

**GOD'S PATTERN FOR  
CHRISTIAN  
WOMANHOOD**

## GOD'S PATTERN FOR BIBLICAL WOMANHOOD

### PREFACE

“Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, and to train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the Word of God may not be reviled.” Titus 2:3-5 (ESV)

These lessons have been prepared for use in my own personal ministry in the lives of whomever God allows and specifically for my own daughters and granddaughters. I am not familiar with any one book that teaches on all the topics that God has laid on my heart. So, I have drawn from women I know of high Godly character qualities and from books written by Godly men and women whom I highly respect. I am also drawing from my own experiences, which include being happily married for over 50 years and raising three children who are now grown with children of their own. I am a teacher by profession and a homemaker by choice. It is my prayer and my desire that you will find Biblical Truth within these pages, and that you will find practical ideas and means to apply these Truths to your own life and to those around you to whom you relate and minister, especially those in your own home.

May we all strive to know God, His Truth, and His “Pattern for our lives”!

# GOD'S PATTERN FOR CHRISTIAN WOMANHOOD

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“...I will make him a  
help meet for him.”

Genesis 2:18



## Chapter 1

### CELEBRATE THE ROLES

Genesis 5:1&2 “...When God created man, He made him in the likeness of God. Male and female He created them...”

In a world that is trying to destroy the differences between the roles of men and women in so many ways, God has called us to celebrate the roles and enjoy who He has created us to be. The Bible is very precise about the fact that men and women are different by God’s creative design. For humans to try to destroy or even blur those differences, is a gross sin. And beyond that, women find themselves frustrated and deprived of the very things God designed to give them joy. It is my experience that when we fulfill the roles that God has given us as women, whether it be marrying and bearing children, or ministering to children, or otherwise serving in ministry, we find meaning and fulfillment in a way we can’t find anywhere else. God has gifted women to nurture and give care, and when we choose not to proceed as God has prepared us, we find frustration and confusion.

Since “the beginning” God’s plan has not changed, so it is important to know what God says on the topic as we walk through the mire that has been created by the people of our age who profess to know everything.

Way back in the garden, God gave responsibilities to Adam that were different from those for Eve. God instructed Adam to name the animals and take care of the garden (Genesis 2:15, 19, & 20), while Eve’s responsibilities were for the benefit of her husband. Specifically, in Genesis 2:18 and 22 we find that God made a helper for Adam and “brought” Eve to him. Further support for this thought can be found in Genesis 2:18. I Corinthians 11:7,8,&9 and I Corinthians 7:34.

The “curse” had a profound effect on the roles, and man has never recovered the original plan that God had in the beginning. According to Genesis 3:17-19, working the ground would be much more difficult and painful for Adam. Genesis 3:16 explains that Eve would from now on bear children in much pain and her husband would rule over her.

In order to display the wonder that God created in the roles, we will study a number of women in the Scriptures and the roles they fulfilled.

The first woman we will observe is Eve, who, of course, was the first woman that God created. As we can see in the paragraph above, Eve was created for her husband according to Genesis 2. God “brought” her to Adam and gave her to him. In other words, she was God’s gift to him! That does not mean that he could “use” her for whatever he desired, but it does mean that she was for his benefit, and her desire should be to honor him and meet his needs.

Sarah was Abraham’s wife. We read in Genesis 11:30 that she was barren. In Genesis 16:2, Sarah desired children enough to scheme a way outside of God’s design in order for her and Abraham to bear a child. This tells us that her heart was focused on her desire for children. We also read in I Peter 3:6 that Sarah “obeyed Abraham and called him lord”. She truly had a focus on family as God had planned.

Other women to consider were Deborah (Judges 4:4-14), Ruth (Ruth 2:2-3 and 21-23), Hannah (I Samuel 1 and 2), Mary, who willingly accepted God’s plan for her to bear the Messiah (Luke 1:38, 46-55), Anna, who was a great woman of prayer (Luke 2:36-38), the Samaritan

woman (John 4:6-14), Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38-42), Lydia (Acts 16:14,15, &40), “the praying women” (Acts 16:13), and the “Proverbs 31 Woman”, who will be studied in more depth in a later chapter. We won’t take time to discuss these women here, but if you look at the focus of these women, with the exception of Deborah, they all focused on husbands, family, ministry, hospitality, worshiping and prayer. It appears that God used Deborah as a sign of His judgment on the nation of Israel at a time of unrest among the people. God’s original plan was to have men in charge of nations, but when things were not going well, it appears that He sometimes allowed women to take charge as a type of judgment on the nations.

The Bible exalts the role of women, as they have a very significant role in nurturing the next generation. I Peter 3:7 tells men to give honor to their wives, and Ephesians 6:1-2 tells children to honor their “parents”. Proverbs 1:8 tells children not to forsake the law of their mother. The culture degrades the role that God has planned for women and implies that God’s way gives men the right to lord it over their wives in a tyrannical way. But God tells husbands to love their wives as Christ loves the Church and gave His life for it. That is not ugly but is a beautiful way for husbands and wives to relate.

Some of these thoughts will be further discussed in later chapters, but for now, suffice it to say that God has given women/mothers very meaningful and wonderful roles to fulfill, as stated in this chapter. In my opinion, if we choose not to fulfill these God-ordained roles, we will miss one of God’s greatest blessings.





“She will do him  
good all the days of  
her life.”

Proverbs 31:12



## Chapter 2

### LOVING YOUR HUSBAND

Titus 2:3-4. "...They (older women) are to teach what is good, and so train the young women to love their husbands."

As I studied and prepared the Scriptural material that speaks to loving our husbands, I was very interested to read the wording of the Scriptures that apply to this topic. In almost every case, the verses use the words "own husband" as they speak to this topic. To me this was very significant, as I believe in the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, and I don't think God would use that terminology by mistake or accidently. The specific verses are as follows:

1. Ephesians 5:22&23. "Submit to your 'own' husband." (22) "Be subject to your 'own' husband. (23-NKJV)
2. Colossians 3:18 (NKJV). "...submissive to their 'own' husbands..."
3. Titus 2:5. "...submissive to their own husbands."
4. I Peter 3:1-5. "Be in subjection to your 'own' husband."

Now, you might wonder why I think this is significant, so I will tell you what I think. It will apply more obviously at a later time, but for now, I will give you my opinion. God made all of us, and He purposely made us "male and female". He knows how He wired us, and He knows how we respond to one another between the genders. This is why I think He told women to be subject to their "own" husbands. When we spend time with other men, i.e., working, socializing, etc., we put ourselves and our marriages at risk, and God gave us that mandate for the purpose of our own protection and the protection of our marriages. When we spend time with our "own" husband and submit to him, it cements our relationship with him and not with men who belong to someone else.

This concept of submitting to your own husband applies within the Church as well. I Corinthians 14:35 tells women that if they have a question in church, they should wait and ask their husbands at home. This is important, because I believe that God has a couple of reasons for giving that directive. First of all, asking your husband a question let's him know that you respect his understanding and gives him the opportunity to answer or to tell you that he will look it up, which is the second reason! If you ask a question that he doesn't know, he can spend time studying it out, or you can work together to find the answer. So, buy your husband a good Study Bible for Christmas and ask away!

Now as to the submission part of this principle, we will try to define what it means to submit. We know from other portions of Scripture that a man is not to lord over his wife as a ruler, and he is not to lead in a way that is to her detriment. Here again, it is my opinion that a wife is to understand that God gave the responsibility for the leadership of the home to the husband, and she is to follow. She is to seek his advice and help as she walks through her life with the understanding that he is accountable to God for the direction of the family. This in a great way relieves her of the burden of making decisions that are difficult and weighty. Now, if he is a wise husband, he will desire her input, but when there are differences of opinion, she is to submit to his leadership as he submits himself to God. That gives her an "umbrella" of protection



over her head, and if it works right, the children will then walk under an “umbrella” created by the unity of both parents walking together. (See the “picture” of submission presented on page 7.)

You might ask how this concept of submission works if your husband is not born again or otherwise walking with the Lord. There are no Biblical exceptions made for that possibility, but we know that we are to stay with an unbelieving husband as long as he is willing to live with us, because “the unbelieving husband has been sanctified by the wife”. (I Corinthians 7:12-14.) So it is God’s desire that we live out this principle and encourage the unbelieving husband to come to faith in Christ as we display God’s grace before him.

Another way we can “love your husband” that I will discuss is by building our relationship with him daily. I Corinthians 7:3-5 tells us the importance of putting a high priority on the physical relationship. A wife is the ONLY one who can meet the physical needs of her husband in a Biblical way, so it is of utmost importance that you be there for him. It is important that you be together and not separated for any length of time. Spending any length of time apart puts him and you at risk for sin as the physical needs escalate during times of separation. So if he needs to travel for his job, travel with him if at all possible. I have seen God do miracles for people when they realize that they need a job where they can be home with wife and family! And a wife should certainly not take a job that takes her from home for overnight. (There is no verse for this, but I think there are Biblical and practical principles that apply.)

Other ways of building a strong relationship with your husband include good communication, daily prayer time together, daily prayer for him, sharing your appreciation for his provision and protection of you and your family, helping him on projects when possible, and being sure he knows that he takes priority over the children. Along with these ideas, be sure you don’t feminize your husband. Don’t expect him to be like you. God created them “male and female” and gave them differing abilities, tasks, and different ways of thinking.

Take time and effort to prepare yourself for your husband. Let him know that you want to look good for him. Proverbs 12:4 says that a wife is her husband’s crown, and that takes some effort to achieve every day, but it is worth it. Remember, there are many women out there who aren’t fussy about finding their own man, so be sure your husband looks forward to coming home to you by making yourself attractive and making your home pleasant. Your home should be his haven from the stress and pressures of work and just life.

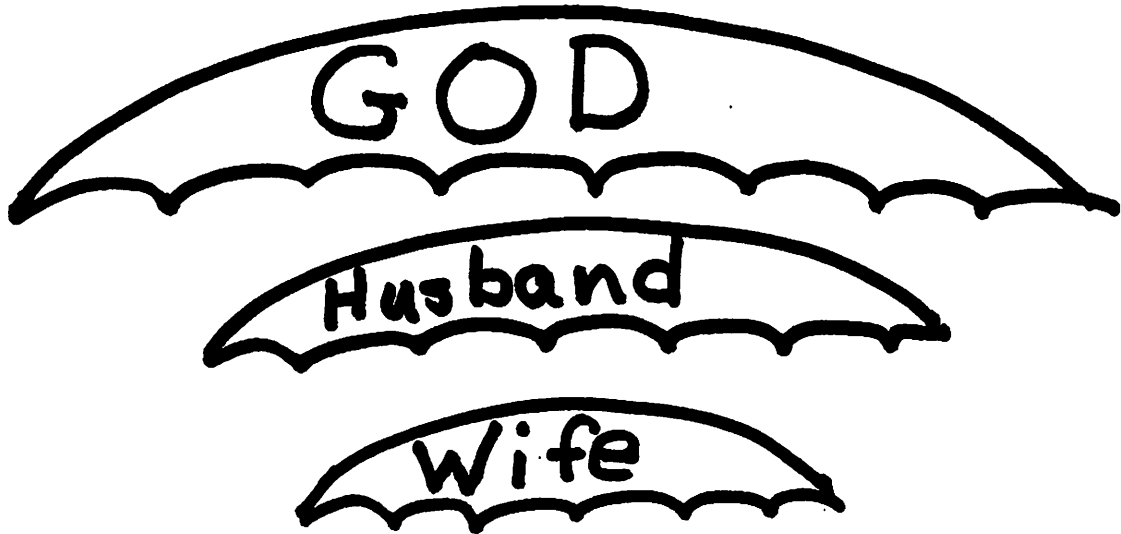
Many women in this culture have become lazy about cooking and preparing meals. I Corinthians 7:34 says that “...a married woman is anxious about...how to please her husband”. Send him off in the morning with a healthy breakfast of something the two of you can eat together. Plan a nice evening meal. It can be simple, but make it tasty, and serve it joyfully. There are MANY sources of wonderful recipes, both simple and gourmet, so there is little excuse for not making good food for your family.

Make sure you and your husband enjoy some fun times together. “Fun” is different for everyone, so don’t try to mimic someone else. Do things that the two of you enjoy and it doesn’t need to cost a lot of money.

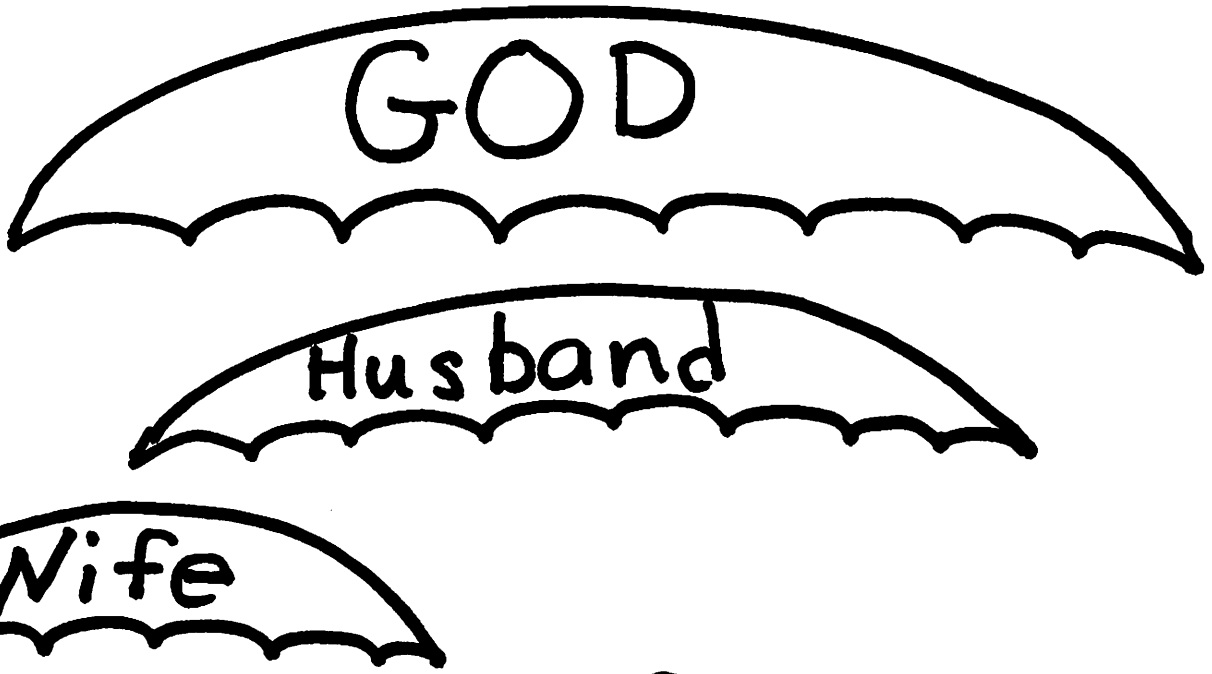
All of these things are choices that we all have to make every day! Get into good habits of thinking and get help from successful older women if need be. Marriage is MUCH better when we do it God’s way!

(There are some simple, but good recipes included in this book. Use them!)

Lesson 2 - Illustration  
BIBLICAL PICTURE OF SUBMISSION  
(Husband is under God. Wife is under husband and children  
line up under both parents.)



UNBIBLICAL PICTURE OF SUBMISSION  
(The wife has pulled herself out from under the umbrella of her  
husband. Notice what happens to the children.)





## Some Fun Recipes for Cheap/Fun Outings with Your Husband

### Tortilla Roll-Ups

2-4 flour tortillas

2-4 tablespoons of sour cream mixed with dry Ranch dressing to your taste

Deli sliced smoked turkey breast

Shredded cheddar cheese

Your favorite pickles

Spread each tortilla with one tablespoon sour cream. Lay one or two slices of turkey over the sour cream. Sprinkle with shredded cheese. If desired, lay chunks or spears of pickles (sweet or dill) down the center of the tortilla. Roll up like a jelly roll and insert a toothpick to hold. (These travel well and are easy to eat out or in a car! ☺)

### Chicken Salad for Croissants or just for eating with a plastic fork

Cook two chicken breasts and chop meat into small pieces.

1 cup pineapple tidbits OR green grapes

½ cup finely chopped celery

½ cup chopped walnuts

½ cup shredded cheese

½ cup light sour cream

½ cup light mayonnaise

Mix all of the above and serve on a lettuce leaf or the bread of your choice. Make it pretty! ☺

### Chocolate Chip Butter Cookies – a new look and delicious (Also travel and KEEP very well!)

1 cup butter – (NO substitutes) Melt and cool completely

½ tsp. vanilla – Add to melted butter.

2 cups flour

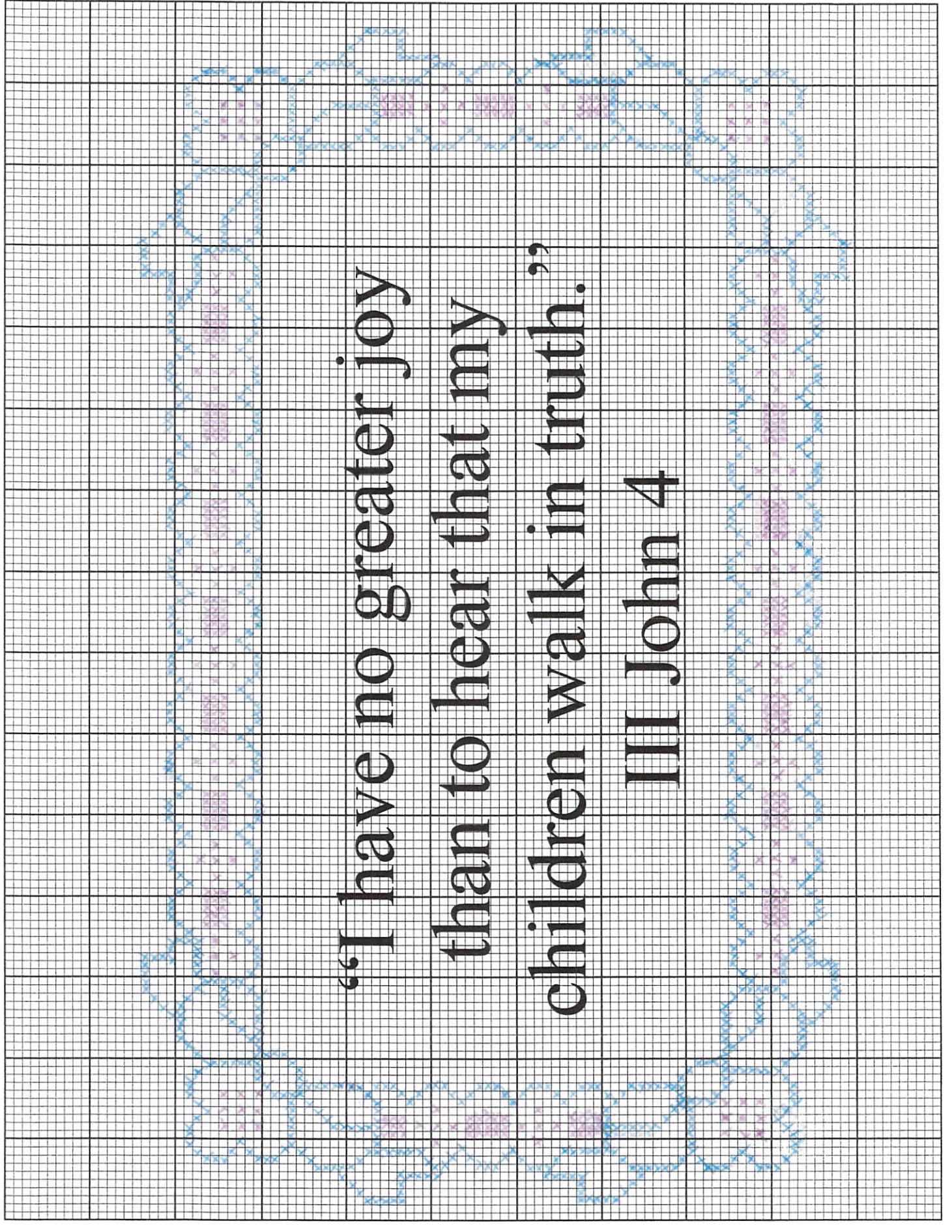
1 cup powdered sugar

Combine dry ingredients and add cooled butter and vanilla. Mix well.

1 cup mini-chocolate chips – or a little more ☺

Add to above dough. Shape into 4 dozen balls. Flatten slightly. Bake in preheated oven at 350 degrees for 10-12 minutes.





“I have no greater joy  
than to hear that my  
children walk in truth.”

III John 4



## Chapter 3

### LOVING YOUR CHILDREN - Part I

Titus 2:3&4 “They (older women) are to teach what is good...and so train the young women to love their...children.)”

The first concept we want to discuss is this. Loving your children isn't: Giving them everything they want; never saying “no”; not disciplining them; excusing their behavior with a cultural diagnosis (i.e., ADHD); etc.

One of the very first ways for you to love your children is for you to love their dad and vice versa. Your children will thrive much better if they KNOW that their parents have a loving, “rock-solid” marriage!

When we commit to love our children as God has planned, it takes a huge commitment, and sometimes we wonder how to get everything done. Philippians 2:13 says that God works in us to “will and to do of His good pleasure” and then in the same book, verse 4:13, we are told we can “do ALL things through Christ who gives us strength.” So if we find ourselves not being able to get everything done, it is my conclusion that we are trying to do things that God didn't ask us to do.

It is a very wise exercise for you and your husband to work together to set goals for yourselves and your family. This can be done every year or more or less frequently, depending on your time and needs. Some of those possible goals are listed below:

1. Raise Godly sons who will love their wives and father their children Biblically.
2. Raise daughters with a quiet and gentle spirit who will honor and respect their husbands and love and nurture their children.
3. Determine to have regular habits related to church attendance.
4. Memorize a book of the Bible, etc.
5. Make sure you aren't trying to live beyond the financial level that God has provided.
6. Have a “family” and “couple” prayer time/devotions each day.
7. etc.

It is also a good idea to prioritize your time. As you all know by now, there are more things to do than anyone can get done in a lifetime, so it is necessary to pick and choose your priorities. My husband has done a series of lessons on how to prioritize your time, and I won't share the whole study here. But I will choose to share one of the main ideas, which is to learn to discern the difference between things that are urgent and things that are important. If we describe “urgent” as things that get in your face and grab your attention, we can see that some things are both urgent and important. If your child falls off his bike, it is both important and urgent to get to him and see how he is doing. However, if you get a message on your Facebook account and your device beeps at you, that will feel urgent, but it is probably NOT important! All day every day most of us are confronted with interruptions and distractions that steal our focus from the things we should be doing. So, make a list for each day of the responsibilities and goals for that day. Cross off anything that isn't necessary to meet your Biblical goals and responsibilities. Be sure to include some time, no matter how small, for your own spiritual and emotional nourishment. And be sure to get good rest. Things will go better if you are not trying to function on empty!

Another great habit to incorporate into your day is to pray for your children. Hannah was a good example as she prayed for her son, Samuel. I have always been struck by the example that was set by Job as he committed to interceding for his children, especially after he knew they had been in a time of “feasting”. According to Job 1:5, “When a period of feasting had run its course, Job would send and have them (his children) purified. Early in the morning he would sacrifice a burnt offering for each of them, thinking, ‘Perhaps my children have sinned and cursed God in their hearts.’ This was Job’s regular custom.” An example of someone who was not found in the Bible was Augustine’s mother, Monica. Augustine was one of the men in the early centuries who influenced the course of Christian thought right up until today. Monica prayed for her son diligently though he walked his own sinful way for many years. She finally saw her prayers answered shortly before she died! So NEVER give up praying for your children! It is one of the most valuable ways there is to spend your time

When you pray, it is important that you know how and what to pray for them. It is important to pray for things such as health issues and so on, but there are many other concerns that we should have for our children when it comes to asking God on their behalf. Some of the Biblical virtues that we should be petitioning God for on behalf of our children are: Salvation, Spiritual growth, a love for God’s Word, a burning desire to know God, kindness, courage and boldness, purity, contentment, and so many others.

A very practical suggestion to help accomplish all of this is this: EAT TOGETHER every day, if possible! This provides time for families to discuss the events of the day. It is a time when children tend to be comfortable and able to talk about things that are on their minds and hearts. It is a good time to have some Bible reading and prayer while everyone is together. It is sometimes more difficult to get everyone back together again for those disciplines, so do it while you have them all together. After they are all satisfied with their meal, it is a good time to memorize Scripture.

Every family is different and has different schedules, but these are things that need to be scheduled into your day or they won’t happen. So if you are serious about making sure your children establish good habits in these areas, you must teach them how to do it, and you must display a good example in your home.

## Chapter 4

### LOVING YOUR CHILDREN - Part II (Shepherding Your Child's Heart)

“Shepherding” is parenting that invests in the life of your child and instills daily, by word and action, the wisdom of God.

(God alone can change hearts! We are but the instruments He uses to encourage that change.)

We are all familiar with the Bible verse in Proverbs 22:6 where it says; “Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” But what does it mean? I do not believe it means that parents can teach and train every child so that every one, without exception, will fall in line and become a child of God. I do believe that there is a principle there that lays a major responsibility on parents in this process. When things don't work out, we have all heard parents start to say that that verse doesn't really mean what it says. However, parents should enter parenting with the understanding that it is their job to teach their child and work diligently to reach his heart. And this is no small job. It means that parents must give up some of their goals and expectations for themselves in order to minister to and teach that child. Parents can never assume that their child will get anything anywhere else. Don't count on the church. Don't count on Christian school. Don't count on good Christian books. These will hopefully supplement what you are teaching, but they are never meant to be a substitute for what parents are to be doing and teaching.

The issue is spelled out in Jeremiah 17:9. “The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. Who can know it?” Children do not need to learn how to sin! It is stamped on their hearts from conception. What they need to learn is an awareness of their sinfulness and an understanding of how offensive it is to a Holy God. God said in Genesis 8:21 that “every inclination of [man's] heart is only evil from childhood.” And Proverbs 22:15a tells us that “folly is bound up in the heart of a child”. (\*See the illustration of the sinful heart at the end of this chapter.)

We do not want to leave the reader with hopelessness, as there is hope for a remedy of this issue. Proverbs 22:15 finishes with the statement that “the rod of discipline will drive it (folly) far from him”. And of course, the ultimate remedy is the hope that a child will become God's child as God replaces his “stony” heart with a “heart of flesh” and “causes him to walk in [God's] ways”. (Ezekiel 36:26&27)

Parents can do a lot to prepare a child's heart for the work that God's Spirit will do in the heart of their child. Proverbs 1:7&8 tells us that “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom...Listen to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching.” This implies that the instruction about wisdom and knowledge comes from the parents. There is no directive here to go to church or Christian school or any other Christian opportunities. The instruction is only to parents. Proverbs 2:10&11 gives some of the “fruit” of teaching your child wisdom and knowledge. That fruit includes the fact that wisdom will enter your heart and knowledge will make your soul pleasant. The resulting discretion and understanding will protect and guard you. This should give high motivation to parents to make sure they are doing their part in the teaching and training of their children.

So how do we instruct our children in these things. Psalm 37:4 says to “delight ourselves in the Lord”. Psalm 119:11 says this: “Thy Word have I hid in my heart that I might NOT sin



against God.” Memorizing Scripture is a first line defense in guarding your children against sin. It should have a top priority in your home. Another high priority in your home should be to teach your children to be wise. Proverbs 2:12 tells us that “wisdom will save you from the ways of wicked men, from men whose words are perverse, who leave the straight paths to walk in dark ways, who delight in wrong doing and rejoice in the perverseness of evil, whose paths are crooked and who are devious in their ways.” And furthermore, the way to teach wisdom is to teach them to “fear the Lord”. Proverbs 9:10 says that “the fear of the lord is the beginning of wisdom”. So to sum up this process, there are basically three steps: 1. Memorize Scripture; 2. Teach your children to Fear the Lord; 3. Wisdom will follow almost automatically.

Now that we know what to do, it is important to know how to do this. Deuteronomy 6:5-7 tells us to be very diligent in teaching our children. We learn there that this is a job that involves every aspect of our day: “when we sit in our home and when we walk by the road, when we lie down and when we get up.” We are to put things around our homes that remind us of what God has done. We want our children to ask us why these things are on display in our homes, and this will give us opportunities to explain to them what God has done. And you don’t need to wait for them to ask. Use every opportunity to talk about God’s faithfulness to your family. This involves a great deal of time, and that means we need to be sure that we give proper time to teaching our children. There may not be time for all the things we want to do and that is fine. Some day your children will be away from your home, and then you can make up for all the things and events that you “missed”. REMEMBER: Quality time is not quality unless it is also quantity!

Be sure you and your husband have a Biblical plan for good discipline in place in your home. Avoid the cultural terms for sin that allow children to be naughty because they have a syndrome of some kind. It is true that some children have a harder time behaving than others, but calling it something other than sin will give the child “permission” to continue that behavior because they “can’t help it”. Often disobedience and poor behavior is the result of poor discipline or of a difficult circumstance in their family life where they are lacking in the love and attention they are craving. Hebrews 12:10 & 11 tells us that “God disciplines us for our good...and (that discipline) produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who are trained by it.” Proverbs 29:15 says that “The rod of correction imparts wisdom.” And verse 17 tells us that when we discipline our children, we will enjoy peace, and our soul will be delighted. Proper discipline leads a child to the Cross, for it shows them their sinfulness, and without a proper understanding of their sinfulness they will not be drawn to repentance at the Cross.

One of the basic principles of child rearing is communication. The art of communication with one another is something that, I believe, has been damaged by the world of technology that we find ourselves in. The study of how technology affects our communication and what to do about it must be left for another day, but suffice it to say that we are all aware that MUCH valuable time is lost on devices that are both deaf and mute and we miss opportunities to verbally communicate with our children/spouse. Proverbs 23:19 and 22 both instruct sons to “listen to their fathers, and be wise.” It is pretty hard for a son/child to listen to his father if his father isn’t saying anything! Luke 6:45 says: “...out of the overflow of his heart, the mouth speaks.” If you really want to know what a person is thinking, you must make uninterrupted time to listen to what is coming out of that person’s mouth! One of the best ways to listen to your children is to plan regular activities that allow for open conversations. Ideas for accomplishing this are to eat meals together with everyone at the table. Take rides together without ANY form of technology - no matter how much your children beg. God has given parents authority over the children in the home, and children do not know what is best for them, so parents must make those choices.

Finally, be careful when you communicate to choose your words wisely. Children can be destroyed by words that cut down and demean. Without allowing disobedience or other forms of sin, use words that encourage and build up. Children thrive when they know that their parents love and appreciate them unconditionally.

As stated above, God has given parents authority in the home. (Ephesians 6:1) Expect obedience every time you make a directive. And expect exact obedience. By this, I mean, when you tell your child to sit on the red chair by the door, it is not obedience for him to sit on the red chair by the window. Children will try to sort of obey but still maintain some control of the situation by choosing their own form of obedience. If you don't care what chair they sit on, then don't specify which one, but if you choose the chair then it isn't obedience if they don't sit in the chair you chose.

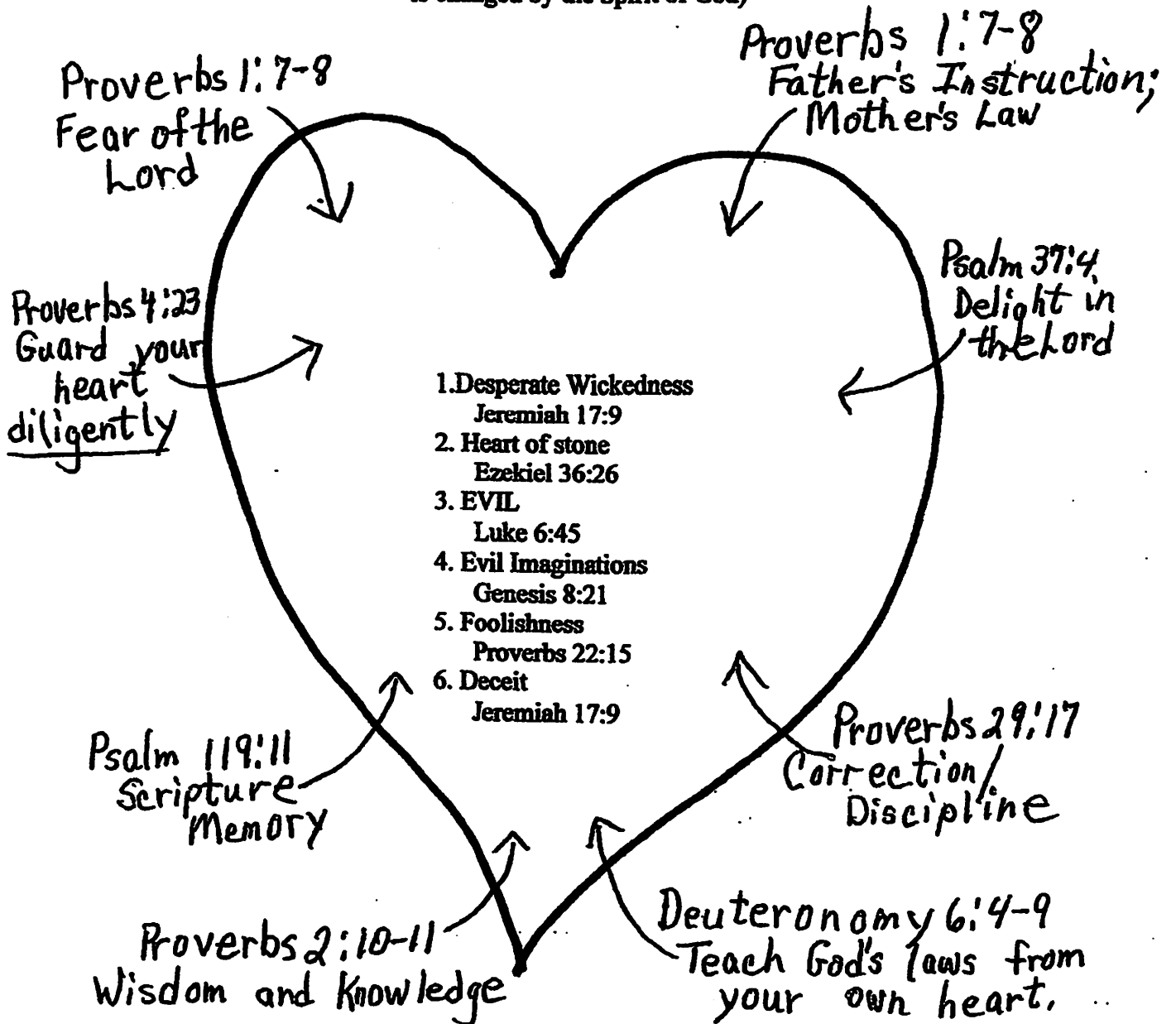
Finally, be sure that you are following the directives that you are expecting from your child! Children are very good at seeing through inconsistencies in your life. If you mandate a certain action, but you don't live up to that expectation, they will see that, and you might as well not expect it of them. That kind of behavior not only causes them to disrespect you, but it causes confusion in their lives, and they have a hard time figuring out what the expectations really are! Remember, they can see what your priorities are, and if they don't match what you expect from them, there will be great confusion.

Now, remember, no one is perfect at this and it is a learning and growing process, but the goal is to reach your child's heart with the Gospel. How will you know if you are accomplishing the task? A heart that is tender to the Gospel will show a desire to please without fear of punishment or hope of reward. A tender heart will exhibit remorse when it realizes there is a broken relationship because of disobedience. Communication will flow joyfully. Open rebellion will gradually subside. They will respond obediently to correction. (Proverbs 9:8-10)

In conclusion, be actively, emotionally, and intimately involved in the life of your child. Be sure you have things in place in your own heart. Commit to daily and uninterrupted time with your children. Be available when they are ready to talk, and LISTEN. And remember, parenting is a FULL TIME JOB!!!

( The next page is a diagram of the natural heart and how it is changed through the Word of God.)

**THE PROBLEM**  
(look inside the heart)  
And  
**THE SOLUTION**  
(comes from outside the heart until it  
is changed by the Spirit of God)





## Chapter 5

### LOVING YOUR CHILDREN - Part 3 Leading Your Child to Christ

Some important questions to ponder as we begin this topic:

1. What do your children think are your goals in life?
2. What are your goals for your children?
3. How do your family activities reflect those goals?

Matthew 19:14 - Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the Kingdom of Heaven." (See also Mark 10:14 and Luke 18:16)

As you can see from the previous verse, God puts a high priority on reaching children for Him. In fact, in Matthew 18:6 we read that if anyone causes a child to stumble and sin, it would be better for him that a millstone were hung around his neck and that he be drowned in the sea.

God uses parents to reach and teach their children. You may attend Sunday School and church and have the best attendance record available, or you may have your children in the best Christian School in the nation, but if they aren't being taught in your home, there will be grave consequences down the road. God has planned for parents to be the main source of spiritual teaching for children, and any other source of spiritual teaching can supplement what they are learning at home. Deuteronomy 6 is full of instructions for parents regarding this topic. Parents are to talk of the commandments of the Lord at every time of the day and make sure their children are raised with an awareness of all that God expects of them.

One principle parents must remember is that they can minister to their children and give opportunities for instruction and salvation, but God is the one who must change the heart. Christian parents must keep very alert to the methods of the culture that distract and change the Gospel and the means of salvation. I will speak here of several ways the culture tries to gum things up with methods that sound good but are not Biblical.

1. Worldly psychologists tell us that children are born "neutral", and it is their environment that determines how "good" or "bad" they are. The Bible tells us that we are ALL born sinners in Romans 3:23. So be careful of books you read that are not written by Christian authors.
2. Worldly psychology tells us that children have "disorders" called "ADHD" or "Oppositional defiant disorder", when in reality, it is the SIN in them that causes the behavior that we see at home or in school. And many times, the source of the unwanted behavior results from things going on in the home when parents don't obey God's plan for marriage and family. If your child ever needs counseling, it would be best if you as parents could work through it with him, but if not, be sure to seek a Christian counselor who believes in and practices Biblical counseling.
3. Do not practice "behavior modification" which uses rewards for "random" good behavior for the purpose of changing behavior. Use of rewards is O.K. at times, but the goal is to teach children to behave well because it is the right thing to do, not to get a tangible reward. The ultimate goal is to change the heart and turn it toward Christ.

4. This last one is a reminder to parents that “The anger of man does NOT accomplish the righteousness of God.” ( James 1:20) Discipline your children lovingly and firmly, but not from an attitude of anger.

There are certainly other methods in the world that don’t work, but it is time to move on to the Biblical methods that do work so that we can incorporate them into our discipline methods in our homes.

The central focus of Christian parenting is to teach our children the principles of their sinfulness, its consequences, and the redemption that is offered through faith in Christ. The following list is not exhaustive, but it covers a few Biblical principles that I think are very practical and pretty easy to implement.

1. The first principle is to establish a rich and warm relationship with your children through meaningful and deliberate communications. This seems pretty elementary, but so many people allow the culture to distract them at every turn, and the children are often left to figure things out on their own. I Thessalonians 5:11-15 tells us to encourage one another, build each other up, encourage, help and be patient with everyone. Surely these actions begin with our children.
2. Use God’s Word and the principles in it to establish the guidelines and atmosphere of your home. One example is Ephesians 6:1 which admonishes children to obey their parents. Parents must deal with disobedience firmly and consistently! Obedience to parents is one of the few directives in the Bible that is aimed directly at children, and it must be one of their first commandments to follow. For if children do not learn to obey their parents, it will not come easily for them to obey anyone else, and that could put them in great danger.
3. Make Christianity relevant to their whole life. In other words, establish a Biblical “Worldview” and make sure your children know what it is and how to rely on it. You must teach your children to know and memorize Scripture so that they can use the principles from Scripture to “fight” the daily battles that come along each and every day. (More on the Biblical Worldview will be included in a later chapter.) Most children are not naturally drawn to read and memorize Scripture on their own, so it takes effort from the parents to create an interest and desire to know and learn God’s Word.
4. Children must come to understand their own sinfulness in order to realize that they need redemption. Jeremiah 17:9 says that the heart is deceitful above all things! Through your discipline of their violations in your home, you can teach them that sin OFFENDS A HOLY GOD, and someone must pay for those sins. If they are never confronted with the fact that they sin, they will not realize that they need a Savior.
5. Finally, use the ‘rod’ in a Biblical manner. Proverbs 29:15 says that the “rod of correction imparts wisdom” and we read several other places that “wisdom will protect from the ways of wicked men.” (Proverbs 2:12-15)

Since corporate punishment is such a controversy in our culture, I want to take a short diversion from the list and discuss it.

Physical punishment must be done wisely and carefully and lovingly. It should never be done out of anger, but out of a desire for your child to learn God’s principles of how to live in this world. It should be done in a consistent manner. Disobedience coupled with failure to discipline consistently breeds confusion in the mind of a child. Punishment needs to be swift, and

the relationship needs to be restored quickly. Long sessions of “grounding” or “withholding” often end in inability to hold the line and then not following through the entire discipline. It also extends the length of time of the breach in the relationship, which is not healthy. Be careful of your motive for disciplining. Personal anger, frustration, or embarrassment are not good motives for discipline. “The anger of man does not accomplish the righteousness of God.” (James 1:20) REMEMBER: Disciplining one’s children is not pleasant, but necessary. Hebrews 12:11 says that “For the moment, all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.”

ILLUSTRATION: Your child disobeys you. You need to discipline him, but of course he isn’t very happy to receive your discipline. This gives you an opportunity to explain to him how he disobeyed you by breaking one of your family “laws”. You then explain to him that one of God’s laws is that fathers are told to “spank” their children for disobedience, and that if you don’t carry that out you will be breaking one of “God’s laws” and opening yourself up for God’s discipline. If you work through this process properly, your child will realize that the one he really needs to fear is God, and you will have taken a huge step toward instilling in him the “Fear of the Lord” which is “the beginning of wisdom”! YEAH!

6. God has gifted every person with a conscience. Teach your child how to guard his conscience (the Bible often calls it the heart) so that it does not become numb to the wrongs that go on around him. It can be a helpful tool.
7. The home should be the main venue for spiritual teaching, but other opportunities are available and should be utilized as much as is possible. Of course, there are weekly church services and opportunities, but there are also Bible conferences and seminars as well as informal times of prayer and Bible Study. Seek support from other like-minded adults who share your vision for rearing Godly children.

As stated previously, the main goal of Christian parenting is to reach the heart of your child for Christ. I want to summarize the main principles we have discussed into three main points. First is that most of this instruction should take place in your home according to Deuteronomy 6. Assume he is not receiving any instruction any other place. If he is, that is great, but if you assume so, there will probably be gaps in his understanding. And Remember: You are to prepare the soil and plant seeds. God is the only one who can grow the seeds and cause fruit-bearing.

In every parent, there will be a nagging thought that maybe you have squandered the time and it is too late to reach your child for Christ. I want to remind you that it is NEVER too late! I have a few suggestions for you to consider. As parents you should gather your children together and explain any new insights you will use to approach an issue you have just discovered. Children don’t take very well to “surprise” changes in how things have been done so far, so be sure you explain any changes you are making and maybe give some reasons for the changes. For instance: We are changing the policy on having T.V.’s in your rooms because we decided that there are programs that are not uplifting for your walk with Christ, and we want to protect you from those. If there have been broken relationships for some offenses that are your fault, confess your part in it and seek forgiveness without demanding anything from them. Be sure they understand your expectations, especially if new guidelines require new behavior. Be sure the children know how you will respond to disobedience in the future, and be sure they know why



you are doing what you are doing. Be sure you have Biblical reasons for why you do what you do and not just preferential reasons that just make your job “easier”. Finally, be patient and PRAY a lot - together!

## Chapter 6

### LOVING YOUR CHILDREN - Part 4 Teach Them Godly Habits for Life

Ephesians 6:4 “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”

When our children are born into our homes, we must assume that they know nothing, and everything they learn will come from somewhere. So, when we look at that precious, tiny baby, we must decide: How will we make sure that our young baby comes to know the Truth of God’s Word that is so vital for all children to know and understand? Whom will we allow to have influence over the child that will be under our care for the first number of years of his life? It is impossible for parents, no matter how diligent they are, to guard their children from every influence of the culture, but we can control a lot of the sources, and we need to do so in the early years of their lives!

One of the best sources of Truth and wisdom on this topic is found in Deuteronomy chapter 6. The first instruction is to parents regarding their own knowledge of the commandments. Verse 6 tells us that “these commandments” are to be on our own hearts before we can teach them to our children. Then we are to impress them on the hearts of our children. The implication is that parents are to work diligently to accomplish this task. The teaching is to be going on at all times of the day: “when you sit at home”, “when you walk along the road”, and “when you lie down at night”. They are to be displayed in our homes and on our beings, if we can figure out how to do that.

So, what are some ways that we can accomplish this task? There are many wonderful habits that we need to teach our children from the start. Some will be covered here, but there are others that you can use in your home that might be unique to your own situation. First, Hebrews 10:25 tells us not to “forsake the assembling of ourselves together”, which is the Bible’s way of saying that we need to go to church. The end of the verse says we are to do it more as we see the “day approaching”. That means that as time goes by and things appear to be getting worse, we need to be together more and not less as is the case in some segments of our Christian culture. The stronger the habit we establish in our homes, the harder it will be for the children to let that habit go. So, instill in them from the start that church is the place we go on the first day of the week to meet with God’s people.

Most of the rest of these habits take place in your home. First is to be sure your family reads God’s Word together. II Timothy 3:16&17 tells us that all Scripture is given for our benefit in teaching and training so we can be equipped for every good work. Our children certainly fall into the category of those who need to be trained, and we desire for them to accomplish good things for God. Psalm 119:11 tells us to hide God’s Word in our hearts, and the best place for that to happen is in your home. It should happen regularly, so find a place and a time that suits your family and make it a habit.

James 5:16 tells us to pray for each other. Family and personal prayer time is one of God’s very special gifts to His children! Imagine having the privilege of coming before the Creator of the Universe any time and any place on behalf of our family and friends and people all over the world! If we really understand the depth of this privilege, we would certainly want to teach this habit to our children so they could do the same!



In every Christian home, there should be a time and a place for ministry to others in the Body. Once we are part of the Body, Christian ministry is why God leaves us here. Teach your children to have a heart for the elderly and the lost and those in need. Let them see you setting the example in this area and involving them as that is one of the best ways to pass on this habit.

The last habit I will mention here is one of listening to good music. The world is fighting for the attention of your children, and it is a good idea to fill the minds and hearts of your children with good music that can play over and over in their minds as they go through their days.

Besides assuming that your children know nothing when they come into the world, we also remember that they are unregenerate and unable to choose right from wrong. So it is incumbent on Christian parents to teach their children how to develop Godly character. God says in Proverbs 16:6 that it is “through the fear of the Lord that a man avoids evil.” That seems very straight forward to me. If you want your children to avoid evil, teach them to fear the Lord! The fear of the Lord “teaches a man wisdom”, and “wisdom is more precious than rubies.” (Proverbs 8:11). So before we attempt to teach anything to our children, we need to lay a solid foundation of Biblical wisdom. And how is this accomplished?

A large amount is taught through example. Never underestimate the influence of your example as a parent. And you can choose to be an example of good or an example of not-so-good! One aspect of fearing the Lord involves having a very reverent and respectful attitude toward Him and Who He is! But I think that it also involves the fear of punishment if we violate his principles. I think that we should all be highly respectful of His holiness and realize that He holds our lives in His hands, and He can do anything He wants to bring us to where He wants us to be. That is how we learn to “avoid evil”. We need to teach our children that God is in control and He will not be mocked or denied without consequences. I know that when I was a child, I learned that it wasn’t to my liking if I chose to disrespect or bad mouth my dad, and I think the same fear should be applied to God who is able to produce far greater results if we don’t respond to Him out of obedience. There are key verses in Scripture that we should memorize with our families to instill these principles into the hearts of our children. One example is Ephesians 6:2 where it says to “honor your father and mother so that your days may be long upon the earth.” This is one of the key commands to children in the Scripture and will stand the children in a good position if they learn to honor and obey their parents, for if they don’t obey their parents, they will not transfer that attitude over to others in their lives who are to be honored and respected.

The next Godly character quality involves developing a thankful heart. Philippians 4:6 tells us to present our requests with thanksgiving. Then the very next verse says that “the peace of God will ... will keep our hearts and minds through our Lord Jesus Christ.” It sounds to me like thankfulness breeds contentment, which is the next Godly character quality. But first, let’s discuss how to teach thankfulness. Again, example is by far the most effective tool. Children learn to complain from others (especially parents) complaining. Ever heard this one? “Do all things without murmuring and complaining.” (Philippians 2:14) Another idea is to focus on the blessings you have and not on the things you want. Focus on giving and not getting. And teach your children that “people are always more important than things”.

Along with a thankful heart comes the ability to be content. In my opinion, it is not possible to be content without being thankful. It is important to teach children to be thankful for what they have and not to look longingly at things they want. This idea goes for parents and grandparents as well! :) If we as the adults in their lives model the characteristic of contentment,

it will be much easier for children to pick up that trait. If we, on the other hand, continually long for and talk about all the things we want and can't have, the children will think this is "normal" and they will pick up that trait as well. And the very best way to learn the trait of contentment is to learn to be thankful for what God has provided and go about our days with a joyful heart of thanksgiving. We live in a very difficult culture that has as its motto, "he who dies with the most toys wins", and we, as God's people, need to counter that attitude with a great deal of thanksgiving and a great lack of complaining in our daily conversations.

Another way to fight a discontent and unthankful heart is to focus on the needs of others. It is important for us to teach children to enjoy ministering to others who have needs and to learn the joy of giving to them. And finally, remember that everything we have is a gift from our loving Heavenly Father, and for this reason, we should be glad and happy with everything He has provided.

Another important habit for all of us to develop in our lives is the ability to discern - not only the "good" from the "bad", but the "excellent" from the "good"! In Philippians 1:10, Paul prays that the people will be able to "approve things that are excellent". Philippians 4:8 describes to us how to think Biblically. In a world that is constantly distracting us from our mission, we need to follow the Scriptural guidelines of right thinking so as not to flounder in the unstable thinking of the culture around us. At the end of this section is an illustration that helps me to think through some of the basic issues of life and it will be explained for you there. It is a grid that will not only help to discern "right" from "wrong", but also to decide which things are Biblical and which are preferences. Many times in life, we are confronted with circumstances that demand immediate response, and unless we have a "grid", where we have already thought through the Biblical principles of some things, we will often make a bad choice and end up doing something that we may regret. (There will be some examples on the page where the grid is explained.) Making a Biblical grid is dependent on a working knowledge of Scripture. So work on getting God's Word into your heart, so you can learn how God thinks about the issues of life.

There are many other habits that should be ingrained into our children. Among them is integrity (Exodus 20:16; James 5:12) which allows them to speak the truth in the face of possible consequences. There is also conscientiousness or reliability, which means that that others can rely on their word (James 5:12). Respect for others (II Kings 2:23-25) is also important and should begin with a healthy respect for parents. Without a respect for parents, it will be difficult for children to transfer their respect to God. Finally, the habit that ties all the others together is Holiness, which includes purity (Hebrews 12:14) and an overall Godly lifestyle (Ephesians 1:4).

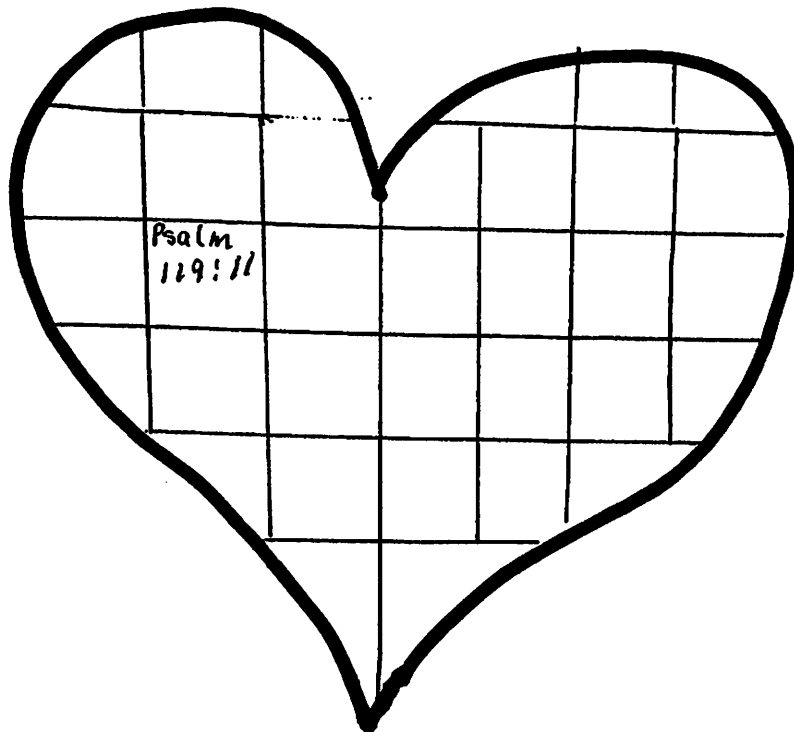
This may sound like a long list of things to do and teach, but if you remember Philippians 2:13, you will find the task much easier. "For it is God Who works in you both to WILL and to DO of His good pleasure."

## "MAKING A GRID" (Lesson 6)

**KEY VERSE TO MEMORIZE:** Psalm 119:11 "Thy Word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee."

Other verses to memorize for establishing a Biblical "grid":

1. Psalm 101:3 "I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes..."
2. Hebrews 10:25 "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is...and so much the more as ye see the day approaching."
3. Ephesians 6:1 "Children obey your parents in the Lord for this is right."
4. I Peter 3:8&9 "Finally...love as brethren...not rendering evil for evil."
5. James 1:26 "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue...this man's religion is vain."
6. Ephesians 5:11&12 "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret."
7. II Timothy 2:22 "Flee youthful lusts: but follow righteousness..."
8. Deuteronomy 6:5 "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy might."
9. Psalm 97:10 "Ye that love the Lord, hate evil..."
10. II Corinthians 6:14 "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers..."
11. Philippians 4:8 "...whatsoever things are true, ...honest, ...just, ...pure, ...lovely, ...good report; ...if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."
12. I Corinthians 6:19&20 "What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you...and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: Therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."
13. Hebrews 10:24 "...to provoke unto love and to good works."
14. II Corinthians 10:5 "Casting down imaginations...bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."





Life Situations That Demonstrate How the “GRID” Works  
(Lesson 6)

(KEY VERSE: “Thy Word have I hid in my heart that I might NOT SIN against Thee.”  
Psalm 119:11)

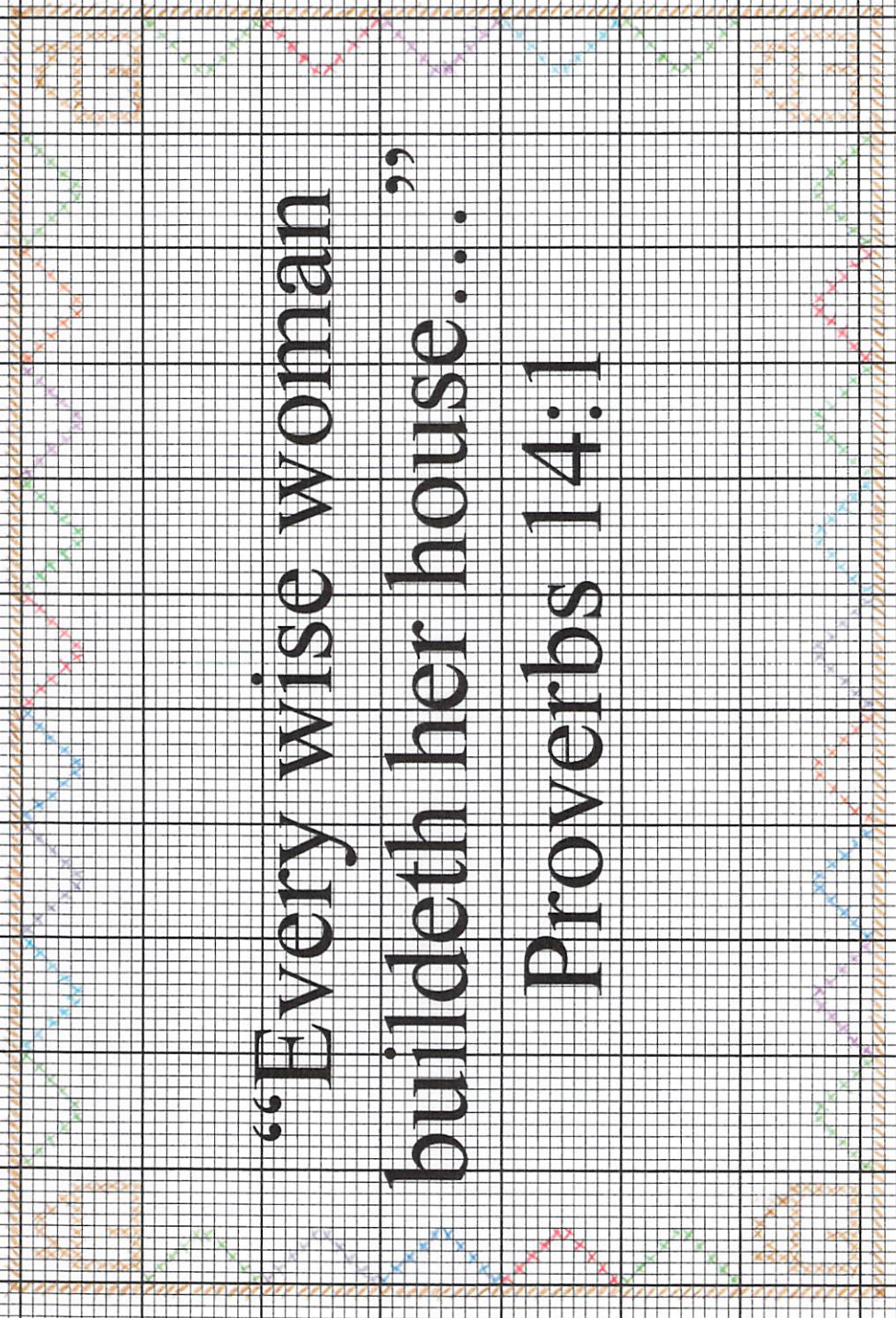
Some real life situations.  
(Have your list of verses and “heart grid” handy from previous page)

1. A television program comes on which contains immorality, blatant or implied. Or your child is reading a book that contains scandals, murder, etc. What should be the reaction and what verses might apply to these situations? Try I Cor. 6:19&20; Psalm 97:10; Psalm 101:3; Ephesians 5:12. (Plug each of these verses into one of the squares on the “heart grid”.)

(See how it works? Now you go ahead and fill up the grid! You can certainly find more verses of your own choosing.)

2. Someone has given you a video game that contains violence.
3. Your child wants to date or have a “special” relationship with a person who is not born again.
4. Your child’s school has scheduled a ballgame for 10:00 Sunday morning and he is one of the star players.
5. Your 15 year old son wants to spend Friday afternoon and evening at the beach on a hot day in June.
6. Your daughter seems to enjoy speaking unkindly about her friends to others.
7. Someone has cheated or otherwise offended you or your child.
8. You have taught your son not to drink. His friends invite him to an unchaperoned party. What is your response?
9. You have taught your child (teen) not to travel with teen drivers without you knowing where they are. Their friends say that it will be fine. What should he do?
10. You have a tendency to worry about all of the above. What is your answer to that?

(Many of the squares on the grid will be filled by the time you finish this exercise – and you can add your own. This will only work if your children KNOW the verses that apply to the situations in which they find themselves.)



“Every wise woman  
buildeth her house...”  
Proverbs 14:1



## Chapter 7

### FILL THE DAY WITH GODLY INPUT

Deuteronomy 6:5-7 “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words, which I command you this day, shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.”

These verses are written to parents. If we are to follow this mandate, we must first discover what are the “words” that are to be taught to our children. And, even before we can discover what the “words” are, we need to know where the words are to be. The answers to both questions are right here in this verse. The words are to first be in “our” (parents) hearts. And the words consist of the teachings (commands) of the things that are being told to them that day. So the idea is that before parents can teach their children how to live in this life, they must first incorporate the principles into their own hearts by searching God’s Word.

How much effort is to be put into teaching these things to our children? The word used in this verse is “diligently”, which means with much time and energetic effort. How often are we to discuss these “words”? Again, the answer is right here. We are to teach them when we sit in our house, when we take a walk, when we lay down, and when we get up! To me that looks like most of the day! It seems to me it should encompass everything we do in a day. The whole day should be planned around how to fit the teachings of Scriptures into our conversation. In other words, we shouldn’t have a time that is “Spiritual”. The whole day should incorporate the Truths and principles of Scripture. We get up and make our bed because we want to please God by obeying our parents. When we play, we honor God by being joyful and following the rules. When we do dishes, we do it joyfully as unto the Lord. We do our best on everything we do because the Bible says, “And whatsoever your hand finds to do, do it with your might.” Ecclesiastes 9:10. I think you get the picture. Everything we do is a Spiritual exercise and should be treated as such.

The above task could seem overwhelming, but it is the major responsibility God has given to parents and should have priority over most everything else. If parents don’t teach these things, the children will not get them. And, remember, the teaching comes by verbal communication as well as by example. Both must be there, or it will be confusing and difficult to transfer. But remember the verse from the last chapter: Philippians 2:13.

If you look at your life and wonder how to fit all of this teaching into the day, evaluate the activities in your life and home and see what things interfere with your ability to carry this out. If you ever have trouble accomplishing the tasks you think you need to do, it is because you are trying to do things God has NOT asked you to do. God NEVER asks us to do things that He does not give us the strength and ability to do. We may be trying to do too many things outside the home. Maybe even church responsibilities take too much out of us or our time. We may be trying to have our kids in too many outside-the-home activities. Look at your schedule and see how you can arrange your time to fit in the most important activities.

If you are pretty sure you can’t do this, here are some practical ideas for arranging your life so as to accomplish this very important task. The first suggestion is to get together with your husband and set up a regular time for Bible Time which can include Bible stories, singing, memorizing, etc. Make sure the children know that this is the time for Bible time so as not to



interrupt their play time and frustrate them. And of course, you may want to set aside more than one time. We found after meals, while still at the table, to be a very good time for memorizing Scripture. It is good to start the day out with something, though with everyone getting their day started, it may not be a good time for a lengthy amount. Before going to bed is also a good time for ending the day with some teaching from the Scripture. You need to determine what works in your home and implement it as faithfully as you can so it will be an expected part of each and every day.

In the above paragraph, it was mentioned that Bible time should include memorizing Scripture. This is REALLY a good idea as Psalm 119:11 tells us “Thy Word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against Thee.” What a great motivation for having family Bible memory! It helps protect your children from sinning against God! One wonderful way of memorizing Scripture is to use Scripture put to music. There are many books and songs available that are a great help for this endeavor.

Aside from Scripture memory, singing is a very important part of Bible time. Some of the old hymns, which are not sung as much as they used to be, are full of Truth and doctrine. It is a great way for you to get Truth and doctrine into the minds and hearts of your children. At the end of this section, there is a hymn and a little Sunday School song that are filled with Truth. You may want to use these or some other songs you enjoy to help your children pick out the Truth and doctrine that is there. Doctrine is Biblical Truth that is foundational to our faith and practice.

A couple more less formal ideas you may want to try to help instill the “words” into your children, are to take walks as suggested in the verses, and take time to talk to your children one on one and keep in touch with what they are thinking. There are many more ideas, but one last one for this discussion is to make sure you eat together as a family. Lots of good topics come up over the supper table! Keep in touch with what your children are thinking and what is happening in their lives. The value of a good discussion over some good food cannot be overstated!

The title of this lesson is “Fill the Day with Godly Input”. In this culture it is very hard to do that, but it must be on our list of priorities at all times! The culture we live in is FULL of distractions for children and for families! Just living takes a lot of time, but if we add to that all of the other demands on children and families, the list gets infinitely long! There are tons of recreational and sports opportunities, and tons of different kinds of lessons for children to be involved with. (i.e., music, dancing, swimming, gymnastics, tennis, etc.) There are places to go and there are technology distractions. So many of the things we used to consider to be extra, are now on the list of necessities. There is pressure from every direction to have your children involved in MANY activities because everyone on Facebook flaunts all the things their children do. And a very sad part of all of this is that so much of it takes place outside the home, so the home has lost its place as the warm and cozy place where families gather for eating and “together times”.

And then, there are the distractions within the home - television, videos, video games, phones, etc. It is not my desire to imply that there is anything inherently wrong with any of the things in the previous two lists, but it is necessary for parents to learn and then teach their children how to guard against letting these activities take a higher priority than should be allotted to them. A couple of things that can be done without cutting things out completely are: 1.) Do some of these things WITH your children, but limit the time spent. 2.) Plan family activities around working together to accomplish projects and ministry. And schedule times and places for these activities. Keep yourselves available for monitoring the activities of your children. Don't let your priorities get out of balance. REMEMBER: Time with your children is far more valuable

than any extra money you can make which takes you out of the home during times when they need you.

Finally, too much stuff is a very common distraction! Be careful of giving your children too much! It becomes a huge distraction for them, and in many cases they don't even know how to manage it. Sometimes parents get frustrated with their children for not keeping things orderly, but often it is simply the volume of goods that keeps them from being able to do that! They have lots of things to fit in small spaces and keeping that organized is a learned trait, not something most of us are born with! One principle to apply here is to remember that the decision on what our children should have is NOT, "Can I afford it?" It should be based on whether the child needs it and whether it is something that would be helpful for the child.

So spend some time as a couple praying and determining what goals you seek for your children and family and do those activities and purchase those items that further the plan you make with God's help. God invented families and children and He knows what is best, so use your Scriptures and follow Biblical guidelines as you seek to raise countercultural children that love and serve the Lord! If we are not careful in this area, we will "not have time" for the really important things that accomplish that goal.

Here are some suggestions that will help to enhance the atmosphere in your home and accomplish some of the spiritual goals for your children:

1. Read good books together, Christian and otherwise.
2. Work together and seek to make it fun.
3. Cook together - try new and fun recipes.
4. Take time to play and have fun together.
5. Have outings together and make shared memories for the children.
6. Teach your children how to garden.
7. Walk together, and while you walk, point out the beauty of the things God has made
8. Vacation together and enjoy the out of doors.
9. Learn together by going to Christian conferences and seminars.
10. Minister together. Visit the elderly and the sick.
11. Do LOTS of things as a family - Strong family ties help when things need to be worked through at older ages. The stronger the relationship, the harder it is for him to turn his back on the teaching he has had at home.
12. Invite Christian adults and families to your home so your children can interact with Godly people of all ages.
13. Etc.

"The best way to instill God's Truth into the hearts of your children is to teach them God's Truth and then live a Godly and consistent example before them. Make sure that the desires and focus of your life matches the principles you are teaching them! You cannot be perfect at it, but the desires should be obvious to all who know you." (Just a thought from the writer of these lessons.)

Practice Finding Doctrine in This Hymn  
(Lesson 7)

(Work together with your family to find the Biblical Doctrine in this Hymn. After you have completed this one, find others and teach your children how to recognize Truth. Others are: Holy, Holy, Holy; How Great Thou Art?; Praise Ye the Triune God; etc.)

And Can It Be

1. And can it be that I should gain an interest in the Savior's blood?  
Died He for me, who caused His pain?  
For me, who Him to death pursued?  
Amazing love! How can it be that Thou my God shouldst die for me?

2. He left His Father's throne above, so free, so infinite His grace!  
Emptied Himself of all but love, and bled for Adam's helpless race!  
'Tis mercy all, immense and free, for O my God, it found out me.

3. Long my imprisoned spirit lay fast bound in sin and nature's night.  
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray: I woke – the dungeon flamed with light!  
My chains fell off, my heart was free, I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.

4. No condemnation now I dread: Jesus, and all in Him, is mine!  
Alive in Him, my living Head, and clothed in righteousness divine,  
Bold I approach the eternal throne, and claim the crown, thru Christ my own.

Amazing love! How can it be that Thou, my God, shouldst die for me!

Greater is He That is in Me (Challenge your children to be the first to find the reference for this verse. I John 4:4 Find many others and make it a fun exercise for learning Scripture.)

Greater is He that is in me,  
Greater is He that is in me,  
Greater is He that is in me than he that is in the world.

1. Satan's like a roaring lion roaming to and fro,  
Seeking whom he may devour—the Bible tells us so;  
Many souls have been his prey—to fall in some weak hour:  
But God has promised us today His overcoming pow'r.

2. On the day of Pentecost, a rushing mighty wind  
Blew into the upper room, and baptized all of them  
With a power greater than any earthly foe;  
And I'm so glad I've got it too—I'll let the whole world know.

## Chapter 8

### FILL YOUR HOUSE WITH GODLY REMINDERS

Deuteronomy 6:8-9 “You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house, and on your gates.”

This verse from Deuteronomy tells us all of the places we are to post something in our homes and even on our body parts. Before we can do that, we must first discover what it is that we are to “post”. If we take a look at the first several verses in Deuteronomy 6, we will uncover what exactly that is. “Now, this is the commandment that the Lord your God commanded me to teach you...The Lord our God, the Lord is One. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.” Now that we know what it is that we are to bind, the question is where are they to be bound? Verse 6 says that they are to be in our hearts. So these are the steps: We must know the commandment; we must respond to it with obedience in the fear of the Lord; then we must teach them diligently to our children. The goal is that everyone in the family would have this goal: To love God and to be obedient to Him all of our lives.

Now this sounds like a tall order when we first encounter it, but if we break it down into pieces, we can see that it is very manageable. I have some ideas that seemed to work in our home, and I will share those here.

1. Set aside a place in your home where your family meets with God. This would be the place where you read Bible stories together, memorize Scripture and pray together. We found that reading something from Scripture at the breakfast table before everyone starts his day was a good way to begin. We also found that in the evening before children settle down for the night was another good time. After supper, while still at the table, worked well for Scripture memory. These may not work in your home, but certainly there needs to be a priority on these activities, so be sure to work them in. It is helpful to meet at the same place and the same time every day, so people expect it. It is hard on children if things are unexpected, and they have to interrupt their play to fit it in.

2. Supply your family bookshelf with good Christian books for all ages. Our children enjoyed hearing books read to them, so this can be done in the evening or even in the car on long trips.

3. Make time for good Christian music in your home and in your travels. Let children fall asleep to fun Gospel songs that have a good message. A good way to get Bible verses into the minds and hearts of your children is to learn Scripture verse songs. They are available wherever Christian supplies are sold.

4. There are certainly other ideas, but the important thing is to do something!

Proverbs 24:3&4 give us two reasons and goals for establishing this kind of atmosphere and attitudes in your home. “By wisdom a house is built, and by understanding a house is established; by knowledge the rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant riches.” The above list of items (1-3) are examples of filling the rooms with “precious and pleasant riches”. The following list is filled with valuable items that should be included in a list of goals that every set of parents should have for their home.



1. Proverbs 22:1 “A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and favor is better than silver or gold.”
2. Proverbs 22:16 “My inmost being will exult when your lips speak what is right.
3. Proverbs 23:23 “Buy Truth and do not sell it; buy wisdom, instruction and understanding.”
4. Proverbs 1:33 “But whoever listens to me (wisdom) will dwell secure and will be at ease, without dread of disaster.”
5. Proverbs 3:1&2 “My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments, for length of days and years of life and peace they will add to you.”
6. Proverbs 3:13 “Blessed (happy) is the one who finds wisdom, and the one who finds understanding.”
7. Proverbs 3:3-4 “Let not steadfast love and faithfulness forsake you; bind them around your neck; write them on the tablet of your heart. So you will find favor and good success in the sight of God and man.”

The above list of verses (good name, no dread of disaster, happiness, etc.) should be high motivation for making sure your home is filled with Godly teaching and reminders of who we are when we belong to God.

It is very important to let children know who they are and who went before them. At the end of this lesson is a picture of a tree. The tree is pretty small above the ground, but it has a very large root system! It is the “picture” of a cedar of Lebanon which is often used in the Bible as a symbol of strength. It is a very strong tree because it often has a root system that is four times as large as what you see on top of the ground. I like to use that symbol as a picture of our goal for our children. We want their “root system” to be so strong that they will not blow over in times of storm and famine! The description in Jeremiah 17:7&8 gives us a good picture of what we are talking about here. “Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose trust is in the Lord. He is like a tree planted by water, that sends out its roots by the stream, and does not fear when heat comes, for its leaves remain green, and is not anxious in the year of drought, for it does not cease to bear fruit.”

In order to accomplish the above, it is necessary for parents to consciously and intentionally place roots under your children. The first root I will describe is one that deals with a Godly heritage. I have noticed as I read the Old Testament, that the children of Israel, time and time again, go over the history of their people, and how God blessed them and led them out of Egypt and brought them to the Promised Land. It is important and right for us to do the same! As you pray together as a family, be sure the children know the prayer requests you have as a family and when there are answers, make a BIG deal out of it! From my experience, I have come to believe that the main way that God grows the faith of children is through answered prayer! And then as they grow, continue to rehearse all of the things God has done for your family and the ways He has led you in different areas of your family’s lives. Be sure your children know how and when you were converted. If you don’t have much of a heritage for one reason or another, begin one! Start where you are and celebrate the heritage you are starting with your own family! It takes one generation to start a Godly heritage and it can also end with one generation that strays off the path! And the best way to start one is to start today! Don’t be guilty of saying that “some day we will do this.” “Some day” may never come! Today is the day to make the first step

even if it is a baby step. Just pick a verse to memorize or a song to sing or a passage from Scripture to read but do something! God will honor and bless your efforts and soon you will have things to relate of the goodness and faithfulness of God!

So far in this lesson, we have discussed some of the goals we have as Christian parents to pass on a Christian heritage to our children. We have discussed things we can do to enhance the opportunities for our children to catch our vision of cultivating a Christian atmosphere in a Godly home. There are however many things that come in the way of our efforts, and we need to prepare for and address them! Many of the hindrances come from our culture! At this point, we need to consider a verse from Deuteronomy 6:10-12 which says: “And when the Lord your God brings you into the land...to give you...houses full of good things, that you did not fill, and cisterns that you did not dig, and vineyards and olive trees, that you did not plant - and when you eat and are full; then take care LEST YOU FORGET THE LORD...!”

One of the strong hindrances from the culture is the pervasive and hidden attitude that “he who dies with the most toys wins”! Our culture is very “things” oriented! There are so many choices and things to “satisfy” every desire of our hearts that it takes every ounce of our conscious effort to ward off the tendency to go along with that philosophy. And most of us are able to provide way too many things for our children, thus confirming to them that the culture is right!

We need to look at some of the results of allowing our children to adopt that mindset from the culture. First of all, having too much stuff can cultivate an attitude of laziness toward the things that really matter in life. All the stuff tends to squeeze out all that really matters, and time and money can be frittered away on things that don't matter at all! Having so much stuff can also foster an attitude of greed. As we all know and have seen and experienced numerous times, things never satisfy, and the more we have the more we desire! Another result is that we can become self-centered. We learn to hang on tightly to the things we acquire and count them as our most precious possessions, not to be shared with anyone else. We can see this acted out as we watch children play with each other. The main response of the child who “owns” the object is that as soon as another child picks it up to play with it, the one who is “owner” desperately wants it! And above everything else, having too much stuff and finding ourselves satisfied with the things in this culture, cause us to lose our dependency on God as we lose our need for Him. As stated in the above verse, we may “Forget the Lord”! Once this has happened, it is a long way up to get back our love and dependency on Him!

Does your home reflect the above attitude of the culture that “he who dies with the most toys wins”, or does it reflect the attitude of “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind”?

There are other attitudes of the culture that affect the atmosphere in our homes. Some of them are the obsession with recreation and amusement as well as the high priority placed on sports. There is also technology, but the same principles that apply to “stuff” also applies to these other areas, so we will leave it at that.

Now that we have identified the problem, is there anything we can do to improve the situation? First of all, watch your own attitude. Be sure you are displaying before your children and others a Godly attitude toward these vices of the culture. There is nothing inherently wrong with any of the things we mentioned, unless they take over time and energy that belongs to other priorities in our lives. Measure your time and be sure that God is getting His rightful share of your time and efforts.

The next part of the solution is probably my favorite and one that takes a lifetime to perfect. Be sure to display an attitude of thanksgiving and contentment. I don't believe you can be content without being thankful! Make it a family effort to spend time thinking of everything for which you can be thankful, and see if that has any effect on the "needs" that people have felt in the past.

A very practical exercise is to determine purchases based on need and long-term benefit, not on your ability to provide it for your child. It is very easy in our culture to see things and think we need them, and since we have the money, we often go ahead and purchase them. Discern if what you are providing is good for your child and not just if you can afford it.

A very important attitude we want to develop in our children is the need to depend on God for everything. It is good to practice withholding from your children in order to teach them that dependence. If everything is always provided, the verse above will come into play. Teach your children methods of praying and then relying on God for His provisions.

Parents need to take inventory periodically to see what their goals are for their family. Some questions to ask yourselves are:

1. What values do you want to pass on to your children?
2. Can your children discern between their needs and their wants?
3. Do your children know how to work and earn money?
4. Do your children know how to deprive themselves of something they really want?

Finally, the bottom line is that we only get one time through parenting. What is it we want our children to know when they leave our homes? Everything besides this present moment is either a memory or an anticipation, so it behooves us to make sure that we are giving our children the memories we want them to have that will be most beneficial for them. Memories are all that is left over after an event, and we sure would desire that our children would enjoy many good and valuable memories. Do you want them to remember video games, television programs, chaos, etc.? Or would you like them to remember meaningful time spent with family and friends reading, playing, studying God's Word, etc.?

"Scripture says that the children placed in our lives are beings that God knew before they were ever even conceived. God Himself has already planned the days that they will live on this earth, and He personally shaped and crafted each life just as He shaped the mountains and the dry land." (Psalm 139 'Turning the Tide: A Call to Intentional Mothering')

If it is true that God Himself shaped and planned for these children, then we need to do our part to be sure they learn and have opportunities to hear and respond to the Gospel. Our goal, after all, is to bring our children with us and present them to God when we get there!

I don't like giving assignments or leaving you without helping you know where to start, so here are some practical ideas:

1. Do one (1) thing today that will give your children a "warm" memory of their childhood in your home. (i.e. Play a game, make cookies, etc.)
2. Do one (1) thing that will help them remember the Spiritual emphasis in your home. (i.e., Choose one (1) verse to memorize; Read one (1) Bible story; etc.)
3. REMEMBER: It takes a lifetime to live a life! It is NEVER too late!

The main goal of my thinking here is that children need a good solid root system! The Cedars of Lebanon have a root system as big as four times their above ground system. That is our goal! (The next page has a “picture” of how this looks and a list of things that help to grow that root system. But first look at a few verses.)

1. Jeremiah 17:7-8. “Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, and whose trust is in the Lord. He is like a tree planted by water, and sends out its roots by the stream, and does not fear when heat comes, for its leaves remain green; and is not anxious in the year of drought, for it does not cease to bear fruit.”

2. Psalm 1:3. “He (the one who delights and meditates on God’s law) is like a tree planted by streams of water and yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all he does, he prospers.”

3. Colossians 2: 6-7. “...so walk in Him: rooted and built up in Him, and established in the faith...”



Illustration for Lesson 8

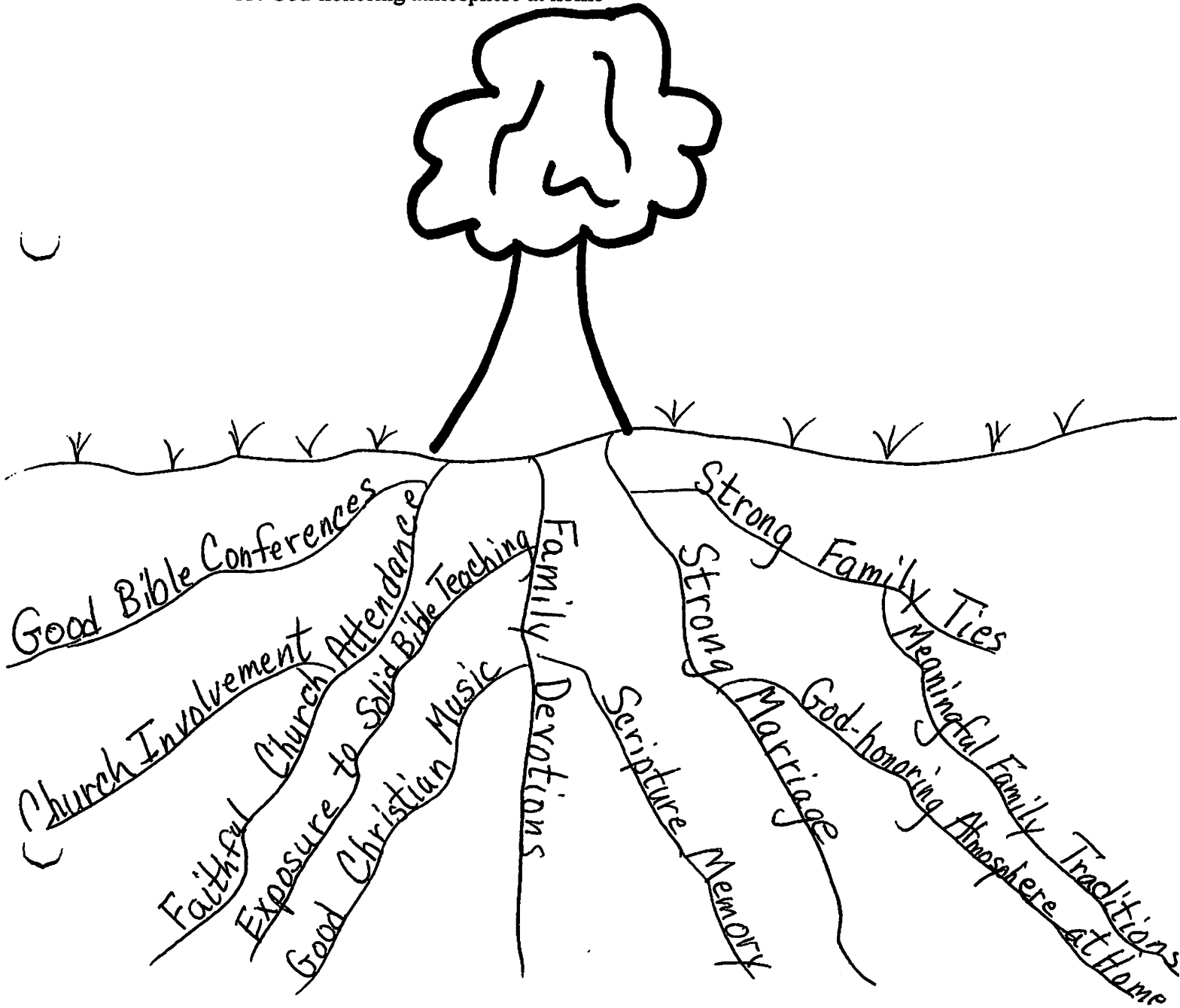
Build roots with:

1. Strong Marriage
2. Strong family ties
3. Scripture memory
4. Family devotions and teaching
5. Church attendance and involvement
6. Good Christian books
7. Input from other Christian adults
8. Good Bible Conferences
9. Good Christian music
10. Exposure to solid Bible teaching
11. Meaningful family activities
12. Meaningful family traditions
13. God-honoring atmosphere at home

Jeremiah 17:7&8

“Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh but her leaf shall be green: and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.”

ALSO See: Psalm 1 and Col. 2:6&7



## Chapter 9

### KEEPERS AT HOME

Titus 2:3-5. "...They (older women) are to train the young women to be...working at home."

(Greek word is literally: "home workers")

I Timothy 5:14 "...that the younger widows marry, bear children, manage their households..."

(I believe that to be a "keeper at home", in the literal sense of this passage, is God's ideal, as are obedient children and lifelong marriages. But, because of the fallen world in which we find ourselves, we sometimes find ourselves unable to live up to God's ideal (Matthew 19:8). However, this is the goal.)

I was born in 1947 and I have seen a huge shift in this Biblical principle over my lifetime. I visited with a friend who had 30 or so years over me, and asked her what was the most important shift she had seen in her lifetime, and this is what she said: "World War II pressured many women to go into the workplace, and they never came home." So the culture has picked up this lifestyle and run with it. Women are no longer encouraged to raise their own children. There are people who say that it doesn't matter who raises your children as long as they have some kind of supervision. You might think that the results of this kind of thinking would be enough to get their attention, but they are blinded to it all as is stated in the Scriptures.

The first thing we need to ask is: What does it mean to be a "keeper at home"? It does NOT mean that a woman cannot use her gifts to make a little money or to be creative in other ways. It does mean that she should be in the home, making it a safe and comfortable place for her family to live. It does mean that she should be there to care for and minister to her husband and her children. While there are things she must address outside of the home (i.e., church ministry, purchasing the items her family needs to live comfortable together, etc.) her main focus should be in the home, making it a happy place for the family to live. Women have other responsibilities listed in the Scripture (worship, pray, hospitality, serving, etc.), but her main focus should be her home and family.

There are "stages" in life that may affect the responsibilities of women to some extent. When the children are grown, mothers become freer to serve others outside the home, but if there is a husband, her responsibility is still to him first. There are also individual circumstances that affect our abilities to be a "keeper at home". Those circumstances must be answered on an individual basis, each person with her individual circumstance and with the Wisdom of God.

Sometimes, we are guilty of thinking that God makes "demands" on us just to make us miserable, but that is NOT the case. God ALWAYS has good reason for the mandates He sets up for us, and it would be good for us just to follow even if we don't understand why. Below are some of the reasons God may have had in mind when He said that women should stay home.

1. Young mothers are to teach their children diligently as specified in Deuteronomy 6.  
Teaching young children takes a lot of time and energy, so time at home would enhance those opportunities.
2. All married women are to care for the needs of her husband and her home.  
(Proverbs 31)
3. Demands from work may conflict with responsibilities at home. Which one will win?

4. Bosses may have expectations on women that conflict with the desires of her husband. This puts her in a difficult place of making a decision.
5. Energy for the home and husband may be expended at work.  
(REMEMBER: You are the best protection and accountability for the needs of your husband.)
6. Working with men that are not your husband puts you and them in situations that may cause compromise and temptations from which we are to “flee”!
7. There are many ministries in the church that don’t get done if women are all out working. (visiting the sick, praying, helping widows and orphans, etc.)
8. God’s plan is to preserve and protect our marriages. If you are able to be home, be there!

There are some important questions you should ask yourself before seeking employment outside the home. Here are a few of them Take time to ask these honestly and before God and applying your understanding of God’s Word.

1. Would it be best for me and my husband to entrust the care of our children to another person? How will that affect the teaching of our children?
2. Can I be totally loyal to my husband if I am subject to someone else for a large part of my day, especially to another man? How will I respond if the desires or schedule requirements of my boss conflict with those of my husband?  
(Will I compromise my relationship with my husband in ANY way by spending hours of time daily with another man - my boss?)
3. Which, if any, of my Biblical responsibilities will suffer if I take on this working opportunity?
4. Will the spiritual wellbeing of my husband/children be affected for good or otherwise if I take on this new responsibility?  
(Will I have time to “shepherd” my child’s heart? Will I have time and energy to meet the needs of my husband and do the things that please him?)
5. Will I have time and energy to accomplish the other ministries God has given to women in the Church?
6. Is my husband in full agreement with whatever decision I make?
7. IMPORTANT QUESTION: Which should it be?
  - a. I’ll take on this opportunity and try to juggle my home and ministry responsibilities to see if I can make it fit.
  - OR
  - b. I’ll make sure I can take care of my home, my husband, my family, and my ministry responsibilities and see if there is time for something else outside my home.

There are other areas of responsibility for the wife which are specified and/or implied in portions of the Scripture. The first one I want to bring up is the concept of mothers teaching their daughters to love their husbands. I have heard it said by my husband and others, that one of our jobs in parenting is to always be sure we teach our children with the next generation in mind. For a godly heritage can be lost in one generation if there is no understanding of how to pass it on! So, as we mothers live our lives in the home, it is very important that our daughters not only hear our words, but they need to see us live out the principles we teach them! This requires time spent together as families, both in just living as well as good communication and teaching.

The culture talks a lot about “continuing education”. Well, I have an idea for us as Christian women. We can have “continuing education” in the home. It consists of spending time regularly in keeping your home a place of encouragement and special effects that make your home a pleasant and happy place to be. Learn new crafts and teach them to your children! It is a very fulfilling exercise for the family!

Work hard to help your husband and family live within your means. Determine with your husband the level you can afford, and then determine to stay within that level. Create beautiful items for your home decorating or for gift giving. Provide clean and appropriate clothing for your family. You may have to sew in order to make sure the clothing is appropriate. And, I am an example of someone who can say, “If I can learn to sew, anyone can!” Be creative in meal preparation. You can make meals more nutritious and more tasty if you make them yourself. And I have heard women say, “I don’t cook!” Well, I don’t believe you can find that concept in the Bible. It is part of your responsibility as a wife and mother to provide for the needs of your family, and meals are certainly one of the biggest needs of a family.

Here is one more list of questions to ask before you take on work outside your home. There is some overlap with the previous list, but I wanted to share it as it comes from outside myself. I want you to see that I am not alone in my understanding of this concept. This list is from a book called: “Feminine Appeal: Seven Virtues of a Godly Wife and Mother”, by Carolyn Mahaney.

1. What are my reasons for considering this opportunity? Are they selfish or God-honoring?
2. Will pursuing this venture glorify God and honor the Gospel?
3. Is this an undertaking that will help my husband?
4. Will it enhance and enrich the lives of my family?
5. Does this endeavor hinder my role as a caretaker of my home?
6. Will I be able to fulfill other God-given responsibilities?

Homemaking is a high and noble calling. (Titus 2:5 - “...that the Word of God may not be reviled.”) It is obvious that there are reasons for some women to be out working, but “Boredom” and “Stuff” are not legitimate reasons. God created us as women to be helpers to our husbands and mothers to our children. Therefore, that is the best and most fulfilling work we can do in our lives on this earth. (My personal thought based on my understanding of Scripture and many years of experience.)

Here is a compilation of the priorities of a Godly woman. Take care of these responsibilities and then see if there is time for anything else.

A Godly Woman should exhibit:

1. Love for God and his Word
2. Love for husband



3. Love for children
4. Love for home - manifested through care and time spent to” make a house a home”
5. Love for God’s people - manifested in service and ministry

I am trying to give you resources from many different writers that I respect, so here is one final list of questions to ask yourself before taking on work outside your home. This list comes from the book: “A Wife After God’s own Heart” by Elisabeth George.

1. Why am I working?
2. Have I explained my desires and concerns to my husband?
3. Have I properly researched my options?
4. Do I have goals that will allow me to quit working (at some point)?
5. What can (or must) be eliminated from my life in order to maintain Biblical priorities?
6. How can I do a better job of managing my time?
7. Am I neglecting my relationship with the Lord?
8. Is my perspective correct?
9. Am I diligent and fervently praying for god to work in my husband’s heart?
10. Am I faithfully endeavoring to follow God’s priorities for my life?

“...A virtuous woman  
...her price is far above  
rubies.” Proverbs 31:10

## Chapter 10 CHARACTERISTICS OF A GODLY WOMAN

I Peter 3:3-4 “...Do not let your adorning be external....But let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart...with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God’s sight is very precious.”

Outward adorning is something that is of interest to most young girls and women. It seems when I was young, we were more concerned with it than women are today. As my mother-in-law often said, “When we were young, we tried to look pretty.” Nevertheless, though the focus has changed from the wearing of much gold to wearing tattoos, the topic is still important, and the basic principles are the same. Basically, the Bible is saying that we are not to wear or do things to our bodies to attract attention to ourselves!

There are a couple of principles found in I Peter 3:3 which says, “Do not let your adorning be external - braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear - but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart...” Now, there are some that take this to mean that women are not to wear ANY jewelry, but I can’t see how that could be since clothing is being put on this same list, and we certainly know that this doesn’t mean that we aren’t to wear any clothing! I Timothy 2:9-10 says, “...that women adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control; not with braided hair, and gold or pearls, or costly attire; but with what is proper for women who profess godliness- with good works.” John MacArthur says that women used to flaunt their wealth by wearing expensive and excessive jewels and clothing. This became a great distraction to their lives and in their churches. So this teaching was in response to that issue.

I think the major takeaway here is that we are to FOCUS on our “inward adorning”!

I Peter 3:4 says, “But let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a quiet and gentle spirit, which in God’s sight is very precious.” If I want my beauty to be precious to God (and why wouldn’t a person want that?), I will gladly submit to this Scripture that tells me how to accomplish that! And, if I submit my heart and desires to desiring what God calls “precious”, how will that affect the way I display my body? And finally, if I cultivate a “quiet and gentle spirit”, how will these attitudes express themselves in my life? - A thankful heart; A submissive spirit; A quiet trust.

Beware of the influence in the culture that calls for women to be like men. God created TWO distinct genders and roles to accompany those genders. (Refer back to Lesson 1) Whose approval do I seek? I Samuel 16:7 says: “...For the Lord does not see as man sees. For man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”

The next principle we want to look at is found in Titus 2:5 where we are told that “women are to be self-controlled”. There are several areas where women need “practice” in self-control, but one that is particularly difficult for women is the problem of the tongue. The tongue can cause problems in the area of gossip (to which women are particularly susceptible), backbiting, criticizing, and just generally using the tongue for unkind purposes. If we read the Book of James, we see all kinds of problems that are stirred up by the tongue. James cautions us to get our tongues under the control of the Spirit in order to conquer these problems. Proverbs 14:1 says; “The wisest of women builds her house, but folly with her hands (or tongue) tears it down.” An unkind comment to a child can cause damage that can last a lifetime!

Here is a list of questions to use as a barometer to see how well you are doing in the area of self-control with your tongue and your other behavior. [This list is taken from a book called “Becoming a Woman of Discretion” by Nancy Leigh (Demoss) Wolgumuth]:

1. (Are my words) building up my home or am I tearing it down?
2. (Are my words) nurturing my marriage?
3. Am I reserving the best of my energy for my family?
4. Am I creating a climate that makes my husband and my children want to be home?
5. Am I finding fulfillment in serving my family?
6. Are my communication and demeanor loud and defiant or that of a gentle and submissive spirit?
7. Am I careful what I take into my mind through my senses? (Romans 12:1&2 “...Be transformed by the renewing of your mind...”)
8. Am I careful what I watch on T.V. or on Social Media? (Phil.4:8; Psalm 101:3; II Cor. 10:5) Things to avoid: Filth; Wickedness; Unfaithfulness in marriage; Disobedience displayed as normal or funny; Gender reversals; etc.
9. Am I careful what I read? (Romance novels can create unattainable expectations that will adversely affect your marriage.) You know what I mean, right?

Titus 2:5 says that women are “to be pure”. This will be covered more thoroughly in Chapter 11, but I want to put it in this list briefly so as to keep all of the thoughts together. Something to ask yourself that touches the heart and soul of this characteristic is: Am I promoting “holiness” in the minds and hearts of the men around me by my manner of dress and behavior? We should be dressing in a way that pleases our “own” husband, but not drawing the eyes of men who are not our husbands. We are not to attract the eyes of others to our body parts other than to our joyful and happy faces. Our faces should reflect our love and joy of the Lord, and that is what is meant by displaying “inner beauty”.

Learning how to be kind seems like a no-brainer, but you might be surprised how many wives are not kind to their own husbands. It is sometimes easier to be kind to people outside our homes than to those that live in our homes. Proverbs 31:12 says that: “(A wife) brings (her husband) good, not harm, all the days of her life.” Remember that your husband is confronted with the culture every day. That means he has stress, mingles with other women, has long hours, may be bored, and any number of other discomforts. When he thinks of you, he should have joy knowing that you are his #1 cheerleader, and no matter how things go at work, he can come home to your smile and support and respect.

Likewise, your children should have the same sense of support and love from both of their parents. While you are to be the main source of teaching and training and discipline, they should sense your love and know that everything you do is for their growth and for their best. And finally, be kind to others. Show them acts of service by giving, being hospitable, ministering to those in need, etc.

Another characteristic of a Godly woman will be covered in a later chapter, but a Godly woman should fear the Lord. A woman who fears the Lord will receive a great reward from her family.

I am sure there are other qualities, but for this lesson we will finish this topic by discussing a woman “who has devoted herself to every good work.” This quality is in the list of qualifications of a “widow indeed” who receives oversight of the church. Some of her activities should include raising children, showing hospitality, serving the Saints, and helping the sick.

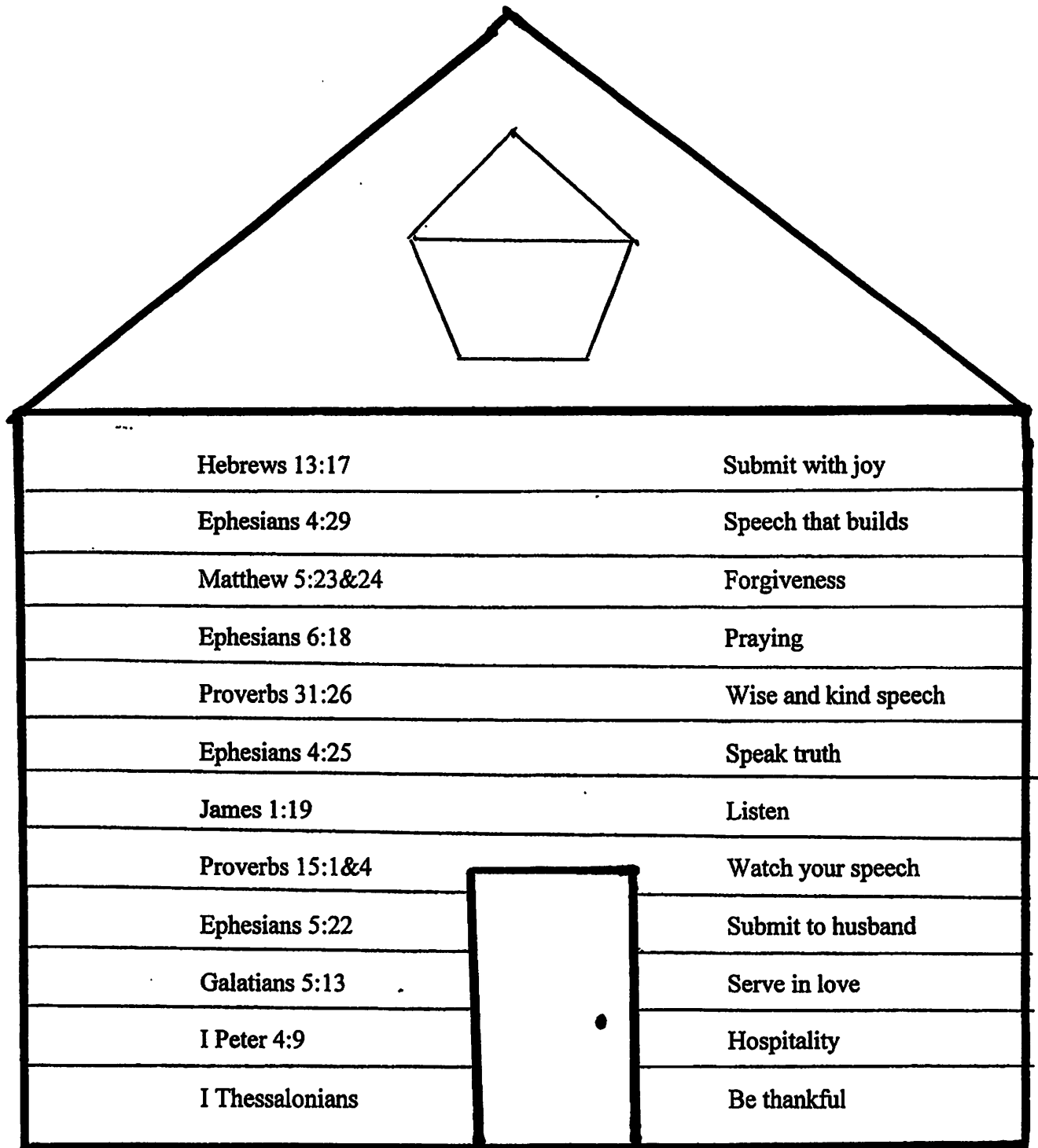


These are the ministries a woman should display in order to be considered for church oversight as a widow.

It is not possible for any one of us to be able to exhibit every one of these characteristics perfectly, but these are goals to which we should all aspire as we walk in this life. And though we will never become perfect, we should be able to look back and see growth in our lives as we grow and mature in our faith. These are principles that we should apply, and if we don't make an effort, it is like telling God that we don't agree with Him. This is His list for us to help us to know what His expectations are. Often, we talk about wondering what God expects. Well, this is a pretty long assignment, and when we get this mastered, He will move us to the next level.

Lesson 10 (Illustration)

“EVERY WISE WOMAN BUILDETH HER HOUSE...” Proverbs 14:1



## Chapter 11

### CHRISTIAN MODESTY

I Timothy 2:9-10. “Likewise also that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control (propriety and moderation), not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, but with what is proper for women who profess godliness - with good works.”

Our culture has just about lost an understanding of what it means to be modest. Even within the Church, modesty seems almost like a lost desire. I continue to be totally baffled by what I see coming into our churches from homes where there are Christian moms and dads. Where are the dads who know how a man responds to the sight of a girl/woman who is showing private parts of her body or who displays every curve and shape of her body through thin, stretchy attire? Those same dads and moms were VERY wise to teach their little girls not to play on the roads so they wouldn't put their lives in danger, but they seem totally oblivious to the fact that when their “little” girls dress like the culture, they are putting their very souls and bodies in danger!

To get a clear understanding of what the Bible means when it tells women to dress modestly, it is important to understand some basic principles of the Scripture. The first thing we want to see is how clothing came about in the first place, for we know that in the beginning, clothing didn't exist. In Genesis 2:25, we see that Adam and Eve were naked, and they were not ashamed. That is because they were sinless at this point. In Genesis 3:5-6, we see that Adam and Eve partook of the forbidden fruit (the Tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil) which was an act of disobedience. At that moment their consciences were awakened, and they knew they were naked. (Genesis 3:7) Also at this point, their relationship with God was broken and their innocence was gone and replaced with shame. They had experienced evil and after this, nakedness outside of marriage, was shameful.

Now at this point, Adam and Eve tried to deal with the guilt of what they had done. Genesis 3:7 tells us also that they took fig leaves and made coverings (aprons) for themselves. They also felt it necessary to hide. It is here that God gives the first hint of His remedy for this broken relationship. Genesis 3:15 is the first seed of the Gospel that then pervades the rest of Scripture. Furthermore, God made them coats from the skins of animals (Genesis 3:21). It seems obvious that this means that He had to have sacrificed an animal, and death was introduced into the world as a result of the first sin. It was God's intention for those “garments” to cover the body. This brings me to what I think is a very important principle of clothing! It seems that if God gave us clothing to cover the nakedness we became aware of because of sin, it would be an insult to God to use our clothing, that is meant to cover us, as a means of being immodest before those that we are meant to protect - namely our brothers in Christ.

There are three important principles that should govern the way we dress. First of all is the principle of OWNERSHIP. I Corinthians 6:19-20 tells us that we are not our own. If we are born again, we have been purchased at a high price, the blood of Jesus. Therefore, we are NOT free to dress any way we want. If we belong to Christ, then our body is not who we are. It is merely the “packaging” for our heart, soul and spirit. Therefore, God's Word has the final authority over how we dress.

Next is the principle of LORDSHIP. Romans 14:8-9 says that whether we live or whether we die, we belong to the Lord. When someone is Lord of your life, that means that you belong to Him. So this is kind of a confirmation of the previous principle of ownership. We cannot therefore say: "I am not going to dress modestly, Lord." If we say something like that, we have dethroned Him for a different kingdom.

And finally, is the principle of CITIZENSHIP. Romans 12:2 says, "Do not be conformed to this world..." We are citizens of another kingdom. I John 2:15-16 says, "Love not the world...if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." It is pretty clear that if we decide to disobey God in this area or any other area of Scripture, we might check to see if we are truly "in the faith". Everything about us should reflect our Heavenly citizenship.

One of the main reasons to be careful of how we dress is to protect our Christian brothers from thoughts and temptations that may be harmful to them. If everyone in the world was a girl, this whole problem of modesty would not be nearly the problem that it is! Richard Baxter, a 17th century pastor, once said (speaking to women): "We must walk among sinful persons as you would do with a candle among straw or gun powder or else you may see the flame, which you did not foresee, when it is too late to quench it."

The story of David and Bathsheba is to me one of the saddest stories in the Bible! Now to be clear, David was 100% responsible for his actions with Bathsheba, but she did a very careless thing! She was not being careful of her behavior and the place she chose to take her bath. Women, it is our sin when we purposely or carelessly wear clothes or behave in such a way that causes a man to have a sinful thought. ( I Thessalonians 4:4-7) Ladies, in order to follow God's mandates for the way we behave and dress, we need to resolve not to put a stumbling block or an occasion to stumble in the way of our Christian brothers.

Now, there is a positive challenge for us which gives us joy and purpose in our manner of dress. It should be great joy to edify and build one another up in their walk with God. As Christian sisters, we can care for our brothers in Christ and children by protecting them from the attacks in the world! In general, we are told in Hebrews 10:24 that we are to edify one another and build each other up to love and good works. Ask yourself: "What can I do to edify my brothers in Christ and cause them to have Godly thought?" "Does what I wear encourage an attitude of holiness in the hearts of the men that see me?" Don't take these things lightly, because we are our brothers' keeper!

We are also told in I Thessalonians 4:6 that we are not to defraud our Brothers. Now if you are like me, I was never sure what that meant until I did this study. But what that means is that we are not to display something in front of them and then pull ourselves away after tempting them in their thoughts. It is like putting all the fresh chocolate chip cookies on the counter and showing them to your children and then saying, "But you can't have any!"

This takes us to the real Biblical plan for our bodies. It was God's plan from the beginning that the human race should multiply, but only through the means of marriage! So, He created men to be very visual and to pursue, and He created women to be very relational and to respond. God desires for men and women to meet each other's needs, but only through His way! And God's way for this to happen is through marriage between one man and one woman. So, the point here is that when we marry, all barriers come down for this one man, our husband. God wants us to save all of our beauty and femininity for this one man! So guard yourselves and save all your treasures until that wedding day! Have a beautiful gift to give your husband and make it last a lifetime!



Now it is time to get to the very practical part of this discussion. Sometimes in our Christian circles, we assume that everyone knows what it means to dress modestly. That is obviously not the case as we have many examples in our churches of immodest dress. The other possibility is that some women just don't care! That is a very sad scenario to contemplate! So here we will list some of the kinds of things we are talking about. This list has been compiled from many years of discussions with older women, men, and also through reading books by Christian women that I respect. (Before we teach these concepts to young Christians or to young girls, it is important to teach their hearts to be sensitive to God's Word and the teaching there.) The list below gives an idea of the kind of things that might be considered off limits for a Godly woman.

1. Anything that exposes or emphasizes intimate or alluring parts of the body.
2. Anything that "teases" by just a hint of exposure.
3. Anything that is designed to purposely draw eyes to sexual parts of the body.
4. Tight clothing ("Clothes should be tight enough to show that you are a woman, and loose enough to show you are a lady." -Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth. (Modesty is more than just a covering of the skin. A woman can be covered head to toe and still be immodest.)
5. Underwear that shows through the clothes or that is showing by design.
6. Anything that is too low, too short, too tight or too sheer.

QUESTION: Am I communicating the world's philosophy of clothing or am I communicating God's heart in this matter?

ANOTHER IMPORTANT QUESTION: If I were going to a party where Jesus Christ is the guest of honor, is there anything in my closet that I would not consider because it isn't modest enough to wear in front of Him?

John Piper said: "Clothing shouldn't draw attention to what it is meant to cover!"

Now that we have covered the basic principles of modesty, there are a couple other related topics I would like to cover. The first one is that there are a few minor disadvantages to dressing modestly. It may take some time to find or sew clothing that is modest since much of what is in stores does not fall into the category of "modest". You may need to sew or "fix" things to make them modest for your daughter, but the love that is shown to a young girl by a mother that wants to protect her from the culture is of great value to her!

It may cost a little more, but maybe not! Sometimes we find things on the sale rack that no one else wants, so that is a blessing. You may not look as "cool" as you would like, but God isn't into "cool" and your children need to learn that concept very early. We Christian ladies need to look nice and neat and attractive, but "cool" isn't required. You will probably look

different from most everyone else, but Titus 2:14 says that “(God) gave Himself for us to redeem us ...and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession...”

Resolve to please God and bring glory to Him at all cost. Determine to have a modest and pure heart, for that is where it all starts.

Now for some of the blessings of dressing modestly: You will enjoy a richer and more fulfilling marriage as you save all of your “treasures” for your husband. This will give him exclusive ownership of you and all you have to offer him. You will experience some peace and joy in knowing that you are obeying God. You will be free from the pressure of the fashion trends of the culture. You will be more protected from attracting the wrong kind of guys and men. When it is the time for finding a husband, a Godly style of dressing will more certainly attract the right kind of man. There are others, but this gives you an idea of what is available for you if you choose to be obedient to Biblical guidelines for your manner of dress.

Here are some practical conclusions for dealing with this topic:

1. Don't compare yourself with the wrong standard. God's Word is the standard, not other people or the culture.
2. Start early with your little girls. Don't think you can change their style of dress when they are 13. They may not respond well.
3. If we are God's children, then we represent God and need to dress accordingly.
4. Dress for your husband and only for him.
5. When someone looks at you, their eyes should be drawn to your face.
6. Check your wardrobe and have someone help you if you can.

**REMEMBER:** Modesty starts in the heart! As Godly women, our desire should be:

FEET that carry the Gospel

HANDS that serve

FACES that radiate the Glory of God

“Lord, give me a modest heart. Teach me to love you more than I love my own desires and wants. Let me be a woman of grace, and love, enough to protect my Christian brothers.”

## Chapter 12

### PROVERBS 31

(\*\*\*When I started really digging into Proverbs 31, I noticed that the whole chapter results from the teaching of a Godly “Proverbs 31 Mother”! I think we normally start in Proverbs 31:10 and don’t think much about what comes before that in this same chapter. But there was first a mother who was very concerned about her son and how he would face the life that lay before him [Proverbs 31:1-9]. She then went on to describe for her son a picture of the “excellent wife” that she desired for him to find. So I want to do a little introduction here and notice some things about the mother who was at the crux of this chapter.)

#### THE TEACHINGS OF A GODLY MOTHER

Proverbs 31:2. “What are you doing, my son? What are you doing, son of my womb? What are you doing, son of my vows?”

( This mother addressed her son three times in a very loving and passionate way. She wanted him to know how very important the things she had to say were.)

After the initial addressing of her son in verse 2, this Proverbs 31 mother gave several admonitions to her son in verses 3-9. This mother was passing on her heart to her son in a very heartfelt manner. She was giving him Godly advice from her heart as to how he should face the culture he was about to venture into, a culture that is dominated by a godless world system that lays traps at every turn for young men.

She gave him three principles that applied specifically to kings, but also to men in general. The first principle was that as King, his reign should be characterized by HOLINESS. Specifically, she warned him about “giving himself to women” and the things that destroy kings. Of course, the book of proverbs is full of warnings to men about how easy it is to be led away by the wiles of a wicked woman. We don’t need to give specific examples here, but we have seen many men who have allowed this evil to destroy themselves, their families, and their ministries!

The second principle she shared with him was that his reign should be characterized by SOBRIETY. In verse 4, she told him that it is not best for him to “drink wine”. She gave him two reasons for that which are: 1.) You may “forget what has been decreed” (the law), and 2.) you may “pervert the rights of the afflicted”. In other words, it is best for you to rule with all of your “faculties” in full capability. She told him to save the strong drink for those who are dying or in other types of stress, as they may need it to get them through these hard times. (v. 6)

The third and final principle is that his reign should be characterized by COMPASSION. Spend yourself pleading on behalf of others who cannot plead for themselves. Plead on behalf of those who do not have the material means to pay for their own defense. (v. 9)

(There are some great principles and teachings for children today, but the importance of this teaching for women is not necessarily the specifics that she shared with her son, but just the fact that she took the time and effort to speak to him concerning the pitfalls of his particular calling in life. And, men are the same all over and have particular areas that trip them up very

easily, so the principles here are very important for every son. REMEMBER: Your children are never too old to hear Godly wisdom from their parents. Be careful of how and when you do it, but parenting of one kind or another goes on for a lifetime!)

Proverbs 31:10. “An excellent wife who can find? She is far more precious than jewels.”

The big question in our culture today, even within the Church, is: Is it possible to be a “Proverbs 31 Woman” and should we even try? What we read in Proverbs 31 is that the “Virtuous woman” does exist, but that she is hard to find. It is a goal that we should work toward, but not all in one day! It is a goal that we should pursue for our entire life by taking bite sized steps and working on them little by little. Should we expect perfection on even one aspect of this goal? The answer is “NO”, but every day is a new day and when we fail in one area, we get up the next day and try again. With prayer and a lot of help from God, we can make progress just like we make progress on any other goal whether a Biblical goal, or any other goal in our life! REMEMBER: It takes a lifetime to live our life! Make every day count, one at a time!

A woman who is not married can also be a “Proverbs 31 Woman” by transferring these qualities to her life of ministry much like a woman from Joppa named Dorcas, who “was full of good works and alms which she did”. (Acts 9:36)

The Proverbs 31 Woman had three main areas of ministry. There were several aspects to each ministry, but if we can simplify it down to these three, I think we will see that it isn’t as overwhelming as it sometimes looks when we try to see each verse as a new “requirement”. The first area of ministry relates to her ministry to her husband. Verse 11 says that her husband’s heart can trust in her. She is not like the woman in verse 3 who “ruins kings”. He does not need to worry that she will waste his resources. She is loyal. She is thrifty. And she is industrious.

Continuing on with her ministry to her husband, in verse 12 we read that she will do him good and not evil her whole life. She builds him up to others and encourages him. As a result, he is respected at the city gate, and sits among the elders of the land. (v.23) The proper conclusion we can draw is that she makes his home a place of safety and a source of strength for him, and not a place that drains him of his joy.

Next, we read of her relationship and ministry to her family/children. Verse 15 tells us that she gets up early and makes food for her family. This is a very important practice for those who wish to be Godly, Proverbs 31 Women! I know that we lose a lot of women on this point as more than one woman has told me that they just don’t get up that early, and they certainly don’t cook! Well, let me break it to each of you! Making good food for your family is part of your job, and if you want a strong and productive family, everyone needs to do his part, especially that which is given by God as your responsibility! Morning meals are especially important as that fuels the family for their day of work. Besides, mealtime is important because it gives everyone a time to stop and chat and even do some spiritual exercises before going off in different directions. It is a time to read some Scripture, and pray for the activities of the day, and start everyone on the right foot for the day!

The Proverbs 31 Woman also sees to it that her family has warm and beautiful clothing to wear. Verse 21 tells us that when it snows she “has no fear for her household: for all of them are clothed in scarlet.” That means warm and nice! And she didn’t go to the store to buy the clothing. She had to make it! (v. 19)

She looks out for ways to benefit her family. And above all, she is not lazy (v. 27)! You don't find her watching T.V. or reading romance novels all day. She is ingenious and takes good care of her entire household.

We see that she also takes care of and ministers to her servants. She feeds her servant girls the same as she feeds her family. We read that she gets up early and "provides food for her family and portions for her servant girls" (v. 15). She also reaches out to the poor and needy. She is alert to those in her neighborhood who have needs and tries to meet those needs.

Finally, she took care of her own needs and made sure she pleased her husband. In verse 17 we read that she was actually strong because she worked so "vigorously"! So that means that she was in good physical condition. She was able to take care of some of the physical needs in her home with that strength. She also took care to make beautiful clothes for herself from "fine linen and purple" (v. 22)! I like to think that she wanted to please her husband and be sure that he was proud of her when they went out in public.

In verses 25-30 we read a more detailed description of this lady. None of these qualities are unattainable for any of us who really want to become a "noble" woman. She was physically strong as was mentioned earlier, but here we are told she is "clothed with strength and honor". I presume this means that she is emotionally strong to give good support to her family in need, and that she receives high respect from others, as they see her manage her family and home. Her inner beauty is on display as she goes about her ministries. She is wise as is manifest in the teaching she does to those in her realm of influence. Her wisdom is undoubtedly a result of her "fear of the Lord" which is the beginning of wisdom (Proverbs 9:10). Because of this wisdom from the Lord, she has no fear of the days to come (v. 25). She is truly a solid support for her family who can look to her for strength and Godly advice.


Besides the ministries that kept her busy, she also had many other activities that took her time when she wasn't busy with the people in her life. We have already spoken of the fact that she sewed clothing for herself and her family, but she also sewed garments to sell (v. 24). She didn't use polyester either, but she used wool and tapestry and linen and silk. She made coverings for her bed. She evidently made her own wool as verse 19 says that her hands "hold the distaff" which is used in the process of making wool. She had a garden. She was resourceful and entrepreneurial and helped out financially. (It is my opinion that with all the activities she did in her home, according to this passage, she would not have had time to have a full-time career outside the home.) She creatively gathered food for her family from "afar". All in all, she was a very busy lady, and it may seem that she had more time than we do, but I am sure she didn't. She just used the time she had in a very efficient and productive way. She set her priorities, and her family and her home were definitely at the top of the list!

I believe that the Scriptures encourage a woman to live her life in this manner. There are those who say that "times are different" or that a family can't survive today without the income of both parents. I have even heard some say that they wouldn't have enough to do, and they would be bored if they stayed home! Whatever the reason or excuse, I believe that the first responsibility of a wife or mother is her home and her family. There is so much to do to make a pleasant home for a family, and then there is all of the teaching that has been described in earlier chapters. To do all of these responsibilities well, requires full and daily attention, and I don't believe there is much time left for careers outside the home. I personally have found, and believe it to be true for everyone, that fulfilling the job of wife and mother the way the Bible describes is the most rewarding job there is for a woman who loves God. I believe that to thwart that role and exchange it for something else, brings frustration and unhappiness of the greatest kind.



Besides the fulfillment that a woman feels are the rewards that come from the accomplishment of that role. Proverbs 31:25 says that this woman will rejoice in coming days! There is such a joy that one reaps from a job well done! When it is one's children who bring that joy, it is the best! (III John 4) Her children will rise up and call her "blessed". (v.28) Also, her husband will "praise her". (v.28) And finally is the praise she will receive from excelling in the qualities of "virtue." "Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised!" (v. 30)

The book of Proverbs starts and ends with "the fear of the Lord." If we want to be virtuous women, it appears that we need to start there. Learn to know God and why He is to be feared. Learn to know His expectations on our lives and then use our lives to be a blessing to our family and to others that God places in our path. Our lives will only be truly fulfilling and virtuous if we fulfill the plans that God has for us. God's Word is full of wisdom for living and for raising children. Let's purpose in our hearts to know God and His Word so we can be "Virtuous Women" and receive all the blessings that are available for those who pursue God's best!



“...A meek and quiet  
spirit, which is in the sight  
of God of great price.”

I Peter 3:4



## Chapter 13

### SOME FINAL THOUGHTS (Also Some Practical Suggestions for Application)

“ And so train the young women to (be) ... submissive to their own husbands, that the Word of God may not be reviled.” Titus 2:4&5

I guess if there is only one point that you take away from these lessons, I would like it to be that young women need to learn to be submissive to God’s Word and thus to their own husbands. For if one is submissive to God’s Word it would automatically follow that she would be submissive to her husband. If we learn to submit to the Word of God, that will stand us in good stead as we walk through life and navigate the circumstances we face.

I want to reflect on what I think is a very devastating movement that has highly undermined the concept of submission. It started out as a movement called “Women’s Liberation” (otherwise known as the Feminist movement) and it has crept into every aspect of our lives and affected how we see everything. That is not to say that this is the only reason we are where we are, but it is a huge contributor to where we are in our culture. Since I grew up in the 1950’s, I remember when mothers stayed home with their children, and they even wore dresses around the house as they did their work. And yes, mothers did most of the housework at that time, and no one thought it was unfair or strange.

So, what is the feminist movement? It is an unbiblical view of the role of women that has taken women out of the home and caused them to compete with men in every area of life. And how has the Feminist movement affected our lives as Christian women in the 21st century? It has affected the way woman dress, the way women “mother”, the way they respond to their husbands, their view of success, as well as many other areas of womanhood!

I want to describe some of these effects, since some of those reading this do not have the experience of seeing how things have changed over the years since women became “liberated.” First of all, women have opted to dress more and more like men. Some of the changes in dress fall under the category of preferential changes, but there are definitely styles that are tending toward male clothing which is not biblical. (Deuteronomy 22:5) Also, is the bold immodesty which used to be frowned upon, even in the secular culture. But Christian women need to be willing to submit to the authority of the Scripture in this area and wear clothing that is modest and respectable. (I Timothy 2:9)

Next is the area of how women “mother”. There is a lot of pressure in the culture for women to leave the home and find other ways to keep occupied. Much of this has been covered elsewhere in this book, so suffice it to say that God said that “Older women are to teach the younger women ...to love their husbands and children... to be keepers at home” (Titus 2:5).

The culture also tells women that they are equal to the men in their lives, and therefore they can and should make their husbands feel inferior and let them know how things should be done in the home and elsewhere. It is our job as women to honor and respect our husbands so that they will be “respected at the gates” (Proverbs 31:23) because of our manner of life. Look to the previous chapter to see this concept in more detail. This ties in with the last attitude listed in

the previous paragraph concerning the changes made in our culture by the feminist movement. Because women see themselves as equal to men, they also see their level of success as being of more value than the success of their husbands. Many are choosing to work at very lucrative jobs because they can make more money than their husbands, and the husbands are opting to stay home with the children. This is totally in contradiction to how God set up the home and family, and it is destined for failure and, in many cases, divorce!

So, what is true Biblical liberation for woman? Personally, it gives me great freedom to be all that God wants me to be and to allow my husband and the other men in my life to take their rightful role of leadership, freeing me from the responsibility of being in control of areas that are not mine to control! Numbers 30:6-16 describes how God has even planned for our husbands to take responsibility for our decisions - good or bad- which is a very freeing concept! Submission to proper, God-ordained authority gives freedom of heart and mind as we let those to whom God has given authority, make decisions that are way too hard for us to make on our own! Some of those God-ordained authorities include leadership in the church, governmental authorities, slaves to masters, children to parents, etc. And, for those who are already parents, it is of utmost importance for your children to learn to submit to you regularly, as that will prepare them for future submission to other authorities, most especially husbands.

God has reasons for establishing an order of authority in the home. It is His desire that things get done decently and in order (I Corinthians 14:40). Psalm 103:14 tells us that God knows our frame and that we are made from dust, so we definitely need help in this area. He knows how it would be if everyone tries to take control!

I want to take a short paragraph to mention a few of the lies that the culture tries to promote in order to get women to give up their rightful role in their homes. The first lie tells us that marriage is a "50-50" proposition, and it is only fair for your husband to do his half of the housework, so you are free to live your life in a more liberated style! They also tell women that "they can have it all"! I am here to vouch for the fact that after being a homemaker for most of my adult life, you CANNOT have it all and do it all well! Something will suffer and I am guessing that what usually suffers is the home and family! And the final lie that I will cover here is worse than them all, in my opinion. This lie tells us that children are better off at daycare where they can learn to socialize and become more well-rounded adults! Well, my question is this: Who are they to determine how and where my children should socialize? And what kind of socializing do you want your children to have? I personally prefer socializing that takes place with my oversight of who and what goes on in the place where my children are learning to socialize!

I want to make one comment concerning submission. I am all for Biblical submission, but I want to say that submission in a symbolic action that is not supported by submission in attitude is NOT submission. In other words, wearing a head covering is no substitute for Biblical submission in a heart that wants to please God and honor her husband. When a Godly woman submits for proper reasons, she is freer to fulfill the role and responsibilities that God has given her.

## So, Where Do I Start?

We have covered a lot of topics, and there is a lot to think about. You might be left with a feeling of panic or concern about how to implement some of these Biblical concepts that have been discussed in these lessons. Here are some ideas for practical things you can do to begin to develop a Biblical atmosphere in your home or to move it along from where you are. The ideas are listed by topics so you can find them easily. Please involve your husband in any ideas you desire to implement. Make this a team effort.

First of all, don't shirk your responsibility as an "older woman". Pass your Biblical heritage on to your children. Give your children a "mission" for their life! This will give meaning and purpose to their life. Teach them to plant seeds (Matthew 13:3-9). Teach them to minister to those in need. You can, with them, develop a ministry to the elderly or some others that you know who are in need. Teach them to wear the armor of God in order to resist the wickedness of this world (Ephesians 6:13-18). And of course, if they are going to wear it, they will need to know what it is! We are in a battle and this gives them the equipment to use to gain victory!

Enhance the spiritual atmosphere in your home. First of all, establish what we used to call a "family altar" in your home. It can involve Bible reading, memory work, prayer, catechism recitations, singing, etc. Find out what fits your family, but definitely start something and let it grow into God's plan for your family. If you incorporate singing, be sure the songs have a Biblical message that will encourage them in their walk with Christ. A great Bible Story Book we used in our home is called, "The Child's Story Bible" by Catherine Vos. It takes the children through the Bible in chronological order, in story form so they can follow it well.

Bible memory is very important as your children grow since, everyone testifies to the fact that it becomes harder and harder to memorize as we age. We found in our home that after the evening meal was a great time to spend just going over some verses or a passage. It is amazing how quickly children memorize from just hearing it once or twice a day.

Give your children a heart for ministry. Capitalize on their instinctive desire to please people and make them happy. Bake cookies and take them to the elderly or the neighbors. Christmas time is a wonderful time to start a tradition of sharing with others.

Use the old hymns of the faith in your evening family devotions. In many churches, they no longer are exposed to those, and your evening times together would be a great time to sing the old hymns. Many of the older hymns are full of doctrine and Truth that will sink into the hearts of your children if you sing them!

Finally, as part of their heritage, establish many traditions in your home. Children, especially young children, thrive on tradition and routine. It gives them some stability knowing that "this is something that our family does every year."

Next, be sure the children have many "fun" activities to anticipate with the family. These fun activities will help your family to bond together and encourage family interaction. There are many family activities that don't cost money, so if things are tight, look for some around where you live. Outside activities like hiking, picnics, biking and camping are free or pretty reasonable. During these types of outings, teach your children about the majesty of God and His creation. Have them identify the many beautiful flowers God made - and there are many flowers out in the fall that aren't there in the spring! Have them collect leaves - which child doesn't get all excited in the fall with all the different colors of leaves! Be creative and ask God for ideas!!!



Make work projects fun! Children will respond much more happily if you can teach them to enjoy work. My mom used to tell us that since we knew we had to do the work anyway, we might as well put a smile on our faces and enjoy it!

Use mealtimes as opportunities to chat and laugh- or cry- over the happenings of the day! If the meal is tasty and interesting (not complicated), children will open up and talk! We found out a lot of what went on in school, etc. during our informal family mealtimes. And along this same topic, use meal preparations to teach your children how to make a tasty meal! Food draws people - and families - together. So this is something parents should incorporate into their list of goals for their children. Children should know how to cook by the time they leave your home. The future husbands of your girls will thank you if you teach their wives how to put together a good meal. And the time spent together cooking will bond your family together.

Finally, use time riding in the car for visiting and chatting. Many families would rather fly to their destinations instead of driving, but, trust me, driving in the car is a great way to keep up with what your children are thinking and you can have great input into their lives through this wonderful time. And don't let each child have an electronic device to keep them occupied. They will miss all the good family communication and besides, riding in the car is a great time to notice all the beauty that God created! Use the time in the car to point out things along the way. They will gain an appreciation for other areas of the country if they learn to appreciate the different terrains, the different vegetations, etc. as they ride across the country in a car!

The third area that needs attention is the area of holidays. Be careful to help your children not only know the meanings of the different Christian Holidays, but they also need to know how to celebrate them with the Glory of God in mind. Christmas and Easter are probably the most misused holidays of the year. First of all, call them by their rightful name, not the nicknames that are used in the culture, such as "Happy Holidays", etc. If we as Christians are going to celebrate the birth of Christ, then we need to make sure our children know that is what we are celebrating! It is and has been our goal through the years that our children and grandchildren have opportunity to think about someone other than themselves. Children will not do that on their own as the culture floods them with thoughts of what they want for themselves! So plan things that will give them other thoughts. Think of opportunities in your neighborhoods or your church that can involve your whole family. There are also ministries such as, Samaritan's Purse or Compassion International, who will give ideas of projects that you can do as a family. Use these ideas to help your children give to others and not just think about themselves. Read good Christmas books to your children that will give them a vision of what really went on that first Christmas.

Easter is another one of our Christian holidays that has been hijacked by the culture. Spend some time thinking through Easter through the eyes of your children. Picture them going to the mall or other place of shopping and seeing all of the frills and fancies that the world associates with Resurrection Sunday. There are eggs hunts and candy all over the place. Then they get up on Resurrection Sunday morning only to find huge mounds of candy in their baskets. And now it isn't just candy in the baskets, there are toys of all shapes and sizes. And finally, they march off to church where they color a picture of a Cross and/or the empty tomb and hear a sermon that they probably don't understand. They go home for a big dinner and an afternoon of eating the candy and playing with the toys that were in their baskets. By evening they are tired and full of sweets and you sit down as a family to ask them, "So what is the meaning of Easter?" What about their week/day do you think they will remember? I fear that the most central part of our faith, being the death of Jesus and the Resurrection have been lost in the flurry of everything

else that has transpired before their eyes. This isn't to say that we shouldn't celebrate the Resurrection with family and even enjoy the spring season with some beautiful colors and fresh clothes, but we need to be sure that the message is not lost in the muddle of things that the world uses to draw our attention away from what really matters!

Finally, teach your children to be patriotic. We live in a flawed country with flawed leaders, but God has ordained governments and countries and laws for our benefit, and we live in the last best country on earth. We need to celebrate that! Many have died so we could worship God as we please, and we need to teach our children to love that! Celebrate the patriotic holidays with gusto and be sure the kids know that they need to pray for our country and our leaders. That is the hope for our country and for our world! Let them own flags and teach them to wave them on Memorial Day, July 4th, and any other time they feel they would like to do it.

I pray these thoughts and ideas will serve as a means to restore truthful meaning to your family celebrations.

**Recommended Reading List**  
(Some good books and authors and resources for you to use)

“Biblical Womanhood in the Home” - Nancy Leigh DeMoss

“Biblical Portrait of Womanhood” - Nancy Leigh DeMoss

“Feminine Appeal – Seven Virtues of a Godly Wife and Mother” - Carolyn Mahaney

“Family Driven Faith – Doing What it Takes to Raise Sons and Daughters Who Walk with God” - Voddie Baucham, Jr.

“Successful Christian Parenting” - John MacArthur

“Twelve Extraordinary Women” - John MacArthur

“Shepherding a Child’s Heart” - Tedd Tripp

“Secret Keeper – the Delicate Power of Modesty” - Dannah Gresh

“Becoming a Woman of Discretion” - Nancy Leigh DeMoss

“The Look – Does God Care What I Wear?” - Nancy Leigh DeMoss

“The Shaping of a Christian Family” - Elisabeth Elliot

“A Woman after God’s Own Heart” - Elizabeth George

“Putting on a Quiet Gentle Spirit” - Elizabeth George

“Different by Design” – John MacArthur

**Good books for young ladies to prepare them for courtship.**

“Let Me Be a Woman” - Elisabeth Elliot

“Passion and Purity” - Elisabeth Elliot

**For Teaching Purity to Young Girls**

“The Princess and the Kiss” - Jennie Bishop

Good Bible Story Book for Children: (Actually takes you through the Bible in language that children understand and in chronological order)

“The Child’s Story Bible” - Catherine Vos

## Closing Thoughts

To: The Ladies and Young Ladies who read/study these lessons

It is my prayer that God will use His Word in whatever way He sees fit in each life that shares in these lessons in any way. God has promised that “(His Word) will not return unto (Him) void, ...but it shall prosper in the thing whereunto (He) sent it.”  
Isaiah 55:11.

May God challenge and encourage you to be the woman He has ordained you to be in whatever station of life you find yourself today. May His truth enable you to see and to seek His “Pattern for Your Life”!

In His Service and  
For the Glory and Praise of God,

## RECIPES

(Some easy and fun recipes and tips for you to try with your family.)

### WHITE CHICKEN CHILI (very low calorie and good for you) – 4-5 servings

- 2 chicken breast halves, boiled and chopped
- 2 (16 oz.) cans Great Northern beans
- 1 cup salsa (whatever level of “hot” you like)
- 1 cup low-fat sour cream
- 1 cup shredded Monterey Jack cheese
- 2 cups water

Mix beans, chicken, salsa, and water. Leave on low heat for a couple of hours. Add sour cream and cheese just before serving. **DO NOT BOIL!** Serve with more cheese if desired.

### SWISS CHICKEN CASSEROLE (what to do with leftover turkey or chicken)

- 4 cups chopped cooked chicken or turkey
- 2 cups diced celery
- 2 cups croutons
- 1 cup real mayonnaise (NO substitutes)
- ½ cup milk
- ¼ cup chopped onion
- salt to taste
- 8 oz. grated Swiss cheese (or suitable substitute)

Mix all ingredients and sprinkle with slivered almonds if desired. Bake at 350 for 30-40 minutes.

### SOUTHWESTERN SOUP (taco soup)

- 1 pound lean hamburger, browned and drained
- 2 teaspoons dried onion flakes
- 1 can (15 oz.) chili beans
- 1 can kidney beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 (15 oz.) can tomato sauce
- 1 (15 oz.) can diced tomatoes
- 3 cups water
- 3 chicken bouillon cubes
- 2 cups whole kernel corn
- 2 cups salsa (choose your level of “hot”)
- 1-2 teasp. dried oregano
- 1-2 teasp. dried basil
- 2 cups shredded cheese

Mix all ingredients except cheese and let simmer for 2-6 hours. Makes 12 servings. Sprinkle individual servings with cheese.

**MASHED POTATO CASSEROLE (Great for Sunday noon when you get home from church)**

Boil 6 large potatoes until very tender, and mash  
8 oz. cream cheese  
1 cup shredded cheese  
½ cup sour cream  
1/3 cup chopped onion  
1 egg  
Salt and pepper to taste

Place all ingredients in a mixing bowl and beat until fluffy. Put into greased baking dish. Cover and bake or set aside for later. Bake at 350 for 40-45 minutes. Sprinkle with extra cheese and serve. Serves 10.

**BAKED MACARONI AND CHEESE (for the “mac ‘n’ cheese” lovers in your home)**

2 cups uncooked macaroni  
¼ cup chopped onion  
6 Tblsp. butter, divided  
3 Tblsp. flour  
2 ¼ cup milk  
2 cups shredded sharp cheese  
½ tsp. dry mustard  
1/3 cup fresh breadcrumbs  
salt and pepper to taste  
Bacon bits

Cook macaroni and drain. Sauté onion in 4 T. butter. Add flour and mix until blended. Gradually add milk. Bring to a boil and cook and stir for 2 min. Stir in cheese, mustard, salt and pepper. Add cooked macaroni to sauce and stir to coat. Transfer to casserole baking dish. Melt remaining butter and toss with breadcrumbs. Sprinkle over macaroni. (Sprinkle with bacon bits if desired.) Bake uncovered at 350 for 25-30 minutes.

**EASY CRISP SWEET PICKLES (Excellent for sweet pickle lovers! Don't make you pucker!)**

1 large jar cheap whole dill pickles (around 46 oz.)  
2 cups sugar  
½ cup white vinegar

Drain pickle juice from pickles. Save about 1 cup. Slice pickles into chunks and return to jar. Heat sugar and vinegar until sugar is dissolved. Pour over pickles and add enough dill juice to fill the jar. Make sure all pickles are covered with sweet juice or turn closed jar upside down. Refrigerate and they are ready to serve the next day!



### CHOCOLATE PEANUT BUTTER ( Gives peanut butter a new meaning!)

½ cup butter (no substitutes)

½ cup honey

½ cup cocoa

1 1/3 cup peanut butter

¼ tsp. vanilla

Melt butter. Add honey and cocoa. Remove from heat. Stir in peanut butter and vanilla. Refrigerate.

### ICE CREAM COOKIE CUPS (A fun dessert for everyone)

Make your favorite chocolate chip cookie dough and press about ¼ cup dough into large muffin cups. Bake until firm (10-15 minutes). Cool and then freeze until ready to use. Fill with ice cream and topping of your choice.

### ICE CREAM SANDWICHES (Make them seasonal with seasonal M&Ms)

¾ cup butter

¾ cup peanut butter

1 ¼ cup brown sugar

Cream until light and fluffy.

1 egg

1 tsp. vanilla

Blend into above mixture.

1 ¼ cup flour

1 tsp. baking soda

¼ tsp. salt

Add to above and mix well.

1 cup chocolate chips – Add to above and mix well.

Divide dough into 30 balls. Place on cookie sheets and press to ¼ inch thick. Sprinkle with M&M's and press them in lightly. Bake at 350 for 10-12 minutes. Remove from pan and cool. When cool, freeze until ready to use. Place ice cream on one side of 15 frozen cookies and top with remaining cookies. Refreeze if desired until ready or serve!

### CHEESE BALL (Great for Christmas celebrating!)

2 (8 oz.) pkg cream cheese

2 cups shredded cheddar cheese

1 small onion, finely chopped

1 Tblsp. Worcestershire sauce

½ tsp. salt

½ tsp. celery salt

Mix all the ingredients and shape into one large or two smaller balls. Roll to coat in chopped pecans or walnuts. Serve with crackers.

### FROZEN FRUIT SLUSH (Very refreshing any time!)

- 1 cup sugar
- 3 cups hot water
- 20 oz. can of crushed pineapple, including juice
- 1 or 2 cans mandarin oranges, including juice
- 12 ounce can of frozen orange juice

Mix all of the above and place in a large freezable container and freeze. When ready to serve, remove from freezer 1-2 hours before serving. Break up mixture and put in a large bowl. At this time add sliced bananas and serve.

### FRENCH ICED COFFEE (For those who love coffee and those who don't!)

- 3 tsp. coffee powder (regular or decaf.)
- 3 cups hot water
- 2 cups sugar
- 1 pint cream (or two cans evaporated milk)
- 1 quart milk (can be skim)
- 2 tsp. vanilla

Dissolve coffee and sugar in hot water.

Add to the above mixture when it is cool.  
Freeze in a 9 by 13 inch covered pan. Remove from freezer 2 hours before serving. When ready to serve, just scoop it into cups and enjoy!

### MOUNTAIN PIE ( A great way to use up canned or frozen fruit that is a bit old)

- 1 stick butter (melt in a 9 by 13 pan)
- 1 cup flour
- ½ cup white sugar
- ½ cup brown sugar
- 1 ½ tsp. baking powder
- ½ tsp. salt
- ¾ cup milk

Mix the above and pour over melted butter.

Add one quart of fruit. (Canned, frozen or fresh peaches, blueberries and cherries are especially good.)

Bake at 350 for 45 minutes. Serve warm.

### Do you like warm cookies every day?

Make your favorite cookie dough. Make balls about 1 inch in diameter. Lay them on a cookie sheet and put them in your freezer until they are frozen. When they are frozen, bag them. Take out as many as you need at any one time and bake them! That way you can have fresh warm cookies at any time!!!

## Addendum

### \*\*Two Articles Encouraging the Virtue of Thankfulness

The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance. Psalm 16:6

The providence of God designates the family out of which we should rise. This affects both our temporal and eternal good. If your family feared God, and took care to train you up in the nurture of the Lord, you can reckon this among your chief mercies to spring from such parents. What a mercy to have parents that prayed for us before they had us, as well as in our infancy when we could not pray for ourselves! At the throne of grace they poured out their souls so affectionately for you, carrying all your concerns, especially your eternal one before the Lord. They prayed weeping with their heart-strings breaking for you. O put a value upon such mercies for they are precious! To have parents that nipped in the bud the outbreak of your corruptions by their pious and careful discipline. They carefully instilled the knowledge of God into your souls in your tender years. As no pain, care, or cost was too much for our bodies to feed and clothe us, so they considered no prayer, counsel, or tears too much for our souls that we might be saved. They knew that a parting time would come, and strove to make it as easy and comfortable to them as possible by leaving us in Christ. They were not satisfied with mere physical health, but desired that we were in grace. There was nothing more desirable than to be able to say in the great day, "Lord, here I am, and the children which you have given me!" How many children are drawn headlong to hell by their ungodly parents who teach them to curse and swear as soon as they can speak. Ah, my friends, let me beg you to take special note upon this divine providence to have parents as a pattern of holiness that beat the path to heaven for us by their example. Let your hearts become thoroughly warmed in the sense of it.

From "Voices from the Past" page 337, an excerpt from John Flavel, 17<sup>th</sup> century.

Matthew Henry's response to Hannah's prayer of thanksgiving for God's gift to her of a baby boy, Samuel. (The prayer is found in I Samuel 2:1-10.)

"What great things she (Hannah) says of God. She takes little notice of the particular mercy (the gift of Samuel) she was now rejoicing in, does not commend Samuel for the prettiest child, the most toward and sensible for his age that she ever saw, as fond parents are too apt to do. No, she overlooks the gift and praises the giver; whereas most forget the giver and fasten only on the gift. Every stream should lead us to the fountain; and the favors we receive from God should raise our admiration of the infinite perfections there are in God."

(Matthew Henry: "Commentary on the Whole Bible")