

The 21st Century Woman of Grace: Homemakers: Pursuing Homemaking In a World Filled with Homelessness Titus 2:5c

Our world is filled with homelessness. Not so much a lack of shelter for living and sleeping—but a lack of godly nurturing at the most basic level of the Christian home. To battle homelessness in the church God has called each married woman to accept His call to be a homemaker for His Name and Glory.

This morning just as for the past 20 centuries, God offers to every married woman in Christ's Church the privilege of capturing each moment she spends in her home: whether a tent, a house, an apartment, or a palace—and turning those moments into eternal crowns she can someday cast at Christ's feet.

God Wants Nurturing Homemakers

Since Paul sat to pen that one word in Titus 2:5, "homemakers" (NKJV), or "keepers at home" (KJV); "to be busy at home" (NIV); "workers at home" (NAS), every grace-energized woman can offer her homemaking in worshipful service to God. God designed women, not men, to have the calling and responsibility of shaping and keeping the home!

Think of what God has offered to these obedient and responsive married women—each dish that she washed, each towel she folded, each diaper she changed, and each weary day she spent with often self-centered family members: can become worthy of eternal rewards that will never pass away.

But sadly, the most amazing extinction event in American Church history has been the growing near extinction of the nurturing, Biblical, home life of families.

From both parents working, to sports becoming top priority, to the rise of the electronic devices: home life has been reduced to a house where detached minds and often disconnected people, now live under the same roof; not deeply connected, and living spiritually and emotionally compartmentalized lives.

At first glance many Christian families look closely connected. Like marbles in a vase that can appear connected, but when poured out they all go different directions, so many Christian families are not growing together in the Biblical home: they just share a house.

To this detached era of church history, as to all eras: in Titus 2:5 God continues to offer the Christian home, guarded, nurtured, and filled with love by a 21st Century Woman of Grace, that God Himself personally calls to be a homemaker.

Titus 2:5 promises each grace-energized homemaker¹ that they can redeem every moment they spend in the endless duties of the home into worship offerings of obedience to God. That means God wants her:

Redeeming The Time

One word, chosen by God is this word homemaker.

One word, designed by God as the role-specific ministry that pleases Him, is what He wants for godly women who offer their lives to Him through their ministry to their home.

As we open to this next virtue that God desires to be cultivated in the lives of godly women—the very concept is increasingly offensive to our 21st century world. In Titus 2:5 the Creator and Designer of every woman on Earth says: “Admonish the younger women to be...homemakers”.

Please stand as we listen these words from God. Titus 2:4-5 (NKJV)

that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, ⁵ to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.

Pray

The verses of this chapter were sent as a call to First Century men and women energized by grace to live an extraordinary spiritual life in a very unspiritual culture.

Of all the godly traits older women of the faith were to exhibit and train the younger women to embrace—this is the most controversial. In our liberated women, egalitarian society nothing riles modern women more than the image of a home-bound-slaving woman that this passage seems to portray.

And even in the church of today nothing seems harder than to convince *wives* that their **primary ministry ordained by God** is to be their husband’s best friend; and *mothers* that their primary calling is to disciple and nurture their children.

¹ It is very interesting that in the eternal portrait of the godly woman of Proverbs 31, that 9 of the 22 verses are about working in her home.

Some women act as if God said homemaking was optional for them: "Be a home maker only if you like it or have nothing else to do"; but nothing is further from the truth! God says to every married woman: your home is to be your priority, it is not an option.

The lesson of this verse is not so much that a woman's place is in the home as it is that **her priority is for her home**, and that calling from God becomes evident by her choices. It is not whether she works outside the home or not—just being in or out of a building that you live in, is not the measure of this virtue. Remember, as a born-again believer:

God's Plan is the Greatest Calling

Paul told Titus that a wife and mother would find her greatest fulfillment in obeying this priority from God. But a married woman who is a believer must make a conscious choice to obey the Lord in this area.

The Greek word translated "homemakers" (Greek *oikourgos*—Strong's #3626), in Titus 2:5 (NKJV) is from the compound Greek word which is built from *oikos* (house) and *ergon* (work). The Greek word *ergon* isn't just about general work but a specific job focus. That is why in the New Testament it is used of strategic spiritual ministry. Turn back with me to John 4 and see this pattern.

- Jesus declared His focused ministry when He said, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His **work**" (John 4:34). On another occasion He said, "I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the **work** which You have given Me to do" (John 17:4).
- The Spirit of God clarified the focused ministry of the church at Antioch by instructing: "Separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the **work** to which I have called them" (Acts 13:2).
- Paul explained the focused ministry of Epaphroditus by reporting that he "came close to death for the **work** of Christ" (Philippians 2:30 NASB). Paul also said that the faithful leaders in the church of Thessalonica shared their focused ministry (1 Thessalonians 5:13).

When God asks godly women to focus on their God-ordained role as a homemaker, He is asking them to join in with a ministry strategic to the plan of God.

A godly married woman consequently believes that she has been called of God to do the work of homemaking for the Lord God Himself.

Whether the culture agrees or not, whether it is hard or not, whether others obey or not—God is looking for women who view their home as His highest priority for them.

He says you can be as great a servant of the Lord as is possible by living out your God-

given calling of loving your husband and your children in a home that is your top priority of ministry!

Was God's Original Plan Flawed?

From the first-century, there has probably been no distinctive of the Christian life that has been more derided than that of being a homemaker. In fact, in today's society of liberated women who are individualistic and totally independent, a grace-energized homemaker seems like a dinosaur to them—or worse.

Even among Bible-believing Christians there are many who want to relegate Paul's instructions to Titus and Timothy concerning the God-designed gender-specific roles and responsibilities to being simply cultural instructions for that locality only—and not supra-cultural biblical commands from an unchanging Lord of His Church.

If we consider Paul's scriptural instructions to women as being biased because of his Jewish upbringing and culture, and thus no longer binding, authoritative, or relevant, we come up with huge problems. This position would open the entire Bible to being questioned as being authoritative, inspired, and trustworthy.

For example, if Paul erred in his teaching on women, and therefore couldn't be fully trusted, did he also get other parts wrong in the half of the New Testament that he wrote? And, if Paul was mistaken about God's instructions for women, how could we be sure if what he said about how a man is saved is correct?

I firmly believe that all that Paul wrote was *not* flawed, but under the complete inspiration of the Holy Spirit—and thus totally trustworthy. And even though there are some issues Paul addressed that were possibly just local and cultural (such as head coverings in Corinth), there is no way a good interpreter of God's Word can say that about His instructions regarding the role and priorities of women.

To do so would seriously question the authority of God's Word. And one of the clearest biblical teachings directed toward godly, Spirit-prompted women of all times is that they, if married, are to be "busy at home." This desire of God is seen consistently in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation.

What God Does *Not* Say

When Paul wrote the Holy Spirit's instructions which said that married women are to be homemakers, ***he was not saying that God says women can never leave the home, be active outside the home, or never have a career.*** After all, Proverbs 31:10–27 clearly shows the many facets of this wise woman's life and among them were real estate investments (v.16) and a small manufacturing business (v. 24).

God also ***never said that a woman has to do all the work at home***. On the contrary, as the God-ordained “head of the house” the husband is actually to lead by Christ's example of serving others rather than seeking to be served Himself (Matthew 20:28). So then, a godly husband will display a servant’s heart (Philippians 2:7) that at all times gives honor to his wife (1 Peter 3:7) by assisting her in every way he can.

Neither did Paul teach that women were any sort of second-class citizens to the men because of this role responsibility. Although God's Word clearly teaches gender-specific roles in the home (Ephesians 5) and the church (1 Timothy 2), it just as clearly declares absolute spiritual equality in Christ:

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28).

In God’s sight, the spiritual standing, access, and position of a woman isn’t any different than that of a man. God has made no sexual distinctions when it comes to spiritual access.

What God Does Say

Since the Titus 2:5’s “homemaker” role is authoritatively from God, and is not imprisonment, slavery, or second-class status to men, what did the Lord mean when He stated that married women have a special God-ordained role through which they can serve Him?

God clearly defined a woman’s role in the church is as a learner—not a leader of the church or a teacher of the church—for that is the gender-specific role (I Corinthians 11; I Timothy 2) God gave to godly men. At the same time, a woman’s God-ordained role, if heeded and pursued, will keep her from being second-rate to the men.

Paul clearly defined a married woman’s priorities so that she would have spiritual and eternal significance as a believer. We also see this context as we look in I Timothy 2:11–15:

“Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control.”

If she spiritually follows God’s desire that she manage a home built around God’s Word, she will find her greatest blessing and complete fulfillment from God. She will also have the privilege of rearing children who are God-hearted, useful servants of the Lord. ***A married woman who resists being a grace-energized homemaker is therefore working against this divine plan established by the God of the Universe.***

Every married woman who wants to do God’s will make her home a top priority. That was God’s Word, through Paul to Titus, and by the authority of Scripture to us today. That is what God means by “homemaker.” God allows a great deal of freedom in how this is done (as Proverbs 31 records) as long as the precedence of the home is heeded. Any marriage and home where this is neglected is headed for serious problems. (No one can violate a specific directive from God without incurring the consequence engine of Galatians 6:7.)

What Does God Say About Single Women?

But what about women who are not presently married, or may never be? Singles who are around a marriage-focused fellowship often feel left behind, left out, and sometimes even cheated. This can lead to withdrawal, isolation, morbid introspection, and loneliness. Left unchecked, these responses can foster growing anxiety, frustrations, and even bitterness. Obviously, that is not God's plan, so is there a place of special favor and ministry for single women?

My favorite example of God's plan for unmarried women is the life example of a lady who has taught me more general knowledge of the Bible than nearly anyone else. When I was only eight, while watching Billy Graham on TV I heard him speak about a woman who had made an immense influence on his life—one of the greatest Christians he said he'd ever met.² Her name was Henrietta Mears, and she had written a book about what she had taught for decades through the Christian Education department at Hollywood Presbyterian Church. Graham then shared how she guided him when he started his evangelistic crusades. (She also trained Bill Bright as a college student in her classes, and was actually at his home when he founded Campus Crusade for Christ.)

I believe the secret of her great spiritual success lies in her choice to remain single. You see, Dr. Mears testified later that she had once loved a man who did not have a personal relationship with the Lord, yet he still wanted to marry her. Since she believed God wanted her to fully seek and serve Him, she prayed, and waited. When it became apparent that she could never serve Christ fully if she married that man, she declined his proposal. And after him, no one else ever seemed to "fit" in her heart. The prayer she recorded at this time revealed the intensity of her servant's heart for the Lord:

"Lord, You have made me the way I am. I love a home, I love security, I love children, and I love him. Yet I feel marriage under these conditions would draw me away from You. I surrender even this, Lord, and leave it in Your hands. Lead me, Lord, and strengthen me. You have promised to fulfill all my needs. I trust in You alone."³

Toward the end of her sojourn on earth, Henrietta Mears gave testimony to the Lord's abundant grace throughout her entire life. She described how He gave her more in every way than she ever dreamed possible. Through her Sunday school ministry, she had poured her life into thousands of children who also loved her back. From the day she surrendered her future to the Lord in the prayer above, she had no regrets. And God never ceased to open further and further doors of family, friendship, and ministry to her.

Even though God's Word presents marriage and family life as the major way to fulfillment, it isn't His only avenue. God has designed a perfect pathway of blessing for

² Billy Graham, "Introduction" to Barbara Hudson Powers' *The Henrietta Mears Story* (Westwood, NJ: Revell, 1957), p. 7.

³ Ethel M. Baldwin and David V. Benson, *Henrietta Mears and How She Did It* (Ventura, CA: Gospel Light, Regal Books, 1966), pp. 42–43.

every person who surrenders to His will and will follow Him through life. The greatest blessing in serving God is enjoying supremely the unwavering companionship of Jesus Christ—the only One Who can go through every single moment of life together with us. So if you never find a man who is a “fit” for your own heart, as you surrender your life to the Lord, and leave it in His hands, He can do great and mighty works through your own life as well!

Now then, let’s move on to some guidelines that can help married women more clearly establish biblical priorities in their homes.

Personal Assessment Is Vital

If you are a married woman, here is a quick checklist that can help you discern whether you are away from home more than God wants you to be—or, if your priorities when at home are not guided by God's Word. Here’s the test:

Because of the pace of my life, I am—

- Often too tired to plan and cook meals, or even keep the house orderly.
- Always wanting to eat out rather than at home.
- Slowly losing interest in my homemaking responsibilities.
- Constantly feeling the pressures of never having enough time to finish what needs to be done.
- Noticing that my husband is sometimes agitated over things that are not getting done on time.
- Frequently getting irritated with my children (and husband) because I am overly stressed and tired.
- No longer able to show hospitality or even entertain friends in my home.
- Gradually waning in my fervency for the Lord because I am so preoccupied with many demands on my time.

The following two types of women, both of whom truly want to serve the Lord, are typical of how today’s wives approach their homemaking role:

1. The first wife is always on the move from ministry at church to volunteering at school. She sings in the choir, shuttles her children everywhere, attends two Bible studies, and teaches Sunday school. But there’s one thing she never does—stay at home. Her husband therefore asked her to please stay home more, and keep the house from becoming a disaster.
2. The other wife is home most of the time. However, she is lazy, sleeps late, and often lets her children get up and get ready for school on their own. At night she’s rarely tired, so she stays up reading (even her Bible) or TV watching, but never seems to get any of her projects done that she has agreed to do. Her husband therefore asked her to please get up earlier, tend to her children, and focus on

getting her work around the house done.

The “Superwoman” who is everywhere does everything—but stays home; the non-Superwoman stays home—but never gets anything done. Both types of women need to stop and examine their lives to see where they have diverged from God’s plan to “rule or guide the house” (Greek *oikodespoteo*, *I Timothy 5:14*).

If you are a working wife, or considering entering the workforce, you need to prayerfully examine what the claims of God's Word are upon your choices. One of the best ways to determine whether it's proper to work outside the home is to sit next to a godly, older woman who is willing to help you think through the answers to these heart-searching questions:

- Is my desire to work outside of the home mainly related to wanting more material things?
- Is my longing to go to work because I'm tired of the constant demands of caring for my children?
- Is my motive for wanting to work because I want to become an independent woman and find security in a career?

If you're honest with yourself, you'll see find that none of these reasons fit with God's plan for a grace-energized woman. A wife and mother who desires to please the Lord will choose to be content where God has placed her, to be grateful for what possessions are hers, and to stay home for as much time as it takes to fulfill her calling from God to maintain a clean and orderly home for her family to God's glory. Now we must decide:

What Does God Want From Us?

Please bow with me as we pray.

Lord speak to all of our hearts, but especially each married woman listening today. If they are struggling with any part of your plan, pour out Your grace so that we all can respond to these simple verses expressing our heart's desire to obey You as Lord:

Energize me by Your grace to learn “in whatever state I am, to **be content**” (Philippians 4:11).

Energize me by Your grace to “give thanks” in everything, “for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for [me]” (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

Energize me by Your grace in “whatever [I] do, [to] **do all to the glory of God**” (1 Corinthians 10:31).

Pray and invite elders/deacons to prepare communion

Personal Application of God's Plan: Study and Decide for Your Life

Areas like these fit the scenario that needs a grace-energized older woman to come alongside a younger wife and mother to help restore her interest and even hope in her role as a homemaker. For that is a vital and godly ministry Titus 2 older women are to pursue in Christ's church.

Because our society is increasingly becoming individualistic and obsessive with privacy, this has made everyone a stranger at times. But as a community of believers in Christ's church we are called to be different. A grace-energized woman who manages her home well is meant to be the gatekeeper for hospitality by setting this inviting tone for her home.

1. A grace-energized homemaker is hospitable. Peter explained that one of the basic ministries a godly homemaker can engage in is hospitality:

"But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers. And above all things have fervent love for one another, for 'love will cover a multitude of sins' **Be hospitable to one another without grumbling.** As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (1 Peter 4:7–10).

Not only are we as believers to love one another, but we are to "love strangers," which is the translation of the Greek word for "hospitality." But hospitality is becoming extinct in our privacy-guarding, individualism-seeking culture. Nevertheless, grace-energized homemakers understand that God's will is for believers to open their homes to welcome in those they do not know so that they can extend the love of Christ to them.

This instruction to be hospitable does not refer to enlarging the guest list for entertaining friends in our homes. A danger here is that sometimes such entertaining can become a source of pride. In other words, we find ourselves wanting to impress guests with the beauty of our home, and to point out all that we have as they look on with admiration. True biblical hospitality never seeks to impress—only to serve. This type hospitality quietly whispers in the background to those who are being served: *What is mine I gladly share with you!*

The best manager of the home is the grace-energized homemaker who heeds God's Word which calls us to love Christ supremely. That means loving Him more than our home or possessions. One way to strengthen Christ's supremacy is to de-accumulate possessions. The more things we own, the more complicated our lives become. Our possessions should be periodically sorted, stored, restored, and protected. And most of us could also get rid of as much as

half of what we own without very much sacrifice—some of which could certainly be passed on as a blessing to others.

Our materialistic culture continually tries to infect us with the “discontentment syndrome” that perpetuates an ongoing cycle of wanting to buy more and more of “the latest” and “greatest” stuff. Only the disciplines of godly contentment and simplicity can free us from becoming ensnared by the “needing more” bug:

“Those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For **the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil**, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But you, O man of God, **flee these things** and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness” (1 Timothy 6:9–11).

We must always be on guard against letting our possessions possess *us*! Simplifying the lust for “more and more” can also keep many families from needing two incomes to survive. By the way, if you have perfectionist tendencies, you should be especially cautious of becoming always dissatisfied with your home so that you can never enjoy it with your family.

- 2. A grace-energized homemaker shapes the atmosphere of her home.** We see a very important guideline for homemakers in Proverbs 14:1: “The wise woman builds her house, but the foolish pulls it down with her hands.”

This verse speaks not merely of the physical structure of the house, but also the reality of what the atmosphere is like for the people who live there. And who does God say is the one responsible to build an atmosphere that makes a house into a home? The grace-energized homemaker.

Just as a thermostat regulates the temperature of a physical house, so a godly woman sets much of the emotional and spiritual temperature of the home. For example, when words get “heated,” a grace-energized woman can turn down the “heat” by giving a soft answer “that turns away wrath” (Proverbs 15:1). And when hearts turn “cold,” a godly wife and mother can become a conduit of encouragement as she exhibits the “merry heart” that “makes a cheerful countenance” (Proverbs 15:13). Of course, since this type ministry is humanly impossible to maintain, only a *grace-energized* woman can create such a temperate atmosphere in the home.

- 3. A grace-energized homemaker guards her home.** Here is another guideline that will help a wife and mother in her role as a homemaker:

“She watches over the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness” (Proverbs 31:27).

In this verse is a very descriptive word used to describe the home; “watches” is literally “to hedge about” like a mother bird would do to protect her young. This reminds a godly woman that part of her God-given assignment in the home is to watch over both the house and the people within. This is why “does not eat the bread of idleness” is mentioned because it implies a constant care. (Don’t you find it interesting that nine out of twenty-two verses in Proverbs 31 are about the virtuous woman working in her home?) The meals, the schedule, the clothes, the health, and so much more are to be watched, guarded, and done as an offering of worship to the God Who called and assigned these highest of duties.

4. **A grace-energized homemaker loves the ministry God gave to her.**

When a woman truly understands that home management is God’s will, then she can see how easy it becomes to love what God wants done. That is what Paul said in Romans 12:2:

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that **good and acceptable and perfect will of God.**”

When God’s grace helps us resist the pressures of culture, and we set our mind on His plan and will—we live out God’s best. And God’s best for a married woman is home management which is pleasing to the One Who called her to that ministry.

Think of the joy it can be to go through life doing exactly what God designed you to do, wants you to do, and will help you to do by His grace as you walk through life together with Him. That is what a grace-energized homemaker has to look forward to—loving the ministry God gave her to do.

“Whatever you do, **do it heartily, as to the Lord** and not to men, knowing that **from the Lord you will receive the reward** of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ” (Colossians 3:23–24).

Don’t Wait: Ask God to Lead you

Perhaps the Holy Spirit has been showing you areas that need improvement in your own life as a homemaker and you’re tempted to just give up. If so, be aware that Satan wants our sins and failures to convince us to give up, but don’t let him win. Never forget that throughout history the work of God has always been performed by weak individuals like us—those who have completely surrendered themselves to the God whose power is perfected in man’s weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9). After all, He has always had only weak and sinful humans with whom He could work.

The truth is that Jesus *loves* to do extraordinary things through ordinary people so that He will be glorified! And to those who will humble themselves before Him, He gives this

awesome promise:

“For thus says the High and Lofty One
Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy:

‘I dwell in the high and holy place,
With him who has a contrite and humble spirit,
To revive the spirit of the humble,
And to revive the heart of the contrite ones’ ” (Isaiah 57:15).

Wow! What a God of Second Chances and New Beginnings! What happens when you allow God to use you as He pleases? Great and marvelous things—exceedingly abundantly above all you can ask or think (Ephesians 3:20–21)! The greatest joy, the greatest power, and the greatest rewards possible for a married woman are the result of being a grace-energized wife and mother.