

The Woman Who Fears God

Air Dates: November 7-11, 2022

Day One

Have you ever read Proverbs 31 and felt like quitting? I get tired when I read about the superwoman pictured in that famous last chapter of Proverbs. What woman can live up to this ideal?

Well, I'm encouraged to realize that this is most likely not the description of a specific woman, but a picture of the characteristics of a godly woman. And if you will focus on verse 30 of that chapter, you will be encouraged:

Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.

The beauty of this Proverbs 31 woman is that she feared the Lord. Her central focus was not to please people, not to set new records, not to prove she could do anything she wanted to, not to fight for her rights, but it was to fear the Lord. If you and I want to be like this ideal woman, then what we must learn to do is fear the Lord, because then we will be women to be praised by God.

Any woman can be a woman who fears the Lord if she chooses to. There may be many things you cannot do, many avenues that will never be open to you, many mountains you'll never climb, many awards you'll never win. You may think you are insignificant compared to other women and what they do. But take heart today; you can be a woman to be praised if you will fear the Lord.

Throughout time women have often been characterized as deceptive and manipulative, and physical beauty has always been the world's way of measuring a woman. But when I read that charm is deceptive and beauty is fleeting, it tells me that these shallow and non-durable characteristics—charm and beauty—are not God's criteria, and we are not bound by them.

Women today are often very focused on being free from stereotypes and traditional roles. This Proverbs 31 woman found her freedom by fearing the Lord, and believe me, that's where we will find ours. Let me tell you, as one who has tried it both ways, true freedom comes when you commit yourself to be God's woman and make him the central focus of your life.

What does it mean to be a woman who fears the Lord? Have you given that any thought?

Day Two

"Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised." You probably recognize that verse from the famous 31st chapter of Proverbs, which describes a godly woman. The one thing that made this woman significant was that she feared the Lord.

I want to be a godly woman, and I'm sure you do, too. So, how do we become a woman who fears the Lord? What does that mean? This fear is reverential awe—a fear that comes from knowing enough about God to be in awe of his power, his holiness, his sovereignty. An awe that springs from love and devotion.

First, let's talk about what we should fear if we fear the Lord.

- **I should fear bringing any kind of disgrace to the name of Jesus.**

Psalm 69:6 is a prayer of David's which I have written in my prayer journal and I pray often:

"May those who hope in you not be disgraced because of me, God of Israel; may those who seek you not be put to shame because of me."

Do you fear doing something that will cause the name of Jesus to be dishonored? That is a godly fear; it is the fear of the Lord.

We've seen many times over, both in public and private arenas, where Christians have strayed morally and ethically, and brought disgrace to the name of the Lord. I have a great fear of doing that and I hope I always will.

Why am I fearful of bringing disgrace to the name of the Lord? One, because I know how weak I am and how easy it would be for me to fall. That's true of all of us. Two, because the thought of breaking his heart through a moral failure breaks my heart. And third, because I know I would lose so much; my ministry and freedom to serve the Lord would be greatly impacted if I brought disgrace to his name.

When you have a holy fear of bringing disgrace to God's name, you will watch the way you live very closely. No temporary thrill can entice you to pay this awful price, when you truly fear the Lord as you should.

Day Three

No matter who you are, how qualified or successful you may or may not be, if you are a woman who fears the Lord, you will be praised. That was the heart of this remarkable woman—she feared the Lord, and we can do that, too.

If we truly fear the Lord, we will fear bringing disgrace to his name. Another holy fear is

- **Causing any kind of dissension or disunity in the body of Christ**

Paul wrote to the Romans: *"If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone"* (Rom. 12:18). And Jesus told us to love one another as he has loved us. *"By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another"* (John 13:35).

Are you fearful of causing bad feelings among your friends and fellow believers? That is a godly fear, and we need to cultivate that kind of fear. That loose gossip which we tolerate in our lives, those unkind words we say to each other, that competitive spirit and malice which is evident in the way we treat each other—those are things we should fear greatly.

If you have bad feelings right now toward someone, would you start praying about that and ask God what he wants you to do about it? He may want you to go to that person and ask for forgiveness and have your fellowship restored. If so, please don't put it off. The longer you wait, the heavier that burden will be. Until you make things right between you and others, you'll never be the godly woman you want to be.

Is your fear of people stronger than your fear of the Lord? If you really fear the Lord, it will be more important to you to get your relationships right than it will be to save face with your friends or family. Maybe you're fearing rejection by others, and that keeps you from restoring fellowship with them. But ask God to give you a holy fear—the fear of the Lord—which will be stronger than your fear of people, so that you can do what he wants you to do.

"Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised." Keep repeating this verse over and over to yourself and ask God to make you a woman who fears the Lord.

Day Four

What are you fearful of today? Did you know that we should be women of fear? The Proverbs 31 woman is described as a "woman who feared the Lord" and she was praised. This is the most important lesson we can learn from this ideal woman. Are you a woman who fears the Lord?

If so, there are some specific things you will fear, and one of those is:

- **The fear of getting off on some issue and losing the right focus**

One of the things that I fear greatly is getting out of balance and becoming an issue-oriented woman instead of a God-fearing woman. It would be very easy to do in this society with my personality, believe me. And I fear it, because I know that is one way Satan gets his foot in our doors.

Many women in the last couple of generations have focused their lives and energies on righting all the wrongs done to women. To be sure there have been and still are discriminatory practices in our culture—including Christian institutions—which can be criticized, which should be changed, and which are not fair. And we may have some opportunities to try to effect some of those needed changes. That's fine in its proper place.

But for us to become issue-oriented on women's rights so that the issue is more important to us than anything else is to be shoved into the world's mold of fighting for your rights. I keep reminding myself that the only way I can really help any woman is to point her to Jesus, who can free her from her sins and give her peace. Then she'll be free indeed.

Paul wrote to the Romans that we are all slaves either of sin or of Christ. So instead of being in bondage to some issue, or becoming obsessive about fighting for our rights, I want to encourage women—and everyone else—to become slaves of righteousness, because when we die to ourselves we find life in Christ. I could help further the cause of women's rights 'til I'm blue in the face, and any progress made would be useless if the women are still slaves to sin.

I want to fear not hearing the Lord say to me, "Well done, good and faithful servant," for I will stand before him someday for my life's work to be judged. I fear wasting the time and energy I have on things and issues that are not of eternal significance. That is godly fear.

Day Five

Trying to find the right balance as a Christian woman is certainly a major challenge for most of us. I find that I must fight not to be caught up in what others think I should be. Rather I want to focus on the characteristics of a godly woman, and as Proverbs 31:30 tells us, a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.

We should not fear:

- **What people say or think about us**

Frankly, that can be a hard one for us women, because our natures are often inclined to be people-pleasers, and we will do most anything to avoid rejection. So, we can easily care too much about what people say or think.

Sometimes I find myself fearful of looking irrelevant because I have aspirations and beliefs that are not in sync with the norm for women today. Let's face it—we like to think of ourselves as sophisticated and “cool.” And quite honestly, there are times when I feel like the country-bumpkin, even among some Christian women who seem to be more “in tune” than I am.

But I have to keep going back to who I am—a woman who wants to please God. That means, I must fear the Lord, and not fear looking dumb or backwards. If we live godly lives in this society, we're going to look weird at times. Be prepared for it. And ask God to help you not to fear what people say or think.

That also means I must not fear:

- **What people can do to me.**

A boss can fire you, a boyfriend or husband can leave you, a child can disobey you, a parent can disappoint you, a friend can be disloyal to you. There are many things that people can do to you, and if you live in fear of those things, your life will be a constant emotional roller-coaster. Remember, no one can separate you from the love of Jesus, and as long as they cannot do that, then we don't have to live in fear of what people can do.

“Charm is deceptive and beauty is fleeting, but a woman who fears the Lord will be praised.” Let's make that our goal in life, to be a woman who fears the Lord.