

- ***READ Proverbs 31:29-31*** What we have here at the tail end of **Proverbs 31** is the conclusion of what is often referred to as the virtuous or worthy woman. What is it that makes this woman worthy of praise? What makes her excellent in the eyes of the author? Well he begins in **vv.10-12** by pointing out that she is an excellent wife who has earned the trust of her husband. Why does he trust her? The next few verses show us how she is a hard worker, how she is caring towards others especially those of her household, and how she is strong, dignified, wise, and kind. (**Proverbs 31:13-27**) He concludes by making the statement that she is simply a good mother and wife. (**Proverbs 31:28**)
- Yet, it isn't these external things by which she is judged. Instead, the author notes in **vv.29,30** that it is the character of her heart that truly makes her great and worthy. This is where God's thinking differs so much from the thinking of the world. The world nearly always focuses only on the external aspects of a woman to determine whether she is worthwhile. They judge her looks. They judge whether she is married or has kids. They judge her based upon her education or the prestige of her job or position. These are the things by which the world so often judges whether a woman is successful, but this just isn't so when it comes to our God. Yet, this is nothing new when it comes to the judgements of men.
- We remember well from **I Samuel 16:1-12**, when Samuel was charged by the Lord to go and anoint the next king of Israel from the household of Jesse. When Samuel arrives, he looks upon the first son, Eliab, and thought to himself that this surely was the man who would be king because it seems he was strong of look and stature. Yet, the Lord responds to Samuel with important words, *"Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."* (**I Samuel 16:7**)
- Whereas man looks at so many external factors, God is far more concerned with the substance of character that leads to what will be found on the outside. Sure David himself was good looking on the outside according to the Text, but God put far more stock in the fact that He found David to be a man after God's own heart. (**I Samuel 13:14**) In much the same way, God is far more concerned with how women after God's own heart. This morning I would like to look at four things that women after God's own heart seek to do that shows the true character of their hearts, and that's where we want to begin...considering the character of women who are after God's own heart.

I. Seek to have the character of Jesus.

A. Our world seeks to push women to focus on themselves and put themselves in positions of power.

1. The modern-day feminist movement strives to instill within the minds of women that there are no differences between men and women, and therefore women should do whatever they have to do to make sure that they do and can have anything that a man can do or have in this life.
2. Now, this isn't to say that it is wrong for women to have quality educations, high paying jobs, or important positions, but what this is often attached with is a mentality that women should be willing to do this by whatever means necessary. If that means being unethical in their dealings, then so be it. If it means using sex-appeal to get their way to the top, then so be it. Remember, the world often judges by external things such as looks, wealth, and prestige, so if a woman wants to acquire these things then she is encouraged to go get them.
3. Whatever it is that a woman wants, then she should be able to have, and she should be free to get those things by doing whatever it takes. All that matters is number one, myself, and if I want something then nothing should hold me back from getting it. This is the type of mindset that is being thrown in the face of women all over this country, and it is all done in the name of equality and feminization. Friends...this type of mindset is dead set against what God desires for his people, including those women who claim to be His disciples.

- B. The character of Jesus largely stands opposed to what the world promotes as being most desirable.
1. Where the world desires for the 21st century woman to be powerful and domineering by any means necessary, God desires for women to take on the character of His Son, and His Son while powerful was not domineering and refused to be immoral in His behavior and character.
 2. In **Matthew 11:29**, Matthew records of Jesus that He is "*gentle and humble in heart.*" Some equate gentleness with weakness, but that could not be any further from the truth in regard to our Lord Jesus. This is the Man who created the world and everything within it in six days. He is the one who expelled demons and calmed the sea. Jesus is the holder of immense power, and yet He displayed a spirit of gentleness and humility. Instead of thinking only of Himself, Jesus thought firstly of others and gave up everything for the betterment of others.
 3. Additionally, **I Peter 2:23** tells us that when Jesus was reviled and tormented He did not revile in return or offer up threats to those who were doing Him wrong. Instead of returning evil for evil, Jesus put His faith and trust in God and simply asked that those doing such things would be forgiven. (**Luke 23:34**)
 4. Finally in **Hebrews 7:26**, we are reminded that Jesus was a holy, innocent, and undefiled man. He was tempted in all ways even as we are, yet He withstood every attack of Satan and maintained His righteousness.
 5. All of these characteristics, while lofty, were seen in Jesus, and God expects for Him to be able to see them in all of us. That includes those women who are after His own heart. First and foremost, God cares about the contents of our hearts, and if the substance of our hearts are good, then we will be able to carry ourselves as God expects. For those women who are after God's own heart, that means they will seek to do certain important things in their own lives.

II. Seek to lead children to love and believe in Jesus like Lois & Eunice. (II Timothy 1:5)

A. Timothy was a great man of faith because of his grandmother and mother.

1. The Scriptures, Paul in particular, speak very highly of the preacher Timothy for the work he did within the Kingdom of God. We first see this man mentioned in **Acts 16:1-5** while Paul finds himself in Derbe and Lystra. Timothy is mentioned as the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer in Jesus and a Green man who is not mentioned as a believer.
2. He was very highly spoken of by those around him as being a faithful and godly man, and Paul quickly took a liking to what he both heard and saw. Paul asks him to go with him on his preaching journey, but before leaving he circumcises Timothy for the benefit of the Jews that they would inevitably come across. What faith was shown by Timothy to be willing to go through such a thing past the normal time for the sake of the Gospel.
3. So it is that we find Paul speaking so highly of Timothy in his second letter to his son in the faith. Paul's words in **II Timothy 1:3,4** surely show us the deep love that Paul had for his brother in the Lord. He goes on to say in **II Timothy 1:5**, "*For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that it is in you as well.*" Yes, Timothy had a great faith, and Paul gives due credit to those who it seems helped to instill that faith within him, his grandmother and mother.

B. For mothers, there isn't a better work to be involved in than the instilling of a deep love and faith for God in your children.

1. Sure Timothy was a faithful disciple because of his heart's desire and decision to be such, but we mustn't ignore the work that had been done, that is acknowledged by Paul, of Timothy's grandmother and mother. They were integral in his faith, and I'm sure many of us can look back to our mothers and think about the important role they had in us being the faithful disciples that we are today.

2. While we honor our mothers today, can we take a moment to thank them for the work they have put in to helping us to be people of faith? No greater work is there for a mother than for her to lead the hearts of her children to the Lord. Let's remember that for those who are mothers! God has blessed you with precious souls, and He expects for us to give every effort to lead those precious souls back to Him.
3. While there are many things that mothers often desire for their kids...for the mother after God's own heart...there is no greater joy that for her to see her children walking in the truth, just the same as the Apostle John. **(III John 1:4)** As children, may we give our mothers that great joy, and as mothers, may we seek to find that great joy in the Lord.

Yet for those who may not be mothers...please know that you are no less valuable in the sight of the Lord because there is tremendous work that God would have for you to do as you seek after His own heart as you live in this life.

III. Seek first the things of God like Mary. (Luke 10:38-42)

A. While Martha was upset with Mary for not helping out with the needs of the house, Jesus recognized that Mary was focused on what was most important at the moment.

1. As Jesus is traveling along during His ministry, Luke records that a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home as her guest. Martha had a sister named Mary and while Jesus was in their home teaching, she found herself sitting at His feet listening intently.
2. Martha becomes extremely irritated with her sister because she finds herself being the only one that is going about making sure that the work of serving is getting done. She even complains to Jesus about this, and yet Jesus ends up commending Mary for what she was doing. His explanation is simple and clear, *"Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; but only one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her."* **(Luke 10:41,42)** Mary was certainly a woman after God's own heart, and she showed this by being wholly devoted to the words the Son of God was speaking.

B. While taking care of the needs of the home and life have their place, godly women are first and foremost concerned with the things of God.

1. Was Martha doing anything wrong by serving those guests who were in her house? Of course there is nothing wrong with doing such a thing. However, her mistake was in thinking that this was the most important thing at the moment. While there were guests in her home and she had opportunity to serve them, there was a greater opportunity before her and that was to hear the words of life that were being spoken by Jesus.
2. Mary seemingly recognized what was the better part of what was going on, and she wanted to take part in it. She wanted to hear the wonderful words spoken by the Savior. The serving of guests and the work of the home could come later, but this was the part that mattered at the moment. This is the mindset that the woman after God's own heart possesses.
3. This woman knows that there is a time and place for domestic duties, serving guests and doing other things like we see from the woman of **Proverbs 31**, but she will always put the things of God before all things. Why? The answer is simple...women after God's own heart love the Lord their God with all their heart, soul, strength, and mind. **(Luke 10:27)** This is what her heart truly desires for, and that will be seen in what she gives her foremost attention towards. Sometimes, that focus will be seen in how she seeks to serve her fellow man.

IV. Seek to love and serve their fellow man like Tabitha. (Acts 9:36-42)

A. The friends of Tabitha were so distraught because of the love she showed them through her acts of kindness and charity.

1. As Peter is in Lydda **(Acts 9:32)**, he is made aware of a disciple who has just fallen ill and has died. This woman's name was Tabitha (Dorcus in Greek), and her kindness and charity were

evident based upon the outpouring of love that was seen after her passing. Luke tells us that she was a woman who *“was abounding with deeds of kindness and charity which she continually did.” (Acts 9:36)*

2. When Peter arrived at the house, she was immediately met by many women who were wanting to show him all of the tunics and garments that Tabitha had made for them. They were so distraught over her loss, and they begged Peter to do something. After praying, Peter turns to the body and says, *“Tabitha, arise,”* and immediately she opened her eyes and sat up.
 3. This story of resurrection was made known all over Joppa, and Luke records that many came to believe in the Lord because of it. Seemingly it was all a result of one woman who loved the Lord with all of her heart, soul, strength, and mind, and she also followed the second great command to love her neighbor as herself. She was a woman after God’s own heart and all women would do well to imitate her love and service towards others.
- B. God women have the same mind as Christ and are concerned with looking out for the needs of others.**
1. While so many around us are imploring women to only look out for themselves and their own interests, the women of God are women who are constantly looking for ways in which they can be of service to those who are around them. This was obviously Tabitha’s mindset, and the impact she had on those around her was made so apparent by the outpouring of broken hearts because of her passing. She was a woman after God’s own heart and it showed by the way she followed the second great commandment.
 2. As I was thinking about the example of Tabitha, I couldn’t help but think about so many of the women of this congregation who serve others in the exact same way that we see Tabitha serving. There is hardly a one of us that doesn’t have a beautiful blanket or quilt back at our house right now that was made by our Mrs. Betty. Not only she, but so many others have served so many of this congregation through their ability to craft and create different goods that are so helpful to so many of us.
 3. If I tried to name them all then I’m sure I’d miss someone and we’d all be here for a bit longer, and Mother’s Day lunch might get cold. Just suffice it to say that I believe I speak for everyone when I say “thank you” to all of the women of this church who do so much to serve others, and you so often do it without much fanfare. You are all worthy of praise and we are all so grateful for all of your works and acts of love. Your heart for God is seen in your actions, and this is worthy of praise and imitation from all others. May God continue to bless all of the “Tabithas” that we have selflessly serving God’s people in this place.

Women after God’s own heart can be found all around us in this place, and I am thankful for the strong examples of godliness that the young ladies of this church can look up to and see in the women here. While the world has its influence on so many, may God help for each of us to look to the proper examples of godly women to be like. And for us guys...may we always encourage and motivate the women and young ladies in our lives to seek to this type of mindset and lifestyle. May each of them feel our support as we encourage them to seek to be those women who fear the Lord and are worth of praise. Many have done nobly, but the woman after God’s own heart excels them all.

PRAYER *Father...we are so thankful for the blessings that are present in our lives because of the women you have surrounded us with. While so many grow unsatisfied with what they perceive as being slights in this life, may women who seek after Your own heart find fulfillment and satisfaction in having the character of Your Son. May those blessed with children give every effort to lead them to love and serve you. May all of your daughters seek You and Your will above all things, and may they be blessed as they show their love for You through serving their fellow man. Help us daily to show appreciation for the godly women we have in our lives. Help us to encourage them in the fine work they are constantly doing, and may their efforts always be to Your glory. Thank You Father for all of our blessings, especially on this day for our mothers, and it is in the name of Your Son we pray these things...amen.*