

Proverbs 31:17 - She Can Dress Herself

“She dresses herself with strength and makes her arms strong.”

~Proverbs 31:17

Today we will take Proverbs 31:17 and break it up into three delicious morsels (noted below), so we can fully savor the richness of this extremely small, yet meaty verse.

Is it just me, or are you also amazed by how often we use a multitude of words to make a minute point, but our brilliant Father God can use a modest amount of words (only 10 in this verse) to make a vastly profound and life-transforming statement?

I found it peculiarly interesting that within the 22 verse acrostic poem of the Proverbs 31 woman, there are three verses that contain exactly 10 words: Proverbs 31:13, Proverbs 31:29, and the verse we're meditating on today, Proverbs 31:17. Very interesting, but I must digress.

The three delicious morsels are:

1. She dresses herself.
2. She dresses herself with strength.
3. She makes her arms strong.

She Dresses Herself

A Proverbs 31, biblically submissive wife knows how to dress herself. The Hebrew phrase for "*she dresses herself*" is translated "*she girds her loins*". To "gird one's loins" is an idiom meaning: to prepare oneself for something requiring readiness, strength, or endurance. Wow! That does not sound like a weak-willed or stupid woman, does it?

Therefore, she dresses herself and does not require, or expects others (i.e., her husband, children, friends, or anyone) to make it easy for her to live as God called and has already equipped her to live according to His word—as a Princess of The King of kings and the Lord of lords.

She does not use any worldly excuse to flaunt her freedom in Christ in order to be unsubmitive and/or disrespectful to her husband (Gal 5:13). She neither seeks a way to disregard her husband's guidance and position of spiritual headship over her, nor searches Scripture in order to find a way to be contentious with him (Prov 14:1).

Let me make this point clear, God does not contradict Himself. The LORD never commands you to disobey Him in one area of your life, in order to obey Him in another. If He states in one place (although He repeats this concept numerous times) that He commands wives to be submissive and respectful to their husbands (even if their husbands do not obey the Word), then you can be assured no Scripture exists that will contradict this command.

Be mindful however, not to confuse “submission” with “blind obedience”. God never commands any of His children, male or female to obey *anyone*, including authority, who tells them to disobey any of His commands. God’s Word prevails over all and His truth must also; humbly, lovingly and respectfully triumph in our hearts and lives (1 Peter 2:18-23, 3:14-17, Acts 24:1, 10).

Remember, it has to legitimately be a sin (as alone God defines through His Word) for you to submissively and respectfully disobey your husband or any authority God has placed over you. Don’t misuse this caveat to engage your sinful desires.

"Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants [bondservants] of God."

1 Peter 2:16

The Greek word used in 1 Peter 2:16 is "bondservant", which is actually different from a "servant".

[bondservant](#) *n.* – 1. a person who serves in bondage; slave; 2. a person bound to service *without wages*

[servant](#) *n.* – 1. a person *employed* by another, esp. to perform domestic duties.

A bondservant is bound to service without expecting any worldly compensation, while a servant is a hired worker who performs his/her duty for immediate satisfaction.

I wanted to share this distinction with you before you read this next passage so you’ll understand why God calls us “bondservants” rather than “servants”. God purchased us with the blood of His Son. He owes us nothing but death and condemnation for that is what our sins have accrued for us (Rom 6:23). But rather than give us what we’ve rightly earned, by His grace, He sacrificed His one and only Son and gave us what we didn’t earn: eternal salvation. Therefore, we’re not God’s hired servants, for He owes us nothing (Job 41:11, Ps 49:7-9), rather we’ve been graced to be His bondservants; His precious children, His blessed possession (1 Pet 2:9).

If you’ve made it this far down the narrow and challenging journey towards biblical submission, I’m confident you’re now humble and mature enough to take and eat this very solid piece of food. Okay, now dress yourself with gratitude and humility before God. Are you ready? Good... let's go....

"Will any one of you who has a servant [bondservant] plowing or keeping sheep say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come at once and recline at table'? Will he not rather say to him, 'Prepare supper for me, and dress properly [gird yourself], and serve me while I eat and drink, and afterward you will eat and drink'? Does he thank the servant because he did what was commanded? **So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.'**"

Luke 17:7-10 (emphasis added)

I hope you can see how necessary it was for me to share this Word from our merciful and kind Lord with you today. Many of you who are currently taking this study are not living in the "model Christian" marriage and I understand how much harder it is for you to endure. Although this passage from Luke may sound archaic, unfair and demeaning, please know that because it is the Word of God, it is used by our heavenly Father for great healing and to bring you comfort, strength and a sound mind— especially during the most difficult times when you don't receive any affirmation, but instead receive contempt for your faithfulness, love and devotion to Christ.

Dear one, know that our Lord is not one that is far away, but grieves with you and weeps with you. Allow Christ our Lord to comfort you and affirm you when no one else on this earth will. For our husbands are our earthly husbands, but Christ Jesus, the King, the Son of the Most High God, has betrothed us to Himself, and we are His and He cherishes us with a love no man on earth can ever match, for the man Jesus alone is God.

Having this knowledge, we are honored to be called bondservants of Christ, as we strive to live according to His commands out of pure love and gratitude for Who He Is and what He has done for us...[without expecting anything in return.](#)

A Proverbs 31, biblically submissive wife receives her full reward in Christ Jesus that produces a joy that is hid in God our Father, so that [no one can steal it, nor will it fade away.](#) She does not pursue the temporal, man-made "happiness"; no, instead she strives for peace and fullness of joy in her Lord who alone is the Master of her heart and soul (Is 26:3, Ps 16:11). Being a wise woman, she is well aware that her marriage, her family and her life was not lovingly created by God for her to merely be happy, but to endow her with something far greater—holiness (1 Peter 1:13-16).

Therefore, she dresses *herself*. She does not require or expect anyone to lay out her clothes for her day to day and tell her what she must wear, what the weather is like or what is appropriate dress for every activity. Rather a Proverbs 31, biblically submissive wife is mature enough to know how to feed and strengthen herself with Scripture as well as use every resource God has provided her (wise counsel and rebuke [when necessary] from an older and godly woman, books, magazines, articles, the internet, etc.) so she can learn how to appropriately "dress" for all circumstances.

She is wise, and is eager to learn to be self-controlled, pure, holy and modest in everything. She is intelligent, and intentional seeks godly wisdom from much time spent in God's Word. This discipline enables her to discern the current weather conditions (the circumstances of her life), whether it is bright and sunny (times of pleasantries), dark and gloomy (times of sorrow), or thundering with fierce winds (persecutions) that might come her way. No matter the weather, she is not afraid, but she is ready because her trust and hope are in Jesus Christ alone.

Rather than vicariously live through someone else's faith and time in study, she's mature enough to seek biblical counsel and direction for all aspects of biblical womanhood (i.e., how to establish a cleaning schedule for her home, research healthy and nutritious recipes and cooking techniques, learn wise and frugal shopping habits, etc.) because she daily feeds off of and clothes herself with the Word of God instead of expecting others to constantly feed her and prop up her faith.

She rejects the common, worldly practice of blaming her parents or anyone else for life lessons she was never taught. She realizes that as an adult, she is fully responsible for what she does with the past and present God has given her (Ps 90:12, 139:16). With humility and gratitude, she clings to all that is good (even from a painful past) and flees from all that is evil so that an immature, self-absorbed, and overly sensitive viewpoint will not cause her to cultivate bitterness in her heart, thereby capsizing her sound mind in Christ (1 Thess 5:18, 2 Tim 1:7).

She realizes that although the world may look upon her submissiveness as if she's had a lobotomy, she is fully aware that she has not...but she has had a heart transplant worked by the Great Physician, Jesus Christ— in whom her life is hid (Col 3:3-4).

And so she dresses herself with self-control, discipline, and wisdom. She dresses herself daily with the [fruit of the Spirit](#), as she knows that this "adornment" is required for every activity and is fitting for any and every occasion.

She Dresses Herself With Strength

- The Word of God: [Psalm 1:1-3](#); [Ecclesiastes 12:11](#); [1 Timothy 4:6](#); [2 Timothy 2:15](#) , [3:16](#)
- The Full Armor of God: [Ephesians 6:10-19](#)
- The Joy of Christ: [John 15:10-11](#); [Romans 14:17](#); [1 Thessalonians 1:6](#); [Hebrews 12:1-2](#); [James 1:2-4](#)
- The Peace of Christ: [John 14:27](#); [John 10:30](#); [Philippians 4:7](#)
- The Humility of Christ: [Isaiah 53:4-5](#); [66:2](#); [Philippians 2:5-8](#); [Romans 12:16-21](#); [1 Peter 2:23](#)
- The Attitude of Christ: [Luke 5:16](#); [Luke 6:22-23](#), [6:27-36](#); [2 Corinthians 1:3-5](#); [2:5-7](#), [3:4-6](#); [Romans 12:1-3](#); [Ephesians 5:1-2](#)
- The Wisdom from the Holy Spirit: [Ecclesiastes 7:5](#), [8-10](#); [1 Corinthians 2:6-16](#), [3:18-21](#), [James 3:13-17](#)

"He had no form or majesty that we should look at Him, and no beauty that we should desire Him."

Isaiah 53:2b

She Makes Her Arms Strong

By exercising...

- Excellent care of her husband through preferring his needs above her own, or that of her children(s), or anyone else on this earth. A biblically submissive wife never puts her children before her husband or allows them to come between her and her husband; for she is well aware that God has made her one with her husband, *not* her children. ([Genesis 2:23-24](#); [Mark 10:9](#))
- Tender and wise guidance/counsel for her children, diligently training them in the Way they should go, and loving them enough to discipline when necessary without anger or frustration, but with great love, self-control and the teaches of wisdom and kindness. ([Deuteronomy 6:5-9](#); [Ecclesiastes 8:11](#), [Proverbs 13:24](#); [Ephesians 6:4](#))

- Her faith by carrying the burdens of other brothers and sisters through prayer and good works. ([Romans 12:10-13](#); [Galatians 6:2, 10](#); [Ephesians 6:18](#))
- Her love for Christ with the outpouring of love to her community as she strives not to contain herself in a "Christian Bubble", but is effective in sharing the Gospel of Christ to a lost and depraved world through words *and* deeds— knowing full well, if separated, [all her efforts will be in vain](#). ([Matt 28:19-20](#); [1 Cor 1:17](#); [1 Thess 4:11-12](#); [2 Tim 4:2-5](#))

So put on a pretty dress, comb your hair, wash your face and "gird your loins" sisters! Take off your worldly princess heels and walk with the lowly and work diligently with your hands; all while, fully clothed in your "royal robe" as a daughter of the Most High God!

Biblical Perspective, Practically Applied:

1. Take more than one day to do this lesson. And as always, look up EVERY SCRIPTURE.
2. Choose *four* Scripture passages to memorize, and study. Share it with your husband and recite it to him within the two next weeks. If you feel you don't fully understand a passage, kindly ask your husband to explain it to you with great humility and reverence.
3. Practice diligently the four Scripture passages you chose to memorize so that you can "[work out your salvation](#)". There is no need to ever memorize Scripture if you never intend to put it into practice. Otherwise, the Word of God only because just another thing you know, but do not really understand. ([Jeremiah 9:23-24](#)). Remember, the Word of God is *living* and *active*, not dead and slovenly.
4. Depending on what time of year you're reading this, rather than expect your husband to plan your anniversary, Valentine's Day, date night or any other celebration, plan something that would be relaxing or enjoyable for *him*, even if it's not your cup of tea. You'll be surprised at how much you'll begin to enjoy his activities, just because you love watching him experience God's joy. Keep in mind; these occasions were created to celebrate your *marriage*, not *you*.

I pray that the Lord will direct your hearts to the love of God and to the steadfastness of Christ (2 Thess 3:5). Amen.