

## Mother's Day 2026

This is Mother's day, and most mothers are also wives, so I am going to take a few minutes and share what I hope are two phrases of wisdom for you mothers and wives here. With that being said I recognize that not all mothers are wives. Some of you are mothers and are divorced. Some of you may be mothers and have never married. But regardless of your marital status, I trust these words will be helpful and encouraging. I also recognize that some of you women here are not married and are not mothers. I can easily see where you might think that because I am directing my comments to mothers and wives, I am biased against single women. Quite the contrary for in many ways, like Paul, singles, whether male or female, are more free to serve and work in God's Kingdom than those who are married. But just because my focus this morning is on mothers and wives doesn't mean that singles can't benefit from what I am going to say. So my point is, even though you may be single, and not a mom, stay tuned, and if I have thoroughly confused you, here is the deal, if you are a woman, listen up.

### **Embrace your Place.**

I have two phrases to impart to you ladies today. And the first phrase requires a bit of context; and that is to distinguish between the idea of identity and role. Your identity is your internal sense of self; your values, your beliefs, your traits, qualities, and attributes, which define yourself. Roles are the external domains in which your identity is expressed. Let's put this in Christian terms. When one comes to faith, your identity changes. The Bible says you become a new creature, born of the Spirit, and though you inhabit the same physical body as you inhabited before faith, your core values, beliefs, and outlook on life changes because you are now a spiritual creature awakened and animated by God. Colossians summarizes this transformation as being transferred from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light. I said roles are the domains in which your identity is expressed. It is your home, your marriage, your work, and your community where Christ expresses Himself through you. And here is where the first phrase I have for you has significance, for the phrase is to "embrace your place," by which I mean to take hold of the domain in which God has placed you to express your new identity. In today's culture the word "place" can be taken as demeaning for it can imply the consignment of a woman's talents and ambitions to the home. Again that is not what I mean, rather it is the expression of your Christian self in the domain God has placed you. It seems odd that I should have to say this. However, there is a tremendous amount of cultural messaging that distorts this definition.

So what is a woman's place? What functions does she serve in God's economy? Another way to ask this question is what are a woman's primary domains in which God wants her to operate and lay hold of? The answer is threefold and is given in Genesis chapters 1 and 2. I will note these in the order they were given in scripture, but it is not necessarily the order in which they are to be prioritized.

### **Parenting**

The first is given in Gen 1:28a and that is parenting, *God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth.* The first direct command to Adam and Eve was to be fruitful and multiply. God intended for human kind to spread over and take charge of the earth. Adam and Eve were to have children, and children just don't start out as mature, knowledgeable, and wise adults. They need

care, clothing, shelter, food, training, love, and nurture, until they reach an age of independence where they become self-sustaining. That process of leading an infant to adulthood takes most everything you have. So the very first duty (or domain) mentioned in scripture and charged to Adam and Eve is parenting. And note they were not just to be parents one time. The charge was to be fruitful. They were to multiply. And with multiplication comes parenting many times over.

### **Joint Dominion**

The second role or domain is found in 1:28b and it is shared dominion; note, they were to fill the earth, *and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.*” In other words, as Adam and Eve were to fill the earth they were also charged to rule and subdue it.

The word *subdue* refers to the inanimate world while the word *rule* refers to the animate world. In other words, God wanted man to understand, use, and steward earth’s inanimate resources while at the same time rule over the animate world.

We have more clarity of this role in Gen 2:15, *The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.* Remember Gen 2 is a commentary or expansion of what happened in Gen 1. God made man first and placed him in the garden to *work it and take care for it*. Note *work* is to change it, while *care* is to sustain it. So man is placed in the garden to improve and then sustain the improvements. But God sees that the man is not complete in fulfilling this charge, so he creates the woman to help him out. And this is where we find the third role.

### **The Complementarian**

The third role is found in Gen 2:18, *Then the Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone, I will make a helper who is just right for him.”*

The third domain is the role of complementarian. The word *good* here has the idea of completeness, fitting, or appropriateness. We use this definition all the time. Something is not good because it remains incomplete: it is not good that the lawn is half mowed, or your homework is only partially done, or the house is only half cleaned. These are things that are not good because they are incomplete. Comparing what God said in chapter one we see what is not good, or what is not complete. The heavens without stars, the sun, the moon, and without birds is not complete. The seas without fish is not complete. The land without plants and animals is not complete, and similarly man alone is not complete.

The Hebrew words for *helper* and *just right for him*, means someone who corresponds, completes, and is his opposite or counterpart. It is not a demeaning term in any way, rather it expresses the idea that the woman completes what is lacking in the man. I mentioned in our study of Gen 2, this idea of helper or being a compliment is more than just traits. It means she corresponds to the man physically, socially, mentally, and spiritually.

1. Physically, in that without a woman the man cannot be fruitful and multiply. It works the other way as well.

2. Socially, in that God saw the man was alone. This means man was created for social contact, and the woman was the one God designed to fulfill that social connection.
3. Mentally, as she is to function as his partner in working and caring for the garden. That means she had ideas that were as valid as his as to how to do it.
4. Spiritually in that they both fed off the tree of life God had given them, and were to enjoy His presence and be jointly responsible for the responsibilities God gave them.

God further defines the structure of this relationship in Gen 2:24, *That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.* God intended for the man and woman to live together under the umbrella of marriage. They were to leave their fathers and mothers, establish their own family identity, have children, and then repeat the cycle all over again.

So these are the three domains where woman are to embrace their place,

1. Their role in Parenting.
2. Their partnership in Dominion.
3. Their Complementarian role as a Wife.

Now this is where it gets a bit complicated. Not all women fill all three roles. Some are not married, some are not mothers, but note all participate in dominion. So at least one of these domains apply to you, for some it is two, and for some of you all three.

Then the question becomes, how are they to be prioritized? Scripture does give us a clue. Note Gen 2:18, *The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."* And Gen 2:24, *That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.* Of all the domains listed, I would argue that to be the man's complement is the most important. It is primarily why the woman was created. She is his counterpart; she is what completes him. In a sense she makes man whole.

And because marriage was to be the umbrella under which this relationship existed and flourished, and the charge to both of them was to fill the earth and multiply, I would argue parenting is the second most important domain of the three.

Last is the domain of shared dominion. Note Adam was already functioning in this role and managing it fine apart from Eve. It wasn't because he couldn't fulfill this duty, it was because he was *alone* that she was created.

So what does "embrace your place" entail?

1. Accepting. It is knowing why God has designed you. This is the brain part -intellectually understanding what it is God has for you.
2. Adopting. By adopting I mean making it yours. It is taking that role for yourself. This is the heart part—throwing your being into that task.
3. Adapting. This is the tricky part, for managing these domains requires a delicate balancing between the three and often involves trade-offs and compromises.

## Provide with Grace

The second phrase I want to leave you with is “provide with grace.” In other words, this is how your identity is to be manifested. It is a function of the power of God. *Not be might, not by power, but by your Spirit* (Zec 4:6). So much of what you do as a mother and wife is to give. You give away your time, your attention, your love, your care, your sleep, your energy, your creativity, your imagination, and dreams, and yes, sometimes you give away your career and ambitions, for the love of your family and husband. These are not always easy choices, but you make them, and God is pleased when you make them willingly and with grace. And grace means willingly, lovingly, without expectation of reciprocity. It is how Christ deals with us. And we manifest His life by letting Him live through me. *I have been crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live and the life I now live in the flesh, I live by the Son of God who loves me and gave himself for me.*

What does this look like? Prov 31 is a description of a woman who constructs her life about these themes of embracing and providing and has found a balance between the three domains in her life—her marriage, her family, and her shared dominion. It is easy to read Prov 31 and think you are comparing yourself to some sort of Biblical Platonic form—the perfect woman. That is not the impression the passage wants to give. Rather it is a picture of a woman who lets God express Himself through her. The key is found in verse 30—*she fears God*. So as we read this don’t compare yourself to the Platonic picture—because the passage emphasizes the end product—and not the producer—so as we read these verses focus on the Producer; the great God we have who produced these things through her life.

Prov 31,

- a. Vs 10-11, *A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies.* <sup>11</sup> *Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value.* She has a noble character. She expresses her Christian identity through her virtue.
- b. Vs 12, *She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life.* She brings her husband good. She seeks the best for him and her family.
- c. Vs 13, *She selects wool and flax and works with eager hands.* She takes the initiative and is hard working.
- d. Vs 14, *She is like the merchant ships, bringing her food from afar.* She has a far gaze for a good deal.
- e. Vs 15, *She gets up while it is still night; she provides food for her family and portions for her female servants.* She is organized and thinks ahead.
- f. Vs 16, *She considers a field and buys it; out of her earnings she plants a vineyard.* She has business and investment sense and seeks to enhance the family income.
- g. Vs 17, *She sets about her work vigorously; her arms are strong for her tasks.* She is physically fit and hard working.
- h. Vs 18-19, *She sees that her trading is profitable, and her lamp does not go out at night.* <sup>19</sup> *In her hand she holds the distaff and grasps the spindle with her fingers.* She has a huge work ethic.
- i. Vs 20, *She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy.* She is generous and community minded.

- j. Vs 21, *When it snows, she has no fear for her household; for all of them are clothed in scarlet.* She is prepared and plans.
- k. Vs 22, *She makes coverings for her bed; she is clothed in fine linen and purple.* She is stylish and wants to look good.
- l. Vs 23, *Her husband is respected at the city gate, where he takes his seat among the elders of the land.* She empowers her husband.
- m. Vs 24, *She makes linen garments and sells them, and supplies the merchants with sashes.* She is enterprising.
- n. Vs 25, *She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come.* She is positive, hopeful, and free of anxiety.
- o. Vs 26, *She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue.* She is wise and imparts wisdom (also see 2 Tim 1:5, Pr 22:6, Pr 1:8).
- p. Vs 27, *She watches over the affairs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness.* She is a good home manager.
- q. Vs 28-29, *Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: <sup>29</sup>“Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all.”* She is esteemed.
- r. Vs 30, *Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.* She fears God.
- s. Vs 31, *Honor her for all that her hands have done, and let her works bring her praise at the city gate.* She is known for her works. (From “Teach with Joy, breaking down the Proverbs 31 woman”, by Joy Mendoza)

The reward.

- a. Vs 28, Her children, and husband call her blessed and
- b. Vs 31, her works bring her praise in the city gates.