

# INTRODUCTION

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In the Bible, there is a familiar passage of scripture (Proverbs 31:1-31) that deals with the virtuous woman. This text will serve as foundational scripture; and throughout this book, I will be referring to it in the context of a woman's goal to becoming a virtuous woman.

This book is targeted for the contemporary woman of this society that we live in today; however, know that God's word is timeless. Various lifestyles have become the norm—not just the norm for those in the world today—but they have also become the norm for people in the house of God.

As a pastor, I have an opportunity to observe these lifestyles, and there are times when a pastor who has oversight of a church must address these lifestyles that are lived by his or her congregation.

It's the biblical mandate to every preacher of the Word of God to proclaim and declare God's Word, His precepts, principles, and standards to every generation. Though every generation is

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different, God's standards remain the same. Much of what has become socially acceptable in our society is contrary to God's Word, and it is the job of the preacher to declare to us that we've crossed the line of God's law. It's what Elijah did with Ahab and Jezebel; it's what Jonah was sent to Nineveh to do; it's what John the Baptist did in the wilderness; and it's still our job today as those who are entrusted with the care of His people.

We also see a plethora of biblical inconsistencies in the make up of our contemporary church: There is no shortage of dead-beat dads, Pentecostal pimps, tyrannical teens, curt kids, unwed mothers, and unfit moms. Not to mention, the church is soiled by extramarital affairs, openly gay males and females, and long-term living together arrangements.

Being a pastor of a local church, I am often spiritually grieved by what I've seen in the lifestyle of the people I've been privileged to pastor. But out of all the people who comprise the local church, one group of people stand out above all others: the women of the local church.

Now, I have to admit that this group is not hard to notice since it is the largest group making up fifty to sixty-five percent—or more—of many congregations. Shockingly, very few people have recognized the impact of a woman's lifestyle on her family, community, and the world because a woman's lifestyle is crucial to having healthy families, morally correct communities, and in the development of moral societies worldwide.

Traditionally, we're taught that men are the most important factor in developing healthy families, communities, and societies. While that is true in many regards, because biblically men have been given headship and have been elevated to a position of responsibility *for* the family, community, and society, men by no means wield the kind of influence that women wield *over* the family, community and society, through a connection with their children—just ask Jacob about it Gen. 27: 1-30.

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The reason why the woman is so important in all of this is because she is not only a woman, she's also a mother. Now, I know some women have never had children due to medical reasons, or simply by choice. And that's fine. But whether a woman admits to it or not, every woman in some way is mothering somebody. Sometimes she's doing it without actually knowing it.

Because of this, a woman holds the most influential position known to man, and that is the position of a mother. Mothers are influential in the lives of their children because most of the morals that a child ever learns comes from his or her mother; a mother is often a child's first teacher because many things are imparted into a child by his or her mother that, in many ways, are hard to reverse.

That kind of influence can be a major factor in determining what kind of man her son becomes or what kind of woman her daughter becomes. Therefore, the maternal factor is imperative to her family and community. But the maternal factor is not the only reason why the lifestyle lived by a woman is so important; it is much more involved than that. Everything from finances to careers are connected to the kind of lifestyle a woman leads—even her success in relationships has to do with her lifestyle.

This book will use the biblical principles taught to us by the virtuous woman of Proverbs 31 to guide and lead women to a rich, full, and virtuous life.