

# *“The Invaluable Woman of God”*

## *Lessons from the Proverbs 31 Woman*

### *“Character Counts”*

As you begin this study on character take a moment and review the past few days in your life. Think about the people that you have encountered, whether at school, work or on your errands. Did anybody grab your attention as one who has good character? Or did you, like many could say, just experience 'surface' individuals? Sometimes, don't you just want to find someone with some “good old fashion” character? Occasionally, you meet an older person who has grown up in “the ole days” and it is a blessing to see such truly good character that has been developed in their lives due to their life experiences. Remember what the Lord said about old paths? We do well to take heed to the wisdom of those choose good character over popularity.

***“Thus says the Lord: 'Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; then you will find rest for your souls'....”***  
***Jeremiah 6:16.***

We are constantly bombarded through advertisements, TV shows, magazines, internet ads, movies, etc., with a deceiving lie about what makes for good character. The lie being that what people see on the surface appearance is more important in life then the quality of character that one ought to have. This idea, among other things, is causing a sad trend because it is creating individuals with weak and unrespectable characters. Satan is determined to keep it that way. As a matter of fact, his ultimate goal is to keep us so focused on the *surface* that we never go any deeper in our relationships with people than what we see or perceive from the outward appearance in each other's lives. If we buy this lie of the enemy, then we will never enter into Godly friendships and relationships where we are living out God's plan for the church. God's plan is that we would walk in love towards one another, to be One with Him and making a impact on the world, showing the Love of Christ to the world with pure hearts honestly seeking the good of others, not just our own!

As women of God, we must be wise regarding things that promote good character in our lives, not pretending on the surface, but having genuine good Godly character! We must recognize and avoid those things which promote lack of character. This world needs Christian women to act like Christian women! He calls you to be a woman of Godly character...and to bring as many women with you as you can.... because in the eyes of the Lord it is Godly Character that Counts!

**“Reputation is what folks think you are. Personality is what you seem to be. Character is what you really are.”** *Alfred Montapert*

Using a dictionary or other study tool, define the word "character" here:

**Day 1**

**“Defining Character”**

Character is what defines an individual, whether good or bad, superficial or deep. Character is made up of the qualities (or lack of) that make the person who they really are. As Christians, our goal is to seek God’s word and line ourselves up to the character of Jesus. We will study the attributes of Godly character, how to achieve it, and maintain it. As you complete this lesson, do not be discouraged if changes in your character need to be made, but rather anticipate God’s power towards you to build in you Godly character for your good and His glory.

**Read Philippians 3:12-16 out loud.**

“Let’s press on together”

1. Read each verse below from Proverbs 31. After each verse write a word that identifies that particular Godly character. *The 1<sup>st</sup> is done for an example*

Verse 20 “She extends her hand to the poor,  
Yes, she reaches out her hands to the needy.” compassionate

Verse 22 “She makes tapestry for herself;  
Her clothing is fine linen and purple.” \_\_\_\_\_

Verse 24 “She makes linen garments and sells them,  
And supplies sashes for the merchants.” \_\_\_\_\_

Verse 25a “Strength and honor are her clothing” \_\_\_\_\_

Verse 25b “She shall rejoice in time to come” \_\_\_\_\_

Verse 26 “She opens her mouth with wisdom,  
And on her tongue is the law of kindness.” \_\_\_\_\_

Verse 29 “Many daughters have done well,  
But you excel them all.” \_\_\_\_\_

Verse 30 “Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing,  
But a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised.” \_\_\_\_\_

*Now next to each word that you wrote, write the OPPOSITE word.  
(You may want to use a thesaurus to help)*

2. Look over your list of Godly characters, which one of these do you desire the most? Why?

- a. Look up the characteristic word(s) that you desire in your Bible, concordance or dictionary.
- b. *Challenge*...Find scripture(s) that correlates with this particular characteristic that you desire. You may want to use your Bible concordance.
- c. What do you discover about this trait you desire? What are practical things you can do in your life to help you achieve that character trait in your own life?

We can see that from this list in Proverbs, we are provided with some wonderful, Godly characteristics. As we examined them, we look to our greatest example of good character, Jesus, who possesses each of these characteristics and so much more.

3. When it comes to the Lord there are so many beautiful characteristics that He has. Take a moment to think about which of His characteristics you are most thankful for in this season of your life. Write your thoughts.

**The Webster's dictionary defines character as – “a distinctive trait”; “a behavior typical of a person.”**

With this definition in mind, prayerfully examine your heart. How would you identify your **distinctive traits**? What is the **typical** behavior that comes from your life?

Pray over what you find, thanking the Lord for all the changes that He has done so far. Ask the Lord for help in those areas where He may be placing His finger in your life for change.

Remember...Jesus is for you. No mountain is too big for Him. He is the One who cheers you on having already plowed the Way so that you can have a Godly character.

**Jesus is the Way and the Way Maker**

*Memory verse:*

***“She opens her mouth with wisdom, and on her tongue is the law of kindness.”  
Proverbs 31:26***

## DAY 2

### “The Means Matters”

Wouldn't it be so nice to wake up one morning to find that you are the perfect Proverbs 31 woman possessing perfect Godly character? Unfortunately, it just does not happen that way....*Having Godly character is supernatural and only comes by supernatural means.* The way God has chosen to produce character in us may not be the most popular or comfortable event in our lives, **but it is His way**. Let's take a close look at how Godly character is produced in our lives.

1. Read Romans 5:3-4. How is character produced? From where does it originate? How does each attribute build upon the other?
  - a. What does character produce? And why is this important?

The word “produce” found here in Romans has a great meaning (you gals that work-out will love this) it means *to work fully, to accomplish, to finish, to work-out.* You all know that to become strong and in shape you have got to work-out, there is just no getting around it, and you must go through the pain to have the reward. It's the same with gaining Godly character, and we all know those trials give us such a good work-out!

- b. Write 1 Timothy 4:7b-8 here:

When we persevere through hardships something supernatural is happening in our lives. God is at work, this is where the rubber meets the road. Not only is our character being worked out, but we also see our *true character* shine through. It is not always a pretty shine though. It has been well said that “*All women are good company in fair weather; but the storms of life prove spiritual character.*” Hardships will come for sure, how we handle them joined with perseverance is the key.

***“God is more concerned about character than our comfort.”***  
*Paul W. Powell*

2. Most Bibles provide a notation that the word “*character*” in Romans 5 translates “*approved character.*” With this in mind, read James 1:2-4 & 12. Record the truths that you find.

3. The word "*perseverance*" comes from a Greek word that means "*patience and cheerful endurance.*" Why is having this kind of perseverance so important in developing Godly character?

a. As we face hardships in our lives, what do these verses teach you, to help you to have *perseverance*? How can you *persevere*? Are you on your own?

Philippians 4:13

2 Peter 1:2-3

4. Some of us can testify that when a big trial floods our lives, that God brings us through mightily. However, sometimes it's those small everyday nuisances that nip and pick at the soul. Many times it can be the "little things" that stumble us. How do you respond to the everyday little irritations that come your way?

**"It is in little things not in great that weakness of character is to be found"**

*Charles Simeon*

5. If you are experiencing the same trials over and over, it could be because you have not yet yielded to the Godly characteristic which God is trying to produce in you. Take some time and ask the Lord to reveal if you are in this cycle. There can be an end to these repeated hardships...learn the lesson. Ask the Lord to show you what lessons you may have missed, remember that Jesus is on your side, He wants you to grow and gain His character. Close this lesson today by reading Hebrews 4:15&16 and then pray over those areas in your life where the Lord has brought revelation.

*Memory verse:*

**"She opens her mouth with wisdom, and on her tongue is the law of kindness." Proverbs 31:26**

### Day 3

### “Maintaining Godly Character”

Today we are going to have a peek into the life of a woman who possessed Godly character. Even though there were few verses written about her, they give much insight.

1. Turn to Acts 16 and read verses 13-15 and 40. (If time permits, read the entire chapter to get the full context, you will be blessed if you do). Who was this woman and what was she doing when the Apostle Paul met her? (verse 13)
2. From these verses, find and list all the Godly characteristics that you see her. (At least 7)

Maintaining Godly character takes effort. As said at the beginning of the study, we are constantly bombarded with lies about what true character is. We see that this world is so out of order; it screams at us, “you must look this way”, “you must drive a certain vehicle”, “you must have these name-brand clothes”, “house” and “money” and it is only if you possess these that you will then have “good character,” when in reality, it is only mere surface. Ladies we need to fight against this lie! Do not give in to it, not even an inch! Our fight needs to be offensive as well as defensive. We press toward the goal of Godly character while resisting temptations that tug at us daily. Maintenance is vital, so through Lydia’s life we will learn tools of offense and maintain Godly character.

It is worth noting that Lydia was probably more on the wealthy side, being a *seller of purple* gives us that hint. It is very obvious that this was not her number one passion. Being wealthy in it self is not wrong, but it is wrong if that is your first goal in life. See Matthew 6:33.

3. The Proverbs 31 woman was also making clothing in purple and selling fine linens, this shows the character of being industrious was evident in her life. The scripture does also emphasize something greater about her clothing and how important outward appearance is compared to the character. What do these verses say about this?

Proverbs 31:25a

Proverbs 31:30

4. Lydia feared the Lord (which means to reverence Him) and this we know because she was a worshipper of God. This is a key element that we must also have in our lives: To maintain Godly character we also must be a woman who worships the LORD. Lydia was known by this, are you **known** as being one who worships Jesus as well?
  - a. What does worship mean to you personally?
  - b. How does being a worshipper directly influence having a Godly character? In other words, what does singing and praising God do to the human heart?

5. Jesus speaks specifically about how to worship. What is His instruction to us? John 4:23&24

a. How does the Lord's instruction about worship minister to you?

6. Proverbs 31:29 says "*Many daughters have done well, but you excel them all.*" The word "excel" means "to ascend and to go up". How would this scripture relate to our worship for the Lord? Before you answer, read Psalm 24:3-6.

There must be one ongoing constant in our lives, and that is giving our worship to the Lord. Maybe your habit is to only worship during church services, or when you feel good, or maybe only when something good happens to you. Worship should be our way of life no matter the circumstances. **Read Hebrews 10:15.** Note the word continually. Yes, Jesus is worthy of our continuing praise! Take some time in prayer; ask Him to help you be a true worshipper of His. Remember, this lifestyle of worship is part of how we maintain Godly character all for the glory of God.

*Memory verse:*

***"She opens her mouth with wisdom, and on her tongue is the law of kindness." Proverbs 31:26***

#### **Day 4**

#### **"Maintaining Godly Character"**

**"You cannot dream yourself into a character; You must hammer and forge yourself one"**

*James Froude*

Yes, Godly character does take work. The Lord has provided the way to gain it and keep it, we are responsible to develop it and display it. Keep up the good fight; it is so worth the work.

We saw from Lydia's life that worshipping Jesus is a key to maintaining Godly character; today we will see another necessary tool from her life.

1. Read Acts 16:15 and 40. From these two verses, what can be told of Lydia's heart?

a. What does this reveal about the kind of company or friendships that she kept?

2. The company which we **continually** keep has great influence on our character.

Write 1 Corinthians 15:33-34 here.

a. Why is this verse so important? What could happen if we disobey this verse?

- b. Bad company can come in other forms, not just in the friends which we keep; do any ideas come to your mind? Write them here.
3. The opposite to 1 Corinthians 15:33 is quite true as well, “*The good company we keep will help strengthen us and keep us accountable to put to death any bad morals or sinful behaviors in our lives.*” How do these verses confirm this statement?

Proverbs 27:17

Hebrews 10:24-25

James 5:16

4. Describe someone who is considered “bad company” and then someone who is “good company”
- |                    |                     |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| <u>Bad company</u> | <u>Good company</u> |
|--------------------|---------------------|

Some may say that their dearest friends are *not* Christians, does that mean there is to be no contact with them? Well, we know that Jesus Himself had contact with non-Christians. There is something very important with this truth, there were those who heard Him gladly and followed Him and there were those who didn't. *Remember that Jesus' closest friends were His disciples.* We must make sure to follow the Lord's example with those unbelievers in our lives. Ask yourself, are they listening to you as you speak God's word to them? Do they follow you to church? Do you see willingness in their heart to follow Jesus? Or do they cause you to compromise your example?

5. What do these scriptures instruct us to do when it comes to friendships with people who would blatantly reject Christ and want to see you join them in their folly?

2 Corinthians 6:14

James 4:4

**“A man (woman) is known by the company she shuns as well as by the company she keeps”**  
*C. H. Spurgeon*

Take some time to think about the friends in your life. Who are the ones you spend the most time with? Can you honestly say that they influence your character to become more like Jesus? Do you return the blessing back to them? Do you have those individuals in your life that are pulling you down, causing your character to grow weak? Remember at the beginning of 1 Corinthians 15:33 it says *“do not be deceived.”* We are exhorted not to be deceived in thinking that we will be okay with bad company in our lives. We have got to submit to this truth even though it may be hard. Pray over all your friends, thanking God for those with strong Godly character who build you up. Pray also for the wisdom and boldness of the Lord if you find that there needs to be a distancing of bad company in your life. The Lord will honor every attempt you make to line yourself up to His word. And if God allows bad friends to be removed, He will bring better Godly friends in return...if you let Him!

*Memory verse:*

***“She opens her mouth with wisdom, and on her tongue is the law of kindness.” Proverbs 31:26***

## **Day 5**

### **“A Character Revealed”**

**“A bird is known by his note, a man (woman) by her talk”~Anonymous**

Yes, that’s right; we are going to be addressing our tongues!! Our character is revealed by the words that pass over the tongue and come out from our mouths. Let’s look once again into Lydia’s life to gain encouragement in this all important topic.

1. Read Acts 16:15. What was Lydia begging the Apostle to do?
  - a. How would you describe the words that were coming from her mouth?
  - b. Now read Proverbs 31:26, what are the two characteristics the come from this woman? How does this verse compare to Lydia’s words?
  
2. There is something about the tongue that we must not miss. Read Luke 6:4 and summarize what Jesus teaches us about the tongue.
  - a. Where do our words come?

- b. Read Acts 16:14, what did the Lord do to Lydia's heart before she spoke with the Apostle Paul? How could this be an instruction for us?

***“The tongue is the hinge on which everything in the personality turns”***

*T.C Baird*

The heart and tongue are connected. The mouth speaks what fills the heart. Proverbs 18:21a says, *“Death and life are in the power of the tongue...”* Meditate for a moment about the words that you speak, words to your husbands, children, family, and friends. Your tongue is either speaking life or it is speaking death, how incredibly convicting and humbling to have this power. Let's make sure to use words wisely.

3. Write out some examples of “words of life” and “words of death” that come from the tongue?

Life

Death

**“Let no foul or polluting language, nor evil word nor unwholesome or worthless talk [ever] come out of your mouth, but only such [speech] as is good and beneficial to the spiritual progress of others, as is fitting to the need and the occasion, that it may be a blessing and give grace (God's favor) to those who hear it.”**

**Ephesians 4:29 Amplified Bible**

The Psalmist in Psalm 17:3 says *“...I have purposed that my mouth shall not transgress”*. It is very interesting to note that in Hebrew the word “purpose” was used here in a bad sense, it means to “plan, imagine, plot, consider”. It would be safe to say that this Psalmist thought carefully about his words considering that if he did transgress that the outcome would be bad. If we women purposed to speak wisdom and have the law of kindness on our tongues our whole world would change.....But we need to understand exactly what we are up against.

4. Read James 3:1-12 and record the truths about the tongue.

- a. Explain what verse 6 means by *“the tongue is set on fire by hell.”*
- b. What are we to keep our tongue occupied with? 2 Timothy 4:2
- c. Read James 3: 8 and answer, who then can tame the tongue?

Heeding to that old term “bite your tongue” does help a little but is only a temporary bandage to a greater issue which is in the heart. Think for a moment the things in your life that affect your heart in such a way that you are tempted to transgress with your tongue. It is always a heart issue. For example, if the tongue gossips it probably means the heart is jealous or insecure. If foul language comes from the tongue it probably means there is anger or bitterness. Throughout scripture we find that what comes from our mouths, is actually the overflow of our hearts and thoughts. So the way we overcome a sinful tongue is to fill our hearts and minds with the word of God and allow it to change us.

5. Read Psalm 19:14 and Psalm 141:3-4. Now write these verses out as a prayer, and add your own prayer as well. Maybe you need to confess sinful habits of using your mouth to sin instead of to praise God and edify the people around you. God is not surprised by our sin, but He does desire us to acknowledge the sin, repent and be renewed in this area.

Remember Jesus is on your side, giving victory, He is your strength and redeems your heart making it clean resulting in a purified tongue. How does Psalm 19:14 encourage your heart about the Lord's ability to help you in this area?

On a small note card or paper, write out either Psalm 19:14 or Psalm 141:3-4, (or any other scripture you have studied this week that ministered to you) and place it in an area that you see every day as a reminder and encouragement to stay focused on having a Godly character, because Character Counts!

*Write out this week's memory verse:*