



Workers at Home

by Jan Patterson

*Give her the product of her hands,
And let her works praise her in the gates.*
Proverbs 31:31

We as wives and mothers have a stewardship from the Lord, and just two little verses in Titus 2 contain the 7 things that comprise that stewardship. These 7 things are intertwined into one beautiful, productive life. We ought to ENJOY what God has ordained for us to do, and “magnify our office.”

The Lord used each of the words that form the theme of our lesson today only ONCE in our Bible, and they apply to us alone, as is evident from the chart below.

	Titus 2:5	I Timothy 5:14
NASB	<i>Workers at home</i>	<i>Keep house</i>
NIV	<i>To be busy at home</i>	<i>To manage their homes</i>
KJV	<i>Keepers at home</i>	<i>Guide the house</i>
NKJV	<i>Homemakers</i>	<i>Manage the house</i>
ESV	<i>Working at home</i>	<i>Manage their households</i>
	oikouros /oy-koo-ros'/ 2 words combined: <i>work</i> and <i>house</i>	oikodespoteō /oy-kod-es-pot-eh'-o/ 2 words combined: <i>master</i> and <i>house</i>
	Our home is our place of work.	Our work is being the manager of our household.

Word meanings

1. “Workers – from a root meaning “action”
2. “At home” – a physical house
3. “Keep” – be the master, guide or manager
4. Therefore it means a *laborer* in and *manager/keeper* of your home

Word of caution: commentators on these verses nearly all focus on the tendency and danger of wives to “gad about” and be busybodies; they see the home and this command as a safeguard against that. There is ample opportunity in any era for this – in Bible times as well as in the 21st century. We need to busy ourselves with properly carrying out our stewardship and thereby avoid this danger and tendency.

What it doesn't mean

1. That you need to be a Supermom. Work within your own God-given capabilities as well as limits, and don't compare.
2. That you can't hold an outside job. If the Lord intended that wives never work, He would have made that clear in His Word. If you do work, however, the home is still to be “the best part of your life.”
3. That you can't have ministry apart from taking care of home and family.
4. Isolation from the outside world. Fellowship with and service to others is part of God's plan for all of His people. And we do live IN this world though we are not of it.

What it does mean

1. It is an *attitude* of the heart and mind.
2. At least you need to find satisfaction and contentment in your labors, if not actual enjoyment. If you don't feel this way, then ask God to change your heart and mind.
3. You need "a mind to work," as the people in Nehemiah's day, not be lazy or idle. Proverbs 31:27, . . . *does not eat the bread of idleness.*

Being workers

Proverbs 31 is our example of godly home management.

1. Care for husband and family (vv. 10-12, 23, 28)
2. Willing spirit to work hard physically (vv. 13, 17, 27)
 - Laziness is sin. See Romans 12:11 and II Thessalonians 3:10-12. Also, many verses in Proverbs warn against laziness. Teaching children a good work ethic starts in the home.
 - Chaos is unsettling and creates tension. The Bible teaches *order* – creation, the Mosaic Law. I Corinthians 14:40, "orderly" = "properly arranged."
 - Perfection is not required and can be disheartening – family is more important than cleaning standards.
3. Feeding her household (vv. 14-15)
 - Put good fuel into growing bodies. Routine – families look forward to satisfying meals at regular times.
 - The way to a man's heart really is, in part, through his stomach! A home with good aromas is reassuring and comforting.

4. Clothing her family (vv. 19; 21-22)
Clothing doesn't have to be costly, just clean and appropriate. It is part of our Christian testimony to be clean and neat.

These things give *security* to your family, which breeds *contentment*.

*The beauty of the home is ORDER.
The blessing of the home is CONTENTMENT.*
Henry Van Dyke

5. Ministry to others (requires sacrifice and is an example to your children)
6. Outside job (vv. 16, 18, 24)
- This isn't a command, but is commendable if it is God's plan and will for you.
 - If you are working outside the home, then
 - It must be the Lord's clear leading for you.
 - You need special grace to keep up with home and family in addition to your job, and the Lord has promised to give that.
(I Corinthians 10:13, II Corinthians 12:9)
 - In your thoughts, desires and heart, your home and family are first.
7. Some of the verses specifically and the passage in general indicate character qualities that we as homemakers ought to exhibit, and that *enable* us in our stewardship.
- trustworthiness
 - selfless love
 - industry and forethought
 - kindness and generosity
 - dignity and wisdom
 - strength (inward as well as outward)
 - hard-working and diligent, not idle
 - carefulness about our person
 - God-fearing

At home

1. This sphere – at home – is to be your satisfaction and fulfillment. If you have a job, be careful not to confuse loyalties.
2. Try to be “at home” when your children are, especially as they grow older. This is stability and security for them.
3. Be a home lover!

Being managers or “keepers”

Their home is to be their kingdom.
R. K. Lenski

What does a ruler do?

1. Sets the tone and atmosphere of his “realm.” As the ruler is, so the people will be.
 - by EXAMPLE
 - A merry heart, cheerfulness, and industry (Proverbs); sing to the Lord with gratitude (Colossians 3:16); speak of the Lord and His wonderful works and His goodness (Psalms); fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5); even good smells (Proverbs 27:9a)
2. Meets the needs of, protects, and nurtures the subjects of the realm.
3. Guards the home against unhealthy outside influences. Protects the family from their own sinful tendencies.

4. Meets spiritual and emotional needs as well as physical needs. LOVE includes acceptance as well as affection.
5. Oversees the work/manages the affairs of the realm.
6. The keys to good management are to focus on the basics, and to know priorities.

In domestic affairs I defer to Katie; in all other matters I am led by the Holy Ghost.

Martin Luther

A word about priorities

Sometimes the load becomes overwhelming – possible reasons:

1. You may need help with time management (but maintain flexibility.)
2. You may not be following **God's** agenda for you.
3. You may need refocusing – assess your priorities.
 - Is your relationship with the Lord progressing?
 - Are you serving your husband, and able to love him as you ought?
 - Are you a **joyful** mother of children (Psalm 113:9) and meeting their basic needs?
 - Are you maintaining your own body as the temple of the Holy Spirit?
 - Are you able to “rule your realm” with a measure of peace and contentment?

4. There are various “seasons of life” as your children age, as YOU age, and other changes come your way.
- Exceptional “seasons” – SIMPLIFY. (And remember that people are more important, and that your house, your cleaning standards, your projects, and all those other demands will be there waiting for calmer times.)
 - If you can’t maintain the basics, then something has to go
 - Consult your husband
 - “Priorities are made in prayer.” Study your minimums – what must be done, what could be cut away, altered or simplified.
 - Learn to delegate
 - Learn to say “No” – **how** as well as when

Final reminder: our American culture today is very task-oriented, not people-oriented. Be careful of defining “godliness” in purely cultural terms, and it will help you maintain perspective. Thinking about the differences in different cultures gives insight. Ex: keeping a mud hut “clean and neat;” going about conversation in a slower, more round-about pattern that takes a couple of hours; having people look in your windows to see your home and lifestyle; protocol with having visitors, etc.

Another kind of “keeper”

Comparison to a lighthouse keeper – time, responsibilities, requirements, reward

One living example of Proverbs 31 woman: Sarah Edwards

The home's greatness and its importance should ever be held up as a woman's divinely intended sphere, in which all her womanly qualities and gifts find full play and happiest gratification.

R. K. Lenski

Conclusion: So this is the “stewardship” the Lord has given you. Do you find satisfaction and a sense of fulfillment in “housewife” or “homemaking?” In managing and guiding your realm, keeping your home in every respect and overseeing what goes on there? Are you diligently active in your house? Do you care for, protect, and nurture its inmates? What will cause you to look back at your life with gratitude and satisfaction? That you obeyed and loved what God had for you in each “season” and each day. That you loved your God, your family, and others. For that, your true stewardship, you will give account – your **HEART** and how you enjoyed and gave yourself to it. So “magnify your office,” and may we all be worthy of a humble phrase on the tombstone of another, virtually unknown but godly woman buried in Africa,

“having served [her] generation according to the will of God” (taken from Acts 13:36).

One more word about the Lighthouse keeper – his “benefits.” They had regular inspectors come to evaluate their work. (think I Corinthians 3:12-15) “Low-rated keepers risked reprimand . . . Top-rated keepers were awarded . . . a gold-star medal.” But he could wear this coveted medal for only 12 months. If we are faithful, we receive an *eternal crown*, and rather than a reprimand, we will hear, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant” from the King of Kings!

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