



THE WISE WOMAN'S
LIFESTYLE REFLECTS
HER HEAVENLY
HERITAGE

*Then God said,
“Let Us make man in Our image,
according to Our likeness.”*

GENESIS 1:26

As we begin this chapter, let me ask you a question—“Are you a Christian woman or a woman who is a Christian?” On the surface, both appear to be identical. However, it is one thing to describe yourself as a Christian, and it is another thing to *be* one through and through. A woman can call herself Christian but not really live according to scriptural guidelines and be transformed by the Spirit of God. She may be theologically sound but practically inept; and as James teaches, Christians are to, “prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves” (James 1:22). The second portion of the question describes the woman who, by her lifestyle,



clearly demonstrates that her values and character align with the Word of God. Let's take a look at what God's Word says as you consider your response to my question!

A SNAPSHOT OF THE WISE WOMAN

*The wise woman builds her house,
But the foolish tears it down with her own hands.*

PROVERBS 14:1

In the first chapter of *Becoming a Woman Who Pleases God* we introduced the woman whose lifestyle, values, and character align with the Word of God.¹ We established that Proverbs 31:10–31 paints a word portrait of the character of the woman who is a Christian. We twenty-first-century women are challenged to follow her example. The immutability of God is in question if Proverbs 31:10–31 is not relevant. We looked at the six attributes of God that provide a solid foundation for our study of Scripture:

- God's life does not change.
- God's character does not change.
- God's truth does not change.
- God's ways do not change.
- God's purposes do not change.
- God's SON does not change.²

Since God is immutable, a Wise Woman cultivates a lifestyle that reflects that she believes His principles are essentially the same realities for twenty-first-century Christians as they were for those of the Old and New Testaments. We learned that the description of the Wise Woman of Proverbs 31:10–31 is not designed to develop an inferiority complex within us—rather it provides a biblical foundation for the creation of principles by which we, as Wise Women in progress, prioritize our lives.



We then examined eleven characteristics of Wise Women—Virtuous, Trustworthy, Energetic, Physically Fit, Economical, Unselfish, Honorable, Lovable, Prepared, Prudent, and God-fearing. Let's take a moment to reflect on the heart of these principles:

- ***Virtuous*** (31:10) describes an inner quality that instinctively demands respect. Moral excellence characterizes all of this woman's behavior (Ruth 3:11).
- ***Trustworthy*** (31:11–12) is indicative of the ability to keep another's confidence. Our Wise Woman's speech is encouraging, sympathetic, and tactful (Proverbs 25:11). Her love of the Lord is evident (John 14:15), and dependability is exhibited in her lifestyle (Proverbs 25:13).
- ***Energetic*** (31:13–16, 19, 24, 27) suggests that our Wise Woman is a worker and not a shirker (Proverbs 10:4). Her Christianity is practical (James 1:17); she enjoys her work (John 4:36), and attacks it with a cheery attitude (Colossians 3:17).
- ***Physically Fit*** (31:17) reminds us that to perform our duties efficiently we must be healthy. As Wise Women in progress we seek to understand our personal limitations and then work within them (1 Corinthians 6:19).
- ***Economical*** (31:18) challenges our wise woman to refrain from wasting time, money, fuel, or any other resource. She operates her home on a budget (a plan for spending) and at the end of the month there is not "too much month left at the end of the money."
- ***Unselfish*** (31:20) depicts her willingness to share her most valuable asset—her time—with others. Practically speaking, a Wise Woman is not so busy with her own affairs that she can't lend a helping hand to others. Her words bring comfort, hope, cheer, and, when necessary, correction to those who touch her life (Galatians 6:10).
- ***Honorable*** (31:25) characterizes her choice to "abstain



from every form of evil” (1 Thessalonians 5:22). She dresses modestly and understands the importance of maintaining a reputation of integrity (Proverbs 22:1).

- **Lovable** (31:28–29) embodies the consistency of her lifestyle. She enjoys relationships that have depth because she seeks to sharpen her friends spiritually and intellectually (Proverbs 27:17).
- **Prepared** (31:21–22) includes our Wise Woman’s ability to cope with unforeseen circumstances with confidence (Philippians 4:13).
- **Prudent** (31:26) implies that our Wise Woman is practically wise and careful of the consequences; that is, she is cautious. As she speaks she has the ability to be firm, yet kind (Proverbs 27:9).
- **God-fearing** (31:30) suggests that her actions and lifestyle consistently reflect that she stands in awe of the Lord (Proverbs 1:7) and loves Him with all of her heart (Matthew 22:37).

We then examined Proverbs 31:31 which describes *the reward* of cultivating the eleven principles. The Wise Woman receives her rewards “in the gates,” which refers to the public assembly of people; she is often rewarded in this life and always in the hereafter (1 Corinthians 3:10–15; 4:1–21; 5:10; Revelation 22:12).

“Jesus said, ‘You were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things’” (Matthew 25:21 NKJV). He meant that a person who is faithful in serving the Lord here would be rewarded with an honored position in His millennial kingdom.³ Our Wise Woman lives in such a way that Jesus’ words in Matthew 25:21 characterize her daily life.

THE WISE WOMAN PURSUES WISDOM

The beginning of wisdom is:



*Acquire wisdom;
And with all your acquiring, get understanding.*

PROVERBS 4:7

Becoming a Wise Woman was the theme of *Becoming a Woman Who Pleases God*, as it is in this volume. The book of Proverbs reminds us repeatedly that if we choose to live wisely, our lives can be rich and abundant now, as they will be forever in eternity. First Kings 3:3–15 describes a prayer of Solomon's which serves as a model for all Wise Women in progress:

1. Solomon loved the Lord and walked in the statutes of his father, David (3:3).
2. He was privileged to experience a unique, two-way conversation with the Lord (3:5).
3. He viewed his succession to David as evidence of the Lord's faithfulness to His promises to his father (3:6).
4. He humbly admitted his inadequate qualifications for the position the Lord asked him to assume (3:7).
5. He petitioned the Lord for an understanding heart to judge His people (3:9).
6. He received what he did not ask for (riches and honor) because he sought God's wisdom first (3:13).

Application of Solomon's prayer for twenty-first-century women may include:

1. Loving the Lord completely (Mark 12:30).
2. Communing with God through prayer (Philippians 4:6–7; 1 Thessalonians 5:17).
3. Believing that her heavenly Father will complete the good work He has begun in her (Philippians 1:6).
4. Understanding that she can only complete her Father's work through His strength (Philippians 4:13).



5. Seeking the Lord's wisdom rather than relying on her knowledge and experiences (James 1:5).
6. Trusting that God's ways are best (Proverbs 3:5–6).

While embracing the positive attributes exhibited by Solomon, our Wise Woman will be careful to avoid the fatal errors that were a part of his character. Though he walked in the statutes of his father and loved the Lord, his choice to continually worship at the high places demonstrated that he failed to follow Him completely (1 Kings 3:3). As well, he chose to live life on his own terms rather than personally applying the truth. A Wise Woman identifies the “high places” in her life, and she seeks, through God's strength, to “utterly destroy” them (Deuteronomy 12:1–7). She purposes to skillfully apply biblical truth to practical living (James 4:17).

THE WISE WOMAN IS GRACIOUS

A gracious woman attains honor.

PROVERBS 11:16

Gracious is a word that we don't hear very often anymore. Biblically, the word *gracious* describes one who has a kind disposition and shows favor and mercy to another. For example, Boaz showed favor to Ruth (Ruth 2:10), and King Ahasureus' treated Esther graciously (Esther 2:17; 5:2).⁴ It is worth mentioning that these women treated these men with kindness and gentleness from the start, which in turn led to favor being bestowed upon them. Practically speaking, a gracious woman will be pleasant, kind, merciful, compassionate, and characterized by good taste.

Our heavenly Father sets the model for graciousness toward others in Exodus 34:6: “The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth.” Psalm 86:15 (NKJV) portrays God as “full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in mercy and



truth.” Psalm 103:8 (NKJV) declares, “The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy,” and Psalm 145:8 (NKJV) affirms, “The Lord is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and great in mercy.”

The book of Proverbs provides several strategies for the integration of graciousness into the Wise Woman’s life. She extends graciousness to the poor and needy (Proverbs 14:21, 31; 19:17), speaks *graciously* (Proverbs 22:11), and exemplifies graciousness in her behavior (Proverbs 11:6). John MacArthur’s analysis of Proverbs 11:16 suggests, “While evil men may grasp at wealth, they will never attain the honor due a gracious woman.”⁵ Elizabeth George assists us in understanding the characteristics of a gracious tongue:

Suppose you were in the presence of a woman who was thinking about God and enjoying sweet communion with Him as her thoughts ascended to His throne in prayer, who was continually absorbed in some portion of God’s Holy Word, who was perhaps humming a hymn of praise to God. If you began to talk to one another, what do you imagine would come out of her mouth?

I think you can safely answer something like this: You would hear words of blessing, words filled with graciousness and sweetness from such a woman. Tumbling forth from her lips would be soothing, healing words of comfort or uplifting encouragement, whichever was appropriate. Certainly you would witness words of mercy, concern, and compassion.⁶

The adjective *gracious* is found five times in the New Testament. The noun *grace* is used some 155 times, usually to describe what God did for us in Christ (Romans 5:2, 15, 17; 1 Corinthians 15:10, and Ephesians 1:20). The five instances of *gracious* provide a challenge for our Wise Woman and are worth taking a look at:



- Luke 4:22 reports that *all* who heard Jesus speak in the synagogue wondered at the *gracious* words that proceeded from His mouth.
- Luke 7:42 describes the *gracious* forgiveness of the moneylender to his two debtors.
- Romans 11:5 explains that because of God's *gracious* choice a remnant of Israel would come to faith in Him.
- Second Corinthians 8:6–7 refers to the *gracious* Macedonians' work of giving and urges that the Corinthians' giving align with them.
- Second Corinthians 8:19 refers to the Corinthians' *gracious* work of giving that was urged in 2 Corinthians 8:6–7.

Practical application of these verses finds our Wise Woman:

- always seeking to speak *graciously*,
- completely forgiving the wrongs of others,
- willingly sharing her faith,
- practicing generosity, and
- prayerfully considering others' urging of her generosity.

Recently one of our Home Economics graduates married the son of one of our seminary professors. The wedding ceremony was held in Georgia, the home state of the bride. Since the bride and groom reside in California, the groom's parents hosted a dinner reception in their California home several weeks later.

Since I know the groom's mother, Karen, I offered to help with the serving and cleanup of the reception. The gracious spirit Karen exemplified as she executed the lovely occasion blessed me. Her choices that serve as a model to all women desiring to be gracious hostesses include:

- She was willing to allow others to help. So many women have such a "Martha" complex that they are unwilling



to allow others to share in the labor of an event. Working together is often what builds strong relationships.

- She had written instructions and diagrams that eliminated the need to interrupt her when she needed to be with her guests.
- Once she gave an instruction, she allowed her helpers to follow through on the task without hovering over them.
- She was careful to express her gratitude.

The Wise Woman will be excited about integrating *graciousness* in her own life, as well as training others to follow her role model.

THE WISE WOMAN'S WALK

*Therefore be careful how you walk,
not as unwise men, but as wise,
making the most of your time,
because the days are evil.*

EPHESIANS 5:15–16

Our study of the Wise Woman teaches us a significant character quality. Her heart is open to learning from the wisdom and experience of others. Biblical wisdom “is both religious and practical. Stemming from the fear of the Lord (Job 28:28; Psalm 111:10; Proverbs 1:7; 9:10), it branches out to touch all of life, as the extended commentary on wisdom in Proverbs indicates.”⁷ Wisdom takes insights gleaned from the knowledge of God’s Word and applies it to one’s daily walk. We know the Scriptures provide the basis for possessing a teachable heart (Proverbs 2:10–11), and we are reminded of Paul’s teaching in 1 Corinthians 10:6 (NKJV) that “now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they [the Israelites] also lusted.” Solomon’s admonition that “fools despise wisdom and instruction” is a serious warning to us



(Proverbs 1:7 NKJV). However, once we are convinced that we need to seriously consider the wisdom of mature saints, our next step is to examine our daily walk. We will use an acrostic for the word *Christian* to look at day-to-day living:

- C** would of course stand for Christ. Women who ponder the answer to this question have learned about Him in their churches, Bible studies, and personal devotions. They know how to achieve salvation (Romans 3:10, 23; 5:8, 12; 6:23; 10:9, 10, 13). The significance of this part of the question is, does she just know about Christ, or does she know Him as her Lord and Savior (Matthew 7:13–23)?
- H** reminds us to be holy as God is holy (Leviticus 20:7). Do we fill our minds with thoughts that will challenge us to live a holy lifestyle (Philippians 4:8–9)?
- R** stands for reputation. People remember us by the things that we do. Throughout the Bible, Rahab was known as “Rahab the harlot” (Joshua 2:1; 6:22; Hebrews 11:31; James 2:25); though her lifestyle changed, her reputation followed her. Do I purpose to cultivate a reputation that invites others to imitate me as I imitate Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1)?
- I** focuses on integrity, a word that basically means that I choose to do what is right when given a choice between right and wrong. Those with integrity are allowed to dwell with the Lord (Psalm 15:2). Am I a person of integrity?
- S** stands for the Scriptures, God’s Word, that has all of the answers to all of life’s questions. However, they only answer the questions if they are diligently searched (John 5:39). Study of passages like Psalm 119 reveals all that God’s Word will do for me. Do I live like I believe it?
- T** focuses our thoughts on our theme verses of Titus 2:4–5 (NKJV), where the older women are told to “admonish the



young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.” This passage implies that a young woman ought to learn how to manage her time and family finances, cook nutritious meals, practice hospitality, joyfully submit to her husband, and raise her children in the “training and admonition of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4 NKJV) so that the Word of God will not be discredited. Am I willing to learn these skills and then teach others?

I directs the Wise Woman to inquire, in other words, to ask. Matthew 7:7–8 are two of the many verses that tell us that if we ask, our Lord will respond. Do I ask with a humble heart that is truly desirous of my heavenly Father’s will?

A represents a challenge to abstain. Simply stated, abstain tells the Wise Woman to stay away from anything that could possibly not be good for her. First Thessalonians 5:22 is a short but potent verse that basically says anything that is unbiblical should be shunned! Do I abstain from every form of evil?

N reminds the Wise Woman that NOTHING is impossible when we trust our God. Proverbs 3:5–6 instructs us to place our trust in the Lord and not our own understanding—then our paths will be straight. Philippians 4:13 is a reminder that, through Christ, we can do all things. Do I trust God or lean on my own understanding?

THE WISE WOMAN'S RESPONSE

*If indeed you have heard Him
and have been taught in Him,
just as truth is in Jesus, that, in reference
to your former manner of life,
you lay aside the old self,*



*which is being corrupted in accordance
with the lusts of deceit,
and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind,
and put on the new self, which in
the likeness of God has been created
in righteousness and holiness of the truth.*

EPHESIANS 4:21–24

We began this chapter by posing this question: “Are you a Christian woman or a woman who is a Christian?” As we viewed the Wise Woman’s literary photo album, we found that a woman who is a Christian believes that the verbal picture of God’s ideal woman painted in Proverbs 31:10–31 is as relevant today as the day it was written. Daily she seeks to be virtuous, trustworthy, energetic, physically fit, economical, unselfish, honorable, lovable, prepared, prudent, God-fearing, and rewarded. We found that she desires to model God’s graciousness and eagerly learns from the experience and wisdom of others. She intentionally acquires instruction that allows her to use time management skills in her home, manage the family finances, cook nutritious meals, practice hospitality, joyfully submit to her husband, and raise her children in the “training and admonition of the Lord” so that God’s Word will not be discredited.

Additionally, our Wise Woman seeks to develop the *gentle* and *quiet* spirit, which is precious to God. Peter challenges women in 1 Peter 3:1–6 to concentrate on developing chaste conduct (purity of life with reverence for God) rather than an incessant preoccupation with outward adornment. The “gentle and quiet spirit” is beauty that never decays as the outward body does. *Gentle* is actually “meek or humble,” while *quiet* describes the character of a woman’s action and reaction to life in general. We will explore the 1 Peter 3 passage in chapter ten as we investigate beauty that endures, establish a last-



ing standard of beauty, and learn that Christ is our role model for developing a “gentle and quiet spirit.”

A Christian Woman may desire the benefit of being God's child but lack the motivation to integrate into her lifestyle the values and character that align with the Word of God. Ezekiel 33:30–33 describes this type of woman—she hears the Word of God, but her heart goes after covetousness (she wants God on her terms); consequently she chooses to ignore God's teaching to her. James 1:22 challenges women to be doers of the Word and not simply hearers.

Which part of my original question describes you?

A FINAL THOUGHT . . .

The lifestyle of God's Wise Woman reflects her heavenly heritage and focuses on the development of what is truly permanent and noteworthy—her character. This chapter concludes with a scriptural blueprint for designing the character of a woman who is a Christian, modeled after 1 Corinthians 13.

THE CHARACTER OF A WOMAN WHO IS A CHRISTIAN

If I speak to other women about their scriptural roles and responsibilities but lack the motivation to integrate the teaching into my life, I am arrogant (James 2:22–25).

And though I know about the women of the Bible and believe myself to be a devoted Christian but fail to emulate their model, I am nothing (1 Corinthians 10:11).

If I pursue Christian ministry and stay up all night preparing a theologically correct Bible study but fail to develop the gentle



and quiet spirit that is precious to my heavenly Father, my efforts are in vain (1 Peter 3:4).

*A woman who is a Christian is gracious (Proverbs 11:16)
even when others are not.*

She believes that the verbal picture of God's ideal woman painted in Proverbs 31:10-31 is as relevant today as the day it was written and seeks to emulate her qualities.

A woman who is a Christian gleans insight from the knowledge of God's Word and seeks to become a Wise Woman (Proverbs 2:17-21).

She takes seriously the mandate of Titus 2:3-5 and intentionally acquires godly Christian role models and seeks to be one to those younger in the faith.

As for professional contacts, ultimately they will diminish in importance; as for speaking opportunities, they will be presented and the content eventually forgotten; as for strategic social events, they will occur and the memories will fade; but the woman who is a Christian prepares to face God's plan for her future with confidence (Proverbs 31:25).

So, both the Christian Woman and the woman who is a Christian abide in the Christian community; however, the woman who is a Christian cultivates a lifestyle that clearly displays that her values and character align with the Word of God.



GROWING IN CHRISTIAN CHARACTER

1. *Evaluate your lifestyle . . .*

- a. *Use specific examples to describe how you are faithful in serving the Lord here so you will be rewarded with an honored position in His millennial kingdom.*
- b. *Set personal goals that will challenge you to live in such a way that our Lord will say of you, "well done" (Matthew 25:21).*
- c. *Identify any "high places" in your life. Develop a strategy to "utterly destroy" them (Deuteronomy 12:1–7) through our Lord's strength and to skillfully apply biblical truth to practical living (James 4:17).*
- d. *Ask a Christian sister to hold you accountable to achieving the goals you established in steps b and c.*

2. *Consider each of the questions posed in the Christian acrostic. Write your response to each.*

3. *Study Psalm 119 and make a list of the things that God's Word can do in your life.*

- a. *Select the five areas that are difficult for you to surrender to the Lord. Write out verses that will remind you to trust God with those areas.*
- b. *Place them in a prominent place. Purpose to memorize and meditate upon the verses when*

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you are tempted to be anxious instead of trusting (Philippians 4:6–7).

4. Develop your own acrostic for the word Christian. Support each word with appropriate Scriptures.

5. Set personal goals that will challenge you to activate the goals. As with question 1, ask a Christian sister to hold you accountable to achieving in these goals.