

We've been considering for the past few weeks, the Biblical picture of a virtuous woman—a woman who is unashamedly and joyfully a wife, mother, and homemaker—a woman who defies the modern day philosophies that portray such a person as mindless and meaningless—a woman who shames 1/3 of American church-going women who've practically aligned themselves with a worldly philosophy that's in contradiction to the revealed will and word of God...

Now if you remember in considering the meaning of the term “virtuous” I mentioned that at its root it means “strength or valor”—while it also entails a sense of nobility and goodness, primarily it refers to a courageous woman who defies a world system that daily confronts her with deceptive and destructive lies—this my friend is a courageous and brave woman—a woman whose worth is far above rubies...

Thus we come this evening to our third study within this portion of Scripture a passage I suggested can be loosely divided into three sections—[1] her identity (v10), [2] her primary focus (her husband and home, vv11-27), and [3] her reward (vv28-31)...

Last week in considering the primary focus of the virtuous woman, we sought to answer three questions—[1] Why does she do her husband good, wherein I suggested two closely related reasons [a] because of the creative needs of men, and [b] because of the creative purposes of women, Gen.2:18—“And the LORD God said, *It is* not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him...”—thus the virtuous woman understands that she has been specifically created to assist her husband to fill and subdue the earth

This brought us to a [2] question, How does she do him good—if you recall I suggested all that she does she does in an effort to help and assist her husband, but specifically I mentioned three ways—[a] she seeks to do him good physically, [b] spiritually, and [c] socially...

This brought us to a [3] question, When does she do him good, v12b—“...all the days of her life...”—[a] in days of difficulty, [b] in days of prosperity, and [c] in days of maturity...

This then brings us tonight to vv13-27, a passage that can be summarized by v27—“she watches over the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness...”—here we continue to see that her primary focus was her household—“she watches over the ways of her household...” and then we are told how this is done—“and does not eat the bread of idleness...”

- I. A Presupposition
- II. Some Specific Ways
- III. Some Practical Helps

I. A Presupposition

1. The presupposition I here refer to is, that the virtuous woman is manager or administer over her household...
2. This of course takes place under the oversight and with the assistance of her husband—but nevertheless for all practical purposes she acts as the governess over the everyday affairs of the home...
3. This is seen in that summary statement of v27—“she watches over the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness...”
4. She watches over the various activities that take place within her home—thus the NIV—“she watches over the affairs of her household...”
5. The word translated “watches over” or “looks well” means “to watch closely, or to spy”—it refers to a diligent and close scrutiny...
6. 1Tim.5:14—“therefore I desire that the younger widows marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully...”

7. This verse is a part of Paul's counsel to Timothy with reference to younger widows—they are to—"marry, bear children, [and] manage the house..."
8. The single Greek word translated "guide the house" KJV, "keep the house" NAS, and "manage the house" NKJV, is literally—"rule the house"
9. It refers to a person who manages or governs the home—the woman is to govern or manage the general and practical affairs of her home...
10. This is the one time this word is used in the verb form, but it's used on several other occasions in the gospels...
11. For example, Lk.22 our Savior sent His disciples into the city to secure a room for the Passover, we read in v11—"Then you shall say to the master of the house..."
12. Thus the presupposition I here suggest is this—the virtuous woman consciously acts as the governess of her household under the oversight of her husband...
13. Now as governess this necessitates that she possesses a delegated authority within her home, and that she diligently regulates this authority with reference to the persons and practices of the home...
14. In this case that included, maidservants, children, and finances—she acted as her husband's helper and thus with a sense of divine authority and approval...
15. Now I take the time to point this out, simply because, as we shall see, this lady is no mere passive sit back and do nothing kind of woman...
16. She is actively [and dare I say] aggressively involved in the every day affairs of the home, and thus she is contributing and assisting her husband in their divine calling—to fill and subdue the earth...
17. Thus the woman who fails to manage her household and the husband who refuses to allow her to manage her household are sabotaging the divine plan with reference to the home...
18. I think at times there is a misunderstanding with reference to the calling and responsibilities of a wife and mother...
19. Some may misrepresent this, as simply sitting at home, doing nothing more than waiting for her husband's next instruction...
20. But this is far from the description before us—she has been given, under the care and oversight of her husband, the responsibility—"to watch over the ways of her household..."
21. Let me illustrate—let's liken the husband to a store manager and the wife to an assistant manager—they are both responsible to the store's owner, but the assistant is also responsible to the manager...
22. Now because the manager has several responsibilities that take away from the daily operations of the store, a wise manager will hire a diligent and capable assistant...
23. And he will delegate to his assistant the needed authority to make every day decisions without having to get his approval...
24. But all this she does beneath his eye, bringing all larger matters to her boss getting his counsel and consent...
25. Now you can imagine how relieving it would be for the manager to know that his assistant is diligent, honest, and hardworking...
26. V11—"the heart of her husband safely trust her; so he will have no lack of gain. She does him good and not evil all the days of her life..."

II. Some Specific Ways

A. She is frugal and wise

1. By this I mean she is thrifty and prudent in her managing and spending of the household income and finances...
2. This is seen in a couple of statements, v14—"she is like the merchant ships, she brings her food from afar..."
3. Merchant ships were used to travel great distances in order to trade and purchase various types of merchandise...
4. Thus the virtuous woman is similar to the merchant ship in that she travels far and wide in acquiring food for her household...

5. To put it plainly she knows where and how to find a good bargain—she would never dream of paying more merely out of convenience...
6. She's compared the various stores in her area and knows where to shop for particular items and when to shop for specific sales...
- 7.
8. Now we admittedly find that her household was clothed with scarlet, and she was dressed in fine linen and purple...
9. It becomes very apparent that this particular lady manages a household that is very financially stable—she has money to buy a field, plant a vineyard, employ servants, and be clothed in scarlet and purple...
10. Not every has the means for these items—thus I suggest that the basic and generic principle, that she was not wasteful but frugal, must be applied to our own individual financial and economic situation...
11. Or, let me put it another way—one of the fundamental reasons behind her frugality is a contentment with her present situation in life...
12. Most of the time the problem isn't budgeting skills but lack of self-control—a person wants things that their present station in life don't allow...
13. But not so with the virtuous woman—for she, by the grace of God, mortifies all and any urge to want things that are unlawful for her...
- 14.

B. She is creative and innovative

1. By “innovative” I mean, she is inventive or creative in attempting to generate or assist in the financial income of the home...
2. Here there are two key texts, v16—“she considers a field and buys it; from her profits she plants a vineyard...”
3. Here we find that the virtuous woman is attempting to bring a financial return upon her land or property investments...
4. She seeks out a field that would be conducive to her needs, and probably commissions others to plant a vineyard that she might make a profit by selling wine...
5. The second verse is v24—“she makes linen garments and sells them, and supplies sashes for the merchants...”
- 6.
7. Let me clarify—if you remember in our first sermon on this passage I suggested as an interpretive principle that this passage does not imply that the virtuous woman does everything within the passage at the very same time...
- 8.

C. She is diligent and hardworking

1. The virtuous woman possesses a biblical and God-honoring view of work—she understands that the fourth commandment teaches has application to woman as well men—“six days you shall labor and do all your work...”
2. Here there are several relevant verses, v15—“she also rises while it is yet night, and provides food for her household, and a portion for her maidservants...”
3. The phrase “she rises while it is yet night” means she's up while it's still dark—she doesn't sleep-in till 10 or 11 o'clock...
4. Verse 18—“she perceives that her merchandise is good, and her lamp does not go out by night...”—that is, she keeps the light one because she often works late into the night...
5. Verse 27—“she watches over the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness...”—that is, she does eat or gain her bread by idleness...
6. There is a similar phrase back in Gen.3:19—“by the sweat of your face you shall eat bread...”—that is, you shall get your bread by hard and laborious work...

7. So too the virtuous woman, gains her bread not by idleness but by the sweat of her face—she labors diligently in obtaining it...
8. My brethren I trust that you would agree—managing an average sized home takes an amazing amount of energy and effort...
9. Now at this point I hear an objection—Yes but, this lady had maidservants—thus she didn't perform all the tasks herself...
10. True—but I would suggest to you that most if not all women in the west, possess various servants within their homes in the form of modern-day appliances...
11. Microwaves, washer/dryer, electric ovens, refrigerators, vacuum cleaners, irons, disposable diapers, prepackaged food...
- 12.
13. Let me clarify—there's an assumption that's necessary to remember—this lady possessed a pattern of relatively good health...
14. There are some ladies who are not consistently healthy and thus are unable to exert such large amounts of stamina and energy...
15. However I have also known women who enlist supposed reoccurring physical ailments as an excuse for laziness...
16. But not so the virtuous woman—she's characterized by a consistent God-honoring work ethic, v27—“she watches over the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness...”
17. I want to say one final thing before leaving this point—what happens after all the kids are gone and her schedule is freed up some...
18. Does she now sit back and do nothing—perhaps now she can sleep in till noon, get up eat lunch, take a short nap before she prepares supper...
19. By no means—now she's free to pour her energies into other projects, such as helping others, v20—“she extends her hand to the poor, yes, she reaches out her hands to the needy...”
- 20.

III. Some Practical Helps

A. Keep your body in relatively good health

1. By this I mean you must do all that's within your ability to obtain and maintain a healthy, strong, and vigorous body...
2. Verse 17—“she girds herself with strength, and strengthens her arms...”—that is, her arms are strong from and for her tasks...
3. There are some women whose constitution is natively strong and energetic—but then there are others who must work hard to maintain such stamina...
- 4.

B. Organize your week into a regular schedule

1. I trust it's obvious to all, as we read through this passage, that this woman's day was orderly and organized...
2. She was no disorganized and confused mess—she operated within a basic structure, wherein the various activities of the week were all accounted for...
- 3.

C. Enlist the assistance of those within the home

1. This is implied in the latter part of v15—“she also rises while it is yet night, and provides food for her household, and a portion for her maidservants...”
2. The Hebrew word translated “portion” literally refers to—“a prescribed responsibility or task...”—thus the 1901—“she giveth food to her household, and their task to her maidens...”

3. The idea is probably that she rises early in order to provide food for her household, and daily shores to her servants...
4. Matthew Henry—"She gives also *a portion* (an allotment of work, as well as meat) *to her maidens*; they shall all of them know their business and have their task..."
- 5.
6. Prov.14:1—"the wise woman builds her house, but the foolish pulls it down with her hands..."
- 7.

D. Seek counsel and help from older women

1. I can only assume that there are some of you, perhaps some of the younger ones, who may confess that you were never taught these things in your younger years...
- 2.
3. This presupposes two things—[1] that older women are willing to help, and [2] that younger women are willing to be helped...
4. Tit.2:3-5—"the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things, 4 that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed..."
5. Notice several things within this passage—[1] the responsibility of teaching, v3—"they be reverent in behavior, not slanders, not given to much wine, teachers of good things..."
6. Notice [2] the content of teaching, v4—"that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands..."
7. What are all these but a condensed version of Prov.31:10-31—in other words, older women are to admonish the younger how to be a virtuous woman...
- 8.

E. Maintain a balance of the inward and outward

1. Here I simply want to remind you what I said at the outset of our study, that foremostly this lady is a God-fearing woman...
2. Lk.10:38—"Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. 39 And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. 40 But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me." 41 And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. 42 "But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her..."