

Preface

# Dispelling the Myth

*Stacy McDonald*

*Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies.* (Proverbs 31:10)

**I**n the 1970s, the pro-feminist bestseller *Stepford Wives* turned the traditional housewife into a mindless, husband-pleasing, yes-woman who was literally heartless—because, come to find out, she was actually a robot. The message was clear: a woman who faithfully serves her family, loves pleasing her husband, and joyfully takes care of her home (from home) is not a “real person,” but a contrived fantasy of her overbearing and selfish husband.

Instead of treasuring women and properly utilizing their gifts, our culture has attempted to discard the beauty and uniqueness of biblical womanhood and create an emotionally androgynous power-woman whose worth is measured only by the degree of her ambition, the shape of her body, and her money-making potential. Rather than women renouncing this affront to their dignity, amazingly, the slaves are demanding their slavery!

In place of the glorious picture painted for us in Scripture

of the passionate keeper at home, a hollow counterfeit has emerged—a desperate image concocted and promoted by Hollywood stereotypes, magazine models, and women’s self-help books.

The rise of the Internet has only added to the confusion. As women have gravitated to the web *en masse*, they have met a flood of men and women of all backgrounds and persuasions propounding conflicting notions of what it means to be a woman. The cacophony of ideas and teachings that today’s Christian women must wade through as they contemplate their rightful place in God’s created order can be simply overwhelming.

Of course, the challenge of determining the meaning of true biblical womanhood is not unique to our time. While today’s women may be bombarded with more media streams than their counterparts of previous generations, biblical femininity has always been an unusual quality. This is what led King Lemuel’s mother to observe, “Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies” (Proverbs 31:10). Virtuous women have always been rare, and oh, how precious they are!

### *Finders, Keepers!*

Given the age-old challenge of “finding” a virtuous woman, how are we to unearth the rare jewel of Christian womanhood? How does a woman, or a girl on her way to womanhood, truly understand her rightful calling as a daughter of the King?

The answer is this: that in Christ “are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Colossians 2:3); and He has given us “all things that pertain unto life and godliness” (2 Peter 1:4) in the pages of His Holy Word (2 Timothy 3:16-17). And this

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includes the mysterious secret of what it means to be a virtuous woman of God—and to be a happy keeper of the home.

The term “homemaker” can be misconstrued, to be sure, so even as we seek to define what a godly keeper at home *is*, we must also uproot the deeply entrenched stereotypes of what a housewife or “homemaker” is *not*—or should not be. In our quest to get to the bottom of this issue, it is critical that we dispel the various myths that have been foisted upon us by feminist propaganda through movies, television, and even billboards—to clear our heads of the cobwebs that can keep us from understanding true biblical femininity.

*What a Godly Keeper at Home (Or Housewife) is Not*

A godly keeper at home is absolutely not a lesser human being, a mindless robot, or a placid doormat under submission to all men; rather, she is created in the very image of God and of equal worth and value compared to man (Genesis 1:26-28). She is the crown of her husband (Proverbs 12:4), a helper suitable for him (Genesis 2:18). Because she trusts God’s wisdom in establishing perfect order for His creation, she willingly submits to her *own* husband as unto the Lord (Ephesians 5:22-24).

In God’s economy, the godly housewife is no man’s slave or piece of personal property; for her worth is “far above rubies” (Proverbs 31:10). Nonetheless, she eagerly admits to being Christ’s slave, which paradoxically makes her free indeed (1 Corinthians 7:22). She laughs when she hears rumors that she is an oppressed victim of a male-dominated dictatorship, because she knows that God’s will is perfect and His Word timeless. Her place in society isn’t ruled by the culture, but by

God's unchanging and eternal Word. By His grace, she has no desire to question His ways (Isaiah 55:8); on the contrary, she rests in them.

Hardly childish or unintelligent, the godly keeper at home opens her mouth with wisdom (Proverbs 31:26) and her husband and children praise her (Proverbs 31:28). She has opinions and ideas, and uses them for God's glory—not her own. She takes joy in being a helpmate to her husband so that her “husband is known in the gates” (Proverbs 31:23) and so that his heart “safely trusts in her” and he “has no lack of gain” (Proverbs 31:11).

Though the counterfeit lure and charm of the seductress seeks to deceive and entice the housewife's husband, the godly woman's garden is filled with fragrant spices and delicious fruits (Song of Solomon 4:16). As she ravishes her husband's heart, he sings of how her love is better than wine and her scent finer than expensive perfume (Song of Solomon 4:9-10). She is a fruitful vine at her husband's table (Psalm 128:3), and the fruit of her body is blessed (Deuteronomy 28:4).

Far from being a household drudge chained to her stove, the godly keeper at home is like a merchant ship; she brings her food from afar (Proverbs 31:14). Proverbs 31 reveals to us how a godly housewife impacts her community in various ways—feeding the poor, making purchases for the proper running of her household, dealing in wisdom with employees, and selling her homemade goods. She is known in the community and honors her husband by representing him well while in public, yet her hub of productivity and her primary focus is the place she most loves to be—her home.

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The godly keeper at home wisely governs the household that God places in her care so that prudence and sound judgment rule her decisions rather than covetousness or folly. Though she may wear pearls and high heels, she realizes that “charm is deceitful and beauty is passing, but a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised” (Proverbs 31:30).

### *Desperate Housewives*

Still, there are more myths we need to dispel. In this book, we take the long-venerated '50s housewife, wearing high heels and pearls to vacuum the floor, and send her back to the land of fantasy where she belongs. Real women need to know that being helpers to their husbands, raising godly children, and properly managing their homes takes real work, but the rich reward a woman receives by diligently tending to the ways of her household is well worth the effort.

Yet even as the 1950s cardboard caricature of the perfectly polished housewife must be upended, so too must the equally subversive notion of the “desperate housewife” which has made its way into the minds of most Americans.

Hollywood would like for us to believe that a woman who stays home serving her husband and children is not joyful and content, but desperate. Today we have television programs that divulge all the spicy details of what's supposedly going on behind the closed curtains of those seemingly happy housewives. According to modern thought, although she may be smiling when she checks the mail, the cheerful mom across the street lives a life full of secret disappointment, anger, lust, adultery, insanity, and even murder. “Poor, desperate housewife...if only

she had a fulfilling career. If only her family didn't drag her down. If only she would do something for *herself* for a change."

This foolish image of sensual despondency on the part of the housewife is a twisted perversion of the beautiful picture of the wise and chaste keeper at home described in Proverbs 31. While every homemaker at times falls short of this scriptural ideal, when the godly keeper at home is faithful, her husband and children rise up and call her blessed (Proverbs 31:28), and her own works praise her in the gates (Proverbs 31:31). The joyful and satisfied life (Proverbs 31:25) that God gives a woman who is surrendered to His will is rich and filling—yes, even passionate!

### *What Are We Desperate For?*

"So, housewives aren't mere drudges or empty-headed arm décor for their husbands," you say, "but you have to admit there is something to this whole 'desperate' thing, right? After all, read the headlines." Yes, there *is* something to it, but not what pop culture would lead you to believe.

Desperation is a condition which is natural to mankind. Jeremiah 17:9 tells us that our hearts are desperately wicked. All of mankind is hopelessly in need of a Savior, and we are doomed to Hell without Him. Scripture tells us that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). If we claim Christ, then in essence we are admittedly desperate for God. We know that we can do nothing without Jesus and that we can do all things (that He has called us to do) through Him (Philippians 4:13).

Most people don't understand that Jesus Himself was

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the perfect model of godly servanthood. How is the world to comprehend His desire for obedient hearts who are willing to serve—not expecting to be served (Mark 10:45)—unless we Christians are showing (not just telling) them we believe it ourselves? As Christian women, we must learn to let Jesus satisfy our souls, for He will do a much better job at quenching our thirst than we ever could. Our attempts to satisfy ourselves will always leave us thirsting for more, never pleased or content—desperate indeed (John 4:13).

If you're feeling overwhelmed and desperate, you won't find the answer in yet another self-help book or in a temporal bottle of pills. More self-esteem won't quiet those inner yearnings or fears any more than a "better" body or new clothes will. Only Christ can satisfy your anxious heart and give you peace. Long for Him "as the deer pants for the water brooks" (Psalm 42:1). When your soul is disquieted, hope in God and praise His Holy name (Psalm 42:11).

*An Answer to "Me-ology"*

One of the reasons Jennie and I wrote this book is because we know there are "desperate" women who need to hear the truths of Scripture. They need to know about God's wonderful solution to their desperation—and that it won't be met by chasing after more "me time."

Two and a half years ago, when Jennie called to tell me her "hair was on fire" (a Southern term for being all "riled up"), I knew we had to do something. So what was so hair-raising? A friend had alerted Jennie to yet another "me-ology" book—that's how we describe books that encourage women to

## *Passionate Housewives Desperate for God*

“pamper,” rather than “sanctify” their flesh. Page after page, the author told women it was okay to live for *self*—in fact, if you don’t feel like your relationship with God is productive, perhaps it’s your family’s fault for distracting you from the “important” things you could be doing!

This self-centered philosophy is a fallacy that we as Christian women must guard against. If we find ourselves in a position where we feel that serving our families gets in the way of serving Christ’s Kingdom, then we should fall on our faces and repent, because, chances are, if we’re not serving the Kingdom, we’re serving ourselves—not anyone else.

Serving our family *is* serving the Kingdom. Serving our husband and our little ones is serving Christ Himself—and neglecting them so that we can pursue self interests is neglecting the Kingdom of God—and Jesus Himself! “Inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me” (Matthew 24:45).

## *Ordinary Housewives Passionate for God*

This book represents two and a half years of the work and prayers of two ordinary housewives who are slowly learning to die to self. We haven’t arrived yet as homemakers, but we are seeking to conform our lives more and more each day to God’s vision for godly womanhood—a calling which we are passionate about, even as we pray you will be.

Here’s what we have learned: as we have pruned our covetous fingers off those things that are not for us and instead clung to God with all our might, we have found our desperation met with mercy, strength, and power by our loving and powerful Savior.

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While it may seem counterintuitive, the lesson is true: living *more* for self will only keep us further from that true joy we're after as women. God wants us to know that we can't do it all, so that He can do it through us—so that He can equip us with the grace and strength we need to accomplish His will—which includes serving Him by serving others. Then, at last, we can shed the millstone of fear and desperation and get truly passionate!

You can call us housewives, homemakers, or keepers at home; but we're not desperate. Whatever challenges God brings us in our role as women, we have purposed to not lose heart or despair. And when we do fall into sin, God graciously reminds us of our utter reliance on and need for His sustaining grace.

Have you struggled to reconcile God's vision of virtuous womanhood with worldly myths that marginalize and mock the role of the homemaker? If so, then we invite you to pull up a chair, dust off the cookie crumbs, and join us as we dispel the mistaken notion that women can and should "have it all." Listen as we share how you can find true contentment in God's Providence—in His holy order—and discover overwhelming joy in the mysterious dichotomy of gaining abundant life (John 10:10-11) by dying to self.

It's time to lay aside the stereotypes and glamorized myths and discover the rare jewel of godly womanhood—to rediscover what it means to be a passionate housewife "desperate" for God alone!