

Probing Proverbs into a Woman's Life

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The perfect man met the perfect woman and they got married. One Christmas Eve they were driving down the highway and noticed a man stranded by the side of the road. This was no ordinary man. It was Santa Claus! Being the perfect people they were, they offered Santa a ride because he was in a hurry to get his toys delivered. Alas, the roads were slippery, and there was a terrible car crash. Two of the three people were killed. Do you know who survived? The perfect woman. Everyone knows Santa Claus and the perfect man don't really exist.

I think a woman wrote this! In this study we want to focus on some Proverbs that probe deeply into a woman's life in order to expose the myths of modern-day femininity and redirect women in the way of Biblical wisdom. It has been said that the book of Proverbs is God's wisdom book for everyday living. These Proverbs give spiritual light for women in the midst of a culture that has no understanding about Biblical womanhood and true femininity.

Psalm 119:130

"The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple."

As a Christian woman, you need to allow the probe of God's Word to expose what is wrong in your life, and then fix the spiritual problems, so you can live your life to God's glory (1 Cor. 10:31). Ready or not, here comes the probe of the Word of God. Probing Proverbs into a woman's life!

There are three types of women found in the Proverbs.

A. The indiscreet woman

Proverbs 11:22

"As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman which is without discretion."

Can you get any more probing than this? This ancient Bible verse is certainly up-to-date with our modern society and present-day culture. It applies to every woman in a specific way since every Christian woman is to possess discretion in the way she lives out her life in relationship to others. We live in the midst of a moral crisis in relationship to women's dress. The word "discretion" actually means to live in good taste and figuratively suggests a woman who has good moral judgment and behavior in relationship to her dress and presentation of herself in society.

There is a very important lesson to learn from this rather interesting verse of the Bible. Every woman needs to have discretion or good taste and judgment within her life. This simply means that she must revolve her life around modesty, purity, and proper conduct in life. Her discretion should apply to every area of her life, such as her dress, talk, and the overall way she presents herself within society. It may secondarily apply to the way that she also raises her children and runs her own household. She should possess good discretion as a mother and woman of society. The Proverbs primarily paint the picture that a woman should use discretion in the way she dresses or presents herself in society and before men. The seductive woman's dress and decorum (Proverbs 5, 7) is unbecoming to womanhood. A woman should express good moral judgment and behavior in her dress and actions.

The unusual way in which this truth is presented in Proverbs 11:22 is rather comical. The illustration is given which involves a sow or female pig standing in the pigpen with a gold ring in her nose. Can you imagine the humorous picture of a sow looking into your eyes with a beautiful gold ring through her snout or nose? A pig was a rather dirty animal, and for the Jew, it was ceremonially unclean. Therefore, to put a gold ring in the nose of a pig and try to create something beautiful is ridiculous. The picture is actually representing something that is not harmonious or congruous. You must understand that a nose ring was a cultural ornament intended to beautify a woman in Old Testament times (Gen. 24:47; Is. 3:21; Ezek. 16:12). However, it was certainly out of place in a pig's nose. When worn on a pig's snout it became something that was ugly and silly. The gold ring was intended to bring beauty upon a woman - not a female pig or sow.

The application of this illustration is then given with the comparative statement “so is a fair woman without discretion.” In other words, a female pig with a gold ring her nose looks silly, unattractive, ugly, and out of place. It’s equally true that a woman that is very beautiful to look upon, but who presents herself in a sleazy or improper manner, makes herself look cheap and unattractive, and her actions are unbecoming to Biblical womanhood.

By her dress, actions, and overall presentation of herself within society, she sends the message that she does not have very much discretion, or proper taste and judgment. Here is the main point. A gold ring on the nose of a dirty sow is out of place and a beautiful woman without discretion (modesty and good moral judgment) is also out of place. The two do not match! They are incongruous. Beauty is only skin deep. The true adorning or beauty of a woman is to be reflected in her godly actions which flow from a heart that is under God’s control (1 Pet. 3:3-4). Let us remember that a woman’s physical beauty can never excuse her lack of discretion and her lack of good moral judgment actually cheapens her beauty.

So what is the lesson for women and wives today? The lesson is rather obvious. Don’t be undiscerning in your approach to life as a woman. Do not allow the culture and the crowd of our day to dictate how you present yourself to others in your dress, overall conduct, and how you fulfill your God given duties as a mother. The proverb is primarily teaching that a Christian woman should never cheapen herself by giving in to the dress standards of the world and our modern culture.

A woman’s natural physical beauty should coincide with good moral discretion, or else her beauty is cheapened in some way, her life as a Christian woman becomes unattractive, and her actions unbecoming to womanhood. A woman who is beautiful, but who lacks moral discretion, is out of place, much like a sow wearing a gold ring in her nose. The Bible likens the gold ring to the physical beauty of a woman and her lack of discretion to a pig’s snout – something that is ugly and distasteful. So ladies, when you seek to live in an indiscreet manner you are like a pig wearing a ring in its nose!

This proverb is giving some practical advice and wisdom for every woman today. A Christian woman should present herself as woman that possesses good taste and discretion. She should remember that her beauty betrays her, and makes her look cheap, when it is flaunted before others.

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.”

Paul gave very clear instruction to women in this Bible text which is often overlooked or misinterpreted by modern feminists. The Bible is very clear. A woman should not flaunt herself before men by the way she dresses and presents herself.

Paul’s instruction can be summed up in two ways:

1. Too little

The problem within our present-day society is that women are wearing too little. They are no longer dressing in a modest fashion, but a revealing manner. Culture has dictated that women wear less and less so they can look sexy, be feminine, and attract men. However, the Bible has a different story to present to women. It transcends the confusion of our present-day culture. Ladies, you must come to the place where you will place yourself under the authority of God (James 4:7) and His Word (John 17:17) if you want to live a holy and righteous life that is pleasing to God. The godly Christian woman is to dress in a manner that is becoming to womanhood. When a woman with natural beauty dresses without discretion, she is likened to a sow with a ring in her nose! Ladies, don’t forget the picture that the Bible draws of a woman without discretion. When you want to dress in a way that exposes yourself to other men, then you are playing the game of the harlot.

There are several observations related to a woman’s dress.

a. Her adornment

Ladies, does God really care what you wear? Scripture commands the Christian woman to dress or adorn herself modestly because of the enticing sway and way that a woman naturally has over men. The verb “adorn” and adjective “modest” mean “to arrange” or “put in proper order” and speak of a woman’s apparel possessing proper taste and modesty. The words suggest that a woman should dress in an orderly and well-arranged fashion. The opposite of this word would mean to dress in a disorderly manner which is unbecoming to a woman. The dress of a woman should never violate a proper sense of modesty. A woman’s apparel should be decent and orderly. 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. In short, God wants you to become a woman of discretion. Your prayer as a Christian woman of conviction should be: “Yes, Lord, in every area of my life I want to bring glory to You, especially in the matter of my clothing.”

b. Her attitude

Ladies, attitude is everything. If your heart is right, then your clothing will be right. If your attitude and outlook is spiritual, then your attire will not be immodest. A right attitude leads to right attire. If you have a spiritual attitude, you will not want to wear revealing clothing that are designed to expose or flaunt your body before men. The woman’s attitude and thinking concerning her dress or what she wears is very important. A woman’s attitude is explained by the word “shamefacedness.” This means a woman should express humility, bashfulness, and reverence toward God, which will have a direct effect on the way she dresses. Many Christian women of today have forgotten how to blush for nothing embarrasses them anymore and they lack discretion in what they wear.

The word “shamefacedness” conveys how a woman’s humble attitude should cause her to blush and steer away from anything that would even suggest immodesty and indecency. Our problem today is that we no longer blush at sin! We have become desensitized to sin and no longer blush at evil things in our society. Beware! We can view wrong things on TV, listen to wrong things, and read wrong things and no longer blush at sin. Some Christian women ought to be ashamed at the way they dress. If they would possess the attitude of

shamefacedness before God, they would be ashamed at the thought of dressing to expose and flaunt their body before others. Ladies, stop imbibing the culture through magazines and TV. God has called you to be modest and wear godly garments that are unrevealing. Today's Christian woman needs to be countercultural (Rom. 12:2). This means they must counteract culture. As a godly woman you must disconnect from the world system that is against God.

The word "sobriety" also speaks of a woman's attitude and means that a lady will use good sound judgment in the way she dresses. She should use wisdom when dressing knowing the kind of message she will be conveying or portraying to others 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. A sober mind will protect a woman from worldly and immodest display. Ladies, when you dress in clothing that exposes and accentuates the body you are sending a message to those around you. It's a message that you have adopted the cultural or world's view of femininity instead of God's view.

One woman said, "My 11-year-old niece stood in front of the dressing room mirror studying the cut of a swim suit she wanted to buy. "I don't know, Mom," she said to my sister. "It looks like this one shows too much cartilage."

Proverbs 7:10

"And, behold, there met him a woman with the attire of an harlot, and subtil of heart."

This is the seductive woman because she is deceptive and crafty in the way she dresses. She is said to be "subtle of heart" for she knows exactly what she is doing when dressing in a certain manner. The same is true for most women today who dress immodestly. Ladies, you can be attractive without being seductive. You can be feminine without being flaunty.

Someone wrote:

"A dress should be tight enough to show you're a woman and loose enough to prove you're a lady."

As in everything, there is balance. What is the attire of a harlot? This brings us to our main point. Its attire that is too little. It's the kind of attire that seeks to attract men and lure them into lust and licentious living. Ladies, you should remember to steer far away from harlotry by the manner in which you dress. Many women would never want to become a harlot and yet their attitude and revealing dress borders on the thinking and expression of a harlot. When you want to expose yourself to men, you are really thinking like the harlot, and you have an attitude problem. You lack shamefacedness and sobriety. The manner in which a woman dresses indicates a great deal about what sort of woman she is. So modesty is an important issue in dress.

Many Christian women think they are modest when comparing themselves with the popular secular magazines of our day and the way other women are dressing. However, a women's standard for modesty must be based upon God's Word, or else she will only live by degrees of modesty. God is not interested in degrees of modesty. He is interested in modesty. Ladies, God holds you accountable for the way that you dress. How you dress sends a message to everyone around you. Certainly, there is no exact line one can draw concerning modesty. However, when you dress to be seen and showy you can be sure that you have crossed the line. Furthermore, a woman should never see how close she can get to the line. Rather, she should approve only excellent or superior dress that does not put her in question.

Philippians 1:10

"That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ."

When it comes to dress, excellent things are not scanty things, revealing things, and tight things. Ladies, there is a difference between being feminine and being sexually expressive in your dress and mannerisms. The world says, "Dress sexy, dress to be seen, live free." But God says, "Dress modest, don't live to be seen, don't show off the nakedness and curvatures of your body." You are living in a prideful (1 John 2:15-16) and unsanctified (1 Thess. 4:7) manner when you are seeking to expose yourself before others and want to be seen of men. God wants every woman to present the vessel of her physical body in a sanctified or holy manner.

1 Thessalonians 4:4

“That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour.”

When applied to dress, the word “sanctification” means a woman should dress in a holy manner that is set apart or separated from the world’s standards of indecency, pride, and leniency. Ladies, one way you can present your body in a holy fashion before God is to dress in a manner that is unrevealing and unprovocative before men. Don’t use your body for seductiveness and outward worldly show. When you dress in a non-seductive manner, you bring “honour” or dignity to your body as a woman, and also honor and glorify God in your manner of dress (1 Cor. 10:31). Ladies, can you really dress in a sleazy or revealing manner and bring glory to God? Glorifying God means to express who God is by your manner of living, conduct, and dress.

As a Christian woman, your body is owned by God. This means you don’t have the right to dress in a dishonorable fashion, which brings shame against God’s name and reputation or holiness.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body (outward attire), and in your spirit (inner attitude), which are God's.”

Your body does not belong to your boyfriend or other men. It belongs to God! An immodestly dressed Christian woman is giving away something that doesn't belong to her. This principle of ownership means that Christian women are not free to dress in any way they please. They are accountable to God and should glorify God by expressing His righteousness and holiness in the way they dress. Ladies, you should dress in a manner which reveals God’s character and demonstrates that God owns your body.

Women need to examine themselves each day in front of a full-length mirror and take a few seconds each morning to quickly check their dress remembering that tight-fitting, sheer, and short apparel, along with low-necklines that are revealing are inappropriate for Christian

women to wear. Ladies, why do you want to show your private body parts to men? Do you want to look sexy, seductive, and sleazy? A woman is not to show-off her body before other men, but honor God with her body, which belongs to Him. Are you ready to acknowledge God's ownership of your body?

Please notice once again that both the outward attire ("the body") and the inner attitude ("the spirit") are important to God. If the inner attitude is right, then the outward attire worn on the body will be right. Every woman is called upon to glorify God in both her inner attitude and outward attire. Ladies, when you aim for God's glory, you will dress with discretion and not compromise with the culture of the world.

Some Christian women like to throw out the argument: "I can't help if men lust after me." Somehow, this leaves them off the hook, so they can dress as they please. However, this excuse only shows that a woman possesses a wrong attitude toward modest apparel, men, and lacks discretion in the area of her dress. The truth is this. If you fail to dress in a modest manner, you are in some respect responsible for men lusting after you, since the sins you commit, whether they are sins of bitterness or immodest dress, often effect other people (Heb. 12:15 – "many be defiled"). Actually, every Christian woman has a responsibility toward her spiritual brothers in the Lord.

Romans 14:21

"It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak."

It is also good that you do not dress in a manner that would cause a brother to stumble. Take this to heart ladies. Although each man is responsible for his own Christian life and sin, God has not given you the right to dress in a manner that would cause another brother to stumble in his Christian life.

Let's not beat around the bush. When you seek to expose intimate or private parts of your body that should be covered then you are immodest. Also, when you seek to emphasize private or intimate parts of your body that should be covered then you are immodest. The world asks, "Is it sexy?" God asks, "Is it holy?"

One Christian woman writer exclaimed:

“The world says: ‘Look sexy,’ ‘Be cool,’ ‘Everybody’s doing it.’ But the Lord whispers, ‘You only have one life; live it for My glory.’”

Another Christian woman was right when she said:

“Modesty is more than the length of a woman’s skirt or the cut of her blouse. Ultimately, it’s an issue of the heart.”

Many women have a heart or attitude problem (Jer. 17:9; 1 Pet. 3:4) and for this reason they expose their bodies before the watching world. Women are very aware of the messages they are sending when they wear certain types of garments. Many women continue to wear immodest apparel and try to hide behind excuses. However, they need to be reminded that the harlot was “subtil of heart” (Prov. 7:10) which means she was cunning or clever. In other words, she knew exactly what she was doing. Christian women should never be “subtil of heart” but sanctified in their manner of dress and decorum in life.

Someone wrote this about modest clothing:

"Being drawn to a person's God-given beauty is one thing; having one's eyes directed to another's body by a sensually designed garment is another. While clothing does not have to smother one's gender, any apparel designed to draw the eye to the erotic zones of the body cannot fill the requirement for biblical decency."

Your clothes are talking, but you control the message they are sending by the way you dress. Your clothes and appearance reveal a lot about your values, your character, and what you believe. A woman needs to think about the message she is sending when she dresses sensually. Here is the bottom line. Every woman makes the decision how she dresses and the message she wants to convey by her dress. She lets everyone know what her attitude is by the way she dresses. A woman's clothing and appearance are powerful non-verbal communicators of what she believes.

A discerning woman was right when she said what sleazy dress conveys: “Sleazy dress means, ‘Look at me, want me, lust after me. I’m easy, and you can have me.’ Displaying intimate parts of the body is a form of advertising for sex.”

Everyday on TV, billboards, and magazines we see advertisements about certain products. They are designed to sell certain products by making their products look appealing, inviting, and something that a person needs. Everything from makeup to yogurt is made to look appealing to the public, so the designers of a certain product can be sure to sell it. Today they even make cat food look like roast beef, so that cat owners will buy the product! Everything from cat food to cat litter is made to look appealing so it can attract customers and sell.

Advertising for products is a big thing today, but advertising is also connected with the way a woman dresses. The manner in which a woman dresses advertises what she is selling. If she dresses in a manner that is sleazy and immodest she is advertising for sex and lust. Did you ever stop and think about this? It's true. This is what the culture wants women to dictate today by their dress. Culture says, "Look sexy and advertise for sex." But God says, "Dress modestly and glorify Me."

Ladies, your clothing and appearance as a woman, communicate a message about your heart, values, and what you believe. So here's the question. What do your clothes and your appearance communicate about you? What message are you sending? Ladies, dress in good taste. A Christian woman should never forget about God's timeless principle of modesty. Do not move into the realm of what's questionable. You should want to please God in all that you do – even your dress (John 8:29). A woman without discretion is like a sow with a gold ring in its nose. She makes herself look silly, dirty, unbecoming, and cheap as a woman.

James 4:17 reminds every woman:

"Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

Many women no longer appreciate the value of modesty and they don't have any clue regarding what it means to dress modestly because there are so few examples of what modesty looks like today. As you get dressed, ask yourself, "If somebody else were to look at me in this outfit, where would their eyes naturally go?" Would their eyes naturally go to your face, your countenance, your eyes, which are the window of your soul, or would their eyes naturally go to your

hips, thighs, breasts, back, or backside. When you think how your clothing emphasizes certain parts of the body, ask yourself, "Where are the eyes being drawn?" This can be true as it relates to sheer clothing, revealing fabrics, tight fabrics, and see-through fabrics. Let us remember that the purpose of clothing is not to expose or accentuate the private parts of the body but rather to cover them.

Genesis 3:7

"And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons."

God designed clothing to cover Adam and Eve's nakedness, which became shameful after they sinned. Their sin revealed the shame of their naked bodies, and for this reason, they covered themselves. Their sinfulness was realized through their uncovered and opened nakedness. When a woman understands that open nakedness is shameful and sinful she will stop flaunting herself before others. If a woman's heart is right she will understand that the purpose of clothing is to cover her body and hide her sin and shame. However, in the world's philosophy, the purpose of clothing is to reveal the body. The purpose is for sexual attraction.

Exodus 28:42

"And thou shalt make them linen breeches to cover their nakedness; from the loins even unto the thighs they shall reach."

God has always been interested in covering the human body, and Christian women should be concerned about this as well, so they can honor God with their bodies.

Someone humorously said:

"Don't let your clothes be fitted too tightly because even a perfect figure looks better if it doesn't resemble a sausage."

Maybe there is some truth to this! The point is this. A woman does not have to dress dull and drab to be modest. However, she must dress in a way that is unrevealing. Ladies, think about the clothing that you are wearing. Ask yourself these questions. Does your clothing draw attention to the private parts of your body? Where do

the eyes of men go? Why do you dress in the manner that you do? Do you want to be accepted by others? Do you fear what others might say if you don't dress in a certain manner? Do you want the praise of men instead of the praise of God?

John 12:43

“For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.”

Proverbs 29:25

“The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe.”

Let us not forget these important enduring Biblical principles.

2. Too much

1 Timothy 2:9 goes on to say:

“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.”

Can a woman wear too much? Yes! This is what Paul is saying when he adds “not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array.” Neither Paul nor Peter condemned the wearing of jewelry. They condemned the excess of outward adornment so women would not draw attention to themselves. When Paul spoke against woven or plaited hair, gold, pearls, and expensive clothing, he was reminding the women to not overemphasize the outward, and become showy in one's dress and overall appearance. Don't overdo a good thing.

Paul certainly was not condemning these things, but calling upon the ladies to keep them in check, so they do not go overboard and become a walking fashion show. A woman should not try and impress others by the things that she wears. She is not to flaunt expensive clothing and jewelry before others and take on the appearance that she is trying to impress others by her attire and appearance. Once again a woman can be feminine without becoming flashy. Apparently some of the ladies in the local churches were starting a fashion show and trying to outdo one another in their hair and dress.

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.”

1 Peter 3:3-4

“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.”

Peter is not forbidding women to wear jewelry anymore than he is forbidding them to wear clothing! Many fail to see this when they condemn the use and enjoyment of jewelry. If a woman can't wear jewelry, then she can't wear clothing. So much for modesty! The obvious point is this. A woman can adorn herself with too much. Too little is bad, but too much is also bad. When women begin to express themselves with too much outward adornment, they fall into the same trap of seeking to draw attention to themselves. This is what the Bible forbids, since showy dress caters to the flesh and prideful part of man (1 John 2:15-17).

Some women look like peacocks when they are finished getting dressed. They overdo it. Ladies, you can look pretty without being a peacock! You can be up-to-date without glamorizing yourself to impress others. You don't have to look dull and drab or plain. Just beware of becoming an open fashion show. When Paul and Peter speak against gold, they were speaking against glamour. When they spoke against hairdo's and clothing, they were referring to excess outward adornment, which tends to take away from what the true beauty of a woman is to be - the inner life of commitment and communion to God (1 Pet. 3:4 – “the hidden man of the heart”). A woman shouldn't be known by what she wears. Ladies, beware of under-dressing and overdressing. Don't aim at nothing when getting dressed; however, don't shoot for the moon in the way you dress. In other words, don't overdo it.

The lesson of this first proverb is simple. Don't cheapen your beauty by your lack of discretion. It's important that mothers teach their young daughters the lessons of modesty and balance in their manner of dress early on in life. They too need to come under this guiding "pig principle" for their lives.

Proverbs 11:22

"As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman which is without discretion."

Whenever you are not sure about a certain action, there is one test you can take to settle the question in your mind. Think of a big old stinky pig standing in a muddy pool of water, with flies buzzing around its face, and gnats flying into its ears. Picture the swine looking at you through the fence, with a great big gold ring sticking in its nose! This is a picture of you if you are a woman without discretion! You cheapen your beauty, look silly, and lack reverence for God when you dress without discretion and act in a way that is unbecoming to Biblical womanhood.

B. The irritating woman

Proverbs 19:13

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

This is definitely a probing proverb!

Someone is on record for saying:

"No man admires a wife who is constantly pushing the furniture around, especially when he is in it."

Another person has comically remarked:

"A husband needs a nagging wife about the same way a baldheaded man needs a hair dryer."

This verse, one of several in the book of Proverbs, points to an irritating or nagging woman. The word "contentions" speaks of brawlings, quarrelings, naggings, or strife that come about because of an unspiritual woman in the marriage relationship. It is true that

husbands can create problems within the marriage relationship; however, Solomon is zeroing in on the problems that a wife can create within the home. After all, Solomon should know. He had 700 of them! A woman's angry, resentful, and quarreling spirit can create great problems for a man and the marriage relationship. It can drive a man to total unhappiness within the home life and cause him to seek pleasure and happiness outside the home and marriage relationship. It's a real tragedy when the home turns into a place of turmoil and bitter rivalry.

Have you been a "contentious" wife within your marriage? Do you possess a quarreling spirit and nag your husband about many details in life? Must he come home from work and hear all of your complaints and quarrellings? God has not designed the woman to be a nagging companion, but a helping companion (Gen. 2:20). A man cannot appreciate a wife who becomes a contentious and continual nag to him. The Bible says when you act like this, you are comparable to "a continual dropping" that is driving your husband crazy. The constant dropping refers to the nagging and annoying sound of dripping water. You might say that a wife, who becomes argumentative and nagging to her husband, is like the ancient Chinese water torture! She becomes like the constant dripping noise of water within the ears, and can irritate a man to a place of insanity!

We have all had the experience of trying to sleep at night, when all of a sudden we hear the drip, drip, drip of the water faucet in the bathroom. One of the children did not turn it off completely, and it was beginning to drive you out of your sleeping mode, and out of your mind at the same time! While trying to concentrate on your sleep, you heard the constant drip, drip, drip of the water. This is what Solomon is saying. A wife who is quarrelsome and nagging to a husband becomes like the constant drip of water that irritates and drives a person to anger and to all sorts of actions.

Proverbs 27:15-16 also repeats the same saying:

"A continual dropping in a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike. Whosoever hideth her hideth the wind, and the ointment of his right hand, *which* bewrayeth *itself*."

The quarrelsome and angry wife of these verses is the same type of woman mentioned in Proverbs 19:13. She is like the monotonous dripping of water on a rainy day (vs. 15). No person is able to stop her from complaining. In addition, trying to restrain her is like trying to restrain the wind (vs. 16a) or attempting to hold oil in your hand (vs. 16b). It's an impossible task. This kind of woman is simply impossible to restrain or tame as she broadcasts her voice (loud mouth) and temper all over the place.

The word "bewrayeth" speaks of her crying out and reciting to her husband. Her grievances are always known and she will always clearly broadcast her voice to the husband. Therefore, attempting to quiet down her loud voice is like trying to stop the howling wind outside or holding oil within your right hand. She will only become more vocal and outspoken. These added descriptions of an irritating woman are given in order to determine how impossible it is to live with a cantankerous woman, who is bent on living her own selfish way in life, and outside the authority of the man. God is not pleased with a woman like this. This probing proverb needs to sink deep within the soul of each wife, if you have turned into a nagging and complaining wife, in the marriage relationship.

Proverbs 19:14 says:

"House and riches *are* the inheritance of fathers: and a prudent wife *is* from the LORD."

Ladies, God wants you to be a prudent woman instead of a nagging woman within the marriage relationship. The word "prudent" means to be wise, intelligent, and to have proper insight about life and marriage in general. When you are an argumentative woman within the marriage relationship, then you become very unwise and unintelligent in relationship to your marriage, and God's design for womanhood. You are a woman who lacks insight on how to treat your husband and are not fulfilling your God given role as a true helper within the marriage relationship. Ladies, you can be either a helper or a hindrance! God has created you to be a helper to your husband and not a hindrance to him through the years of marriage.

Genesis 2:18 says:

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

Someone has jokingly said:

“Certainly, God created man before woman. But then you always make a rough draft before the final masterpiece.”

Man was given a helper because he needs help. Say amen ladies! As a wife, God has made you to be a helper for your husband in every area of his life. You are to stand beside him, enhance his life, and be there for him when he needs you. This is your highest calling as a woman. When you become argumentative and nagging to your husband you become like the constant dripping of water which is passing through a hole in the roof and falling into a galvanized bucket! You become like a constant rainstorm.

Proverbs 27:15 once again says:

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

In other words, you become a terrific annoyance and bother to your husband, and upset God’s design for your life and home, when you turn into the dripping rainstorm presented in the Proverbs. God wants you to be a blessing, and not a burden to your husband, a helper and not a hindrance to him. A woman can become a blight to her husband. She can become a continual rainstorm of howling and torrential winds within the home setting and drive her husband to the heights of despair. Ladies, if this has been your life, you must place yourself back under the authority of God’s Word.

I have had certain statements thrown in my face over the years, both as a man and as a pastor. “Pastor, you only see the Bible from a man’s perspective, because you are only a man, and because you do not understand the insights of a woman’s life.” Listen, if you are thinking in that way, you must place yourself back under the authority of God’s Word (1 Thess. 2:13). You must rid your mind of this kind of womanized mentality. Ladies, we are not to look at God’s Word from the perspective of a man or woman, but from the perspective of God Almighty!

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, 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, when you belittle your husband before your children, 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 and entire families.

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. Here the place of retreat for a weary husband is a desert or dry wilderness. The poor man must go out into the desert and live there for a while until his wife cools down. Although the desert wilderness would have great heat, hot sand, wild animals and lizards to contend with, it would still be better than a home where the wife is a caged wild lion! The desert would be like an escape or a retreat to the man, when compared to his angry and nagging wife at home.

George Lawson said:

"The contentious woman is far worse than the tiger of the desert."

This is the point of the proverb; you can't get far enough from a cantankerous, argumentative, and brawling woman. Furthermore, it would be easier to face the dangers of the desert than an argumentative 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. The critical spirit of defiance, nagging, and strife will only bring destruction into the home life and cause great conflict within any marriage relationship.

Socrates reportedly warned his students to be careful to marry a good wife. Otherwise, he said, "if you get a bad wife, you'll become a philosopher." 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 to him. 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).

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 (Zech. 14:6).

The overall character of the woman within the marriage is that she is to possess a very humble, mild, and gentle spirit (1 Pet. 3:4 – "a meek and quiet spirit"). This is the woman who is the man's helper and who becomes a real blessing to her husband. Ladies, you can either go your way or God's way. These are the only choices you have. One thing is certain. God hates family discord! He hates to see families wrecked and ruined by the anger of a mother and wife.

As a wife, you must do everything that you can to produce the kind of love and submission that will lead to a home of harmony. This love and submission can only be produced through the filling and fruit of the Spirit within your life (Ephesians 5:18, 22-23). Home is not really a home when the children and the husband are faced with the bitterness and contentions of a mother and wife who is constant filled with a nagging and quarrelsome spirit.

One man came to a marriage counselor and said that his wife was historical. The counselor said, "You mean hysterical." "No," the man said, "She is historical for she is constantly bringing up my faults and shortcomings!" Ladies, don't turn into a historical woman. Don't become the type of woman who always nags your husband about his inconsistencies. This will not enhance your marriage.

Proverbs 9:13

“A foolish woman *is* clamorous (loud and full of rage): *she is* simple (silly and naive), and knoweth nothing (about real spirituality, submission, or the marks of womanhood).”

Proverbs 11:16 declares that “A gracious (very kind and charming) woman retaineth honour” (respect and dignity). This is the kind of woman that God wants you to be. He wants you to possess dignity and honor as you raise children properly and take your motherly and marital roles seriously.

Proverbs 12:4

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

One woman honestly wrote:

“The only bad thing I can say about my husband is that he married me, a wretched sinner! Instead of lifting him up I tear him down with my attitude, I have stabbed him in the heart with the sword of my tongue. Instead of encouraging him I discourage him; I point out his faults without seeing my own. All this time I thought I was doing things right—and I wonder why my husband won’t take the lead? If I were to die this very moment would my husband know I love him? One word . . . NO. Oh, how I have hurt him, and I didn’t even realize it. Instead of praying for God to change my husband, I’ll be praying for God to change me! To make me the woman that my husband deserves. I’ve really hurt my husband, but from this moment on and with God’s help I am determined to be the wife that I was called to be and to make our home a refuge for my husband.”

The truly “virtuous” or devoted and excellent wife (Proverbs 31:10, 29) is the woman who becomes like a crown to her husband. In the present verse, the virtuous woman is compared to a crown or kingly ornament, since she brings honor and respect into her husband’s life, just as a crown provides respect and reverence toward a king’s position (Eph. 5:33). Let us never forget one thing. Behind every spiritual man there is a spiritual woman who has supported and honored him and allowed him to excel in life.

Proverbs 31:12 says:

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

This is a lovely portrayal of the virtuous woman instead of the vicious woman of Proverbs 19:13; 21:9, 19; 25:24; 27:15. Are you a virtuous woman or a vicious woman? Because of the virtuous woman’s sacrificial love and devotion to her husband, she becomes a source of goodness to his life. She is not a source of sadness and disruption, but a source of constant encouragement and fulfillment. However, the vicious and disgraceful woman brings shame and reproach upon her husband and household because of the way she conducts her life.

Proverbs 12:4

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

This is what happens to a man who has a non-supportive wife. A vicious woman in the marriage relationship becomes like a disease to her husband. The term “rottenness of the bones” suggests an actual physical disease. Such a statement as this is implying that a wife, who is out of order within the marriage relationship, is comparable to a physical disease that inflicts her husband. She becomes like bone cancer to him. Although the ancient Hebrews may not have known about cancer of the bone, they knew of its effects.

A nagging, angry, and argumentative wife, who is concerned about her own life, is like a cancer eating away at the bones of her husband! Ladies, are you like bone cancer to your husband? I’m serious. I’m as serious as the Word of God is! Your life can become a total distraction, disruption, and debilitating effect upon your husband’s life, even as a dreadful disease can become totally debilitating to him. Like a disease, your life can become very harmful and painful to your husband. You can keep him from doing what God wants him to do and what the Lord has in store for his life.

Proverbs 31:10

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

A virtuous woman is a woman who possesses excellence in character and conduct within her own personal life and the family

unit. Ladies, here is the conclusion. You can be a crown or cancer to your husband (Prov. 12:4). You can be rottenness or rubies (Prov. 31:10). What kind of woman have you been portraying before your husband and family? My prayer is that these probing Proverbs will create the crown and destroy any cancer within your marriage relationship. God is looking for crowns and rubies! He is looking for women who will seriously consider what God's Word is saying to them about reverence to their husbands.

Remember:

"Of all the home remedies, a good wife is still the best!"

C. The irrational woman

Proverbs 14:1

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

A "foolish" woman is a woman who is irrational or lacking in sound judgment (Prov. 9:13). This Proverb reveals that a woman who destroys her own household is foolish. She does not possess common sense when it comes to her duties as a wife and mother. This probing Proverb reveals that a woman can either build up or tear down (destroy) the home life. The building of a home does not refer to the house construction of masonry and carpentry. This kind of construction is the man's job. The construction or building of the wife refers to building or creating a home where there is stability and spiritual living. It refers to knitting together the family in a day to day routine of life and creating a happy and comfortable environment or place to live.

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, words, and teachings are tearing down your home by creating an atmosphere of division, turmoil, unrest, and unbiblical approach to life. God wants you to be a virtuous woman. When you are tearing down the home by your bad attitudes, bossy arguments

with your husband, your battering statements, and your behavior that is worldly, then you cannot be a virtuous woman. This is a serious matter for many women today. 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 (Prov. 31:10).

As a Christian wife and mother God holds you accountable for the way you act and conduct yourself within the home. Your behavior will affect your home life and what your children will become. Mom, do you want your children to do the same thing that you are doing? Where you go, what you do, and how you act will shape the lives of your children. As a wife and mother, you should use discretion concerning the kind of music you allow your children to listen to, the kind of programs you allow them to watch on television, and teach them a reverent fear for God. A mother must shape her children for the future by teaching them how to live holy and reverently before God.

Many homes are torn down and are suffering because the wife is not taking precious time to build up her home as Proverb 14:1 states. Many women take time for everything else, while the home begins to suffer and move in a spiral or downward direction, because of her neglect to her marital and motherly duties.

Proverbs 10:1 declares:

“A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish son *is* the heaviness (grief or depression) of his mother.”

Proverbs 17:25 adds:

“A foolish son *is* a grief to his father, and bitterness to her that bare him.”

A mother who neglects her own household will tear down her home. She will raise disobedient children who will ultimately bring grief and bitterness to her own heart and life. This despair and bitterness results from her neglected years of proper motherly training and fulfilling those God given duties and roles that God has entrusted to her as a mother.

Proverbs 14:1

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

God expects you to be a wise woman today that is building her home instead of tearing it down by your cantankerous spirit and carnal conduct.

How does a wise woman build her house?

1. Fulfillment of marital roles and duties

Proverbs 31:27 says:

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

The wise woman will build her house by fulfilling her God-given duties as a mother and wife. This is not only old-fashioned; it is Bible-fashioned!

2. Fortitude and strength

Proverbs 31:25

“Strength and honour *are* her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come.”

A virtuous woman finds her strength from God (Ps. 46:1) and she is honored by God because of her commitment to His ways and her household. The godly virtues of strength and honor are pictured as being her true spiritual clothing.

3. Fear of God

Proverbs 31:30

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

A reverent fear of God is in the heart of every woman who is building her home for God’s glory. She possesses a wholesome dread of displeasing God by her adverse actions and neglect of her motherly

duties. It's a fear related to offending God and His holiness.

4. Faith for the future

Proverbs 31:25 declares that “she shall rejoice in time to come” for the simple reason that she has faith in God’s supply and strength for her life. She will not fall to the Tempter, but trust in the Supplier.

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.”

5. Family teaching

The wise woman will build up her house by her own godly teaching ministry among the family. Proverbs 31:26 says “she openeth her mouth with wisdom” and Proverbs 1:8 says that a child should not “forsake not the law of thy mother:” This means that this woman is a family teacher. She declares the wise counsel of God’s Word to her children and teaches them how to live and conduct themselves in a society that is sinful and spiritually sick.

2 Timothy 3:15 declares:

“And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”

6. Favoring her husband

Proverbs 31:12

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

The wise woman will build up her house by following the Biblical examples of submission to her husband which involves a non-divisive and non-critical spirit.

7. Fruitful living

Proverbs 31:20

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

This virtuous woman sets the proper example in the home by demonstrating kindness, love, and compassion to those who are in need. Her fruitful outreach and living becomes a way to build character and fruit into the lives of her own children (Gal. 6:10).

Let’s wrap things up for this study. As a mother and wife, you are either building or destroying your home! If you know that your actions and attitudes have been wrong, then you must change and stop the destructive process. You can’t stay on the same destructive path without consequence for you and your children. Backbiting, bitterness, beer, brawling, and bargaining with the world and Satan will destroy your home.

Proverbs 14:1

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

The woman who tears down her house has been called the demolition queen. It’s sad when some other people outside the family unit causes conflict and tears down the home life. However, it’s even sadder when a foolish woman “plucketh” or tears down her own home with “her hands” or by her own selfish, rebellious, and carnal practices (Proverbs 14:1). When a mother or wife neglects her responsibilities and roles as a woman within the family setting (Prov. 31), when she is not walking the spirit-filled life (Eph. 5:18), she becomes the sole responsibility for tearing down her own home. By her worldly actions, unspiritual living, laziness, lack of commitment and carefree attitude, the wife can become a destructive force within the ranks of the home life. Proverbs 14:1 calls her a fool!

Someone said:

“Living in a fool’s paradise is great fun, until the rent comes due.”

Foolish living will come back to haunt every woman, if she neglects her spiritual life and duties as a wife or mother. As a Christian woman, you need to make commitments to God that will last a

lifetime (Rom. 12:1-2). Surrendering to God's will, or plan for modesty and marriage, will allow you to experience freedom, fullness, and fruitfulness within your Christian experience and walk. Your children will also be forever grateful.

“I took a piece of plastic clay
And idly fashioned it one day;
And as my fingers pressed it still
It moved and yielded at my will.

I came again when days were past,
The form I gave it still it bore,
And as my fingers pressed it still,
I could change that form no more.

I took a piece of living clay,
And gently formed it day by day,
And molded with my power and art,
A young child's soft and yielding heart.

I came again when days were gone;
It was a man I looked upon,
He still that early impress bore,
And I could change it never more.”

