

EVE

MIRIAM

*Deborah*

JAEEL

ABIGAIL

RUTH

ALL THE MARYS

MARTHA

*Priscilla*

**& YOU**

Biblical womanhood is the distinguishing character of a woman as defined by the Bible

When God created two genders (Genesis 1:27; 5:2; Matthew 19:4), He also instituted different roles for each gender. He designed the bodies and brains of men and women to work differently and to fulfill complementary roles.

The quest for biblical womanhood begins in the same place that biblical manhood begins.

“there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female,  
for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

*Galatians 3:28*

In Christ, we have equal value and equal responsibility to obey and serve the Lord. All scriptural commands about:

- surrender (Romans 12:1–2)
- service (Romans 12:1)
- and dedication (1 Corinthians 7:33–35)

apply equally to men and women.

So the Bible’s instruction for any woman who strives for biblical womanhood begins with her being born again (John 3:3). She must have become a “new creature” in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17) and take seriously Jesus’ words about the need to abide in Him (John 15:1–5). The Word of God must be her final authority in life because, if its authority is not clear to her, then she will become a judge of Scripture rather than letting Scripture judge her. This leads to compromise and eventual moral collapse (see Romans 1:22–25).

One common error in discussing biblical womanhood is to mix cultural stereotypes with scriptural truth. This mistake has kept millions of women from pursuing their dreams and developing their gifts. Many pursuits or careers were considered “for men only,” and women were expected to stay home and keep house. However, biblical womanhood does not mean that every woman must conform to a societal standard of femininity. For some women, embracing their femininity will mean they pursue various careers and embrace the gifts and challenges that are different from their male co-workers. For others, raising children and making a home is a fulfillment of their God-given desires. First Peter 3:3–4 sheds some light on God’s goals for His daughters.

He wants His daughters to dig more deeply to find the reflection of Himself that He placed inside them.

**A woman who walks with God radiates the glory of God to everyone she meets.** A woman who models biblical womanhood has a *gentle and quiet spirit*, that she can use to lead a corporation, head a maintenance crew, discover medical cures, and manage her household, and anything else the Lord gifts her in. In fact, as she allows the Holy Spirit to control her, God blesses her natural gifting to accomplish even more than she could if she tried to succeed in her own way.

“Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes. Rather, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God’s sight.”

*1 Peter 3:3-4*

When a woman turns her attention to the beauty of her soul, her attractiveness becomes a cause of her exaltation rather than her exploitation. *As she focuses on developing kindness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22), she becomes more like Jesus, whose attractiveness was not outward; yet the world has never produced such beauty (Isaiah 53:2).*

Godliness manifests itself in our lives when we are in control of our appetites and desires. We live in a worldly culture and must resist ungodly influences around us. One way a godly woman distinguishes herself from the world is by her *self-control*. *She practices restraint and does not give free rein to uninhibited emotions, attitudes, words, and appetites.*

- The godly woman controls her *thoughts*, taking them captive and making them obedient to Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5).
- She controls her *emotions* and doesn't allow them to control her.
- She controls her *appetites* and doesn't display an unbridled passion for food and drink.
- She also controls her *tongue*, which James tells us is like "a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell" (James 3:6).
  - The speech of a godly woman is one that edifies and encourages rather than tearing down with idle gossip.
  - The godly woman also does not allow profanity and "unwholesome talk" to come out of her mouth (Ephesians 4:29).

# Proverbs 31

The woman of Proverbs 31 isn't afraid of work. She gets up in the morning and gets things done. In the time of Solomon, this involved making fabric and sewing clothes, but verse 27 certainly applies directly to us today—*taking care of our responsibilities is a characteristic of Biblical Woman.*

Another characteristic of a Biblical Woman is *the grace to help others*. The Proverbs 31 woman ensures that those under her care receive what they need—food, clothing, protection. And she is able to serve others out of the excess of her work and the leaning of her heart. She has so internalized her role as a provider that it extends past her immediate responsibilities and into the community.

Beyond that, she's savvy. *She's educated about the world and the world of business*. She knows how to *use her skills to provide for her family*, and she's not afraid to go interact with that world, whether it be as a merchant or a buyer. She knows how to *use her strengths* to her best advantage, and she fully realizes how valuable her efforts are.

The Proverbs 31 woman not only knows her worth, she *knows her responsibilities to herself*. She would not be able to provide for others if she neglected her needs—both physical and spiritual. She makes sure her *appearance reflects her respected position* as an influence in her community.

*Her greatest strength is her wisdom*—her accurate judgment about the world and her influence in it. And she is quick to share the wisdom she has gained to encourage others to reach their potential.

# Women of God

A woman of God is first and foremost *a daughter of God*. Becoming a child of God happens through a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. When we trust in Jesus for salvation, we become new creations (2 Corinthians 5:17). God gives us His Holy Spirit who works in us and transforms us to become more like Christ. Most simply, a woman of God is a woman who has been saved by Jesus Christ and who submits to the work of the Holy Spirit in her. What does this look like practically?

A woman of God will seek to know God more through *reading His Word*, communing with Him in *prayer, fellowshiping* with other believers, and *listening to sound teaching*.

She knows that “all Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16–17), so she seeks to know what God’s Word says. She does her “best to present [her]self to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15). She also heeds James warning: “Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says” (James 1:22).

Part of doing what the Word says is having an active prayer life. Paul instructs us, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6–7). Similarly, 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18 says, “Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” A woman of God *approaches God with a grateful heart and casts her worries on God* (1 Peter 5:7). She trusts in God’s ability and His love, and so she brings her worship and her concerns to His throne (Hebrews 4:14–16).

A woman of God *obeys God’s commands to love others well*. Her speech is edifying and encouraging to others, not slanderous or filled with gossip or ill intent (Ephesians 4:29; 1 Peter 2:1–3). She is kind, compassionate, and forgiving (Ephesians 4:32). She helps to bear the burdens of other believers (Galatians 6:2; Romans 12:15). As she has opportunity, she tries to do good to all, especially those also in the family of God (Galatians 6:10). She is not conceited but lives with a spirit of humility (Romans 12:10, 16; Philippians 2:5–11). She does not grumble or needlessly argue or cause dissension, but rather tries to live in harmony with others (Romans 12:16, 18; Philippians 2:14).

A woman of God follows Peter’s teaching to “in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. *Always be prepared to give an answer* to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander” (1 Peter 3:15–16).

She attempts to “*abstain from sinful desires*, which wage war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us” (1 Peter 2:11–12).

A woman of God *eagerly does the work God has given to her* (Romans 12:11).

If she is an older woman, she *lives as an example to younger women* (Titus 2:3–5).

She *spends time with other believers*, encouraging them and being encouraged by them (Hebrews 10:24–25).

She is *submissive*, meaning she takes a “you before me” posture, as all Christians are called to (Ephesians 5:21). She heeds Peter’s command to “submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every human authority. . . . For it is God’s will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people. Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as God’s slaves. Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honor the emperor” (1 Peter 2:13–17).

She knows that *she is highly valued in Christ* (Galatians 3:28) and chooses to imitate Him by laying down her own self-will.

If she is married, she *allows her husband to lead the family* (Ephesians 5:21–33; 1 Peter 3:1–2).

She *honors her parents* (Ephesians 6:1–3)

If she has children, *she cares for them* (Titus 2:3–5; 1 Timothy 5:14).

She *manages her home well* and according to godly principles (Titus 2:3–5; Proverbs 14:1; 31).

A woman of *God’s beauty is of her “inner self*, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God’s sight” (1 Peter 3:3–4).

*Ultimately, the woman of God is a work in progress, a masterpiece of God’s, saved by His grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8–10), and becoming more like Jesus as she seeks to know Him and obey Him.*

# The Posture

## OF BIBLICAL WOMANHOOD

The Proverbs 31 woman and Ruth have taught me that true biblical womanhood has less to do with a title (wife, mom, single, etc.) and *everything to do with your posture of heart, surrendered and submitted to God, in fear and reverence of him.*

A biblical woman, a virtuous woman, understands three things:

1. A biblical woman understands **she is created in the image of God**.
  - *So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. (Genesis 1:27)*
  - *For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them. (Psalm 139:13-16)*
2. A biblical woman understands **she is redeemed as a follower of Jesus**, regardless of her roles.
  - *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise. (Galatians 3:28-29)*
  - *In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace. (Ephesians 1:7)*
3. A biblical woman understands **she is gifted and empowered by God**.
  - *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2:10)*

The biblical woman is a gospel-centered woman.  
She is created, redeemed, blessed, and gifted  
to be a blessing to those around her.

# What does it look like?

Proverbs 31 continues describing the virtuous woman in verses 13-25:

*"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. She considers a field and buys it; with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard. She dresses herself with strength and makes her arms strong. She perceives that her merchandise is profitable. Her lamp does not go out at night. She puts her hands to the distaff, and her hands hold the spindle. She opens her hand to the poor and reaches out her hands to the needy. She is not afraid of snow for her household, for all her household are clothed in scarlet. She makes bed coverings for herself; her clothing is fine linen and purple. Her husband is known in the gates when he sits among the elders of the land. She makes linen garments and sells them; she delivers sashes to the merchant. Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she laughs at the time to come.”

The Proverbs 31 woman exemplified great qualities because she really was strong, intelligent, capable, giving, resourceful, efficient and spiritually minded. Unfortunately, if women today are striving to be all of those things at all times, they will feel like they failed.

So, let's make it practical. It may be possible to fulfill the calling of Proverbs 31, but those qualities don't all have to be fulfilled simultaneously. Much of what is noted about this woman is what we are growing into as we become more like Christ.

To put it in more contemporary terms the Proverbs 31 woman did the following:

- She honored and respected her husband.
- She fed and clothed her family with the healthiest and finest she could afford.
- She invested the use of her skills in a personal business.
- She spoke wisely and kindly to others.
- She dressed herself attractively.
- She helped the poor.

Something about that list simplified it for me. It took away some of the guilt and shame of not measuring up and some of the confusion in not knowing what the expectations were. As a result of a better understanding of this passage, I feel like I can take a deep breath and give myself some grace to see myself as a “growing” woman of God who seeks to please the Lord.

Modern-day biblical womanhood

I believe that women have another force breathing down our necks as Satan reminds us of all we *are not* rather than all that we *are*. We find ourselves believing the lies of the Enemy, comparing ourselves to other women and struggling with the expectations of the culture.

It may be helpful, then, to realize that most women in the Bible were not frail and quiet. They were surprisingly bold and they said what they thought about the issues of their day. They overcame obstacles, fought through resistance and broke through social norms to take a stand for the One they believed in. These were not women of silence, weakness or passivity. They were impacting their communities and even changing the paths of many around them.



Much like the Proverbs 31 woman, we are called to be women of impact. *We are called to use our God-given strengths and talents, within each season of our life, wherever we believe the Lord is calling us to use them.* If that is within the home, we need to be strong and courageous as we serve our family. And if that is through a career, we need to pursue that with all our heart. In both scenarios, we are still women of God simply living out our calling in ways that may look different.

Be faithful to live your life one day at a time — giving yourself grace as you grow and develop into your own version of the Proverbs 31 woman. Instead of wasting your time looking to everyone else and everything else to decide what expectations should be on your life, spend more time looking up. Ask the Lord to direct your path. He is faithful, and He created you for a greater purpose than you can imagine.