



Message Transcript

A Woman of Excellence

Jeff Schwarzentraub

Pastor Jeff:

Our Father in heaven, we give you all the glory, honor and praise for who you are. And Lord, we ask this morning that you would put a special hand of blessing on the families of this church, parents that are trying to raise their kids in the way of the Lord. Lord, it's not easy, it's impossible without you. But Lord, we believe that you gave parents so that kids would have the opportunity of growing into a relationship with you. Father, bless all these parents that are dedicating these children and bless all these children that one day they would advance your kingdom to the glory of God. Lord, now we listen to you because we want to hear what you have to say from your living and active Word. And we believe, Lord, every time your Word is faithfully and accurately proclaimed that you speak and have a message for us. And so Lord, I pray today you'd be helpful to me and helpful to us as we hear.

And so now for all those who have gathered who desire to hear the Lord speak directly to you, who will believe what he says to you and who will by faith put into practice what he shows you, will you agree with me very loudly this morning by saying the word amen. Amen.

I had a very interesting week this week as I was preparing for the message. I was preparing for Exodus 32 and the golden calf and all of those different things, but it kept coming to my mind of how are we going to celebrate the mothers here at BRAVE? And as we were talking about how we're going to do that and how we announce that and all these different things, then I started getting messaging back

saying, "Well, you got to be careful how you do that because that can be triggering for a lot of people." And when I hear somebody tell me that I can't speak freely, it makes me want to say it again. So happy Mother's Day to all the mothers who are here at BRAVE today. We love you.

And while I realize it can be triggering, it can be triggering for this reason. We have a number of godly single gals in our church that are saying, "I just want to get married." And we have a bunch of married people in our church that say, "I would love to be able to have a child that just hasn't happened for me yet." Or, "We've gone through crisis in doing that," or, "I've gone through a divorce and I'm in pain." But here's why I think that we need to do this, is because not only did I start thinking about mothers, I started to think about all the women in our church, because all of our women are so great and so godly and our society does not celebrate women at all. I don't know if you know that or not. As a matter of fact, they let what they call biological males compete in women's sports.

You know what the Bible calls a biological male? A male. And so the problem with that is it pushes women down and doesn't celebrate the femininity that God has for you. And I know politics and media are downstream from culture, and culture is downstream from family, and family is downstream from the church, and the church is downstream from the faithful, accurate proclaiming of the Word of God. And what I've started feeling in my heart is nobody's championing women. We say at BRAVE we're here to challenge brave warriors for courageous kingdom advancement. That's not just men, that's men and women. And so I thought as I was doing this, singing... Today's

Mother's Day, it's also my anniversary today by the way. That I thought, what a better time than to champion our women and let God speak about what a woman of excellence looks like.

So we're taking a pause from the Book of Exodus today to talk about women and we're going to be in Proverbs chapter 31. We're going to look at verses 10 to 31 today because I want the women in our church to know what God has to say about you and how much he values and champions you. I also want the men to know how much God values and champions you. And it's really interesting too because in this section of Scripture, as you're turning to Proverbs 31, you'll see this is King Lemuel. We don't know much about him. We don't know who he was. His name means dedicated to God or belonging to God. If this was King Solomon, which may or may not have been, then this is him getting instruction from his mother Bathsheba, which would be incredible.

But throughout the Book of Proverbs, it's really given to men. "Son pay attention, son pay attention, young man pay attention." And it talks about some different women. There's a woman of wisdom that's talked about that you need to pursue. There's a woman of folly that you need to stay away from. There's an adulterous woman you need to stay away from. So it should come as no surprise that the entire book of Proverbs ends with understanding what a woman with flesh and bones looks like that's of excellence. And this king, Lemuel, is writing down what his mom told him about what it means to be a godly woman and the kind of woman that he should look for in a wife. She starts by saying in the first 10 verses that he shouldn't waste his strength on a bunch of women. Shouldn't waste his time drinking too much or being caught up in

those things because as a king, he needs to make good decisions and he needs to speak forth on behalf of those who need to hear him.

And then she begins to go into this teaching where he says, "Here's what my mom taught me."

Now I come from a great line of women in my family. My one grandma died at 104. My other grandma just turned 100 this last spring. I got two great sisters, great women, cousins. I have a great wife. I'm raising two daughters. God loves all of them. I just think we need to speak about this. And the reason we need to address this is I need to give you a little background information before we get started in the lesson today, just so that you can be aware. Most of you may know this, but some of you may not. It's not being talked about much in TV. So I want to take you back to Genesis chapter 1, when God created the world and how he created it. Because if we're going to talk about gender, we need to understand what gender is, not according to what I think or you think, but according to what God thinks.

Here's what God says in Genesis 1:26-28, and this is why it's important because when God created the heavens and the earth, he was the only eyewitness there. He is the only one around. So there's anybody that can speak to his created order, let him speak. Here's what he says: "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image according to our likeness and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.'" Verse 27, "God created man in his own image, in the image of God he

created him; male and female he created them." So God creates humankind and he creates how many genders?

Congregation:

Two.

Pastor Jeff:

Two, according to God, male and female. Now, any good science will always back up the Word of God. Good science always does. Now, my mom happened to be a labor and delivery nurse when I grew up, which means at the age of 12, I knew more about conception, reproduction, and delivery of babies than most men do in their entire lives. I promise you, I've seen more videos of babies born than any of you guys here, I promise you. And here's science. Here's what science says. Science would back this. So the way conception works is for a healthy child, there are 23 chromosomes donated by the man and 23 that are by the woman in her egg. When they come together, there are 46 chromosomes in a healthy baby. That's called a zygote. All female eggs are the X chromosome. Man contributes to the woman.

If a Y chromosome comes and joins with the egg, it's an XY, that is a boy. If an X chromosome from the sperm comes and joins with the eggs, that's an XX. That's a girl, which means this. Your gender was decided before you even had a heartbeat according to science and the Word of God. Does that make sense? So that's why we say this.

Now, we do live in a culture that doesn't believe this because we have a culture

that doesn't believe in the Word of God and they throw all that away. And I want you to know this too: We live in a culture where the culture impacts us. And there's several of you that attend our church that have family members, friends, cousins and relatives that have been caught up in the satanic ideology that you can change your gender. Some of you here may even believe that. That's a lie from the pit of hell. God created you male or female. You either came out as a girl and will grow into a woman or you came out as a boy and you'll grow into a man. And it doesn't matter what surgery or hormones you take, it will never ever change that.

Now, I'm also saying this with compassion because there's sometimes that people come that will applaud that, but when they have a family member that's dealing with that, then they're ashamed to come to church and say, "Well, what are people going to say?" Here's what we're going to say. We're going to hold the standard of God very, very high and we're going to love you where you're at. And if you're a family that's struggling with that, we're praying for you and we love you and we care for you, and you don't need to live in shame. You're part of our community, you're part of our family. Does that make sense? But we're going to hold the Word of God high. And that's why it's important that we do this because God designed women, he created women, he loves women. He has a unique purpose for women. That's why he created two genders.

Notice Genesis 1:28, first command in the Bible, "God blessed them and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it.'" What did God want? Families. He wanted families. It's interesting because if you flip forward where

God highlights day six, in Genesis chapter 2 to Genesis 2:24-25, which I usually reference in every marriage I officiate, it says, "For this reason, a man shall leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife and the two shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and they were not ashamed." For this reason, a man will leave his father and mother. For what reason? What reason is a man going to leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife? For what reason? Because of the command of God to get married and reproduce and have children, to have the next generation.

Now, I understand we live in a broken fallen world and some of you don't want to conceive, can't conceive. I get all that. God's greater than that. I realize that some of you want to get married and have kids and you're not married yet. I get all that. There's pain in this world because of sin, but it doesn't change what God's desire is and his heart is. And yes, there are a select few in the body of Christ that would say, no desire to get married, no desire for intimacy, want to be single. That's very few. I've met two guys in my entire life that have been called to that lifestyle. Two. It's not normal. What's normal is if you are a man, you would find a woman; and if you're a woman, you would be with a man and you would get married for the sake of growing the kingdom. That's called a family. That's why there's always an attack on the family because Satan hates the family. So he's always trying to redefine the family.

Family is a husband and a wife and Lord willing children. That's definition of a family, and God loves what family is. It doesn't mean you're not part of a broken family. We can come up with all these words, but that's what God wants. That's his

standard. That's what he looks for. And it's important when we talk about this today, I mean it's just really important because so much of the Bible is aspirational. I mean, we spell out, "Here's what God wants the woman of excellence to be. There can be this. I can never be that." Apart from the Holy Spirit, you never can. And even with the Holy Spirit, you'll never be it perfectly. We're just saying, can you grow increasingly?

So it's not the time for women here today to feel like, "Oh, I feel so bad. I'm not bad." And it's not the time for guys today to be nudging your wives saying, "Hey, pick up your game a little bit, would you?" I mean, that's not what it is. We teach on men like love your wives, like Christ loved the church. There's not a guy in here that loves their wife like Christ loved the church. When I read about how Jesus loved the church, I don't come close to that. I'm growing in that. And it's really interesting because in the Bible when God created mankind and he created everything and it was all perfect and good, even before the fall, God said the one thing that wasn't good, it's not good for what? Man to be alone. God needed a woman. God needed a woman because man needed a woman. Man had to have a woman. Man was not complete without a woman. That's how God designed it. And so Adam was waiting on God to look for that woman.

It reminds me of the story. This is not biblical, it's not true, but when Adam was waiting for the Lord and God told him, he goes, "I'm going to create a woman for you. She's going to be a pretty lady. She'll gather food for you. She will cook for you, and when you discover clothing, she will wash it for you. She will always agree with you, with every decision you make. She will never ever nag you, and she will always be the

first to admit she was wrong when you've had a disagreement. She will praise you. She will bear your children. She will never ask you to get up in the middle of the night to take care of them. She will be there to meet all of your needs all the time without complaining." So Adam asks God, he's like, "What's that going to cost?" God said, "That's going to cost an arm and a leg." Adam said, "Well, what can I get for a rib?" And the rest is history.

I joke with you because there's such tension when it comes to gender and we're all worked up. We need to be able to laugh at ourselves. As guys, we're not everything God wants us to be but we're growing in it. As women, we're not everything God wants us to be, but we're growing in it. But can we just let God speak this morning? I want to give you the magnificent seven that I see in this text in Proverbs 31:10-31 about what a woman of excellence is.

And the first is this, that a woman of excellence is gifted and godly. She's gifted and godly. Notice what he says. He says, "An excellent wife who can find? For her worth is far above jewels." It doesn't mean that you can't locate a woman like this. It's when you locate a woman like this, the reason she's so hard to locate is this is a gifted, favored woman. This is a woman that has spent time at the feet of Jesus. This is a woman that is being transformed by Jesus. When you find a woman like that, you can't just find her. It has to be the Lord that's bringing her into your life. She's special, she's unique, she's gifted, she's principled, she's favored. That's what he says. And what is she worth? Far more than any jewels. What the author's trying to say, you

can't put a price tag on this woman. You can't put a price tag on a godly wife there. There's no way that you can do it.

I mean, I love my wife. She knows I love her, but when she goes away for a period of time, I know how much more I love her than I thought I did. When she goes to Mozambique on a mission trip and for 10 days I'm in charge of the family as well as everything else going on in my life, I wasn't good at either. We ate out every single meal for 10 nights in a row, didn't care. We even had people offer to bring us food. I'm like, "No, I don't even know if we're going to be home. I don't know what time it is. I don't know if our kids will eat it. We'll just go out." And that way I don't have to wash dishes either. I mean it was just, we're out. I mean, I couldn't wait for her to get home because our family doesn't run and work the same without her. That's why he's saying, she's an excellent wife who can find? She's worth far more than rubies, far more than jewels.

It means this. If God compensated individuals in our culture, not according to what society valued, but according to what he valued, every single wife would be a multimillionaire. That's how valuable you are to the Lord in his kingdom agenda for you.

Notice what it says in verse 11. This is why she's godly. "The heart of her husband trusts in her and he will have no lack of gain." A lot going on there. The heart of her husband trust in her. By nature, we as men are kind of scared to let our true self out there sometime, especially when it comes to gals, especially when it comes to our wives and we get married and we realize, "They see everything. Can't hide from her." But a godly wife will allow you to be yourself. She'll keep it to herself. You don't have

to worry about her gossiping with all the women talking about how bad you are. You don't have to worry about her bringing up all your stuff from your past. You don't have to worry about her when you mess up telling everybody how bad...

You can trust this woman because she's got character. She knows how to take those things to the Lord. She knows how to pray for you to change and the husband trusts her. He can lean into her. He can value her. And guess what? He has no lack of gain. Guess what? Because that husband knows that every good thing in his life is coming from his wife. That husband realize he wouldn't be the man that he is if it wasn't for her. That's what he's saying. She's gifted, she's favored, she has principle, she has character and she's godly. Notice what it says here, "She does him good, not evil, all the days of her life." She preferences him.

Now in the Bible we're called to preference one another for the sake of Christ. We're called to submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. She's living that. She's putting the man up. She's saying, "Hey, to the extent that you're successful, that means I'm successful because you wouldn't be successful if I wasn't successful. If I wasn't doing this for you, you wouldn't have all that." That's what she's saying. That's what she's doing. So here would be a word to describe a godly woman. Here would be a word to describe a woman of excellence. Ready? A servant. She serves. She's a godly servant. You're going to see that all the way throughout the text. It's how God created the heart of a woman. A woman wants to serve, a woman wants to help. God gave man a woman because he needed help. Men today still need help. That's why God created a woman. She's gifted, she's godly and her husband trusts in her. She

brings him good, not evil, all the days of her life. Why is that important? Because the Bible talks about what it's like if you don't marry a woman like that.

In Proverbs 12:4, it says, "An excellent wife is the crown of her husband." But notice this, "But she who shames him is like rottenness in his bones." Or how about this verse? Proverbs 19:14 says it like this, "House and wealth are an inheritance from fathers, but a prudent wife is from the Lord." When you meet a woman like that, that's from God. Or how about Proverbs 21:9? This is where you see that a wife can make or break you. She can make or break you. "It is better to live in a corner of a roof than in a house shared with a contentious woman." Better to live in the garage, better to live in the shed than under the roof with someone that's contentious and always fighting after you. Not the godly woman, not the woman of excellence. She wants him to do good. She wants to treat him good and not evil. How long? All the days of her life. That's her heart as a wife, a woman of excellence. She's gifted. She's godly.

Number two is this. She's also enterprising and entrepreneurial. She's enterprising and entrepreneurial. Notice this. "She looks for wool and flax and works with her hands in..." what? "Delight." She looked for items that she can turn into something. She's resourceful. Any of you have moms that were resourceful? They could take some leftovers in the kitchen and kind of whip it together and it tastes really, really good. Or they had the ability to mix and match clothing and send you off to school really doing good. Or they had the ability to sew and put things together and do good. Moms have a way of doing things out of what little they have and making them

really look good. That's the heart of a woman. A woman's entrepreneurial. She's resourceful. She's enterprising. It's who she is. It means she's adding value.

Notice what it says in verse 14. "She's like merchant ships; she brings her food from afar." That means this woman's going to Sam's and Costco and she's loading up and she's coming home. I mean, she knows what needs to go in the home. She knows how to make the home good. She knows how to make sure everybody's fed. She knows how to go and take care of the whole family. She knows what the whole clan needs. She's aware when this one needs this and that one needs that and what. She's taking care of everybody. That's the heart of a woman. A woman is by nature a helper that says, "I see it. It's so obvious to me. Let me help you with that." That's the heart of what a woman is.

Men, listen to your wives when she tells you something. You don't see what she sees and you don't hear what she hears. And I found in my family, I mean she's not always right, but about 99.9% of the time I'm listening to my wife because I know that God gave her to me so that she would see things I don't see and hear things I don't hear and speak them into my life. That's the heart of a woman. She's a helper. She's entrepreneurial. She's taking care of the family. She's going out. She's doing some incredible things.

And notice this: "She rises also while it is still night and gives food to her household and portions to her maiden." It means this woman's up early in the morning. I told my wife, this is aspirational for you. Just keep seeking the Lord. Maybe she takes coffee too, I don't know. But she's up early, she's making sure lunches are

made. She's making sure breakfast is there. She's making sure everybody's taken care of. Do you have what you need for the day for those that are helping out around the house? If you've ever done a home improvement project, I promise you your wife has been involved in the decision making process. This needs to go here. This needs to get done there. This needs to be here. That's what she does. It's who she is. She's entrepreneurial. She's adding value to the home. She's doing things that you can't see.

It's like when I go to all these young guys' apartments before they get married and they got one picture on the wall and it's like of a football player. And then they get married and I walk into their house and I'm like, "That picture ain't there anymore. Is it?" Like, nope, it's gone. I mean, that's what she does.

And notice this: "She considers a field and buys it; and from her earnings she plants a vineyard." She's entrepreneurial, she's in real estate. She's looking. She says, "Our family needs this. We need to consider that. We need to buy this. This is what we need. This is going to keep our family and the vision where we're going." She's not just sitting home watching soap operas. She's engaged in what needs to happen. She's engaged in taking ground for the family. She's capable. She's able to do what God wants her to do. Women are capable of doing everything that God tells them that they're capable of doing and they need to be championed for that.

I'm raising two daughters, and I had breakfast with my oldest the other day, and she's getting to a place where she's learning her career and knowing what she wants to do. We're having a conversation about it and I was chiming in. I'm like, "Listen, you

can have that career and have it at this level, this level or this level." And I'm like, "Hey, you're good at what you do and if this is really what you love, you should look on being the best." And we had this whole conversation and I got done and I was like, "And if you do this, you might be one of the best in all of Denver, maybe in the whole state of Colorado." And I thought I was really getting through to her, and she's like, "Dad," she goes, "Listen." She goes, "I want to be called by people because they know me and I'm the best in the world." And I'm like, "Okay, message complete. You got it right."

Why do we put people down? I mean, as men, our job is to empower women. Our job is to lift up women. Our job is to help women be the fullness of everything that God designed them to be. I want that for my wife. I want that for my daughters, both of them. And that's what he's saying here. Women have a way of making things in the family go.

I always remember a story here when I would play for the state championship when I was a senior in high school and we played on AstroTurf at one of the college football stadiums. And it was back in the day, we couldn't just go to DICK'S Sporting Goods and buy cleats for AstroTurf. We had to find a place that had them. And we knew of a coach that coached at this college that was about 50 minutes away. And my mom, who was a labor and delivery nurse, she said, "I'll take off work. I'll go get those shoes for you. I'll drive 50 minutes. I'll drive all the way back." And so she did. I tried on the shoes on a Tuesday and I didn't have the heart to tell her they didn't fit. My toes were crunching at the end. And she's like, "How are they?" And I'm like, "Oh, you know..." She's like, "Jeff, how are they?" I'm like, "Well, they don't fit." She's like,

"That's okay. I'll take off work tomorrow. I'll go down and get you and exchange them in for another pair and bring those back." And she did that for me so that I could play in the state championship game.

Now at the time I thought, "Well, that's what moms do." Moms do all those errands for you. They clean all your clothes, they cook all your meals, they're awesome. Moms are really good. I didn't realize until later in life, those were choices she was making to bless me and our family. That's what it means to be entrepreneurial and enterprising. It means you're looking out for the interests of others besides yourself, and you're taking every opportunity to do that. And that's what God champions in the heart of a woman. Not only is she gifted and godly and enterprising and entrepreneurial, but notice this, she's diligent and determined. She's diligent and determined.

Notice verse 13... I'm sorry, verse 17 says this: "She girds herself with strength and makes her arms strong." Her character is strength. This woman is able to rest in her identity in the Lord. She is strong in the Lord. She is of good courage in the Lord. And guess what? Her arms are strong too. You know what that means? This woman's working out, this woman's capable of doing all the jobs and all the tasks that she needs to be able to do. She's taking care of herself. She's doing the thing. She's not complaining. She's strong. She's strong in the Lord. She's strong in the strength of his mind.

Notice what else it goes on to say: "She senses that her gain is good." Now, how does she know that what she's doing is good? It means she's got a strong relationship

with the Lord. Because just like as for men, where Satan tells us all the time, "You're failing as a father, you're failing as a husband. You're failing in your career. You could be so much better. You could be so much better. How come you..." God speaks the same thing to women, especially women that serve in their families. Like, "You're not a good enough wife and you're not a good enough mother. Here's all the things that you do wrong and you can do all these things..." That's how Satan lies to women. So where's she hearing that she's doing a good job? She's spending time with the Lord. She's hearing his voice over her that you're fearfully and wonderfully made, that you're special, that your soul knows it full well. Where else should she be hearing it? From her husband who should be affirming the things that God is saying to her so that the only time that she hears it is not only when she hears it from the Lord, but she's also hearing it from her husband.

And husband, I'm here to tell you and I'm speaking to myself. I'm preaching to me as I'm preaching today. No matter how much you think you affirm your wife, it's not enough. I mean, she could use a little more affirmation, especially in the things that she's doing so diligently that you take for granted. Notice that. It says this verse 18, "She senses that it's good; her lamp does not go out at night." In other words, not only is this woman up early in the morning, this woman's staying up all night. In other words, she's willing to work around the clock to make sure everybody's taken care of.

I like to tell people I have a full-time job. My wife is the one that has the overtime job, because you don't do motherhood and be a wife from 9:00 to 5:00. It's not a 9:00

to 5:00 job. There's a lot that comes up all the time and you're always dealing with stuff and you don't get to choose all the stuff that you're dealing with. And sometimes it's early in the morning and sometimes it's late at night and usually it's a job that nobody else wants. And guess what? You step into that and you're strong for the task because this is why God put me on the earth.

Now, why is it so important? Mom's, listen to me. I wouldn't be standing here if it wasn't for my mom. I mean, if there's any value that I'm offering you as a church, if you've ever been blessed by anything at BRAVE, you should meet my mom and thank her because I wasn't the wonderful person you see before you right now, every day that I was growing up. And my mom was strict and she was stern and she didn't put up with any nonsense and because of her, that was a huge part in who I am today. That's what was going on.

It says this, "Her lamp does not go out at night. She stretches out her hands to the distaff, and her hands grasp the spindle." She's constantly at work, she's diligent, she's going to accomplish something. She's attentive, she's persistent in doing good. That's who she is. She's always making sure things are done.

Now, my mom was a no-nonsense kind of mom. She didn't put up with a lot with me. And I remember about middle school one time I was coming home and I was complaining about dinner and the meals that she was making that I didn't like them. And my mom didn't lose a beat. I mean, one day we're sitting at dinner and I made some snide remark about her meals. She said, "That's okay." She's like, "You know what, Jeff? Next week you're going to make meals for the whole family every single

night." And I said, "No problem. I can do that. Hot dogs every night." She's like, "No, no, no." She's like, "You have to go shopping with me. You have to make a grocery list. You have to buy the food. I'm buying you a cookbook. You have to tell me what the ingredients are. You have to go with me to the store. You have to buy all the ingredients. And then when you make it, all four food groups need to be present. And by the way, your sister can say whatever she wants about your meal."

That was the last time I ever complained about my mom's food because all week long I slaved and struggled and was no good at it. And we'd sit down to eat, my sister would be like, "This is the worst thing I've ever tasted." She was right and I was like, "Hey mom, you're great." And the funny thing is my mom's a really good cook too, but that's what it means to be diligent. It means you're taking care of those things. You're working those things out.

I was thinking of another story too. When I was in eighth grade, I remember my mom kept threatening me. She's like, "You need to make your bed. I'm not going to let you go to practice if you don't make your bed." I'm like, "Whatever." I remember one day I'm shooting hoops before practice and I see my short little mom sitting over there like this... And I walk over to her. She's like, "We're going home. You didn't make your bed." I'm like, "What are you talking about?" She took me home from practice, made me make my bed, and then took me back to practice. And the coach is like, "Why were you gone?" I'm like, "I had to make my bed." And my coach is like, "I love Jeff's mom. Everybody should make their bed every day." But that's what a woman does. She's diligent, she's determined, she sees the best. She doesn't see the best right

then, she sees the best for the future.

But notice this in number four, not only is she gifted and godly, enterprising, entrepreneurial, compassionate, and confident, this woman is this, number four, she's compassionate and confident. Compassionate and confident. Notice that she extends her hand to the poor and she stretches out her hands to the needy. She sees needs and she meets them. The heart of a woman of excellence is when you see needs and you're like, "I'll take care of that. Nobody else may see what I do, but I see it and I'll take care of that. I'll do that inside my family and outside my family. I have the ability to see where people are hurting. I have the ability to see where people have needs and in my heart, I just want to help. I just want to do something about it. I'll do it by myself or I'll rally some people that can help me because this can't continue." That's the heart of a woman. She cares for the poor. And the poor can be financially poor, can also be the poor that are broken in spirit. She sees that and she's building on them.

Notice verse 21. She's also confident. "She is not afraid of the snow for her household, for all her household are clothed with scarlet. She makes coverings for herself; her clothing is fine linen and purple." This woman walks around in confident. She makes sure that her family is dressed in the best. She may not have all the money in the world, but she's going to make sure that when her kids leave the house and when she leaves the house, she's doing her best to present well. She's going to make sure that she's walking in confidence and this comes from the inside working its way to the out. She's not fearful about what's going to happen. She's confident. You're going

to see that later in the text. She's confident in the days to come. She knows where she is now, but she believes the future's even better. That's who this woman is. She's compassionate, she cares, but guess what? She's also confident. This woman is not a pushover. This woman can hold her own ground. Women, you need to hold your own ground.

Sometimes my wife will tell me, "Jeff, these people, they don't really like me. They think I'm like a pushover to you and just do whatever you want." And I'm like, "Invite them over to our house so they can participate in some of our conversations." A woman should speak into situations and should speak into their husband's life and should speak into the church and should speak into society because you have the ability to see things nobody else can see and hear things nobody else can hear. That's who this woman is. She's compassionate, but she's confident. She's not afraid. She's not afraid.

And then I love this. It just keeps getting better. Number five, she's catalytic with character. She's catalytic with character. Notice verse 23, it says this: "Her husband is known in the gates, when he sits among the elders of the land." She's catalytic. She's making her husband better. This man is sitting at the gates. The gates was the centrality of the city. It's where all the people met. And where all the people met of influence, this man had great influence over the influencers. And the reason this man had great influence over the influencers is because he married well, because he married a godly woman. That's why he's in the gates.

If you study this section of text, and we don't have time to go through it all today,

every beginning verse begins with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet and it's in a structure that focuses right to this verse. This verse right here is the key to this whole thing. This is the mother telling her son, marry a godly woman because she will make or break you. If you're going to be a person of influence in a city, if you're going to be a person of influence among people, you better marry a godly woman. And this is what a godly woman does. She makes her man better.

I know that everything that I am of any good that I've ever done in ministry is a result of my wife. I mean, we'll joke about two decades ago, what it was like when we knew each other and who we were and how we were living. And I'm like, "Man, I am so much more of a godly man because you're in my life and have been speaking into it for two decades." I know that. And without her, I couldn't do what I'm doing. That's just flat out fact. That's what women have the ability to do. They have the ability to make or break you. When we interview somebody at BRAVE and they're coming in, I mean, the guy could be the greatest pastor in the world. I want to meet his wife because I can tell in about five minutes, does she support him or not? Is she godly or not? She can have all different temperament, she can have all different personality. That's totally fine. Is she a godly woman who is building into him or not? It's pretty easy to tell. And if she's not, she's going to break him. And if she is, she's the reason that he's doing so well. She's catalytic. Everyone around her gets better. That's what the text says.

Notice what it says: "She makes linen garments," so she's still making things, selling them. She's entrepreneurial. "And supplies belts to the trade men. Strength and dignity are her clothing." I mean, this woman is a dignified woman. I mean, she's

making everybody around her better. So when your wife is speaking to you, listen. I mean, I'll give you just a little example. You guys are part of the 10:30 service. Last week in the 8:30 service, I wore black jeans. And when I came down off the platform, I saw my wife. First thing she said to me is, "You need to change your jeans because they don't match your shirt before next service." And I said, "What are you talking about? This purple shirt matches perfectly with black." She goes, "First of all, this shirt is blue and it doesn't go because of spring color. I don't have time to get into it. You just need to change your pants."

So I look at my daughter and I said, "What do you think?" She goes, "You need to listen to mom." I said, "I'm not. I'm getting ready to close the service out." So I go back up to my office and we're arguing about it. So we compromise. I changed them, and so that's why I wore blue jeans last week. But that's just a mini example of things that go on all the time in our home where Kim is watching, she's seeing, she's hearing, she's speaking, she's saying, based on where you want to go. She's said something to me the other day that I'm still wrestling with and my heart is very profound about. Something in ministry I need to be more engaged in doing, and I know she's right, and I'm like thinking about how I do it and what it's going to look like and where we go and how do I pray about it? Because she sees and she hears, and so does every godly woman. So does every woman of excellence. That's what he's saying, "Strength and dignity are her clothing."

Now notice this, and she smiles at the future. I mean, no matter how bad things

are going to get, she's not afraid. She's smiling. She belongs to the Lord. She knows, "Hey, my best days are ahead of me. Everybody that's around me, their best days are ahead of them too because I'm bringing value to all the people around me." She smiles at the future and notice this, how she speaks. "She opens her mouth in wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue." So what's that mean? It means when she opens her mouth, she speaks from experience that she knows how to live godly. Wisdom is living with excellence. It's knowing what to do. And how does she do it? She does it with kindness. She's not a bully. She's not a boss. She's not putting people down. She is a godly woman that is filled with kindness and her life demonstrates that she's lived right. So she's demonstrating, "Here's how you live and here's what it looks like, and here's what you want to think about." She's able to dispense all sorts of wisdom.

When you're around a woman who's older and more seasoned in the Lord and she's speaking, there's things that she can say and tell you that she knows about because of how long she's walked with the Lord. This is what a woman of excellence looks like. This is what a godly wife looks like in her family.

And notice this, not only is she catalytic with character, but verse 27, she's focused on her family. She's focused on her family. Notice verse 27, "She looks well to the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness." What does this mean? She puts family first. She puts family first. Why? Because God puts family first. God puts family first. The woman of God knows that family's important, even though the culture doesn't champion the family, even though culture says, "No, no, no, you

need to get your value out from somebody else. You will never get value in the home." God says, "No. Your value comes from focusing on your family first. Care about those that I put in your life because you get the opportunity to make an 18-year investment in your children that will go on and leave a legacy greater than any other legacy that you'll ever live." You say, "Well, why does God want that?" Because that's his design of a woman.

It's not only Old Testament, but in the New Testament, as Paul's writing to the churches, he teaches this exact same truth in the Book of Titus as he's spelling out what a church should look like and what elders should be and what gender should be. And he's affirming older men and younger men and older women and younger women, and here's what he says to the women who are more seasoned in the Lord in Titus 2:3-4. He said, "Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior." That means they're reflecting the glory of the Lord. "Not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good." Why? Because here's their ministry. So they may encourage the young women to do what? "To love their husbands, to love their children, to be sensible, pure." And here's a word, it's one word in the Greek, "Workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the Word of God will not be dishonored."

Now, that's God's definition of what women's ministry looks like. Older women pouring into younger women, older godly women pouring into younger women that want to grow in their godliness to do what? Number one, love your husbands. Number two, love your kids. Number three, what does it say? To be sensible, pure, to be busy

at your home, to be workers in the home, subject to their own husbands, so that the Word of God will not be dishonored. Now, what does that mean? Does that mean women can't work outside the home? It doesn't say that. It says the focus of a godly wife needs to be her family.

If you're married, women, your husband should know, he's number one in your life. Your kids should know they're number two in your life. And anything else that you're able to do outside the home, fantastic. Go do it. Go kill it for the Lord. If you got extra time to do it, there's nothing wrong with working outside the home and some of you have to work outside the home. That's just the season of life that you're in. But if you're married, your number one responsibilities is to your husband, and your number two responsibilities to your children. That's it.

Now, it's really interesting because before Kim and I were here at BRAVE, before I started pastoring this church, we didn't know what the term pastor's wife meant, because if you study the Bible, you won't find the term because it doesn't exist. So I told my wife when we came here, she's like, "Well, what's a pastor's wife?" I'm like, "Well, it means I'm a pastor now and you're my wife. So your role doesn't change. Your role is still to serve me and our kids and to help our family. It doesn't change." And when we started the church, my wife was very involved in the church for. The first two years, she never made a service because she was with four-year-olds in the nursery, and I kept begging her, "Please come into service. Your number one gift is prayer. Come pray for me. I need the help." After two years, I got her to do that.

Then she sang on the worship team. She led worship for us for a season. Then she led the women's ministry for a period of years as a volunteer. Then we got to a place our kids were growing up where she was doing all these different things. She said to me, "I don't think I can keep doing all these things." I said, "Well, that's easy. Stop doing all the stuff at the church for this season and focus on our family and you'll have peace." And that's what she began to do. I said, "You'll get a season again. Our kids will be up. They'll be out of the house, they'll be gone, but we got so much time that we can pour into them. Let's make them our focus." So there's times now she won't show up at things and she won't do other things, and I'm totally fine with that as her husband, because you know why? Because I care about my wife and my kids even more than I care about the church because that's God's call on my life. And that's what it means to focus on your family. A godly woman will focus on her family.

Men, when you're looking for a woman, look for somebody that has character that wants to focus on the family, and this is what God's saying. Now, why is this a big deal? I mean, this is such a big deal in our culture, I mean, because it affects everybody. I mean, just by a show of hands this morning, just answer this question. How many of you are a mother or have a mother? I mean, this is a pretty big deal. It's pretty pervasive and impacts everybody. I mean, guys, I'm talking to you. Some of you young men here today that are sitting there waiting around for the perfect woman, there is no perfect woman. There are godly women that will aspire to be everything this text is. So quit waiting around and looking for the perfect woman. If you're waiting for the perfect woman, go stare in the mirror a little longer and you'll recognize you

can't measure up to the perfect woman.

Some of you that are women, hey, you're trying to take shortcuts and say, "Well, one day when I meet my husband, then I'll start living..." No, no, start living like this now. God sees. Let him pour favor on your life. And even to the women here that have been broken in so many different ways that are so myriad that we don't even have time this morning to talk about them and some that are so gut-wrenching and horrifying, here's the truth. God loves you. This is what he created you for. This is who you are.

And it's really interesting because as this text continues, it gets to the heart of the matter. It really closes this out well. Not only does she put family first. I mean, you think about this woman of excellence. She's gifted and godly. She's enterprising and entrepreneurial. She's diligent and determined. She's compassionate and confident. She's catalytic with character. She's focused on her family. And oh, by the way, just to some of you young girls, because this doesn't get said in church very much, so just hear your pastor say this from the authority of God's Word. If your desire is to grow up and be married and have kids, and you're like, "That's really all I want to be," that's totally not only fine, that's a godly calling, and live it out to the full. Amen. You can do that. God honors that. You don't need to apologize.

But notice this last one. A woman of excellence is commendable and she's celebrated. It says this, that her children rise up and bless her. Her children rise up and bless her. They tell her what a good job she's doing. Now, if they don't do that on their own, which most young kids don't, dads help them out, help them out.

I mean, my kids are getting to an age where they're old enough to recognize how special their mom is, and sometimes we're in the car they're like, "Dad, our mom's awesome." I'm like, "I know. I'm a great recruiter. I picked will." I mean, let them praise her with their lips, with their actions. "Her children rise up and bless her. Her husband also, and he praises her, saying this: 'Many daughters have done nobly, but you excel them all.'" What is he saying? Here's the vernacular. Husband's, your speaking blessing over your wife. Here's what you're saying, "There's a lot of godly women in the world. There's a lot of godly women at BRAVE, but baby, you're the most godly woman I know, and you go far and beyond every single one." And every husband here can say that about his wife. That's what you're supposed to do as a husband. That's what a godly husband does. You affirm with your mouth, you affirm with your actions, you affirm with your ways of letting your wife know just how special she is. The kids affirm her and you affirm her. That's what it looks like.

And then notice what it says this. It says, "Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised." It doesn't say charm is a bad thing. It doesn't say don't look for beauty. It doesn't say that. Charm is okay. Beauty's good. I mean, men are going to find a woman they find attractive. That's okay. Ladies, do the best you can with what God gave you. That's okay. Here's what it's saying, that cutey penis while you're dating, doesn't endure a marriage. And beauty changes over time. That young fine 20-year-old woman that you're going to marry, she ain't going to look like that at 95. That's what it's saying. It's not saying beauty's wrong, it's just saying it's going to change. So don't put all your heart into the idea that, "Guys, I just

got to marry her because she's hot. She's so hot." Because she's not going to look like that forever. But a woman who fears the Lord, that's what's beautiful because that grows over time.

And no offense to you ladies here who are 95 or a hundred, we love you. My grandma's a hundred. I love her, and I've seen pictures of my nana when she was 20. My son's seen pictures of my nana and my mom when she was young. Remember what you said about your grandma? I won't say it. Things change over time, but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised. A woman who fears the Lord is to be praised because that 95-year-old woman that loves the Lord and has been walking with Jesus for about 80 years, she has a joy in her and a spirit in her that is still attractive into her 90s or into her 100s. That's what it means.

So guys, it's okay. Beauty's okay, charm's okay. I mean, you're going to be attracted to different things, but make sure that the centrality of the woman that you pursue is her godliness, because that gets more and more and more and more and more attractive over time. If you only marry for looks, at some point, you'll be disappointed. "Charm is deceptive, beauty is vain, it's fleeting, but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised." Then it says this, "Give her the product of her hands and let her works praise her in the gates." Well, wasn't he sitting in the city gates? Wasn't he around all his men saying, "Man, you're a great leader. You're awesome." Where should his wife be praised? In the same way. Means praise her publicly, means give her what she deserves. I mean, this woman is an incredible woman. She's gifted and godly. She's enterprising and entrepreneurial. She's determined and diligent. She's

compassionate and confident. She's catalytic. She makes everybody around her better with character. She's focused on her family, and she's commendable and worthy to be celebrated. I mean, so praise her publicly. Not in a phony way, but in a real way.

I mean, here at BRAVE, we love everybody that comes here because God created every single person. If he created you, male, we love you. If he created you, female, we love you because God loves you. But today we're talking about that specific class of people. We're talking about females, we're talking about young girls. We're talking about young women. We're talking about women. And I thought, no better way to end our message here today than to praise our women. Amen. So here's what I'd like you to do before you applaud. Nobody applaud yet. I'm asking every woman here just to stand up today because we won't appreciate you. No applauding just yet. No applauding just yet. If you're a woman here today, we want to celebrate you on Mother's Day. You're a young girl here, we want to celebrate you today. If you're six years old and you're a woman, stand up. We want to celebrate you today.

Now guys, can we just appreciate the women here at BRAVE for who they are and all that they do. We love you. Amen.

Wow. We always say at BRAVE that we have some of the finest people in all of Colorado. I mean, we have some of the finest women in all of Colorado too. Can you stay standing. Man, would you stand up too as we pray, and as we close today? Let's just pray this out.

Father, on this Mother's Day, we just offer our women afresh to you. Lord, that

when these women come to BRAVE, they would hear your voice, that they'd be able to live in the fullness of who you've called them to be, Lord, that they would be honored, that they would be cherished, they would be empowered, Lord, that these women would hear you. These women would know that no matter what has happened, that their best days are ahead. Lord, that we as men would surround them, encourage them, build them, edify them, strengthen them, and Lord appreciate them because Lord, you love them, you value them, and they have so much value to add to this world.

God, we love you and bless you. We praise you for your living and active Word. We thank you for letting us hear from you what you think an excellent woman looks like. We thank you that you would speak to us about that in a culture that doesn't champion women, that puts women down, that doesn't celebrate femininity. Lord, here at BRAVE we do. And Lord, I pray that each and every woman here would be encouraged. Nobody go home feeling beat up. They feel inspired because, Lord, the bar that you set is so high that not a woman here can do this apart from your help, but that they could grow increasingly in it. And Lord, that we would champion that. We love you and bless you and praise you for all that you are and all that you're doing. And it's in Jesus' name we pray, amen and amen. Can we give God some praise?