

The Woman That Feareth Jehovah

Proverbs 31:30

Unmarried and Devoted to God

I Corinthians 7:34

The Adornment of a Godly Woman

I Timothy 2:9, 10

Finding a God-Fearing Wife

Proverbs 18:22

She Does Her Husband Good

Proverbs 31:11, 12

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Now, there is the best description that could ever be given to a home and a wife. The unbeliever thinks he can go out and find more pleasure and happiness in the world. He will go to the bars and restaurants. He thinks drunkenness and partying will give him real joy and contentment in life. He is not satisfied in the home. And the unbelieving wife will join him. It is little wonder that so many divorces take place today. The believing husband does not have to go anywhere else than his own home with his wife to find his spoils. This is true because his wife is his spoils. She is his treasure.

I had a man tell me once, “You know, I go out and lay brick all day. And after work the men at work want to go and have a good time at the bar and share a few drinks with each other. I tell them no every time they ask if I would like to join them. I can’t wait to go home at the end of my day of work. There is no greater pleasure for me than to go sit in my house with my wife and children.” That scene is a rarity today, it seems! A man lacking no spoils in his home, that is, a home that provides all his treasures! The wife is a husband’s treasure and he finds his pleasure in her.

III. A Lifelong Relationship

One other thing this passage teaches us: the virtuous wife will do her husband good *all the days of her life*. Now, that is an indication not only of the permanency of marriage, but also of a happy home and marriage. All the days of her life she does her husband good and not evil. All the days of his life he safely trusts in his wife. That is a picture of a home blessed by God and His Spirit. That is a home where Christ dwells. That is a home that is conscious of God’s presence! In other words, the life of love that is exhibited here, selfless, overwhelming love, never grows dim. A godly husband and wife, as they grow old together and the vim and vigor of youth fades away, grow more and more inseparably attached to one another. The wife committed to doing her husband good all the days of her life and the husband with thankfulness praising her and trusting her. That is the home we must make, wives. Peace for a lifetime.

May God bless our homes with wives that will do their husbands good all the days of their lives. And may husbands recognize them and praise them for their labor of love.

THE REFORMED WITNESS HOUR

October 2, 2016
No. 3848

The Woman That Feared Jehovah
Rev. Wilbur Bruinsma

Dear radio friends,

Introduction

I want to thank the Reformed Witness Hour and you, the listeners, for the opportunity of speaking to you the next few months. It is always a privilege to share the gospel in whatever way possible. During my brief time on the Reformed Witness Hour this time I would like to address the place and work of women and men in the home and the church of Jesus Christ.

As Pastor Kleyn’s sermons pointed out, we live in the last days, the days prior to Christ’s second coming. The apostle Peter asks a pertinent question of us in II Peter 3:11: “Seeing then, that all these things shall be dissolved [that is, seeing that everything in this world is soon to come to an end], what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?” What kind of person ought we to be? We know that this universe is hastening toward the coming of the day of God. We know everything in this life will perish. How ought we to live in this world? Peter answers: we must be holy in conversation and godliness. That idea is going to be our focus as

we consider first a short series of broadcasts on the virtuous woman, followed by another on the upright man.

Today we study together Proverbs 31:30. Let me read that verse a moment: “Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.” We are going to apply this verse to believing women in general—not just to a wife and mother in the home, as is done in the context of this verse. We will have opportunity to do that in another sermon, but not today. Today we ask the question of believing women of the church, young and old alike, “what characterizes you as opposed to the women of the wicked world?” And what better instruction can we receive than that of a godly woman. Solomon’s mother, Bathsheba, taught Solomon the words he now records for us in Proverbs 31. In other words, the divine, inspired, infallible instruction of this chapter was written from the viewpoint of a woman in Zion. It contains no male bias. It is not slanted in the direction of a man. It is the clear testimony of a believer led by the Holy Spirit to write God’s

Word. And the women of the church do well to heed it.

THE WOMAN THAT FEARS JEHOVAH

I. Her Identity

Solomon asks a question in Proverbs 31:10: “Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies.” Obviously, a virtuous woman is hard to find. For that reason, if she *is* found, her price is far beyond the most precious jewel. She is priceless since she is so rare and so valuable. Indeed, a virtuous woman in today’s world is a rare gem. Yet, those who are not gem collectors are not able to determine the value of a precious stone even if they see one. For that reason, God Himself teaches us what makes up a virtuous woman. Our text identifies for us this woman. “Favor,” we are told, “is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman that fears Jehovah,” she is that virtuous woman! The one criteria that determines the true beauty, the true value of a woman is that she fears Jehovah. This is what makes her precious, priceless. She fears God. The one outstanding feature of a woman who is beyond price is that she fears God. This beauty is not outward. It reveals itself

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outwardly, but fearing God is rooted in the heart—it belongs to the hidden man of the heart.

Peter explains this in I Peter 3:3, 4: “whose adorning let it not be that outward 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 heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, *which is in the sight of God of great price.*” In other words, the fear of God is that which God by His grace and through the Spirit of Christ works in the heart—the spiritual center and seat of a woman. It is a work of God in an elect woman that comes with her salvation. There is no fear of God found in the heart of the unbeliever.

What is this fear that we read of here in Scripture? The Hebrew term for fear actually speaks of “trembling.” When we contemplate who God is, then we bow before Him and tremble. So great is God’s dignity and power, so great is His majesty and glory that we tremble before Him.

Our world is void of this fear of God. There are people who blatantly mock, criticize, and spit out hatred toward God. We hear such hatred from the

This means a husband goes off to work at the beginning of the day and knows that when he returns home again his wife will have done him good there. He does not worry or fret over it. He safely trusts in her. His comforts are considered by her, his mind is relieved of all the cares his wife takes on. He leaves the home knowing that everything he is interested in is kept safely by her. He will come home and see the smile of his wife and a welcome hug. With that kind of a wife, a ruby, he has no misgivings at all.

As one commentator says: his home is the home of his heart! Think of that, people of God. Satan works so hard to destroy the home and the family, by working hard to arouse suspicion and unhappiness in the home. He does this in the wicked world in order to destroy the home and family. But he works hard in the church to do the same. He knows that if he destroys the home and family he will destroy the church and the line of the covenant that God establishes in the generations of believers. There are so many unhappy homes simply because the wife does not seek to do her husband good all the days of her life. The blame is on husbands,

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too. There is far too much selfishness going on. It is the spirit of the world in which we live—living to keep self happy. If only we, by God’s grace, may be able to see the beauty of a home that is described for us here in Proverbs 31, we would guard ourselves from untold misery in our home. Why make our homes a miserable place to live? The fix is easy enough—but only by God’s grace.

A home where a wife does her husband good provides all the riches needed for a God-fearing husband. Notice the end of verse 11: “he [the husband] shall have no need of spoils.” Better: he shall have no lack of spoils. The word “spoils” refers to the treasure that is carried on a merchant ship. Pirates knew what the spoils would be if they were able to seize that merchant ship because contained on it would be that chest of money collected for the wares that were sold. Well, a husband who safely trusts in his wife fully understands that he does not need to seek any kind of treasure elsewhere than in his own home. He does not have to go outside of the home and raid another place to find his treasure. He has everything and more in the way of wealth in the home itself.

nor behave itself in an unseemly manner. Love is not easily provoked. It bears all things and endures all things. Love does not think evil of another, neither is it easily provoked. And if you want to be reminded of this love that a godly wife has toward her husband, all you have to do is keep your Bible open to I Corinthians 13. This is a love that is rooted in Jesus Christ. It is a love that reshapes—entirely reshapes—our view of marriage and our place in it. It rearranges our values and priorities in life. As wives we enter into marriage in order to serve our husbands and not in order to be served. We do not enter marriage begrudgingly or pulling our nose up at the tasks that lie before us. We cheerfully take up our place in marriage and do our husbands good all the days of our lives.

II. Her Husband's Trust

Here is the result, verse 11, “The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need for spoil.” Now, this is not an exhortation to husbands. God’s Word here does not say: “Husbands, let your hearts now safely trust your wives. She will do you good, but you must trust her!” That

is not what we have here in this verse. What we have here is what will naturally result when a wife does her husband good. When she does him good, his heart will naturally trust in her unless he is evil himself. That is a wonderful thing, you know: trust. We trust God because we know He will always do us good. We place our childlike confidence in Him. We throw our all upon Him. Well, that husband who loves his wife as much as she loves him will trust his wife—no, he will *safely* trust his wife. It is almost as if the Hebrew lays before us a redundancy—a repetition of terms. Trust and safely imply each other. When we trust someone, then we do feel safe in their care. We do not have suspicions that they might be doing us wrong or evil when we are not around. That really is trust. It is when we rely completely on another without fear or misgiving about them. We know we are safe within their care. There is nothing better in a marriage relationship than when there are no jealousies or reserves about one another. A faithful wife and a confiding husband are a mutual blessing to each other and this makes for a happy marriage.

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mouths of extremely popular talk show hosts. It is either that or people of this world find God humorous. They make God and Jesus Christ the objects of their jokes. But most people in the world today reveal no fear of God by simply ignoring what God commands in His Word and doing what they want with no fear of punishment.

The virtuous woman, however, is one whose heart has become the abode of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit has sanctified her in the blood of Christ. She is righteous and holy. She lives out of a true faith. And in that faith she knows God as Jehovah, the sovereign God who reigns over heaven and earth, the God who has called all things into existence and who upholds this creation and governs it to fulfill His sovereign will and good pleasure. He is the judge of all the earth before whom every man and woman must give an account. He sets the standards and demands of us to walk in His ways. And the virtuous woman fears that God. She stands in awe before Him and trembles at His power, majesty, and holiness. This fear of God determines her life in this world too.

Hand in hand with the fear

of God is the keeping of His commandments. We read in Ecclesiastes 12:13, “Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.” The virtuous woman in whom God has worked a knowledge of who He is knows her duty before God. This is how her godliness, her piety, her fear of God shows itself in her life. She does not walk in wickedness, but she walks in a way that pleases the God whom she fears.

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I know there are many women today who will claim

they fear Jehovah. There are many who speak of their love for God. But here is the ultimate test: do they know and seek to walk in God’s commandments and Word? Do they read God’s Word, know God’s Word, and then strive to conform their lives to God’s Word? Are such women more concerned with what man says or with what God says in His Word? Do they follow after the standards set by the world and society or do they direct their lives to follow after the Scriptures? There is a corresponding relationship between the fear of God and the knowledge of Him and how this comes to manifestation or fruition in life. The woman who fears God, strives to walk in God’s ways. And this is what makes such a

woman both rare and priceless! There are not many women around like that anymore. The examples of unbelieving women abound and are in our face all the time, but the examples of believing women are few in today's world.

Now, God's Word in the proverb before us gives those women who

are virtuous something to think about when it comes to favor and beauty. We learn that favor is deceitful and beauty is vain. Notice, God does not say that favor and beauty are sin, but they are deceitful and vain.

How true this is! Favor is deceitful. The term "favor" refers to the words spoken or actions used by a woman in order to catch the eye of a man or men. They are words or actions meant to win the favor or acceptance of others. It might be flirtatious mannerisms or words. It may be sweet, sappy flattery or superficial laughter. It may be mere friendliness and attentiveness.

That is what is meant by favor. Solomon writes that such favor is deceitful. Not that it always is, of course. A woman that fears Jehovah must reveal genuine friendliness. She must

be attentive, she must show concern for others. She must speak kindly to and about others. She must be sweet and happy. But she does not do this in order to win the favor of others. She

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does not feign these things. There are so many women in our society, however, that do! The Word of God here makes refer-

ence to the women of this world who are loud, gaudy, bold in their advancements. Isaiah in chapter 3:16 describes this type of woman: "the daughters of Zion are haughty and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go and making a tinkling with their feet." These were women of Zion, that is, the church who had become exactly like their heathen counterparts! These women were haughty, and walked with stretched forth necks as a peacock and with wanton eyes. What a perfect description of the women of fame in our society—women over which so many young women and men swoon! Their favor is deceitful! It is meant to deceive others into thinking they are a gem when in reality they are a worthless stone. Their actions and words are meant to catch someone else. But they are

discouraging to a husband than when he sees no cheerfulness or joy in his wife in her tasks, or when she constantly chides him for his actions.

Now, once again, husbands, there are times when

we bring this on ourselves when we are not giving of ourselves for the happiness of our wives. Sometimes our own sinful behavior brings on sadness. But even then, a wife, just as a husband, must examine herself to see whether she might be the cause of that unhappiness. There must be a mutual relationship of love and giving. It is always easy to blame the other rather than oneself for the evil we find in ourselves. In fact, it is the simplest way out—and modern psychiatry knows how to play on this—to blame our own unhappiness on someone else rather than acknowledging our own sins. A virtuous wife will do her husband good all the days of her life and not evil.

Why will she do him good? Well, first of all because she fears God! She is a God-fearing woman. She is the object of salvation! Her sins are forgiven her and she experiences the joy of her salvation. This in itself leads to cheerful and happy service to her husband. She considers her

own unworthiness before God and with this considers what God in His great love has done for her. Besides, she has been sanctified in the blood of Jesus Christ. In Him she is a new creature. Her thoughts

and desires are now toward God. That work of Christ is a powerful one, delivering His people from the clutches of sin, overcoming the unbelief, removing the darkness of sin. Through the cross the power of Satan has been destroyed. The Spirit of our risen Lord now dwells in our hearts and leads us into a deep and profound love for God. Out of her love for God, therefore, the wife gives of herself to her husband. She understands what Christ has given for her. And for Christ's sake she is also willing to give of herself in loving duty to Christ in her particular relationship toward her husband. And that is the second reason she does her husband good.

Out of the love of God that has been shed abroad in her heart she loves her husband! And love is of such a nature that we forget about ourselves and seek to please another. Love suffers long and is kind. Love is not puffed up with pride. It is not selfish. It does not seek its own

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her happy! For the life of me, I cannot figure out why my wife repeatedly does some of the things she does for me. But she does them—over and over and over again—as routine and humdrum they may seem to be to me. She does them. And while she is doing them she is humming or singing. She is happy. She is content because she knows they need to be done and she is happy to do them. And then, when I sit down and think about all the things I just simply take for granted that she does for me: cleaning, washing, dishes, finances, keeping dates and schedules, going places with me to keep me company—it boggles my mind! She picks me up when I am down, she admonishes me when I feel sorry for myself, she helps carry the burdens of my life. Marriage is so much more than merely the sensual, sexual relationship that the unbeliever makes it out to be.

And although the wife may have her rough times, nevertheless, for the most part she does these things and then puts up with her husband's grumpiness and frustrations besides. Wow! A virtuous woman does her husband good! She does him good! Husbands, do not be oblivious to what your wife does for you. You would not be the man you are today without that godly wife! Acknowledge her in these things. Praise her. Be tender towards her. And

strive your best not to lay even more burdens on her shoulders. Instead seek to help her in her work. The virtuous wife does her husband good.

And not evil! Ah, the contrast that Solomon now gives. The Bible gives us examples of wives that have failed their husbands. Eve was tempted by the devil and then, in turn, tempted Adam. She was first in the deception. Job's wife told him to curse God and die. Michal, David's wife, despised him in his worship of God. Rachel loved Jacob, yet brought idols into his family. Rebekah deceived Isaac together with Jacob. But then, we need not point the fingers at these misdeeds of other women, need we, women of the church? We know our own weaknesses and sins in this regard. We are not perfect in our words and actions either, are we? A wife does her husband evil when she is lazy and does not go about her tasks of assisting her husband. She does him evil when her husband comes home at the end of the day only to hear complaints and sighs or a constant nagging. God's Word wisely states in Proverbs 25:24, "It is better to dwell in the corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman and in a wide house." When a wife gives her husband bad spiritual advice, or assists him in his sin, or is constantly criticizing him, she does her husband evil. There is nothing more

deceiving, and many a foolish young man has fallen snare to this deceitful woman!

Solomon adds here in our text, that beauty is vain. The word for vain here is empty and fleeting.

Outward
beauty is
here today
and gone
tomorrow.
It fades.
Time takes

Mothers, teach your daughters
and your sons
the true beauty of that woman
who fears God.

If a woman or a man thinks that love will be found in outward beauty and sexual attraction, they have not discovered love. A woman can be drop-dead gorgeous on the outside but sour as a lemon on the inside. She places so much emphasis on outward beauty she becomes vain. And meanwhile, the uglier she becomes on the inside. And that is what is happening to so many women in our society.

Again, this does not make outward beauty a sin. God gives a natural outward beauty to many God-fearing women. Neither does it mean that a woman may not modestly and carefully adorn herself. But God's Word instructs us in I Timothy 2:9, 10 that a godly woman adorns herself with shamefacedness, with sobriety, and with good works.

Concentrate on what you carry in your heart, women of

the church of Jesus Christ! Exercise yourselves in godliness. Mothers, teach your daughters and your sons the true beauty of that woman who fears God. A virtuous woman is far above the price of rubies! She is a rare jewel!

Parents,
shape and
hone your
daughters
into those
rare jewels!

II. Her Virtues

This, then, is the identity of a virtuous woman: she fears Jehovah. That she fears God is who she is. But out of that fear of God flow forth the virtues of such a godly woman. We are told in verses 25 and 26 of Proverbs 31, "Strength and honor are her clothing;...she openeth her mouth with wisdom and in her tongue is the law of kindness." These are the virtues of a virtuous woman. Strength and honor are her clothing. She is clothed with strength. A virtuous woman is not a weak, helpless, incapable creature who is unable to make it on her own in this life. Neither is she the weak, impotent, and incompetent vessel in a marriage who is entirely dependent on the strength of her husband. Strength is her clothing! And if there is anything that Proverbs 31 teaches us about a virtuous woman it is that she is important in the

sight of God and in the church in her God-given role as a woman. Look at what she does for her family and household. Look too at what she does for the church of Jesus Christ both as a single and as a married woman. She is clothed with ability, talents, and gifts, all of which she uses in the service of the God whom she fears. She fears Jehovah, and it is in that strength that she goes forth in this life. She can do all things through

||| *She knows from God's Word
her place in the home
and in the church
and is happy and content there.* |||

Christ who strengthens her. She is able to war the warfare of faith in this life. She is able to stand against the fiery darts of the devil and to overcome in the blood of the Lamb.

And this too is her honor. She is clothed in honor too. She is not a lowly servant, she is not a slave, she is not a no-count. She is not to be abused as is often done in wicked and godless homes. She is honorable. She must be held in high esteem; she must be treated with respect in the calling God has given her in the home, in the church, and in society.

But the honor this passage speaks of is also of a spiritual nature. A woman *that fears Jehovah* is clothed with honor. She is not the wanton, lewd,

deceitful woman of this world. She is not obsessed with her own beauty. She is not one who is out to satisfy her own wants and desires. She loves God. She loves His Word and commandments. She seeks the welfare of others. She is humbled by her own sins and acknowledges that her worth is found only in the cross of Jesus Christ. She knows from God's Word her place in the home and in the church and is happy and con-

tent there. And for this reason, she is most honorable and respected.

Words of wisdom and kindness are found in her mouth. Ah, yes, a woman that fears God is characterized by this virtue: she is wise. She knows the Word of God. It is in her heart. It is a living Word. That Word imparts wisdom to her ways. She is able to determine what to do in the various circumstances in life because the Word is her guide. But more, she speaks words of wisdom to others. She does not involve herself in the foolish prattle of the wicked. She is not vain in her conceits, talking only about herself. She is not a bragger or self-centered. She is ready to speak words of instruction and warning. The words of encouragement are

to her husband and his good. Whatever may benefit *him* is her priority. Now, once again, a husband does his wife good too. He gives of himself to please his wife too. But our focus is on the virtuous wife. A good marriage, dear listener, always focuses on two saints giving of themselves unselfishly to please their spouse. Yet, this is not

||| *A good marriage
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giving of themselves unselfishly
to please their spouse.* |||

a mechanical thing either. I mean, the wife is not a robot mechanically programmed to perform certain actions that will please her husband. She has tasks to perform in her home and family. She is fully aware that she was created as a help for her husband. For that reason, she sets herself to do that which will make her husband shine. Certainly, the saying, "Behind every good man is a good woman," is true. We learn in Proverbs 31:23 that her husband is known in the gates when he sits among the elders. Why? Because the clothing she makes is silk and purple. Her husband is well clothed by her hands. Now, that may seem trivial (although some of us husbands can be thankful that our wives pick out our clothes for us, given our own taste). That may seem trivial, but the point behind this is that a godly wife

is out to make sure her husband has a good name.

But there is more implied in this term "good" as well. In reality, verses 13-27 of Proverbs 31 is an explanation of how she does her husband good all her days. Notice some of these

||| ways: she willingly works with her hands. She rises when it is yet night

and prepares food for her household. She stretches her hand to give to the poor. She looks well to her household. She opens her mouth with wisdom. She busies herself with these matters. Obviously, she is not lazy! She performs tasks in the home that her husband would probably neglect or at least would not have the time to do. She completes him. She does those many things that perhaps even go unnoticed by him each day. She keeps for him a clean home to which he loves to come at the close of his workday. She sees to it that he is clothed with clean clothes. And so the list can go on.

But there is another aspect to the term "good" in our text. It carries with it the idea of cheerfulness and happiness. The wife in her labors for her husband does so because to make her husband happy makes

THE REFORMED WITNESS HOUR

October 30, 2016
No. 3852

She Does Her Husband Good
Rev. Wilbur Bruinsma

Dear Radio Friends,

Introduction.

In our broadcast today we focus our attention on the virtuous woman in marriage. We will consider what it is that makes a good wife. Just as in the last broadcast, the same is true today, this will be for the benefit of both the women and the men of the church. Not only are we as wives to learn from the important passage of God's Word before us. But we as men too must learn to love and appreciate our wives for what they are and what they do for us. Again, we turn to the wisdom of Solomon in Proverbs 31 and consider verses 11, 12: "The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life."

As we noticed in a previous broadcast when we studied verse 30 of this chapter, the majority of this chapter is devoted to describing a virtuous woman. And, indeed, we will need to take into account the context in which we find our text today. We will take notice exactly how a virtuous wife does

her husband good and not evil. We will learn why a husband's heart safely trusts her. We will learn why he is in need of nothing else since he will find it all in his wife. When we consider the Word of God in the verses we consider today, godly wives, we will receive encouragement but we will also see our weaknesses and receive encouragement from this Word of God.

***SHE DOES HER
HUSBAND GOOD***

I. *The Wife's Good*

We start with the second of the two verses we consider. We do so because verse 12 explains to us what a virtuous wife does in order to gain the trust of her husband. The question we immediately confront is, what is it this good a wife does?

The term "good" here in the Hebrew expresses two inter-related ideas. The first is to confer benefits on another. A godly wife's actions or deeds are of benefit to her husband. To use the words of Paul in I Corinthians 7:34, she cares how she may please her husband. Her goal as a wife is to give of herself

in her mouth. And this is true because she is also kind.

Do words of kindness characterize you, women of Zion? Let all malice and bitterness be put far from you, the Bible teaches us. Do you fear Jehovah? Are you a virtuous woman? Then this virtue must be found in you too. We must be willing to think no evil and speak no evil of a fellow saint. Even to those who are outside of the church, words of humble wisdom and kindness must be found in what we say. The tongue no man can tame. It is an unruly evil. But Christ has overcome our sinful flesh and the power of sin in us. Let not sin reign in your mortal bodies. We hold our tongues in check and speak kind, gentle, encouraging words about and to others. This is a virtue. And these are the virtues, now, that must characterize the women of the church. When they do, then you are the precious ruby that is spoken of here in this chapter. You are priceless.

III. *Her Praise*

Let me read the proverb we consider one more time: "Favor is deceitful and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised." The woman that fears the Lord shall be praised! Literally, that term praise means to be bright

and clear. When the virtues of a woman that fears God shine forth in her life, then others will speak of them. They shall shine forth brightly. She will be honored, adored, and thanked for what she does. This is her praise. The virtues themselves give cause for praise. In the home, fathers and children rise up and praise their wife and mother—at least, I hope they do! I pray that we do not have husbands and children that simply use their wives and mothers and never recognize what they do. And never a word of praise and thanks? What a wretched husband and children those are! In the church, women must be praised for their labor and for the invaluable work they do. Where would our families and churches be without godly women who devote themselves to our welfare?

But that is not the all-important praise that must be given to the virtuous woman. It is the praise that God Himself in His Word bestows on those who fear Him. *God* praises you, godly women. *He* is pleased with you. You are His cherished possession! Thank you grandmothers, mothers, and single women for what you do for us. The church could not exist without you. Your role is invaluable. And, indeed, your price is far above rubies.

THE REFORMED WITNESS HOUR

October 9, 2016
No. 3849

Unmarried and Devoted to God
Rev. Wilbur Bruinsma

Dear Radio Friends,

Introduction

Today in our broadcast we are going to study the Word of God found in I Corinthians 7:34. That verse reads, “There is a difference between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband.” I Corinthians 7 is a unique chapter of the Bible. It is wholly devoted to practical instruction concerning marriage and the single life. The difficulty that many have with this chapter, however, is that Paul seems simply to be passing on good advice. Advice that we can either heed or not heed.

For example, we read in verse 12 of this chapter, “But to the rest speak I and not the Lord.” Or in verse 25 Paul writes, “Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful.” How are we to take this instruction of Paul in this chapter then—as God’s Word to us or as Paul’s

word of judgment on certain matters? Paul answers this question for us in the very verses we quoted.

Paul first of all calls the attention of his readers in Corinth to the truth that Christ, the Lord of the church, had not given any particular instruction on the matters he brings up. Christ during His earthly ministry did not teach concerning these matters. Paul could not appeal, therefore, to what Christ had taught His apostles.

But Paul does call attention to his apostolic authority: verse 25, “I give my judgment as one that has obtained mercy of Christ [to be an apostle] to be faithful, that is trustworthy.” The idea is that what Paul teaches regarding these matters is trustworthy because he was given apostolic authority. Paul’s judgment therefore is authoritative! He speaks on behalf of Christ. This he confirms in verse 40 when he writes: “and I think that I have the Spirit of God.” Not that Paul is doubting or is quite sure he is led by God’s Spirit, the Spirit of truth, but when Paul says “I think,”

They are not all Israel that call themselves Israel. In the faithful church there are those who do not fear God even though they may go through the outward motions. A man must look for a woman who fears God—a fear that is rooted in the heart but that shows in her adornment. She will walk in humility and kindness. She will bring forth works accordingly. That is what a man should search for. And that is what a woman must look for in a man that is searching.

In other words, the searching of our text is a sanctified searching. It is a searching that flows out of a redeemed heart that is looking for a woman set apart by God unto holiness. A man ought never to be interested in mere outward beauty. He ought not to be lured in by that woman of this world that has nothing to offer if she were to become a wife. He must look for a woman who is sanctified—set apart and made holy and who is therefore chaste and dedicated to serving the Lord. And that means that the man needs to be holy and set apart as well. His searching must be sanctified in order to lead him to a wife that is virtuous. Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing! And such a good wife will do that man good all the days of his life.

III. Subsequent Blessing

A man who finds such a wife, God’s Word informs us, “obtains favor of Jehovah.” God approves of this deed. God’s divine favor rests upon such a man. He has found a good thing. And God will guard and preserve such a man and his wife. When the hardships of marriage confront them, God will protect married persons sometimes when they are least deserving of it. This is the subsequent blessing that is given to that man who finds a wife. God is pleased with him. Such a man will take delight in his wife, and if the Lord grants children, they will grow up in his house and be a blessing to him.

This is good. Not just objectively does a man find a good thing. A wife of this sort is good. She is what God wants. But subjectively a man finds this wife good for him too. She will do him good all the days of her life. That is a real blessing! Every person wants a wife or a husband that will make them happy. Otherwise, why marry? Well, this is how you will find happiness with your wife. When she knows why God wants her to enter marriage and finds her joy in that too. He that finds a wife finds a good thing!

||| *Such a good wife will
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all the days of his life.* |||

even three generations removed now from a proper view of courtship, fornication is a must. It is necessary because love consists of sexual interest in each other. How can a man find out if he is in “love” with a woman unless he have a sexual relationship with her? How horrible! But even if dating is used only to have fun, it is being misused. Dating is a serious tool that ought to be used to search for a wife! It is necessary to find out if the woman we are dating is indeed that gem of great price! Dating therefore must always be taken seriously.

By means of it a young man and woman are searching for the right God-fearing mate with whom they will spend the rest of their life! It

is that serious. It is not fun and games. I have to find a virtuous woman that will love me and cherish me for the rest of her life. And vice versa. Marriage is until death us do part, after all! How important for me to search carefully to find a wife that is such a good thing that together we can spend a lifetime of joy with one another!

But where am I going to find this rare gem? Where do I find a God-fearing woman? When

I shop for a ruby, do I go to a hardware store or a grocery store? Obviously not; I go to a jewelry store. And I am pretty fussy about which jewelry store I visit too. I want a reputable one—not one that will sell me a clouded, chipped ruby. Well, where am I going to search for a wife? In the church. I do not find a God-fearing wife with all the virtues of a pious woman in the wicked world. I do not find her sitting in some bar. I will not find her at the parties, the clubs, the chat rooms of this unbelieving world. That is like looking for a ruby in Home

Depot. I will look in the church. This is where a woman who fears the Lord will be found. Her salvation calls her out of this world and into the

church. That is where a God-fearing husband will be found too.

Believers bind themselves to the church of Jesus Christ in this world. The church institute, therefore, is where one will find a godly spouse. And even in the church we must be particular. It will not be just any church where we will look. We will look for a woman or man who is of like faith with us. And even in the church where there are those of like faith I will be careful.

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he means “I believe” I have the Spirit of God to impart to you the truth.

At the same token, we need to be careful too that we do not jump into a legalistic interpretation of the matters set down here in this chapter. Paul addresses God’s saints as they live in the liberty that belongs to them in Christ. Hard and fast rules can often be laid down in these areas of life that will lead us into frustration and legalism. That is obviously not Paul’s intent. He gives sound, infallible advice as to how to deal with questions that surround single life and marriage. We must bear that in mind today too as we consider the instruction of this Word of God concerning single women in the church. This Word of God is both instructive and encouraging to single women, who also are given by God a place in His church.

UNMARRIED AND DEVOTED TO GOD

I. The Unmarried Woman

The verse we consider in today’s message distinguishes between two types of women in the church: married and unmarried. We need to be clear that both of these types of women are believers who fear God. They both are virtuous women whether married or unmarried. From the point of view of their

salvation, therefore, there is no difference. Both are saved in the blood of Jesus Christ and are precious in God’s sight. They are His dear children whom He has chosen and loved from eternity in Christ. It is clear from this entire chapter that Paul holds both types of women in highest esteem. Both have their own particular place in the church.

Neither does Paul, as an apostle, prefer one over and above the other. We say this because Paul is oftentimes accused of being a male chauvinist. He was single himself and is, at times, accused of being anti-marriage and anti-women. This is not true, of course. Scripture is God’s Word—not Paul’s. Paul does not state anywhere that single life is to be desired more than married life. He only confirms what is the truth: that one is able in single life to devote himself more to the study of God’s Word. And it is with that in mind that we also must understand the instruction given us in the verse before us. Paul mentions both the married and unmarried woman, but his instruction in this verse addresses the single woman.

But then, it is necessary for us to identify the single women in the church. You see, this verse has a little different translation than what is evident in our KJV. When we read, “There is a difference also between a wife

and a virgin. The unmarried woman cares for the things of the Lord," we are left with the impression that the virgin and the unmarried woman are one and the same. A more literal translation of this verse, however, reads this way: "Even this difference: the unmarried woman and the virgin care for the things of the Lord." Now, it can very well be that the unmarried woman and the virgin are synonymous, that is, one and the same. After all, a virgin is an unmarried woman. But our text can also be translated in such a way that the unmarried woman and the virgin are two classifications of women who stand outside of marriage. And I believe that is the preferable translation too: "the unmarried woman and the virgin care for the things of the Lord."

Let's examine this classification.

There is, first of all, the virgin, that is, the young maiden who is of marriageable age and who, because she is a virtuous woman, is also a virgin. The term "virgin," therefore, implies more than simply the truth that this woman has come of age and is old enough to become someone's wife. It implies that she has kept herself pure and chaste. She has not allowed herself to become sullied by the sin of fornication by giving herself to a man outside of marriage.

This is indeed a rarity in today's society and takes truly a believing young woman who loves and keeps God's commandments. Virgins—whether women or men—are usually mocked in today's society. The unbelieving outside of as well as inside of the church open their eyes wide and chuckle when they learn this of us. But truly a virgin is a woman that fears Jehovah! The Word of God in our text places the virgin who has not married over against that young woman who has married.

There may be a couple of reasons that a young woman of this age does not marry. The first is, she would rather not marry. For one reason or another she prefers to remain single. This is not sin. Just because the majority of women in the church set their designs on marriage does not mean every one of them does. Of course, the virtuous woman does not desire to remain single in order to fulfill her own lusts or to live a life of frivolousness and irresponsibility. Paul writes concerning single people as well as married in verse 31: "they that use this world as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away."

The second reason a single woman may remain unmarried is because the Lord, in His providence, has not brought to her a God-fearing man to marry.

blessed, most difficult task of bringing forth and training the next generation of believers. I cannot think of a task more laborious and painful, yet more rewarding and all glorious than that! A godly man who finds a virtuous woman will also find this kind of tender, yet determined attitude in her. And that too makes her a rare gem. There are not many women today anymore that can lay hold of that vision and embrace it. There are not many women today who can stand up under the mockery, revilement, and condemnation our present society heaps on them. But, men, whoever finds that kind of wife finds a good thing!

II. Sanctified Searching

"Finds." That word means acquires. And when we find something it is only through searching. It is true, I suppose, that if something were as common as grass it would not take much in the way of searching. But if we lived in a desert, it would take a lot of searching to find that grass. The same is true of a wife—a good wife—a wife that is God-fearing, who is characterized by the virtues of strength, honor, wisdom, kindness, and humility. Or, to use the figure we have already used today, since the price of a virtuous woman is far above rubies she is a rare gem.

We are not going to find

a ruby by digging in our back yards. To find a ruby a man will have to search. It is a rare gemstone mined mainly out of countries in the Far East. Only a few rubies have been found in the United States: in Montana, Wyoming, and the Carolinas. It is considered one of the four most precious gems in the world. I say this only because the same can be said of a virtuous woman who will make a good wife. She is not to be found everywhere and it takes some searching to find her. But when a man finds and acquires her he has found a good thing—a rare commodity! So a man, according to this Word of God, goes in search of this wife.

The method used in today's society is that of dating. It is no longer courting, which in my estimation would be much more useful in finding the right wife. But today a man takes a woman out with him on a date. The problem is that our wicked, unbelieving society has defined dating in a sinful way. Dating has become recreational. The emphasis is on a man taking a woman out to have fun with her. He takes her out once or twice with no intention to marry her. Many men in this wicked world (and women, too, for that matter) use dating to have casual, noncommittal sex with each other. Dating and fornication have almost become synonymous in our present society. In the mind of an unbeliever, two or

end. He dwells in eternity and He always was and always will be God. Also, this name implies that this God does not change. He need not change. He *is*. He is ever the same.

Now, we may ask what all of this has to do with a man finding a good wife, but obviously Solomon finds that to be the case in the verse we have before us. This is true because the name Jehovah is the name of God's covenant. God has chosen a people unto himself in eternity in Christ. These people He always views in Christ because in Christ their sins are covered and they are righteous before Him. They are, therefore, God's people. He has entered into a relationship of love and fellowship with them. And in that love He makes a promise to them that He will be their God to a thousand generations. In other words, God's covenant follows His church from the beginning of time to the end in each succeeding generation.

In His unchanging faithfulness to His church, God has promised that He would gather and save a church unto Himself out of the generations of believers. The man who finds a wife who knows and believes this truth has found a good thing. A

woman was created by God in order that she and her husband might find physical pleasure in each other. That was a part of her creation. She was created to meet for her husband—perfectly adapted by God to procreate. God did not give this gift to a husband and wife merely for their pleasure. The sexual relationship is indeed viewed by the wicked in this way—it is merely a fun, recreational activity. That view is horribly sinful. This is why fornication and adultery kill the marriage relationship. The reason God created a man and woman and then also the institution of marriage is that of procreation. It is true, that a godly woman and her husband who fear Jehovah do not view her place in marriage merely as a baby-maker who is always walking around the house “barefoot and pregnant,” as the saying goes. Her relationship to her husband is far more comprehensive than only bringing forth children.

At the same time, she does understand and love the covenant God has established with her and her home. She also understands that, if possible, she brings forth children of the church and covenant. On her falls the most glorious, most

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She desires it, but God, in His sovereign and good will, has not brought it to pass. She does not become discontent with His will. She does not rebel and go to the wicked men of this world in order to force the hand of God, so to speak, and marry an unbeliever. But she patiently waits on the will of God and follows His lead in her life, all the while remaining that virtuous woman who fears the Lord.

But there are other unmarried women in the church too. There are widows. These are women who were married but the Lord took their husbands away from them in death. This means she is unmarried. She is without a husband. Now, this widow may remarry again. We learn of that in verse 39 of this chapter. But as long as she is a widow, she is unmarried. And truly, if she is without children in her marriage, she is no different than a virgin from that point of view. She, as an unmarried woman, therefore, cares for the things of the Lord and not how to please her husband.

But there also are other women in the church who are unmarried. These women are under obligation to remain unmarried. These women have gone through a painful but lawful divorce. Jesus teaches us both in Matthew 5 and Matthew 19 that there is reason for a *lawful* divorce: when the husband (or

wife) has been unfaithful to us. There can be reason for a divorce under these circumstances. The other circumstance a woman can be alone is that her unbelieving husband abandons her and obtains a divorce. She is then left behind without a husband. She is obligated by Scripture not to remarry. Paul writes in verse 27, “Art thou bound to a wife? Seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? Seek not a wife.” The same is true, of course, of a wife. If she is loosed from her husband, she must not seek to be married again. This, too, classifies that woman of our text as unmarried, meaning, she is without a husband. So, the instruction here is given to virgins but also to all unmarried women in the church. And by implication it also applies to all unmarried men in the church. All unmarried women are at a distinct advantage over the married women of the church.

II. Her Care

To show this, God's Word here contrasts the unmarried women of the church with those who are married. The unmarried women care for the things of the Lord. The married women care for the things of the world. Now, this needs some explaining, obviously. That married women care for the things of this world ought not to be interpreted in an evil way, as if married

women are worldly minded and unmarried women are not. The term "world" does not mean wicked world. It refers to the things of this present life—the life that we lead in this creation. In the case of a married woman the things of the world pertain to her husband and children. She is extremely busy with them, while the single woman is not.

Neither is Paul teaching us here that single women are prone to be more holy than married women. This is the false conclusion the Roman Catholic Church draws from this verse and those that precede it. On the basis of these verses, the Romish Church maintains the celibacy of the priesthood. Monks may not marry. Nuns may not marry. And they may not because they then can fully devote themselves to the Lord and be holy in body and spirit. Nuns are said to be married to Christ. They therefore

are a step or ten above the married women of the church because they are more holy unto the Lord. That

is not what the Word of God in this verse teaches us. But rather it teaches that the married woman is busy with the things of this present life, namely, how

she may please her husband. A godly woman in marriage always gives of herself and her time to her husband and children. That is her calling in marriage—a holy and sanctified calling. Marriage is an institution, the success of which depends on a person always and ever *giving* of their time and efforts to please their spouse. It is not a place of taking, but a place of giving. And the wife always concerns herself, then, in those things that will please her husband and her children, if the Lord chooses to give her them.

That is not true, obviously, with an unmarried woman. Now, I know an unmarried woman can be very busy with her work and life too. But when she comes home there is no one but herself to attend to. Her sole care is how she is to please her Lord, and she has the time in

her home to read more, study more, discipline herself more in the things of the Lord. Christ is her Head. He rules her in her life and home. She seeks, therefore, to please her Lord. The difference between a single and a married woman of which Paul speaks at the outset in our

...a married woman seeks to please God by means of pleasing her husband.
A single woman in the church seeks to please her Lord directly without interference and diversion of her attention by others.

What makes her this gem is, in the first place, that she understands out of a believing heart who she is in the marriage. She was created out of the man because she was created to be a help to her husband and to do him good. We read in I Corinthians

A virtuous woman is indeed a rare find! She is a gem of great value because she is a rare gem—someone that takes finding!

11:8, 9: “For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.” The woman that believes her place in the marriage is for the benefit of her husband, that she is given by God to him in order that she may aid and assist him—the woman who lives this way in marriage is indeed a virtuous woman. Now, this does not mean that she (and her husband ought not to view it that way either) is some kind of slave in her own home. A man who finds a woman who is of such a mind finds a good thing! It is not good that man should be alone. He needs someone to help him. He needs a woman that will submit to his rule willingly, who will encourage him when he is down, who will make his home a comfortable place to live, a haven of rest when he comes home from a long day at work. He needs a woman who assists him in his decisions and advises him in matters with which he

struggles. In short, the husband needs a friend, the most intimate, close, and understanding friend that he will ever find.

When he finds such a woman and weds her, he has found a good thing—a woman that always has his good at heart and is willing to give of herself, to expend of herself to help him. That woman is a rare gem! Her price, Solomon says in Proverbs 31:10, is far above the price of rubies! And this is true because such a woman is one who fears God. She is strong, honorable, wise, and kind. She is humble. Ah, there is the best word to describe her—she is not proud and selfish. She is selfless and humble. A man who finds a wife of this sort—one who fears and loves God, knows her blessed place in marriage, and who is humble—finds a good thing!

One other truth must come to the foreground in this passage we consider. A man who finds a woman of this sort finds favor of the LORD. We will return to that last phrase in our text later. But notice the name of God used here in this verse. It is the name Jehovah. It means “I Am.” This name refers to God’s unchangeableness and His eternity. God is God. And this is true because He *is!* He has no beginning or

God, in the verse we consider, gives a rather general and non-descriptive word about finding a wife. Solomon informs us that it is a good thing. Now, a good thing can refer to almost anything, as long as it is positive. Finding a wife is good. But this description comes to life when we view the wording as we find it in the original Hebrew.

Literally we read, “Whoso finds a woman finds good.” Immediately this draws our attention to the creation account in Genesis 2:18-24, where God said, “it is not good that the man should be alone. I will make him a help meet for him.” This account here in Genesis calls attention not only to the creation of the woman, but also to the institution of marriage. God created a woman—a human being that was a perfect counterpart to the man. She was *meet* for him, that is, fitted or adapted by God to be a companion and

help for the man. Physically, psychologically, and spiritually the woman was created by God as a piece of a puzzle that fits exactly together with the man. She was the female counterpart made for the man. This was the purpose of her creation. It is good therefore that man is not

alone, but that he is able through marriage to find a woman to be his wife so that she might complete him as a companion, a support, and a help. This is why when a man finds a woman to be his wife he finds what is meant by God to be a good thing for him.

But it is obvious from the relationship of marriage in today’s world that men who find themselves a wife do not always find a good thing. The rate of divorce in our own society and even in the church has reached epidemic stages. Those men and woman who go through a bitter divorce would say (some matter-of-factly; others with deep resentment) “we certainly did not find a good thing in marriage!” This is due to the fact, on

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the one hand, that the man did not carefully search out and find a proper godly wife. And, on the other hand, he did not strive to live with his

wife in all godliness and holiness. But, given the instruction of the proverb we consider today, we also discover that a virtuous woman is indeed a rare find! She is a gem of great value because she is a rare gem—someone that takes finding!

text is this: a married woman seeks to please God by means of pleasing her husband. A single woman in the church seeks to please her Lord directly without interference and diversion of her attention by others.

Now, all of this has something to teach unmarried women in the church. I know from spending some lengthy periods of time alone without my wife that it is easier to let spiritual matters slip. When my wife and children are around it is a matter of priority to instruct and lead them in the Word of God. Besides, a God-fearing wife always reminds her husband of the need to read God’s Word and pray. Likewise, a God-fearing husband is there to lead a wife into God’s Word.

This is not true when a person is alone. This Word of God, therefore, applies well both to single women in the church and to single men. You may not forsake the spiritual exercise of reading and prayer in your lives. You may not forget about the fact when you are sitting in your home that you need to spend time with your Lord. It is

so easy to turn on the TV or be so busy in some project that we forget about this all important aspect of our lives. You may not do that! You have the advantage of busying yourselves in spiritual matters more than one who is married. God gives you that time. Use it for Him and not to satisfy yourself. There is no one to force you to go to church. You have no obligation toward husband or children to be in church for their spiritual welfare—only for your own. But you must discipline yourselves to attend to the things of God’s kingdom

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You must exercise yourselves in things spiritual because this is the way you may be holy in body and spirit. The Word of God adds that, here in the verse we consider. It is by attending to the things of your Lord and Master that you become holy. Now, this does not contradict the truth that we are holy only through the work of Jesus Christ. We know that through His blood alone we are cleansed from the filth of our

sin. He alone has overcome the power of sin and Satan in our lives. Christ makes us holy before God. But Paul here is addressing those who are already cleansed in the blood of Christ. To the single woman Paul points out that her holiness is practiced by means of attending to the things of the Lord. The term holy here means consecrated and dedicated to the service of God. Holiness does not simply mean without sin, but it expresses what must be the desire of the believer, to devote herself to the service of her Lord. By involving herself in the things of her Lord, the single woman becomes all the more dedicated to the cause of Jesus Christ and the kingdom of God in this world. And she is so in body and spirit, or simply put, she becomes the more dedicated and consecrated to serving God with her whole being. Not just in her heart, the spiritual center of her soul, but in her body as well, she keeps herself pure and chaste unto her Lord. Completely within and without she becomes more and more devoted to her Lord.

Now, once again, we can apply this Word of God here.

The life of a single person in the church can become rather vain and self-centered. This surely is the lifestyle we see in the wicked, unbelieving world around us. The empty and selfish and superficial life of that loud, barhopping, skinny, make-up-pasted woman of this world is always in our face. You are bombarded with it, single women. We all are. You must realize the sinfulness in all of this. You must realize that the pearl of great price to your Lord is that of holiness, chastity, modesty, a woman of a meek and quiet spirit. And when you are

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characterized by this, you are a woman that fears Jehovah! That sets you apart from the women of this world. You are a woman of

God. That is your beauty. Such is what you must strive for in your lives. And when you do, you adorn the church. You make all of us beautiful. What a wonderful witness you leave to others.

And what a wonderful witness you leave to us.

III. Her Service

One more thing. Your ser-

THE REFORMED WITNESS HOUR

*October 23, 2016
No. 3851*

*Finding a God-Fearing Wife
Rev. Wilbur Bruinsma*

Dear Radio Friends,

Introduction

We have examined the virtuous woman in single life. We have found that the unmarried woman has an important place in the home and church. She is not a second-rate in the church just because she is not wed. She is a virtuous woman, after all. Her beauty is that of her virtues of strength and honor, wisdom and kindness. This adornment is hers whether married or not. Since she fears God she also lives a life of piety or godliness. And these are what make her beautiful—not the outward decorating of the hair and the putting on of apparel and jewelry. It is the hidden woman of the heart. These are outstanding characteristics of a virtuous woman whether married or single.

But we must also realize that the single life is not the norm in the church. We cannot deny what the psalmist says in Psalm 68:6: “God setteth the solitary in families.” Just as in the world at large, so also in the church, men marry and give in marriage. This will continue until the end of time. And

marriage will, in turn, produce children—at least it will in the church.

It is for that reason, too, that it is but natural that our examination of the virtuous woman take us into marriage. We will need to consider the virtuous wife and the virtuous mother. We will see the need of the elder women teaching the younger women in the church. We will need to take a look at those women who have unbelieving husbands and their particular calling. In all these relationships and situations the Word of God praises women who are God-fearing and pious.

Today we consider the Word of God found in Proverbs 18:22: “Who findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favor of the LORD.” This proverb addresses the godly man as well as woman. Nevertheless, even this verse focuses our attention on the woman.

FINDING A GOD-FEARING WIFE

I. A Rare Gem

It seems that the Word of

III. Her Witness

Now, I can issue you a set of rules for what you may wear and not wear. This amount of makeup is allowable but that is not. This dress is appropriate and that one is not. Too much jewelry is too showy, but that little bit is ok.

I must admit, as a father I followed certain rules in my own home with my daughters.

My daughters found out rather quickly when they pushed the limits. Fathers and mothers ought to exert themselves in this regard to teach their daughters modesty. But certainly I cannot issue forth for all the women of the church a list of laws that govern your adornment. Sometimes as a pastor in a congregation I felt like laying down some laws for the young women of my church, especially when I saw young women whose parents did not exercise proper supervision in their homes. That is a shame. But it is not my intent today to lay down laws to follow. I am assuming that the women of the church are believers who fear God. They are virtuous women. They are godly women. So, the one command is this: work out

your own salvation with fear and trembling!

And know this: you are always leaving a witness to the world around you. In the early church, young women of the church were known for their modesty. And many young

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men, even in the wicked world, were attracted to these young women because of their modesty.

They saw the women of the church that they were different, attractively different. Their lives were solid, well grounded, and not superficial and vain. We learn that this witness led many to enquire of the Christian faith, and even some were led to believe. May that witness be left by the godly women of our church. The eyes of the world are upon us. What witness will we leave them?

May the words of the Heidelberg Catechism ring in our hearts: Why must we do good works? That by our godly conversation, that is, by our godly way of life, others may be gained to Christ. Women of the church who profess godliness, *you* are beautiful!

vice to the church of Jesus Christ is of great value to us too. Is that not often the question a single woman may have? What good am I to the church? I feel like a fifth-wheel sometimes. I am not busy with a husband and children like so many others are. It seems the married women have such a wonderful task to raise the next generation of believers. But what am I to the church? What is my place, my niche, in the church of Jesus Christ? Is that not often the question that can come to mind? Well, there is an answer to that question, or that doubt or fear that a single woman might have.

You have a very important place in the church! First, as all God-fearing women—married as well as unmarried—you are virtuous. You have the virtues of strength and honor, wisdom and kindness. In these you are godly examples to others in the church—to the boys and the girls that grow up in the church and come to know and love you. They see your holiness in the place you are given in the church,

more than you realize it—more than they realize it. And they take note. You are godly examples to others. Secondly, you participate together with the whole church in her fellowship and activities. You are a part of the body of Jesus Christ sharing together in the joys and life of the church where you are a member. You cast your all in with the church and become a part of that church. The church, therefore, is incomplete without you.

And then, finally, as a member of the church, you are able to lend of your time and talents to the church of Christ too. When you are a living part of the church of Jesus Christ, then you use your time on behalf of the church. That is your invaluable service to the church and to your Lord.

We give thanks for the unmarried women of the church. And we pray that God will keep you faithful in your life in the church. You are important to the church. But better: you are important to Christ.

THE REFORMED WITNESS HOUR

October 16, 2016

The Adornment of a Godly Woman

No. 3850

Rev. Wilbur Bruinsma

Dear Radio Friends,

Introduction

We have identified the virtuous woman. She is one who fears the Lord. This is true of her whether single or married. We have now also studied what the Bible says of the single or unmarried woman of the church. She is to be praised in her place in the church just as well as the married woman, though marriage is normally what occurs in the church. The unmarried woman has an important function in the church using her time and talents for the benefit of the church and her fellow members. She also is a virtuous woman, who is characterized by the virtues of strength and honor, wisdom and kindness.

Before entering into a study of the place and labors of a married woman in the church, we wish to take up one more subject that applies to virtuous women in general: her adornment. God's Word addresses this subject in a number of different passages. This is true because the adornment of His daughters is of major concern to God their Father. We consider this subject using the Word of

God in I Timothy 2:9, 10, "In like manner also, that women adorn 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 good works." The women of the church are exhorted in this Word to dress as women professing godliness. Those who profess to be believers, those who profess to fear God, ought to dress accordingly.

This is the subject we will address, then, in our broadcast today.

**THE ADORNMENT OF A
GODLY WOMAN**

I. A Godly Woman

A few broadcasts ago we identified the virtuous woman as one who fears God. That also is the definition of a *godly* woman. Every believer desires to be clothed in godliness. It is a virtue that is rooted in the heart and is displayed in one's life. It is a virtue that, though an inner attribute, is worn on the outside for everyone to see. And that is the idea of the term "godliness"

in adorning themselves. And the reason was clear. They wanted men to pay attention to them. Underneath all their makeup they might be an ugly dog. Their personality might stink and they might be the most promiscuous and ugly woman nature wise. But they wanted all attention to be drawn to their outward beauty—to their face, to their body, to their sensuous looks, as if this outward beauty is what a woman is made of. And, indeed, to fall in love was to fall in lust with the outward adornment of a woman. Women of this sort had no shame! They were all show. Their lives consisted of: "Look at me! Look at my body! See how beautiful I am!" Paul says, let not this be the emphasis of a godly woman, even though this is the example that is always paraded before your face by the world. You, dear godly women of the church, are faced everyday with commercials, with ads, with magazines, with television and movies that are always pushing this outward beauty. Do not fall for it! But rather be shamefaced and sober in your adornment.

Shamefacedness. This means adorn yourself in such a way that it will not make a godly man who fears Jehovah

blush when he looks at you. Dress in such a manner that he will be able to look at you without having to divert his eyes from certain areas of your body. Dress in such a way that a godly man will see your true beauty, that is your godliness. And he will be attracted to you for your good works. Your apparel, your makeup, and your jewelry will not override your spiritual beauty. It will cause no shame on your part or on the part of those who see you.

Ah, I know how hard it can be to place our emphasis on the spiritual rather than the earthly. We have a sinful flesh that is drawn to the ways of the world. And there is such a push toward the gaudy and showy ways of the wicked. Who wants to be left behind? Of course, we want to catch the eye of a

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man. To be sober, however, means that we will exercise control over the sinful inclinations of our flesh

that are pulled in the direction of the world. We will follow after the rule of our Lord Jesus Christ. We will keep our eye fixed on our heavenly Father and what He desires for us to do as His daughters.

It seems the famous women of this world compete to see who can show the most skin at their gala events. That is an example of immodest apparel. It is clothing that causes men to gawk, and imagine, and lust after a woman. I know the excuses. Well, there is no clothing out there that covers everything anymore. You cannot seem to find anything stylish that meets the demands of modesty. But that is an excuse. It may demand some searching, it may mean I am not trending, but modest apparel can be found in stores today. We just need to look a little more closely.

Neither ought we to misunderstand that word modesty. It definitely means that a woman may adorn herself in clothing that is seemly. Her style must be chaste but at the same time it may also be attractive. A modest woman need not dress herself in old-fashioned clothes that are of a bygone era. She need not pull over her head some baggy dress or be seen always in big baggy sweatshirt and sweatpants. She need not be sloppy and unkempt in her appearance. She needs to shower and smell good. Being modest is not being a slob. A modest woman indeed can and may dress in pretty clothes. She may modestly apply a little makeup or some perfume. She may make herself look pretty. But as she puts on her clothes and makeup she lives out of one

principle: I am a godly woman set apart by God from this wicked unchaste world. I am not interested in following after the lustful trends of the day, but I am interested in pleasing the God who has saved me from that sin. My adornment will reflect who I am on the inside, just as the adornment of a wicked, wanton woman will reflect who she is on the inside. I am different. I want to be different. I am a daughter of God who wishes to please Him because He is my Father.

Paul gives two words here that describe what modesty is: shamefacedness and sobriety. Over against these, he gives some concrete examples of what ought not to be the emphasis of a godly woman when she is adorning herself. He says at the end of verse 9: not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array. Paul's reference here is to the women of the Roman/Greek culture and what was the emphasis of their adornment. Not only did they dress in immodest apparel meant to insight lust, but they fussed over their hair. They enjoyed their up-dos and often put glitter in their hair or wound gold chains through it or put pearls in it in well-placed positions. Then they would hang the same around their necks and in their ears. Their hands would be covered with rings. Before they would go out to a social event, they would spend hours

as used here in this passage that we study. Perhaps a synonym of this word with which we are more familiar is that of piety. A godly person is a pious person. Now, it is obvious from the word godliness itself that a person characterized by it can only be a true believer. This is a virtue that is imparted to a person with salvation. It comes as a result of the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart. A godly person is one who continues in faith, charity, and holiness with sobriety. Godliness flows out of a woman's faith, love, and holiness. Faith is that work of salvation by which we are consciously grafted into Jesus Christ. As a result, we are one with Him. By faith we become members of His body. His mind and His desires are worked in us. We are so intimately connected to Christ that His life becomes our life. Christ lives in and through

us. That life of Christ produces piety or godliness in the life of a believer—a reverence for God that becomes apparent in a person's whole demeanor. People are able to see that such a person lives out of Christ and as a result has the fear of God. Such godliness becomes apparent in the love that we reveal toward God, His Word, His people and church, and toward others.

But, most of all, godliness flows out of the gift of salvation known as sanctification. Sanctification is that work of Christ by His Spirit by means of which we are set free from bondage to sin and Satan. By means of our sanctification we have become holy or spiritually pure before God. Though we still must contend with our sinful flesh, nevertheless the believer is set apart by salvation unto the holy service of God. This means a godly woman's affections and thoughts are pure. Her desires are toward God and the praise of His holiness. And again, this holiness results in godliness. One who is holy inside is clothed with holiness on the outside. That is one's spiritual apparel. A holy heart results in a holy demeanor or way of life. Those who observe a godly woman can see Christ in her.

Paul emphasizes that too in the words of our text: women *profess* godliness. A virtuous woman, a woman who fears God, a woman who is made holy in the blood of Christ professes, that is, makes an announcement concerning herself. That is what literally that word *profess* means. It is to make an announcement about oneself. And that announcement a godly woman makes is this: I am holy! I am

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a believer. I know Christ and am confident that He has saved me from my sins and cleansed me in His blood and therefore my desire is toward Him. I wish to please God in my life. I am not concerned

about what I want. I am deeply concerned about what pleases my heavenly Father. I am not concerned

what impression I leave on the ungodly and impious world around me. I do not care if the world finds me attractive. I care about one thing: that I look attractive to my Father in heaven. Such is what characterizes a woman professing godliness.

Such a woman who professes godliness is also one who brings forth good works in her life. Let us remember what a good work is too. It is not something that necessarily seems good to men, but it is a work that is good to God. A good work is done to the glory of God, stands in conformity to the laws of God, and is done out of a true faith. There is the key: it is done out of a true faith, out of a heart in which Christ has worked a conscious knowledge of Him and a hearty confidence or assurance. A woman of godliness will produce good works because faith always produces fruit, that fruit being good works. Neither

must we forget that good works are not meant to call attention to themselves but always draw attention to God and the work of Christ in us. A good work is not done when a person is self-absorbed

or selfish. A good work is a selfless act of love toward another. One is reminded of Dorcas, who was known by

all for her acts of kindness, her alms deeds on behalf of others. She was a godly woman. She did these things out of her love for God, and others could see Christ's work in her.

Now, good works, we must remember, flow out of the work of faith in a person's heart. Faith is within, it is a work in the heart. Good works, on the other hand, *reveal* to others that faith because good works are done with our bodies. Good works are found in the words that we speak and in the deeds that we do. This is why Paul says that a godly woman professes or announces to others something about herself. She announces this by means of her good works! Her good works become her adornment. Read our text in its entirety again and we will understand what Paul is talking about: "Women adorn themselves not with broided hair or gold or pearls or costly

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array, but (which becometh women professing godliness) *with good works.*" A woman ought to adorn herself with good works! Adorn herself: to arrange or prepare herself, to decorate herself. A woman is interested in adorning herself. In the Bible, the man is never described as one who fusses over adorning himself. He keeps himself clean, he does what is necessary to keep himself from stinking or looking unkempt and sloppy, but otherwise he is not so interested in his own adornment. Although, in today's society, this is not so true among many men. In a society in which people are so into themselves it seems that not a few men are into primping themselves up in order to adorn themselves like a woman.

But be that as it may, women throughout history have enjoyed adorning themselves. Neither does the Bible condemn adornment. The virtuous woman of Proverbs 31, we are told in verse 22, "maketh herself coverings of tapestry;

her clothing is silk and purple." But the adornment of a woman professing god-

liness, God's Word points out here, begins with this: she is clothed in good works. Good works are her beauty—because

these good works reveal her inner beauty, that is, her godliness. That is what the virtuous woman is concerned with, fusses over. She wants to appear beautiful to God. And with that as a basis she now adorns herself cosmetically, so to speak.

III. Her Adornment

God's Word in verse 9 of our text commands "that women adorn themselves with modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety." It goes without saying, I suppose, that a woman who strives to wear her godliness through good works places only moderate attention on her physical adornment. Modest apparel is clothing that is well-arranged and seemly. In other words, it is clothing that is arranged in such a way that it covers everything. Now, I know that certainly is not the order of the day in our world. It has not been for the longest time. In fact, when a society is breaking down it seems the clothing styles become worse as time

The adornment of a woman professing godliness begins with this: she is clothed in good works.

goes on. If it is not revealing blouses or dresses that show cleavage, it is a dress or

skirt that reveals lots of leg. As society develops more in its sin, then the more its styles leave very little to the imagination.