



WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A WOMAN?

So many different ideas about what a woman is: (Pics) Beauty, family, power:

Society to working moms: Go back to work 6-8 weeks after having the baby. Make sure to break the glass ceiling and excel at your job- you can do anything a man can do! It is your job to show society this! Also, lose that baby weight and get back in shape, as quickly and as gracefully as possible. Maintain a clean, pinterest worthy house. Take the Christmas lights down. Recycle. Be Santa Claus, the Easter Bunny, the Tooth Fairy, -Maintain the schedule for the entire family. Don't forget they need to dress as their favorite book character on Monday, and wear something yellow on Thursday. In case nobody told you, if you have more than one kid you will need to buy new shoes approximately every other day. -Sorry, you are now out of vacation time because you used it all for time taking your kids to appointments or when your childcare is unavailable. You should go on vacations though. It's good to relax and unwind from work. Makes you a better employee. Don't forget the kids need healthy meals (and so do you! you are trying to lose that last 20 lbs before swim season right). Date your spouse! It's important to keep your relationship alive and fresh. Try to go out 1-2 times a month. Oh hey you should have a hobby too. It's important to have "you time". Also be well read, keep up with the latest pop culture and tv shows, and keep an eye on politics. Make sure to have friends. Social time is SO important. Self care though. SO important. Mental health too. Everyone should have a therapist. Good luck finding one that takes your insurance and has hours outside of your normal working time (out of vacation time, remember?). That leaves evening time when you want to hang out with your kids. But it's important, so make time for it. Going to have to get up even earlier so you have time to style your hair, wing your eye liner and search for a pair of pants that fits your new post baby (or multiple baby) shape. Get off your phone, turn off the TV, and enjoy your life. Enjoy your kids. THESE ARE THE GOOD TIMES make sure to love every minute of life because before you know it all of this will be in the past. (Sarah Friedberg) This is for men, too! **Pray!**

Vs 11 “An excellent wife who can find? She is far more precious than jewels.”

The Bible Honors women: First things that God says isn't good is the absence of a woman. Women are *never* said to have acted against Jesus. The only people said to have regularly given of their own means to support Jesus are women. Jesus' final act of ministry before he died was to minister to a woman. Women are the primary (first) witnesses to the empty tomb. Not at all a surprise that the early church was primarily women. Man could only have sex with a woman if he married her and he could only marry one woman. And if he came to it, he had to die for her! Bible honors women! 6 Pictures of a Godly Woman last one is the most important—just going to walk through the text and I'll pull from other places when it's appropriate.

A Woman and Her Husband

Vs 11 “The heart of her husband trusts in her and he will have no lack of gain. She does him good, and not harm all the days of her life.” Her husband trusts her and she does him good and harm. No lack of gain. She's the perfect partner. She's an all-star helper for this man. God created man and gave him a task, before Eve was even around. He's like a project manager. Problem is he's not able to compete his project.

He needs help. So God gives him a helper to complete the project and the women in Prov 31 is an all-star partner. Always doing him good and not harm and she works on this project with him.

That's Eph 5 says, "Wives submit to your husbands as to the Lord, for the husband is the head of the wife and Christ is the head of the church." This gets misunderstood.

Ladies, your husband will one day have a conversation with God about how he led your family spiritually and made every effort to cultivate a Christ-centered home. Are you doing everything you can to make sure that conversation goes well? Are you a liability or an asset to your husband as he tries to fulfill his God-given responsibilities to exercise sacrificial servant leadership in the home?" So, this submission is primarily spiritual. Are you doing good or harm as he tries to do that? Are you leadable?

A Woman and Her Children/Home

Vs 13-15 "She seeks wool and flax, and works with willing hands. She is like the ships of the merchant; she brings her food from afar. She rises while it is yet night, and provides food for her household and portions for her maidens." Vs 21 "She is not afraid of know for her household for all her household are clothed in scarlet." Vs 27 She looks well to the ways of her household." The word translated "looks well" is used of watchman watching over a city. She's working intentionally and with willing hands—she's not just passively tolerating the responsibilities of the home—she's intentional about cultivating a space where those around her prosper.

Caring for the home used to be honorable in our culture and now it's seen by modern feminism as something for women who gave up on their dreams. Honor to care for the home, this woman is praised by her husband, children, and community—let her works praise her in the gates vs 31 says. The goal isn't Home and Garden magazine photoshoot and Pinterest worthy cupcakes—this isn't an attempt to be Martha Stewart. It's creating a comfortable, safe, refuge for your husband, children and yourself to enjoy fellowship and community and rest. It is to cultivating a Christ-centered retreat that you and your family want to come home to. It's about making an environment where guests feel welcome where unbelievers feel comfortable as your forge relationships at the dinner table. Managing the home, should go in the "facilitating discipleship" category. And for that reason it's not just the job of the woman.

This is doesn't get said enough, if you look at 1 Tim. 3:4-5, "He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, 5 for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church?" So this isn't man works a job woman works the home. That's "traditional" but it's not "biblical". Men and women are partners in the home and while women do play a unique role in nurturing and caring for the home, men are called to actively involved as well.

Now really quick, let me talk to my singles. "I'm not married, I don't have a family" How does this relate to me? Well, some of you are perfectly happy not being married and are really seeking it out. And I would simply say that you need to focus on being a spiritual parent like Paul. Paul was never married but he considered himself a Father to people like Timothy because he introduced them to Christ. Making disciples is your being fruitful and multiplying spiritual children. And you use your home to do that. Without a husband and children you have a unique availability to use your home as a disciple-making headquarters and have both unbelievers and believers at your dinner table and on your couch.

Some of you *do* want to be married. You do want to be a wife and mom and I would simply tell you to pray for your husband and your kids and in the meantime cultivate these qualities in yourself. Altar doesn't change that. Altar doesn't change you into a trustworthy, diligent, leadable woman who works with willing hands. The best thing you could do for your husband and kids is work on you. Husband/Home...

A Woman and Her Work

Vs 27 says "she looks well to the ways of her household and doesn't eat the bread of idleness." Women are made to work! Not made for free time. Not just go lurching and pursue hobbies. Adam and Eve worked together—not just Adam. And if you stay home with your kids that is an exhausting job. And if you have kids and you're working outside the home, that can also be exhausting, but either way women were made to work hard. This woman is getting it done. Vs 16 "She considers a field and buys it, with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard." Vs. 18 "She perceives that her merchandise is profitable" vs 24 "She makes linen garments and sells them; she delivers sashes to the merchant." This woman is a legit entrepreneur. She's buying real estate, reinvesting her profits. She's intelligent, driven, and she's making bank. And notice she's doing this without abdicating her responsibility to care for the home. It's not like she's choosing a career over investing in her home—she's doing both—and she does them both very well. And while the Bible does not command women to financially provide, they certainly have the options and when they are cultivating both their home space and their workspace well, they should be praised.

She's working, but not neglecting her home and she's not neglecting those around her vs 20 "She opens her hand to the poor and reaches out her hands to the needy." Poor people usually reach out to you! She is reaching out to them! She's being proactive. So please don't miss this, this woman works, and works well, but she doesn't find her identity in her career. She's not working to get rich she's working to enrich the lives of those around her; She's providing meals for her maidens, clothing her children in scarlet and helping those in need all out of a reverent fear of the Lord—that is biblical femininity.

A Woman and Her Words

vs26 "She opens her mouth with wisdom and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue." I'm just going to touch on this... It is hilarious to me to see how far the book of Proverbs goes out of its way to speak to women and their words. There's like this theme that keeps coming up.

(Prov. 21:9) "It is better to live in a corner of the housetop than in a house shared with a quarrelsome wife." (Prov. 25:24) "It is better to live in a corner of the housetop than in a house shared with a quarrelsome wife." (Prov 19:13) "A foolish son is ruin to his father, and a wife's quarreling is a continual dripping of rain." (Prov. 27:15) "A continual dripping on a rainy day and a quarrelsome wife are alike" (Prov. 21:19) "It is better to live in a desert land than with a quarrelsome and fretful woman." Nothing is ever quite good enough for you and you always let other people know it. The clothes aren't folded right, the dishes aren't done right, it's too hot it's too cold, the service isn't fast enough, the food isn't good enough, and you can't let another person tell a story without correcting every detail. It's impossible to please you. God understands this. Instead have wise words. Kind words, Encouraging words. Constructive words. So that you may build up and give grace to those who hear. A godly woman looks carefully to her words and to her emotions....

A Woman and Her Emotions

Vs 25 “Strength and dignity are her clothing and she laughs at the time to come.” I love this verse. She looks at tomorrow and all the things that could happen and all things people may think and all the adversity that may be heading her way and she has a good chuckle about it. Why?—Because she has an unshakeable confidence in the sovereignty and she’s fears him in such a way that she fears nothing else. What she knows determines what she feels. A godly woman is served, not ruled by her emotions.

She has what 1 Pet 3:4 calls a gentle and quiet Spirit, “but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God’s sight is very precious.” God’s not talking about introverts or people have a soft speaking voice. This is an inner quietness and it’s the result of a woman who is ruled by what she knows, not by what she feels. And because she knows the truth about God’s infinite goodness, glory, wisdom and sovereignty if you were to cut her heart open you would just see peace. Not because she’s unaware of chaos of life around her but because she’s extremely aware of the God within her and his sufficiency and power to sustain her and this enables her to look at the time to come and laugh. According to Prov. 31 *that* is what strength and dignity. Not a coincidence that they are connected—strength and dignity connected with an emotional framework governed by truth, not feelings.

Feelings are crucial. It’s not that they’re bad it’s that they’re broken. They lie to us. And because of that we cannot look to our feelings to determine what is true about God or ourselves or anyone else. We need truth-shaped feelings. And I see too many people—especially women—who have a feeling and then allow that to carry them to conclusions about something without letting the truth correct how they feel. And I’m pleading with you—don’t do it. You’ll never have a quiet heart, but a storm of emotion inside.

Let me just offer this when you have an intense feeling, “What do I feel?” “What is true?” And then exhort yourself toward orienting your beliefs and feelings around that. Feeling worthless? Got your feelings hurt?—Hurt feelings don’t mean that someone else is guilty. Are my feelings consistent with reality? If not allow what you know to correct what you feel. A godly woman is served, not ruled by her emotions. What I feel must be shaped by what I know.

A Woman and Her God

Vs 30, “Charm is deceitful, beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.” This verse provides the soil in which all the virtues before it grow. To pursue this vision of godly femininity, you don’t start at the beginning and work your way forward, you start at the end and work your way backwards. The fear of the Lord is the fuel for this whole thing. Calvin said that the fear of God is the root and origin of all righteousness.

What does it mean to fear God? It doesn’t mean be scared like scared of the dark. And it doesn’t just respect. The closest word we have is probably “awe”—joyful wonder—holy reverence—a trembling love for God. Fear, in a practical sense, could be used describe what you fear losing most—what you fear not having. We don’t often think about it this way, but what you fear losing the most, reveals what your heart reverse and longs for and cherishes the most. Fear reveals worship. What do you fear not having most? What do you fear losing the most? If I didn’t have or if I lost _____ life would hardly be worth living?

You see what you fear most will really determine how you live and what your live for. And if you don't fear God, you won't live for his glory. "1. We fear people because they can expose and humiliate us. 2. We fear people because they can reject, ridicule, or despise us. 3. We fear people because they can attack, oppress, or threaten us. These three reasons have one thing in common: they see people as "bigger" (that is, more powerful and significant) than God, and, out of the fear that creates in us, we give other people the power and right to tell us what to feel, think, and do." But friends that is simply not an option for us. We worship serve and are loved by an infinitely holy powerful loving God. Ps 89!!!

Beauty is fleeting—this woman doesn't fear not being a size 2. She doesn't fear not having perfect eyeliner. Why? Because she fears the Lord. If you stood before God's glory no woman would be thinking about how well she blended her neckline or about swimsuit season or how many Instagram followers she has. The bravest most courageous woman in the world isn't someone who doesn't have any fears. It's the woman who has the right fear...and is willing to live and die for it.

That's this woman! She doesn't fear what people think of the fact that she's working and making bank—bc she fear the Lord. She's not paralyzed by fear about whether her kids are going to turn out exactly like she wants—she fears the Lord. Her husband trusts her and she does him good—not bc she's always trying to please everybody but bc she's fears the Lord. How is she able to laugh at the time to come—because she doesn't fear her circumstances, she fears the Lord. This is her secret. She has found a kind of fear that causes all other fears to cease; that drowns out all the others. Fear one thing and you fear nothing else.

And I am burdened for our church and our culture who fear a thousand things—finances, beauty, and, reputation, career success. "Our greatest fear should not be of failure but of succeeding at things in life that don't really matter." (Chan ripping off D.L. Moody) We should so treasure so love so long for God and his glory that we fear living for anything but that. Fear doing anything that would take away from that. Fear placing our identity in anything else but that! A loving, gracious god who has come after us.

Garden of Eden they sinned, God came and they hid. God asks where Adam is "I was afraid." God saves and tells us not to be afraid. Do not fear I have redeemed you and called you by name. If you fear me, you don't have to be afraid!

Unbelievers have reason to fear!