There are rich rewards outlined in God’s word for the wise choices we make. God “calls” us to be women of discretion—who listen carefully to the voice of wisdom. We’re to be noble—(biblical definition is taking heed to becoming well-known for wisdom). Psalm 51:6 says “Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place.” Webster’s definition of noble: of a superior nature, august, baronial, grand, magnificent and majestic in character. And character is one marked by distinctive traits or qualities. So a woman of noble character is marked by the distinctive qualities of a superior nature—taking heed to becoming well-known for wisdom!

In Ruth 3:11b, Boaz says to Ruth: “All my fellow townsmen know that you are a woman of noble character.” A woman of noble character will be a wife of noble character, and a mother, grandmother, homemaker, friend and neighbor of noble character. What made Ruth a woman of noble character?

In the Book of Ruth, Naomi was in the land of Moab and her husband and two sons had died, leaving her with her two daughters-in-law—Orpah and Ruth. In Ruth 1:15 Naomi says to Ruth:

“Look, your sister-in-law (Orpah) is going back to her people and her gods. Go back with her. 16 But Ruth replied, ‘Don’t urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God.’”

A passage often read at Christian weddings, it describes one who is committed to the one she loves. Most of all, though, she’s committed to God—she demonstrates wisdom in her choice to make God her God—hence noble. The choice that Ruth made was wise! How do we know that? Because Scripture says “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” Ruth feared—was in awe of—the God of Naomi. She loved Naomi, but more nobly she embraced Naomi’s God!

Many Old Testament women asked God for wisdom and a plan, took action, and experienced victory. One whole book describes how Esther delivered the Israelites from destruction. We read about Judge Deborah and how God gave her wisdom to conquer Israel’s enemies. Hannah prayed relentlessly for a son—Samuel was God’s answer to her prayer. Abigail was married to wicked Nabal, who arrogantly refused to let King David and his military men pass through his land. She sought the Lord God’s wisdom and placated the King. When Nabal later fell over dead, she became a wife to King David.
Wisdom for the wife and mother: In the last book of the Old Testament, God spoke to the Israelites through Malachi about why judgment was coming on them, and says in Malachi 2:14-16a:

“You ask, ‘Why?’ It is because the Lord is acting as the witness between you and the wife of your youth, because you have broken faith with her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant. Has not the Lord made them one? In flesh and spirit they are his. And why one? Because he was seeking godly offspring. So guard yourself in your spirit and do not break faith with the wife of your youth. ‘I hate divorce,’ says the Lord God of Israel....”

Way back in Genesis 2:24 God had said, “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.” And this passage in Malachi says that God made a husband and wife to be one flesh because he was seeking godly offspring. If someone says, “I don’t think a couple should stay together just for the children,” know that you’re hearing a lie, because that’s not what God’s word—Truth—says!

The Apostle Paul is all over this in the New Testament—1 Corinthians 7:13, 14, 16 says:

“And if a woman has a husband who is not a believer and he is willing to live with her, she must not divorce him. For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified through his wife.... Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is they are holy. How do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband?”

If you are single—never been married—or are widowed, know that God will be a husband to those who have no earthly husband. He will be that overseer, caregiver, head, protector, friend and companion—that husband.

And if you have been divorced and/or are remarried, remember that God is in the ‘Re’ business! If you ask him to forgive and renew and reclaim your home, he is faithful. He will redeem and restore the years the locusts have eaten. Don’t get weighed down with “Oh, no, my home is destroyed, my children are doomed.” Confess and receive God’s forgiveness and his wonderful restoring work. This lesson is for us today, divorced, married—first marriage or not. God holds us responsible for what we know “to him who knows to do good and does it not, to him it is sin.” Let God give each of us wisdom and commitment for our home, family and marriage, today!

In the book Susanna Wesley, author Charles Ludwig records: “Susanna was always conscious of God’s presence when she prayed...her daily prayer was, ‘Dear God, guide me. Help me do Thy will. Make my life count.’” And at times she felt certain that her purpose in life was to raise and educate a large family and that perhaps some of her children would help change the world.
Of the 19 children she bore, only 8 lived to be mothered. Ludwig writes: “In addition to sectioning (methodizing) her days, she had become more and more convinced about the power of prayer, meditation, and the constant reading of God’s word.” We know from the praise given to her by her children and others that Susanna Wesley was a stellar mother—*wisdom* ruled her mothering—but let’s look at her *wisdom* as a wife.

Susanna had wanted some material to make dresses for her and her girls, and she was going to ask her husband, Samuel, for the money when he announced that he needed more books to work on his dissertation of the *Book of Job*. Ludwig writes: “Choking back her desire, Susanna said, ‘Job comes first! I want it to be a masterpiece.’ Susanna remained loyal. She wrote ‘Old as I am, since I have taken my husband for better, for worse, I’ll take my residence with Him. Where he lives will I live; and where he dies, will I die; and there I will be buried.’” Those were her words she got from God’s word, because those were Ruth’s words! We are to love our husbands, yes, but Scripture says, “*see that she*—the wife—*respects her husband.*” That is the command!

Susanna exhibited ‘respect’ for her husband. And while her husband Samuel’s dissertation of the *Book of Job* is hardly remembered, today, Susanna’s life is well remembered—it did count! Her life as a woman of God—wife, mother, homemaker—in her community did *so* count! God answered the prayer of her heart—two of her sons, John and Charles, changed England and the world for Christ, and John led her to saving faith!

- In preparing to look at what it means to be the *wife of noble character*, we must first peer at the *ignoble* wife—the wife of *ignoble* character. This describes a woman who is loose with her tongue, her virtue and her money. She’s careless in the way she speaks to her husband and about her husband. She’s a continual ‘drip,’ ‘drip,’ ‘drip’ as Scripture says. The *ignoble* woman is immodest in her dress, in her language and in her heart. **She does not fear God!**

Remember the wisest man who ever lived, and the primary author of *The Book of Proverbs*—King Solomon? It was the idolatrous influence of his *ignoble* wives that, in the end, turned his heart away from God. 1 Kings 11:1-13 chronicles the details beginning with “King Solomon, however, loved many foreign women...He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives led him astray” (verses 1 and 3).
We can be seduced by the world without God’s wisdom! We can get into bad company and wrong thinking and become ignoble: dishonorable, despicable, sordid and wretched—the kind of woman who could “ruin a man.” As our character is corrupted, we will corrupt our home—our husband and children. **1 Corinthians 15:33** “Do not be misled: ‘Bad company corrupts good character.’”

- **Proverbs 31:10-31** outlines the wife of noble character presented in the form of advice to King Lemuel from his mother about the kind of woman to find and take as his wife. The first 9 verses of Proverbs 31 are ascribed to King Lemuel—who is otherwise unknown. History implies that Lemuel was possibly a nickname Solomon’s mother had for him. If it is Bathsheba giving the advice—and there’s no absolute proof that it is or isn’t—he did not heed it as he should have as Scripture bears out. But that heart-breaking fact does not invalidate the advice given—the wisdom of it.

Wisdom invites us to look at ten main points from this passage. We don’t need to become overwhelmed and give up on striving to become the noble wife that God wants us to be for His Glory! Understand that the wife of noble character that the King’s mother wanted him to seek out is first of all fictitious, and also would have had servants who, under her command and discretion, carried out all of the tasks she’s credited with. But she, “the wife of noble character,” is singled out and praised for her wisdom.

1. -She is worthy (verse 10),
2. -Her husband has full confidence in her (11),
3. -She brings him good (12)—she respects and honors,
4. -She makes good decisions (13)—**discreet** (discretion is discerning and discriminating—listens to the voice of wisdom) and **prudent** (judicious, wise and cautious). **Proverbs 19:14** “Houses and wealth are inherited from parents, but a prudent wife is from the Lord.”
5. -She gets up…and provides (15),
6. -She considers, she plants, she sets about her work vigorously…she opens her arms to the poor (16-20),
7. -She makes coverings—is clothed with strength and dignity (22-25),
8. -“She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue” (26),
9. -She watches over the affairs of her household (27), **and**
10.-She is a woman who fears the Lord and is praised for it (30)

Remember “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.”
Dee Brestin in her book *A Woman of Value* says: “The fear of the Lord includes the concept of reverence, but also an awakening to the realization of God’s holiness and wrath at unrighteousness. This fear helps us understand our need for a Savior.”

We are commanded to respect our husbands; and respect will produce submission: **Ephesians 5:22-23** “Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior.”

- Talk to your husband about the good, and talk to God about the bad.
- Build up your husband in front of others.
- Pray that your husband would be respected “at the city gates.”

The Book of Proverbs begins and ends with the importance of *fearing* the Lord—**Proverbs 1:7 and 31:30**! And Proverbs 31:1-7 and 31:30 describe “a woman who fears the Lord.” The commentary in the *NIV Study Bible* says: “Such a wife is almost a personification of wisdom.” Notice that wisdom is **personified as a woman**! Dee again: “There is no command in Scripture with more blessings attached to it than ‘fear the Lord’. Proverbs 29:25 warns: ‘The fear of man will prove to be a snare.’ I have come to see that the woman who loves and fears God is used mightily by Him, and the woman who fears others is paralyzed and fails to bear fruit.” Therefore, fear God and fear nothing else (Psalm 103:13)!

Throughout the Book of Proverbs, there are two women calling out to us. These voices are personalized as

- the Woman Wisdom—the *noble* woman, and
- the Woman Folly—the *ignoble* woman.

Let wisdom—the fear of the Lord—be the distinctive trait you embrace, and the quality you exhibit. What about the influence of God-fearing grandparents? Psalm 103:7 promises us, “But from everlasting to everlasting the Lord’s love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children’s children.”

Choose to be the **NOBLE** woman, mother, grandmother, friend, neighbor, homemaker and...wife—**the wife of noble character**!

“A wife of noble character who can find?  
She is worth far more than rubies.  
Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value.  
She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life.”

The Mother of King Lemuel