

The

Proverbs 31
Woman

One Virtue At A Time



www.womenlivingwell.org

The Proverbs 31 Woman

One Virtue At A Time

Courtney Joseph

www.WomenLivingWell.org

Edited by Katina Miller

© 2011 | All rights reserved

Table of Contents

Is the Proverbs 31 Woman For Real?.....	5
How to be Treasure to Your Husband.....	6
Does Your Husband Trust You?.....	7
A Woman of Action.....	8
Working With Eager Hands.....	9
Shop to the Glory of God.....	11
The Proverbs 31 Woman Rises Very Early.....	12
Do You Have a Dream?.....	14
Vigorously Clean Your Home & Get a Bonus Workout.....	16
Burning the Midnight Oil.....	18
Mundane Tasks Are a Hidden Treasure.....	20
P.S. Your Hands Are Beautiful.....	22
Are You Prepared for the Weather Changes?.....	24
The Proverbs 31 Woman is Classy.....	26
Help Your Husband be a Man of Influence.....	27
Pursuing Excellence.....	29
Let Me Help You Pick Out Your Clothes.....	30
Putting Order on Your Tongue.....	32
Managing Our Time, Family and Home.....	34
What Do Your Children Think of You?.....	36
Be the Woman Your Man Needs.....	38

The Proverbs 31 Woman's Beauty Secret.....	39
Pity or Praise the Proverbs 31 Woman?.....	41
About the Author.....	43

Is the Proverbs 31 Woman For Real?

Have you ever wondered – “Who is this nameless, perfect woman that Solomon writes about in Proverbs 31? Is she for real?” The answer is “no” and “yes”. Let me explain.

Once upon a time there was a prince who would one day be a King. While he was young his mother wisely trained her son on how to find a virtuous wife. She went through the alphabet one letter at a time giving him attributes that he was to seek out in his future wife. Using the alphabet in this manner made it easier for her son to remember and even perhaps memorize what he was looking for in his dream wife. And thus, we have the writings of Proverbs 31 – except this is not a fairy tale!

So is she for real? Does she have a name? No. Proverbs 31:1 says “*The sayings of King Lemuel – an oracle his mother taught him...*” and then verses 2-9 are instructions on how to be a Godly King. She taught him to be on guard against promiscuity and drunkenness and encouraged him to tend to the poor. Then in verses 10-31 she instructs him on how to find the perfect Godly wife – she has no name – just a superior character.

But I must ask... would King Lemuel’s mother give him detailed instructions on what to look for in a wife if there were no women who could possibly have this kind of character? In verse 10 we will see that she is a rare treasure – but she does exist. Does that give you hope – or does it overwhelm you to even attempt to reach for such excellence?

Mandi at Capitol Heights Mom has discussed the Proverbs 31 woman on Women Living Well’s message board. She posted a blog on this and I completely relate to her sentiments when she wrote:

“Let’s see... I do not like getting up while it is dark. I wouldn’t know how to buy a field or a vineyard. I like to go to sleep very early when possible. I can be quite lazy at times. I definitely couldn’t even begin to patch a hole in my husband’s pants let alone actually sew some new creation. I wish every word out of my mouth was wise, but my husband can attest to my lack of common sense; and I am not always sure if my husband has full confidence in me. (Although if asked I am sure he would say, “Of course I do!”)”

She said exactly what I was thinking the first time I read Proverbs 31! And I love her six conclusions from her study of the Proverbs 31 woman!

Her post sparked something inside of me – and gave me a desire to begin a series here on my blog going verse by verse through Proverbs 31. I want to go one verse at a time, one virtue at a time – and encourage you to master one verse and virtue at a time – with God’s help, it truly is possible for you to be her!

How To Be a Treasure To Your Husband

Proverbs 31: 10 "A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies."

A noble wife is rare and extraordinary – just like a ruby. A noble wife is a treasure to her husband – just like a ruby. Do you want to be extraordinary and a treasure to your husband? Then we need to learn to possess a NOBLE character.

So let me tell you what a wife of noble character does not look like:

1. She does not rival her husband.
2. She does not mope around and complain about her housework.
3. She does not overspend and put her family into debt.
4. She is not bored, discontent, greedy or selfish.
5. She does not gossip and slander others.
6. She does not spend her days doing leisurely shopping, texting, emailing, web browsing, watching late night movies, and sleeping in.
7. She does not criticize, mock, or disrespect her husband.
8. She does not have children and a husband who embarrass her.
9. She does not let her outer beauty take precedence over her inner beauty.
10. She does not take God's word lightly.

A wife of noble character, who can find? She is rare! And when she is found – her value is priceless! She is a treasure to her husband. I want to be that ruby! In order to become like the Proverbs 31 woman, we must humble ourselves and see our flaws. We must be willing to change some things – our attitudes, our thought patterns, our work ethic, our words, and what we spend our time on. But by God's grace, you can become a woman of noble character! So for today, begin by evaluating yourself against the list above. Which character quality are you weak in? Pray and ask God for the strength to change!

Does Your Husband Trust You?

Proverbs 31:11 "Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value."

Several years ago, my husband had a year where he traveled for business extensively. I remember reassuring him that I could handle our then, 3 and 1 year old, just fine while he was gone. Though I was tempted to cry to him on the phone because of my longing for him, I wanted to support his business dreams. I freed him by giving him full confidence that I could manage the home and make wise decisions with the children while he was gone. It was not an easy time for me but this verse was my inspiration.

Proverbs says when a man has full confidence in his wife, he lacks nothing of value. That means this character quality is of supreme importance. A husband who has a wife who is solid emotionally and spiritually can rest on his wife's steady support. Can your husband trust you in these areas?

1. **Money** – Can he depend on you to spend it wisely?
2. **Children** – Can he trust you to train your children wisely?
3. **Home** – Can he trust you to run an orderly home?
4. **Reputation** – Can he trust you to not speak poorly of him behind his back?
5. **Faithfulness** – Can your husband trust you to not build emotional connections with other men?
6. **Emotions** – Can your husband trust you to be self-controlled when under pressure?
7. **Choices** – Can your husband trust you to make wise choices when urgent situations arise?

No one is perfect, we all make mistakes. I certainly have not always made the wisest choices. But I am striving to be a Proverbs 31 woman and the Proverbs 31 woman is a woman whose husband has full confidence in her. Does your husband have full confidence in you? If not, what areas can you change in your own life so you can gain this character quality? Commit these areas to prayer and Walk with the King!

A Woman Of Action

Proverbs 31:12 "She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life."

Thus far we have seen that a Godly wife is rare and a treasure to her husband and he can fully trust her in all areas. We will now look at her actions.

The Proverbs 31 woman *"brings her husband good, not harm."* Where does this goodness come from? It comes from her walk with God – it is a fruit of the Spirit. Doing good is a part of her character. And to whom does she do good? Her neighbors, PTA, or scrapbooking friends? Nope – first and foremost – she does good to her husband!

She does not talk about doing good to her husband – she DOES it! She willingly cooks, cleans, cares for the children and stretches a dollar. She willingly submits, respects and praises her husband. She willingly responds to his physical touch and seeks to satisfy him in the bedroom. (okay – I could go further on that one but that's a topic for another time lol!). She does not criticize him over and over for the same flaws but loves him despite his flaws. She knows the power of her words and would not, in a moment of anger, use them to harm him.

In the very first marriage of the Bible, we see the glaring example of Eve harming Adam. She took the bite of the fruit and invited him to join her in her sin. He foolishly followed her lead! A wise woman understands her power of influence to persuade her husband to do things that without her nagging, begging, manipulating or crying, he would not choose to do. We must not attempt to lead our husbands – but allow them to lead us (Ephesians 5).

For how long does the Proverbs 31 woman bring her husband good? *"All the days of her life."* Are these words heavy to your heart? Is your marriage wavering? Let me suggest that a struggling marriage means you must draw even closer to God to see your marriage through. If you are wondering how in the world you are going to love and respect this man you married FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE...let me give you the answer. By fearing God.

Your walk with God is the key to having peace in the midst of a struggling marriage. You cannot control your husband's walk with God – only your own. But when you faithfully pray, read God's word and obey it, it will change the course of your marriage. So do you need a change of course today? Pursue God, pursue the Proverbs 31 woman and pursue bringing your husband good all the days of your life!

Working With Eager Hands

Proverbs 31:13 "She selects wool and flax and works with eager hands."

Thus far we have seen that the Proverbs 31 woman is a treasure to her husband, fully trustworthy, and a woman of action. In verse 13 we see a new character trait. Not only is she a woman who works hard to bring her husband good – but she does her work with an outstanding attitude. She willingly works with *"eager hands."*

When you roll out of bed in the morning, are you eager to do your mundane chores? The Proverbs 31 woman oozes energy, industry, eagerness and diligence. Look at your hands – are they eager to get to work today?

I love how the Proverbs 31 woman's love for God overflows onto her family through her desire to serve them! I want that – but how do we get that eagerness?

1. Pray – pray and ask God to give you an eager attitude all day long.
2. Do your work as unto the Lord. Colossians 3:23 says *"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men."*
3. Change your perspective – each mundane chore you complete for your family is a labor of love. As you grocery shop, cook dinner, fold the laundry and clean out sinks – remember that these small tasks all added together equal a well nurtured home and family. Without one word your actions of eagerness speak volumes of love to your husband and children.
4. Research and find inspiration – read a book on how to be a better homemaker and implement the author's techniques. Find a woman you know who has eager hands and learn off of her. Ask to see her cupboards for organizing tips and her techniques for managing her home.
5. Rest – if you work all day with eager hands you will feel exhausted. Do not let your exhaustion and need for rest discourage you. If all day long you have been feeding and caring for babies and toddlers, listening, comforting, training and teaching your teens plus cleaning and cooking – you will be tired. God never condemns rest. He condemns laziness.

I was a recipient of eager hands when my family helped us move into our new home. They all arrived with eager hands and what a blessing it was to see everyone working so hard. We even had some laughs at our one eager beaver (my oldest sister) who

commanded my other sister and I to “push harder” while we scrubbed cabinets. Our insecurities at our lack of eagerness led us to hide in an upstairs bathroom where we could clean in a more “carefree” manner – but it was not long before she arrived to inspect our bathroom work and to give us more tips on how we could work more effectively and efficiently. Though we laughed then, afterward my husband and I were talking about how amazing her eagerness is. I want that! She is definitely a role model and inspiration to me in this area.

Do you have a Titus 2 role model? Invest some time in learning the skills of homemaking. And take some time today to pray, change your perspective, work with eager hands and then rest. Your eager hands will be a blessing to all those who enter your sweet home.

Shop to the Glory of God

Proverbs 31:14 "She is like the merchant ships bringing her food from afar."

What an amazing woman she is! She is a treasure to her husband because she is fully trustworthy, a woman of action and she works hard with eager hands. In verse 14 we see a new character trait. She takes her shopping seriously! This is my kind of girl!

In verse 14, the Proverbs 31 woman is compared to a merchant ship. What was a merchant ship? It was a ship that brought in all different kinds of cargo to the port. It would have included dyes, fabrics, spices, oils, foods and pottery.

The Proverbs 31 woman did not have a refrigerator, so she would have had to travel to the market daily and sometimes she would have to go a long way to get all of the things she needed for the day. She was willing to go the distance because of her love and care for her husband and children.

If someone was describing your style of shopping how would they describe you? Are you like a merchant ship? Are you willing to go to great heights to find the best, most cost effective and healthiest ingredients for your family? Do you work hard at your shopping? Are you more into convenience foods that are fast or are you willing to cook from scratch? Do you take special care to get a good price on your goods or do you stop at the nearest corner store and just get something quick?

Let me say for the record – shopping is hard work (especially with little ones in tow). I know how much planning, time and energy goes into it. If we are going to be like the Proverbs 31 woman we are going to have to be willing to turn mundane shopping into a creative expression of love for our families.

The questions I asked above are questions I am asking myself. I shop at Aldi bi-weekly to save money. I shop the ads and shop clearance racks first when I'm looking for clothes. But I am not the best at couponing – that takes some extra organization. I cook nearly every meal in the home but rarely completely from scratch. Most of my recipes are simple. I have a couple close friends who cook from scratch – from homemade bread to homemade sauces, salad dressings, and desserts. I admire their willingness to work hard in the kitchen.

Feeding our family fulfills a basic need. It's necessary. Are we doing it to the glory of God? Or are we too tired to cook the family a good meal? If we are – our priorities are not in order. This is a basic need our family has. Strive to excel in it! And shop to the glory of God!

The Proverbs 31 Woman Rises Very Early

Proverbs 31:15 "She gets up while it is still dark; she provides food for her family and portions for her servant girls."

Thus far we see that she is a treasure to her husband because she is trustworthy, a woman of action, she works with eager hands and is a great shopper! In verse 15 we see a new character trait. She rises VERY early!

For all the night owls, I want to clarify in advance – I am not saying that all godly women rise early. I'm saying the Proverbs 31 woman rises early. Later in Proverbs 31:18 we'll see that her lamp does not go out at night – so she stays up late working too. But since in this passage, she rises early, that is what I am going to discuss in this section.

Why does the Proverbs 31 woman rise early?

1. To provide food for her family.
2. To provide portions for her servant girls.

The word portions in this passage actually means work. She rises early to feed her family and delegate the days work that needs to be done. You may say "I don't have servant girls!" – my sentiments exactly! But let me suggest that your washing machine, dryer, dishwasher, and vacuum are just a few modern day servants that lighten our work load tremendously compared to Biblical times.

What are the benefits to rising early?

1. **Time with God.** You can be alone – just you and God in peace and quiet. This is my most precious time of day.

****Tip for those with little ones who disrupt this golden time.**** Starting at the age of 3, I trained my children to stay in their rooms until there was a 7 on their digital clock. I covered the last two numbers of the clock with masking tape and wrote the number 7 on it. Then I told them to wait until they saw matching number 7's. They are allowed to play and read in their rooms just not come out until there is a 7. Training them to do this has been a huge blessing to this mama. I have enjoyed this quiet hour for 3 years now with nearly no interruptions. They know what is expected and they do it.

2. **Time alone for planning.** The Proverbs 31 woman delegated the days work. She knew what needed to be done and she owned her role as the manager of her home. I like to use the morning quietness to think clearly and write a list of what I need to get

done that day.

3. Time for making breakfast, packing lunches and even some dinner preps. The priority of providing food for her family got the Proverbs 31 woman out of bed in the morning!

4. Time for family devotions. We try to read the Bible while we eat breakfast each morning. It's a great way to prepare everyone's hearts for the day.

5. And for me, it's my time to post my daily blog!

How to discipline yourself to rise early:

- ◆Determine what time you plan to rise and make it the same 6 days a week.
- ◆Get to bed early - at least 7 hours before your wake time.
- ◆Pray and ask God to help you rise early.
- ◆Get up!

If you are in a season of life where you are nursing a baby or caring for a sick family member - please do not let this put guilt on you. There are seasons of life where we are not able to rise early. God never commands that we do. Rather we see the example of the Proverbs 31 woman as a goal to attain.

Are mornings hectic and chaotic in your home? You can change that by rising earlier. Rising early can change the entire course of your day and will bless your family.

Do You Have a Dream?

Proverbs 31:16 "She considers a field and buys it; out of her earnings she plants a vineyard."

This woman is truly amazing! The thing that stands out to me most is her work ethic. She labors with all her energy to benefit her family as an early riser, eager worker, and smart shopper. The character trait in the verse above is a summation of all of these.

In verse 16 we see:

1. *She considers a field.* She is not rash to jump into things. She is patient, cautious and prayerful. She sees a field and can imagine what it could become – she is a visionary! I love that about her – she is creative!
2. She **buys** the field! No matter how you translate this – this is a business deal. She buys the field. Rather than spending the family's extra money on frivolous pleasures for herself she wisely invests in something that will benefit the family.
3. She *plants a vineyard* – Once again we see her work ethic. Planting a vineyard is not an easy task. She works hard and as a result her family benefits! At harvest time they will have plentiful fruit and drink.

Do you have a dream? Do you have a talent you wish you could use to contribute to your families' finances? Follow the Proverbs 31 woman's plan.

1. **Consider** – take time to pray about this. Ask God if this is the right season of life to invest time and money into this dream? Will this pull you away from your family or benefit your family?
2. **Buy** – most likely resources will be necessary for your dream to take place. You may have to buy materials, renovate a room in your home or purchase new clothing. Whatever it is – be wise. Be prudent with your family's money.
3. **Plant** – here's where the rubber meets the road. You must work hard to accomplish your dream. It won't happen overnight. It will take day in and day out over sight and care. They'll be setbacks and frustrations. You must persevere to reap the fruit of your labor.

I experienced this verse when I considered starting Women Living Well. This blog was

a dream in 2008. From January until August I prayed – should I or should I not start a website. Was this some silly idea I was coming up with or was this a work God had created me to do? I consulted my husband and together we considered the time factor. Do I have the time? Is this the right season of life? What is my purpose? One big benefit was that I could do this ministry from home – unlike the ministry I was doing at the time.

We knew I had the passion – but time is a commodity that we value highly! Could I really “squeeze” it in and still accomplish our other family goals? Together my husband and I decided “yes” this was a dream placed in my heart from God.

Once I had considered the dream and the time factor – it was time to “buy.” Buy the domain WomenLivingWell.org, a blog design and a few other items.

Now I am in the planting part. Daily I have to work to see the dream take shape. I don’t make a penny from the website and I don’t ever intend to. But I know of many talented moms who are able to sew, craft, bake or create amazing things with their hands. I want to encourage you to not shy away from your dreams. From my own experience, I would say that I believe God places those dreams in your heart.

Every woman from the corner diner waitress to the Corporate CEO has a dream in her heart. We all have common dreams placed in our hearts by God – to be the best wives, moms and homemakers we can be. But after that we each have unique talents and gifts. When the talent and timing match the dream (and your husband is in full support, which you will find out during the “consideration” time) I believe God is in it. Right now in this season of life it may not be the time to invest time or finances in your dream. But pray and wait and when the timing is right – do it like the Proverbs 31 woman – to the glory of God!

Vigorously Clean Your Home And Get a Bonus Workout!

Proverbs 31: 17 "She sets about her work vigorously; her arms are strong for her tasks."

I could study this woman all year long and not get enough of her! She is truly inspiring! We've seen her work ethic as she rises early, works eagerly, shops wisely and produces fruit in her vineyard. The character trait in the verse above is a challenge for me!

There are two descriptions of the Proverbs 31 woman in verse 17:

- 1. She works vigorously.*
- 2. Her arms are strong for the task.*

The word "*vigorous*" challenges me. When the Proverbs 31 woman works, she doesn't get sucked into the web world, junk mail or the television by accident in the middle of the project. She sets about her work and you can bet her vineyard has NO weeds! She doesn't settle to just do the easy jobs she can do while sitting down - she gets into the nitty gritty jobs with all her might.

Some of the commentaries say that this verse paints a picture of her girding her loins which would be the equivalent of us rolling up our sleeves to do our work. There is something about putting on my workout clothes that makes me ready to work out! It's the same with putting on an apron or cleaning clothes, mentally it prepares us to get down to business.

I did a post on this verse titled "Get Fit Cleaning Your House". Here's an excerpt: "One way that we can grow stronger (more fit) is simply by cleaning. We can burn about 200 calories walking for an hour or burn 100-500 calories by doing some deep cleaning for an hour AND have the max benefit of getting a task done!

Imagine how much harder physically tasks were 100 years ago. Women had to scrub their laundry, wring it out and then hang it on a line. They had to pluck the feathers off of chickens, knead dough, wash all their dishes by hand and beat their rugs.

In one of my posts I showed how to make a fitness notebook. One way to grow physically stronger is to work out - but another way simply comes through out the course of the day as you manage your home. If you don't have time to bike, run, swim or exercise or have the money to invest in a treadmill or gym membership - you can squeeze these other activities in during the day to gain some muscle and flexibility.

- ◆When you are lifting your laundry basket to carry up the stairs – do a couple extra lifts – up and down to strengthen your arms.
- ◆When you are mopping the kitchen floor – really push down on the mop and scrub – this will strengthen your core and back.
- ◆If you have stairs in your home – do a couple extra trips up and down putting items away – this will get your heart rate up.
- ◆If there is raking, mulching or outdoor sweeping to be done – do it continually for 30+ minutes to get your heart rate up and strengthen your arms.
- ◆Weeding, window washing, vacuuming and dusting all strengthen your arms, legs and abs – and we ALL know that carrying those babies on our hips is NO easy task!

I have noticed my arms are weaker now that I don't have to carry my children anymore! Those baby carriers are a workout! But once those babies grow into preschoolers – our arms and backs will weaken if we do not keep our arms “strong for our tasks.” We must not shy away from hard work – it's good for us! Working hard will help us live well with energy and vibrancy and benefit our families with a clean place to take refuge.

Look around you right now – is there some work to be done in your home? Take some inspiration from the Proverbs 31 woman, roll up your sleeves, get out your tools and work vigorously!

Burning the Midnight Oil

Proverbs 31:18 "She sees that her trading is profitable, and her lamp does not go out at night."

This woman continues to challenge me. So far we have seen that she rises early, works eagerly and vigorously, shops wisely and is extremely productive with her hands!

1. ***Her trading is profitable.*** Matthew Henry's Commentary says: "*She is one that takes pains in her duties, and takes pleasure in them. She is careful to fill up time, that none be lost. She rises early. She does what she does, with all her power, and trifles not.*"

My friend Kristy is an example of a profitable woman. She makes adorable knit hats and tutu's. She has sold hundreds around the world through her Etsy store while working right from her home!

My sister Kristen works from home as a home schooling virtual High School math teacher. She doesn't just teach math but she shows the love of Jesus to all of her students! Parents are lucky to have her as their child's teacher!!! She truly loves her students and gives them 100%.

My friend Katina works part-time as a nurse while balancing being a wife, mom, homemaker & servant of God. She has spent countless hours helping me with this ebook! I praise the Lord for Katina!

And quite a few of my friends extend a hand of love as they babysit a few days a week in their home. These women are working hard and seeing that their work is profitable. They don't do it half heartedly or bitterly. They have found their passion and with joy pour hours into their work. As a result, I would be willing to guess that all of these profitable women have this next trait in common.

2. ***Her lamp does not go out at night.*** When you are applying excellence to your work you will find that the night oil just simply has to be burnt sometimes to get it all done. My blog has given me more late nights than I care to admit! The Proverbs 31 woman does not watch television every night. Actually, she did not watch television any of the nights (gulp)!

All of the commentaries say that this was a woman who basically worked night and day. But we know she slept because verse 15 says she rises early - so she did have to rise! Because of the invention of the light bulb we might forget that her night oil would

have begun when the sun sets between 5:30 & 8:30pm. For you & me, the “night oil” has begun when we flip our light switches on! Don’t most of us still work in the evening? There’s dishes to do, baths to give, homework to be done, training to be done, laundry to be put away, stories to be read, and possibly cleaning if you were away during the day.

Burning the night oil does not mean we stay up until after midnight working. I know that many are night owls and they get a burst of energy late at night! If that is you – and you are up working late and accomplishing much – that’s fantastic!!!

But for others, do not feel badly if by 10pm you are exhausted and ready to hit the hay “early.” That’s not early! Your night oil has been burning for hours already and if you are going to rise early as the Proverbs 31 woman does, then 10pm is a good bed time for you.

The problem with technology is that it keeps us up way past the night oil – we are not being profitable, we are exhausted in the morning, too tired to keep our eyes open to read God’s word or pray, and cranky with our husbands and children. Try to be profitable in the evenings. Then get your rest. Read a good book, watch a short show, stop by to read my blog (lol!) and then get to bed because the sunrise is coming!

Mundane Tasks Are a Hidden Treasure

Proverbs 31:19 "In her hand she holds the distaff and grasps the spindle with her fingers."

So far we have seen that she rises early, works eagerly and vigorously, shops wisely, is extremely productive with her hands and she uses her evenings to get work done too!

Do you understand verse 19? The Proverbs 31 woman is spinning her own thread! The distaff is attached to the wheel that holds the flax. The spindle is the hand-held rod on which the thread is wound as it's spun.

Let me just say for starters - I cannot IMAGINE spinning thread to use to sew my family's clothing. What a burden! And I thought ironing was a burden! Lol! Spinning the thread, to sew the shirt, that I am going to have to iron...now that's mundane hard work. And that's exactly the type of work the Proverbs 31 woman did.

Do you ever just feel like your tasks for the home are mundane, meaningless, never ending and repetitive? Should I really bother to wash that little hand print off of the window when I know it will magically reappear the next day? Should I really sweep under the lunch table? Dinner's coming and it will need to be swept again! Do I really need to dust? I can't write my name in it yet! Sometimes we ask ourselves these questions.

Housework is repetitive - if you do it! And the Proverbs 31 woman was willing to do the mundane task of sitting down, engaging her hands and mind and spinning the thread necessary to clothe her family, make garments to sell and to help the poor as we'll see in the very next verse.

What is the draw of Martha Stewart, Better Homes and Gardens and The Fly Lady? Innately we all dream of creating a perfect home - but in reality when the house is full of people, messes are being made every second of the day! A woman's work is truly never done!

I would like to believe that the Proverbs 31 woman may not have enjoyed every second of spinning her thread - it was mundane hard work. In the same way, we may not enjoy every minute of cleaning toilets or folding underwear, BUT I think we all will admit that we love the feel of clean sheets on the bed, fresh towels in the bathroom, bathed babies in clean pajamas and a warm cooked meal on the table. The result of our hard work is a blessing to everyone who enters the doors of our home.

Now remember – if you are about to face crusty dishes in the sink and a pile of dirty laundry – DO NOT think for one moment God loves you any less. God does not base your worthiness of his love on the cleanliness of your home. We stand before God justified by the blood of the cross!

But I want to encourage you, do not grow weary in your mundane tasks. Mundane tasks are the hidden treasure to creating a home that is a haven. Embrace this hidden treasure as the Proverbs 31 woman did.

P.S. Your Hands Are Beautiful

Proverbs 31:20 "She extends her hand to the poor, Yes, she reaches out her hands to the needy." NKJV

So far we have seen that she rises early, works eagerly and vigorously, shops wisely, is extremely productive and she uses her evenings to get work done too, even mundane, hard work.

In Proverbs 31:20, there is a feature of this beautiful woman pointed out for the first time – it's "her hands". Up until now, her hands have been furiously working sewing, planting, cooking and shopping. And here they take center stage as she reaches out to those outside of her home with them.

Look down and examine your hands. Are they young or old? soft or calloused? Sun spotted? Do your veins show? Do you think your hands are beautiful? Often our hands are one of the first places to show our age – they have worked hard serving our husbands, children, and the needy. What a blessing it is to have two hands!

My sister Jennifer, once shared this story with me and it so touched me I wanted to share it with you all – she wrote it out for me here:

"P.S. Your Hands Are Beautiful." This was what my in-laws wrote inside my birthday card at the end of their very nice note to me.

A few weeks before my birthday, I was at a family get-together, and something came up about "hands". I'm not sure how exactly the conversation went, but I know that I made the comment that the one place I have started to see my body aging is in my hands. When I look down at them, which I realized is frequently during the day, they have begun to look different, older to me.

My mother-in-law said that the one thing she remembered about her own mother was her beautiful hands. I remembered her sharing about this before, and I believe that she meant more than just the outside beauty of beautiful skin with perfectly groomed nails. Those who had the privilege of knowing her mother, Louise Oliver, know that her life was one of active service to our Lord and that she did have beautiful hands because they did beautiful things for His glory. When I read my birthday card with the message, "P.S. Your hands are beautiful," the full meaning of that small statement touched me.

It reminded me of what Paul said to the church at Thessalonica. I Thessalonians 4:11 says, "Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your

hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anyone."

These verses should cause us to look at the work that we do as women and ask ourselves, am I leading a quiet life?

Am I minding to my own business, the tasks that God has called me to do?

Am I working faithfully with my hands in my daily life as an act of worship to my Lord?

Is my work winning the respect of outsiders?

Am I bringing glory to my Lord with the works of my hands?

Would God think that my hands are beautiful?"

Dear Reader,

Do not be discouraged as you toil day in and day out for loved ones within and outside your home. When we use our hands for God's glory he is pleased. Look down and examine your hands, a second time. Do you have a new perspective? Do not judge the beauty of your hands by the outside - but rather by lives they have touched.

Are You Prepared for the Weather Changes?

Proverbs 31:21 "When it snows, she has no fear for her household; for all of them are clothed in scarlet."

So far we have seen that she rises early, works eagerly and vigorously, shops wisely, is extremely productive, she uses her evenings to get work done and she has beautiful hands that she extends to the poor.

Now we come to verse 21 which is all about preparation! *"When it snows, she has no fear for her household; for all of them are clothed in scarlet."*

The Proverbs 31 woman is prepared. She is prepared for the change of seasons and is careful to be sure that every single person in her household has everything they need. There's no last minute scurrying for mittens, hats or boots - she is organized and prepared.

Every Christmas and Easter I make myself a little crazy trying to get my family matching outfits. I find great joy in picking a theme - one Easter the theme was green. This color was chosen because my daughter had a hand-me down dress which was white and green and my son had a sweater vest I bought on clearance for \$2.99! (Love a deal!) So, green it was! Next I had to find my husband a matching tie - easy! And myself a matching dress - UGH- much more difficult.

After finding the dress, I realized I had a much longer way to go than I imagined. My daughter needed a cardigan in case it was cold, a hair bow, new white shoes, new white socks and on and on it went as I realized that having the family ready from head to toe means thinking everything through thoroughly!

I certainly am not going to say that the Proverbs 31 woman cared for a second about matching outfits - but I will say that she carefully dressed her family. The term "scarlet" is significant because it signifies expensive and good quality. She went for quality over quantity - I must admit I do quite the opposite in life. I love a deal and I love my hand me downs! But the reality is - managing all of my "cheap" clothes at times is a pain! If there is too much in the drawer, my children end up wadding it up into balls and making a mess for me to fix regularly!

Are you prepared for the weather changes ahead? Have you thought through what your family will need, the quality of what you will purchase and considered your family's comfort as the Proverbs 31 woman did?

I tend to be drawn toward finding deals and quantity - but the Proverbs 31 woman was

really much more simple. She had fewer, but better quality, items. Think how much easier life would be if we followed her lead. Make a list of your family's needs, simplify your purchases by getting quality items that will last, and be prepared. This is your job as the manager of your home. Let's get to it – the time is now!

The Proverbs 31 Woman Is Classy

Proverbs 31:22 "She makes coverings for her bed; she is clothed in fine linen and purple."

So far we have seen that the Proverbs 31 woman rises early, works eagerly, works vigorously, shops wisely, even in the evenings she is extremely productive, she extends her beautiful hands to the poor and she is prepared for every season.

We see from the verse above that her clothing is a reflection of her character. After taking special care of her family and household she does not get lazy with her own appearance. But she takes special care to sew herself garments of fine linen and purple.

This fine linen and purple suggests a touch of elegance and class but not excessiveness because remember she couldn't run out to the mall to shop, she was a seamstress so she would have sewn her own clothing.

This detail about her clothing comes last, after a long list of many other tasks she accomplishes. She put her needs last. Selfishness is not beautiful. And remember, this is King Lemuel's Mother telling him what sort of woman he should look for to be his queen. So before we quickly plan a trip to Ann Taylor, we must assess how well we are doing covering the needs of our family first.

On the flip side, there is no virtue in plainness – if that is your personality – that's fine, but it is not more virtuous than trying to be attractive. Sometimes as a knee jerk reaction to this world, we may want to say that any attempt at beauty is sinful but that is not the case with the Proverbs 31 woman. She made everything, from her home to her clothing, appealing to the eye. She knew that how she decorated her home and what she wore was a reflection of her husband and children. And though she made everyone else her first priority, when she did finally find time for herself she did not slack off.

She was not immodest nor trying to draw attention to herself, rather the Proverbs 31 woman was able to find the delicate balance of being classy with I Peter 3:3-4 which says *"Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit which is of great worth in God's sight."*

Is your home well cared for, your finances in order, your family well fed, have you reached out to the poor? As you shop for the family – don't forget to purchase yourself a classy purple blouse! I don't believe I've ever encouraged my readers to go shopping before – but it's in the passage right? Lol! Let your purple shirt be symbolic of the inner beauty of the Proverbs 31 woman you are striving to be.

Help Your Husband Be A Man of Influence

Proverbs 31:23 "Her husband is respected at the city gate, where he takes his seat among the elders of the land."

So far we have seen that the Proverbs 31 woman rises early, works eagerly, works vigorously, shops wisely, even in the evenings, she is extremely productive, she extends her beautiful hands to the poor, she is prepared for every season and her clothing is a reflection of her character: classy.

Now we come to the point in the passage where we learn more about her husband. Who is he? He is respected at the city gate where he sits among the elders. This man is a man of respect, honor and influence. As the Proverbs 31 woman works vigorously at home serving her husband and family, she frees her husband to sit at the city gate in a position of influence. His wife and good home bring him honor in the community.

Do you bring honor to the name of your husband by the way you run your home?

Are you mindful of the fact that the way you run your home is a reflection of your husband and his influence? If your husband cannot lead at home, how can he lead in the community?

Do you compete with your husband for respect or do you allow him to have the respect that is due him out in public?

Are you and your husband going two separate directions in life – each striving after your own pursuits or are you following your husband's lead?

This husband in Proverbs 31 is one lucky man! He has landed a wife that most men could only dream of landing! And it has catapulted him in life to a place of influence. You know the saying "behind every good man is a good woman." That is definitely the case here!

In our culture, we tend to bristle at the thought of staying out of the spot light so our husband can shine. Elizabeth George puts it beautifully here:

Proverbs 12:4 "A wife of noble character is her husband's crown"

"God's beautiful woman is pleased to be her husband's crown. Shunning the spotlight, she gladly gives her life behind the scenes so that her husband may be noticed and honored. She is glad when he is the center of attention, when he

excels, when he is recognized, when he rises to the top. Indeed, she delights in living in his shadow. His promotion is her greatest reward. She desires that her husband be highly respected and esteemed, so she contentedly offers the supreme sacrifice of herself for him.”

– Elizabeth George, *Beautiful in God’s Eyes*

Follow in the footsteps of the Proverbs 31 woman today – your husband will be blessed!

Pursuing Excellence

Proverbs 31:24 "She makes linen garments and sells them, and supplies the merchants with sashes."

Is anyone else overwhelmed by the Proverbs 31 woman yet? Let me be completely honest - I am! So far, we've watched her be a jewel to her husband, children, servants and even the poor. We've watched her rise early, stay up late, plant a vineyard, sew her own clothes, her family's clothing, the tapestries and beddings! And now we see that the Proverbs 31 woman knows she is capable of more and she does more! The cherry on top of all of this woman's work is excellence!

The lesson in Proverbs 31:24 is she is willing to use her talents to add to her family's finances BUT she does not sacrifice the family pursuing them.

The Proverbs 31 woman doesn't just make linen - she makes "fine" linen. She applies excellence to her work. Excellence is not perfection but rather offering quality work. As a result - her product was in demand by the merchants. The merchants were most likely from Canaan and Egypt and most likely wealthy. So she could interact with people from all walks of life from the poor to the wealthy and she did it with excellence. The Proverbs 31 woman's family, the merchants, and the poor benefited from the Proverbs 31 woman's diligence in her home business. As you ponder this verse ask yourself:

1. What are my talents?
2. During this season of life, if I use my talents to benefit my family financially will I be sacrificing in other priority areas?
3. If the answer to number 2 is no, then am I performing my talent with excellence? In what ways could I be better trained or put more time into becoming excellent at what I do?

For some, this is not the season of life to pursue your talents to be used outside of the home. For others, now is the time to spread your wings and use your talents in a new arena. The lesson in Proverbs 31:24 is: she is willing to use her talents to add to her family's finances BUT she does not sacrifice the family pursuing them. Seek God and your husband's wisdom in this decision-making process and then whatever you do - do it with excellence like the Proverbs 31 woman!

Let Me Help You Pick Out Your Clothes

Proverbs 31:25 "She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come."

We've watched the Proverbs 31 woman be a jewel to her husband, children, servants and even the poor. We've watched her rise early, stay up late, plant a vineyard, sew her own clothes, her family's clothing, the tapestries and beddings! And the cherry on top of all of this woman's work is excellence!

This verse adds a couple new character traits:

1. *Strength*
2. *Dignity*
3. *Laughing at the days to come*

When I look at these three qualities I have only one thing to say. This is a confident woman. She is strong, she is dignified, and she is not fearful of her future. Do you struggle with fear – maybe of being rejected, failure, saying something stupid, not being good enough, pretty enough, organized enough, or just plain enough.

I do.

In the beginning of blogging, I took every comment personally – especially the negative ones. I'm over it now! But please be nice anyway lol! I worry about my parenting – am I doing it right? I have moments where I think, if someone rang my doorbell right now, would my home be clean enough to invite them in? I wonder, am I good enough to write on Women Living Well?

Let me be really honest here. One time in my ladies Bible study I mentioned one of my "insecurities" and it was in regard to Women Living Well. I shared with the girls my fear of being "exposed." Not that I have skeletons in the closet to hide but rather that I have failed on my blog to share my flaws. I share my "schedules" without sharing how I struggle to keep on them. I share what I've learned in marriage, without sharing some of the dark places we have come through to arrive in this place. And I rarely share about parenting because I just know one of my kids will surely embarrass me! Lol!

What's beautiful about the Proverbs 31 woman is she is human, flawed, but not exposed – she is clothed – she is clothed in strength and dignity. I pray when you see me, this very weak woman, you will see God's strength and dignity clothing my

weaknesses.

When I take my eyes off of myself and put them on my amazing God – my fears flip to confidence. And he gives me the confidence to say to you, my sister in Christ, you can be strong. Do not live in your fears. Do not wring your hands and lose sleep over today's troubles. Clothe yourself in God's strength. Be confident.

He who laid the earth's foundations, marked off its dimensions, placed the stars in the sky, gives dawn its orders, keeps the storehouses of snow, and tells the lightening to disperse, loves you, flaws and all (taken from Job 38). And he has clothed you in his strength. Do not exchange your clothes for the rags this world offers! Because dear sister in Christ – those clothes you are wearing today are radiant!

Putting Order On Your Tongue

Proverbs 31:26 says "She opens her mouth with wisdom, and on her tongue is the law of kindness."

As we have studied the Proverbs 31 woman, we have seen her put order into every aspect of her life. We've watched her be a jewel to her husband, children, servants and even the poor. We've watched her rise early, stay up late, plant a vineyard, sew her own clothes, her family's clothing, the tapestries and beddings! And the cherry on top of all of this woman's work is excellence!

As she puts order into her home, we find that she also puts order on her tongue. James 3:2 says *"If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man."* This is no small task to put order on her tongue. She is not perfect but she is diligent to make every effort to filter her words!

We find two rules of order that she followed:

1. She spoke only wise words.
2. She spoke only kind words.

Where does her wisdom flow from? From her walk with God, from her life experiences, from wise mentors, wise friends and perhaps good solid literature.

Are you walking with God daily? Are you pondering your life experiences long enough to gain wisdom from them? Do you have a wise mentor, mother or grandmother? Do you have wise friends? Are your reading materials filled with rich wisdom?

OR are you too busy to read your Bible? Too busy to reflect on your daily happenings to pull wisdom from them? Have you chosen poor friendships? Do you choose to fill your mind with the world's wisdom through television, magazines and websites filled with celebrity gossip?

If you lack wisdom start by digging into God's word TODAY in the book of Proverbs. Start in chapter one and get reading! Then pray. James 1:5 says *"If any of you lacks wisdom he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him."*

Now think of those in your family who are affected most by the words you say. Have you considered that they too are weary pilgrims in a dry desert who need a fountain of life pouring forth wisdom and kindness to survive. You can know a woman's character by her choice of words.

Would your family say you are kind? It doesn't matter how beautiful your hair, make-up or clothes are, it's the words coming out of your mouth that determine your true beauty. What can we do to work on kindness?

1. Practice self-control with your emotions. Try to not be overly emotional and don't speak rapidly when you are angry. All of those rapid words are unkind.
2. Watch sarcasm – it usually reveals a bitter heart.
3. Watch critical remarks – they are red flags revealing a proud, envious, selfish or angry heart.

Here's your to-do list for the day:

- ◆Let your husband hear you teaching your children God's wisdom.
- ◆Be gracious with your words towards others.
- ◆Be gentle with others.
- ◆Be quick to notice others' strengths and slow to point out others' flaws.
- ◆Purify your heart through the reading of God's word and put aside all anger, bitterness, malice, slander, envy, and self-pity.

Put order on your tongue as you Walk with the King!

Managing Our Time, Family and Home

Proverbs 31: 27 "She watches over the affairs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness."

This verse sums up the Proverbs 31 woman! She does not eat the bread of idleness! We have seen her diligence in every aspect of life – from caring for her husband, children, servants and even the poor. We've watched her rise early, stay up late, plant a vineyard, sew her own clothes, her family's clothing, the tapestries and beddings! And the cherry on top of all of this woman's work is excellence!

The Proverbs 31 woman knew that homemaking was her God-given role and she OWNED it! She didn't idly sit by and let the clutter and laundry pile up! She was busy embracing her high calling. She was busy managing her time, family and home well!

Proverbs 31:27 says:

1. *"She watches"* – this means her eyes are fixed on her own family as her first priority. She's not watching what others are doing. She's not watching television or status updates on Facebook all day long. She's watching her home closely and the needs that are there.

2. What does she watch over? *"the affairs (or ways)"* What are your family's ways? What are their habits and routines? Are they healthy? Are they glorifying to God? Is everyone getting their rest, getting time in the Word of God, getting enough tender listening time, love and affection, enough exercise and healthy food? What are your family's ways? You shape the ways of the home by your influence.

3. Whose ways does she watch? *"her household"* Let me reiterate -she is thinking of her household first. She is not thinking about pleasing her boss, pleasing her mother-in-law, or meddling in others business. She is focused on her household because she understands and embraces the powerful role she plays in the home.

And then the verse ends with a kicker! *"She does not eat the bread of idleness."* This statement is so powerful. The Proverbs 31 woman knows how to manage her time, family and home! As she resists idleness, she embraces her work and she serves her family.

Do you see how irreplaceable she is in this home?

She is the one who is making everything run smoothly! It is her watchful eye and her diligence that makes her home a pleasant place.

The appearance of your home doesn't lie. It is very clear to the eye when a home has been neglected. And I am convicted by this verse.

I want to encourage you, do not grow idle in your mundane tasks. Manage your time, family and home well. Mundane tasks are the hidden treasure to creating a home that is a haven. Watch over the ways of your family. Embrace this hidden treasure as the Proverbs 31 woman did and you too will be blessed!

What Do Your Children Think of You?

Proverbs 31:28 "Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also and he praises her."

This verse hits home with me! Isn't this what we all dream of? Our husband and children praising us? We have seen this woman pour her life out for her family. We've watched her rise early, stay up late, plant a vineyard, sew her own clothes, her family's clothing, the tapestries and beddings! And here we find her reward - "*Her children arise and call her blessed!*"

I am going to address the husband's "words of praise" in the next chapter because it correlates with that verse and it's a HUGE topic for me - I can't wait to write on it! Now we will solely look at the children.

◆Who is praising her? It's not the people in the PTA, her church Bible study group, local newspaper, co-workers or neighborhood association. It is her children!

◆Who you are at home is who you really are. If you find that all of your accolades come from sources outside of your home - and inside your home is a train wreck, then you can be sure that your priorities somehow have been derailed!

◆If you have little ones and even teens, this may not be the season where they arise and call you blessed, so be patient! The words "*arise up*" mean that the children are full grown. Often times, it's not until children gain a bit of perspective in life that they realize how much their mother has sacrificed for them.

◆Arising and blessing their mother is not just about the "thank you" but about them arising and living honorable, noble, God-fearing lives. This fruit is evidence of a mother's hard work. This is a mother's true reward!

What are some practical ways to get to this point?

1. Do not focus on raising your children to be straight "A" students, captains of the basketball team, doctors or missionaries. Focus first on raising children who fear God and desire to serve him. And let their success and vocation be left in God's hands.

2. Pray daily for your children to love God and desire him more than anything this world has to offer!

3. Work on creating order, fun, memories, warmth, and a haven in your home. Make

your home a place where children feel comfortable to open up their hearts and talk, where they are free to laugh, make mistakes, be silly, yet always sensing the presence of God. We must first have God's word present in our lives in order for the children to sense the presence of God in their lives. Read the scriptures together, memorize them, sing them, and delight in them.

4. There is no room for giving up, giving in or surrendering to the wayward child. We must continue to parent our children – not until Jr. High, not until they are 16, not even until they are 18. They will make CRUCIAL life altering decisions between 18 and 25 – their vocation and who they will marry. Stay in the game with a fierce face! Persevere in guiding, praying, loving, talking, and creating special time with your children. Your children need you.

5. Remember – you are irreplaceable. They are YOUR responsibility to train, instruct and release. Walk humbly and fearfully as you fulfill this high calling!

A huge challenge lies before us today as we consider our parenting skills. Have we blown it? Apologize. Have we failed to pray? Start today. Have we been too wrapped up in our own lives to spend meaningful time with the kids? Turn off the TV and computer and give your children the best of you.

Let me close by arising and calling my own mother blessed! “*THANK YOU*” for all of the sacrifice and unconditional love and for riding out every wave with me. Since I was a baby you have taught me the truth of God's word and role-modeled what that looks like lived out in high heels! You are deserving of high praise – I love you!

Be The Woman Your Man Needs

Proverbs 31:29 "Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all."

This verse is absolutely my favorite verse from the Proverbs 31 passage! We have seen the Proverbs 31 woman pour her life out for her family. We've watched her work hard. And here we find her reward: **Her husband praising her.**

Let's just stop right here! I know what some of you are already thinking, "Courtney you are in lala land - my husband never praises me. All he does is criticize me!" You are imagining that I have a husband who daily says remarkable things about what I do in the home, with the children and my writing. Nope! That is not the case - though I do have a husband who I know is pleased with me. He does not go around pouring out praise.

I live in a normal marriage where my husband sees my flaws and will even mention things that need to be addressed that are being neglected. And when he points those out it's like a dagger to my heart. I take it very personally and seriously. That's something he wishes I would not do. But I have said to him before - "I'm striving to be the Proverbs 31 woman whose husband praises her. So if you point out my flaws I've failed!"

You see, **no amount of positive reader comments, worldly accolades, praise from my parents, friends, pastor or even praise from the kids can compete with my desire to please my husband.**

The Proverbs 31 woman knew her husband's needs, met them and as a result he praised her. If we neglect what our husbands ask for, ignore their advice, withhold love in the bedroom (*wink*), and refuse to submit and respect them -it's inevitable - we will not get a whole lot of praise from our husbands.

We can be the best room mother, best career woman, best servant at church, or best friend another woman can have but when we come home - if our husband's needs are not met - we have failed to be like the Proverbs 31 woman.

Every husband has different needs. Every marriage will look different as a result. We need to listen to our husbands.

I believe if we follow God's word and apply it in our marriages our husbands will one day say, *"Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all."*

The Proverbs 31 Woman's Beauty Secret

Proverbs 31:30 "Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised."

What a joy it has been to study this lovely lady with you! We have seen her beauty shine as she serves her husband and children with every bit of strength and love she has.

As we come to verse 30, we are reminded that this chapter was written by a mother telling her son what to look for in a wife (found in Proverbs 31:1). Ladies, if you have sons - listen up to the warnings you must give your sons!

1. Charm is deceptive - Charm is the use of the womanly ways of displaying kindness, agreeableness, flattery and affection to hook a man. Then once she is married, the real woman comes out and it was all a lie. For the charming woman is not nearly as kind, agreeable or affectionate as the woman the man fell in love with. This poor husband is now trapped in this marriage that began as deception!

2. Beauty is fleeting - Men desire something beautiful to feast their eyes on, and guess what ladies? God made us all with eyes, hair, and curves that please your man. But marrying a beauty will not make a great marriage! The beauty will fade and if she is not beautiful on the inside, this husband is trapped!

Remind your sons to not fall into the traps of charm and beauty! But rather remember:
"A woman who fears the Lord is to be praised."

The woman who fears the Lord will have a God conscienceness. She will be aware of God's presence in her home at all times. She will work tirelessly and sacrificially to create a home that is filled with peace, joy and comfort. This woman loves the Lord and desires to please him. She serves her husband and children because of her higher desire to please the Lord. When marriage difficulties arise, this woman remains unwavering in her faith and dedication to pleasing God. She does not respect and submit to her husband based on her husband's worthiness but out of her love and fear of the Lord. She knows when her husband is acting ugly that there is a God in heaven who loves her and whom she serves and so she presses through those difficult times remaining unwavering in her dedication to him.

This woman's faith is her beauty secret.

Her faith makes her gorgeous, desirable, praiseworthy, admirable, noble and indeed RARE!

It's the charming and beautiful women who grace the cover of magazines. Have you seen the picture of a woman who fears the Lord on the front cover of a magazine lately? Nope? Me neither!

This world has fed us lies about beauty! And for far too long we have fallen for them! Why do we so painfully compare ourselves to these faithless, deceptive, fleeting beauties? We have been fearing man rather than fearing God.

Listen to me – your faith makes you beautiful! Your faith makes you praiseworthy! We must teach this to our sons and daughters!

Pity or Praise the Proverbs 31 Woman?

Proverbs 31:31: "Give her the reward she has earned, and let her works bring her praise at the city gate."

We have finally come to the end of the Proverbs 31 series! What an inspiration it has been to study this amazing woman who does not eat the bread of idleness! We have seen her diligence in every aspect of life – from caring for her husband, children, servants and even the poor. We've watched her rise early, stay up late, plant a vineyard, sew her own clothes, her family's clothing, the tapestries and beddings! In the end, what does she get for all of her hard labor? A prize, trophy or plaque? No, she receives the praise of those around her declaring indeed she is rare.

Let's reflect for a moment on the above list. Do you think she wanted to be pitied for the lowly work she had to do? Do you think she moped around imagining that the grass was greener for the lady down the road? She had to wake so early to care for her loved ones. She had to work so late at night to get all of sewing work done. She helped the poor, while still making sure her family was warm and fed. She had to be exhausted! Should we pity the Proverbs 31 woman?

I mean where are the spa days? Disney Land vacations? The raise with the corner office and bonus checks? Proverbs 31:31 says – *"Give her the reward she has earned."* So what has she exactly *"earned?"*

Proverbs 31:28 says *"Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also and he praises her."* Her reward is the praise of her closest loved ones. And so we must ask:

1. *What do your children think of you?*
2. *What does your husband think of you?*

Some may say, "Praise is not much of a reward." But truly, how many wives do you know who long for their husband's appreciation and acknowledgment of what they do? How many parents do you see struggling with the rebellion of their teens? The Proverbs 31 woman does not face these struggles. Wouldn't you take the peace, love, and harmony of a warm cozy home over a free family vacation filled with strife?

Let's switch gears, I have said many times on my blog *"Who you are at home is who you really are."* But I want to add - you cannot be warm to those inside your home and cold to those outside your home and be like the Proverbs 31 woman.

Her character was clearly seen by those outside of her home. Verse 31 says: *"Her works bring her praise at the city gate."* Not only is she praised by those inside her home, but now we see her being praised by those outside her home! Double bonus!

So, at the end of the day, do we pity or praise the Proverbs 31 woman? I suppose it matters what you value. Money, status, power, or people?

My life is empty without the people in it. And though I never want to selfishly seek praise from others – we see that it is the natural outcome of a woman who lives her life poured out for her family and friends.

Does God pity or praise the Proverbs 31 woman? He praises her. It is God I ultimately desire to please. And though this world may be confused by our dreams, visions and goals, one day when we stand before God's throne on judgment day it will all be clear.

Proverbs 31:10 says, *"A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies."* Indeed sweet Christian sister, you are rare and your worth is beyond any earthly treasure. Now go treasure the people in your life and pursue pleasing God.

Walk with the King!

Courtney

About the Author



Welcome to Women Living Well Ministries! I'm Courtney and I have been married to my high school sweet heart for 13 years. I homeschool my son and daughter and am a graduate of the Moody Bible Institute with a degree in Evangelism and Discipleship.

After leading women's Bible studies, a Mentorship Ministry, and Titus 2 Workshops at my church, I decided to move my ministry home in 2008 by blogging.

In November of 2009, I received an unexpected email from a producer of the nationally televised CBS Show, The Rachael Ray Show. The producer had stumbled across my blog and invited my husband and me onto the show to share about our marriage, parenting and homemaking. At this time, my blog took off.

My passion to see "women living well," inspired me in 2010, to start a second website called GoodMorningGirls.org. There, women gather together to dig into their Bibles daily through tech accountability groups called "Good Morning Girls." I can also be found here: Women Living Well Facebook; Women Living Well Twitter; & Good Morning Girls Facebook.