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# CHAYIL

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S E C R E T S O F T H E  
V I R T U O U S W O M A N

mildred kingsley-okonkwo

# CHAYIL

**secrets of the virtuous woman**

**mildred kingsley-okonkwo**

**CHAYIL**

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## DEDICATION

*For Bose... my amazing personal assistant.*

*For everything you do....*

*As you walk down that aisle to become Mrs Udeme, I pray that the principles in this book will make marriage easier and sweeter than you ever dreamed*

# **WITHOUT YOU...**

When God wants to bless you, he sends some people into your life. I am blessed truly for I have many of such people in my life.

I must say thank you first to my greatest blessing, my strength, my heartbeat, my sunshine, the love of my life. The man who still gives me butterflies in my tummy even after almost twelve years of knowing you. The one everyone calls Pastor Kingsley but I have the privilege of calling honey. Thank you for your love, patience and for constantly inspiring me to be better. Words will never be enough...

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## **FIRST WORD**

One of the most talked about women in the bible; aside from the woman with the alabaster box or the woman with the issue of blood, is the Virtuous Woman. If you are a woman and especially a Christian woman, you would have been compared with her, challenged by her, inspired to be like her or on the flip side been frustrated by her. I mean she is like a real life super woman – wife, mother, great leader, entrepreneur, humanitarian, realtor, fashionista, successful wife of a successful husband – and on top of it all she had a vibrant relationship with God.

I've heard all sorts of things about the virtuous woman and seen many different reactions to her. Someone actually once said to me that the proverbs 31 woman is God showing us what we can be but can never attain. Someone else said to me that the proverbs 31 woman is just another expression of men's unrealistic expectations of

women. I laughed, but sometimes I'm truly shocked at how exasperated people feel toward her.

Funny, I think the problem is we are focusing on doing rather than being. Being a virtuous woman or a noble wife as some versions put it is not about being a perfect mother or wife; it is about what you can DO if you will BE who God has called you to be. God doesn't expect you to be a superwoman, he simply expects you to be the very best that YOU can be.

I hope you will relax and just follow me through a few pages and see if we cannot find what this woman knew that made her so special and more importantly let's see if we won't find what makes me so sure that you too are what the Hebrew people call *echet chayil* - a virtuous woman.

# FAVOUR

*A valiant wife is the crown of her husband, and as a boring worm in wood, the woman that does evil things destroys a husband.*

**Proverbs 12 :4**

(Aramaic Bible in plain English)

Marriage is an amazing thing. It is the one thing that has the ability to either make or mar a person's life. My husband would often say that "marriage is your last chance" and I find that to be very true. You see who you marry has the ability to change your life forever. Nothing can destroy a man quicker than a bad wife. This is why King Solomon asks in the first verse that describes the virtuous woman, this very profound question:

***“Who can find a virtuous woman?”*** -Proverbs 31:10a

A simple question but more of a heart cry. He is asking who can find a woman who has virtue; a woman with moral strength of character: A woman, who loves God, loves truth and hates sin; a woman who can be trusted. The word translated to mean virtuous here is the Hebrew word CHAYIL and it actually means strength, might,

efficiency, wealth, army. Interestingly, she is considered an army because she is as efficient as an army taking charge. You must understand that the word virtue in itself is a positive force. So what he's actually saying here is "Who" can find a woman with that moral strength of character, a woman that the force of her virtue would cause positive change. Now which man wouldn't want that kind of woman in His life? He even goes on to say she is priceless.... worth more than her bride price: "**...for her price is far above rubies.**" **Proverbs 31:10b**

The virtuous woman is an investment in any man's life. She is the kind of wife who, once her husband marries her, cause things to start to happen positively in his life. She knows that she carries favour and understands that it is a powerful force that is just waiting to enrich a man's life. She carries a healing, creative and restorative

power that multiplies the blessings in a man's life. Jesus carried virtue and He knew that once it left him it would do something positive in a person's life. When He felt it leave Him as in the episode with the woman with the issue of blood in Mark 5:21-34, the bible says in verse 30: ***"And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes?"***

Incidentally Proverbs 18:22 tells us that, ***"he that finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favour from the Lord"*** The virtuous woman is the kind of woman who knows and understands that she is a blessing in her husband's life and uses the power of prayer to unlock the favour factor upon her life.

My dear sister, you are the one God is talking about here. You are a good thing. No, you are that good thing he promised His son. You carry the promise of favour. God knows what He put on the inside of you that's why He said it is not good for \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in your husband's name) to be alone. He knows that the moment that you enter his life favour is unlocked and immediately ***two begin to have a good reward for their labour (Ecclesiastes 4:9)***

You are not trying to be virtuous, you are: you carry the virtue of favour. The blessing that has the ability to heal, restore and make a man happy for the rest of his life. It has the power to elevate and enthrone him. ***Proverbs 12:4 says a virtuous woman (a wife with strength of character) is the crown of her husband, but the wife who degrades him is like bone cancer.***

One of the first things God taught me in marriage is the fact that as a virtuous woman you carry a king-making virtue. If you understand this, you will be more excited about being the wife that you should be. Once you enter his life, you crown him. It is the crown that makes a man a king or at least that announces his kingship to the world. Little wonder the proverbs 31 woman's husband was always found sitting at the city gates. The city gate is where all the decision makers sat. It is the place where all decisions including the political decisions were made in Israel, so obviously he was the kind of man that his opinion mattered.

The virtue you carry has the ability to make your husband a great man. It can make things start to move at amazing speed such that like Elijah even if he is running, he will still outrun the kings chariots even on foot (1 kings 18 :46).

Having said all this please understand that if you refuse to walk in the fullness of

what God has placed on your inside you will become like bone cancer. It may not be visible in the beginning but you will be destroying your husband from the inside. The virtuous woman carries favour and she knows it. Do you?

# FAITHFULNESS

*The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain.*

*She does him good and not evil all the days of her life.*

*Proverbs 31:11-12*

Someone once said that character is who you are when no one is watching but in marriage it's actually more like character is who you are when someone is watching...very closely. It's funny but marriage is not a very good place to try to fake it. Trust me; it will only be a matter of time before you give up. Marriage is the one place where you are expected to be ***naked and not ashamed (Genesis 2:25)*** and by naked I mean literally...okay so let me leave that for later chapter.

The virtuous woman is a woman of character. She has moral strength. The bible tells us this and expatiates by adding that her husband, the person closest to her, the one who had seen her inside and out, love handles and all, still trusted her. In fact the term used by the King James Version says that ***his heart doth SAFELY TRUST in her...*** I think that this is the biggest compliment any woman can receive, that her husband can vouch for her character. In other words he knows what she is capable of

and it made him have full confidence in her. He knows she would never cheat on him or be disloyal to him. He knows that with her he would always come first. He knows she would only give him good advice. **GOD'S WORD** version of this same scripture is just so beautiful. It says ***"Her husband trusts her with [all] his heart, and he does not lack anything good."***

This scripture challenged me early in marriage to be the kind of wife that her husband would always feel safe around. The kind of wife that he could be rest assured would not deceive, undermine or cause him to need protection from. I made up my mind from the start not to hide secrets from him and it paid off. I knew he felt safe with me because he would buy property and put it in my name not in our name. He would buy shares and put it all in my name. I mean in a world now where everyone is suspicious of the other; where wives are building houses and keeping it

secret. I heard this amazing story about a couple who had been married for over fifteen years. The couple had lived in a certain rented house for ten years out of the fifteen years they had been married. The house where they lived, the landlord had been increasing the rent and the man had been paying but had no idea that the house belonged to his wife all along and he had been paying rent to his own wife. In other words, his wife was their landlord or landlady in this case.

Honestly I have no idea how that marriage will survive that level of deception. I'm not even sure how she could sleep at night everyday beside this man and wake up to face him with a smile on her face daily.

The virtuous woman is a faithful woman. She is the kind of woman that never gives her husband cause to worry about where her allegiance lies. She constantly reassures him of her love and her loyalty to him. She is the kind of woman who gives him good advice. One example of an amazing virtuous woman can be found in 2nd Kings 4:8-23. She is known as the Shunamite woman, the one who came up with the popular phrase: '**IT IS WELL**'. She and her husband may have never been known nor ever had their problems solved if she didn't give such great advice. The story goes that every time Elisha would pass through Shunem that she would beseech him to stop by and eat and he would, but one day, ***'She said to her husband, "Behold now, I perceive that this is a holy man of God passing by us continually. Please, let us make a little walled upper chamber and let us set a bed for him there, and a table and a chair and a lamp stand; and it shall be,'***

***when he comes to us, that he can turn in there." (2nd Kings 4:9-10).***

Her husband's response was simple. He didn't argue with her he trusted her judgement and in the end she got them a son and when he died, a resurrected son. Can your husband trust you to give him good advice? I believe that this virtue or ability to give good advice comes from the very next portion of that scripture...***she's committed to doing him good all the days of his life.***

The virtuous woman understands that she's in her husband's life to be a blessing. She understands that she is on assignment. She's there in his life to help him...where? Anywhere he needs help. That's what drives her. It energizes her, gives her the strength to do all she needs to do to simplify his life. To ease his burden so he has

time to dream and follow his dreams. She's committed to helping him be the very best that he can be. It helps her understand that she must live a submitted life.

When I first met my husband he was doing well in ministry but he was getting ready for the next phase of ministry which was the media arm of our ministry. And since I had a bit of experience in the industry and made a few friends along the way, I had a few links. So what did I do? I dusted all business cards and we went out together to make his dreams come true and of course as you know the rest is history. His TV programme **LOVE DATING AND MARRIAGE** with Pastor Kingsley became very popular and as a result our church attendance multiplied. His itinerant ministry also took an upward turn. I believe that the very thing that your husband needs to enter his next level is within your reach. Find out what it is in the place of prayer then help

him.

The virtuous woman is a woman of character, the kind that will not put her husband under pressure to do things that he should not morally, legally or that he cannot afford financially. I once heard a preacher explain this, that when the bible says he will have no need of spoil, it means that he will not need to plunder in order to get spoils to satisfy his wife's greedy lusts. Therefore, because of her strength of character her husband's destiny is preserved.

Can he trust you not to lead him astray? If he is missing it can he trust you to be honest with him and yet not disrespect him while correcting him?

That is a major quality of the virtuous woman. She knows how to steer her husband in the right direction respectfully and because of that they don't lack any good thing. She recognizes that her husband is her first assignment and ensures that he doesn't feel neglected. ***She treats him generously (Proverbs 31:11 The Message Bible).***

# FAMILY

*God could not be everywhere physically  
therefore he made mothers*

-      *Jewish proverb*

Growing up as a young girl even before I encountered the Proverbs 31 woman I had seen glimpses of her in my own mother as I'm sure most of us did growing up. We learnt respect for husbands, we learnt how to become skilled in the craft of home and hearth, we learnt hospitality, being good to strangers, and a strong prayer ethic. At least I saw all this in my mum but there is one thing that I think had the strongest impact in my life – motherhood. I saw the passion with which she mothered. Not just her biological children but every child that passed her way.

The virtuous woman is a mother. However, being a mother may or may not include having biological children. It is the art of mothering that I speak of in this chapter not necessarily birthing a child. **Proverbs 31:27-28 tells us that she keeps an eye on everyone in her household and keeps them all busy and productive.**

**Her children respect and bless her. Her husband joins in with words of praise...**

The virtuous woman is one who understands her role as a mother both physically, emotionally and spiritually. She understands how important it is and doesn't throw it aside as if it is another's responsibility. We are to create the time to actually mother not just our children but a generation. I remember the day I came across this scripture about motherhood that changed my perspective. You see, because it took me quite a while to have my first biological child, I didn't quite connect being a mother to being a virtuous woman. I felt since I hadn't birthed children I wasn't really a mother so I could focus on other areas of my life. But Judges 5:7 tells me otherwise, it says ***the villagers ceased in Israel; they ceased to be, until I***

***Deborah arose, until I arose, a mother in Israel.*** It doesn't say anything about her birthing children. She was a wife – Lapidot's wife but no children were mentioned. She simply saw a people who needed comfort, direction and guidance and the Bible says that she arose. It was a deliberate and conscious decision. She stepped in and said Lord if you will use me to guide these people I will make myself available. Being a mother is a conscious decision daily to care for others, to be selfless and to be committed to them fulfilling their destiny. Deborah the virtuous "mother in Israel" made that choice and we all know the outcome was victory for Israel because she turned them from Idol worshipping back to the living God.

Your first assignment as a mother is to guard your family. To do that, you need to provide spiritual assistance to your husband by becoming an intercessor. The NKJV

bible says ***she watches over the ways of her household (Proverbs 31:27)***. I truly believe the only way to do that is in the place of prayer. A virtuous woman must pray for her family. There is just no other way around it. I know how marriage counsellors tell us that we must look good because men are moved by what they see but I also know many beautiful women, who are particular about how they look, who still have cheating husbands. I know how they say that the way to a man's heart is his stomach but I know many women who are great cooks and their husbands don't have much of an appetite. I've heard many times people emphasize how much a man needs sex and as much as I don't dispute that fact, if anything I've preached it very often myself but I know people who have sex with their spouses everyday sometimes as much as three times a day yet their husbands have impregnated every house help they have ever had. So my point is the only way to watch over a man and to safeguard

his destiny from the adulterous woman is in the place of prayer. The book of Proverbs tells us in other words that prayer is the only sure thing that a man's heart responds to. Proverbs 21:1 tells us ***the king's heart is like a stream of water directed by the LORD; he guides it wherever he pleases.*** Your husband is your king and the only way to ensure that he remains on the right track is to hand him over to God. He will steer his heart in the right direction.

And that goes for the rest of the family as well. Parents try to monitor their kids and have all sorts of tracking devices on them but I know for a fact that the only way to ensure your kids turn out well and are protected is by watching over them in the place of prayer. Angels make great guardians...***for he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways (Psalm 91:11 NIV)*** and they

are at our disposal. The Bible tells us, **angels are only servants – spirits sent to care for people who will inherit salvation (Hebrews 1:14 NLT)**. So why not send them on errands as you do your kids and staff.

A mother is the glue that binds the family together and a virtuous woman recognises that she must care for her family and guide them. She will advise her husband but she must admonish her children. Her role is that of guide and teacher. ***She is to train up her child(ren) in the way that they should go*** and the Bible promises us in proverbs that ***they will not depart from it (Proverbs 22:6)***. The virtuous woman knows that she is to create a generation of ***godly seed (Malachi 2:15)***. The children of a virtuous woman are not hard to know, there is usually a trend, and it is a generation of godliness. Paul describes this when he talks of

Timothy, the son and grandson of two virtuous women : ***I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and I am persuaded now lives in you also (2nd Timothy 1:5).***

This is not something that happens by chance. Timothy's mother, Eunice was a virtuous woman who also had a virtuous mother Lois. They understood the importance of a family that serves God; a godly generation. So they made sure that Timothy knew the Holy Scriptures from infancy (**2nd Timothy 3:15**).

As much as we expose our children to Disney inspired characters; Barney and friends and the likes, I think it is even more important to make sure our children are taught

the word of God. That they are just as passionate about David killing Goliath as they are about Ben10 and also as inspired by Mary the mother of Jesus as they are about Cinderella and Barbie.

I know that in this generation we are all very busy. Getting up 4am to hit the road and getting back from the office as late as 11pm. where is the time to do anything else right? I mean as it is you barely get to see the children. I'm not underestimating how busy you are but if you look closely at the virtuous woman, she was busy too but she didn't let motherhood take a backseat. I stumbled on a beautiful quote by Neil L. Anderson and I couldn't have put it better myself. It says, ***“Motherhood is not a hobby, it is a calling. It is not something to do if you can squeeze the time in, it is what God gave you time for.”***

# FOCUS

*First thing in the morning, she dresses for work, rolls up her sleeves,  
eager to get started.*

*Proverbs 31:17 (Message bible)*

A woman who understands her purpose is always very attractive. Men like a woman who knows what she wants, where she is going and is dedicated to taking steps that will get her there. The virtuous woman isn't unsure of what she is called to do. She knows she is called to make a difference, to be an inspiration even if it is only to her immediate family or those around her. She knows that being a woman isn't a setback if anything it is a gift and she uses it to her advantage and becomes an influence, a motivator and a creator.

She is the kind of woman that knows how important everything she does is and she doesn't stop or give up when faced with a challenge. Distractions are unacceptable in her life. She is an early riser because she knows that she has much to achieve in the day. However, she refuses to wear herself out. The virtuous woman is a wise woman you see, she understands that she must balance her life or she will burnout.

Initially when I started studying about her life I was shocked by how much she was achieving and yet she didn't seem to burn out. The bible tells us that ***she gets up before daylight (verse 15) and works late into the night (verse 18).*** I think the secret is to be focused. The virtuous woman is organized, hardworking, strong and industrious but I think more importantly that she is focused. What do I mean? Well, I think she understands that to be a virtuous woman means to be productive and to be productive one must be focused. ***Jesus said if your eye be single your whole body will be full of light (Matthew 6:22).*** In other words, be focused and you will be productive. So she knew the goal and she kept her eyes on it.

It's important that you understand the ultimate goal which is a happy fulfilled husband, inspired and godly seed and a vibrant relationship with God. How do you achieve this? Simple: **PRIORITIZE**. At some point in my marriage I began to feel a bit overwhelmed and I would often hear my husband say things like: "you don't do the things I ask you to anymore." Or you would hear him say, "you don't take the assignments I give you seriously anymore" and the truth was it wasn't that I didn't take him seriously anymore or that I just wanted to disobey him, it was that I seemed to have so much to do and so little time to do them. The assignments were piling and I wasn't getting much done. So I had to sit and ask myself some serious questions.

I started with why am I here? Who am I here to please? What do I need to do to please them? What are the things that only "ME" can do and what can others do for

me? What can I delegate? Who can I delegate to? What things can I do without? Would the world suddenly stop turning if I didn't do them? So once I gave myself very honest answers I was able to simplify my life and become more focused on the important things.

I am here as a child of God, wife and mother first. Then my job is to pastor amongst other things but my priority is God and family in that order. This helped me to decide what I could delegate and what I couldn't. My husband likes me to cook his food. He hates to eat out so I make soups, stews and sauces and anyone once trained can use a microwave to heat up and maybe boil some rice or yam or whatever else needs to be done. I can delegate the cooking or on a really busy day I can order in and add a personal touch to it. On the other hand, I cannot delegate having sex with my husband; that is my sole preserve and my personal assignment. So knowing what

needs my personal attention helps me maintain focus. I can get a nanny to bathe my children, get them ready for school, wash their clothes, etc but I cannot delegate raising them up in the fear of the Lord or building character in them. That is something that no one can do for me especially because children learn more from what they see than what you say to them. Some things are caught and not taught. I cannot delegate how I live around them.

Even things like my prayer life, I can have a million prayer teams praying for my husband and I and our ministry but the truth is I cannot delegate having a personal relationship with God. You need to talk to someone to remain intimate with them. At some point I found out that I was praying but not really praying. I was talking at God not to God. I found out I was throwing scriptures at him and asking for this or that

without really talking to Him. We were not talking like a dad and His daughter but more like a boss and his staff. I found out it was because I was constantly looking for time. So what did I do? You see, like I said before, being focused brings productivity. I started waking up really early and taking prayer walks. It solved two problems for me: first, I was more relaxed and since I was alone I had more time to be intimate with God. We would gist and talk, no distractions. Second, because I was up earlier, I had time to exercise and since I was exercising, inevitably, I started shedding those pounds.

The virtuous woman understood focus – she knew what she wanted and went after it. She needed to achieve a work/life balance so she understood the power of prioritizing and delegating. Verse 15 tells us that ***she gets up before daylight...to***

***tell her servant women what to do.*** A virtuous woman is not necessarily one who does it all herself. This woman had so much to do there is no way it would be humanly possible not to need help. So, she had household staff and she kept them busy and productive.

She focused on the fact that everything that needed to be done was done and that she reserved her energy for the things that only she could do. Being virtuous is not about doing it all. It's about doing what must be done and keeping the people that matter happy.

# FUN

*... brings back exotic surprises.*

*Proverbs 31:14 (The Message Bible)*

To be honest with you I really didn't think of the virtuous woman as a fun person but for some funny reason the Holy Spirit made me see one of the verses in a totally different light. You see I had always seen her as more of a too-busy-to-play goal getter, an achiever, a do-it-all, get-it-right-all-the-time kind of woman but never really as the fun type.

Okay, so let me share what changed my mind. Proverbs 31:14 says ***she is like the merchant ships, she brings her food from afar***, if you were to look at the scripture like that you would think it was still talking about work and about her being productive but the day the Holy Spirit showed ***The Message Bible*** version of that same scripture, all I could hear was "men like exciting and exotic things". In other words, spice up your bedroom. So I guess this will have to be the chapter on sex. You knew it was coming, didn't you? You can't talk about being a capable wife and not

talk about bedmatics \*wink, wink\*

One of the biggest lessons that you will ever learn in marriage is that as much as men want to marry women that can pray for them, they also want women that can play with them. So if you are not a fun person to be around, you are probably not going to enjoy your marriage.

The Message Bible tells us that the virtuous woman is like a trading ship that sails to faraway places and brings back exotic surprises. So the virtuous woman is the kind of woman who gets information on how to spice up her marriage – whether inside or outside the bedroom. Not my words actually; It's the bible. You doubt me? Then check out 1st Corinthians 7: 5 of THE MESSAGE BIBLE. It simply states what you

signed up for as a wife. It says ...***marriage is a decision to serve the other whether in bed or out.*** So the virtuous woman is wise and skilful in satisfying her husband's every need. She is not the kind of woman who sits back and allows marriage happen to her, her husband cannot predict what to expect from her so he is always eager to leave the office because he is excited to find out what she has in store for him. She is a fascinating kind of woman she keeps herself on her husband's mind. He finds it hard to take trips without her because he enjoys her company so much. She is interested in the things her husband is interested in so they have things to talk about apart from children, school fees, bills and all such mundane things.

Before I got married, I would describe myself as a very laidback, reserved and unadventurous kind of person. In fact, I would consider myself borderline boring. I

would pick a good book under a duvet with a mug of warm milk any day over a party or a day out. You see I am homebody; I don't like to go out, I prefer to watch a DVD than to go to the movies. But ever since I met my husband, all that became pretty much irrelevant. I have been schooled by the Holy Spirit in the true meaning of the word HELP MEET. The Amplified bible explains being a help meet as being suitable and adaptable. It's funny but I married the exact opposite of myself. My husband loves having people around and before we know it he has called a lot more people and then someone throws in a few drinks, I'm off to prepare something in the kitchen and we have a full fledged party. He is the kind of person that will do the most adventurous things like skydiving, power bike rides; he's always at the zoo. Just name it. If you had asked me before now I would not even bat an eyelid before telling you it would be impossible for me to get involved in any of these things but a virtuous

woman is a help meet she understands that she needs to adapt to her husband's needs. If I am to be his friend then I have to do what he enjoys.

Today I have done some of the craziest things with him and the look of admiration on his face is all the thank you I need to do more. When he bought his power bike, guess who sat pretty on the passenger seat as he took a spin one Sunday evening after church. Guess who was sitting behind him on an eight hour bike ride in the United Arab Emirates; guess who sat beside him at Ferrari world in Abu Dhabi when he went on the world's fastest roller coaster; guess who held his hand as we were dropped thousands of feet on the G-shock in Ferrari world. Who walked around the Philadelphia zoo lugging myself around with an eight month old pregnancy? Yep! You guessed right every time: ME! Why would I do all these things? Because it makes him happy and I am devoted to doing him good all the days of my life. In other

words, I plan on keeping him happy all the days of my life.

Now that we've talked about playing with him outside the bedroom, let's talk about keeping him happy in bed. About bringing exotic surprises into your marriage, every man needs sex. No, let me rephrase that every man deserves great sex. Please don't act like you are doing him a favour. Make him feel special. Let every sexual experience be one that makes him come back for more. The virtuous woman is one who keeps her husband sexually satisfied. She is very deliberate about pleasing him. Proverbs 31:22 tells us how the virtuous woman satisfies her husband. ***She makes coverings for her bed; she is clothed in fine linen and purple (NIV).*** Purple is the colour of royalty. She is telling her husband I am planning on giving you the royal treatment tonight. She takes care to prepare herself as well as the marriage bed. Proverbs 7:16-18 tells us about the adulterous woman. Now we are not to

emulate her ways but I mean we can't throw the baby out with the bath water so let's see what we can glean from her. She said, ***I have spread fresh, clean sheets on my bed, colourful imported linens. My bed is aromatic with spices and exotic fragrances (MSG).***

She obviously takes her time to lay the bed with fresh linen and she perfumes both the bed and herself and then tells the man what she intends to do to him. Please don't hold back with your husband. Keep him excited sexually... ***she said come let's make love until dawn; let's comfort ourselves with love (ISV).*** This woman was ready to satisfy the man. Go the extra mile. Find out new and exciting things to do in the marriage bed. Thankfully that's why you are married; you have licence to try new positions, new styles and new things. Be creative, be spontaneous.

The marriage bed is undefiled but it doesn't mean sex must remain in the bed. Wear sexy lingerie that leaves very little to the imagination. Try new and exciting things. Sex isn't just for when you want to make babies. It's for intimacy. Enjoy each other. Trust me it doesn't reduce your spirituality. If anything it increases it. It is a covenant act. Sex can never be too much in marriage. The Message bible tells us in 1 Corinthians 7:3 that ***sexual drives are strong, but marriage is strong enough to contain them and provide for a balanced and fulfilling life in a world of sexual disorder.***

This is one of the major assignments after all a man who eats pounded yam till he is full will not have need for a snack.

# FINESSE

*...her clothes are well-made and elegant, and she always faces  
tomorrow with a smile.*

*Proverbs 31:25 (Message Bible)*

I struggled a lot with what to name this chapter. I first started out with fabulous but in no time I caved in to finesse. There is just something very finely refined about a virtuous woman. She is a mix of a lot of things. She is hard yet delicate. She is a goal-getter yet she is warm and hospitable. She is an entrepreneur and a humanitarian. She is a career woman yet skilled in the affairs of home and hearth, she is a leader yet she is a submitted follower. She is the successful wife of a successful husband.

The virtuous woman is synonymous with intricate and refined delicacy— dressed in silks, always elegant in her dress sense and her style but more importantly in her attitude. Verse 25 describes ***her as her clothes are well-made and elegant, and she always faces tomorrow with a smile.***

She is a fashionista, always in style. She is a couturier – designer and trendsetter. Her clothes are haute couture but contrary to what most people would expect she is not vain. If anything, she is quite the opposite. She knows that she needs to look good and she also knows how best to wear them; she doesn't allow the clothes wear her. Verse 20 tells us that ***she's quick to assist anyone in need, reaches out to help the poor.*** She is a woman with a heart even though she has style.

This woman is the whole enchilada – body, soul and spirit. The Bible tells us that God does not see the way men see; God sees the heart. Unfortunately we are married, not to God who looks on just the heart but to men who focus on the outside and all the packaging that comes with it. I believe a lot of us are married to Christian men and I've heard too many Christian women use that as an excuse to let themselves go.

Just because the threat of the man going out there and getting himself a girlfriend like his unbelieving counterparts has been removed, they are not motivated to look good because they know the man is stuck with them. My sister, I know that the man is a Christian and he will refuse like Joseph ***to do this great wickedness and sin against God (Genesis 39:9)*** but please help his “ministry” and make it easy for him to stay faithful. Take care of how you look. Honestly, I have been fat and I have been slim....slim is better. You look better, you feel better and clothes fit better and you have more options. Now, note I am not a campaigner for being model thin. The average man wants something he can grab onto especially in bed so I’m not saying become a size 0 but my dear, get to the size that makes you feel good about yourself and makes him proud to have you on his arms. Every man wants some eye candy that he can put his arms around and show off to the rest of the world.

However, he also wants a woman who looks good and has something in her head. Beauty and brains is the secret of the virtuous woman. She's smart but not in a show off kind of way. She is definitely the opposite of this woman that ***Proverbs 11:22 talks about: like a gold ring in a pig's snout is a beautiful face on an empty head (The Message Bible)***. No doubt the virtuous woman is interested in how she looks but she is also interested in how she sounds. She is not against flaunting a great body but she can often be seen flaunting a great mind too. She understands that a man may be attracted to you because of how you look but it is how you think that will keep him attached. The virtuous woman knows this. She may attract him with her body but it is with her mind that she keeps him captivated.

***Proverbs 31:26 says ...when she speaks she has something to say, and she always says it kindly.*** Another amazing thing about her is not just that she

has something worthwhile to say but how she says it. The New Living Translation Bible says when ***she speaks, her words are wise and she gives instruction with kindness.*** I often imagine her to be strong yet soft spoken, to be firm yet gentle. This woman is the kind of person that corrects you without making you feel foolish. This in itself is an art. It's what I call the finesse that she possesses. It is what the bible call discretion.

The virtuous woman has fine-ness; she is polished, elegant and exhibits discretion. She is well-put together and by definition a true lady. I don't think that we always have to dress in silks and fine linens of purple like she did, or personally design all the clothes we wear but I do believe that a man shouldn't marry his girlfriend and after a month, a year, two or three children later find that he's stuck with his great

grandmother. Too many women act like once they are married or have kids they have suddenly crossed the finish line. Sweetheart, the finish line doesn't exist except in heaven. So you keep at it. Keep him captivated till we get to heaven and like I said not just by what's on the outside but also by what's on the inside. Let him always be happy he chose you and when he tells you that you always look good, let it be actually true and not just him making a positive confession.

I'm not my perfect weight yet but I'm still working on it. I take the time to dress up for my husband. At least he knows I'm making the effort and I haven't somehow become a Vashti in his life by taking him for granted because I'm thinking I'm married, what can he do if I am not 100%? I choose to be his Esther. I choose to satisfy him and consistently find favour in his eyes. I choose to look good and carry

myself with self respect, discretion and the elegance and grace of a queen because my husband, my king, deserves nothing less.

# FINANCIAL INTELLIGENCE

**Money without financial intelligence  
is money soon gone – Robert T. Kiyosaki**

A husband is not a financial plan. They say, *never marry for money it's so much easier to just borrow it.* Funny as that may sound, I guess the principle is just because you are a woman doesn't mean you cannot make money of your own. The Bible makes it clear that this woman had serious financial sense.

***She evaluates a field and purchases it: from the proceeds she plants a vineyard (Proverbs 31:16).*** She sets herself up for financial freedom. The virtuous woman exhibits financial intelligence.

There are so many lessons to be learned from that statement. I can only infer from that verse that she has been saving. I am a firm believer in the fact that the Bible says exactly what it means. So, if she bought the field using money she got from her

husband it would have been mentioned but it simply tells us that the woman considereth a field and she buyeth it. I believe with her own money.

Another important lesson here is the fact that she is not an impulsive buyer. She doesn't just see something and buy it just because she feels like it. Shopping is not an emotional decision for her. She stops and evaluates the worth of the field. She probably asks experts or seeks counsel before going ahead. After all, the Bible tells us that ***in the multitude of counsel, there is safety (Proverbs 15:22)***. I believe she was the kind of woman who took the time to cover all her bases. She investigated before committing herself to something. She checks to find out if it is a venture worth committing to.

She doesn't just check to see if the venture is worth it. She stops and like Jesus said in Luke 14:28, ***she counts the cost.*** She checks to see if buying the field is the best decision for her and if it is something she can carry on till the end, she checks to see if it is something she will finish. Unfortunately, there are too many unfinished businesses in many lives. We start things without actually stopping to see if it is something that we have capacity to manage and to finish.

Another major lesson I learnt from that verse is that she doesn't buy on credit. Buying what you cannot afford is one of the fastest ways to being bankrupt and unfortunately we live in a world of credit cards and IOUs. Buy now, pay later. It is the undoing of too many women and when the bill has become cut throat they simply begin to rob Peter to pay Paul: entering more debts to pay already existing ones. In

no time, it becomes a cycle that is impossible to break.

She considers, she thinks about it before she buys it. The Bible tells us she buys but she thought it through before buying. Sweetheart, those new shoes you just picked up that you and I know you have no space for in your wardrobe, have you considered it? Think about it. Can you afford it? Is another gold earring really going to make you any happier? Consider it. Can you afford it? Give it a day or two. If you can't afford it then don't **"buyeth it."** Pardon my grammar. She thought it through before she paid.

The virtuous woman is investment minded. She didn't buy something that would be enjoyed on its own but something that had the capacity to yield dividends. The Bible

also tells us that from the dividends, she set up other businesses ...***from the profits she plants a vineyard.*** In other words, she is so financially intelligent that she knows how important it is to have multiple streams of income.

This woman is obviously a helper. She understands that a virtuous woman must help her man in the areas he needs help. If he needs help with the home front help him, if it's emotionally help him emotionally, support him spiritually and if need be then help him financially. With today's economy, I doubt that any man would turn down some financial help. Even if you are not making millions, making enough to take off some responsibility is important. To be effective though you need a consistent flow of income, so it is important that you don't rely on only one channel as your financial channel. If one door closes briefly, you should have another door that is open to you

financially. When you bring whatever you have and your husband brings what he has, once it is combined, it becomes a lot, like the scripture says ***two are better than one because they have a good reward for their labour.***

She is not the kind of woman who hides her money from her spouse. She supports him and makes financially intelligent decisions. Her husband's confidence in her causes them to have all they need. She is prudent and wise. She is the kind of woman who understands that you need to prepare for the future. She is not taken by surprise when there are dry spots or what the Bible calls winter because she has already done the necessary when it seemed unnecessary. She knows you don't eat all you have. There is a point where you save and when you sow in order to protect your future.

The virtuous woman is industrious and she is smart. She wears the best clothes but she also makes them. She is not just a consumer; she is a creator and a producer. So she's wearing nice things but she can afford to because it is not costing her as much as the average woman. She is financially smart.

# FAITH

*But without faith it is impossible...  
-Hebrews 11:6*

We have talked a lot about the qualities of the virtuous woman and what makes her an enviable wife. However, there is one secret that without it you will simply be running in circles and not be able to achieve anything. The virtuous woman is a woman of faith. Yes, I know there is no mention of her raising the dead or healing the sick but I know you might think that, seeing as we have unfortunately, reduced faith to what we use to do healing miracles or get money when we need it. Faith is much more than that.

Faith is believing God and believing in God. Hebrews 11:6 tells us, ***'but without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He IS (emphasis mine) and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.'*** Faith is what makes it possible for us to have a

relationship with God and to please him.

***You can never please God without faith, without depending on him. Anyone who wants to come to God must believe there is a God and that he rewards those who sincerely look for him. (The Living Bible)***

The virtuous woman BELIEVES that God exists and she lives her life guided by that. Even though she cannot see Him, she lives a reverent live. This faith in God guides her decisions and actions. She is empowered by her faith in and love for God. I believe that if you look closely at the life of this woman you will see that everything in her life is powered by her relationship with God. I don't think she could be all these things or do all these things without being connected to God. How do I know this?

Well, let's quickly flip over to John Chapter 3 - Popular story:

***There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:***

***The same came to Jesus by night and said unto him, “Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.***

***Jesus answered and said unto him Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.***

Nicodemus was amazed at how much Jesus was doing and achieving so he went to ask Him his secret. I guess that's a picture of how most of us feel when we encounter the Proverbs 31 Woman. Haven't you ever thought if only I could meet her, I would ask her how she does all these things? I know I have. I've always wanted to know how one human being can be so together and get so much done ...one woman! So I'm guessing Nicodemus is a bit like me. He wanted answers so he went to ask Jesus, ***how do you do the things you do?*** And Jesus set him free as he did me by saying this simple thing: Unless a man BE born-again...if you just read that you may miss it so I underlined the most important part of that for you. Jesus was simply saying focus on **BEING** rather than **DOING**. If you can BE then it's only a matter of time and you will DO. This is what Jesus was telling Nicodemus, if you can **BE** born-again which is to BE reborn by God then it only follows naturally that you will

start to DO the things that God does. Psalm 82:6 says, I have said, 'ye are gods; and all of you are children of the Most High.'

However, believing comes before being. To them that believe gave He the power to become. The virtuous woman believes in God, and then she believes him for power to become the kind of wife who is suitable for and adaptable to all her husband's needs. I believe strongly that she was so productive because she had a great relationship with God. If you want to unlock favour over your husband's life and you want to build a godly family or be the kind of wife that gives her husband great advice. If being exceptional in your career or business is your own dream then I strongly believe that the only way to achieve all this is by hearing God constantly. And you can't hear God if you don't build that relationship with him.

After you have read everything she was, she did and achieved the bible tells us her secret at the end. It says it very clear that beauty is vain, ***charm is deceitful but the woman who fears the lord she shall be praised (Proverbs 31:30)***. I think this is the key scripture that unlocks all the others. The virtuous woman is nothing without her Lord. She understands that ...***apart from Him she can do nothing. (John 15:5)***. So everything she is and has is actually a testament of her relationship with God.

If you look closely you will see that as efficient as she was, she was actually praised more for her fear and reverence of God rather than the things she did. The Message Bible says the woman who fears the lord, festoon her life with praises. Decorate her with the praise she deserves. To be a virtuous woman, you must have a strong

relationship with God. That's the real secret and that should be your biggest boast.

***But those who wish to boast should boast in this alone: that they truly know me and understand that I am the LORD who demonstrates unfailing love and who brings justice and righteousness to the earth, and that I delight in these things. I, the LORD, have spoken!***

***Jeremiah 9:24(NLT)***

For too long we have focused on the wrong things. Too many women have tried to look good, be homely and submissive wives, be inspirational leaders and mother figures and have found that in no time they burn out. They think that in doing all this they become virtuous women. No matter how many things you try to do, until you

enter into that reverent relationship with God all your efforts will fail. Beauty is vain and charm is deceitful. The real virtuous woman is the one who fears the Lord.

# FINAL WORD

*...many women have done wonderful things but you've outclassed them all.*

*Proverbs 31:29 (The Message Bible).*

I've studied the life of the virtuous woman and I have read as many versions of the account of her life as I could lay my hands on and this is the conclusion of the matter for me. Proverbs 31 is not about the perfect woman or the capable wife. It is not God trying to put us under pressure to try to be the perfect wife or mother. It is not King Solomon putting down all his secret and unrealistic desires. For me, Proverbs 31 is a message of GRACE.

## **SURRENDER TO CHRIST**

If you have not given your heart to Christ this is a good opportunity to do so, God reserves only good and perfect gifts for His children. Come into God's fold today; let Him help you to be the kind of wife and mother that you should be; let him help you fulfil your destiny. It's really simple. Just say this prayer from your heart:

*Lord Jesus, I come to you today, I acknowledge I am a sinner and I believe that you came and died to save me. I open my heart to you and I confess with my mouth that you are my Lord and Saviour from today onwards. [Romans 10:9-10].*

*Thank you Lord for saving me and transforming; now I am born-again and I know from today my life will never be the same.*

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