

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
Proverbs: Topical Applications of Proverbs
III. The Proverbs Themselves, Proverbs 10:1-31:31
A. Proverbs On The Family
2. God's Wisdom For Women In The Home

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Many women in the home struggle with relationships in their marriage, family, extended family or in-laws:

- (1) A recent letter to “Dear Annie” by “Still Waiting” reported, “(T)he silence in my marriage feels deafening . . . When he retired . . . I thought . . . things would . . . feel more balanced, but when I suggested he take on a few chores, he said, ‘When do I get to retire?’ I answered, ‘When do I?’” (Republican-American, April 14, 2026, p. B12)
- (2) Another “Dear Annie” letter by “Not Reporting to Management” lamented that her husband “retired eight months ago, and ever since then, our home has felt . . . like a company he has decided to manage . . . I am beginning to feel crowded, criticized and strangely like a junior employee in my own home.” (op. cit., April 13, 2026,, p. B10)
- (3) A “Dear Annie” letter by “Tired of Carrying It All” shared regarding her “husband” that “lately I feel more like his house manager than his wife . . . I am exhausted by carrying the invisible load. When I bring it up, he says I am ‘better at stuff.’ I do not want another child. I want a partner . . .” (op. cit., April 7, 2026, p. B10)
- (4) Sometimes a woman’s tension rises from issues with the in-laws. “Bruised by Politeness” wrote to “Dear Annie” to state, “I have been married . . . to a good man whom I love very much, but I dread nearly every holiday, birthday dinner and casual Sunday visit with his family” due to their “cutting remarks aimed . . . at me . . . (H)ow do I get my husband to understand that ‘just ignore it’ is not a(n effective) strategy . . . ?” (loc. cit., April 15, 2026)
- (5) A wife’s tension can involve issues with her childhood family. “Homesick and Overwhelmed” wrote to the “Dear Annie” column that when she “left home” she “swore I wouldn’t come back . . . Through therapy, I’ve learned . . . it was healthier for my sanity to stay away. But my husband . . . wanted to get to know them. My mother was ill, so he and my family convinced me to come back to take care of her . . . (I)t has become a huge . . . burden . . . How do I make a polite exit from this nightmare without hurting my husband?” (op. cit., April 11, 2026, p. B12)
- (6) The problem can be invasive in-laws: “Trying to Find Boundaries” wrote to Annie that her marriage was “happy” but “his mother” at times “asks detailed questions about things that feel pretty personal – our finances, plans for the weekend, even disagreements we may have . . . How can I encourage healthier boundaries with my in-laws without making my husband feel like he has to choose between his family and me?” (op. cit., March 31, 2026, p. B12)

Need: So we ask, “*How may God’s ‘wisdom’ minister to bless a woman in the home?*”

- I. **When God created the first woman Eve, she was to be a “helper suitable” for her husband Adam, Genesis 2:18, 20b NIV. However, Eve became a detriment to Adam, eating the forbidden fruit and giving it to him so that he ate of it, plunging the human race into sin and death, Genesis 2:16-17; 3:1-6.**
- II. **Thus, God’s “wisdom,” His *hokmah*, or fixed eternal moral order for success and blessing versus sinful failure, applies to women in the home according to proverbs scattered throughout the Book of Proverbs.**
- III. **We have collected those proverbs and we view them and their applications for insight (as follows):**
 - A. On the negative side, a number of proverbs direct a woman in the home not to practice destructive behavior:
 1. A series of related proverbs call a woman in the home to avoid being contentious with her husband:
 - a. Proverbs 19:13 states that a “contentious” (*madon*, B. D. B., A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 193) wife is as annoying to her husband as a constant drip of water!
 - b. Proverbs 27:15-16 adds that a “contentious” (*madon*, Ibid.) wife is even like a constant drip on a rainy day, that restraining her is like confining the wind or grasping oil with the hand as an unruly irritation.
 - c. Accordingly Proverbs 21:9 and 25:24 claim that a “contentious” (*madon*, Ibid.) wife is so uncontrollably annoying to her husband that he is better off living on a corner of the roof than sharing the house with her.
 - d. Proverbs 21:19 develops this idea even further, declaring that a husband with a “contentious” (*madon*, Ibid.) and an angry wife is better off living in a distant, inhospitable wilderness than living with her!
 - e. In summary, a wife’s being contentious by angrily nagging, arguing, complaining, etc. with her husband is so upsetting to him that a wife must curb such behavior or face growing estrangement from her husband!
 2. Proverbs 11:22 claims that a beautiful woman who lacks moral discretion is like a gold ring in the snout of a ceremonially unclean pig, the lack of moral discretion making even a beautiful wife undesirable to her husband. A wife must thus not lack moral discretion if she wants to have a successful marriage!

- B. On the positive side, many proverbs direct a woman in the home to practice constructive behavior:
1. A wife who is wise establishes her family (Prov. 14:1), if she is kind she gains respect (Prov. 11:16) and if she is noble, she is a crown of good influence with other people for her husband (Prov. 12:4).
 2. Proverbs 31:10-31 summarizes and illustrates such qualities, showing her to be the fitting “suitable helper” for her husband mentioned in Genesis 2:18, 20 and for everyone else with whom she relates (as follows):
 - a. The Proverbs 31:10-31 segment on the “wife of noble character” NIV (“excellent wife” ESV) was authored in a patristic culture where a woman was culturally submissive to her husband.
 - b. As such, her husband’s having full confidence in her and lacking no gain (Prov. 31:11) as she brings him good and not bad all the days of her life (Prov. 31:12) so that her husband is respected at the city gate where he takes his seat with the leaders of the land (Prov. 31:23) occurs only if his wife has submitted to his headship and has thus given him room develop as a head of household and leader in the community.
 - c. Accordingly, instead of being contentious toward her husband, her family, her house servants and people in the community over their various failings or needs, she helps them all: (i) Her husband praises her above all other women as she enables him to succeed as her head (Prov. 31:28b-29, 23); (ii) her children arise and call her blessed (Prov. 31:28a) as she produces clothes (Prov. 31:13, 19, 21-22) and feeds them (Prov. 31:15a, 27); (iii) her household servants are well endowed (Prov. 31:15c, 27); (iv) the poor in her community are helped by her gifts (Prov. 31:20) (v) all due to her diligent industry (Prov. 31:16-18, 24-25, 27) (vi) and she speaks with wisdom and loyal love to all the people around her (Prov. 31:26).
 - d. [Note: With household servants to do household chores, this woman had the time to achieve all she did. Today’s housewives are left doing the household chores, what limits their time for such other ventures!]

IV. We know from Proverbs 31:30b and other Scripture passages that a wife needs to have a proper relationship with the Lord for the motivation and power to function as the Proverbs 31:10-31 noble wife:

- A. Proverbs 31:30b reveals that the noble woman in the passage reveres the Lord, that she understands that she is accountable to Him so that she functions in her relationships like God wants her to function.
- B. In the current Church era, Scripture reveals that this reverence begins with a wife’s believing in Christ as her Savior from sin that she might be spiritually born into the family of God, John 3:16; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11.
- C. Then, she needs to rely on the indwelling Holy Spirit for the power and the motivation to function as a suitable helper not only for her husband, but for her family, extended family, friends and neighbors, Galatians 5:16-23.

Lesson: *As a wife by the power of the Holy Spirit avoids being contentious and lacking moral discretion while being a true suitable helper to her husband and others, she aligns with God’s “wisdom” for true lifelong blessing.*

Application: *(1) May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God’s gift of eternal life, John 3:16; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11. (2) May Christian women rely on the Holy Spirit to avoid being contentious and lacking in moral discretion but to be truly helpful, fitting the role that God designed for them.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message and/or provide additional guidance . . .)

Each “Dear Annie” writer noted in our introduction can be helped by heeding the Scriptures in this sermon:

(1) Each wife in our introduction faces wrongs from some party(s) – be it her husband, her family, her in-laws and/or her childhood family, and each wife is exposed to harm by the combination of her spiritual weakness in mishandling mistreatment as well as her being vulnerable to what ungodly people around her do or say. Thus, each wife in our introduction needs to get into a right relationship with the Lord and function by the power of God the indwelling Holy Spirit to have the ability and the motivation to initiate good toward the problem party(s) in her life without having to descend into a contentious spirit by her reacting out of hurt or frustration to the wrongs she faces. The Proverbs 31:10-31 woman functions this way toward all with whom she relates!

(2) On the other hand, since the Proverbs 31:30b noble woman reveres the Lord, she does **not** have **spiritual fellowship** with **evil** people, so she does **not** have **fellowship** with **anyone** who is **ungodly** due to the contrast that exists between righteousness and sin (cf. 2 Corinthians 6:14-18)! For this reason, a godly wife will be kind and decent toward other troublesome folk but live immune to the negative attitudes and actions of those people, for there cannot be spiritual fellowship between a godly woman and ungodly people around her. Proverbs 18:24 NIV claims, “One who has unreliable friends soon comes to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.” A godly wife for her own welfare will necessarily be selective as with whom she opens up in full spiritual fellowship!

May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God’s gift of eternal life. May Christian women rely on the Holy Spirit to fulfill the role God designed for them in blessing.