life most miserable for him. The virtuous woman expresses the strength of her character and conduct in the way she treats her husband. She is to faithfully serve him and do him good by supporting his endeavors in life and in this way she become both a compliment and completer of him.

Some women are mixed blessings to their husbands. Eve tempted Adam (Gen. 3:6). Job's wife urged him to curse God and die (Job 2:9). Then we have seen the brawling woman of the proverbs (Prov. 21:9). These types of women do not help the man along in life or do him good. They actually do him "evil" and put a thorn in his side. The virtuous woman is not like this. She seeks to "do him good" by supporting him and encouraging him in his life and calling. Her husband's good consumes her life. Doing good for him is her desire. No wonder her price is far above rubies. She does him good for she is there for him, helping him, and giving him the assistance that he needs for accomplishing God's goal for his life.

You may ask, "What about my goals?" Ladies, your primary goal should be to support the man's goals in life. God has called you to stand by his side as a helper (Gen. 2:18) so that you might assist him in accomplishing his goals. This is Biblical womanhood and God's high calling for you. If a woman is going to do her husband good she will be loyal to him, absolutely dependable, trustworthy, and helpful to him.

3. She is resourceful (vv. 13-19).

"She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands. She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar. She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens. She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard. She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms. She perceiveth that her

merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night. She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff.”

The ideal wife is not an idle wife. She is industrious. She is resourceful. She is seen to be an initiator or self-starter who needs no prodding to attend to her duties (“worketh willingly” – vs. 13). This woman works willingly and diligently. She takes personal delight in her work and gets out of bed early (vs. 15) and works until it’s late (vs. 18). This woman is a go-getter in life. She is not lazy. She does not sleep the morning away. She has no time nor would she want to take time for the afternoon soap operas. She is with it in the industrious field for she is seen supplying the needs of her family and husband. She is indeed a domestic engineer!

The excellence of a woman is seen in her ability to accomplish the tasks that God wants her to accomplish as a mother, wife, and woman. She wants to manage the home affairs well and free the man from household duties that are hers. Many men come home after a hard day’s work and find themselves doing the job of the woman. Ladies, this shames Biblical womanhood and it should shame you. God expects that you accomplish your roles as a woman and fulfill your God-given duties as a wife and woman of excellence. This verse gives a catalog of her activities. It is a detailed account of what fills the hours of her day and the days of her week.

Her resourcefulness can be seen in three ways:

- a. She clothes the family (vs. 13).

“She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands.”

This woman spends a great deal of time buying raw materials and spinning, weaving, and sewing. Mom, it’s your job to see to it that the children are clothed properly (vs. 21). You may not make their clothing as this woman did but the principle can’t be overlooked. God wants a woman to take the initiative to keep the children dressed properly. You know, the way children are dressed reflects the mother. This has always been true. A mother must know what God expects of her. If she is going to be a mother she must understand that a large portion of the child’s care falls into her lap and hands. God holds her

responsible for taking care of the children and keeping them clothed properly is certainly part of this responsibility.

b. She feeds the family (vv. 14-15).

“She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar. She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens (servants).”

This woman is compared to the trading ships that return to port filled with produce from afar. She is compared to a sailing merchant ship that brings food into port. In other words, the virtuous woman knows how to provide for her household. She is like a merchant ship that sails into the coast bringing back plenty of food for her family. She is always on top of feeding the family and making sure they have plenty. This woman knows what to do to get food on the table. This woman knows that shopping was often a daily routine, especially in Bible times. This was true because refrigeration was not available in these days. So the woman would often be like a merchant ship when she brought back food from the local market. Now let's update this to our times.

Ladies, God wants you to provide for your family. He wants you to be a woman who sees the importance of going to the supermarket and getting good bargains like a merchant would. He wants you to prepare meals for your children and husband. Does a woman really have to do those old-fashioned things like having supper on the table when a hungry man gets home from work? According to this study God expects the virtuous woman to remember that she is responsible for making meals and serving them to her family.

The implication is this. A woman of excellence will make sure that her household is fed. “She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens” (Prov. 31:15). This woman uses her time wisely. She rises while it is yet night (early morning) in order to distribute food to her family and household servants (“maidens”). There can be no doubt about it. The excellent woman understands that she is the cook. She knows how to prepare meals for her household. Ladies, this is not old-fashioned it is Bible-fashioned.

God wants you to know your responsibility toward your family. If you don't know how to cook, then get some cookbooks and get started. Your husband will be grateful! A woman of excellence will take her responsibilities seriously and not look at cooking or food preparation as something that is archaic. We see that a woman's energies should be poured into the home life. A godly woman wants to faithfully meet her family's needs. She sacrifices herself for her family. Her time and energies are poured into the family instead of all kinds of extra activity. Her family is her priority in life.

c. She helps the family financially (vs. 16-19).

“She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard.”

This woman knew how to use her spare time productively. She became involved in agricultural activities. Men, if you went to work, came home, and discovered that your wife had purchased a ten-acre field from a farmer while you were gone, what would you do? What would be your reaction? “Honey, you know that I love you but you must return the field.” Apparently this woman lived in a wealthier household where she had opportunity to purchase land. If she saw good opportunity she was given the authority to make a wise decision. Now ladies, you may not have money to purchase a field but you are given the responsibility to purchase things for the family that would meet their needs in life. The purchases you make must be wise and resourceful. You must use money wisely. The virtuous woman knows how to effectively use money. She knows how to stretch a dollar.

She also knows how to use the field to be resourceful for the Bible says, “with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard” (vs. 16). This woman was not afraid to get her hands dirty. She does not just purchase the field to increase her wealth but uses it to plant a vineyard, which can be used for harvesting grapes. This woman was always looking out for her family's needs in everything that she did. She had the goal of providing for her household. It's important to understand that this woman's enterprise did not overtake her family responsibilities. They simply helped her to fulfill her responsibilities.

This is not a mother working outside the home but a mother working while she is in the home. We don't know all the details of this woman's family situation. Perhaps the children were older and this gave her more time for her enterprising activities. However, I tend to believe that this woman simply found time to create materials that she could sell in order to earn money on the side and help in the family needs.

"She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms."

Verse seventeen is an idiomatic expression that speaks of the woman's ability and desire to work hard in order to help her household. The expression of girding up the loins speaks of a woman tying up her robe to keep it from interfering with her hard work and labors. This pictured her readiness to begin her work. When it says she "strengtheneth her arms" it pictures how the woman has the power and ability to perform the tasks that she needs to do in order to help her family. This woman did not even take vitamins but she has the fortitude, drive, and determination to do what she could to help the family financially.

"She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night."

Verse eighteen reminds us again of her resourcefulness. A Russian proverb says, "There are two fools in the market. One asks too much and one asks too little." This woman knows that what she is making is good and will sell in the local markets. She knows the price that she can get for a project well done. Therefore, she is ready, if need be, to burn the midnight oil to finish her project. The old line is still true:

"Man may work from sun to sun,
But woman's work is never done."

The virtuous woman is seen to be diligent to finish a project that might help or profit the family in some way. The virtuous woman is very industrious in her living and practice. She tries to do all she can with the time she has to enhance her family financially.

"She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff."

The “distaff” and “spindle” were tools used for cloth-making. Imagine how long it took to spin thread or yarn, then weave a piece of cloth! Consider how much time every woman had to spend spinning and weaving in ancient days. Yet this woman does it without complaint. She knew that this trade would clothe her family and also bring extra finances into the home. The making of beautiful material was an important lucrative trade. This virtuous woman, even with children in the home setting, still found time to do those things that could bring money out in the world. She knew that her first commitment was to her children while at the same time she sought to help financially in any way that she could. All of her effort and hard work was designed to help the family.

4. She is responsive (vs. 20).

“She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.”

This noble woman was not so busy with her household duties that she forgot the needs of others. The virtuous woman was ready to respond to the needs of others. She was interested in helping other people who were hurting and in need and became a blessing to many by her generosity. This woman reminds us of another generous woman called Dorcas.

Acts 9:36-39

“Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did. And it came to pass in those days, that she was sick, and died: whom when they had washed, they laid her in an upper chamber. And forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent unto him two men, desiring him that he would not delay to come to them. Then Peter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them.”

The virtuous woman is the type of woman that demonstrates pity and kindness to those who are in need. She responds to the needs of

others. She is ready and willing to shower gifts upon them. This woman was not self-centered or selfish. She was giving and generous. Let me tell you what Jesus said about this during His earthly ministry. "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

Every woman, wife, and mother must remember this. When we learn the secret of reaching out to others we will find great blessing and fulfillment in lif

e. Any woman can write an encouraging card and send it to someone. Any woman can visit another needy mother or elderly person and give her a gift certificate to a store or some other place. She can drop some groceries off to a mother who is struggling. The virtuous woman is this kind of woman. She responds to the needs of others.

5. She is ready (vs. 21).

"She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet."

This woman is prepared or ready for the weather to change. Therefore, she is not afraid of the snow. You may say, "But this statement was made before the invention of cars and driving on frozen freeways!" Yes, but this is not what it is talking about. This virtuous woman is not afraid of the snow or the colder months because she has her children and husband clothed with warm clothing. Snow is not uncommon in Israel or the land of Palestine. It can linger in the hollows or shadows for two or three weeks at a time.

The virtuous woman makes sure that the family is prepared for the winter season. This once again demonstrates her concern for her family. Mothers today must take this to heart and learn to cover their babies well in the winter months. They must use motherly instincts or sense and keep their children warm and protected from the elements. I have seen more than one mother carrying a baby around in her arms on a cold winter's day without covering the baby's face or adequately clothing a little boy or girl. Mom, babies are defenseless against the cold without your help and little children are ignorant of

the cold weather. Keep them safe and warm from the elements. This is your motherly calling.

Years ago, a young mother was making her way across the hills of South Wales, carrying her tiny baby in her arms, when she was overtaken by a blinding blizzard. She never reached her destination and when the blizzard had subsided her body was found by searchers beneath a mound of snow. But they discovered that before her death, she had taken off all her outer clothing and wrapped it about her baby. When they unwrapped the child, to their great surprise and joy, they found he was alive and well. She had mounded her body over his and given her life for her child, proving the depths of her mother love. Years later that child, David Lloyd George, grown to manhood, became prime minister of Great Britain, and, without a doubt, one of England's greatest statesmen.

6. She is rewarded (vs. 22).

“She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple.”

The woman's skill, industry, and wise investments pay off. She has managed everything so well that she can afford to reward herself. She does so by making herself coverings for her bed. Women somehow like fancy coverings on the bed. Men don't seem to mind what the covers look like just as long as they keep them warm at night. But a woman likes fancy covers. She also rewards herself with her clothing, which are described as being “silk and purple.” This type or clothing would evidence her wealth since purple dye was extracted in minute quantities from certain shellfish found in the eastern parts of the Mediterranean Sea, making it costly and rare.

Please note that her use of fine things is not condemned but commended as rewards for her hard work. Men, we must allow our women to be rewarded for their sacrifice and work in the home. We should not keep nice things from them when they commit themselves so wholeheartedly to their tasks. Men, don't think you can buy guns and ammunition every year and forget to reward your wife. Let her know that you appreciate her. Open up your wallet. Get out the cash!

7. She is respected (vv. 23-25).

The virtuous woman is respected by all those who know her because of the way she conducts herself in life. This is evident in the next set of verses.

There are three reasons why this woman is respected:

- a. She gets the job done in the home (vs. 23).

“Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land.”

This woman gains respect because she allows her husband to succeed in his calling. The virtuous woman does her work in the home effectively so the husband can do his job or work effectively. The term “in the gates” (Deut. 21:19-20; 25:7) coupled with the husband sitting “among the elders of the land” suggests that her husband had a community leadership position. This is probably why the family was above average in respect to wealth and servants. The term “gates” was the description where business, legal, and governmental matters were carried on.

The point is this. The man was able to dedicate himself to his calling because the woman was dedicated to her household calling. He was known in the gates of leadership and business because he was not sidetracked by wife problems or home problems that would detract from his ability to lead. The man did not have to worry about the children and home conditions knowing that a godly and virtuous woman was in control. This does not mean the man had no responsibility in the home or to his wife. We have seen this in our previous studies. It simply means that he could concentrate on his job in a greater way and be committed to his calling since he did not have to pick up the slack in the home.

Many men must come home from work to a woman who is out of order and out of sync. They come home to a brawling woman and find themselves making supper and doing the laundry or those other home duties that could and should be done by a committed mother and wife. Ladies, when your man must do your responsibilities it

keeps him from being known in the gates and also becomes a frustration to him. These things ought not to be! Ladies, you must take your home responsibilities seriously and commit yourself to God's high calling for your life which is in the home. God has called you to fulfill home duties since it is your household (Prov. 31:15, 21, 27) and when a man must do them it shames you and God's design for womanhood. This woman is respected for the simple reason that she allows her man to succeed in life.

Something else might be said at this point. The virtuous woman functions in a way that honors her husband's leadership rather than demeaning it or tearing it down. In other words, she respects him and builds him up and this is yet another reason why he is known in the gates. The wife should build up her husband and not humiliate him in front of others. Any woman will be respected for doing this.

b. She gives good work for added income (vs. 24).

"She maketh fine linen, and selleth it; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant."

The virtuous woman was also respected because the work that she did was always done right. She did good work allowing her trade to provide supplemental income for the family. The mention of "fine linen" (outer garments) and "girdles" (belts) were her creations that she sold to the merchants to help in the economic affairs of the household. It's likely that this woman sold some of the materials she has made (vs. 13) in trade for food or money to help buy food for the home (vs. 24). The merchants always knew that her products were done well and because of this she could get a good price for them. It always pays to do things right when you do them. Cutting corners will sooner or later catch up with you. So this woman was respected because of the excellence of her work.

c. She girds herself with virtues (vs. 25).

"Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come."

The virtuous woman also gains respect because of her virtues, which she exhibits in her life. She is called the virtuous woman (vv. 10, 29) and one of the reasons for this title is because of the virtues she displays in her life. The true clothing that this woman would wear consisted of her godly virtues of strength and honour. They are spiritual clothing and this is what is suggested in this verse.

This virtuous woman was clothed with spiritual strength. When the virtuous woman was exposed to fierce temptations she would rely on the Lord's strength and come through victorious. No foe could daunt her: no fear could haunt her! This woman knew that she was on the victory side. The virtuous woman was clothed with spiritual strength for she knew that her strength was in the Lord (Ps. 46:1). She was also clothed with honour because of the way she conducted herself in life. Her honour would refer to her spiritual excellence and dignity as a woman. She was known as a very godly and spiritual woman who walked with God and manifested godly traits in her character and convictions. This woman had more than fancy clothing. She had the true clothing that will count for now and throughout eternity. She wore the clothing that will make a household holy and a woman a true blessing to her husband and family.

8. She is right (vv. 26-27).

a. She is right in what she says (vs. 26)

“She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness.”

These are the gold and silver qualities of this woman's spiritual excellence. She not only spins, weaves, buys fields, provides for the needs of her family, and helps the poor, she also gives instructive wisdom to her children and family (Prov. 1:3, 7, 20; 4:7).

Abraham Lincoln said:

“The greatest lessons I ever learned were at my mother's knees.”

This woman shares the wisdom of God's Word, the wisdom of her personal experiences, and the wisdom of her age with her children. She might also share the wisdom of her homemaking skills with

others (Titus 2:4). She has wisdom because she knows what is true and how to live in accordance with truth. Children today need this kind of motherly wisdom.

A Jewish proverb says:

“A child without a mother is like a door without a knob.”

The Bible also says that “in her tongue is the law of kindness” and this speaks of the way she speaks to her children and husband. She has a meek and quiet spirit (1 Pet. 3:4). Her words are not harsh and battering but kind and loving. Love is kind (1 Cor. 13:4) and she knows that a kind word can build up instead of tear down. She knows that kindness (Col. 3:12) is Christlike and will always be the best example to set for her children. The children probably learn as much from this woman’s moral example than they do with her teaching.

Someone said:

“It’s not always what you were taught but what you caught that makes a difference.”

b. She is right in what she sees (vs. 27).

“She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.”

The word “looketh” means to “to spy, keep watch, or observe” what is going on in her household. This woman is on top of things. She watches over the affairs of her household. She knows how to keep a tight control on her children and those who were working under her as servants (vs. 15). The virtuous woman sees what is going on in the physical and spiritual lives of her children. She knows what is happening for she is on top of things and wants to protect and care for her children in the best possible way. Blessed are they who can see what is happening! Staying on top of her household duties, children, and servants was a full time job. This is why she does not eat “the bread of idleness” which is an expression used for laziness. If a person had time to always sit around and eat bread they were not doing their job or fulfilling their obligation.

The wife also looks well to the ways of her household by seeing the needs of the husband and family and providing for these needs. For instance, a husband has the right to expect a neat home, clean clothes, and a meal on the table when he comes home from a hard day's work. When a woman looks well to the ways of her household she will be taking care of these household needs. A woman should spend her day in honest labor.

It becomes clear that God has set the wife in her role in order that she fulfills her God-given position. The home or "household" is her domain and her ministry involves her family. As a result, she experiences a genuine satisfaction in the work that she does. She possesses an inner fulfillment knowing that she is following God's calling and making a difference in her children's lives.

There was a neat greeting card for Father's Day. On the front it read: Dad, I want you to know that if there's anything you need, like a soft pillow, an afternoon snack, or a glass of lemonade... Then on the inside it said: Just let me know, and I'll call Mom! Well, we know that motherhood involves much more than just picking up after everybody else. It involves real commitment to excellence of living that will influence the home and children for a lifetime.

9. She is recognized (vs. 28).

The virtuous woman will receive recognition from her family for being the kind of woman that is committed to motherhood and living a spiritual life. Recognition speaks of how her family acknowledged her for her achievement and service as a mother and wife. She deserved recognition for her faithful service and commitment to Biblical womanhood and spiritual living.

"Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her."

a. She is recognized by her children (vs. 28a).

Unlike many homes in America today, where the children are bitter toward their parents, this home manifests praise for a godly mother. The children offer up thanks that they were born in such a home as

this where a godly mother fulfilled her role effectively and lovingly. When her children rise up and call her “blessed” they do so realizing that her example, love, and dedication to them throughout the years cannot be replaced with anything else.

The Hebrew verb rendered “call her blessed” is not the verb frequently used for pronouncing a blessing but a verb form that has the sense of “declaring someone happy.” In one sense the children were saying, “Hooray, hooray for our mother.” That’s how the children of this woman talk. What greater words could a mother receive? Children, even while still in the home, can realize that a woman is an outstanding mother. Of course, when they are full-grown they too can look back with gratitude and thanks for a mother who accomplished her role effectively and Biblically. They will sing their mother’s praises throughout their entire lifetime.

b. She is recognized by her husband (vs. 28b).

This is clearly seen when the text says that her husband “praiseth her” in much the same way her children do. He sends a joyous note of praise to his wife for being a kind, loving, submissive, consistent, teaching, virtuous mother and wife. Any man who knows that he has a good wife should send forth praise to her for her commitment to excellence and living, as God wants her to live. He should not hold back his praise to her.

10. She is renowned (vv. 29-31).

The virtuous woman has a reputation of being a woman that is a true godly mother, a spiritual woman, and a wife that is committed to the welfare of her family and the success of her husband. Everybody knows this when viewing her walk and talk in life.

She has a three-fold reputation:

a. She is a superior woman (vs. 29).

“Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.”

The term “daughters” is an expression related to womanhood and this statement is actually made by her husband. In his praise of her

womanhood he reminds her that she is a renowned woman or a woman with a reputation that tops them all. The term “excellest” means surpassing and in this context means to “be superior” or “be better than.” He was saying, “You are the best of them all. You beat them all. You are the number one among them all.” This is because she had “done virtuously” or practiced true Biblical womanhood by the way she lived. She was a woman of excellence in her character and conduct of living (vs. 10) and this brought praise to the lips of her husband. He was so thankful for her godly life and ministry.

b. She is a spiritual woman (vs. 30).

“Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised.”

Verse thirty is the capstone of this woman’s noble character. She may be beautiful to look upon in her purple fancy clothing (vs. 22) but her true beauty was her spiritual character. Her true beauty was seen in the way she lived and expressed herself as a woman of excellence. The expression “Favour is deceitful” means that a woman’s outward charm or beauty can mislead or trick people as to what she is really like. Beauty does not tell the full story or really any of the story in regards to a woman’s true character.

Matthew Henry put it this way:

“There may be an impure deformed soul lodged in a comely and beautiful body.”

Men, don’t let beauty cause you to make a quick decision for a future mate. Beauty can be very deceiving. It might be an illusion or mirage. By the way, beauty changes through the course of the years. The young look gives way to the older look. Beauty is a transitory thing whereas the true beauty of a woman’s character will last forever.

When the Bible says that “beauty is vain” it is not giving women the advice to try and look as ugly as they can for their husbands. One must understand that the Bible is making a comparison here. The point is this. In comparison to virtue and spirituality, outward beauty is vain. It is empty. It can’t do anything for a woman. It has nothing true and lasting to offer a woman. Spiritual living is the true beauty that

lasts for it is not transitory; it is the true beauty for it brings joy and gladness to the home, and it is true beauty for it is the mark of godliness and spiritual excellence. Some women spend hours trying to improve their external beauty and miss out on what has lasting value!

1 Peter 3:3-4 gives us this same perspective on beauty:

“Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.”

A woman’s true beauty is seen in that she “feareth the LORD” which means that she has deep reverence and respect for God, so much so, that she possesses a wholesome dread of not pleasing God with her life. In other words, the virtuous woman lives to please God and this is her driving force. She wants to live in such a way that her life brings pleasure to God and that she has His favor. The fear of God means that she lives to honor God and with this mindset she will not want to do anything that will bring displeasure to Him. The fear of God is the deep respect that people have toward God and the dread of not pleasing him. This fear is exhibited when people seek to honor God in all that they do and say. When a woman lives like this her husband will rise up and praise her. In short, he will shout, “Hurray for my wife. She is so wonderful.”

c. She is a successful woman (vs. 31)

“Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates.”

The husband is now saying that his virtuous wife is successful in life and she should be rewarded accordingly. The “fruit of her hands” speaks of those things that her own hands have wrought or what she has accomplished (vs. 16). It encompasses everything that she does in her life from a physical perspective (her craft) and from a spiritual perspective (her virtues). The husband is declaring that his wife should receive great blessing from God in view of her success as a

virtuous woman or a woman of excellence. An unusual woman calls for unusual recognition!

The virtues of an excellent wife are those that are seen in Proverbs 31. They encompass such things as hard work, wise investments, good use of time, planning ahead, care for others, respect for one's spouse, ability to share godly values with others, wise counsel, and godly reverence or fear. These are qualities that lead to honor, praise, success, personal dignity and worth, and enjoyment of life. Ladies, it truly does pay to practice virtuous living. It pays in this life and it will pay in the next life. A woman will receive praise "in the gates" or the public domain of life by her husband but more important she will receive God's reward and praise throughout eternity for fulfilling her role as a virtuous woman and excellent wife (Rev. 22:12).

So we have discovered the burden that every godly mother should possess for her son. Her burden should be for her son to find this rare ruby of Proverbs 31. Every mother should be instructing her son about the importance of marrying the right woman who will have a genuine heart for him and the home.

Proverbs 31:1

"The words of king Lemuel, the prophecy that his mother taught him."

Every wise mother knows that the happiness and blessing of her son's future depends on the kind of person he chooses as his lifelong mate. What else can this mother possibly say? Only one thing.

Proverbs 31:10

"Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies."

"No man is poor who has had a godly mother."

Abraham Lincoln

2. The woman should be a helpmate to her husband.

Genesis 2:18

"And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him."

1 Corinthians 11:9

“Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.”

This is a beautiful expression of truth that is echoing the Genesis arrangement or the purpose for which women were created. The woman was created and designed to help the man (Gen. 2:18). She was created “for the man” (1 Cor. 11:9). Ladies, are you really for your man? She was given the very name “woman” because she was taken out of man (Gen. 2:23) and was to be the man’s helper. Someone who follows after and is created to help and assist a person cannot be the leader of that person or authority figure over that person. Paul reasons this way elsewhere (1 Tim. 2:11–13).

If a young fellow comes to a new job and wants to start bossing the foreman around there is going to be fireworks on the job. It just doesn’t work this way in real life. The obvious point is this. The woman was not designed to rule in the stead or place of the man but was created to carry out man’s will who is her head and become his helper in life (1 Cor. 11: 3).

It’s interesting that the woman was brought to the man (Gen. 2:22) that she might be for him. She is to be for her husband as Paul said (1 Cor. 11:9); she is behind him, backing him up; she is supportive of him; she wants him to succeed and she is deeply involved in this process. She is there for him in every way she can be and finding great delight in doing whatever she can for her man. Ladies, stand by your man! Get behind your man! This is the beauty of marriage. This is the way a woman is man’s helper. She is there to help man follow his God-given directives for his life. She is there to assist the man to fulfill his obligations to God. Many a wife leads a double life – hers and his. This is not Biblical or according to God’s creative purpose for the wife.

Someone wrote:

“Some men achieve distinction by the kind of car they drive – others by the kind of wife that is driving them.”

Ladies, God has not put you in the driver's seat. God has not created you to lead your husband and take him where you want to go in life. The woman was brought to the man in order to be his helper – not his leader. The woman is to be “for the man” (1 Cor. 11:9). Men, we need help! We can't possibly pack four lunches, change diapers, and do three loads of wash at the same time. We need help. Actually, we need a mental, physical, and spiritual helper who is on our level. The description of her as a “help meet” (Gen. 2:18) means “a helper corresponding to man.”

This means that the woman shared the same nature of the man, which was unlike the animal and plant kingdoms. A man may enjoy a form of companionship with a dog, but only on the dog's level. A man may keep a monkey in a cage and enjoy his monkey company but it's not the same as the company of a woman. With a wife, a man finds companionship on his own level for she is his equally created in God's image (Gen. 1:26-27). So the woman was taken from man (Gen. 2:21) so she could be like man in his original creation (Gen. 2:7) and become a helper that is suitable to him.

We can be sure that the woman corresponded to the man. Eve possessed a beauty to Adam's eyes unlike any of the animals or plants that he had ever seen. Any woman today who is beautiful inherited it originally from mother Eve. There is no beauty that women have today that Eve did not have. She was the queen of all beauty. She was a doll from the word “get go” as we say and she was the other half of Adam. She was his counterpart.

Now if man is to achieve his objectives in life, he needs the help of his mate or counterpart in every way. Since she is man's counterpart (created in his likeness), she is the kind of help that man needs, since she is able to identify with him on a mental, physical, and spiritual level of existence. Because this is true she can meet the man's needs for love, companionship, and fellowship. She can also assist him in serving the Lord and following God's purpose for his life. Of all the home remedies that have been given to mankind, a good wife is still the best!

Nancy DeMoss said:

“The Truth is that God did not make the man to be a helper to the woman. He made the woman to be a helper to the man.”

This is why the woman could be such a perfect helper to man. She could be the perfect compliment, counterpart, and completer to man which is designed to assist him in fulfilling his creative purpose as leader and head of the family unit. This does not mean she challenges the man’s leadership position but compliments it. She does this not only by submitting to him but also helping him in any and every way that she can to accomplish his spiritual goals and objectives. She is given her submissive sphere of ministry that is designed to back up and enhance the man’s leadership position.

This is what marriage is all about. It’s a woman helping a man to achieve God’s goals and objectives for his life. This is why she was taken from man (Gen. 2:21). This is why she was brought to the man (Gen. 2:22). She is there to assist him in life. She was created for the man (1 Cor. 11:9) to meet his needs of companionship and assist him in his work and spiritual goals. None of the animals could ever meet man’s needs of love, companionship, and fellowship. Nor could they assist and support Adam in following God’s will.

Ladies, if you are married, God will hold you responsible to be an asset to your husband. Proverbs 31:12 states: “She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.” Ladies, do you make it easy for your husband to fulfill his God-given calling to lead in the home, church, and society? Do you respond to your husband in a way that demonstrates respect for his manhood and leadership position or role in the marriage relationship?

Matthew Henry used to say that God didn’t take the woman from the head of Adam to be his superior, or from his foot to be his inferior, but He took her from his side to be equal with him, to be along with him. Someone else added: “Woman was taken not from Adam’s head to dominate him, nor from his feet to be trodden down, but from under his arm to be protected, and from near his heart to be loved.” How very true!

The modern thinking of most women today has been largely shaped by the feminist movement, which has tried to promote a spirit of independence. Women are encouraged to pursue independence, careers, personal recognition, and self-satisfaction instead of modeling their life according to God's design of being a submissive helpmate to their husbands. God's truth flies in the face of our modern culture and feministic ideas. Feminism teaches that the husband's life is to revolve around the woman's goals, needs, and interests but the Bible teaches that the wife is to revolve her life around the husband's goals, needs, and interests in life. A wife who thinks, "My husband is supposed to serve me" is not going to be submissive to her husband and become the kind of helper that God wants her to be in the marriage.

There is a beauty that should be evident in every wedding. When a man and a woman stand together to be married, the marriage ceremony has for centuries recognized that she is giving herself to him. She is giving herself to him as she holds his arm and clings to him in the front of the aisle. The man is responsible to cherish his wife as the most valuable gift that God has given to him and to protect this gift and guard it. But the woman is basically saying to her man those beautiful words in the book of Ruth, "for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God" (Ruth 1:16).

Now, if you do not want to do this, then do not get married because that is what marriage means. This is what marriage is all about. It's about a woman giving herself away to a man and selling out for him. God brings her to the man and she says, "I'll follow this man and be his helper in every way to achieve God's purpose for his life. This is because the man's purpose now becomes my purpose in life. I will uphold this work and do everything I can to help this man succeed in doing the will of God." That is marriage! It's nothing more or nothing less.

Martha Peace writes:

"God's will for every Christian wife is that her most important ministry be to her husband (Genesis 2:18). After a wife's own personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, nothing else should have a greater priority. Her husband should be the primary benefactor of his

wife's time and energy, not the recipient of what may be left over at the end of the day. Whether her husband is a faithful Christian man, or an unbeliever, God wants every Christian woman to be a godly wife-an excellent wife.”

There is an obscure passage in the Old Testament, which pinpoints the quality of help and support, which a husband always wants to find in his mate. It is found in the context of the wedding between Isaac and Rebekah when the servant returns with the new bride. Genesis 24:67 records, “And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.”

The text suggests that after the death of Isaac's mother Rebekah met a need in the life of Isaac. He has the need for security, companionship, and encouragement. Ladies, this is what God wants you to be to your husband. He wants you to be helper to him and reach out to meet his needs in life. This is why God created you. You are to be there and meet the needs of your man, to help him along in life, to assist him in any way that you can – physically, mentally, and spiritually.

1 Corinthians 7:3-4

“Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife.”

This verse reminds every woman of what God expects of her in the physical relationship. God wants her to be submissive physically in the marriage. When a woman remembers that God has called her to be a helper to her husband she will seek to meet his physical needs in life. God has created a woman to fulfill her husband's physical needs and give him a sense of completeness and satisfaction in life. As a wife you might ask yourself this question: “Do I reserve intimate communications, looks, words, and touch for my husband only? God has called you to meet the important physical needs in your husband's life. When you do this you are fulfilling part of what it means to be a helpmate to your husband. Ladies, Satan will tempt your man if he does not get physical satisfaction in the home. So

when you lovingly and passionately offer yourself to your husband you are meeting a very important need in his life.

Someone wrote:

“To a man, one of the main advantages of a home, is that it offers him refuge from the troubles of the day. Life in the modern business or industrial world is not a picnic. He is fighting all day long, in one sense or another. When the whistle blows, he longs for peace, harmony, comfort, and love. The wife who creates that atmosphere in the home, who fills that place in her husband’s life, knows her business!”

Ladies, your primary ministry in life is to be to your husband. Do you know why? It’s because he needs you! He needs your encouragement and help in life. He needs your love and companionship. He needs your backing and support. If you make this commitment to your husband God will bless you and your marriage in a wonderful way. Ladies, are you committed to support your husband in every way possible and to always act in his best interests?

3. The woman should be a humble submissive partner in the marriage.

Let’s break down our study on submission in the following way.

a. The truth about submission.

Colossians 3:18 states:

“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.”

The Greek word for “submit” is actually a military term that means, “to be in subjection.” This verse means that a wife is to place herself under the authority of her husband and the reason for doing so is because “it is fit in the Lord.” This means that it is proper and becoming for a woman to do this. In other words, it’s the right thing to do! Ladies, this is what the Lord tells you to do. It’s what He expects from your life. I wonder if obedience to the Lord means anything to you today? Does the fact that God wants you to be submissive mean anything to you? This is fitting in the Lord. This is right. This is the

thing to do. This is where it's at in life! This is what it's all about. One thing is certain. When you don't do this your life is no longer pleasing to the Lord. God is looking for women whose lives are fit and in order. He is looking for those who take obedience seriously and who know what God expects from their lives. By the way, having a right order in our homes is a duty to our Creator who ordained the order of submission and headship (1 Cor. 11:3). Therefore, when a wife submits she is doing what is right or fitting in God's eyes.

The wife in the marriage relationship is to be a hen and not a rooster! She is to learn the secret of following her man and submitting to his authority over her life. The Bible has much to say about submission. Few wives have the right heart attitude to be submissive to their husbands because they are not being led by the Holy Spirit. Even if a wife desires to please God by being submissive to her husband she will not always feel like being submissive. But regardless of her feelings and the frustrations of the day every wife must develop the right heart, the right resolve, and right attitude about submission.

When you learn to follow God's truth about submission, your feelings will eventually improve. Many wives are motivated solely or primarily by how they feel, and that makes their motivation in the marriage relationship selfish and sinful. They ask, "What can I get out of this marriage?" However, they should ask, "How can the Lord Jesus Christ be honored in my life and in this marriage?"

Many women don't really know the joy of Biblical submission because they are not walking by the Spirit's power (Eph. 5:18). They don't have a godly attitude toward obedience and doing what is right. They view submission as something miserable and then spread their misery to others. They are bitter or determined to have their own way and struggle terribly in life because they possess a resentful attitude and the spark of rebellion in their hearts. Ladies, God wants to change your heart in this area and make you into the kind of woman that is filled with the Spirit and submissive to your marriage partner. When you walk close to God and enjoy His presence in your life He will implant within your heart the right desires (Ps. 37:3) and you will become a different type of woman in the marriage and home. Satan knows that if you could see the truth of Biblical submission that you

would joyfully embrace it and become liberated in your life from sin and a disobedient spirit (John 8:32).

b. The lie about submission.

Ladies, one of the lies that Satan wants you to believe about submission is this. "If I submit to my husband I'll be miserable. I'll miss out on something that is better for my life." This simply is not true. You can't be truly fulfilled in life unless you are obedient to what God tells you to do and are fulfilling the role that God has designed for you as a woman. True fulfillment is found in obeying God and following His will for your life (James 1:25). Ladies, if you want to have the "days of heaven upon the earth" (Deut. 11:21) then you must learn the secret of being submissive. Don't believe the lies of Satan and feminism. Believe God!

Genesis 3:4-5

"And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

Satan convinced Eve that if she submits to God's direction for her life she would miss out on something really big for her life. Satan is saying the same thing to women today in relationship to submission. He is saying, "If you take submission seriously and do what God wants you to do, then you are going to miss out on something that is far better and more fulfilling than following God's plan for your life." What does Satan try and do? He sells the lie that there is something better than following God's will. He is a liar!

Let me be very honest with you today. If you know that you should be submissive to your husband in some specific areas but are not, then you must come to grips with the reality that Satan has snowballed you. He has peddled his lie before you and you have bought into it. You actually believe that refusing to be submissive is the better way and the better life. Ladies, don't believe it. Satan is playing with your minds. Don't you see it? When you are disobedient to what God wants you to do then you are being blind sided by the devil.

Satan is doing a masterful job at convincing women that submission is a narrow and negative way of life. He has convinced women that submission is a nuisance or something that is not in line with their best interests for life. Satan has taken a beautiful, holy, and powerful truth and made it look ugly, frightening, and undesirable. This is exactly what he did in the Garden of Eden. He came to Eve and made something else to be more attractive than God's command for her life and downgraded God's will to something that was negative and a nuisance to her way of life. Ladies beware! Don't allow the devil to sell you a bill of goods.

Ladies, why aren't you submissive? You must understand that when you fail to submit to your husband you are failing to submit to God's authority over your life. This is why you are not submissive in the marriage relationship. Did you ever stop and think about this? When you rebel against your husband's authority it's because you have already rebelled against God's authority over your life. You have decided to rebel against His will for your life and say to God, "I'll do it my way."

James 4:7 says:

"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

Ladies, God wants you to submit to His absolute authority and control over your life, and when you do the devil will flee from you, and God will grant you victory over rebellion, stubbornness, and deceptive feelings. Submitting to God's authority means that you put yourself under His rank and allow Him to be your leader and sole authority figure. When you are tempted to rebel against God's truth about submission you are in actuality shaking your fist at God and saying in your heart, "God, I don't care what You say, I'm going to do this my way." Rebellion is a grievous sin in the eyes of God and against God.

1 Samuel 15:22-23

"And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity

and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king.”

Why is stubbornness compared to witchcraft? Are you ready for this ladies? It's because those who practice witchcraft open themselves up to demons and satanic intrusion into their lives. The practice of witchcraft brings people in contact with demons and they become openly vulnerable to them and their deceptive ways. The parallel to rebellion cannot be missed. When we openly and defiantly practice rebellion against God's commands for our lives we are being led and deceived by the demonic world. We don't have to be stirring a witch's brew over boiling water to be influenced and led astray by demons.

Whenever we place ourselves outside God's truth and are no longer under God's rank or authority we open ourselves up to the powerful forces of the underworld. Listen, this is real. If you are indifferent to submission in the marriage, if you don't think it really matters, then you are being influenced and duped by demons in your marriage relationship for rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft.

Ladies, what is it going to take for you to change and follow God's pattern for your life and marriage? Let me tell you what it's going to take. It's going to take victory over rebellion (James. 4:7). It's going to take submitting your life to God. You are going to have to put all on the altar and turn your life over to God. Our fallen human nature and all feminist theology have a problem with authority (Gen. 3:16). This is the way I see it. We simply don't want anyone telling us what to do! Not even God!

There is no such thing as respectable rebellion. All rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft. It is a sin that is against God and sin that is fueled by the underworld of demons. I'm telling you the truth today. What bill of goods has the devil sold you that is keeping you from committing your life to God's will and pattern for submission? What are you afraid of if you follow God's command for submission? What frightens you? The devil wants to put fear in your heart (Heb. 2:14) so that you do not follow God's purpose for your life. Perhaps you are afraid that your husband will be unfair or mistreat you. However, a submissive wife filled with the Spirit is not afraid of doing the right thing. She will entrust herself to God (Prov. 3:5-6), knowing that in difficulty, God will

give her the grace she needs (2 Cor. 12:9) to get through anything that she faces in the future.

Perhaps you have experienced or seen mistreatment in the past and fear what may come upon your life if you submit. God can dispel all of these fears if you will come to Him and surrender. Maybe you simply don't want to submit to your husband knowing that it will mean more spiritual commitment on your part. If this is the case, then you need to have a spiritual change of heart. You need to do some old-fashioned repenting and get right with God (Rev. 2:5). You should be willing and ready to follow your husband as he seeks to take the spiritual lead in the family. Remember this. To ignore God's order has a high price tag (Numbers 32:23).

c. The reason for submission.

1. Because of the command of God.

1 John 5:3

“For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.”

We have already seen that God wants a woman to be submissive to her husband (Co. 3:18). The reason a woman should want to obey her husband is because God says that she should obey him (Eph. 5:22). It is the right thing to do. It is honoring to the Lord. This is reason enough to submit. Knowing that the high King of Heaven wants you to submit to your husband should cause every woman who lives close to God to obey His wishes. You can obey God knowing that His commands are never “grievous” or hard to bear and tolerate. They are actually blessings that seek to regulate our spiritual lives and keep our lives in order. God's commands are God's enablements and our love and dedication to the Lord is reflected in the way we obey His commands.

Jesus said in John 14:15:

“If ye love me, keep my commandments.”

I wonder how much we really love the Lord these days? Are we really in love with Him? There are so many things in this life that keep us

from loving Him and enjoying the wonder of His presence and power from operating in our lives. We must always ask ourselves, “What is right? What does God want me to do? What is God’s will for my life?” When we start asking, “What do I need, what do I want to do, or what is in it for me” we fall into the devil’s trap.

2. Because of the truth of God.

Titus 2:5 says that women are to be “obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.” Why are wives to live like this? So the Word of God is not blasphemed or ridiculed. In other words, when you are disobedient toward your husband’s leadership and wishes you blaspheme the truth of God’s Word or defame and make mockery out of the truth of God’s Word, by the way that you live and act. Furthermore, you also open the door for others to blaspheme or ridicule and mock the truth as well. When children of God do not follow the instructions of their Father in His Word, unbelievers are led to reject the sincerity of their religious profession and the truth of the Word of God. Ladies, when you live in defiance against God’s commands it tells the story that God’s truth is not worthy following and that the Christian way of life is really only one of many approaches to living that can be embraced or discarded at will. Listen, disobedience mocks and ridicules God’s truth.

The wife’s submission or obedience to the husband is set in the context of not blaspheming God’s truth. Every woman must be conscious of the reproach brought upon Christ, Christianity, and the cause of Christ by disobedience and inconsistent living as a woman. Ladies, when you live in rebellion against God’s truth and design for your life then the Word of God is made into a mockery for it’s looked upon by both you and the watching world as something that is meaningless and which has no authority over your life. Christian wives can still be sure that the Lord will honor those who value what He values. He will bless them and His Word will not be blasphemed through faithful obedience to what He says and commands.

3. Because of the work of God.

1 Peter 3:1

“Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives.”

You may say, “But you don’t know my husband.” No, I don’t. But God does. You may say, “If my husband demonstrates genuine Christian leadership, then I will obey him.” Ladies, the Bible does not give you this option. Every wife is to be submissive to her husband, whether he is a believer or not. God has given to the man the place of headship (1 Cor. 11:3), and it is His will that the woman should acknowledge the authority of the man in the marriage relationship. Ladies, your submission is not based upon what kind of husband you have or how spiritual or unspiritual he is within his life.

The Bible says that you should practice submission to him for the simple reason that submission is designed to alter or change your husband’s character and living. In the case of an unsaved husband a woman’s godly submission to him can have a saving impact upon his life. In other words, the woman’s submission can become a Christian testimony to the man and eventually challenge him to give his life to Christ (1 Cor. 7:14).

How does a woman win her husband to the Lord “without the word” as this text says? She does it by living the truth before him. This means that the wife need not be preaching to her husband constantly about salvation. Great harm has been done by wives who nag their husbands concerning the Gospel and who are constantly cramming it down their throats. The emphasis here is on the wife’s winning her husband by living Christ daily before him. A submissive lifestyle can have a positive impact upon a man’s life so much so that it might lead him to seek the kind of life that the wife possesses in Christ. Her life can lead to the question, “What must I do to be saved” (Acts 16:31). Submission can do a great work in the hearts of husbands. This is true for saved and unsaved husbands. The presence of a godly woman can have a sanctifying effect upon a husband that can encourage him to live as God wants him to live and fulfill his responsibilities in the marriage relationship. In short, your submission can do a great transforming work in the heart and life of your husband (Prov. 27:17).

a. The motive for submission.

1. Submission to God

Ephesians 5:22

“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.”

The wife needs to remember that when she submits to her husband she is really submitting to the Lord and His will and plan for her life. This is what it means when it says she submits “as to the Lord.” The underlying motive and incentive for submission is that you are really submitting to the Lord and want to honor and please Him (Co. 3:18). The wife’s submission to her husband is really an act of submission to the Lord for she is ultimately under His authority and command. Whenever we follow God’s command we are ultimately following Him and living to please and glorify Him (1 Cor. 10:31). This should add a whole new twist on the wife’s submission. When the wife submits, she must remember that she is really submitting to God’s plan and will for her life. In reality, she is really submitting to the Lord as she yields to His purpose for her life. Ladies, this paints submission in a different light. As you submit to your husband you are submitting to the King of Kings and Lord of lords!

2. Example to the angels.

1 Corinthians 11:10

“For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels.”

This verse reminds why a woman was to be submissive to her husband. The custom in Corinth was to wear a veil as a sign of submission. But the underlying and intriguing point of this verse is that submission and angels are somehow tied together. This verse actually gives the reason (“For this cause”) why the woman is to be submissive to the man. What do angels have to do with a woman practicing submission? We do know that the angels of God are all about us. People often think of angels as remaining in Heaven and only coming to earth on rare occasions to bring some message. But

that is not true (Heb. 1:13,14). However, we know that angels are spectators of the church (1 Cor. 4:9; Eph. 3:10; 1 Tim. 5:21).

Angels are apparently interested with submissive behavior since they are creatures of submission. The elect or good angels are servants of the most high God. Angels submit to God's leadership and perform His will (Psalm 103:20; 104:4; Gen. 28:12). Angels are examples of creaturely subordination to God and when they see rebellious women in the church or home they take offence to such actions. For this reason, women should practice submission. Angels view what is taking place among women in the marriage and home relationship in regards to submissive behavior. The point seems to be this. The women of Corinth needed to practice submission or else the angles would take offense. If angels see woman being rebellious to their husbands, while at the same time coming to church and claiming to be serving God, then they would be offended by such actions. Angels are supposed to learn from the church but they will learn nothing about submission if Christian women are not following the Biblical mandate that God has called them to uphold.

Another possible reason for wives submitting to their husbands is because angels can also be tempted to rebel as they did in the beginning (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 12:4). Therefore, when they see women rebelling against authority they too may be tempted to rebel against God's authority. Because of the angels, every woman should practice submission, lest she should become a stumbling block and curse to them.

Ladies, have you offended the angels this week? Have you tempted them this week? When your husband wanted to come to church and you said "No," do you realize that the angels were offended and perhaps tempted to rebel against their own authority? When your husband had to make a final decision and you defied that decision you did so in front of the children and also the angels. Instead of seeing submission the angels have seen rebellion in a woman who was created to be submissive to her husband and God's design. Ladies, when you want to flare up and become an authority in the home the angels become offended for they witness a woman who is God's child behaving in a way that frustrates God's purpose for submission. The angels are watching us all the time.

b. The respect of submission.

Ephesians 5:23

“For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.”

The respect that is linked to the wife’s submission should be to honor her head, which is her husband. She should seek to show respect to her husband as the leader of the marriage unit, even as we are to show respect or honor to Christ, who is the head of the body or New Testament church. This is the analogy that Paul has created for us to see. Just as we honor Jesus Christ, who is the head of the Church, when we submit to His authority, so a wife should seek to honor her head by submitting to His authority. She demonstrates respect for her husband as the head of the family unit when she submits to him.

Ephesians 5:33

“Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.”

The wife should express reverence and respect toward the husband in the marriage relationship. Remember the analogy of the human body to understand what Paul is saying. The head of the body gives the orders and takes the lead. The body must respond to the head. If the body does not respond to the head both the body and head are dishonored. When the body responds to the head there is harmony and coordination. So the motive behind a woman’s submission as a wife should be to promote honor and respect for her husband as the head. A woman’s submission really brings honor to both the body and the head in that they are functioning together as they should. Ladies, does your husband sense that you reverence and respect him by your attitude, actions, and overall demeanor towards him? Reverence and respect toward the husband should be manifested by right attitudes, what you say, and how you act before him. Do others know that you respect your husband? Do the children see this respect in the marriage relationship?

When a wife respects her husband she will not tell his faults to others. By the way, you cannot live with another person without knowing their faults Ladies, if you truly respect your husband you will not tell your

girlfriends, children, your mother, or the preacher your man's faults. If you undercut the leadership of your home it will not help matters. Furthermore, your husband will feel betrayed. A wife who reverences her husband will seek to honor him in the home and outside the home. Here is a piece of good advice. If you make your husband know that he is respected, you will have a happy home. Seek his guidance and respect what he says, thank him for fixing things around the house, for being a spiritual leader, and apologize when necessary. Respect goes a long way. If you show respect to your husband you will reap the blessing.

Here is another word to the wise. If you are not married make sure that you look for a man that you can respect. The time to get the respect issue settled is before you are married. If you cannot respect him for a lifetime, don't even consider marrying him. If you don't have respect, run! Some people buy a home with the intent of remodeling it but before the remodeling project is finished they get sick of the house. In a similar way, if you marry a remodeling project I can guarantee you that you will probably be sick of the marriage before you finish the job.

f. The extent of submission.

Ephesians 5:24

"Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing."

Marriage is not a fifty-fifty deal. I know that this makes sense in our modern world and culture but this emphasis is not in harmony with the pattern of God's Word. Short of sin (Acts 5:29), a woman is commanded to obey her husband "in every thing." Ladies, it does not say in some things or things that make sense to you. It says, "in every thing." So much for fifty-fifty. In a marriage, someone has to be the head of the home; it cannot be a fifty-fifty split of authority. Democracy will not work in the home since the vote would be tied! When it comes to a wife following the leadership, direction, and decisions of her husband the wife must be submissive to her husband in everything. Marriage does not work or function, according to God's design, when a woman is not willing to submit to her husband in every area – physically, spiritually, and directionally. Although she

may not always agree with his decisions she will willingly submit knowing that God is pleased with her submission.

As a wife it's important that you don't make moves on your own. When leadership is needed you should ask your husband, "What should I do about this situation?" If the telephone rings and someone wants a decision on something you might get in the habit of saying, as a wife, "Just wait a minute, you will have to ask my husband." Ladies, the man as leader will delegate certain areas to you where you can make decisions. In this way you can be his helper (Gen. 2:18). However, make sure that they are delegated areas, not usurped areas. Actually the few words, "You will have to ask my husband" will save a lot of grief in your home.

Ladies, are you submissive to your husband in your actions as well as your attitude? Here is another question that probes even deeper. Have you ever agreed with God that your husband is your spiritual head? Have you come to the place where you said to God, "Lord, I know that my husband is the spiritual leader and head of this home and I will by God's grace follow his leadership and direction." If you have never done this, you need to bring yourself to this point of surrender (Rom. 12:1-2). If you are not willing to say this to God, then it only proves that you have a sour spirit and disobedient heart toward what God wants you to be and do.

Every woman needs to take inventory of her life today and ask, "Do I allow my husband to lead me, or do I resist his leadership, making it difficult for him to fulfill his God-given responsibility?" A husband is looking for a wife that willingly submits to his leadership and direction. When a wife is willing to do this the marriage relationship becomes orderly and according to God's design for marriage.

The famous philosopher Socrates said:

"By all means marry. If you get a good wife, you will become very happy; if you get a bad one, you will become a philosopher – that is also good."

g. The model of submission.

1. Church submits to Christ

Ephesians 5:23-24

“For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.”

Now what is the pattern or model, which you are to follow in the area of submission? The Bible says that a woman should follow the example of submission, which the Church has toward Christ (“Therefore as the church is subject to Christ”). Christ is the head of the Church and therefore each member within the body of Christ must be submissive to Christ’s authority and leadership over their lives. They must follow His decisions and direction for their lives. We are under His authority throughout life. In like manner, the wife is to come under the authority of her husband within the marriage relationship.

The wife is to submit to his authority, leadership, decisions, care and protection over her life, even as the Church does with Christ. This is the model of submission that is given in Ephesians. Ladies, does your response to your husband demonstrate to the world the beauty and blessing of submission to Christ? Do you respond to your husband in the same way the church is to respond to Christ? Your submission to your husband is testifying of the submission that the church is to have with Christ. This is the model of submission that you should portray in your marriage. But there is another model of submission.

2. Christ submits to the Father.

1 Corinthians 11:3

“But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.”

The Bible reminds us that the head of Jesus Christ is God the Father. The relationship that the Son has with the Father is one of submission (John 5:30; 8:29). The Son always wants to please the Father and do His will. The greatest example or model of submission is when Jesus was willing to die and give His life a ransom upon the cross (Phil. 2:5-8). Ladies, this model of submission should be a tremendously motivating factor in becoming Biblically submissive to

your husband. Jesus was obedient even to the point of death. Jesus was willing to die the sinner's death in following the plan of the Father. There is no greater model than this.

3. Women submit to their husbands.

1 Peter 3:5-6

“For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.”

There are many examples of women in the Bible who were submissive to their husbands. They serve as good role models to Christian women today. Sarah was one example of a submissive woman. She respected her husband Abraham and knew where her place was in the home and marriage relationship. You can follow her example knowing that God will honor your life and bring great blessing, peace, and order to your home when you follow in the same pattern of submission.

Richard De Haan writes this concerning submission:

“Some women refuse to comply to these scriptural injunctions. They insist on having their own way no matter what the consequences may be. Without regard to God's formula for the man-woman, husband-wife relationship, they will do whatever it takes to get their own way. This is their detriment and shame. Their husbands suffer. The whole family senses that things are out of order. And the woman may be the worst loser.”

Ladies, you must ask God to make you what you ought to be in the marriage relationship. Only when you place yourself under God's authority can you have true fulfillment in your life and marriage. Look at the examples of women who have submitted and found great blessing in their lives and brought great blessing to their families. This will inspire and encourage you to follow in the same train or example.

h. The power for submission.

Ephesians 5:18

“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.”

God has provided a way for the wife to submit to her husband. He has provided a divine means whereby she can lovingly have victory over the old nature of rebellion, which seeks or desires to have control and dominance over the man. This divine means is the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit can fill or control her life so that she can lovingly submit and not rebel against her husband. When a wife is under the control of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit will lead her into this practice of submission. The filling of the Spirit is set in the context of submission.

This spirit of rebellion against the man was part of the Genesis curse (Genesis 3:16). Women would seek to dominate men because of their old nature. They would continue to follow the same path, which Eve did, when she became a leader over Adam by offering the fruit to him. So begins the battle of the sexes and the women’s liberation movement. The only way that a woman and wife can overcome this old nature and habit of rebellion is to be filled with the Spirit. Under His control she can lovingly submit and not give in to the Genesis curse. A godly wife will by the Spirit’s power and enablement place herself under her husband’s authority. She will follow the husband’s leading and direction in life. She will obey him and live under his authority. The Holy Spirit will cultivate patience, peace, and other pertinent virtues in her life that will enable her to live under her husband’s authority (Gal. 5:22-23).

Every wife must acknowledge that her man is her head and leader. If a wife is more gifted, capable, and spiritual than her husband, rather than dominating him, she should encourage and aid him (Gen. 2:18) to be more active in home leadership and in serving the local church. If she is tempted to nag him, she should resist the temptation and praise him instead. This can only be accomplished by the power of the Holy Spirit. Lehman Strauss said: “The greatest unused power in the world is the power of the Holy Spirit.”

- i. The beauty of submission.

1 Peter 3:1-6

“Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. Whose adorning (beauty) let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.”

What makes a woman beautiful? The Bible says it's her obedience and quiet submissive spirit that outshines her physical beauty. Her true beauty is witnessed when she is willing to place herself under God's truth and the authority of her husband. The word “adorning” in these verses speaks of beauty and loveliness. There is something beautiful about a submissive woman that cannot be matched with any other beauty. A submissive woman is more beautiful than a lovely spring day. She is more beautiful than a whole bouquet of freshly cut flowers. She is more beautiful than any outward beauty that a woman might demonstrate in her dress and appearance. The true and lasting beauty of a woman is to be her inner spiritual life that leads to her willingness to submit to her husband.

The mention of “the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit” (1 Pet. 3:4) means that a woman who is spiritual, led by the Holy Spirit, and submissive, will not be overbearing and brawling in the marriage relationship. She will manifest a spirit of meekness (humble, mild disposition) and quietness (peacefulness tranquility) as she accepts her role in the marriage relationship. She will not become the type of woman that seeks to override and overwhelm her husband with her demands and demeanor. Rather, she will seek to humbly place herself under the husband's leadership and follow him. She will also be a woman who influences her husband by gentle words instead of controlling and intimidating words. Her overall demeanor and her words demonstrate humility and mildness.

Dr. Jowett comments:

“The difference between a loud woman and a woman of quiet spirit is the difference between fireworks and sunshine, between a quiet, genial glow and a cracking bonfire.”

Men think jewels are precious but God considers precious the jewel of a gentle and quiet spirit (“which is in the sight of God of great price”). Ladies, what is valuable to God is your spiritual obedience – not your physical beauty. Your physical beauty begins to fade with age and time but your spiritual beauty never fades away. The spiritual beauty that leads to submissiveness is the only true beauty that lasts. It is the beauty that makes a marriage sparkle and shine. Ladies, you must learn the secret of walking in the Spirit’s power and when you do you can be the kind of woman that God wants you to be in the home and marriage.

Someone said:

“It is useless to call your husband ‘Honey,’ if you act like vinegar toward him.”

We must remember that submission in the marriage relationship does not destroy the equality of the sexes. Both Adam and Eve were created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27) and both were on the same human level possessing intelligence far above the lower beasts. Both were created with the same capacity to worship God and commune with the Creator. There is equality in the sexes. The fundamental teaching of the Bible does not deny this. The problem with the feminist movement of today is that they want to ignore and obliterate the roles within the marriage relationship. Their aim is to restructure homes and society on the basis that men and women have equal roles in a marriage unit.

We must understand that there is equality in human creation but there has never been equality in marital roles. The “equal rights” movement is not God’s movement! There is a clear chain of authority given in the Bible for the family institution (1 Cor. 11:1-3). And this chain exists not because men are superior to women in any way but simply because God instituted it for functional design within the home that is patterned after the Godhead.

4. The woman should manifest honorable traits of Christian character and service.

One godly woman wrote:

“The fact that I am a woman does not make me a different kind of Christian, but the fact that I am a Christian does make me a different kind of woman. For I have accepted God's idea of me, and my whole life is an offering back to Him of all that I am and all that He wants me to be.”

a. Christian character

2 Timothy 1:5

“When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.”

Here is a woman who possessed what was called “unfeigned” faith. This means that her faith in the Lord was sincere, without hypocrisy, and undisguised. This is the kind of woman that God is looking for today. It’s a woman of character who exhibits genuine faith in the Lord’s person, power, and provision for her life. It’s a genuine trust and dependence upon the Lord to meet her needs in life. By the way ladies, sometimes you are waiting for the man to meet a need in your life that only God can meet (Phil. 4:19). You must simply walk by faith and claim God’s provision.

Your problem is not with your man but with yourself. You must grow in your faith and dependence upon God to meet all your spiritual needs in life. God is looking for women with Christian character (2 Pet. 1:5-8). There are many other things that need to be added to your faith to produce Christian character that will enhance your own spiritual life and marriage. They are outlined as “virtue” (moral excellence) and “knowledge” (spiritual knowledge). A woman can only grow in her Christian character as she submits to the knowledge of God’s truth and in so doing grows in her intimate knowledge with the Lord.

Eliza E. Hewitt
“More about Jesus in His Word,
Holding communion with my Lord.
Hearing His voice in every line,
Making each faithful saying mine.”

There is also the need for “temperance” (self-control), “patience,” and “godliness,” “brotherly kindness,” and charity (love). Ladies who possess Christian character will not become spiritually barren in life and unfruitful or unproductive in their Christian lives. Ladies, how spiritual are you today? Your spirituality is really measured by your character and conduct in life. Are these qualities and virtues part of your everyday life or do you live in fear, defeat, and shallowness? Living productively is a choice. You are attached to the vine (John 15:1-3) so there is no reason why you can’t live in a way that is holy and pleasing to the Lord. Your home will be positively affected by your spirituality and Christian character. Here is a verse worth repeating.

Proverbs 14:1

“Every wise woman buildeth her house: but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands.”

This is perhaps the most important verse related to Biblical womanhood. Every mother and wife must understand that her demeanor, words, behavior, actions, and attitudes have the power to bless and build the lives of those in the home or the power to tear them down and destroy them. In short, a woman’s presence in the home sets the atmosphere of the home. If she is a spiritual woman she will build up her household with her actions and attitudes. If she is walking by her feelings and flesh she has the power to tear it down and create an atmosphere of tension and difficulty.

Someone said:

“If Mama ain’t happy, ain’t nobody happy!”

We may smile when we read this type of wall plaque in the novelty store but our smile quickly turns to a frown when “Mama ain’t happy.” You say, “Preacher, you have gone to meddling.” Ladies, you must live with “the joy of the Lord” (Neh. 8:10) in your heart. You must

cultivate a joyful attitude and live so you can enjoy life as a woman, mother, and wife. You must express a right spiritual outlook and attitude on life and when you do this you will create a right atmosphere in your home. When you live by your feelings or moods that are fueled by the old nature you may say things and live in such a way that becomes very hurtful to others in the home. You can leave your family with a bad taste in their mouth and as the Scripture says foolishly pluck it “down with her hands.”

For many families the home has become a “war zone” and place of strife due to a woman who is not living a spiritual life. Ladies, when you are grumpy and divisive in the home you can be sure that you are not growing in grace (2 Pet. 3:18). The home is the wife’s domain. What are you going to make of your home?

b. Christian service

1 Timothy 5:10 gives to us a description of the godly widows that were worthy of support in the early church. It says that these women were to be: “Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints’ feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work.”

These were women that served others as this text reveals. They were to have a testimony and running record of service, which is defined as good works toward others (“well reported of for good works”). The text then goes on to explain some of their good works. They served their own families (“brought up children”) and then served traveling saints with their hospitality (“lodged strangers”). They demonstrated acts of humble service toward weary travelers such as washing the saints’ feet who came into their homes from the dusty Roman roads. They relieved the afflicted and hurting with their acts of kindness and help. Their life seems to revolve around “every good work.” This is what God is looking for in every woman. It is a life of committed service toward others. Ladies, God is looking for women workers who are ready to roll back their sleeves and serve.

“Make me a servant, humble and meek
Lord, let me lift up, those who are weak.

And may the pray'r of my heart always be;
Make me a servant, make me a servant,
Make me a servant, today.”

5. The woman should have a priority of love for her family.

Titus 2:4 commands:

“That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children.”

Ladies, God wants you to love your husband. This is the opposite of what society is saying today to young women. They are not really encouraged to love their husbands but rather to love and to follow their own way and to “love” whomever they want whenever they want. Today marriage is held to be a matter of convenience and preference, which, when it becomes inconvenient and unpreferred, can be abandoned. This is not love; it's heathenism and the plan of the devil to destroy the foundation of love within the home. There are no conditions or exceptions. Ladies, this is not simply a virtue but a command that you must obey. Not to love your husband is a sin.

The word for love is “philandros” and speaks of the type of love that is a deep affectionate bond of friendship within the marriage. It conveys the thought of tender affection. It points to a willing and determined love that is not based on a husband's worthiness but on God's command to love. It's a love that is extended by a wife's affectionate and obedient heart toward God. Even unlovable, uncaring, unfaithful, ungrateful, and even unregenerate husbands are to be loved.

In a society of arranged marriages, where women did not have a say at all on the choice of their husbands, this quality is very important and needs to be emphasized. This kind of love involves unqualified devotedness and speaks of a friendship type of love within the heart that is strong and deep. Three little words, “I love you” can ease a couple through many stormy seas. As someone has said: “I is the subject, you is the object, and there is nothing between but love.” I love you! We are to have a deep affectionate love toward each other in the marriage relationship. Love affects the look, the tone of voice, and the touch of the hand. This type of love is accompanied by an attitude of willing, joyful, service and personal care and giving.

If a wife does not truly love her husband, she must, in obedience to the Lord, train herself to love him through the Spirit's work and ministry upon her heart. Contrary to popular thinking, love that is carefully built and nurtured is not artificial. Training yourself to love involves doing loving things for the other person, whether or not you feel like doing them. It involves putting their interests and welfare above your own. It involves sacrificial giving of yourself to others for their sakes, not for the sake of appreciation or returned love or favor. Jesus said in Matthew 5:46, "For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?"

You see, true love reaches out to those who don't necessarily return the favor all of the time. Ladies, you are to develop in your own heart a loving bond of friendship toward your husband, so that you are compelled to serve him. When you sacrificially serve your husband, it becomes almost impossible not to love him. Let God do a wonderful work in your heart. We learn something from this command. Love is not an emotion – it is volitional. It pertains to the will and centers upon determination wrought in the heart by the Holy Spirit. A woman can be taught to love her husband and she can then act upon this command with her will and determination and by the Spirit's power. All happiness in the marriage relation is based on mutual love. When love departs, happiness departs. Let me tell you what keeps a marriage together – love!

Titus 2:4 also states that the woman is to "love her children" (philoteknos) and means that she is to have a deep and affectionate bond with her children. Not all mothers love their children equally. Some love them impartially – they have their favorites. Don't you think children know this? Some times a mother has a less favorite child because he is more rebellious and tries her patience. Paul indicates that mothers are to be taught to love their children – all of them.

Don't tell me you love your children when you leave them run wild and when you have no godly standards for them and no time for them. A modern mother once said: "I love my child too much to spank her." This is not love. In reality, she had a selfish love for herself and did not really love the child (Proverbs 13:24). Another working mother rarely saw her little children because she was

working outside the home. When asked why she was working outside the home her reply was this: "I'm doing this for my children." Well, the fact of the matter is this. She was not doing it for her children but for herself. She wanted her own personal career, fame, and paycheck.

Young lady, God expects you to love your children with a fervent and undying love. God wants you to possess a strong bond of love with your children so that you express a selfless and sacrificial love toward them. This love is not based on the children's physical attractiveness or personalities or intelligence but on their need. Listen now, children need to be loved. They are desperately crying for love. And when they don't get it at home they will mistakenly try to find it elsewhere in sexual relationships outside of marriage and with other friends who lead them astray. Let me tell you something today. If you have had parents that have loved you, protected you from the world, and taught you good morals and sound judgment, then you ought to praise the Lord today. Many children have not had loving parents who really cared for them.

A preacher told of visiting a couple who had two teenage boys. He said that when he entered the house he immediately sensed it was a warm and loving home. During the course of his stay, he noticed that the carpet in the living room was very tattered, and he wondered about it. Before he left, the mother related a story that accounted for its condition. She said that one day several boys from the neighborhood were having a good time in the living room. She preferred that they play elsewhere, so she asked them to leave. "But where will we go?" they asked. "How about your place?" "Not a chance," replied the boy. "We're not allowed to invite kids in." Then she said to another, "How about your house?" He too answered quickly, "Oh, Mom wouldn't let us mess up her living room!" The mother quickly sensed that her home was the only one where the boys felt free to come and have fun. From then on they were always welcome. "After I heard their story," said the preacher, "that tattered rug seemed almost beautiful--it was worn out in expression of love for children." Mom, you can replace a rug but you can't replace years of lost love!

5. The woman should practice holiness in her everyday living.

Titus also reminds the women how they should be “chaste” (Titus 2:5) and this speaks of moral purity. This word then primarily refers to moral purity, especially in the context of the marriage. A godly woman is to avoid impurity in thought, word, or action. Ladies, God wants you to be sexually pure and faithful to your marriage. A wife needs to have a moral code and moral control over her body (1 Cor. 9:27). She needs to keep her passions in check, especially sexual passions. She is to reserve herself only for her husband. A woman is to express holiness in her thought life and everyday living.

1 Timothy 2:15 gives this reminder:

“Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith (trust) charity (love) and holiness (purity) with sobriety (soundness of mind).”

The word “childbearing” speaks of raising children. This verse is teaching that a woman will be saved from great hardship and difficulty if she learns the secret of living a virtuous or holy life before her children. When she seeks to live a holy example before her children throughout the days of her child rearing she will be saved from many problems and pitfalls related to raising children. God has decreed that woman’s place is in the home, and more specifically in the ministry of raising children for the honor and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

When a mother remains in the home during those formidable years of child training and practices the virtues listed here she will save herself from many heartaches and difficulties in relationship to raising her children and experience a fulfilling and meaningful life. Her example of godliness and holiness in the home will save her life from much heartache and unhappiness in relationship to child rearing or training. It will save her from children who are ungodly, rebellious, and disgraceful. It will save her from the problems that arise because of disobedient children. As a mother you can save yourself from much misery if you will live a life of holiness before your children.

The word “holiness” is lost behind all of the down dressing and actions of women today. Ladies, running around will destroy your marriage. Don’t do it! You need to live free from immorality and carnality. Chastity has gone out of style these days! We live in a day of adult movies, marching sodomites in Washington D.C. and

demanding feminists. It is an age of “the new morality” and moral relativism and humanism. Let me tell you something. The new morality is nothing more than the old immorality that is now openly accepted and endorsed! Most of the familiar landmarks of common decency and morality are gone. We have banished the Bible from the classrooms and the Ten Commandments from the courts. The senseless pursuit of the demonized and haunted cultic practices of our day, with the indulgence in drugs and liquor and pornography, all are against moral chastity. But God’s Word commands every Christian woman to be “chaste” (Titus 2:4) or pure in her actions and thinking.

More than ever the younger women in church life must remember to live different, be decent, and become disciplined in life (Titus 2:14). When Boaz first met and talked with Ruth he said in Ruth 3:11: “for all the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman.” Ruth is the only woman called a virtuous woman other than the woman in Proverbs 31. Now listen ladies, God wants you to remain pure in your heart and living and marriage. And God will honor your purity.

In his commentary on Isaiah, H. A. Ironside tells of some boys who caught two chirping baby finches. They decided to teach these birds to sing by placing them in a small cage and hanging it next to the cage of a pet canary. The canary, of course, sang beautifully, so the boys thought if the finches were close to it they too would become good songbirds. Several weeks went by with no apparent results. Then one day the youngsters were startled by a strange sound coming from the canary's cage. "Listen," said one of them, "the canary is chirping like a finch." Listen, if you hang around with the wrong flock of birds, sooner or later your chastity is going to go down the drain. You are going to look, sound, and live like the world.

6. The woman should possess healthiness in her thinking habits.

Titus also informs the women of the important of remaining “sober” (Titus 2:4) in the area of their thinking and living. This is an important lesson that the older ladies should convey to the younger ladies. It’s interesting that the word “teach” (sophronizo) in verse four is literally “to make of sound mind, to restore one to his senses.” The

understanding behind this word is that of instructing or training someone to think wisely and properly. It is not only that the older women should show the younger mothers how to keep house, but that they would train them with the result of having the truth and right, spiritual, mental attitudes placed within their hearts and minds. Truth must get into the mind and heart to be effective. The goal of the teacher is to have truth get on the inside so people think right and do right. Too often women live by their fluctuating feelings instead of being led by the absolute standard of truth.

It's also interesting that the very next key word is "sober" and it is the same Greek word (sophronizo). The point seems to be this. The result of teaching sobriety is sober thinking and then living. Being sober is the result of teaching women about spiritual sobriety. Paul is emphasizing the importance of having truth in the mind – to possess a sober mind. This word for "sober" (vs. 4) is a different Greek word than was used for the older men in vs. 2. In vs. 2 the word sober meant "wineless" (free from intoxicants) but in vs. 4 the word literally translates "to make of a sound mind, to restore one to his senses, to be disciplined in one's thinking."

The idea is that a young Christian lady needs to be disciplined in her thinking so that she will become disciplined in her living. How you think and what you think about is who you are! Proverbs 23:7 says, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he." You are what you eat and you are what you think. The godly young lady must learn the secret of disciplining her mind. She must dwell on those things that are holy, righteous, and Biblically true. Philippians 4:8 says, "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

Ladies, what you think about is generated by what you see, read, and believe to be true. As a result of right thinking a woman will be able to curb her wicked impulses that stem from her old nature and move her life in a godly direction. When a woman thinks right she will be able to live right. She will live above her feelings and frustrations in life and keep her mind thinking Biblically and discerningly. The key to everything is right thinking. We must think right to be right! The godly

woman is disciplined in her thinking – she is sober-minded. Some young ladies may not be drunk on booze but let me tell you they are not sober in the way they think. This is because they don't use the Bible as their guide. They live by feelings, frustrations, and failures instead of living by truth and simple trust in God.

A godly woman needs to have a sensible judgment about the matters of life. She needs to be thoughtful and cautious about her decisions and not make rash decisions. What she does, how she lives, and where she goes all involve sensible judgment that is under control – the control of God's truth and Word.

A sensible and sound mind is a controlled mind that thinks properly. A sober mind is a spiritually discerning mind (Heb. 5:14). The young lady who is "sound minded" is not mentally confused about spiritual matters. A sober woman is serious, sensible, and Spirit-directed in her way of thinking. She is prudent and makes wise choices. A sober woman has a sure and steady mind. She is not rash in judgment, but thoughtful, earnest, and cautious. She is cool-headed. Her mind is controlled by God's truth, not the whims of her feeling or flesh. She draws wise conclusions because she likes to have all the facts before making a decision.

A mother needs a sensible mind today in the midst of this humanistic bent society! She needs to possess sense when there is so much nonsense in the world today! We talk about having good "street sense" but what we need is good spiritual sense in the midst of a sinful and satanically inspired world. Good spiritual sense and discernment comes from knowing the truth of God's Word and goes a long way in a world that has gone spiritually bankrupt (Heb. 5:14).

In Titus 2:5 the women are summoned to also be "discreet" in their way of living and when raising their children. This is another good sermon that young ladies need to listen to today. The word "discreet" (sophron) is the same word translated "sober" (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8) and "temperate" (Titus 2:2). It's very similar to the previous word we studied about concerning the younger women in verse 4 – "sober" (sophronizo). The word translated "discreet" in verse 5 means "to have a sensible and controlled mind." Here the word is used in connection with the home life.

A godly mother needs to have a sensible and self-controlled mind in raising children. You need to have good sense if you are raising children today. Most parents do their fair share of foolish things in bringing up their children. Some overindulge them and others overdiscipline them. They might threaten them and then fail to do what they said. They might break their promises to them. They might play favorites or take sides. Rebekah is a classic example of a woman (mother) who was not discreet or sensible in her judgments. Rebekah had her favorite son Jacob who she coached to become a deceiver. She was willing to teach Jacob how to fool his father so that he might receive the blessing. Rebekah was not wise or sensible in her judgments. She needed to learn the secret of being sensible from a spiritually standpoint in her manner of thinking. Ladies, if you will think straight you will live straight. It's not about feeling but thinking properly that gives you discernment and victory and in life.

The parent-teacher group was involved in a serious discussion about what the school's students could do after dismissal each day. Among the many suggestions made were: playgrounds, youth huts, bicycle trails, canteens and even a student center with a paid supervisor. Finally, a practical grandmother quietly said, "Couldn't they just go home?" This is good advice. Why? It's because the home is to be a haven of safety and a place of joy and learning. However, many homes today no longer have this kind of atmosphere because the mother is no longer in the home.

7. The woman should be a hospitable individual.

Apparent this trait is very important, so much so, that Titus chose to mention it in his virtue list for godly women. The word "good" (agathos) in Titus 2:5 means to be good-natured or kindhearted in the way a woman lives. She is to be a very hospitable person who treats people warmly, friendly, generously, and kindly. Young women should be taught how to be good in the sense that they learn to live for others, to be hospitable, to be gracious and generous, and not to be self-centered and possessive. If they have this virtue in the home, then the children and husband will be refreshed and the home blessed. The godly wife and woman does not rule her household with an iron hand, but practices "the law of kindness." Proverbs 31:26

says that the virtuous woman “openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness.”

“Show a little bit of love and kindness
Never go along with hatred’s blindness
That’s the way to make the world a happy place.”

It’s also the way to make your home a happy place and your husband happy. Never forget this.

8. The woman should hold (model) a good testimony.

Titus goes on to say “that the word of God be not blasphemed” (Titus 2:5). This is the positive result of a mother who commits herself to the home, who is submissive to her husband, and who lives a godly life. This is the result of a mother who practices genuine godly living and love toward her family. The result is this. She will continue to model a good testimony before a watching world. The Bible (God’s truth) is not “blasphemed” or portrayed in an evil manner when a woman lives right. In other words, God’s truth is not railed against, discredited, dishonored, and spoken about in a reproachful way when a woman manifests a godly and holy life. God’s truth is actually defended by the godly living and right living of a woman or mother. William Kelley translates this phrase like this: “so that God’s Word may suffer no scandal.”

It is sad to see the way family problems and even divorces among Christians cause unsaved people to laugh and sneer at the Bible. Unbelievers judge the genuineness and value of our faith more by our living than by our theology. In doing so, they judge the truth and power of the word of God by the way in which we live. When a Christian woman lives for herself instead of her children, when she lives like the world and for the world, then the Bible becomes a laughingstock before the watching world who is looking for something different in the life of a Christian woman and mother.

A skeptic wrote: “Show me your redeemed life and I might be inclined to believe in your Redeemer.” Paul said in 2 Corinthians 3:1 that “Ye are our epistle (living Bible) written in our hearts, known and read of all men.” Ladies, you are the only Bible some people will ever read.

What is the Gospel according to you!! Every woman is a walking Bible before a watching world. How she lives and conducts herself, as a woman and mother are very important.

Philippians 2:15 says we are to live in such a way “That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.” Jesus said in Matthew 5:16, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” For a person to be convinced that God can save him from sin (Matt. 1:21), he needs to be shown someone who has been saved from sin and who, as far as possible, lives a life separated from sin.

9. The woman should publicly display herself with modesty.

1 Timothy 2:9

“In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array.”

Whenever you preach on dress or attire today people immediately call you a legalist. The modern church wants to follow the culture and therefore many use words like legalism as a way to escape clear preaching on Christian attire. Listen, when the Bible speaks about a subject we must find out what it is saying and then obey it. Obedience should never be labeled as legalism! Of course, some have used this verse to teach that a woman should never use gold or jewelry. This is not true at all. Paul did not forbid the use of jewelry but rather the excessive, showy, and prideful use of them as substitutes for the true beauty of “a meek and quiet spirit” (1 Peter 3:1–6).

This has always been the emphasis in Scripture regarding the outward adornment for women. A woman should never use excessive jewelry to draw attention to herself. There is an artificial glamour of the world that does not last and there is also the true beauty of a godly life that lasts. Godly living is more important than glamour. This does not mean a woman should look drab and dingy for her husband. We will cover this in our final point. Paul is simply saying that a woman should not overdo it when it comes to externals remembering

that she needs to concentrate on her true beauty, which is her godly living.

Someone wrote:

“A woman who depends only on externals will soon run out of ammunition!”

This is because the outward beauty of youth begins to fade over the passing years. We need to have a right perspective on clothing and apparel today. Perhaps the latest fashion fads were tempting the women in the church at Ephesus, and Paul had to remind Timothy to warn the women not to get trapped. They were not to become fashion models strutting around the church like peacocks trying to impress everybody with their overdone and excessive hairdos, jewelry, and clothing. They were to use discernment when it came to their appearance and dress. For a more detailed study concerning Christian attire see the author’s study “How Should a Christian Dress?”

Along with the warning of excess is the warning against being immodest. Ladies, men have no excuse to be immodest either but it’s obvious why the Scriptures give ladies a specific warning about being modest in their dress. A woman’s body has a special eye attraction to a man. This is the way God designed the sexes. Therefore, a woman must take special care to dress modestly and not attract the undue attention of men by her manner of attire. This is Biblical and right.

In today’s society we are told that women should dress sexy. Ladies, what does that really mean? It means you should dress provocative and immodest to some degree so as to attract the attention of men. This is what our culture dictates today but God’s Word never teaches this. God wants you to dress in such a way that you do not attract the attention of the opposite sex. Now ladies, this does not mean you must wear a huge sack over your body or walk around in plain clothes and deprive yourself of nice or new things.

The Bible does not teach asceticism (Col. 2:21-23). What the Bible is teaching is that you should be tasteful in what you wear so that you do not draw attention and to those parts of your body that cause men to lust and become overcome with sin. Yes, it’s true that a man can

look at a properly dressed woman and lust after her in his heart (Matt. 5:28). However, this is no excuse for any woman to dress in a provocative way, which is clearly designed to highlight the feminine parts of her human anatomy, and draw the attention of men. God does not want the Christian woman to flaunt herself before men by the way she dresses and presents herself. This is strictly forbidden in Scripture. Ladies, you must become sensitive to how you portray yourselves before men and sensitive to God's Word on this matter of modesty. When you do nobody will have to tell you to button up and become careful in your manner of dress before men.

The word translated "modest" (1 Tim. 2:9) simply means "decent and orderly." It is related to the Greek word from which we get the English word "cosmetic." A woman's clothing should be decent, orderly, and in good taste. The woman's wardrobe should be filled with clothing that does not expose her body and which represent her as a woman of virtue instead of vice. The Bible speaks of the "attire of a harlot" (Prov. 7:10). It's one thing to look like a lady and be feminine in your appearance. But it's an altogether different matter to look like a whore and possess the heart of a whore.

A Christian lady would never want to be a harlot but today many Christian ladies are dressing in such a manner that they are portraying the message of harlotry. Dressing immodest is a sin that can lead others to sin. Ladies, what kind of message are you communicating by the way you dress? When you get up and look in the mirror what is going through your head? Are you thinking, "Do I look sexy enough?" Am I following the fads of the day that say I must wear my clothing in a way that will attract the attention of men?" Ladies, why do you make the decisions you do in connection with your dress? What is fueling your decisions? Is it the world of entertainment, the culture that is represented in magazines and society? You can become so caught up in the culture that we forget about God's plan for modesty. Whatever happened to old-fashioned modesty?

Earl states:

"The Christian woman is not to adorn herself with 'gold or pearls or expensive clothes' so as to draw attention to herself. At worst, this is what the prostitutes did. At best, it shows pride and self-

centeredness, both of which are contrary to the spirit of Christ. Such dress is especially unbecoming in church.”

In First Timothy 2:9 the woman’s attitude and thinking concerning her dress is also very important. This is explained in the next words. The word “shamefacedness” (aidos) means that the character of a woman must be full of humility, bashfulness, and reverence toward God so as to demonstrate obedience to His design for a woman’s dress. The word would convey how a woman’s humble attitude should cause her to shrink away from anything that would even suggest immodesty and indecency. The word “sobriety” (sophrosune) means that a woman should use good sound judgment in dressing. She must think correctly when dressing knowing the kind of message she is conveying by her dress. The word indicates that a Christian woman or girl should give careful thought to what she should wear, how she should dress, what clothing she selects, and the overall appearance that she should present to others. She is to dress sensibly. A sober mind will protect a woman from worldly and immodest display.

Proverbs 11:22 says, “As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman which is without discretion.” The word discretion means to have proper taste. It connotes that a person will use proper judgment and have right understanding about purity and moral living. Sadly, the woman mentioned in this illustration lacks good moral taste and judgment in the way she dresses and presents herself in society. She flaunts herself and in doing so becomes like a pig wearing a ring in its nose. There is an inappropriate relationship between the woman’s beauty and her lack of moral purity or good taste. This is pictured by the beauty of a gold ring that does not match a pig’s snout. Her physical beauty should match her moral discretion.

Ladies, there is wicked philosophy being spread abroad by some Christians that God is not interested in attire. This philosophy tells us that God only looks on the heart and that we are not to judge by the outward appearance. The embracers of this philosophy use it to justify inappropriate and immodest dress. They teach that God is not concerned about what the Christian wears. This is not true. As we have already stated, many verses in the Bible speak of the importance of Christian attire and how it relates to the Christian life. Proverbs 7:10 shows us that there is such a thing as the "attire of an

harlot." Now what that attire is, is not the issue. The issue is that God is interested in what the Christian wears. The Bible does teach about the outward adorning as well as the inward adorning (1 Tim. 2:9; 1 Pet. 3:3). The point is this, when we are what we should be on the inside our outside will become what it should be. Our outside will catch up with our inside very quickly. How we look and appear before God and a watching world is important! We are to be holy in all manner of living (1 Pet. 1:15) and this would include our dress. How we as God's children wear our hair does matter. If we are true Christians, then we are one of the few lights in this dark world (Matt. 5:14). How we wear our hair shows what kind of light we are!

10. The woman should portray herself as feminine in appearance

As mentioned above, a woman should not look drab and dingy for her husband. The Biblical wife is an attractive wife.

Genesis 12:11 mentions this:

“And it came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his wife, Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon.”

Abraham was able to consider Sarah's attractiveness in his decisions and plans. He appreciated her natural beauty and what that meant to him personally. The same is true of every man. The beauty of his wife does mean something to him. Every man sees natural beauty in the woman that he marries! It's a feminine beauty and attractiveness that charms him and appeals to him as a man. I believe some women are failures as wives because they are first failures as women.

A man wants a woman who keeps herself looking feminine and pretty. The natural desire of men is that their wives look, smell, and act feminine. The beauty of a woman and her appearance toward her husband is still very important. How a wife enhances her beauty for her husband is very important to him. And this is what women need to understand. She is always beautiful to her husband; however, she enhances her beauty as a woman when she dresses in a way that is different than a man.

Proverbs 31:22

“She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple.”

In spite of the cultural changes through time, the timeless principles in God’s Word indicate that a woman is to dress and be different than a man in her appearance.

Deuteronomy 22:5

“The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman’s garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the LORD thy God.”

The apparel in Bible times was very similar in many ways and yet it had distinctiveness and masculine and feminine highlights which separated the sexes in the matter of attire. God still wants us to distinguish the sexes in the matter of overall appearance. How we interpret these distinguishing differences has changed through the years and the present-day culture. Nevertheless, there is still the ancient principle of Scripture that states a woman’s dress and appearance should be different than a man’s in some way or fashion.

The distinction among the sexes in regards to dress and overall appearance is seen in both the old and New Testaments (1 Cor. 11:15). A woman’s dress and overall appearance is one way to demonstrate that she is distinctly feminine and different than the man. We should not allow culture to do away with this unchanging principle. When a woman wants to dress and look exactly like men, then her beauty is not accented or highlighted, as it should be. She should find ways in her dress and overall appearance to look different and mark herself out as feminine. Let the girls look like girls and the boys look like boys! Ladies, do you look more like a man or more like a woman by the way you dress and present yourself? This is the ultimate question. This is a good question to ask yourself in light of the woman’s feminine attractiveness and overall appearance.

True femininity and Biblical womanhood extends even to the area of dress. Every wife needs to remember this. There is no husband who could honestly say that he does not appreciate when his wife takes on a feminine appearance. This does not mean that he will not love or

appreciate his wife if she fails to dress in a certain feminine way. But the truth of the matter is that men want to see femininity expressed in the way that their wives dress and keep their overall appearance. They want women who look feminine. This is very pleasing to a man.

The woman's real feminine appearance demands a difference in clothing in some respect. The more different she dresses the more feminine beauty she reflects. Any man wants to see his wife dress in a feminine manner that accents her beauty. He is lying if he says he does not. Let us remember that women express their God given femininity and different sex in the way that they dress and look. Every man knows this. Furthermore, every wife needs to understand this. She needs to seek to please her husband (1 Cor. 7:34) in this area of dress and not become self-centered and careless.

Marriage involves pleasing one another. One major way that a wife pleases her husband is in the feminine way that she dresses. Any man is pleased to have a wife who does not hide her femininity in equal dress with the man. Therefore, the wife should seek the type of clothing that accents her beauty in order to please her husband. The woman or wife must learn the lesson and need for femininity in the marriage relationship. It will bring new freshness and vitality into the marriage relationship.

Men who are committed to their wives will be faithful to them and love them for better, for worse, and in spite of their appearance. A man can love his wife in spite of the way that she dresses. However, this is no excuse for the woman to not highlight her femininity by her distinctive dress and overall appearance. The woman will serve the man and please the man in this way if she wants her husband to see her in a greater feminine way.

1 Corinthians 11:15

“But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering.”

The feminine look and appearance of a wife will help her husband to keep his eyes on the femininity of his own wife and not be tempted to dwell upon the feminine appearance of other woman. This is the facts of life. It is the birds and the bees! In one sense, a wife needs to steal

the heart of her own husband. He needs to see his wife different than a man and distinctly feminine. Dress is only one aspect of femininity, but it is a part of femininity. Other aspects of femininity deal with submission and the proper place and role of the woman within the home life. It has to do with raising children and setting a good example within the home. Nevertheless, femininity is displayed by a woman's dress and overall appearance. A woman should represent femininity in the best possible light.

Song of Solomon 4:9

"Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck."

The effect of his bride's love was so powerful that even a glance from her beautiful eyes or even seeing an article of jewelry or clothing associated with her was enchanting to her husband. He certainly rejoiced in the feminine appearance of his wife and the outward display of her femininity. The same is true of every husband today. Wives, remember this and dress like a woman. Make yourself pretty and captivating for your husband. He will appreciate it and reward you.

A Closing Word

Elisabeth Elliot, writing on "The Essence of Femininity," offers a fitting summary of God's ideal for wives: "Unlike Eve, whose response to God was calculating and self-serving, the virgin Mary's answer holds no hesitation about risks or losses or the interruption of her own plans. It is an utter and unconditional self-giving: 'I am the Lord's servant. . . . May it be to me as you have said' (Luke 1:38). This is what I understand to be the essence of femininity. It means surrender."

How very true! When a woman surrenders to God's will and plan for her life she can become the kind of feminine woman that God wants her to be. Biblical womanhood begins and ends with surrender (Rom. 12:1-2). Ladies, you must be willing and ready to do whatever God wants you to do. You must be willing to be whatever God wants you to be.

“To be what You want me to be, dear Lord,
I’ll live so the world can see.
To be what You want me to be, dear Lord,
I’ll live for eternity.”

A godly woman at an ordination was asked if she was ready to follow her husband's calling. Her reply was something that I will never forget. She said, “Whatever, whenever, wherever!” Now this is Biblical femininity and womanhood. It’s my desire that every woman who has read through these pages might have the same heart and willingness that this woman possessed. “Whatever, whenever, wherever!”