

# Regarding the Virtuous Woman

Various Authors

## **Dear Editor,**

I appreciated your modern rendition of Proverbs 31 in your recent editorial. You have hit upon a frightening pattern in our churches; the denial and reversal of the God-ordained role of men and women. The future of our churches lies with our families and our children. Oh, that we would recognize how indispensable and vital a godly mother is to the lives of our children and our posterity! Young women must not be consecrated to self-satisfaction, college degrees and “fulfilling” careers. Couples must not be dedicated to the prestige of the larger home and the conveniences and pleasures our booming technology offers. They need, rather, consecration to God and dedication to marriage and children. God Himself declares that His Name is at stake in how our mothers behave in this regard: “That they (the older women) may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the Word of God be not blasphemed.” (Titus 2:4-5).

The cure is young women who marry recognizing their vital importance in the lives of their children. The solution is young men who marry with resolve to fulfill their role as the breadwinner and to lead their wives to the fulfilling of theirs. The help for this departure from truth lies with all of us; from pastors who are ordained to bring God’s Word, to the older women who no longer have young children. All of us are responsible. All this is for the blessing of our families and posterity. For the good of the Church. For love of God and for the glory of God.

*Scott Connerley*

*South Holland, Illinois*

## **Dear Editor,**

I was very blessed by your new article on the place of mothers. A subject that many fear to tread I fear. Many of us are afraid of confrontation, and the frowns of others. Well you spoke the truth in love, and I appreciate that very much. It is an area of great concern, an area of great significance. If the trend continues, our churches will deteriorate. I pray that God will use your words, and the words of others to impress these truths upon the hearts of our people.

*In our Lord*

*Jay Martz*

*Peace Church, Illinois*

## **Dear Editor,**

It was a blessing to see the issue of mother’s working opened up and biblically supported in what an honorable place the woman has in the home. If we as PRC women continue to find our work outside the home eventually our head will begin to swell and we will see the women in the elder’s seat. I do believe that there is a correlation here as we witness the effects of feminism in the church. Why is the pulpit silent in some of our churches in this matter?! It is a can of worms no doubt. But we have let it become so through the course of time. What evil has prosperous times brought into the church! Our covenant homes are not stronger for it, but as time goes on we will see the effects of working mothers bringing much grief and sorrow upon the church and our individual families.

I have a question or two that I would appreciate your thoughts on. In the 1st paragraph of your article you state that Proverbs 31 does not support the working mother; neither does any other text in the Bible. I agree 100%. My question is, does this issue fall under the category of Christian Liberty or should we be going to our sisters in Christ through Matthew 18 as we see that they are doing something contrary to scripture? If the husband in the covenant home believes that his wife can do justice in the

raising of their God-given children and also is able to keep up with her duties, say as a Christian school teacher, should we say then that this is really their business and that they will have to answer to this someday? Our Christian schools are staffed with mothers who have young children at home and who daily are doing their double duty. I have to admit that I do have a soft spot in my heart for our women teachers. Speaking to those who must juggle their time in this situation do indeed have a difficult time of keeping up with their duties at home and school. I do think that there is a time when a mother can teach and that is when her children are grown and out of the house and she feels the calling to teach in our school. Then you are talking of a mother who is in her late 40's and 50's, 60's, not the 20-30 year old moms that are in our schools today. I know too that the older women have an important place within the church as to the guiding of the younger women, but not all women are teachers, qualified to teach children in our schools. Should we go so far as to say that women may not and should not at any time in their lives teach in our schools? Where do we draw the line? May we draw the line?!

As I become older I see more and more the importance and responsibility laid out before me as to how crucial my place within the home means to me, my husband and children. How in the world can a mother who is in the work place, say only 2 days a week, deal with this situation in such a prayerful way and still do justice to her job?! I think our teenagers especially need us at home in these years in their lives and yet these are the years when many mothers feel the need and ease of mind to get out and work. Even though we might be seeing less of our teenagers at this point in their lives, the times and instances we see them are very crucial. Their world is just beginning to open up for them and they are in need of the guidance of us parents especially at this time. Sometimes the issue can not wait till supertime.

*In the love of Christ,  
Mrs. Deb Portinga*

**Dear Editor,**

Permit me to make a few comments regarding your version of Proverbs 31, written in the July, 98 issue of Beacon Lights. I find there some generalities that I cannot agree with. These are as follows: 1. "Proverbs 31 does not support working mothers." The virtuous woman in Proverbs 31 does reflect upon modern working women. She was a worker of great endurance and achieved much satisfaction in primarily caring for her family but also active in business activities (verse 14, 16, 18, 24). This is nothing to be ashamed of for she refuses to be idle but finds spiritual fulfillment in laboring while it is day for the welfare of her husband and children. 2. "...mothers who work outside the home are doing so contrary to the Word of God and to the destruction of their home and church." If this is true, there must immediately begin disciplinary work against those mothers who work outside the home. No exceptions! But let's not generalize. Each family has particular situations where there may be a need for a mother to assist in the financial support of her family (including Christian School tuition) and her children sense the need and are appreciative of this labor of their mother to the glory of God. Our Lord may also use this situation for godly friends or grandparents to more fully be an example to the children and thereby receive a more biblical upbringing. A single mother must almost necessarily labor with today's financial obligations. She needs grace and support, not condemnation. 3. "She provides food and clothing producing it right at home. She does not contribute significantly." Generalities—often condemning unjustly. She may more efficiently do some labors at another location and her financial reward may be great. The Lord gives the increase. Just don't neglect the needs of your children as they are the heritage of the Lord. It's not necessarily an either-or situation. It's not always the quantity of time spent with your children, but the quality of time spent with them.

The working mother who diligently labors to meet her family needs and still does not neglect her family will be appreciated and praised by most children when they are older and reflecting upon these labors. Then idleness will not be praised.

*Fraternally,*

*Frank Van Baren  
Loveland, Colorado*

## **Reply**

Proverbs 31 certainly does command the mother to be industrious; but she must be industrious in the sphere of her home and children, not in the sphere of a corporation or business. In fact, there is more work in a home with children than any one mother can do, and she must be so industrious in the work of her household that she has no more energy to work for an employer and make extra income! Verse 14 says “She is like a merchant ship;” this does not mean she is a merchant; verse 16 says “she considereth a field, and buyeth it;” this does not mean she is a realtor; verses 18 and 24 speak of her merchandise; it belongs to her, she is not employed by another. Her work is within the sphere of her home.

Should the church then discipline mothers who work outside the home? No. Church discipline is not a process of cleansing the church from every sin. Church discipline is the God ordained means for the repentance of one who teaches false doctrine or one who manifests a walk with Satan in such sins as those listed in the form for the administration of the Lord’s Supper. Helpful in this issue is the commentary by Van Dellen and Monsma on the Church Order. We read on page 301: When does error in doctrine or life merit discipline? When the sin of the transgressor gives offense, i.e., when a sin tends to lead others into sin, and when the guilty party rejects the admonition offered and persists in his sin. Not every sin and error in doctrine and life calls for discipline in the formal sense of that word. We are all imperfect. We all sin with word and deed, in doctrine and life. These sins should be exposed and condemned in the preaching of God’s Word and we should all be admonished by each other as believers, and particularly by the office-bearers as overseers at the time of home visitation or at special occasions. But discipline in the formal sense is not initiated unless the matter is serious and offensive, and unless the sinner refuses to repent and change, as we have indicated. The matter of mothers who find employment outside of the home is a problem that is to be addressed in the preaching, by the admonition and encouragement of fellow believers, and by the elders at family visitation.

Scripture leaves no room for a mother to seek employment outside of the home for financial reasons, even if they are without a husband and need to pay for school tuition. On the one hand God says “I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house,” (I Timothy 5:14) and that the older women teach the younger women to be “keepers at home.” (Titus 2:5) On the other hand, God says to those in financial need (especially widows) “If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed” (I Timothy 5:16). God provides for those mothers who are faithful to their calling to stay home with their children. First God calls the immediate family to provide financially, He does not call the mother out of the home to work. For those mothers in the church whose family may be unwilling or unable to help, God calls the whole church through the deacons (Acts 6) to help. Woe is that church which scorns the mother who comes for help! Woe is that church which does not cheerfully support the mother who desires to live according the will of God.

Are there mothers who can have a job and still be a great mother? No doubt there are. There are also women who are great leaders and orators, but God forbids them to be preachers of the Word. We may have all the pious reasons in the world to support what we do, but God says “to obey is better than sacrifice.” Saul also thought he knew better than God when he kept the cattle alive for sacrifices rather than destroying them utterly.

Can mothers make money more efficiently by working outside the home? Certainly, and they can even make millions. But God says that their work in the home has a value far above rubies. The world can not see this. By nature we can not see this, but by faith we can and do. The God who makes Himself known by the “foolishness” of preaching is also the God Who fulfills His will by weakest means.

Every mother with children under her wings who thinks it necessary to leave the nest in search of employment had better first prayerfully meditate upon the Word of God concerning her calling. She had better have an answer for God when He asks, “why are you working outside the sphere of your home?” Ed. ❖

Originally Published in:

Vol. 57 No. 9 September 1998