



Helping, Encouraging, And Refreshing, Together

Coming alongside the Pastor, his family, and the local church to assist in areas of encouragement, evangelism and education.

The Virtuous Woman I

A Closer Look at Proverbs 31

Four Lessons (1-4)



Bible Study Course



*“Study to shew thyself approved unto God,
a workman that needeth not to be ashamed,
rightly dividing the word of truth.”*

II Timothy 2:15

More Bible study helps are available at www.kjvhearthelps.com

Dear Friend ~ The first step to becoming a Virtuous Woman is trusting Jesus Christ as your Savior. Have you done that? The Bible tells us that we can know for certain that when we draw our last breath here on earth, heaven will be our home. (1 John 5:13)

DO YOU KNOW THAT ALL HAVE SINNED?

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;” (Romans 3:23)

DO YOU KNOW THE PENALTY FOR SIN?

“For the wages of sin is death . . .” (Romans 6:23)

“And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.”
(Revelation 20:14)

DO YOU KNOW YOUR SIN DEBT HAS BEEN PAID IN FULL?

“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God . . .” (1 Peter 3:18)

WILL YOU REPENT OF YOUR SIN AND TURN TO GOD?

“. . . that they should repent and turn to God . . .” (Acts 26:20b)

**WILL YOU TRUST JESUS, AND NO WORKS OF YOUR OWN,
FOR SALVATION?**

“But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.” (Romans 4:5)

“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us . . .” (Titus 3:5a)

**WILL YOU TRUST THE ETERNITY OF YOUR SOUL COMPLETELY
TO JESUS CHRIST?**

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16)

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved . . .” (Acts 16:31)

I CHOOSE TO TRUST JESUS CHRIST AND HIS FINISHED PAYMENT FOR MY SIN.

I CHOOSE TO REJECT THE PAYMENT OF JESUS CHRIST.

To trust Jesus Christ as your Savior, pray a prayer similar to this one: “Lord, I know that I am a sinner. I know that without You I will die and go to hell. Please forgive my sins, come into my life and be my Savior. I am trusting You and You alone as payment for my sins. Help me live for You from this day forward. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

If you have decided to trust Jesus Christ as your Savior today, please contact us. We will rejoice with you, and provide you with material that will help you to grow in your new faith.

PROVERBS 31

The words of king Lemuel, the prophecy that his mother taught him...

10. Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies.
 11. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her,
so that he shall have no need of spoil.
 12. She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.
13. She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands.
14. She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar.
 15. She riseth also while it is yet night,
and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens.
 16. She considereth a field, and buyeth it:
with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard.
17. She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms.
18. She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night.
19. She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff.
 20. She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea,
she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.
 21. She is not afraid of the snow for her household:
for all her household are clothed with scarlet.
22. She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple.
23. Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land.
24. She maketh fine linen, and selleth it; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant.
25. Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come.
26. She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness.
27. She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.
28. Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her.
 29. Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.
30. Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain:
but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.
31. Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates.

LESSON 1: PROVERBS 31:10-12

VERSE 10: WHO CAN FIND A VIRTUOUS WOMAN? FOR HER PRICE IS FAR ABOVE RUBIES.

Virtuous – Having, or characterized by virtue.

Virtue – General moral excellence, right action and thinking, goodness or morality, excellence in general.

- The words “virtuous” or “virtuously” are mentioned only four times in the Bible. In all four, the words are descriptive of a woman.

Ruth 3:11 – And now, my daughter, fear not; I will do to thee all that thou requirest: for all the _____ of my people doth know that thou art a _____ woman.

Proverbs 12:4 – A virtuous woman is a _____ to her husband: but she that maketh ashamed is as _____ in his bones.

Proverbs 31:10, 29 – Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above _____. Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou _____ them all.

- In II Peter 1:5 the first thing that we are instructed to add to our initial faith is virtue. This is achieved through diligent personal training, and through those with whom we choose to associate.

Training: personal Bible study, prayer, church attendance

Association:

Proverbs 13:20 – He that _____ with wise men shall be _____: but a _____ of fools shall be _____.

Titus 2:3-5 – The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh _____, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be _____, to _____ their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, _____ at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not _____.

- Ruby – Valued as a precious gem; occurs as a red, transparent variety of the mineral corundum (a common mineral, second only to a diamond in hardness). Dark, granular variety is used for sandpaper, grinding and polishing; pure transparent varieties, when combined with another mineral, are known as rubies or sapphires (one mineral lends a red color, the other, blue). When cut in a convex (as opposed to a faceted) shape some specimens of ruby exhibit asterism. That is, a six-rayed star can be seen on the interior of the stone. Such rubies, called star rubies, are highly prized, even above diamonds.

I Peter 3:1-4 – Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be _____ by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. Whose adorning let it not be that _____ adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the _____, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of _____ price.

Proverbs 31:10 – Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is _____ above rubies.

- The value of a virtuous woman comes not from external things (clothes, jewels, material possessions, etc.) but from an inner faith and character that God says is very highly valued.

[Note: To give the Proverbs 31 lady a more personal identity, we refer to her in these lessons as “Ruby.”]

VERSE 11: THE HEART OF HER HUSBAND DOTHS SAFELY TRUST IN HER, SO THAT HE SHALL HAVE NO NEED OF SPOIL.

Heart – Seat of human emotions (contrasted to the mind, which is the seat of intellect).

- The heart can experience a wide variety of emotions, trust being just one of them.

Determination – Psalm 16:8 – I have set the LORD _____ before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall _____ be moved.

Sneakiness – Psalm 10:9-11 – He lieth in wait _____ as a lion in his den: he lieth in wait to catch the poor: he doth catch the poor, when he draweth him into his net. He croucheth, and humbleth himself, that the poor may fall by his strong ones. He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten: he hideth his face; he will _____ see it.

Sorrow – Psalm 13:2 – How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having _____ in my heart daily? how long shall mine enemy be exalted over me?

Joy – Psalm 13:5 – But I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall _____ in thy salvation.

Truth – Psalm 15:2 – He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the _____ in his heart.

Gladness – Psalm 16:9 – Therefore my heart is _____, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope.

Purity – Psalm 24:4 – He that hath _____ hands, and a _____ heart; who hath _____ lifted up his soul unto vanity, _____ sworn deceitfully.

Unrest – Psalm 38:8 – I am _____ and sore _____: I have roared by reason of the _____ of my heart.

Remorse – Psalm 51:17 – The sacrifices of God are a _____ spirit: a broken and a _____ heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

Safely – Involving no risk.

Trust – Firm belief or confidence in the honesty, integrity, reliability, and justice of another; to rely or depend upon.

- There are two types of trust: Mislplaced and true trust.

Misplaced trust:

Job 8:11-15 – Can the rush grow up without mire? can the flag grow without water? Whilst it is yet in his greenness, and not cut down, it withereth before any other herb. So are the paths of all that _____ God; and the hypocrite's hope shall _____: Whose hope shall be cut off, and whose _____ shall be a spider's web. He shall lean upon his house, but it shall not _____: he shall hold it fast, but it shall not _____.

True trust – the Lord is our example:

Psalm 37:3-5 – integrity – Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. _____ thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. _____ thy way unto the LORD; _____ also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.

Psalm 91:2-4 – rely, depend – I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust. Surely he shall _____ thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall _____ thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou _____: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.

Proverbs 3:5-6 – reliability – Trust in the LORD with _____ thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In _____ thy ways acknowledge him, and he _____ direct thy paths.

➤ A man with a Godly wife has “no need of spoil.”

Spoil – To damage or injure in such a way as to render useless or valueless; to destroy. This can be applied in at least two ways:

Psalm 31:11 – to an individual – I was a _____ among all mine enemies, but especially among my neighbours, and a _____ to mine acquaintance: they that did see me without _____ from me.

Proverbs 24:15 – to an environment – Lay not wait, O wicked man, against the _____ of the righteous; spoil not his _____ place:

(An environment can be spoiled in many ways, such as attitudes, influences, appearance, atmosphere, etc.)

VERSE 12: SHE WILL DO HIM GOOD AND NOT EVIL ALL THE DAYS OF HER LIFE.

➤ “She will do him good, and not evil . . .”

Do (a verb / action word) – To bring about, cause or produce; to exert effort.

Good – Effective, efficient, producing favorable results, beneficial, honorable, worthy, respectable, dependable, reliable, right, morally sound or excellent, virtuous, honest, just, kind, benevolent, generous, sympathetic, able, skilled, expert.

Ephesians 2:10 – For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto _____ works, which God hath before _____ that we should _____ in them.

Titus 2:3, 5, 7 – The aged women likewise, that they be in _____ as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home,

_____, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed. In all things shewing thyself a _____ of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity . . .

Evil – Morally bad or wrong, wicked, depraved, causing pain or trouble, injurious, offensive or disgusting, threatening or bringing misfortune.

Titus 1:16 – They profess that they know God; but in _____ they _____ him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.

- What should a wife’s attitude be when her husband is not applying scriptural principles to his role in the home?

Ephesians 6:7 – With good will doing service, as to the _____, and not to _____:

She should approach each day as an opportunity to serve the Lord (not just her husband) enthusiastically and whole-heartedly.

Ecclesiastes 9:10a – Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy _____ . . .

[Note: Approaching marriage as a 50/50 proposition will not work - each individual will be careful not to give more than 50%, and watch to be sure the other individual is doing his / her part. This will lead to an attitude of selfishness, instead of selflessness. We must determine to give 100%.]

- “. . . all the days of her life.”

During the “honeymoon” / Early marriage

Parents of infants/toddlers / Parents of elementary students / Parents of junior/senior high students

After children are gone / Through good health and bad / Through financially good times and bad

Through “twilight” years / Through special challenges

**HOW A LIBERATED WOMAN
TREATS HER HUSBAND:**

Hinder him
Undermine him
Surn his attentions
Belittle him
Antagonize him
Notice his failures
Dominate or dump him

**HOW A GODLY WOMAN
TREASURES HER HUSBAND:**

Help him
Understand him
Satisfy his needs
Bring honor to him
Allow him to lead
Note his accomplishments
Determine to be a really “good thing”

Proverbs 18:22 – Whoso findeth a _____ findeth a _____ thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD.

CHALLENGE: Are we physically and emotionally investing in our marriage each day? Are we actively looking for ways to support, to encourage, and to help our husband?

PUT IT TO PRACTICE! This week, consciously do at least one extra “good” thing each day for your husband. If you are not married, choose another family member and do the same.

LESSON 2: PROVERBS 31:13

VERSE 13: SHE SEEKETH WOOL, AND FLAX, AND WORKETH WILLINGLY WITH HER HANDS.

- Ruby did not just wait for something to “demand” being done. She went *seeking* opportunities to be productive.

Seek – To track down, trace; to search or look for diligently; to pursue (note that these are all verbs, which indicate action). Another word that expresses this same quality is “industrious.”

- Note also that Ruby’s care for her family, home and other responsibilities required a lot of hard work. She did not spend time being idle.

Proverbs 31:27 – She looketh well to the _____ of her household, and eateth not the bread of _____.

Read Proverbs 31 beginning at verse 10, and list as many of the verbs (action words) as you can:

- Hard work has been God’s way from the beginning.

Genesis 2:2 – And on the seventh day God ended his _____ which he had made; and he rested on the _____ day from all his work which he had made.

In the New Testament, God said “if any would not _____, neither should he _____.”
(II Thessalonians 3:10b)

Not a problem, you say? Busy every moment? Not a second to spare? That’s a good start, but more than activity is needed.

- Organization gives direction to industriousness.

Thoughtful planning keeps us from “running in circles.” It gives purpose to our industriousness. [Illustration: a two-year-old can “industriously” empty all the drawers in his room, but for what purpose?]

Other references to Ruby as a diligent, wise manager of her time are found in verses 15 & 24.

15 – She riseth also while it is yet _____, and giveth _____ to her household, and a portion to her maidens.

She rose early each day, and got busy right away.

24 – She _____ fine linen, and selleth it; and _____ girdles unto the merchant.

Do you suppose that she made and delivered her girdles whenever she got around to it? I am stating the obvious ~ she could not have accomplished all the activities found in this chapter without a plan for getting the most out

of her time. The relatively small amount of time invested in formulating a plan will yield great dividends of productivity as you work that plan.

- Tips for getting more out of your time.

Ephesians 5:16 – Redeeming the _____, because the days are _____.

In Matthew 25:14-28, two individuals are commended as a “good and _____ servant,” but the other is referred to as a “wicked and _____ servant.” The difference is found in how each managed what was given to them.

- Make a list of what needs to be done (at night for the next day is best)
- Use a pencil (this list changes frequently)
- Revise list as needed
- Keep it handy, and add to it as things come to mind
- Prioritize items on list
- Do one thing at a time, beginning with priority #1, and work until you are through. STAY FOCUSED! Cross off #1 (I really enjoy this part), move on to #2, etc.
- Be sure to keep your daily goals realistic
- Remember to “dove-tail” when possible (Example: make phone calls while folding laundry)
- Do the most distasteful jobs first, if possible, and the rest will go easier
- Items not completed will be bumped to tomorrow’s list, again in priority order
- BALANCE IS A MUST. Interruptions are inevitable. Make wise choices. Examples: dust on piano vs. walk with restless child; ironing vs. opportunity to help someone in need; mending vs. seasonal activity; unwashed dishes vs. chance to spend time encouraging someone.
- Make sure that interruptions are not excuses
- Things will go wrong with your plan. That’s okay. But, when the choice is yours, or when you are in control of circumstances around you, STAY FOCUSED!
- Remember that people are almost always a higher priority than things.

- Teach family members and others to be industrious / older are to teach the younger.

Titus 2:3-5 – The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, _____ of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at _____, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not _____.

Deuteronomy 4:9 – Only take _____ to thyself, and keep thy soul _____, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but _____ them thy _____, and thy sons' sons;

Deuteronomy 6:6-7 – And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt _____ them diligently unto thy _____, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

Joel 1:3 – Tell ye your _____ of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children another _____.

These verses speak of teaching children about the things of God. They would also apply to teaching Godly characteristics and qualities, such as being good, effective workers.

- Be aware of time wasters.

Can you think of and list some ways that folks often waste time? _____

Be conscious of time wasters in your own life, and seek to eliminate them from your schedule. Work at making more productive use of your time. Work smarter, not harder! You may surprise yourself at all you are able to accomplish!

PUT IT TO PRACTICE! Do you have some spare time? Find someone who you can help ~ don't just sit idle or waste your time. Have an attitude that says "What can I do to help?" Be a seeker of opportunities (review Proverbs 31:13a again)!

- Note that not only were her actions right, but her attitude was right.

Willingly – acting, giving (both verbs), etc. readily and cheerfully; done, given, offered (again, all verbs), readily or gladly; voluntary.

Another word that expresses this same quality is "enthusiasm." The Proverbs 31 woman approached her day with enthusiasm and cheerfulness. In this verse, we are talking about enthusiasm first in reference to clothing (wool and flax):

- Her own dress was more than ordinary (vs. 22 – "... her clothing is _____ and _____").
- The fabric she made was more than ordinary - it was "_____ linen" (vs. 24).
- Ruby did nothing boring or half way. This woman *intended* to excel ~ not just squeak by (vs. 29 says "_____ daughters have done virtuously, but thou _____ them _____.")

Ruby had to begin the process with raw materials ~ wool and flax. She had to make her own cloth. We have the advantage of fabric stores (if you can sew), WalMart, Kmart and clothing stores (if you don't). Also, hand-me-downs from family / friends, thrift stores, etc. can be helpful.

- Keep in mind that she strove for excellence. Only the best would do. Her clothing was silk. She made fine linen.
- Even if we are on a tight budget (and who isn't these days?) we can find low-cost, good-quality clothing at thrift or second-hand stores. Our family members should look "sharp," not "shabby." Our clothing should reflect positively on our Savior.
- Special clothing needs? Take them to the Lord in prayer. Learn to trust Him. Our God is faithful. (Psalms 91:1-4 – He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in _____ will I _____. Surely he shall _____ thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall _____ thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his _____ shall be thy shield and buckler.)

A few thoughts on enthusiasm ~ it takes the drudgery out of routine tasks, and will:

- Make any job easier. If enthusiasm is a problem for you, pray for a willing heart. Ecclesiastes 9:10a – Whatsoever thy _____ findeth to do, do it with thy might . . .
- Be contagious. An upbeat attitude spreads to others (so does a sour one).
- Show visibly. Proverbs 15:13 – A merry heart maketh a _____ countenance: but by

sorrow of the heart the spirit is _____.

- Motivate those around us. II Corinthians 9:2b – “. . . your _____ hath provoked very _____.” We can “provoke” others not only spiritually, but also physically. Ask children “Who will ___ / ___ / ___?” Provide a small treat to those who accomplish their tasks well.
- Small rewards can also keep adults focused when we are working alone. Set a timer and work for a certain period of time. Reward yourself with a small treat (cup of coffee, sweet, short walk, etc.) before moving on to the next task. Staying time-oriented helps to maintain a focus on the tasks at hand.

Maintaining an attitude of enthusiasm throughout our day is beneficial to all family members and helps keep our home running smoothly.

CHALLENGE: Little girls (and boys) watch us and walk in our footsteps. Our example could very well determine their future success or failure as young women, wives and mothers. Ezekiel 16:44 says “Behold, every one that useth proverbs shall use this proverb against thee, saying, As is the mother, so is her daughter.” We often use “like mother, like daughter” in a positive sense. Scripture, however, says this truth can also be applied in a negative way. Let’s determine to teach those within our influence to be productive and cheerful workers in the home and in the church.

PUT IT TO PRACTICE! Take steps to be more organized and get more out of your time. Remind yourself to approach your work willingly, cheerfully and with enthusiasm.

LESSON 3: PROVERBS 31:14-15

VERSE 14: SHE IS LIKE THE MERCHANTS' SHIPS; SHE BRINGETH HER FOOD FROM AFAR.

- What was an actual “merchants’ ship?”

It was a vessel whose main purpose was to transport required persons and goods from one point to another. Could we apply this not only to our families, but to others in need as well (verse 20)?

“Here we have a continuation of how a virtuous woman serves the Lord by meeting the needs of her family. When he made this statement, ‘She is like the merchants’ ships . . .’, I wonder if he was thinking of the stately gracefulness of a ship on the ocean, resolutely headed toward a specific goal or destination? I wonder if it occurred to him that the very load it carried could lend stability to a ship that might otherwise be tossed about by every wind?” ~ *The Lady the Lord is Looking For* by Cathy Corle

- In bringing “her food from afar,” we see again that this lady *intended* to excel.

She didn’t necessarily do just what was convenient, or what was easy. She went extra distance and put in extra time to do what she felt was best for her family.

Why would she bring “her food from afar?”

- Delicacies / treats were not easily obtained
- She was a wise shopper / bargain hunter (Weigh the value of time invested vs. money saved.)

Titus 2:5 – To be discreet, chaste, _____ at home, _____, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not _____.

In this verse, we see God giving primary responsibility for the “keeping of the home” to the woman. This encompasses many things. In Proverbs 31 there are numerous references to the responsibility of the woman to oversee the clothing needs of herself and her family.

- Here in verses 14 and 15 we see that it is also our responsibility to see that our family members are properly nourished.

- No time to cook because of a job or other commitments? Use a crock pot.
- Make it your hobby to collect “quick and easy” recipes that are still tasty and nourishing. Always be “on the lookout” for new ones to add to your collection.
- Make healthy snack choices readily available (i.e. ready-to-eat fruit, ready-to-eat vegetables with a healthy dip). Children will often choose fruits / vegetables if they are prepared and ready for snacking over pre-packaged, high-fat, expensive snacks.
- Slowly incorporate new, healthier recipes into your family’s diet, or modify old favorites.

VERSE 15: SHE RISETH ALSO WHILE IT IS YET NIGHT, AND GIVETH MEAT TO HER HOUSEHOLD, AND A PORTION TO HER MAIDENS.

Rising “also while it is yet night,” I believe, is another reference to the fact that this woman had a distinct purpose for her day. She rose early with a plan already in mind, and was ready to tackle the tasks at hand. Refer back to Lesson Two for “Tips for getting more out of your time.” (Quote: “Plan nothing and you’ll always be sure to reach your goal!”)

- Scripture tells us we should be “redeeming the time” (Ephesians 5:15-16). Adaptability must be applied if we are to accomplish that goal (Philippians 4:11-13).

Ephesians 5:15-16 – See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as _____, Redeeming the _____, because the days are _____.

Philippians 4:11-13 – Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be _____. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be _____, both to abound and to suffer _____. I can do _____ things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

“Have you learned this secret of success? You are constantly busy. The demands on your time crowd and shuffle. If you can’t balance those demands ~ to adapt to the specific time and place ~ you will fail to manage your life. Our heroine of Proverbs must have been a master of adaptability. She cared for a family and servants in a splendid manner. The Scripture does not detail her adjustment abilities, but can’t you read between the lines? She was sometimes a seamstress (sewing girdles in verse 22), a businesswoman and a farmer (farmeress?) planting crops (buying and planting in verse 16). And she was such a good wife that her husband noted the fact publicly.” ~ *A Pyramid in Proverbs for Today’s Woman* by Marilyn Jensen.

DAILY priorities constantly change (sickness, injury, schedule changes, needs of others). To reach our fullest potential for the Lord, we must adapt with the changes, not be broken by them. If this is a problem, refer to Psalm 107:28-30 and seek the Lord’s wisdom and strength: “Then they cry unto the LORD in their _____, and he bringeth them _____ of their distresses. He maketh the storm a _____, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they be _____; so he bringeth them unto their desired _____.”

LIFE’S circumstances often change. We must remain adaptable and seek the Lord in these situations as well.

- In Paul’s life, he knew how to be abased / abound, full / hungry, abound / suffer need. Still, in verse 10, he rejoiced.
- In our life, we reach a level of comfort or control, then have a new baby, our kids grow up and leave home, we move to new city, lose a job / get a new one, develop health problems . . .

- Ruby cared for “her maidens” with kindness.

Our maidens are generally electronic, not human (the job of feeding them is much easier for us ~ we just pay the electric bill).

Apply the teamwork philosophy ~ her maidens were there to do a job, as our family members are. Enlist everyone’s help.

This verse implies that Ruby was kind and considerate to all, regardless of position. Her servants received not just her commands, but nourishment and nurturing from her. Though her maidens had no voice in how they were treated, she exercised kindness and generosity in their behalf; she knew she was accountable to God for how she treated others.

Ephesians 6:8-9 – Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the _____, whether he be bond or free. And, ye _____, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there _____ of persons with him.

Colossians 3:24-25 – Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye _____ the Lord Christ. But he that doeth _____ shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of _____.

Colossians 4:1 – Masters, give unto your _____ that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in _____.

Should we not also strive to be kind, considerate and patient toward others in our lives? (One who may work with / for us, children, exceptionals, those with physical / material needs, older people?)

CHALLENGE: If you desire to see changes made in your life, determine: are you inhibited by a lack of knowledge, or a lack of application?

Lack of knowledge:

Proverbs 1:5 – A wise man will _____, and will increase _____; and a man of understanding shall attain unto _____ counsels:

Proverbs 13:20 – He that walketh with wise men shall be _____: but a companion of _____ shall be _____.

Titus 2:3-4 – The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh _____, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may _____ the young women to be sober, to _____ their husbands, to _____ their children,

Lack of application:

- Identify your problem. List potential solutions. Revise the list. Put the list into practice.
- “Do you lack skill in homemaking? If you know what to do, but lack practice ~ start practicing! Choose one thing today that you know you ought to be doing, and do it.”
- “Start something today. Don’t start everything today! Don’t start a stringent diet, an exhausting exercise program, and a complete make-over at the same time. But do start something without delay. If you are overweight, make one or two decisions about food. ‘I will not take second helpings.’ ‘I will replace sugared drinks with ice water or unsweetened tea.’ ‘I will not eat desert.’” ~ Both quotes from *A Pyramid in Proverbs for Today’s Woman* by Marilyn Jensen.

PUT IT TO PRACTICE! Begin a collection of simple, tasty recipes to prepare for your family. Start by finding 2 or 3 quick and easy recipes. You may want to check with friends for some of their favorites, or check out a cookbook that appeals to you from the library. Begin your collection with one of our family’s favorites:

SUPER SIMPLE SCALLOPED POTATOES AND HAM

1 (24-oz.) pkg. frozen hash brown potatoes	1 can condensed cream of mushroom soup
1/2 cup chopped onion	1/2 cup sour cream
2 cups cubed ham	1 cup shredded Cheddar cheese

Heat oven to 350°F. Combine hash browns, onion, ham, soup and sour cream in 2-quart casserole. Bake at 350°F for 30 minutes or until heated through. Sprinkle top with cheese and bake 5 minutes longer. Enjoy!

LESSON 4: PROVERBS 31:16-17

VERSE 16: SHE CONSIDERETH A FIELD, AND BUYETH IT: WITH THE FRUIT OF HER HANDS SHE PLANTETH A VINEYARD.

Consider – to ponder, to study, to meditate on; to observe and examine.

- Being a woman of faith, we can assume that Ruby prayed about her decision, and that she talked to others about it as she considered her opportunity.

Proverbs 3:5-6 – Trust in the LORD with _____ thine _____; and lean not unto thine own _____. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he _____ direct thy paths.

Proverbs 11:14 – Where no _____ is, the people fall: but in the _____ of counsellors there is _____.

Proverbs 15:22 – Without counsel purposes are _____: but in the multitude of counsellors they are _____.

- Then she took action – she bought it.
- Ruby was able to make sound decisions – she took initiative.

Initiative – simplest definition – to begin.

- Sometimes we fail to take action because we feel that for a Christian woman to show initiative is unbiblical. (Abigail is a great example of a woman showing initiative and taking action. Read about her in I Samuel 25.)
- Not so, as long as the initiative is Spirit-led and appropriately channeled.
- Seeketh, worketh willingly (vs. 13); bringeth (14); riseth and giveth (15); considereth and buyeth (16) are just some of the ways Scripture describes Ruby. She did not just sit around and wait for things to happen, or for someone to tell her what to do.

Nehemiah is an excellent biblical example of a man who demonstrated unusual initiative.

- Walls were broken down, gates burned (Neh. 1:3)
- Nehemiah wept, mourned, fasted and prayed – confessed sin and asked forgiveness for national sin (1:4-10)
- Shared his burden (2:1-3)
- Stated his goal (2:5)
- Made necessary arrangements (2:7-9)
- “Considered” or surveyed what work was needed (2:11-16)
- Enlisted / inspired others – “come and let us build up the wall” (2:17)
- Was laughed at, scorned and despised by those who did not share his burden (2:19)
- Remained determined and focused (2:20)
- Had assistants in the work (chap. 3)
- Was mocked (4:1-3)
- Dealt with hardships – It would have been faster and easier to work with both hands, but the sword was necessary for protection. He did what he had to do to get the job done (4:15-18).
- Remained determined and focused (4:21-23)

- People complained, Nehemiah helped them re-focus (chap. 5)
- Enemy tries to distract / discourage Nehemiah (6:2)
- He knew what he was doing was important – “I am doing a great work . . .” (6:3)
- Four more times they tried to interrupt his work; his answer did not change (6:4)
- The wall was finished, and recognized to be the work of God – “they perceived that this work was wrought of our God” (6:15-16)

Could this verse be where the phrase “a woman’s touch” came from? Ruby took a field (something plain) and planted a vineyard (something green, growing, lovely to look at). She transformed her surroundings and in doing so pleased her heavenly Father (vs. 29).

PUT IT TO PRACTICE! How can we show initiative in our lives? (The possibilities are endless, but here are a few thoughts to get us started.)

- Our own spiritual growth: Whether we are a new believer or a mature Christian, we need to be growing in our faith. Do we have a plan to accomplish that goal? Are we following through?
- The atmosphere in our home: Determine to make it Christ-centered in all areas (including décor, music, audio / visual materials, etc.).
- Boldness in sharing the gospel: If fear of what people will think is the problem, remember that Nehemiah was scorned, mocked and laughed at too, yet his focus remained strong. Also refer to Ezekiel chapter 2, especially verses 6-7: “And thou, son of man, be not afraid of _____, neither be afraid of their _____, though briers and thorns be with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions: be not afraid of their _____, nor be dismayed at their _____, though they be a rebellious house. And thou shalt _____ my words unto them, whether they will _____, or whether they will forbear: for they are most _____.”

Determine to be the kind of a woman who can “survey the situation” and do something about it to bring about an improvement. Do not get caught in the trap of always waiting for someone else to tell you what to do, or waiting for things to get better on their own ~ they generally won’t.

VERSE 17: SHE GIRDETH HER LOINS WITH STRENGTH, AND STRENGTHENETH HER ARMS.

Strength – the state or quality of being strong; vigorous; the power to resist strain or stress; durability.

- Ruby evidently thought it was important to be in good physical condition ~ the very work that she did each day probably helped to keep her in tip-top-shape.

As in everything else, this is to be kept in proper perspective.

We are not to be preoccupied with weight and appearance, or guided by “Hollywood’s” standards.

- Our motive for maintaining a good physical appearance is to bring honor to our Savior, to please our husband, and to be a testimony to the world of Godly femininity.

As Christian women, we are to refrain from excesses in appearance or fashion, and be modest and moderate. However, that does not mean we should look frumpy or plain. Look closely at these scriptures, where clothing is referred to as modest, attractive and colorful.

I Timothy 2:9-10 – In like manner also, that women _____ themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with _____ works.

Proverbs 31:25 – Strength and _____ are her clothing; and she shall _____ in time to come.

Matthew 6:28-29 – And why take ye thought for _____? Consider the _____ of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his _____ was not arrayed like one of these. (Remember that God created beauty and color.)

Psalms 45:13 – The king's daughter is all glorious _____: her clothing is of wrought _____.

Proverbs 31:22 – She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is _____ and _____.

- Remember that *all* we do should be for God's glory (even the way we dress and appear before others); however, be careful not to focus all our attention on our outward appearance and neglect our inward heart.

I Corinthians 10:31 – Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do _____ to the _____ of God.

I Peter 3:3-4 – Whose adorning let it not be that _____ adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the _____ man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet _____, which is in the sight of God of _____ price.

- As Christian women, we should strive to be in good condition in order to function at our best (not only physically, but also spiritually).
- Being a wife / mother / _____ (fill-in-the-blank) is a strenuous job. Maintaining good health is essential if we are to do these jobs well, and serve our God with enthusiasm.
- There are many things that affect our good health. Exercise helps keep us in shape physically and mentally, and a good diet helps keep us healthy and strong.

CHALLENGE: Be careful in our own lives not to diminish the importance of being in good physical condition in order that we may have the strength to accomplish each day what the Lord sets before us. Remember, too, that a wholesome, pleasant physical appearance can help draw others to us, that we might have opportunity to point them to our Savior.

PUT IT TO PRACTICE! Think about an area of your life that “needs some work,” and begin to take some initiative to improve the situation. Pray about it, seek Godly counsel, devise a plan, and take action!



Helping, Encouraging, And Refreshing, Together

Coming alongside the Pastor, his family, and the local church to assist in areas of encouragement, evangelism and education.

The Virtuous Woman II

A Closer Look at Proverbs 31

Four Lessons (5-8)



Bible Study Course



*“Study to shew thyself approved unto God,
a workman that needeth not to be ashamed,
rightly dividing the word of truth.”*

II Timothy 2:15

More Bible study helps are available at www.kjvhearthehelps.com

LESSON 5: PROVERBS 31:18-19

VERSE 18: SHE PERCEIVETH THAT HER MERCHANDISE IS GOOD: HER CANDLE GOETH NOT OUT BY NIGHT.

Perceive – to discern, know or understand.

Merchandise – objects of commerce; wares; goods.

- What does “her merchandise” refer to? It could be the actual objects she bought/sold, or it could be the services and provisions she made available to her family and those around her.

Proverbs 31:24 – She maketh fine _____, and selleth it; and delivereth _____ unto the merchant.

Proverbs 31:14 – She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her _____ from afar.

Isaiah 23:18 – And her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to the LORD: it shall not be treasured nor laid up; for her merchandise shall be for them that dwell before the LORD, to _____ sufficiently, and for durable _____.

- Ruby knew not only the necessity of hard work, but the joy of accomplishment as well.

She was able to think independently and able to make accurate judgments. She could look honestly at her work (all through chapter 31) and know that it was “good.” (Another example of this is Dorcas in Acts 9:36 – “Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was _____ of _____ works and almsdeeds which she did.”) Ruby knew she had done her best. She gave each task all she had.

These days, many women are dissatisfied with their lives and their work; this is also a time when quality craftsmanship is difficult to find. When you do find it, it is often in something made years ago (Grandma’s quilts, crocheted tablecloths, fine needlework, embroidered pillowcases).

If we do not already possess abilities in these areas, might it not be a good idea to learn, and to teach them to our daughters and other young women? Too often, these skills belong only to older generations.

- Quality workmanship is held in high esteem by the Lord. This is clear when Scripture refers to the temple workers in Exodus:

Exodus 35:25-26 – And all the _____ that were wise hearted did _____ with their hands, and brought that which they had spun, both of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine _____. And all the women whose _____ stirred them up in wisdom spun goats' hair.

Exodus 35:30-35 – And Moses said unto the children of Israel, See, the LORD hath called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; And he hath filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of _____; And to devise curious works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, And in the cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of wood, to make _____ manner of cunning work. And he hath put in his heart that he may _____, both he, and Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan. Them hath he filled with wisdom of heart, to work all manner of work, of the engraver, and of the cunning workman, and of the

_____, in blue, and in purple, in scarlet, and in fine linen, and of the _____, even of them that do any work, and of those that devise cunning work.

Cunning – knowing, skillful, experienced, well-instructed. This word is applied to all kinds of knowledge, but generally to the skill and dexterity of artificers, or the knowledge acquired by experience.

- God created us in His image; we naturally have a love for beauty and hunger for creativity.

Not all have the same abilities, but all have SOME ability to work with their hands, minds and time.

Fulfillment is not to be found in getting more FROM your work, but in giving more TO your work.

Ecclesiastes 9:10 – Whatsoever thy _____ findeth to do, do it with thy _____; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the _____, whither thou goest.

Colossians 3:23 – And whatsoever ye do, do it _____, as to the Lord, and not unto men;

- “Her candle goeth not out by night” is yet another reference to a well-executed plan / a plan-ahead philosophy: staying up after others have gone to bed or getting up before they do (vs. 15) to get the most out of the coming day. (Refer back to Lesson Two for specific helps in this area.)

Without advance planning and preparation, rushing into a day can be overwhelming.

For our grandmothers, this could have meant getting their bread dough ready and setting it in the oven to rise while they slept so their families could have fresh baked bread in the morning.

For us, this could mean preparing or going over our to-do list, ironing and laying out tomorrow’s clothes, doing a quick clean-up of main traffic areas of the house, making lunches, or starting a load of laundry.

VERSE 19: SHE LAYETH HER HANDS TO THE SPINDLE, AND HER HANDS HOLD THE DISTAFF.

“Before the age of machinery, spinning was done by hand with the spindle and the distaff. The latter was a stick or staff upon which a bundle of the fiber to be spun was loosely bound, and it was either held in the left hand or stuck in the belt. The spindle was a smaller tapering rod, the rotation of which gave the twist and around which the thread was wound as it was twisted. The spinning wheel, introduced into Europe from India between the 13th and 14th centuries improved the hand-spinning method.” ~ Funk & Wagnalls New Encyclopedia.

Ruby was a skilled lady. Obviously, she could spin (making thread), weave (making cloth), and sew (making the final product). She also knew something about real estate – she purchased land (vs. 16). She was a food buyer and chef (vs. 14). She was a saleswoman (vs. 24). Did all these skills come naturally? Probably not.

- Ruby worked at being a success. She practiced and applied what she knew were basics. Over the years, many skills were developed.

Do you feel that you lack skill? Pick one area to work on, and start practicing!

Don’t be satisfied to stay as you are. If you have some skills, improve them, and work to develop others. You can *always* learn more!

Proverbs 1:5 – A wise man will _____, and will _____ learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels:

Proverbs 9:9 – Give instruction to a _____ man, and he will be yet wiser: _____
a just man, and he will _____ in learning.

- Do you need instruction or encouragement as you seek to develop new skills?

Don't be afraid to go to an older woman or Godly Christian lady who possesses the skill you seek. Share with her your desire to learn.

Titus 2:3-4a – The _____ women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may _____ the young women . . .

Or . . . bring up your desire to develop the skill at an informal gathering of friends and ask for suggestions on where you might find someone to teach you.

- Ruby was diligent – she put her hands to a task and kept them there until it was completed.

Diligent – a steady application in business of any kind; constant effort to accomplish what is undertaken; not idle or negligent.

This passage of Scripture (Proverbs 31:10-31) refers continually to Ruby's diligence, or focus. It never mentions that she "becameth discouraged and quiteth." Nor does it say "Behold: she carrieth too great a burden and suffereth burn-out." Nor do we find anywhere that she "taketh her eyes off her goal and becometh side-tracked."

Proverbs 10:4 – He becometh poor that dealeth with a _____ hand: but the hand of the _____ maketh rich.

Proverbs 13:4 – The soul of the _____ desireth, and hath _____: but the soul of the _____ shall be made fat.

- Diligence needs to be applied not only to physical matters, but spiritual ones also. We often take care of day-to-day needs that arise, but push to the back burner our spiritual needs and those of our family.

Proverbs 4:23 – Keep thy _____ with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of _____.

II Peter 3:14 – Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be _____ that ye may be found of him in _____, without spot, and _____.

CHALLENGE: Determine not to model the values of women in our society, but values that are Bible-based. As a Christian woman, do we possess skills that allow us to make with our own hands things that add beauty to our home and to the lives of our loved ones? Do we remind ourselves continually to stay focused and diligent about accomplishing those tasks that God has given us to do? Do we look to Him for the strength to accomplish them?

PUT IT TO PRACTICE! Work on developing one hand skill that you already possess (knitting, crocheting, cross-stich, calligraphy, drawing / painting, etc.) or learn a new one! As you become confident, teach someone else what you have learned ~ a friend, daughter, niece, or young girl in the church (Titus 2:3-4).

LESSON 6: PROVERBS 31:20-21

VERSE 20: SHE STRETCHETH OUT HER HAND TO THE POOR; YEA, SHE REACHETH FORTH HER HANDS TO THE NEEDY.

Stretch – to extend; to reach out; expand; hold forth.

Reach – to extend; stretch out; to spread abroad.

A practical definition of these words in this context might be “to extend ourselves beyond what comes easy” ~ to step out of our “comfort zone” for the benefit of others.

- Ruby was definitely “others-oriented.”

She did not hide from poverty or the needs of others with an “I don’t want to get involved” attitude.

In this verse, she continues to play the role of the need-meeter, but doesn’t stop with her family. [It is important to note, however, that before she extends herself to meet the needs of others, she has already seen to it that her own family’s needs are taken care of.]

- What does the Bible have to say about our treatment of and attitude toward the poor, or those less fortunate than ourselves?

Psalms 41:1 – _____ is he that considereth the _____: the LORD will _____ him in time of trouble.

Proverbs 14:31 – He that oppresseth the poor _____ his Maker: but he that honoureth him hath _____ on the poor.

Proverbs 21:13 – Whoso stoppeth his _____ at the cry of the poor, he also shall _____ himself, but shall _____ be heard.

Luke 14:13-14 – But when thou makest a feast, call the _____, the maimed, the lame, the blind: And thou shalt be _____; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the _____. (Those you help may not be able to return the favor, or may not have the character or gratitude to even *want* to return the favor ~ the motive here is to secure God’s blessing, not man’s.)

Romans 15:25-27 – But now I go unto Jerusalem to _____ unto the saints. For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the _____ saints which are at Jerusalem. It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their _____ is also to minister unto them in _____ things. (The provision of “carnal,” or physical needs.)

Galatians 2:10 – Only they would that we should _____ the _____; the same which I also was forward to do.

James 2:1-6 – My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with _____ of persons. For if there come unto your assembly a man with a _____ ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a _____ man in vile raiment; And ye have _____ to him that wareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a _____ place; and say to the poor,

_____ thou there, or sit here under my footstool: Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of _____ thoughts? Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him? But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats?

- Scripture is clear. Despising or neglecting the poor is condemned ~ as Christians, we are not to have “respect of persons” or turn a deaf ear to their needs.

PUT IT TO PRACTICE! Commit to being mindful of the needs of those around you, to extend yourself beyond your “comfort zone.” How? Volunteer to serve in some way those less fortunate than yourself; be a friend to someone going through a difficult time in their life; reach out to a widow lady or shut-in who is lonely; teach a Sunday School class of children who may at times be “unlovable;” become involved in the visitation or bus ministry (if not full time, help out when you can ~ extra help is always appreciated), etc.

VERSE 21: SHE IS NOT AFRAID OF THE SNOW FOR HER HOUSEHOLD: FOR ALL HER HOUSEHOLD ARE CLOTHED WITH SCARLET.

- Once again, we are reminded that Ruby was in the habit of “planning ahead.” She was not afraid of the coming snow because she had already prepared for winter.

In each verse that we have studied thus far in this chapter, we see the way Ruby seems to “have a handle” on everything. Her life, schedule, and all responsibilities are well managed. It is not a coincidence when things go smoothly ~ someone has made wise plans and advance preparations.

- Ruby was diligent about providing proper clothing for her loved ones.

“In Bible times, it was a matter of pride and satisfaction for a woman to know that her family members were well-dressed and sufficiently clothed for winter weather, and that she had personally fashioned every garment herself. She began with raw materials, wool and flax, and from these she spun thread, which she wove into fabric, which she cut and sewed into garments. It was a great undertaking, and brought her great satisfaction.”

“Kitto (the British scholar) said, ‘In the state of society to which this description belongs, every kind of drapery for their person, the tent, or the house, is manufactured at home by the women, who make it a matter of pride to be able to boast that their husbands and children are entirely clad by the labor of their hands; and the man’s robe clings the more sweetly to him ~ is warmer in winter, and cooler in the heat, from his knowledge of the dear hands by which every thread had been prepared.’” ~ Both quotes from *The Lady the Lord is Looking For* by Cathy Corle

Many women are gifted seamstresses and can make lovely clothes for their families. Whether or not you have this ability, it is important for us to see that Ruby considered her family’s wardrobe one of her responsibilities ~ she saw to it that their clothing needs were taken care of.

In preparing for winter, ask yourself questions such as: Who needs boots this year? Are the coats still in good condition? Are my daughter’s tights warm enough? Give thought to these needs *before* the time they will be required.

Notice also that Ruby seems to have found great satisfaction in her role as a wife and mother. No indication is found that she was discontent. Today, many women feel they must leave their homes and sacrifice their families to “find their identity” or to be “fulfilled.” The devil has once again caused many to believe a lie (Genesis 3:1).

There is no higher calling, no job more satisfying or rewarding, than serving God through being first and foremost what He wants us to be in our families (Proverbs 31:28-31).

➤ A look at Bible references to the word “scarlet.”

In Exodus, there are 24 references to “gold, blue, purple and scarlet” or “purple, scarlet and fine linen” or some variation of those words. In each case, the references are to the tabernacle. The following verses also contain the word “scarlet:”

II Samuel 1:24 – Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you in _____, with other delights, who put on ornaments of _____ upon your apparel.

Lamentations 4:4-5 – The tongue of the sucking child cleaveth to the roof of his mouth for thirst: the young children ask bread, and no man breaketh it unto them. They that did feed _____ are desolate in the streets: they that were brought up in scarlet _____ dunghills.

Daniel 5:7 – The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. And the king spake, and said to the wise men of Babylon, Whosoever shall read this writing, and _____ me the interpretation thereof, shall be _____ with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the _____ ruler in the kingdom.

Daniel 5:16 – And I have heard of thee, that thou canst make interpretations, and dissolve doubts: now if thou canst _____ the writing, and make _____ to me the interpretation thereof, thou shalt be clothed with scarlet, and have a _____ of gold about thy neck, and shalt be the third ruler in the kingdom.

Nahum 2:3 – The shield of his mighty men is made red, the valiant men are in _____: the chariots shall be with flaming _____ in the day of his preparation, and the fir trees shall be terribly shaken.

Matthew 27:27-28 – Then the soldiers of the governor took _____ into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers. And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet _____.

Scarlet seems to be a reference to royalty. More about the word scarlet, and an extensive study on women’s clothing, will be covered in Lesson 7.

CHALLENGE: Let’s look to the future, anticipate the needs of our family members, and plan ahead so that we will be able to meet those needs for them, asking God to enable us to do our very best for those we love.

PUT IT TO PRACTICE! Pray, and ask God to specifically lay upon your heart someone who is poor (in finances, in relationships, emotionally) or needy (of physical provision, of the gospel, of God’s wisdom, of comfort or encouragement). This week, minister to that individual in some practical way. As your vision grows, you will find many around you to “stretch out and reach forth your hands to” in the name of your Savior!

LESSON 7: PROVERBS 31:22

VERSE 22: SHE MAKETH HERSELF COVERINGS OF TAPESTRY; HER CLOTHING IS SILK AND PURPLE.

In addition to this reference, there are three other references to silk in Scripture:

- Ezekiel 16:10 and 13 (read vs. 1-14) – Note associations with fine linen, ornaments, bracelets, chain, jewels, gold and silver.
- Revelation 18:12 – Note associations with gold, silver, precious stones, pearls, fine linen, purple and scarlet.

There are many verses in the book of Exodus referring to purple being used in the tabernacle (God's dwelling place). Also:

- Esther 8:15a – And Mordecai went out from the _____ of the _____ in royal apparel of blue and white, and with a great _____ of gold, and with a garment of fine linen and _____:
- Mark 15:20 – And when they had mocked [Jesus], they took off the _____ from him, and put his own clothes on him, and led him out to _____ him.
- Luke 16:19 – There was a certain _____ man, which was clothed in _____ and fine _____, and fared sumptuously every day:
- John 19:2-3 – And the soldiers platted a crown of _____, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple _____, And said, Hail, _____ of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands.

The words silk and purple, by association, seem to indicate fineness, richness, or royalty.

- Most often mentioned in reference to fabric or clothing.
- Implies that our family members should be as well provided for as we can make them.
- This does not necessarily refer to the cost of clothing, but that it should be clean, well-fitting, and well-maintained.
- Try alternative shopping sources like re-sale shops, garage sales, clothing exchanges, or hand-me-downs from a friend whose child / children are a little older than yours.

WHY WEAR CLOTHING AT ALL?

- Before the fall, Adam and Eve wore no clothing, and were not aware of their nakedness (Genesis 2:25).
- After sin entered the picture, they tried to clothe themselves (Genesis 3:7).
- That clothing revealed their spiritual condition ~ they were now sinners (Genesis 3:10-11).
- God changed their clothes ~ He made clothing for them (Genesis 3:21).
- Their clothing now revealed a different spiritual condition ~ their sin has been covered, or paid for, through the death of an innocent animal. The animal skins picture the future death of the innocent Lamb, and His provision of righteousness for their souls (Romans 5:19).
- When sin came, the beautiful bodies that God had created in honor and glory were subjected to dishonor and weakness (I Corinthians 15:43). Satan was now able to take the desires that God had created and mimic them with lustful, unholy desires that induce people to sin. Because we are sinners, subject to the temptations of sinners, it is needful to clothe our bodies.

CLOTHING SPEAKS. WHAT DOES CLOTHING SAY ABOUT . . .

- the man on a white horse, wearing a white hat in a TV western? _____
- the man on a black horse, wearing a black hat, twirling a black mustache in the same western?

- the uniforms of participants in a sporting event? _____
- someone wearing rubber hip boots and a yellow hard hat who carries a hose? _____
- a teenager with baggy pants, chains hanging out of the pocket, orange hair spiked on one side of his head but bald on the other, and sets of earrings in both ears? _____
- a clean shaven man with neatly trimmed short hair, a three piece suit and tie, wearing wing-tip shoes?

We may make a mistake in a judgment based solely on the appearance of an individual. We may come to a wrong conclusion about what people are really like on the inside (illustrations above). Nevertheless, our human nature causes us to draw a conclusion on an individual based on their outward appearance.

What does your clothing reveal about you? Whose team are you on? Do you want to be easily identified as His follower? Do your clothing and outward appearance clearly identify you as His follower?

GOD LOVES BEAUTY, BUT STRESSES SPIRITUAL PRIORITIES

- Beauty and detail originated with God.

He gave Moses explicit instructions regarding construction / completion of His tabernacle, and the priest's garments (Exodus 28). He directed the colors, the fabrics, the designs, the pattern in the embroidery ~ He was interested in every detail. Why? "... for _____ and for _____." (vs. 40b)

Scripture refers to the adorning of a bride for her husband: Isaiah 49:18, 61:10; Jeremiah 2:32; Revelation 21:2.

Creation itself tells us that God loves beauty: Matthew 6:28-29.

He has filled heaven with beautiful things for His people: I Corinthians 2:9, Revelation 21:10 – 22:6.

When we dress to show that we are a child of God, we should strive to be as wholesomely attractive as possible. Humility or spirituality is not demonstrated by looking run-down, sloppy or unkempt, nor is God pleased with such an appearance (Matthew 6:17-18).

- The Christian's body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 6:19-20). We dishonor Him when we abuse or fail to maintain His temple.

A Godly lady who wants her appearance to show that she belongs to the King will:

- | | |
|---|--|
| keep her hair clean and neat | brush her teeth regularly |
| have her fingernails well-trimmed and clean | make sure her breath is sweet |
| use deodorant | have a clean and fresh complexion |
| use pretty fragrances when appropriate | wear clothing that is clean and wrinkle free |

- God's Word warns us not to focus upon fancy hairstyles, jewelry or clothes for adornment. True adornment, or beauty, comes from within (Psalm 45:13, I Peter 3:3-4, I Timothy 2:9-10).

Spending excessive time, money and effort on outward adornment while paying no attention to the spirit can lead to sin. In Ezekiel 16:15-21, womanly adornments became a curse.

Other references in Scripture to a woman adorning herself for the purpose of luring a man into sin: Hosea 2:13, Genesis 38:14-15, Proverbs 7:6-10.

With young girls, let's be careful not to encourage "cute" behavior that 10 years down the road will be flirtatious, provocative, or seductive. Train them to be Godly young ladies right from the start.

Isaiah 3:8 tells of a time when Jerusalem and Judah had turned against the Lord. Yet, in that day, when their cities were ruined and fallen, the women were spending much time on their appearances, to the neglect of spiritual things (3:16-23). God pronounced judgment upon them (vs. 24-26).

Jehu set out to avenge the sins of Jezebel. When she learned he was coming, how did she prepare to face him? (II Kings 9:30). Was she setting out to distract or seduce God's messenger, or was she so warped in her thinking that all she cared about was her physical appearance? Her beauty did not prevent her bloody and terrible death (II Kings 9:33-37).

- Priorities need to be in a proper order. When individuals are truly concerned about spiritual things, concern for physical appearance fades in comparison:

Children of Israel (Exodus 33:3-4)

Mordecai, hearing of Haman's plan (Esther 4:1)

Daniel, fasting because of sin (Daniel 9:3)

Daniel, seeking God's mercy (Daniel 10:3)

Where is the balance? How can we know what is too little, or too much? How should we dress to make sure that people looking at us know we love the Lord?

WHAT ARE SOME BASIC PRINCIPLES THAT I CAN USE IN SELECTING CLOTHING THAT WILL PLEASE THE LORD FOR MYSELF AND MY DAUGHTERS?

- MODESTY – I Timothy 2:9a – In like manner also, that women _____ themselves in _____ apparel.

Modest – not vain or boastful; unassuming; behaving, dressing, speaking, etc. in a way that is considered proper; decent; quiet and humble in appearance, style, etc.; not pretentious.

The word "apparel" is the Greek word *katastole*, which Young's Analytical Concordance translates as "long, flowing robe" or "a garment lowered, or let down." "Long, flowing" is NOT: form fitting (spandex anything, for example), flesh exposing (low neckline, short skirt, etc.), or figure revealing (clingy).

Does the Bible have anything to say about hemlines? In addition to the "long, flowing" description, let's look at Isaiah 47:1-3 and Exodus 28:42. God refers in both verses to a bare leg, or an uncovered thigh, as nakedness. Could we not say that a reasonable understanding of this Scripture would be that the hem (of skirt or culotte) ought to at least cover the knee? An uncovered knee tends to show parts of the thigh, or even undergarments, which is inappropriate.

Garments should be long enough and full enough to cover the contours of our body whether we are standing, sitting, stooping, or walking. Any slit should go no higher than an acceptable hem line. (Think for a moment ~ do slacks cover or accentuate the curves of a woman's body? Even in looser-fitting slacks, the backside / hip region of a woman's body is clearly defined.)

You, as a woman, may *feel* more modest in a pair of slacks, but the real issue is how you *look*. The fact is that a man, viewing the female body in slacks, cannot help but see specific outlines and curves. It is important for us, as women who strive to please God, to walk so circumspectly, dress so carefully, and present ourselves in such a way that no man would be accidentally tempted to sin.

“I think slacks are so much more *comfortable*.” Are we to make spiritual decisions based on our comfort, or our feelings? If so, how many people would bother to get out of bed on a Saturday morning to go on bus visitation? Or, how many people would opt for Sunday morning church attendance on a beautiful summer day when given an opportunity to go the park to relax? Either of these would be more “comfortable” than the right choice.

- MOST DEFINITELY FEMININE – Deuteronomy 22:5 – The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a _____, neither shall a man put on a woman’s _____: for all that do so are _____ unto the Lord they God.

The word “garment” in Deuteronomy 22:5 is the Hebrew word *simplah*. This means “outer garment” as opposed to “inner garment.” Would this not imply that it is the outside, the obvious, the immediately distinguishable garment that ought to be different between men and women? The silhouette, the total impression, ought to be distinctly male or female. You should be able to tell, at a glance, whether one is a man or woman. [Illustration: the internationally recognized symbol for men and women used on restroom signs.]

Abomination – extreme disgust, loathing, abhorrence, hateful, shamefully vile.

Every time that “abomination to God” (or some form of the same words) is used in the Old Testament, God is forbidding a gross moral sin, something inherently and obviously wrong, and equally condemned in the New Testament. See Deuteronomy 7:25 / I Corinthians 10:14 – idolatry; Deuteronomy 12:31 / Revelation 17:6 – human sacrifice; Deuteronomy 18:10-12 / Acts 13:8-10 – witchcraft; Proverbs 12:22 / Ephesians 4:15 – lying tongue; Proverbs 15:9 / I Peter 1:15 – wickedness; Proverbs 16:5 / Romans 12:16 – pride; Proverbs 20:23 / Romans 12:17 – cheating.

Why would “abomination” describe the way that God feels when He sees a woman put on a man’s garment (or vice versa)? Because God wants the sexes to be kept absolutely distinct. Women are to look like women, men are to look like men ~ fully and completely.

- MODERATION – Philippians 4:5 – Let your _____ be known unto all _____. The Lord is at hand.

Moderate – within reasonable limits; avoiding excesses or extremes; temperate or restrained.

Moderation would look to God, not the world, to set a standard. [Illustration: There may not be anything scripturally wrong with dying your hair pink on one side and green on the other, but that definitely would be described as a fashion extreme, and one that we, as Christians, should avoid.]

Ephesians 5:10 – Proving what is _____ unto the _____.

Our clothing should not emphasize or draw attention to our physical bodies, but to the sweet Spirit of our Savior within us (I Peter 3:3-4).

- MINDFUL OF HOLINESS – I Peter 1:14-16 – As obedient children, not _____ yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is _____, so be ye holy in _____ manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be _____ holy; for _____ am holy. [Note the word “fashioning”!]

Mindful – aware; heedful or careful; always having in mind. Ask yourself these questions:

Am I different? – II Corinthians 6:17-18 – Wherefore come _____ from among them, and be ye _____, saith the Lord, and touch not the _____ thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

God states in Scripture that He wants His people to be different from the world, and He brought judgment upon them when they refused to do so. See Leviticus 10:10, Ezekiel 22:26, Ezekiel 44:23.

One of the most obvious ways to differentiate ourselves from the world is in dress. We don't have to say a word. If we consistently maintain a lady-like appearance, people will notice that we are different. That difference, or separation, is not an end in and of itself ~ it gives us a platform from which we can share Christ with others.

Titus 2:3-5 – Someone is watching you. Are you setting a good example?

Am I consistent? – I Corinthians 15:58 – Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye _____, _____, always _____ in the work of the _____, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

- Do you act differently with your group of church friends than you do with your family?
- Do you talk differently with your co-workers than you would at a prayer meeting?
- Do you dress differently depending upon whether you are teaching one of your Sunday School girls or going shopping with her?
- Can your family and those around you depend upon you to be stable and consistent in every area of your Christian walk?

Am I obedient? – Hebrews 13:17 – _____ them that have the rule over you, and _____ yourselves: for they _____ for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with _____, and not with _____: for that is unprofitable for you.

Respect the standards set forth by your husband and / or Pastor.

CHALLENGE: Are we as Christian ladies more concerned about our own comfort than we are about representing our Savior in the very best way possible? He gave His all for me. Am I giving my best for Him?

II Corinthians 5:20a – Now then we are _____ for _____ . . .

II Corinthians 6:3 – Giving no _____ in any thing, that the _____ be not blamed:

1Peter 1:16 – Because it is written, Be _____ holy; for _____ am holy.

PUT IT TO PRACTICE! Choose at least one area of your dress or appearance in which to make a change to better honor the Lord Jesus Christ.

[Note: A very valuable resource in preparing this lesson has been *Your Clothes Say It for You* by Elizabeth Rice Handford, published by the Sword of the Lord.]

LESSON 8: PROVERBS 31:23

VERSE 23: HER HUSBAND IS KNOWN IN THE GATES, WHEN HE SITTETH AMONG THE ELDERS OF THE LAND.

The success of Ruby's husband in his work has a direct connection to her diligence in her work ~ because she gave herself to being a Godly wife and mother, her husband could give himself more completely and productively to what God wanted him to be.

The city gate was an influential place. Her husband was well known and well respected in his circle, evidently involved in the affairs of government that were conducted there.

Proverbs 12:4 –A virtuous woman is a _____ to her _____: but she that maketh _____ is a rottenness in his _____.

A crown sets apart, or brings honor to the individual who wears it.

As a helpmeet, a wife can be instrumental in her husband's reaching his full potential for the Lord. What has your past record been? Are you a crown to your husband, or have you been like rottenness in his bones? May God give us the desire to be our husband's "crown" in every way ~ a crown to both his life and ministry. What steps can we take to help us reach this goal?

➤ Prayer

Thank the Lord for your husband. The more you thank the Lord for your husband, the more appreciative you will be of him.

Ephesians 5:20 – Giving _____ always for _____ things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord _____ Christ;

Pray about your husband's needs, and for your relationship with him. Let him know that you will be praying for him throughout the day.

➤ Praise (A one-word solution to most marital problems.)

Praise is a powerful tool of encouragement, and brings out the best in those we love.

Proverbs 12:25 – Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it _____: but a _____ word maketh it _____.

Proverbs 27:21 – As the fining pot for silver, and the furnace for gold; so is a _____ to his _____.

Two rules to keep in mind. First, never say publicly anything negative about your husband.

- Who determines how much a married man is respected? His wife. Females especially look to a man's wife before fully developing their opinion of a man. [Illustration: If a preacher tells a joke from the pulpit, many people will look to his wife for her reaction.]
- Implied criticism is just as bad as outright criticism – "I'm sorry I'm late, but you know how my husband is . . ."

Secondly, take every opportunity to publicly say something positive about your husband. (Quote: “Plant a little seed of praise here and a little seed there until praise is scattered everywhere.”)

- Use either Direct Praise (spoken to your husband) or Indirect Praise (spoken to another where he may or may not be able hear you).

Admire him in your mind. Verbal criticism will not occur if your mind and heart are consciously mindful of his strengths. Remember your own faults and failures. (Quote: “It is unfair for weakness to expect perfection.”)

Psalms 19:14 – Let the _____ of my mouth, and the _____ of my _____, be acceptable in thy sight, O _____, my strength, and my redeemer.

Admire details. To an author, which of the following compliments would mean more? “I enjoy your writing.” OR “I enjoyed the idea you expressed on page 95 in the seventh chapter.” Detailed praise reaches the heart. Take the time to notice the many different types of effort he puts in every day.

Praise him in areas where he may be insecure. Is he older? Let him know he is still has much to offer. Is he shy? Admire his ability to relate to people. Is he of small stature? Praise his strength. Is he unemployed? Let him know you are confident in his ability to support the family. A thoughtful, caring wife will give support and encouragement rather than criticism in sensitive areas.

Encourage him to try new things. Support him in new endeavors. Unfortunately, some of his efforts will fail. Continue to praise anyway, knowing that the effort is much more important than the success or failure. The fact that he is happy and visionary in his work is much more important than his degree of achievement. This is not to say that a wife will never disagree with any of her husband’s opinions. The point is that her FIRST response does not have to be / should not be negative. Our husbands should not think of negativity as our primary personality trait. What if the idea is really crazy and you feel that it will have a permanently damaging result on your family? If you are truly concerned about a situation, take it to the Lord and ask Him to accomplish His will through it.

Value his ideas and opinions. To do this, you cannot totally ignore or ridicule his tastes and opinions. Take into account your husband’s opinions when dressing, cooking, decorating, or making personal decisions. Willingly and cheerfully submit to him in every way.

Colossians 3:18 – Wives, _____ yourselves unto your _____ husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.

Downplay his weaknesses and defeats. This will be easy if you dwell intentionally on his strengths. If he occasionally becomes tired and irritable at home, try to meet his needs and calm his spirit. Saying “Dad is really in a bad mood. I wonder what his problem is?” to the children may cause him to lose the respect of his children. A much more appropriate response might be “Dad worked a very long day today. He must be really tired. Let’s leave him alone for awhile so he can rest.” Be willing to “cover” for him when needed. You may find that he will do the same for you when you are feeling weary of *your* duties.

Proverbs 10:12 – _____ stirreth up _____: but _____ covereth all _____.

Never stop looking for opportunities to praise ~ whether you’ve been married for ten days, ten months, ten years, or ten decades. Why? Because praise is an expression of a heart that loves (I Corinthians 13:3-8).

➤ Accept him as he is ~ some DO's and DON'T's

DO accept the way your husband plans things for you. [Pizza / bowling vs. fancy restaurant.]

DO accept his gifts. To reject his gift is to reject him. Many times men will give practical gifts, rather than romantic ones. He is trying to fill a need. Rather than reject the gift, be careful about what type of needs you express to him (especially right before Christmas or your birthday). While shopping, subtly (or not so subtly) suggest things you might like to receive from him.

DO accept the way he works. Allow for differences in work style (i.e. fast or slow paced, organized or unorganized, etc.). Especially be careful of making suggestions regarding Christian work or service. You may be unaware of what the Lord is trying to do in his life, and unintentionally hinder the work of the Holy Spirit.

DO accept his affection. The key word is “respond.” Respond to your husband’s every word and action with an appropriate response. When he arrives home, respond. When he leaves, respond. When he tells a story or a joke, respond. When he gives you a hug, respond with an appropriate response. An appropriate response would not be to stand there like a dead fish. Throw your arms around him with affectionate enthusiasm.

DO accept his preferences. If your husband likes to have dinner on the table right when he comes home from work, try to do that for him. If he likes the toilet paper roll to go over, rather than under, try to accommodate him. If he enjoys having a cup of coffee in the morning, try to have one ready for him to take with him when he leaves.

DO accept his toys. Every well-balanced man has a hobby. It is easy for a wife to view her hobbies as sensible and profitable while viewing her husband’s as a threat to her and a waste of time and money. Allow him to enjoy his friends and his interests away from the home without viewing these interests as “the enemy.” When one spouse hates something that the other loves, a wall begins to be constructed between the two.

DON'T correct him in front of others (when he tells a story, when he tells a joke, his English, his performance, his appearance). Let others see your confidence, not your correction.

DON'T laugh at him. Your roaring laughter, especially about jokes in which your husband is the punch line, can be a manifestation of disrespect and ridicule.

DON'T accept your husband based only on his performance. Unconditional love should never be questioned.

DON'T compare your husband with other men. Do everything within your power to be content with the mate that God gave you.

CHALLENGE: God is preparing your husband. Only God is fully aware of the necessary ingredients needed to complete His plan. Don't tamper with His recipe. Treat your husband with tender loving care. Make full use of opportunities to truly be a helpmeet ~ to *complete* your husband through prayer, praise, and acceptance.

PUT IT TO PRACTICE! Each day this week, think about a different quality you are thankful for in your husband, and let him know you appreciate that quality in him. If you are not married, choose another family member and do the same.



Helping, Encouraging, And Refreshing, Together

Coming alongside the Pastor, his family, and the local church to assist in areas of encouragement, evangelism and education.

The Virtuous Woman III

A Closer Look at Proverbs 31

Four Lessons (9-12)



Bible Study Course



*“Study to shew thyself approved unto God,
a workman that needeth not to be ashamed,
rightly dividing the word of truth.”*

II Timothy 2:15

More Bible study helps are available at www.kjvhearthelps.com

LESSON 9: PROVERBS 31:24

VERSE 24: SHE MAKETH FINE LINEN, AND SELLETH IT; AND DELIVERETH GIRDLES UNTO THE MERCHANT.

- To work, or not to work ~ that is the question!

Previous verses mention Ruby's spinning, weaving and sewing skills. This verse indicates that she had enough time and energy left over to make even more than her family could use ~ and she sold it.

Her business endeavors seem to point back to her home . . . there are no indications that her work became an end in and of itself or drew her away from her primary focus (i.e. – girdle production was not a career for her; her family continued to be her priority).

- Some points to ponder before making the decision.

1. God clearly gives the role of "homemaking" to the woman of the home. Her responsibilities could be divided into two basic categories:

People – her husband (vs. 11-12); her children (vs. 28). Also see:

Psalms 127:3 – Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his _____.

Deuteronomy 6:6-7 – And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt _____ them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou _____ in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou _____ down, and when thou risest up.

Duties – the usual tasks that must be done in order to keep a home running smoothly.

Titus 2:3-5 – The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their _____, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, _____ at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not _____.

I Timothy 5:14 – I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, _____ the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak _____.

We should strive for excellence in all that we do, and not be satisfied with just "squeaking by" (vs. 18, 22, 24, 27) in our home responsibilities in order to take on a job outside the home.

Ecclesiastes 9:10 – Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy _____; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the _____, whither thou goest.

I Corinthians 10:31 – Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do _____ to the _____ of God.

It does not appear that Ruby took on work outside the home until her family's needs were well provided for:

- | | |
|---------|-------------------------------------|
| 11 -12 | sound relationship with her husband |
| 13 | made things for her home |
| 14 - 15 | grocery shopping, food preparation |

- 16 grew what she could in a vineyard
- 17 took time for physical activity / exercise
- 18 worked long hours to do her best
- 19, 21, 22 saw to the clothing needs of herself and her family
- 20 ministering to others was important
- 23 was a credit to her husband's reputation
- 24 now she goes "to work"!

2. Once my home obligations have been met, can I work outside the home and still maintain a proper balance of priorities in my life? In other words, can I do *both*?

Proverbs 11:1 – A false balance is abomination to the LORD: but a just weight is his _____.

3. Is it necessary that I work? Our culture / economy often makes it necessary for both husband and wife to work in order to pay for the high cost of housing, educational expenses, debt, etc. Sometimes, it is our desire to have "more," "bigger," or "better" that makes us want to seek work outside the home. Determine: is our desire for work driven by need, or by greed?

4. Is it profitable? Determine your actual spendable dollar-per-hour wage. Deduct from your hourly pay:

- Tithe
- Taxes (also, consider the impact your working will have when combined with your husband's pay)
- Child care
- Gas, parking fees, insurance, extra maintenance on car
- Clothes / accessories (pantyhose, jewelry . . .)
- Fast food lunches and breakfasts ~ these add up quicker than we like to think!
- Convenience foods at home
- Extra eating out for the family
- Higher prices paid for many purchases ~ not much time to "shop around"
- Miscellaneous ~ gifts for co-workers, holiday expenses, etc.
- Any other expenses incurred as a result of your working outside the home

Financial experts estimate that the COST of a woman working today can be as high as \$9 - \$16 per hour.

5. Could I make some adjustments to my lifestyle / habits that would lower my family's cost of living and enable me to stay home? For example: Where / how I shop for food and clothing; how I prepare food; decrease entertainment / recreation / eating out; develop a budget / pay off debt.

6. Is working the best way to keep in line with my "mission" as a Christian?

I Corinthians 6:20 – For ye are _____ with a price: therefore _____ God in your body, and in your _____, which are God's.

Matthew 5:16 – Let your _____ so shine before men, that they may see your _____ works, and glorify your Father which is in _____.

Romans 12:1 – I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a _____ sacrifice, _____, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

Some choices of how to use time are not wrong in themselves, but ask yourself these questions: Is this a good choice? Is this a better choice? Or is this the BEST choice? Strive to make the BEST use of your time as often as possible. (Read Matthew 25:14-30. In this passage, two individuals are commended as a "good and

_____ servant,” but another is referred to as a “wicked and _____ servant.”
The difference is found in how each managed what was given to them.)

Investing your time in people and the ministry of God is ALWAYS a better choice than investing your time in acquiring or maintaining possessions.

Keep eternity in mind when making your decisions.

7. How can I keep from filling my time completely with obligations? How can I avoid continually taking on more each time I am asked to do something? Consider responding with “Let me think and pray about that. Can I let you know early next week?” Then do it ~ pray and ask God for wisdom to do the right thing. This kind of a response will allow you time to think about how this change would impact your schedule, and how it will affect other priorities in your life.

James 1:5 – If any of you _____ wisdom, let him _____ of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be _____ him.

8. Scripture does not seem to forbid a woman working outside the home as long as she and her husband are in agreement and she is still able to maintain a proper balance and focus on her God-given roles and priorities. Many women in Scripture are referred to as businesswomen, or as holding positions of responsibility and prominence in their communities. In addition to Ruby, consider that:

Deborah was a _____ and a _____ (Judges 4:4)

Esther was a _____ (Esther 2:17)

Anna was a _____ (Luke 2:36)

Dorcas was a benevolent _____ (Acts 9:36-39)

Lydia was a seller of _____ (Acts 16:14)

CHALLENGE: I must determine for myself and my family where I need to draw the line. How much can I handle and still do my best? Realizing that this line will move as my circumstances in life change, I will seek to do what would MOST please the Lord at this stage of my life.

PUT IT TO PRACTICE! Re-examine your daily, weekly and monthly commitments. Pray about them. Are any of them diluting your time to the point that you are no longer able to keep your family and home a priority? Are there things on your schedule that consume your available time and energy, and offer no benefit to your family, or are not consistent with your mission as a believer? If so, as you are able, remove these things from your schedule so that the commitments that remain are Spirit-led and consistent with biblical priorities.

LESSON 10: PROVERBS 31:25-26

VERSE 25: STRENGTH AND HONOUR ARE HER CLOTHING; AND SHE SHALL REJOICE IN TIME TO COME.

Strength – the quality by which a body sustains the application of force without breaking or yielding; solidity or toughness; power or vigor.

Honor – high estimation; dignity; exalted rank or place.

Previous verses in this passage discuss what Ruby DID, this verse zeroes in on what she WAS. Ruby was a woman of character. Just as she would not think of leaving her home for the day unclothed, this verse reveals that she felt strongly about her “character clothing.”

- Ruby was a woman of personal integrity. Where did she obtain “strength and honour?”

Isaiah 41:10 – Fear thou _____; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy _____: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will _____ thee; yea, I will _____ thee with the right hand of my righteousness.

Ephesians 3:16 – That he would grant you, according to the riches of his _____, to be strengthened with _____ by his _____ in the inner man;

Proverbs 21:21 – He that _____ after righteousness and _____ findeth life, righteousness, and _____.

Proverbs 22:4 – By humility and the _____ of the LORD are riches, and honour, and _____.

What do you suppose is the reason that “she shall rejoice in time to come?” (Refer to Proverbs 31:28-31.)

VERSE 26: SHE OPENETH HER MOUTH WITH WISDOM; AND IN HER TONGUE IS THE LAW OF KINDNESS.

Wisdom – right judgment concerning religious and moral truth; godliness.

- What is the source of Godly wisdom?

Isaiah 11:1-2 – And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of _____ and understanding, the spirit of _____ and might, the spirit of _____ and of the fear of the LORD;

Romans 11:33 – O the depth of the _____ both of the _____ and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his _____ past finding out!

Colossians 2:2-3 – That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; In whom are _____ all the treasures of wisdom and _____.

➤ Is there another type of wisdom?

I Corinthians 1:19-20 – For it is written, I will _____ the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to _____ the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this _____?

I Corinthians 2:4-7 – And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of _____ wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the _____ of God. Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: But we speak the wisdom of _____ in a mystery, even the _____ wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:

II Corinthians 1:12 – For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with _____ wisdom, but by the _____ of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.

James 3:13-15 – Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth _____ from above, but is earthly, sensual, _____.

➤ Is Godly wisdom available for men / women today?

Luke 21:14-15 – Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer: For _____ will give you a mouth and _____, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist.

I Corinthians 12:8 – For to one is given by the _____ the word of wisdom; to another the word of _____ by the same Spirit;

Ephesians 1:17 – That the _____ of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of _____ and revelation in the knowledge of him:

Colossians 4:5 – _____ in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the _____.

How is Godly wisdom obtained?

James 1:5 – If any of you _____ wisdom, let him ask of _____, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it _____ be given him.

James 4:2 – Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye _____ not, because ye _____ not.

What qualities will Godly wisdom yield in my life?

James 3:17 – But the wisdom that is from above is first _____, then _____, gentle, and _____ to be intreated, full of _____ and good _____, without partiality, and _____ hypocrisy.

➤ It is the Lord that established “the law of kindness” regarding our speech.

Ephesians 4:32 – And be ye _____ one to another, tenderhearted, _____ one another, even as _____ for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

Kind – disposed to do good to others, and to make them happy; having tenderness or goodness of nature.

Keeping in mind the goal of kindness, what types of words ought a Christian to speak?

Spiritual	Psalms 145:11	“speak of the _____ of thy kingdom”
Appropriate	Proverbs 25:11	“A word _____ spoken”
Gracious	Ecclesiastes 10:12	“The words of a _____ man’s mouth are gracious”
Inspiring	Ecclesiastes 12:11	“The words of the wise are as _____”
Comforting	Isaiah 50:4	“speak a word in _____ to him that is weary”
Encouraging	Ephesians 4:29	“good to the use of _____”

➤ As a Christian, are there certain types of words that should NOT be spoken?

Deceitful	Psalms 50:19	“thy _____ frameth deceit”
Slander / gossip	Psalms 101:5	“whoso _____ slandereth his neighbor”
Discord sowing	Proverbs 6:16-19	“These six things doth the Lord _____”
Evil whispering	Proverbs 16:28	“a whisperer separateth _____ friends”
Talebearing	Proverbs 18:8	“The words of a talebearer are as _____”
Backbiting	Romans 1:28-30	“Backbiters, _____ of God”
Bitter / angry	Ephesians 4:31	“bitterness, and wrath, and _____, and clamour”
Vain talk	Titus 1:10	“vain talkers and _____”

➤ When I have a problem with my speech, what Scriptures can I claim?

Psalms 141:3 – Set a _____, O LORD, before my mouth; _____ the door of my lips.

Psalms 19:14 – Let the _____ of my mouth, and the meditation of my _____, be acceptable in _____ sight, O LORD, my strength, and my _____.

Proverbs 13:3 – He that _____ his mouth keepeth his life: but he that openeth wide his lips shall have _____.

Proverbs 21:23 – Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his _____ from _____.

James 1:26 – If any man among you _____ to be religious, and bridleth _____ his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is _____.

I Peter 3:10 – For he that will _____ life, and see _____ days, let him refrain his tongue from _____, and his lips that they speak _____ guile:

CHALLENGE: Think about the type of wisdom that you allow to guide you. Is it Godly wisdom, or “the wisdom of this world”? Commit to spend time in the Word of God each day to receive His wisdom and direction for your daily walk as a believer.

PUT IT TO PRACTICE! Identify specific areas of your speech to improve that you might better please the Lord. Claim Psalm 19:14 and seek each day to speak words that are pleasing to God and edifying to those around you.

LESSON 11: PROVERBS 31:27-29

VERSE 27: SHE LOOKETH WELL TO THE WAYS OF HER HOUSEHOLD, AND EATETH NOT THE BREAD OF IDLENESS.

The Hebrew word “tsaphah” translated “looketh well” means “to lean forward and peer into, to espy, look up or investigate, to observe, to be on the lookout, to wait and keep the watch.”

- The word “household” refers not to duties, but to people.

Genesis 18:19 – For I know him, that he will command his children and his _____ after him, and they shall _____ the way of the LORD, to do _____ and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.

Deuteronomy 14:26b – . . . and thou shalt _____ there before the LORD thy God, and thou shalt _____, thou, and thine household,

Judges 18:25 – And the children of Dan said unto him, Let not thy _____ be heard among us, lest angry fellows run upon thee, and thou _____ thy life, with the lives of thy household.

II Samuel 6:11 – And the _____ of the LORD continued in the house of Obbedom the Gittite three months: and the LORD blessed Obbedom, and all his _____.

- We need to make a conscious effort, each day, to “keep the watch” over the spiritual and emotional needs of our family members.

Some questions to ask:

- What direction are they going?
- How much hassle and heartache are they meeting along the way?
- What can I do to lift the load or encourage them to go God’s way?
- Where am I / what am I doing when they need someone to cheer their victories (a song they’ve learned, a project they finished, or a ministry they took part in)?
- How observant am I to little signals that my loved one may be veering off in the wrong direction?

If I am to know these things, I must listen with my heart as well as my ears, and be guided by the Spirit of God. I must be aware of what loved ones are thinking/feeling; what they are excited/worried about. Strive to be available, not just in presence, but in whole-hearted support to help meet their needs.

- Ruby had no time for idleness.

Idle – Having no value, use, or significance; worthless; useless; vain; futile; pointless.

Proverbs 19:15 – Slothfulness casteth into a _____ sleep; and an idle soul shall suffer _____.

I Timothy 5:13 – And withal they learn to be _____, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but _____ also and _____, speaking things which they ought _____.

Ecclesiastes 10:18 – By much slothfulness the building _____; and through idleness of the hands the _____ droppeth through.

“Like mother, like daughter” is a saying that we often hear used in a positive way. However, God’s Word tells us that this can also be true in a negative way. Read the following passage, filling in some of the negative qualities these women passed on from one generation to another. Note that one of the qualities is laziness (idleness).

Ezekiel 16:44-50 – Behold, every one that useth proverbs shall use this proverb against thee, saying, As is the mother, so is her daughter. Thou art thy mother's daughter, that _____ her husband and her children; and thou art the sister of thy sisters, which lothed their husbands and their children: your mother was an Hittite, and your father an Amorite. And thine elder sister is Samaria, she and her daughters that dwell at thy left hand: and thy younger sister, that dwelleth at thy right hand, is Sodom and her daughters. Yet hast thou not walked after their ways, nor done after their abominations: but, as if that were a very little thing, thou wast corrupted _____ than they in all thy ways. As I live, saith the Lord GOD, Sodom thy sister hath not done, she nor her daughters, as thou hast done, thou and thy daughters. Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, _____, fulness of _____, and abundance of _____ was in her and in her daughters, neither did she _____ the hand of the poor and needy. And they were _____, and committed _____ before me: therefore I took them away as I saw good.

Looking at all that Ruby accomplished, it is no wonder that she had no time for idleness.

VERSE 28: HER CHILDREN ARISE UP AND CALL HER BLESSED; HER HUSBAND ALSO, AND HE PRAISETH HER.

Blessed – Holy, sacred, consecrated (set apart); enjoying great happiness; blissful.

Praise – To commend the worth of; express approval or admiration of.

In all the world, these (children and husband) are the people we love the most, have given our lives to, and would go to great lengths to help. To be loved in return by those you love most, and enjoy expressions of that love, is part of God’s plan for real happiness.

VERSE 29: MANY DAUGHTERS HAVE DONE VIRTUOUSLY, BUT THOU EXCELLEST THEM ALL.

Virtue – General moral excellence, right action and thinking, goodness or morality, excellence in general.

Excel – Superiority in some quality, skill, or achievement over all others; to be better or greater than or superior to.

- What are some areas of a woman's life that can help her excel in God’s eyes?

Attitude (spirit) – Right, meek, quiet.

Psalm 51:10 – Create in me a _____ heart, O God; and renew a _____ spirit within me.

I Peter 3:4 – But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a _____ and _____ spirit, which is in the sight of God of great _____.

Behavior – Holy.

Titus 2:3 – The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh _____, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of _____ things;

Dress – Modest.

I Timothy 2:9 – In like manner also, that women _____ themselves in _____ apparel, with shamefacedness and _____; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array;

Speech – Gracious, sound, above reproach.

Colossians 4:6 – Let your speech be always with _____, seasoned with _____, that ye may know how ye ought to _____ every man.

Titus 2:8 – _____ speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the _____ part may be _____, having no _____ thing to say of you.

➤ God desires every woman to excel at His unique plan for her life.

Jeremiah 29:11 – For I know the _____ that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of _____, and not of evil, to give you an _____ end.

The mindset of women today is that by rejecting God’s plan for them, they are being “their own person.” The devil has made them believe a lie. They are not acting as individuals, but are conforming to the world.

➤ Will you choose to conform, or be transformed?

Scripture tells us in Romans 12:2, “And be not _____ to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your _____, that ye may prove what is that _____, and acceptable, and perfect, will of _____.”

Satan cannot transform us (only God can do that). He is the master of conformity (go to the mall or any other public place and observe clothing, hairstyles, attitudes). God is the author of individuality and unique difference (Examples: thumbprint, snowflake).

Conformation works from the outside in. Transformation works from the inside out; is a miraculous process; the result of the power of God to make us what He has called us to be.

Consider this illustration of individuality: In a room full of artists, each is given the assignment to paint a picture containing trees, flowers, a stream, and a path. How many different scenes would result?

Proverbs 31 provides Christian women with tools God has given us to use, and some instructions about the masterpiece we are to create. We are to take the tools and His instructions and do our very best to translate them into our daily life. This we do, not to earn God’s love or favor, but to express our love for Him. Not one of us will be a carbon copy of another. We will all be unique, as only the transforming power of God can make us.

CHALLENGE: The highest praise we can hope to get is that from our Heavenly Father. If we take these principles, and from a good and honest heart do our best to implement them into our lives, we can take great satisfaction in the fact that God says . . . “thou excellest them all!”

PUT IT TO PRACTICE! Spend some extra time in prayer for each member of your household, and ask God to reveal to you some specific areas of need in their lives. Think of some ways you could help or encourage them, then get busy . . . looking well to the ways of your household!

LESSON 12: PROVERBS 31:30-31

VERSE 30: FAVOR IS DECEITFUL, AND BEAUTY IS VAIN: BUT A WOMAN THAT FEARETH THE LORD, SHE SHALL BE PRAISED.

- Favor with men is conditional and fickle.

Genesis 30:27 – And Laban said unto him, I pray thee, if I have found _____ in thine eyes, tarry: for I have _____ by experience that the LORD hath _____ me for thy sake.

Deuteronomy 24:1 – When a man hath taken a _____, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some _____ in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her _____ of his house.

Proverbs 19:6 – Many will intreat the favour of the _____: and every man is a friend to him that giveth _____.

Proverbs 29:26 – Many seek the ruler's favour; but every man's judgment cometh from the _____.

- The beauty that man sees focuses only on the external appearance.

Genesis 12:11 – And it came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his _____, Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to _____ upon:

Genesis 24:16 – And the damsel was _____ fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her: and she went down to the well, and _____ her pitcher, and came up.

I Samuel 16:12 – And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was _____, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and _____ to look to. And the LORD said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he.

Esther 1:11 – To bring Vashti the _____ before the king with the crown royal, to shew the people and the princes her _____: for she was fair to look on.

Vain – having no real value or significance.

Physical beauty is “only skin deep” and fades with age.

Psalms 49:14 – Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; and their beauty shall _____ in the _____ from their dwelling.

Isaiah 28:1a – Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious _____ is a _____ flower . . .

- Outward beauty is neither a plus or a minus as far as God is concerned.

I Samuel 16:7 – But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look _____ on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have _____ him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the _____ appearance, but the LORD looketh on the _____.

- True beauty comes from a right heart, and a right relationship with God.

Ezekiel 16:14 – And thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy _____: for it was perfect through _____ comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord GOD.

- The woman who fears the Lord, causing her to maintain a close walk with Him, is praised.

Deuteronomy 31:12 – Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may _____, and _____ the LORD your God, and observe to _____ all the words of this law:

Psalms 33:8 – Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in _____ of him.

Praise will come from her family (v. 28), her God (v. 29) and her community (v. 31).

VERSE 31: GIVE HER OF THE FRUIT OF HER HANDS; AND LET HER OWN WORKS PRAISE HER IN THE GATES.

Fruit – what a tree produces; end result of a productive tree, plant or bush; the result, product or consequence of any action.

- We must make a choice ~ who will we serve with our lives?

Joshua 24:15 – And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, _____ you this day whom ye will serve; whether the _____ which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the _____.

- The choice that we make will determine the type of fruit that we produce.

Philippians 1:11 – Being filled with the fruits of _____, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and _____ of God.

Colossians 1:10 – That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every _____ work, and _____ in the knowledge of God;

Isaiah 5:2 – And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the _____ vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth _____ grapes.

Hosea 10:13 – Ye have plowed wickedness, ye have reaped iniquity; ye have eaten the fruit of _____: because thou didst _____ in thy way, in the multitude of thy mighty _____.

Galatians 5:19 – Now the works of the _____ are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, _____, lasciviousness . . .

- God works in the lives of believers so that they will bear more fruit.

John 15:2 – Every branch in me that beareth not _____ he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he _____ it, that it may bring forth _____ fruit.

Purge – to cleanse / rid of impurities, foreign matter, or undesirable elements.

- What can we do to insure a life-long good crop?

Psalms 27:4a – One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I _____ after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD _____ the days of my life . . .

Psalms 92:13-14 – Those that be _____ in the house of the LORD shall _____ in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in _____ age; they shall be fat and flourishing;

Stay faithful to the things of God every day. Don't let things slip as we get older. Continue to strive to have a close walk with the Lord, and be led by the Holy Spirit each day. We need to stay in His Word, seek Him daily in prayer, fellowship with other believers, and share our faith with others.

Matthew 7:17 – Even so every _____ tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth _____ fruit.

Remember, however, that not all fruit, even from a good tree, is perfect. If you fail, ask God for forgiveness and the strength to be victorious. (1 John 1:9)

- ". . . let her own works praise her in the gates."

Scripture uses the word "praise" 248 times. This is the only time that refers specifically to a woman being praised. She is praised for being focused on her God, her loved ones, and her home.

- Why should we desire to be praised?

Because our lives, properly lived, can be a source of praise to God.

Jeremiah 33:8-9 – And I will _____ them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me. And it shall be to me a name of joy, a _____ and an _____ before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the _____ that I do unto them: and they shall fear and tremble for all the _____ and for all the prosperity that I procure unto it.

1 Peter 2:9 – But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should _____ forth the praises of him who hath called you out of _____ into his marvellous light:

Psalms 103:20-22 – Bless the LORD, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. _____ ye the LORD, all ye his hosts; ye ministers of his, that do his _____. Bless the LORD, all his works in _____ places of his dominion: bless the LORD, O my soul.

CHALLENGE: In a society that puts so much emphasis on beauty, note that this passage makes no reference at all to Ruby's physical appearance. Her virtue comes from her character and her Godly priorities.

PUT IT TO PRACTICE! How much time do you spend getting ready each morning? How much time do you spend spiritually preparing for the day? Make the necessary changes to your schedule so that your time is invested in both physical AND spiritual readiness for the day.

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