

A Woman Who Pursues Excellence

*A wife (or woman) of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies.
(Proverbs 31:10 NIV)*

This is a very familiar scripture and one that makes us sometimes feel very inadequate as a woman....it is a lot to live up to. But if we understand that the scripture is talking more about her character, who she is, her moral excellence (reputation); more than what she does there is hope for us as women. We can all with the help and grace of God pursue moral excellence.

Pursue means to go after something with idea of overtaking it. With that in mind, how do we go about the pursuit of moral excellence? Where are we going with the excellence we attain? And why do we want to be women of excellence?

Excellence is not perfection. Neither is it better than average, tolerable. In other words it is not just more of the same old thing, but a new standard; beyond what we believed could be. Excellence is related to reputation; how people think about us. Character is who we are.....and is also something we desire to become. It is our personal mark on society. As we endeavor for good or Godly character, we are working toward moral excellence. We should be working as hard and probable even harder at becoming morally excellent as we would for a job, an art, a hobby. Our character is actually our gift to God.

It's enough for you to do it once for a few men to remember you. But if you do it year after year, then many people remember you and they tell it to their children, and their children and grandchildren remember..... And if it's good enough, it will last as long as there are human beings. Ernest Hemingway

A wife of noble character is her husband's crown, but a disgraceful wife is like decay in his bones. (Proverbs 12:4 NIV)

11 And now, my daughter, don't be afraid. I will do for you all you ask. All my fellow townsmen know that you are a woman of noble character. (Ruth 3:11 NIV)

When we consider the words noble character as used in these verses, it indicates a woman of ability and grace. It is the same word that is used to describe the character of Israel's judges in Exodus 18:21. It means capable, trustworthy, and with a genuine fear or respect of God: can also express strength, power, a force, and worthiness. Again it indicates the reputation of the women is important. The people around them knew them as morally excellent women.

What are some of the attributes, character qualities of the virtuous, morally woman? First of all, the fear of the Lord or reverence and respect for God that leads to trust and obedience and an understanding of His power, His love. (Proverbs 1:17 NIV; Proverbs 31:30 NIV)

Graciousness (old-fashioned term) comes from the word grace and shows love, kindness, goodwill, and mercy---even when it is not deserved. Proverbs 11:16 says a gracious woman retains honor or gains respect or has a good reputation. (Proverbs 31:12,20,26 NIV)

Wisdom (seeing things as God sees them) and discretion (knowing when and how to do and say certain things) are other important attributes of the woman of excellence. (Proverbs 14:1 NIV Proverbs 31:16,26,27 NIV)

A woman of excellence is a lover; first of all a lover of God and His ways: then, of course, her husband if she is married, and her children. The love of God within her will reach out to others around her also. (Proverbs 31:11,12,15,20,21,23,28 NIV)

Finally, God has given us His divine power (not our own...we are not expected to do it all in our own strength) so that we have the privilege of participating in His divine nature. God wants us as women to be effective and productive in the world we live in. And so it is not only our responsibility to be women of excellence, but a privilege to show the world the very nature of God. (2 Peter 1:38 NIV)