



Duties of Christian Wives

A Handbook for Wives

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THE DUTIES OF CHRISTIAN WIVES

For a woman who is married, the greatest privilege God has given to her is to glorify Christ by faithfully fulfilling her role as a biblical wife. None of the duties that this eBook will mention could be accomplished in a woman's own sheer strength and willpower. But with God's enabling and daily grace, the woman of God who has been transformed by the gospel, regenerated by the Holy Spirit, and who is dependent upon prayer, the Word, and Christian fellowship can walk in a manner worthy of Christ and can glorify God in the context of the marriage relationship in which God has placed her.

For the Christian wife who is married to a nonbeliever, the principles and points in this eBook apply. Why? Because a Christian's obedience is *never* contingent upon whether a person deserves to be loved. Consider the gospel: even while we were Christ's enemies, He died for us (Rom 5:8). Thus, a godly wife does not love, submit to, respect, honor her husband *only if* he deserves it. Rather, she does it out of obedience to her Lord and in conformity to what God's Word requires -- whether or not she sees him worthy of receiving it or not. Living as a godly wife wed to an ungodly man will prove to be difficult yet the Lord is gracious to walk with you every step of the way, to strengthen you daily with His sufficient grace, and to provide adequate help from His Word to minister to your soul in times of loneliness and discouragement. All the while, you remember that Christ your faithful and heavenly Bridegroom is the One who serve with joy, with gladness, with hope as you rest in His love, triumph in His grace, and hope for His return!

For Christian wives who are married to godly men, this eBook will serve to remind you of biblical truths and encourage you to serve Christ and obey Scripture for a God-glorifying marriage as you submit to and follow your husband. And all this can be done as an act of worship to your heavenly Father! May God help you and equip you so that you will be transformed by His love, encouraged by His mercies, and riveted to His saving gospel! To God be the glory.

1. Submitting.

I suppose there may be no more controversial word in modern times than "submission." But thankfully we walk by faith, not by sight. Our marching orders come from the clear revelation of God in the Bible and not by men's opinions that can be located online. If one were to simply scan society today, one would need not look very long before understanding that the wife's duty to submit in the marriage relationship for God's glory and for *her joy* seems to be forgotten. Actually, it's willfully rejected and arrogantly trashed as nonsense and some even go so far as to suggest that submission is harmful for females. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Submission actually is a wonderful concept that *all people* are called to. All Christians are commanded to *submit* to God (James 4:7). All Christians are called to *submit* to their church leaders and to obey them (Heb 13:17). Christians are all called to *submit* to authorities in government (Rom 13; 1 Pet 2:13). So submission is not a *bad thing* in and of itself. It's not evil. It's not harmful. It's not bad. It's not given by God to make life miserable. Rather, just as there are different role and distinctions that we all understand, submission is a given. For instance, in the workplace, the boss leads and the employees are to follow the instructions of the leadership. Even in the Trinity there is various

distinctions in role and function: “Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ” (1 Cor 11:3). The idea of “head” or “headship” signifies *authority*. It’s not a bad thing. There is authority in the workplace. There is authority in government. There is authority in the local church. So there is authority in the home. This does *not* mean the wife is less important or to be looked down upon! While remaining equal in person, worth, and dignity, there are still *differences* in role and function and responsibility that exist. And that’s where submission comes in when dealing with the marriage. In the Bible, God calls the wife to submit to her husband.

God says: wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord (Eph 5:22). Elsewhere, God says: wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord (Col 3:18). Submission is commanded by God of all Christian wives to their husbands.

Submit WORSHIPFULLY. The glorious way that God describes a woman’s role to submit is so profound. It’s far deeper than sheer *obedience*. Submission is not synonymous with *obedience* or just “getting the job done.” Anyone could force someone to obey, I suppose. But submission, at its very fundamental level, is a *heart disposition*. One could obey and hate it. But one could never biblically submit *while the heart is fuming or bitter inside*. That’s called hypocrisy and that’s not what God calls us to. So, Christian women are to submit -- and they are to do it “as to the Lord” (Eph 5:22). Amazingly, this catapults the realm of submission into the realm of *worship*. The way that a wife submits to her husband is to be the way that she *submits to the Lord*. She should do so willingly, heartfully, joyfully, happily, patiently, prayerfully, and hopefully. She should submit with a glad heart, a thankful heart, and a trusting heart. Only women who have been saved by God’s grace can do this, however. It’s *wrong* to assume that God’s standards for a Christian marriage can be expected in a marriage between unbelievers. But when God has transformed the soul, and regenerated the heart, and given His Spirit to reside within the believer, now that woman *can* -- is able to! -- submit to her husband in a worshipful disposition as if she would be submitting to her Savior and Lord!

Submit UNCONDITIONALLY. “I’ll submit *if you only...*” No! The Bible knows no conditions! The only exception that the Bible provides for *not* submitting to government, church leaders, or a husband is if you are demanded to specifically sin against Scripture. In such a case (and only in such a case), the godly wife must choose to obey God rather than men. But preferences, or opinions, or feelings, or emotions don’t constitute as biblical reasons to *not* submit to one’s husband. Wives, God calls you to submit to your husbands. This is fitting in the Lord. It is well pleasing to Him. There are no exception clauses. First Peter chapter 3 even has biblical counsel for godly wives who are married to unbelieving husbands -- even, *very harsh, very unreasonable, very ungodly, very foolish* husbands -- and the counsel God gives is for wives to “be submissive” to your own husbands (1 Pet 3:1). This requires daily taking up one’s cross, following after Christ, and doing what He says -- for His glory, trusting in His plan, and relying on His power.

Submit HEARTFULLY. Make it your ambition to submit to your husband with a *happy heart that trusts that God’s ways are best*. That way, if you relate to your husband and submit to him with this on your heart and mind, you will submit even in the tough and difficult times. And even in those times when you don’t feel as though he *deserves it*, remember that you submit to your husband *with a heart that trusts in God, in His Word, and in the reality that there is great satisfaction* found in obeying God rather than doing what seems easy in the moment. To submit heartfully means that our inner man -- our heart, our mind, our thought patterns, our inner person -- must be *daily transformed* by Scripture so that the way that we think, the way that we respond, the way that we communicate, and the way that we conduct ourselves is guided by, governed by, and guarded by God’s Word. The more that you immerse yourself in Scripture, the more you will do what God calls you to do in the specific role in which He has put upon you -- and

you'll do it with all your heart. Remember the Apostle Paul said that whatever you do in word or deed, do ALL in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father (Col 3:17). And a bit later, Paul also said: "Whatever you do, do your work *heartily*, as for the Lord rather than for men" (Col 3:23). True submission is a *heart disposition* that follows God's design for you in the marriage context as you ultimately serve your heavenly Lord and Master! *This* is the path of true and lasting and fulfilling joy.

Submit JOYFULLY. Submit joyfully. It's easy, a wife may say, to submit to a Godly husband. But remember, there are no perfect husbands in this world and the joy comes not in what *seems easiest* or what *appears to be the most fun* or what brings the most *immediate gratification*, but joy comes in a settled, unshakeable disposition and conviction that God is for my good and that God remains in control in and through all things -- for His glory. *That* is why you can have joy even when you submit to an imperfect man. God is in control and is sovereignly and *providentially* working all His preordained plan out according to His purposes in you, through you, and in your marriage! Rejoice in this! After all, God calls us to rejoice always! Don't be worried and don't be fearful! Trust in God and believe in Him! Don't be anxious but be prayerful. Cast yourself entirely and daily upon Him. Joyfully rest in His *character* as you seek to obey His commands. He will honor that and reward you on that final day! Submit with a satisfied joy!

Biblical submission is a God-graced duty for all Christian women to place themselves under the authority of their husbands. It is a willful, a deliberate, a daily, a trusting, and a joyful following of God's ways regardless of how one may *feel* in the moment because we as Christians must live by what we *know to be true* and never by what we're *feeling in the moment*. Emotions are never solid grounds to determine how or what we are to think or do. May God equip and help Christian wives to submit to their husbands with happy hearts and with a worshipful attitude -- for His glory!

2. Following.

The Bible presents Ruth as a woman who followed those who were put into her life to lead her. A touching example comes from Ruth's mouth when she said to Naomi: "where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge, and your people will be my people, and your God shall be my God" (Ruth 1:16). Her submissive, tender heart that willingly follows Naomi models what a Godly wife's attitude should be toward her husband -- the authority that God has placed in her life.

A wife is not called to lead. The husband is the head of the wife (Eph 5:23). This means that the husband is the authority, the leader and God's creative design is for the husband and the wife to complement one another as they fulfill their God-given and gloriously-designed roles for the glory of God, in obedience to His Word, and for the enjoyment of marriage. Quite simply: the path of joy for a Christian wife is to follow the lead of the husband. So, how should a godly wife *follow* her husband?

A Christian wife must follow *obediently*. When God says in Ephesians 5 that wives must be subject to their husbands in everything (Eph 5:24) it is a command that wives should follow the lead of their husbands for he is the God-appointed head over her and God has called him to lead just as Christ is the head, the Savior of the body (Eph 5:23). So as wives follow the lead of their husbands, they do so obediently, willfully, joyfully, and out of a worshipful disposition of the heart. Just as Christ calls His followers to "follow me" so also should wives be those who follow

their earthly head, their husbands. In following the lead of the husband, the wife is fulfilling her God-given role that He has given to her for her good and for her joy.

A Christian wife must follow **respectfully**. It is far too common for husbands and wives to complain about their spouses when with other people. To be sure, it's far easier to talk *about* people than to talk *to* people. But as the husband leads (whether he's a Christian or not and whether he makes a good decision in your estimation or not), God calls Christian wives to respect their husbands. That means that as you follow him, serve him, follow him, help him, and complete him, that you do so in a *respectful* way and in a constructive manner. To belittle him, to be cynical, to assume the worst (or, assume the worst in his motives!), or to trample on his ideas is not following the man that God has put into your life to lead you and to provide for you. Again, whether he deserves it or not (in your opinion) or whether he is fulfilling his duties as a man is irrelevant at this point, God still calls Christian wives to respect their husbands and submit to them in everything.

A Christian wife must follow **comprehensively**. That little phrase: "in everything" just seems so overwhelming and so sweeping. But the Apostle Paul does say it: Wives are to submit in everything (Eph 5:24). Why? Because as the wife fulfills her duty in this way she is doing what is fitting in the Lord (Col 3:18). Of course, a godly wife can offer biblical counsel or helpful feedback or insightful comments that pertain to a given situation, possibility, or decision to be made, but in the end, let each Godly woman know that she will be held responsible *not so much for the outcome of the event* but for the *way in which* she submitted to her husband in everything. Thus, may the Lord so equip and empower Christian wives to follow their husbands comprehensively -- with an indomitable, unshakeable, and heart-sourced joy.

A Christian wife must follow **poignantly**. What does this mean? It is a very poignant and powerful picture of the gospel when a wife follows her husband. After all, this is what Christ calls all of His followers to do. Repeatedly Christ says: "Follow me" to people in his ministry. Remember how in the Old Testament Sarah followed her husband, Abraham, even calling him "lord" (1 Pet 3.6) -- and this is seen as a wonderful example and template for Christian wives. Peter says that the way Christian wives submit to their own husbands -- *even to those who are disobedient to the Word; i.e., nonbelievers* -- functions as a powerful way to possibly win the husbands to Christ through the chaste and respectful behavior of the godly wife (1 Pet 3:1-2). May the way a Christian wife follows the lead of her husband serve as a poignant demonstration of the gospel for all who watch and for all with whom she communicates -- so that Christ may be exalted, so that the marriage institution may be honored, and so that she may honor her Savior.

3. Affirming.

Isaiah 35:3 speaks of encouraging the exhausted and strengthening the feeble. The Apostle Paul speaks to all believers and says to encourage one another (1 Thess 5:11). Especially those who are fainthearted (=little-souled; i.e., weak), Christians must strive to encourage them (1 Thess 5:14). So frequently should this occur that the author to the Hebrews says to encourage one another "day after day" (Heb 3:13).

Don't forget the power of words. Remember: "death and life are in the power of the tongue" (Prov 18:21). You can greatly bless your husband as you affirm in him what you see God doing in him and through him. You may wonder if

you can even find *anything* affirming. But every wife can recognize character traits in her husband (whether he's a believer or not!) that come from God. And seek to be faithful in affirming him in these encouraging ways.

Affirm how GOD's character is being shown. The first way that you as a godly wife can bless your husband in this way is to affirm how God's character comes is manifested in your husband. For instance, he may serve you in a particular way (e.g., he works and has an income and provides for the family) and you can affirm how he serves the family. You may choose to affirm how he is compassionate toward you and the children (or, maybe he responds with patience, tenderness). You could encourage him in his resolve to protect your family (just as God protects all of His own). All of these serves as examples to help you think about how you can encourage your husband by affirming how he manifests God's character (though imperfectly) in his life. You could even affirm his personality and his uniqueness and how God made him in His very own image.

Affirm how GOD's gospel is being adorned. The gospel of grace is a gospel of love. It is a work of undeserved, lavish, unmerited love. Perhaps your husband has expressed love toward you in many ways. Maybe he has done things for you that were lavish, undeserved, and unasked for. How can you affirm how God's gospel is being visibly shown and wondrously adorned through his actions.

Affirm how you're encouraged through their service. Consider how your husband serves you. Maybe he takes the trash out. Maybe he takes the cars into the shop for the maintenance (or maybe he himself does your oil changes!). Maybe he opens the door for you. He may work full time to provide for you and the family. Maybe he does yard work or house work. You can encourage him by specifically and intentionally pointing out ways that he has served you and the family. Think hard and be specific. The more specific and particular you can be in these affirming remarks, the more encouraged your husband will be!

Affirm how you observe GROWTH in them by God's preserving grace. Christian wives, think about your husband and his growth over the years of your marriage. Think about how he has grown in his walk with God, his love for you, his understanding of you, and his care about the things in the home. It may be, dear godly wives, that you find yourself married to a very difficult man who has no regard whatsoever for the things of Christ and he has no concern for the gospel. You can still find ways to affirm him in his growth in your marriage through the years. Find general ways of growth (care for the yard, knowledge of his vocational work, intentionality with the kids, building and cultivating relationships with the children, etc.) and affirm him in his growth -- and remind him that these all take place because of God's wondrous grace in the lives of His creatures. And if you have a godly husband who is pursuing Christ, you can specifically pinpoint ways that he has grown (in his leading in family worship, in his prayer in the home, his knowledge of Scripture) and you can verbalize those to him in an affirming, God-centered, Christ-exalting way.

4. Respecting.

Proverbs 12:4 says that an excellent wife is the crown of her husband. May God help Christian wives to be excellent, respectful, biblical wives as they relate to their husbands. The Apostle Paul calls all wives to respect their husbands

(Eph 5:33). This incorporates an element that is most urgently needed in our day and an aspect of marriage life that distinguishes Christian marriage from that of nonbelievers.

1. Respect the **POSITION** of your husband.

Whether or not you think your husband *deserves* to be respected, remember that God calls you to respect Him as your husband. He is called to be the leader of the home and the head over you as his wife -- just as Christ is the Head over His Bride, the Church (Eph 5:22-24). Thus, Christian wives are to respect the position of headship in which God has placed their husbands. Respect him as the leader, as the primary provider, as the one who is to protect and lead and guide the family. Respect the one that God has wisely and sovereignly placed into your life as your leader and head.

2) Respect the **DECISIONS** of your husband.

Part of the duties that God has placed upon your husband is to be the primary decision maker. That means that you cannot fight with him to *get your way*. Of course, Godly wives should give their input, their counsel, and their advice -- with the right tone, in the right manner, at the right moment, with much grace and humility. But let Christian wives remember that God has given the husband to be the one who makes the primary decisions in serving the family and in doing what's best for the family. Even if you may disagree with what he did or how he made a decision, *actively and intentionally choose* to honor God and obey His Word and respect your husband rather than growing bitter. If an unwise decision was made, let your role be to provide biblical counsel and insight (as appropriate and in the right moments) and then to honor Christ and follow your husband's lead.

3) Respect him in your **COMMUNICATIONS** with others.

Tragically, the way that some professing Christian women communicate on social media or on break with co-workers or on lunch with business associates can be a tragic representation of a Christian marriage. How do you speak to others regarding your husband? Do you respect him when he's not there? What is the perception you give to others about your husband in the way that you describe him and speak of him? Is it evident to others -- especially nonbelievers! -- that you are a gentle, caring, submissive wife who follows the lead of your husband as the God-appointed leader of your home? Please be on guard that you don't speak evil about him when he's absent while speaking kindly about him when he's with you. That's hypocrisy and living a double life. Remain a woman of integrity and guard your lips, your conversations, your heart, and your attitude toward your husband. And be careful that you speak well of him to others. The principle of Ecclesiastes 10:12 applies to how you speak of him: "in your bedchamber do not curse a king, and in your sleeping rooms do not curse a rich man, for a bird of the heavens will carry the sound and the winged creature will make the matter known."

4) Respect him in the **PRIVACY** of your own heart.

The way to guard how you talk *about* your husband in public is to guard how you *think* about him in your heart. What comes out of the mouth (in communications) is just an outflow of what has already existed in the heart to begin with (Matt 12:34). Even the biblical nature of submission is that heart-disposition which flows from within that is very different than just sheer obedience. One may obey another out of fear and anger. But one can only submit with a loving and genuine heart-attitude that is genuinely wanting to please God in the matter. So Christian wives should strive to respect and honor their husbands in the quietness of their own hearts. This means that Godly women should not drudge up past faults, sit and ponder all the failures and recount them continually, or grow in bitterness and resentment. But women of God must be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger. And Godly women must remember to make it their ambition to be pleasing to God in all things (2 Cor 5:9) knowing that God will hold them accountable for how they have acted and conducted themselves as wives. May the Lord help women of the Word to respect their husbands with a quiet, gentle, tender, and genuine trust in the Lord and resolve to obey His Word.

5. Speaking Well Of.

Little do we sometimes realize how powerful our words really are. To speak biblical truth is commanded and to speak edifying words is what Christ calls us to do (Eph 4:29). Indeed, a soothing tongue is a tree of life (Prov 15.4). Also, death and life are in the power of the tongue (Prov 18.21). The Apostle Peter said that the one who desires life to love and see good days must keep his tongue from evil (1 Pet 3.10). This is a brief exhortation to godly wives to speak well of your husband.

1. Speak well of your husband IN YOUR HEART.

Words begin in the heart. The source of our communication is our heart. The mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart (Matt 12:34). Christ calls us to speak well of and think well of each other *in our hearts*. We are not to hold bitterness or harbor resentment or keep a record of sins at all in relationships -- especially in the marriage! Christian wives, as you think of your husband, speak well of him in your heart. Don't rehearse his failings and his faults and his missteps and his inadequacies over and over and over. For this will lead to resentment, bitterness, anger, and conflict. Choose to obey God and consider him in high esteem.

2. Speak well of your husband TO HIM.

An excellent wife is the crown of her husband (Prov 12.4). It goes on to say that she who shames him is like rottenness in his bones (Prov 12.4b). The contentions of a wife are a constant dripping (Prov 19.13). But may you, dear godly wives, speak well of him so as to encourage him and build him up. Let your speech be seasoned with salt and tasteful. Let your words be seasoned, full of joy, and full of encouragement. You are to respect your husband (Eph 5.33) and you are to encourage one another (1 Thess 5.11).

3. Speak well of your husband TO THE CHILDREN.

Be careful how you speak about your spouse to your children. After all, you teach your children even in the way that you speak *about* your husband (when he's not around, especially!). Much in childrearing is caught more than taught. So be sure that you speak in beneficial, helpful, loving, tender, submissive ways *about* your husband when your children are around. For you can know that your daughters will grow to speak about their husbands the way that they see you speaking about your husband. You teach by what you say. Speak well of him and what he does. Speak well of his efforts and his labors. Speak well of his desires and his goals. Speak well of his appearance and his personality.

4. Speak well of your husband TO THE LOST.

Remember, Christian wives, that as you have conversations with neighbors, friends from the gym, people at work, or people at the playground that there are many nonbelievers have mediocre marriages. Show them, by the way that you speak about your husband, that your marriage is distinct, unique, and different. Provoke them to jealousy in that your marriage is one that is full of edifying speech, joyful communication, and Christ-like and selfless love. Don't fall into the habit of outdoing others in speaking negative words about those you live with (especially your husband). You are still to respect and honor your husband even when he's not there. And imagine the difference it'll make when you *choose* to speak well about your husband to women who may be gathered who are speaking *negative* things about their husbands. May Christ give you sufficient grace to do this for His glory and for the advance of His gospel.

5. Speak well of your husband TO OTHER BELIEVERS.

Guard how you speak of him when you find yourself fellowshiping with other ladies. If you need prayer for a particular item in your marriage, then mention it with care and with precision but ensure that you do not slander your husband or bring shame upon his character in presenting even a “prayer request.” Be thoughtful and be wise about how you communicate about him with other believers.

6. Speak well of your husband ON SOCIAL MEDIA.

Guard your appearance on social media. Guard your pictures and your comments. Guard your remarks and guard your videos. Make sure that there is one thing that everyone can be sure of as they surf your social media page: “this is a woman who really loves and cherishes her husband.” Could that be said of you?

6. Working Hard at Home.

Our egalitarian-driven society, which calls for equal rights among all, has so bombarded us that it’s normal for men and women to *both* work outside the home while the children have childcare of some sort. Gone are the days when the norm comprised of a man who worked outside of the home and the woman who worked in the home and cared for and nurtured the children as her *primary* role. Of course, many suggest at this point that times are different and the cost of living is higher and things are just “different” in our culture. But I’d like to make the biblical base that the godly wife is find her primary work environment *in the home* keeping the house, caring for the children, and preparing for hospitality and service. The home is her ministry headquarters and she is the queen of the home to use it for gospel service and for it to be a warm, inviting and comfortable environment for her husband and family.

Here are a few thoughts as I spell this out in greater detail.

1) Godly wives are to **KEEP THE HOUSE**. First Timothy 5:14 speaks of younger widows who are to get married, to bear children, to keep house, and give the enemy no occasion for reproach. She is to “keep house” which literally is the idea of being the one who ‘runs the household.’ Very practically, while the husband is gone much of the day at work, she is the one who runs the home. She is in charge during the day. She is the authority in her husband’s absence. Godly wives must recover this mentality that they are to be those who run the house during the day and rule the household as their *primary* environment of work, labor, and daily service.

2) Godly wives are to **BE WORKERS IN THE HOME**. Titus 2:3-5 speaks to older women encouraging and discipling younger women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored (v.5). The word in the Greek language for “workers at home” refers to one who is a hard worker in the home. She is busy at home. She is a laborious carer for the home. Quite simply: God tells older women to exhort younger women to love their husbands and to love their children and to be *faithful, hard, diligent and busy workers* in their homes. This is the primary place that God has called married women to serve in. They are not to neglect this to work outside the home. This is God’s gracious and wise design for Christian women who are married.

3) Godly wives are to **WORK HARD WITH HER OWN HANDS IN DELIGHT**. Proverbs 31:13 speaks of the excellent wife who works with her hands in delight. Here is the godly wife who is a worker with her own hands in the home. She does such work *with delight*. She doesn't hold a grudge and angrily resent where God has placed her but the excellent wife does this wonderful work as receiving this wonderful calling on her life from God. And thus, the godly woman does her work with delight and satisfaction.

4) Godly wives are to **DIE TO SELF TO SERVE THE FAMILY**. Proverbs 31:14-15 again speaks of the excellent wife who works hard to provide food for the family and she even rises early while it's still night and give food to her household (v.15). The godly woman is a worker in the home in that she goes to bed late because she's been serving, cleaning, ministering to her husband, and spending quality time with him and with the children. And then, she often is one of the first to arise in the mornings as a woman who has died to self to serve the family with joy -- even if that means rising *while it's still dark outside* to serve Christ by fulfilling her God-given duties!

5) Godly wives are to **MAKE THE HOME A PLACE OF MINISTRY**. Proverbs 31:20 speaks of the excellent wife who stretches out her hands to the needy and provides for their needs. She actively sends out her hands -- she stretches them out by physical exertion and great effort -- to serve and care for the needy. Perhaps there are those with needs in your neighborhood, or in your church, or in your school, or in your city and you, as a godly wife, seek to make your home a place where you work and labor hard to provide for those in need. How can you open your home for the benefit of others and incorporate your home as a base for your ministry to the Lord and to His people?

6) Godly wives are **STRONG AND DIGNIFIED AND FULLY TRUSTING**. Again, the excellent wife in Proverbs 31 is one who is described as being a woman of strength and dignity and one who smiles at the future (v.25). The woman of God is one who is described, like the excellent wife in our text, as having strength and dignity. She's a woman with might and majesty. She's a woman of strength and integrity. She fully trusts her God and her husband and can smile at the future as she rests fully in her hard work, her faithful service, and in the kind providence of her loving heavenly Father. Do you find yourself being described in these verses? Are you a woman of biblical strength? A woman of great dignity? Are you fully trusting the Lord that you can smile at the many uncertainties in the future? May the Lord so graciously help and enable and grace you to be a Godly wife who is a worker at home, God's primary place of ministry for you, all for His praise and glory!

7. Teaching Children & Grandchildren.

Timothy's mother and grandmother had sincere faith and undoubtedly instructed him in godliness from a very early age. In fact, 2 Timothy 3:15 says that from his *nursing days* he knew the sacred writings which were able to give him the wisdom that led to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. That is to say, Timothy's mother and grandmother taught him biblical truth even from the nursing years. Remember King Lemuel who was taught by his mother (Prov 31:1). Let godly wives never underestimate the power of teaching God's Word to their children. And let grandparents never underestimate the power of the Scripture when pressing it home upon the hearts of the grandchildren. The Bible clearly presents a pattern of godly parents teaching biblical truth and instructing truth to children. Indeed, Psalm 78 says that this must be done so that the children we have can tell to the next generation to

put their confidence in God (Ps 78:6-7). Let all parents and grandparents carefully heed these examples and seek, by God's grace, to do likewise.

1) Teach Scripture Daily. Moses commanded the people of Israel to teach God's words *diligently* to their children -- even when lying down and rising up, when at home and when traveling (Deut 6:6-9). May godly mothers carefully receive and diligently apply the truths set forth in the Old Testament and the command in Eph 6:4 to bring up their children in the discipline and *instruction* of the Lord. Godly wives, make it your priority if God has graced you with children in the home to *teach* biblical truths to them *every single day*. Like a little water that is added over the course of time, a small tree will grow into a mighty and unshakeable oak tree. So it is with God's Word. May you instruct your children's hearts with God's truth so that the doctrines of the Bible will sink deep into their minds and guide them all through life. From the youngest of ages, teach your children Scripture -- teach them about God, man, sin, Christ, the Spirit, the gospel, faith, repentance, the Church, and eternity.

2) Teach Godliness Practically. Godly wives, live out Christian piety in the home so that your children can see you. Don't be a Christian just for the sole purpose of being seen and noticed by your children. But you should live out your Christian life in such a way that the doctrine you verbalize is enlashed by your conduct. Your instruction should be preached by your lifestyle every day. As a Christian wife, show your children self control, the sufficiency of the Word, the importance and centrality of the local church, the need to pray for the unsaved around you, the joy of walking with Christ, and the priority of prayer. All that you teach with your mouth, preach with your life. Enlashed your instruction.

3) Teach Prayer Continually. Godly wives, you have the greatest weapon in the history of mankind always and ever at your disposal -- prayer. You can storm the mercy seat of the great King of heaven and earth and plead your petitions before Him in the name of Christ! So go often! Go frequently! Go humbly! Go desperately! Go persistently! Have your children obeyed you? Then go together to God's throne and give thanks! Have they sinned by lying? Then go to God in humble repentance and beg for forgiveness. Have *you* sinned against them? Then seek their forgiveness and pray together. Is there a magnificent storm outside? Then worship God and extol His mighty power together! Teach prayer often and regularly. Teach different kinds of prayer, mothers. Teach your children to not only ask things of God but also to adore God for *who He is*. Teach your children to thank God for what He's done and to praise Him for all His promises. Teach your children to pray for the lost and to beg God for the advancement of the gospel among the nations! Teach it, model it, and then actually do it. Pray together.

4) Teach Repentance Carefully. Godly wives, the more you grow in Christ the more you'll see your sin. The heart-desires you have that control you at times, the anger that may come out, the selfishness that may manifest itself in various ways. So repent to God and repent to those whom you have offended. And let your children see this and hear this and join in with you in this. Godly moms, never underestimate the power of *modeling* repentance and contrition before the Lord. Show them that God is the holy God of the universe but also a merciful God to penitent sinners!

5) Teach Humility Preeminently. Be careful, Christian wives, how you present yourself. Guard your attitude! Guard how you talk about others and how you respond to others. Guard from pride! Set the example in instructing your children that humility is *always* better than pride. Pride is Satan's way and humility is God's way. Seek to teach this verbally and to live it out practically. Humility must be preeminent in your teaching. Show this as you relate to your husband, as you pray for other church members, as you go with your children to serve the needy and care for the helpless in the church. Teach and model humility as it is ultimately found in the Lord Jesus Christ and His gospel!

6) Teach Theology Widely. While your husband is away at work, make it a point to be the resident-teacher to download God's truth from His Word into the hearts of your children. This requires, godly wives, that you will first learn and study theology on your own so you can then impart it to your children. Never underestimate the importance of teaching theology and a biblical worldview. Teach theology in such a way that *everything* -- yes, every single thing -- is viewed through the purview of God's sufficient Word. Teach them the attributes and person of God. Teach them about the depravity and wretchedness of all mankind. Teach them about God's sovereign work in sending Christ to make propitiation for the sins of His people. Teach them about the Spirit who regenerates, sanctifies, and seals us for glory. Teach them about the beauty and necessity and involvement in the local church. Teach them about future things such as heaven, hell, the last judgment and the nearness of death.

7) Teach Submission Visually. As your children see you, Christian wives, submitting to your husband, you will actually be teaching your daughters not only how they should submit to their husbands (or showing your sons the kind of wives they want to find and marry) but you also will be modeling how all believers should be submitting to Christ Jesus. After all, the way a wife submits to her husband is to be a picture of how the church submits to Christ. So never underestimate the power of a submissive attitude as you honor your husband, respect him, speak well about him, do what he says, follow his leadership, and worship God in seeking to complete and bless him as your companion. This kind of godly attitude and conduct in your marriage relationship will teach submission visually for your children.

8. Discipling Others.

As a Christian wife, God blesses you with the privilege of investing in other souls as others have invested in you. As you receive God's Word in your daily study of Scripture, as you hear God's Word preached from the pulpit week after week, and as you hear God's Word read in the context of your home in family devotions or in bible reading with your husband, now God graces you with the joy of pouring what you've received into others.

So, be discipled and mentored. Be instructed and taught. Be submissive to your husband and allow him to read with you, read to you, teach you, and engage in dialogue about God and His Word together. But do not forget that you also have the wonderful opportunity to disciple others as well.

How can you disciple others? Here are five pastoral suggestions for Christian wives to consider.

1) Disciple in the home. A disciple means that one is a follower of Christ. To disciple in the home means that you follow Christ and plead with others to follow Christ together with you. You as a Christian wife may have children and you can disciple them in the context of your own home. You don't need a big, flourishing ministry at church to "do discipleship." Start where you are right in your home with those that God has entrusted under your care. Disciple your children toward Christ and show them, teach them, instruct them, and admonish them in the joy of following Christ!

2) Disciple on the go. You may need to go to the grocery store and perhaps you could take someone with you. You may be taking a meal to a family in your church that just had a baby so you may choose to take someone along with you. Disciple as you go may include bringing another Christian woman along with you as you go through the normal day to day activities. Perhaps you as a Christian wife are going to another younger mom's home for an hour to

encourage her while her children nap. Consider taking another woman from the church to join you for this fellowship, encouragement, and prayer. And ask good questions as you travel and talk together. Speak of Christ and of His gospel. Marvel at His grace and of His works! Discipleship doesn't have to be a bunch of additional hour-long appointments. If you think and plan wisely, it could be done as you do the normal routine in your life as you bring another lady along with you in those duties.

3) Disciple when you gather (with believers at Sunday). Think of gathering with the family of God as opportunities for you to serve others. After all, we are to build up one another and we are to edify one another constantly. You may be primarily tied to the home as a Christian wife if you have smaller children. There's nothing wrong with that. But refuse to fall into the thinking that you're just not *able* to serve in the church because you're too busy at home. Consider making Sunday a place where you intentionally and thoughtfully approach one person and initiate a Christ-centered conversation with them before or after worship. It may not be a planned gathering at Starbucks, but make no mistake, a Christ-centered conversation that advances holiness and stimulates thinking on Christ and on Scripture is discipleship! What if God graciously raised up 10 Christian women to reach out to 10 women at Church for this kind of verbal encouragement and discipleship ministry! May God use you to encourage others in your local church.

4) Disciple a woman in your church. Maybe you are a godly wife are in a season of life where you're retired. Or perhaps the children have all moved out. It may be that your children are old enough and they're all in school. Or, perhaps you're married with no children yet. You can be a godly woman who discipled others by initiating a discipleship relationship with another woman (or two!) from your local church. Find a time and place that works. Pick a book of the Bible to read through together (e.g., Titus, Philippians, James, Romans). Talk through it little by little and apply it specifically. Pray for one another. You may even have small children and unable to get out of the home much of the week. But perhaps you could do it early on a Saturday morning while your husband is with the children and you gather with some ladies early for study of the Word and fellowship. The point of all this? To grow together with others and follow Christ *together* as the family of believers.

5) Disciple with much creativity. Let us not try to fit every form of discipleship into a cookie-cutter form that can't be creative or adapted to your schedule. For instance, don't underestimate the importance and encouragement of letter writing. Perhaps you are gifted in this and you love making, designing, and writing cards. So do this. And encourage women in the church regularly through this form of stimulating them toward Christlikeness. Or you may have time to make phone calls to ladies and share a Scripture with them from time to time and to pray together. May the Lord help you to be thoughtful, creative, intentional, and proactive in your pursuits of discipling others as a woman of God and as a follower of Jesus Christ.

9. Praying.

Prayer is the mightiest weapon that God has given to us as children of God. Christian wife, whatever marriage situation you find yourself in, remember that God's glory is on display and He never withholds anything good from those who walk uprightly. So keep walking in holiness. Keep it your ambition to be pleasing to Christ in all respects. And resolve to walk in God's ways and to obey His Word rather than to succumb to feelings and emotionalism. You may be married to Haman-like man or you may have a Holy Gentleman, Christian wife, resolve to be a woman of prayer. Mighty prayer prevails. Fervent prayer prevails. Honest prayer prevails. Hannah was a woman who knew this

by experience. How can you be a Christian wife who glorifies Christ in a maximal way? Remember to give prayer a priority place and maintain it as a daily duty.

1. Pray Early. You may be a working woman with a full-time job. You may be a retired lady with grandchildren that you help provide care for. You may be a young mother raising children in the home. Whatever season of life you're in, dear Christian wife, prioritize prayer. Rise early to meet with God. We do what we love the most and what brings great pleasure. The glorious God of the galaxies and the Lord of the ages invites you to meet with Him and commit all your ways to Him. Before you start nursing or before you drive to work or before you go to the gym or meet with those ladies, seek to remember this helpful maxim: meet with God first and find joy in Him before you begin your busy routine for the day. In a sense, we can do much after we've prayed but we can't really do much till we've prayed. So rise early, while it's still dark if needed, and seek the Lord of creation by calling upon His name and giving thanks to Him.

2. Pray Persistently. Jesus told a story of a persistent widow who came day after day to an unrighteous judge and pleaded her case. She persisted boldly and would not give up until her cause was heard and her cause was won. She prevailed! She persisted! And if an unrighteous judge who could care less for a helpless widow would finally give in to hear the request of a pitiful woman, *how much more* would the righteous and compassionate Father hear the pleas of His children and answer their requests! Godly wives, be women of prayer. Pray persistently for your children -- by name. Pray for their salvation, for their usefulness, for their holiness, for their perseverance, for their purity. Pray for your church. Pray for your neighbors. Pray for your nation. Pray for your leaders.

3. Pray Earnestly. Like Hannah, be women who pour out your souls to God in prayer. Pray as if everything in your day depended upon God hearing you and answering your specific requests. Pray with specificity. Pray with earnestness. Pray with boldness. Pray with urgency. Pray with humility and submission to the Father's will. But pray in such a way that you believe your prayers accomplish amazing things and that your prayers reach God and affect God and prompt God to do what may be humanly impossible. So pray earnestly and desperately. Maybe you need to pray for the closing of an abortion clinic around the corner. Maybe you need to pray for an unbelieving husband who is godless and blasphemous. Maybe you need to pray for prodigal children who currently live in worldliness and sin. Maybe you need to pray for revival in your church, in your city, in your country! Pray! Pray on! Pray earnestly!

4. Pray Biblically. Mary, the mother of Jesus, had a treasury of Scripture stored up in her heart. When the angel came to her and informed her that she would bear a child who would be the fulfillment of the Scriptures and bring redemption to His people, Mary responded with a bubbling forth of Scriptural praise! She was a woman who knew the Torah, the Prophets, and the Psalms. Undoubtedly she, as a righteous woman, was one who trusted God's Word, studied God's Word, memorized God's Word, and sought to pray God's Word. May you be encouraged to do likewise.

5. Pray Specifically. Perhaps you've heard the story of Charles Spurgeon and how, as a young teenager, he remembered walking in his home and standing outside his mother's bedroom door as she specifically, boldly, loudly, faithfully, and with tears, begged for God to save little Charles. Of course Spurgeon gave all glory to God in the work of Sovereign grace in his regeneration, he attributed his salvation to the prayers of his mother. She specifically prayed for him and for his salvation. And God heard her specific petitions. And he answered specifically. Do you pray specifically? What are you worried about? What are you fearful of? What gives you unrest in your heart and soul? Why are you nervous? What do you want or *need* to be in control of? What is it that tempts you? What is it that you want to be happy? Pray specifically to the Lord for His help, His grace, His protection, His power. And he will answer.

6. Pray Largely. God tells us to open our mouths wide and he will fill it (Ps 81.10). He tells us that he is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or even think (Eph 3.20-21). So pray big prayers. Consider: if God were to answer “YES” to your every prayer and actually give you *every thing* you prayed for, what would be different? Would the president be converted? Would all your neighbors be saved? Would your church be revived with swarms of new converts? Would your children all be regenerated and passionately following Christ and mightily used by Him for the advancement of His gospel? Would your church send out many new missionaries from within members of your flock? Pray big prayers! Pray largely! Pray in faith! Pray in confidence! See how God will answer your requests!

7. Pray Expectantly. When Jesus descended from the Mount of Transfiguration, the disciples attempted to cast a demon out of a young boy but they could not do it. And when the lamenting and desperate father approached Jesus, Jesus bewailed the pride of these men and told them that this can only be done in prayer (and fasting). Consider how important it is to pray and actually *believe* that God will hear and answer. Sometimes we pray but we aren’t alert in our praying and vigilant in expecting an answer! Paul told the Ephesians to be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints and to look for an answer. Be like Jacob who wrestled with the angel all night and expected that he would be heard and that his cause would be won. Submit to God’s sovereign decrees and at the same time, pray in humble, desperate faith knowing and expecting and anticipating that God will answer your prayers!

8. Pray Worshipfully. Like David who exemplified a man of worshipful prayer, pray as a worshiper! Be glad as a worshiper! Be mindful of God’s character and glory as you pray! Be humbled by His sovereign transcendence and His ever-present nearness as you pray! Be a worshiper and let your heart be full of awe and adoration as you exult in His great Name and gospel. Fill your heart with Scripture and respond with jubilant and prayerful praise. Christian wife, you have innumerable reasons to worship God in prayer! Consider the gospel by which you are saved! Think of the character of your triune God! Marvel at the intricate and incalculable creation God made and sustains! Glory in the church of Jesus Christ and all the myriads of saints of the ages that are saved by the blood of the Lamb! Worship! Pray! Rejoice! And give thanks!

10. Adorning.

Christian wives are to be women who follow God’s plan and purpose for adornment. This means that there must be an intentional and purposeful adorning of what is sacred in the Christian life. Godly wives, the Lord calls you to adorn yourself with proper clothing and to adorn the gospel with godliness. True beauty is not found primarily in external appearances but in the hidden beauty of the *heart*. Make it your primary ambition to be beautiful and to be attractive in adorning the gospel of God’s grace in the way that your Savior has laid before you. So, what does God’s Word say to you, Christian wives, about adornment? How can you do this to the honor and glory of Christ?

1) Adorn yourself with proper clothing (1 Tim 2.9). Paul gives very careful and needed words to all Christian women in 1 Timothy 2. Especially in the context of the local church and in worship -- and, of course, at all times -- God says that Christian women are to adorn themselves (beautify themselves) with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly -- not merely with externals (1 Tim 2.9). Ours is a culture that loves to flaunt clothing that reveals as

opposed to clothing that conceals. Yet God calls women to a higher and a greater calling. In the way that you present yourself physically -- in in your apparel -- adorn yourself beautifully with modest, proper, discreet clothing that does not draw attention to yourself, your body, or particular parts of your body. One of the great ways that Christian wives can adorn themselves is to honor God joyfully and internally from the heart even by the way that they present themselves by what they wear. Honor God with your clothing. Show yourself to be a blood-bought, Christ-exalting, respectable woman by the way that you modestly dress.

2) Adorn yourself with joyfilled submission (1 Pet 3.5). Another feature of godly adornment comes in the attitude of biblical submission for wives. Peter calls all women to submit to their husbands (1 Pet 3:1) and he reminds them of how godly women in the past adorned themselves with godliness and one of the ways they accomplished this was by living submissively to their husbands. That means that the *heart attitude* of submission -- joyful, consistent, doxological, obedient submission -- is one important way that Godly women can adorn themselves! Women who hope in God and place all their confidence in His power, His might, His sovereignty, and His goodness are those who adorn themselves the way that *God* wants them to be adorned rather than how culture presents adornment. God's way of adornment takes the marriage commitment and says that this is one of the ways that Christian wives adorn themselves so beautifully and marvelously and distinctively -- by joyfully, obediently, and consistently submitting to their own husbands, as to the Lord!

3) Adorn the gospel with godly womanhood (Titus 2.10). The Apostle Paul puts forth many words of exhortation to Christians for growing in grace and living in godliness amongst each other. God's people are to show all good faith and Christian women are to live this way so that -- with the purpose of -- adorning the doctrine of our God and Savior in every respect (Titus 2:10). That means that by the way that you live and conduct yourself *in the context of Christian community, discipleship, and love*, you adorn the gospel of our great God! We are to live in our God-given designs for us (whether a husband, wife, child, employer/employee, etc.) and seek to follow God and His pattern for us to such a degree that even by the way that we *live* out our calling in life, the great doctrine and knowledge of God our Savior will be adorned in every respect. To put it negatively, to refuse to follow God's prescription for your life and responsibilities is to present a muddled and unbiblical picture of godliness. Strive to live out your godly womanhood, the way God designed for you (cf. Titus 2:3-5) and in so doing, you adorn the gospel of grace, the God of all glory, and the power of a transformed life to a watching world that observes you as you live differently, by God's grace and by His power.

11. Fulfilling (Sexually).

A glorious part of the marriage covenant between one man and one woman is the happy delight of fulfilling one another sexually. Created by God and designed by Him and for His glory, a man must fulfill his duty to his wife to please her sexually and the wife must fulfill her duty to her husband to please him sexually. The Christ-given axiom is true: It is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35). How true that is in all of life including the sexual realm of the marriage relationship. This is a gloriously pure, God-given and blessed part of the marriage that the husband and wife are to enjoy frequently and, thus, by God's decree they are to be overwhelmingly intoxicated in their exclusive,

faithful and monogamous lovemaking. A wife has a duty given to her by God to fulfill her husband sexually. Here are some specific thoughts to help the godly wife in this.

1) You can worship God in fulfilling your husband.

The glory of biblical sexuality is that we go to the sufficient Word of God for help, guidance, direction & clarity. The Bible speaks of sex as an others-oriented fulfillment rather than a self-oriented fulfillment. God's design is for the biblical husband to serve his wife and minister to her needs and for the biblical wife to serve her husband and minister to his needs. Amazingly, worship in all of life even includes the sexual realm. In the marriage relationship, a duty of Christian wives is to recognize her glorious privilege to worship God in obeying him and serving her husband.

2) You can serve your husband by fulfilling him sexually.

One way that a biblical wife can serve her husband and minister to his needs is to fulfill her duty -- her obligation -- to him. His desires and his longings are to be verbalized to his wife and she is to seek to serve the Lord preeminently and one way that she can do this is by serving her husband by meeting his needs. The glory of the Christian worldview is that everything in life revolves around God and everything exists to bring Him great glory. The godly wife can and should fulfill his desires because she seeks to obey the Lord and place God's Word above her own feelings and desires.

3) You can protect your husband by fulfilling him sexually.

One way a godly wife can protect her husband is by seeking to fulfill him sexually. We recognize that sexual sin comes from the heart and so the husband would be guilty before the Lord of his own sexual sin but nevertheless the godly wife can seek to fulfill him sexually so that he is totally satisfied in his wife. The husband and the wife should both be so ravished with each other that they do not seek sexual satisfaction outside the marriage covenant. So, one part of the sexual relationship includes not only the fulfilling of each other sexually but also the protecting of each other by frequently drinking their fill of love within the context of the marriage covenant.

4) You remember that your body is not your own but your husband's.

These are the Apostle Paul's words. It is for all godly husbands and wives. The man's body belongs not to himself but to his wife. The wife's body is not her own but it is her husband's. This means that the one-flesh union in marriage meant death to your own self-will and body for your own pleasure and use. In marriage, you exist to serve your mate with your own body. The duty of the Christian wife is to understand that her body is not her own but now it is her husband's (and likewise his body is not his own but now is his wife's). This is the biblical reality of an others-centered life. You can seek to serve your husband with your body and to meet his desires and needs sexually.

5) You bear in mind that each spouse is to not withhold sexual pleasure from each other.

Sexual relations in a biblical marriage are to be regular and satisfying. Intimacy and sexual pleasure should be regularly enjoyed by the husband and the wife. Biblically, only one reason exists to refrain from sex and that is for the purpose of prayer -- and that is only for a season so that Satan does not overwhelm them with temptation. But other than this agreed-upon abstaining from sex for a specific period for the purpose of prayer, the marriage relations of intimacy should be enjoyed freely and indulged in regularly and cherished exclusively!

6) You remember that sexual intimacy is to be frequent, fulfilling, and intimate.

God designed sex to be the closest and most intimate of acts between a man and a woman. Even in the Garden of Eden the man and the woman were naked and were not ashamed as they were married, one flesh, and enjoying one another sexually. God has even given an entire book in the Bible -- Song of Solomon -- that extols the beauties of

God-given, frequent, exciting sex as an act of worship to the Lord. Proverbs tells us to be satisfied and intoxicated always with each other's love. Lovemaking must have the other person's needs and desires in mind first and the primary goal must be to please your spouse in being intimate together.

7) You remember that sex is a gift from God to enjoy in this life only that points us to the ultimate union we'll have with our heavenly Bridegroom forevermore!

God designed sex for a reason! As great and exciting as sex is, God designed it to point to a higher purpose and reality. The intimacy that a husband and a wife enjoy in the joys of sex points to a greater intimacy that Christ Jesus will have with His Bride on the final reunion day in the future! As a husband and a wife imbibe deeply in each other's love and intimate embrace, enjoying one of the closest acts that God has designed for a married people within covenant, so this points to a glorious embrace that Jesus and His people will enjoy as they enjoy each other forevermore in the glories and intimate delights of heaven.

12. Guarding.

One element of godly womanhood includes the duty of being on guard. Godly woman stand vigilant in guarding from their own hearts, from sinful temptations, her family and her own time management. He who watches his way preserves his life (Prov 16:17).

1. A wife is to be continually on guard. As a watchman vigilantly watches, so the godly wife must be continually on guard to guard against temptation, sin, defilements and the Devil. Never must the woman of God let her guard down and lessen her vigilance in watchfulness. The world continually assaults the godly, so the godly then must continually watch and be on the alert.

2. Guard her own heart. Gleaning from the counsel of the wise Solomon, the woman of God must guard her own heart for from it flow the springs of life. She strives to guard her own heart with all vigilance. As the mission control center of her life, as the place where the springs of her thoughts, words, and deeds all originate, the duty of Christian wives is to strive with all care to ensure purity in heart. The Bible looks for good behavior but the Bible is not *only* about behavior. The Bible gets much deeper to the *reason* and the *root* of all human behavior -- the internal workings of the human heart. This includes one's thoughts, motivations, desires, aspirations and ambitions. How vital it is for women of God to guard their own hearts. In so doing, they will keep the spring of life clean, pure and healthy.

3. Guard her own husband and his character. For a Christian woman who is married, she has an important duty to guard her own husband and his character. After all, as a married couple, they are one flesh so his character is her character and her character is his. But she is to fulfill her responsibility to guard her husband and to guard his character and ensure that she does not bring reproach upon him. She is to live and act and speak in such a way that she does him good and not evil all her days. The virtuous woman in Proverbs 31 does her husband good and not evil all the days of her life (Prov 31:12). The way she lives and speaks reflects on her husband and his reputation. Her appearance and the disposition of the wife will lead others to think a certain way about her husband. Thus, she must strive to be godly, faithful, holy and diligent in all her duties and responsibilities so as to honor her Savior and promote a good reputation to her husband and to his character.

4. Guard her own children. If the Christian wife has children in the home, then she must make it her foremost ambition not only to guard her own heart, her husband, but also her children. As the husband is away working, she is the primary keeper of the home throughout each day. She is to guard her children and protect them from all evil. Most importantly, she must embrace the high calling to train up and discipline the children in the Word of God and in the gospel of grace. When sin comes out, she must diagnose the heart and bring the gospel to the children constantly. She is to protect them from worldly influences that creep in. Furthermore, she must guard them from bad social relationships and from children who will influence them to do wickedly. The gloriously busy and noble calling of a godly mother is to be a diligent watchman over her children so as to nurture them in the truth and guard them from evil influences.

5. Guard her own home. The home is the woman's primary domain. She is to be a 'home-maker' and to be a worker at home. She must strive to present the home in such a way that it brings honor to her Lord and to her husband. She should make the home a welcoming and inviting environment for hospitality, for the church family, for her children, and most of all for her husband. She should seek to care for the home in such a way that the husband eagerly comes home at night after a long day at work. Her goal should be to create and cultivate a warm, Christ-like, inviting, and loving environment in the home where love is present, God is honored, holiness is pursued.

6. Guard her own time. The godly wife in the context of her home knows she must be always vigilant to live for eternity. She says with Jonathan Edwards, "Lord, stamp eternity on my eyeballs!" She closely clings to Paul's words in Ephesians to make the most of her time because the days are evil. She wants to number her days to present to God a heart of wisdom. She rises early as she devotes her mornings to the Lord in Bible reading and prayer. She knows the children will soon rise and the day will be full of busyness and energy with the children all awake but she prioritizes her morning time of communion with her Savior. She knows at night, after a long and busy day, she must cultivate unity and communicate honestly with her husband about the day. She wants to be a woman who wastes not a moment of time but redeems it for Christ and for eternity. She memorizes Scripture, she works hard in the home, she teaches and instructs the children, she loves her neighbors, and she prays for her church family. The duty of the Christian wife must be such that she is a vigilant, watchful woman who seeks to glorify Christ in all things that she does.

13. Forgiving.

Perhaps nothing more distinguishes the Christian as a child of God than the trait of being forgiving. Christian men and women must forgive one another as God in Christ has lavishly forgiven them. There is *never* an occasion where a true Christian should refuse forgiveness to another person who asks for it. Marriage proves to be one relationship that God has designed for many purposes, one of which is sanctification. When two sinners come together, conflict will ensue. And when sin has occurred, repentance for sin and forgiveness for restoration needs to take place. Husbands and wives both should be forgiving people. This will be the vital ingredient for a happy, holy, and joyous marriage of companionship that will endure through all the seasons of life. Christian wives must be forgiving.

1. She is to be forgiving AS A FORGIVEN ONE. A Christian is one who is forgiven of his sin. What God has accomplished through Jesus Christ includes the forgiveness of all of one's sins. The Christian wife must remember that as a redeemed daughter of God, she has been forgiven an infinite debt because of her sin through the substitutionary work of Christ the Savior. As a woman seeking to serve Christ, she should frequently reflect on the magnificent grace of God in covering her sin and casting the mountains of her sin into the depths of the sea. As a forgiven woman, she should be a forgiving woman. As a child of God forgiven and protected by Christ, she must give forgiveness to others when they sin against her regardless of the offense or injustice committed against her.

2. She is to be forgiving LAVISHLY. This godly woman is to forgive in a manner that is lavish and bounteous. She should be generous and eager to forgive just as Christ has lavishly forgiven her. Even if her husband has sinned in an egregious way or if he has consistently sinned in habitual ways, she should be always ready to forgive him when he comes to her and repents and asks for forgiveness -- even if he does so many times a day. Christ has lavished mercy and grace upon His people. So His people, then, must in turn be lavish in forgiveness toward others.

3. She is to be forgiving IMMEDIATELY. As the Lord most graciously and immediately forgives sinners the very instant they come to Him in genuine repentance and faith, so the godly wife must immediately lavish forgiveness upon those who repent and ask for it. She, as a woman of Christ, should never withhold forgiveness or refuse to forgive someone when they repent. As the Savior immediately forgives, so must she immediately forgive others.

4. She is to be forgiving as a GOSPEL PICTURE. A glorious picture of the gospel is the washing away of sin by the promise to pardon the guilty one. That is forgiveness. When God forgives He promises to pardon one's sins and He chooses to not bring it up again. This is a glorious promise of the gospel. When the Christian wife forgives others, she is modeling and presenting the gospel faithfully.

5. She is to be forgiving as a WITNESS TO UNBELIEVERS. Those who live outside of Christ have never experienced true forgiveness. The Christian must be willing to forgive. Indeed, she must be lavish and immediate in forgiving when sinners repent and ask for it. This serves as a glorious evangelistic tool to the lost as they have never seen this kind of forgiveness before. The world knows bitterness, apologies, resentment, grudges, and anger. But the gospel provides forgiveness -- full promises of pardon by the glorious and undeserved grace of God! The Christian woman who forgives her husband and children offers a wonderful evangelistic presentation to nonbelievers as she explains why she forgives them and how she can forgive (and keep forgiving them) for the offenses they've committed.

6. She is to be forgiving AND NEVER BRING THE OFFENSE UP AGAIN. It is a worthless man who digs up evil (Prov 16:27). A godly person who demonstrates true Christian love does not keep a record of wrongs (1 Cor 13:5). The Christian wife understands the glory of forgiveness as a promise of pardon. And entailed in this promise are three remarkable realities: she will not bring the offense up to others, she will not harbor the offense in her own heart, nor will she bring it up to the person repeatedly.

7. She is to be forgiving SO THAT HER PRAYERS WILL NOT BE HINDERED. Jesus said that when someone stands praying that he should forgive so that the Father in heaven will forgive him (Mark 11:25). An unforgiving heart means that prayers will not be heard and there will be a breach between the praying one and Jesus Christ. The godly woman willingly lavishes forgiveness upon her husband for his offenses and the children for their offenses (as repeated as continuous and hurtful as they may be) so that she can maintain a close walk with Jesus Christ the Lord.

8. She is to be forgiving and REFUSE TO HOLD ON TO THE OFFENSE AND SHE MUST NOT GROW BITTER. The godly wife absolutely refuses to hold on to an offense. She also will refuse to repay evil for evil. She will diligently put off all bitterness, rage, anger and clamor in her heart and replace that with kindness, forgiveness and love. How easy it is to hold a grudge and grow deep in bitterness and angry resentment, but the Christian wife strives to put off these sins and replace them with tenderness, humility and a Christlike disposition of love and forgiveness.

14. Worshiping.

At the end of the Bible, Christians are told to “Worship God!” (Revelation 22:9). Certainly the woman of God seeks to worship God in spirit and in Truth. She wants to respond to who God is from the fullness of her heart and according to the truthful witness of His Word. She longs to give her life for the glory of God and wants to spend and be spent for souls! She wants to eat, drink and do all that she puts her hand to for the glory of God and the magnification of His name. How does the Christian wife fulfill her God-given duty in being a worshiper?

1. She must be a worshiper in PRIVATE. The dutiful wife understands her preeminent responsibility to worship God as a *woman saved by grace* (that is, according to her identity of being a child of God). She knows and revels in the daily privilege of worshiping God in her own heart. Even amidst the busyness of life, driving the children back and forth, educating her children, counseling them in godliness and with all of the interactions with her husband, she must centralize her worship of God and maintain her communion with Christ in the fellowship of His Word. A godly Christian wife knows the more that she is in God’s Word worshiping Him privately, the more of a blessing and grace she will be to her husband and to her family.

2. She must be a worshiper with her HUSBAND. This godly woman will follow the lead of her husband. If she is married to a Christian man, she will joyfully submit to his leadership in the home as he knowledgeably shepherds the family in the Word in regular worship times. She will delight in reading the Bible together with her husband and having times of prayer together with him as they cry out to the Lord together. If her husband does not know Christ, she nevertheless still must submit to him while understanding -- and not expecting -- that he has no regard for the beauty of Christ and the centrality of Scripture. So she will still quietly submit to him, follow his leadership, and seek to win him by a gentle and quiet spirit (1 Peter 3:1-6). But she will worship Christ as she submits to her husband *as to the Lord* (Eph 5:22-24).

3. She must be a worshiper with her FAMILY. The godly wife knows that she has a unique privilege and a leadership role in the home to lead the family and minister grace while the husband is away working. She is to worship the Lord and lead the family in the worship of God. She prioritizes this with her children -- however young or old they may be -- who are in her care in the home. She will strive to memorize Scripture with them, teach them theological truths, point them to Christ constantly, and discipline them with grace and faithfulness. And all of these comprise ways that she can worship the Lord. Moreover, she can teach her family that *whatever* they do can be an act of worship to God including schoolwork, sports, recreation, walking, reading, and resting. She as a godly, Christian wife embraces the high calling of worshiping the Lord as a model for and together with her family.

4. She must be a worshiper in her DUTIES IN THE HOME. The Lord calls the Christian wife to be a worker at home and to care for the home well. As her husband works outside of the home, she busily works inside of the home. The house is her domain. Indeed, it is her castle. She is to be dutiful and faithful in her duties as a woman of God and she can do these duties to the glory of God. Whether it's laundry, cleaning, the dishes, cooking, preparing for hospitality, or anticipating her husband's arrival after a day of work, she can worship the Lord with a joyful heart responding to His glory and enthralled with His beauty in saving wretched sinners!

5. She must be a worshiper WITH THE LOCAL CONGREGATION. As busy as this Christian wife may be and with all of the demands that may beg for her attention, she still maintains the primacy and centrality of the local church in her life and in her family's life. Given the fact that there are many different seasons of life and varying factors that may make her busier than at other times, she can still serve the local congregation in many different ways. She may be able to meet with women and counsel them biblically. Or, perhaps in a busy season she has time to intercede regularly and privately for the flock of God -- specifically, by name, biblically. Perhaps she worships the Lord in showing hospitality, in serving others, in teaching other women, in discipling younger ladies, in driving the elderly to and from church, or preparing a meal for someone recovering from surgery, this godly wife understands her delightful duty and blessed privilege to serve the Lord in the context of her local church. Far from being a lone ranger, she longs for, loves, and craves for the fellowship with the saints in the hearing of the Word and responding accordingly.

6. She must be a worshiper STRIVING FOR HOLINESS. A worshiper loves Christ and wants to be like Him. This godly wife wants to be holy. She has a sort of holy violence about her as she strives to enter the kingdom of God. Of course, she understands she has been made *positionally* holy at the moment of salvation when the Lord saved her (1 Cor 1:30). And she longs for the day when she will be made perfectly holy in *glorification*. But at the present, she strives to be holy, to be set apart, to be like Jesus, to walk in His steps (1 Pet 1:15-16). In her life and in her words, in her ministry and with her family, in her heart and with her neighbors, she strives to grow in holiness day by day.

7. She must be a worshiper LONGING FOR HEAVEN. A godly wife blesses her husband more and more as she fixates on heaven. Amazingly, the more she directly focuses on Christ and intimate fellowship with God in eternity, the more her husband will be indirectly and undoubtedly blessed by her delightfulness and pleasantness. The more this godly woman worships the Lord by meditating on the reality of beholding the face of God, indeed seeing God face to face, the more she will grow in holiness, delight her own heart in Christ, and model holiness and heavenly-mindedness for her husband. Let all Christian wives remember the priority of worshiping God. Never is the worship of the Lord to be divorced from life, from home-duties, from family engagements, and from domestic responsibilities. *In* doing those things, she can worship the Lord and prepare for active service to the heavenly king on the celestial shore.

15. Self-Denying.

It must be verbalized repeatedly to Christians that the greatest way to be a godly husband or a godly wife is to be the *godliest person* you can possibly be. Godly marriages are not a matter of formulas or programs or steps or methods.

Most importantly, a godly marriage flows out of the deep and healthy root of a vibrant, continual, joyful, and nourished relationship with Jesus Christ, the Son of God, by the power of the Spirit through His Word. Another essential element for Christian wives to cultivate is that of self-denial. In a word, all Christian wives must be self-denying.

Suggesting such things completely runs counter to the screaming mantras of our day that people need to fulfill themselves, please themselves, live for themselves, trust themselves and indulge in all pleasures and happy delights for their own enjoyment. Nothing could be more diametrically opposed to one another. The scream of the culture and the sweetness of God's Word are polar opposites. One promises immediate gratification but it leads to eternal hell while the other guarantees eternal life and lasting joy and surely gives immediately peace to those with a heavenly perspective. Let it be restated again, all Christians -- including Christian wives -- must rest in and cultivate the joy of self-denial. The Lord Jesus said repeatedly: if anyone wants to come after me, he must deny himself *daily* (Luke 9:23).

1. The godly wife is to be self-denying BECAUSE CHRIST DID SO FOR HER. The ultimate reason why the Christian wife must strive to deny herself is simply because her Lord did so for her. The Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, humbled Himself and denied Himself of his rights, privileges and honors and went to the lowest depths of others-centered love in the truest display of self denial in bearing the everlasting wrath of God upon Calvary's cross for her. If Jesus loved her so, she must seek to emulate this in her life. The great model in self-denial is God Himself who humbled Himself and went to the cross to seek and to save the lost. Here in the beauty of self denial is where true glory is found. And this is what the godly wife seeks to do as she walks in the footsteps of her Savior.

2. The godly wife is to be self-denying with HER HUSBAND'S DESIRES AND LEADERSHIP. God has wondrously appointed men to be the leaders of the home. The Christian wife knows this and embraces God's call for the Christian household. Even in the hard times, she takes up the role of denying herself so that she can fulfill her husband's desires and seek to see him flourish and grow in his leadership. How easy it is for sinners to dig in the claws in self-centered greed and selfish desires that take hold of our own hearts. But the Christian woman fights against this through constant renewal in the Word and by fervent meditation on God's Truth and she seeks to *daily* deny herself (Luke 9:23) and take up her cross and follow Christ as she follows his desires and leadership.

3. The godly wife is to be self-denying as she NURTURES AND REARS HER CHILDREN. Perhaps the greatest way a woman dies to her self practically is when she births precious children. Nothing is more helpless and needy than a newborn child! And yet, this godly wife seeks to worship Christ and deny herself as she nurtures her children and rears them in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. O how time consuming it is and how emotionally draining it proves to be at times. And yet, she joyfully runs and steadfastly perseveres through the hard times even waging war with her own heart-desires (of selfishness and laziness) so that she can nurture those whom God has given to her. She seeks to mortify the temptations to love herself and be lazy while at the same time replacing those sinful temptations with godly resolutions to walk in grace, obey God's Word, and trust in God's goodness. She exults in the counter-intuitive and counter-cultural desire to find joy in denying herself so she can serve her young ones in the home.

4. The godly wife is to be self-denying to her own HEART-WISHES FOR THE SERVICE OF OTHERS. Others have needs. And many times those needs manifest themselves in the most untimely and unexpected of ways. And even, many of those occasions to serve others may seem to pile on top of one another in a particular season or time. But she remembers the call of Christ to deny herself and follow Christ by not caving into her own heart-desires

so that she can diligently and happily serve others. When there's a need -- financial, material, hospitality, spiritual, or even emotional -- she longs in her heart to serve them as she is so fit and able to do at a particular time. She wants to lower herself so she can live for Christ and for others. This self-denying spirit produces a fountain of undying joy!

5. The godly wife is to be self-denying AS SHE FOLLOWS IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF HER HUMBLE SAVIOR. The text of 1 Peter reveals that Jesus suffered greatly at the hands of men. And this He endured unjustly. Nevertheless, Peter writes that we are to follow in His footsteps. She knows that as Christ was reviled, and suffered, and persecuted, and rejected, he never retaliated nor did he seek out His own good, but He kept entrusting Himself to God. So the Christian wife knows that in times of weakness and in moments of conflict when she feels falsely accused, or misunderstood or misrepresented, or reviled by someone, she must keep trusting Christ and submitting herself to God rather than giving into her self-gratifying desires to get even. Christ entrusted His soul to God -- a wise and good Creator -- in always doing what is right. So the Christian wife denies herself as she must preach constantly to her heart that there is greater joy in entrusting her soul to God in that particular moment rather than giving into her self-gratifying desire to take action. Truly it is possible to live a life of self-denial for the glory of Christ!

6. The godly wife is to be self-denying as she CULTIVATES JOY IN OBEDIENCE TO GOD'S WORD. Many tiring days and long seasons of travail will come the way of the godly woman. As a busy Christian wife, she will find herself tempted to neglect times with the Lord in the early morning watches, she will be tempted to skip another time of prayer, she'll be tempted to grow bitter over a particular situation or season that has brought much grief and pain to her life. But in all of this, the godly wife knows she must deny herself and cultivate joy in obeying the glorious truth of God's Word. She remembers that the testimonies of God are her delight; indeed they are her counselors (Psalm 119:24). She remembers that if the Law of God had not been her delight then truly she would have perished in her affliction (Ps 119:92). Amazing as it may sound, one of the great duties of a Christian wife is to cultivate the spirit of self-denial. It should be continuous, regular, determined, and Spirit-empowered. And by God's grace, every Christian woman can live out and emulate Christ in cultivating joy-filled self-denial!

16. Trusting.

A mark of godly womanhood must include the ongoing trust in her Lord. God is faithful and He has lavished many and profound promises that He will keep. A Christian wife will make it her passion to trust in the Lord whatever may come in life. She will rest in God's grace, rely on His providence, rejoice in His sovereignty, and follow His Word -- even when it doesn't seem to make much sense.

1. The woman of God must TRUST GOD AND HIS UNFAILING SOVEREIGNTY. She understands the unambiguous testimony of Scripture that God rules on high and that everything that happens takes place at His sovereign command and under His perfect authority. She can rejoice in the future and rest in the past as she firmly believes in the Lord and in His kind sovereignty. She lives in the present with a genuine joy and worshipful gladness in the Lord since He is the Lord of heaven and earth and all things belong to Him.

2. The woman of God must BELIEVE GOD AND HIS PRAYER-HEARING HEART. The godly wife understands that prayer is the great privilege and the profound delight of the Christian. And, amazingly, she remembers that God delights in the prayers of the upright. She does believe in the Lord and knows that in her struggles, in her pains, in her confusing moments, in her uncertainties, and in her decision-making moments, she can come humbly and lowly before her great God and always find a Fatherlike ear stooped low to hear the persistent and passionate cries of His child. She knows God hears. She knows God answers. She has seen it. She believes it. She knows that prayer is powerful and that mountains are moved through believing prayer. So she prays for her husband, for her children, for her own heart, and for her church family.

3. The woman of God must EVANGELIZE AND TRUST GOD TO SAVE THE CHILDREN. While trusting in God's amazingly perfect sovereignty, this woman of God has great confidence in the Lord's plan to bring His elect to salvation. And she takes great joy in knowing that her duty is to proclaim the gospel to those in her family -- including her children even from the youngest of ages -- and trust the Lord *fully* for the results. She can't coerce or try to manipulate or force a decision for salvation. Rather, she understands her role to simply call sinners to come to Christ through repentance and faith and she believes in the Lord that He will do His work to save His people.

4. The woman of God must SUBMIT AND FOLLOW THE HUSBAND'S GOD-APPOINTED LEADERSHIP. As a woman who trusts in the Lord, she submits to her husband as she knows this is what God calls her to do in the Word of God. She finds great delight in submitting to her husband as the God-appointed head of the home. A proper understanding of submission is crucial. This does not mean that she is a doormat or someone to be taken advantage of. However, she recognizes that God's glorious plan for the home includes the husband as the leader of the home and the wife as following his lead, submitting to him, and worshiping Christ with a joyful spirit through the entire process. She lovingly, gently, and carefully speaks to him if there are matters of disagreement but ultimately she knows that her husband must be the primary decision maker and she must submit *in her heart* with love, with confidence, with with, and without bitterness.

5. The woman of God must MEDITATE AND DAILY REST IN GOD'S GOODNESS, LOVE & STRENGTH. Whatever news may come her way, whatever the children may do, however the husband may say his day at work went, she can meditate on God's Word each day and find great sustenance and glorious hope for her soul. She knows that in all the changing moments of life and with all the passing circumstances that will cross her path, the goodness and love and strength of God never changes. Life is fleeting; God is faithful. This is why she can smile at the future because her soul is anchored readily and daily and frequently in the deep bedrock of God's Word.

6. The woman of God must MARVEL AND BE FAITHFUL TO THE SMALL TASKS TO WHICH GOD CALLS HER. A Christian wife sees it her great place of ministry to serve God in her home. She embraces the small tasks that the Lord calls her to -- even if they don't seem large, influential or flashy. Even if she doesn't see the accolades or win the awards for this or that achievement, she happily serves the Lord where He has called and placed her. If she is a home-maker, then she does her duties happily and faithfully. If she is working outside the home, then she does so with integrity, faithfulness, and as a witness for Christ her Savior. When she opens her home for hospitality, she takes delight in all the small tasks of preparation that are required. She marvels that God has called her and appointed her to be a witness for Him -- even in the small and seemingly unnoticed duties of daily life.

7. The woman of God must TRUST THAT GOD WITHHOLDS NOTHING GOOD FROM HER. One toweringly amazing truth that grips this godly woman's soul is the reality that the Lord withholds nothing good from those who walk uprightly. Nothing does God keep from His children. She has read these texts and she believes them. She holds on to them. So when the times of suffering come and the seasons of trial invade, she knows that God is bringing these things into her life *out of love* and for *His glory* and for her growth and conformity to Christ. So rather than growing bitter at the gloomy times and when the storms howl, she trusts the Lord and rests in His grace. When her husband makes a decision that she disagrees with or when her children do foolish things, or when a family member suddenly passes or the finances are suddenly extremely tight, she can rest in the Lord knowing that He has brought her to this situation and He is not holding something *better* from her. She loves and trusts in her Savior.

8. The woman of God must TRUST THE PROMISE THAT SHE IS ADOPTED AS A CHILD OF GOD AND THAT HER SECURITY IN HEAVEN IS NEVER IN JEOPARDY. The Christian wife can have security that her soul remains secure in the loving grip of Christ her Savior. Even on her bad days, the grace of God is greater. And on her good days when she thinks she's done well, her position in the grace of God hasn't changed because she remembers yet again that her identity and security as a child of God *can never change*. She's adopted by grace and her salvation will never be revoked. So she serves her family, she loves her husband, and she submits to her Savior with joy and with confidence knowing that He who began this good work in her will complete it until the day of Christ Jesus.

17. Encouraging.

The writer to the Hebrews exhorts all believers to be encouraging one another (Heb 10:25). Jonathan went to David when the king was fleeing from Saul and Jonathan 'encouraged him in God' (1 Sam 23:16). Let godly wives willingly take up the duty to live for the glory of God and be encouraging in their relationships. Here are a few ways that the Christian wife strives to be encouraging.

1. The Christian wife strives to encourage VERBALLY WITH EDIFYING REMARKS. The woman of God wants her speech to be seasoned with salt. She wants to edify and build up the people of God -- including those in her own home. She wants to put off cutting and demeaning remarks and replace those with edifying and helpful remarks. She wants her speech to be dripping with honey, full of grace, and timely in words.

2. The Christian wife strives to encourage VERBALLY WITH VISIBLE GROWTH IN GRACE. As she sees the Lord working in her husband, the godly wife seeks to verbally encourage him in *specific* ways that she sees growth in him. As he studies the Word of God diligently, as he leads the household in regular family worship, as he seeks to humbly repent of sin and ask those he's sinned against for forgiveness, and as he seeks to serve the local church, the Christian wife sees these and wants to verbalize in specific ways here he has been growing over time. This is not to flatter him (since flattery is a sin) but to glorify *God* for *God's great work* in him. The more specific, the better. She is thoughtful, prayerful, attentive, and striving to encourage him in his journey of sanctification.

3. The Christian wife strives to encourage WHEN PERSEVERING THROUGH TRYING SEASONS. Trials rarely come knocking at the door. Usually trials kick down the door and invade right into the innermost rooms of the home of our hearts. Whether it's interpersonal relationships, spiritual troubles, family-related illnesses, a death of a loved one, or financial hardships, the Christian wife makes it her great ambition to encourage with her words *even while persevering through* the tough and trying seasons. Rather than become a recluse and isolate herself, she seeks to serve others and in so doing, she serves the Lord. She obeys the call to 'persevere to the end' and 'not grow weary in well doing.'

4. The Christian wife strives to encourage WHEN DISASTROUS NEWS AFFLICTS THE SOUL. When the sudden phone call seems to stop life or when the tragic news of a terminal illness inflicts, she still seeks to encourage not only her own heart but also those to whom she lives with as she points them to the *Word of God* and the *God of the Word*. In the trying times, she still seeks to edify and build up. It's easy (and natural -- and sinful!) to grow bitter, isolated, depressed, anxious and worried when these disastrous events invade but she actively (and even daily, even hourly!) resolves to speak gracious words and exude biblical hope from the faucet of her mouth. For she knows that what comes out of her mouth really is the outflow of what resides in her heart. So she chooses to fill her heart with God's Word.

5. The Christian wife strives to encourage WHEN CHRISTIAN MINISTRY IS DISCOURAGING. It's a reality that Christian ministry can drain the people of God. To be in ministry is to embrace suffering. To follow Christ is to take up the call to suffer with Him and for Him. When ministry is discouraging -- in all of its various forms and scenarios -- she still seeks to encourage during these times. How easy it is for her to be cutting, discouraging, gossiping, or even to grow disgruntled with ministry and with the Lord! Yet she refuses to cave into such harmful patterns of thinking. She seeks to build up the people of God when the discouraging times come. When her husband battles discouragement and despair, she wants to help him, hold him up, undergird him, and point him to the mighty refuge of Christ.

6. The Christian wife strives to encourage WHEN SIGHT IS BEING LOST OF THE CHARACTER & CENTRALITY OF GOD. Many situations may arise in the home where the things of the world creep in and take over. It's not planned, of course. Nor do these happen on purpose. But, when the busyness of life, the struggles of finances, the debilitating pain, and the lack of visible fruit seems to stay like a morning cloud of mist, it's easy to focus on these to such an extent that the character and centrality of God fades away in the background. This Christian wife strives to encourage her own heart, her husband, those in her household, and others in her life with the greatness and glory and gospel of God.

7. The Christian wife strives to encourage THROUGH PERSISTENT, INTERCESSORY PRAYER. Perhaps the greatest (and tragically, often, the most neglected) form of encouraging the saints is through persistent, intercessory, specific prayer. Sometimes Christians forget the *power* of prayer and, quite honestly, don't believe in the *power* of prayer. But not this woman! This Christian wife encourages her husband by praying persistently for him. She encourages for her church leaders by interceding for them. She encourages her children by persistently pleading on their behalf. She fully embraces the biblical reality that her prayers are powerful that the ears of Almighty God hear each intercession and that He will answer her pleas. Especially relating to her husband and his work, his ministry, his travels, his purity, his relationships, his husbanding and parenting, his integrity and financial dealings, she prays persistently for him and through her intercessions, she encourages him.

8. The Christian wife strives to encourage BY WRITING TENDER AND THOUGHTFUL NOTES OF EDIFICATION TO HER HUSBAND. One tangible way that men receive encouragement is through the thoughtful writing of a note. This Christian wife wants to encourage her husband and she expresses it in many ways, one of which is writing a tender and thoughtful note to build him up and focus him on Christ. Think of the New Testament letters, how many of them are “notes” from the Apostle Paul to a church or individuals. Ephesians is a letter to edify and strengthen the church. Think of the benefit of writing a note of specific ways he can be encouraged and putting it in his briefcase, placing it on the dashboard of the car, or leaving it in his wallet. This selfless wife wants her husband to know that his wife is thinking of him and cares for him. She wants to point him to Christ and reassure him of her love for him. She is a faithful servant of Christ and an edifying wife to her husband.

18. Wise.

The godly woman opens her mouth in wisdom and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue (Prov 31.26). The Christian wife seeks to exude wisdom as she lives her life and in whatever activity she puts her hands to. She determines to find wisdom from the Lord and *not* follow the folly in her own heart and the foolishness of the world. She knows that the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord. The Christian wife makes it her steady aim to be a woman of wisdom. Here are some ways she does this.

1. She is WISE AS SHE DAILY STUDIES SCRIPTURE. She knows that the Law of the Lord gives wisdom. She has nothing good and no wisdom except from above. Her heart is deceitful and sick and selfish. She affirms and knows the Scriptural testimony of her own human heart. This is why the Christian wife seeks to nourish her soul and realign her thoughts and re-focus her mindset on the truths of unchanging Scripture. Indeed, this is where wisdom is found.

2. She is WISE IN HER DISTRUST IN HERSELF AND IN HER RELIANCE UPON GOD. All mankind falls into the sin of doing what is right in their own eyes as is obviously demonstrated in the Book of Judges. She understands the folly and selfish bent of her own heart and so she daily wages the war to focus on Christ, trust in Him, and rest upon His Word. The Word is sufficient, powerful, clear and totally adequate to lead the child of God in wisdom and righteousness. And to this end, she goes to the Word for counsel, for help, for direction, and for joy.

3. She is WISE IN HER COUNSEL AND ADVICE TO HER HUSBAND. She understands her role in the marriage covenant to love and serve and submit to her husband. But she also knows that God has placed them in a covenant of companionship where she can help and advise him in biblical truths as needed. She can serve him by providing her husband with wise insights, biblical truths, Scriptural helps, and practical guidance in certain situations. She is thoughtful and careful to deliberately give biblical wisdom in a timely, gracious, tender, and humble manner.

4. She is WISE AS SHE INSTRUCTS HER CHILDREN IN THE FEAR OF GOD. Gloriously, she embraces the call to instruct her children in the fear of the Lord along with her husband. So she takes on the duty and privilege to instruct and teach Biblical truth to her children. Daily, constantly, joyfully, and eagerly she ministers the food of the

Word of God to those under her care in the home -- however young or old they may be. From the youngest of ages -- even the nursing children (cf. 2 Tim 2.15) even to the older teenagers -- she seeks to be used of God to minister gospel truth which she knows can reach the innermost part of a person's heart and bring true change by the Spirit's power and working.

5. She is WISE IN PREVENTING WORLDLINESS FROM CREEPING INTO THE HOME. The woman of God lives in wisdom in actively preventing worldliness from seeping into the home. There is so much trash that flows around the public media and gossip columns and filthy worldliness and the Christian wife endeavors to have no place in her home for such ungodly things. She does not want to just be reactive and put out fires that have already sparked. Rather, she wants to be preventative by carefully guarding and shepherding her home and protecting her "castle" so that her home remains an abode of love, holiness, and truth saturated with Scripture.

6. She is WISE IN HER CONVERSATIONS WITH OTHERS. Having read the Word, she wants to guard her mouth. She knows that the mouth speaks out of that which flows out of the heart. So she never wants to participate in slander or gossip. She even wants to guard against involving herself in other people's affairs; that is, meddling in other peoples' business. In her conversations, she wants to pour forth divine wisdom from God's Word and seek to minister grace to the believers and gospel hope to the lost. Her conversations are truly like the woman in Proverbs 31, she opens her mouth in wisdom!

7. She is WISE IN HER PERSPECTIVE ON ETERNITY. The Apostle Paul reminds Christians that this world is not our home as we are citizens of heaven. The Lord Jesus commands His people to not store up treasures on earth but to store up treasures in heaven. We are told to set our minds on things above. The Christian wife understands the subtle temptations to become bogged down with trivialities and worldly ambitions that can consume and occupy one's mind. Nevertheless, she daily strives to focus on heaven knowing that this life is short but what is done for Christ and for His glory will last. Her spending habits, her counseling, her conversations, her church-commitments, her parenting, and her duties as a wife are far more than just 'getting a task done,' but she does them with an eye on eternity and on heaven. She longs to worship Christ in her duties as preparation for service to Christ in heaven!

19. God-Fearing.

The woman of God happily embraces the biblical truth that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. And she knows that she finds the fear of the Lord in the Word of God (Psalm 19:9). Her God-centered perspective and her commitment to follow and obey the Lord guides her decisions, her mindset, and her conduct. She is a God-fearer. Here are some practical ways the Christian wife is a God-fearing woman.

1. She is God-fearing in her OBEDIENCE. Solomon said in Ecclesiastes 12 that the godly person must remember the sum of the matter: to fear God and keep His commandments. Indeed, this is the whole duty of man. The Christian wife undergirds all that she does with a God-fearing obedience to the Lord and His Word. She reads the Word not just to gain more *information* but to enhance her *sanctification*. She studies not just for *knowledge* but for *joyfulness* as she follows the Word and obeys God's precepts.

2. She is God-fearing in her LOVE FOR GOD (Deut 10:12). The Lord required Israel to fear Him and to love Him. Even though the Christian wife has not seen Jesus Christ yet, she loves Him. Why? Because she grows with Him day by day in the Word. Her love for the Lord increases as she hears from Him in Scripture and seeks to emulate Him in her conduct. A true love for God works itself out in obedience to God. This obedient woman, who serves her husband and family well, displays a genuine love for God as she diligently strives to follow the Lord in all things.

3. She is God-fearing in her CLINGING TO GOD (Deut 10:20). God calls His people to fear the Lord and to serve and cling to Him. To cling to the Lord is to superglue oneself to Him. Through the storms of life, the disagreements that may arise, the parenting frustrations that may happen, the financial pressures that may invade, the loss of her husband's work that may terrorize, she still determines to steadfastly cling to the Lord in all things. To cling to God means that one digs the foundation deep upon God and His Word. Whatever the cost or whatever the circumstance, the person who fears God clings to Him regardless. Where else would she go? The Lord is the steadfast One in faithfulness, truth, power and goodness.

4. She is God-fearing in her FAITHFULNESS TO HER WORD (Ps 15.4). The dutiful wife guards her mouth with all care and concern. She seeks to be faithful to her promises and to not go back on her word. She wants to be a woman of integrity not just to please people but to bring honor to her Lord. Even to such a degree of making and *keeping* promises to her own hurt, she seeks to be faithful and not go back on her word. This woman's 'yes' really is 'yes' and her 'no' really is 'no.'

5. She is God-fearing and not MAN-PLEASING (Ps 27:1). Every Christian has to vigilantly guard from the sin of man-pleasing. O how tempting it is to seek the acceptance and accolades of men. Yet this godly woman understands that the LORD is her light and her salvation, whom should she fear? She lives in fear of no one and she strives to please no one (ultimately), except the Lord. Now, humanly speaking and in the context of her domestic duties, she strives to serve her husband and bring joy to him and she sacrifices for his well-being and joy, but she fights against the deep claws of the fear of man by a greater fear of the Lord and steadfast reliance upon His sovereign majesty.

6. She is God-fearing in her HUMILITY (Prov 3.7). To fear the Lord means that a godly person has a *right* and *accurate* assessment of oneself as God would see him. This means that the Christian wife must *not* be wise in her own eyes. She does not have an inflated view of herself. She views herself humbly and contrite before almighty God and she genuinely endeavors to tremble at God's Word. She wants to put off pride and selfishness and humbly seek to consider others as more important than herself. This includes her husband's desire and her children's needs and the various needs that may arise within the church family. Her fear of God shows itself in her humility and selflessness in the active service of others. Truly the godly and joyful wife is the one who walks with great, Christlike humility and lowliness.

7. She is God-fearing in her TURNING FROM EVIL (Job 1.1). Solomon wrote that the God-fearer will turn away from evil. Even God's assessment of the man Job was that he was upright and turning away from evil. Every person who fears the Lord is one who must necessarily turn from evil. To fear God means that one views God rightly and loves God genuinely. And this person will turn *from evil* and *turn to God* in genuineness. She fights against the tide of culture as she does not give into slander and gossip. Nor does she fall into the sin of loving what the world loves. She wants to love God, love her husband, love His Word, and love righteousness. Thus, the Christian wife turns from evil.

8. She is God-fearing in her FALLING BEFORE CHRIST IN FERVENT PRAYER (Mark 5.33). The woman who had been caught in an infirmity for 12 years approached Jesus and had no desire but to fall before Him in fervent, urgent, honest, and open pleas (Mark 5:33). This evidenced a true fear of the Lord as He consumed her thinking. So it is with the godly wife. To fear the Lord means that one does not follow himself. So she comes before her Lord and Savior with prayers of thanksgiving, confession, humility, supplication, and intercession. She fervently cries out to God and begs Him to hear and answer. She fears the Lord and this is demonstrated by her unceasing petitions that she brings before Heaven's altar. Nothing is more characteristic and urgent for a godly wife than persistent, urgent, and daily prayers. May every Christian wife be encouraged to pray much and pray often. No prayer is useless or in vain when brought before the throne of God through the name of Christ. Pray often and pray specifically, dear God-fearing woman. And the Lord will meet with you, minister to you, and bless you as you pour out your soul to Him.

