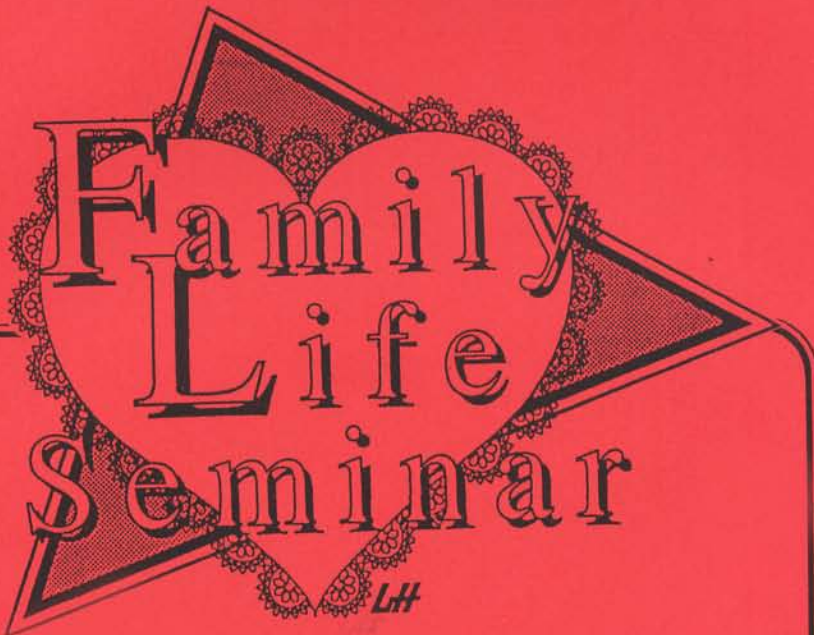


# Salubrity Seminars



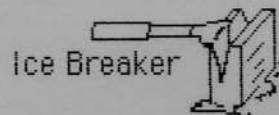
## God's Design for Wives

Original text 1979 (Flannelgraph),  
Updated 1986 (Overhead Transparencies)  
This revised edition 1998  
©Copyright, Lionel Hartley

Salubrity  
Seminars

Lionel Hartley  
& Associates





**To be happy with a man you must love him a little and understand him a lot.**

**To be happy with a woman you must love her a lot and not try to understand her at all!**

How does the Bible help us to understand true womanhood?

Woman's two outstanding qualities are the unfading beauty of a **gentle** and quiet spirit (1 Peter 3:4) and "Her arms are **strong** for her tasks... She is clothed with **strength** and dignity." (Proverbs 31:17,25)

You ask, "gentle strength" again? That sounds like the the man's "tempered steel"! But there is a fundamental difference.

Whereas the ideal man possesses gentle **strength**, the woman of excellence possesses strong **gentleness**.

If manliness is **tempered steel**, then femininity is **gold**. - as strong a gold-ingot with the gentleness of gold-foil.

A secular survey listing what men most admire in women, underlined this.



Overhead Transparency...

**Warm affection** - many women who remain unmarried are either painfully shy or overly aggressive.

**Responsiveness** - aliveness, spontaneous in life and loving.

Unselfconscious **femininity** "When you're with such a woman you really feel you're a man."

Capacity for **concern**. The gold-foil woman respects the person-hood of others.

and **intelligence**. Do not believe what you have heard about men preferring "dumb blondes". Men admire a woman who can reason things out provided she is not aggressively competitive.

In Proverbs 31:10-25 & 1 Peter 3:1-6 we have these five features of an excellent wife: Warm affection, spontaneous responsiveness, unselfconscious femininity, a capacity for



concern, and intelligence .

Our primary passage for discovering *prima donna* womanhood was described by Derek Kidner as a 22-verse "Alphabet of Wifely Excellence", as **Proverbs 31:10:31** is an Hebrew acrostic poem with the first word of each verse beginning with the next letter of the Hebrew alphabet. In this passage, Lemuel the King of Massa recorded a poem his mother taught him.

"Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.

The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil.

She will do him good all the days of her life.

She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands.

She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth food from afar,

She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens.

She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard.

She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms.

She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out at night.

She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff.

She stretcheth out her hands to the poor; yea, she reacheth out her hand to the needy.

She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet.

She maketh herself coverings of tapestry, her clothing is silk and purple.

Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land.

She maketh fine linen, and selleth it; and delivereth girdles to the merchant.

Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come." Proverbs 31:10-25

The Prima Donna wife expresses the gentleness of a leaf of gold foil in four layers:



Overhead Transparency...

1. The first layer of gold-foil is **respect**.

“... as they observe your chaste and **respectful** behaviour ... being submissive to their own husbands (1 peter 3:3,5 NASB)

The Amplified Bible renders Ephesians 5:33 like this: “Let the wife see that she (1) respects and (2) reverences her husband - that she (3) notices him, (4) regards him, (5) honours him, (6) prefers him, (7) venerates him, and (8) esteems him; and that she (9) defers to him, (10) praises him, and (11) loves and (12) admires him exceedingly”.

1 Peter 3:1-6 reads, “Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they may also be won by the conversation of the wives;

While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear.

Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting of the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel;

But let it be the hidden person of the heart, in that which is not corruptable, even the ornament

of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection to their own husbands:

Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord (Genesis 18:12): whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement."



Overhead Transparency...

What is the difference between subjection or submission and obedience?

Obedience is an action, submission is an attitude. It is possible to obey without submission, such as the child who was forced to sit still in the doctor's waiting room who hissed through clenched teeth, "I may be sitting down on the outside but inside I am still running around."

Submission is not to be confused with

- denying one's own self worth

Jesus submitted to His Father, to Mary and Joseph, and even to Pontius Pilate without losing his dignity.

Submission is not to be confused with

- Unquestioned conformity

Daniel's companions refused to bow down to a golden image (Dan 3:18) just as the prophet refused to cease praying three times a day as was his custom despite a king's death decree (dan 6:10).

Likewise the Hebrew midwives in the time of Moses were able to refuse to obey the king and kill the newborn children by arriving late for the delivery. (Exodus 1:17)

You might call this submissive disobedience.

Submission is not to be confused with

- admitting to being inferior

Jesus was not inferior to the disciples when he washed their feet at the last supper (John 13:4-17)



The wife who defers to her husband's headship, encouraging him to have the casting vote in major policy decisions is like the *prima donna* in a ballet. The male dancer in a *pas de deux* is not superior although he has to be physically strong. The *prima donna* co-ordinates with him so that they can dance together with grace and creative artistic purposefulness.

By her respect, Maggie affords her husband Egbert his true worth.

Proverbs 31:11 says, "The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her". The New American Standard Bible renders this phrase, "The husband has full confidence in her."

One way of showing respect is to avoid unsolicited advice or criticism. Often we use this as a means of manipulation.

Maybe Maggie says to Egbert, "I been noticing the Jones next door. Joe Jones is such a thoughtful fellow, he often buys Jilly some flowers or chocolates and always kisses her so tenderly at the gate before he goes to work in the mornings. Why don't you do that?" To which Egbert is likely to sardonically reply, "I hardly know the woman!"

Sometimes it is because of our own lack of respect for others that we don't get treated the way we desire. There was this fellow who commuted from Brisbane to Kalangur each day to attend the South Queensland SDA Camp Meeting. Amongst other meetings, I ran a course on interpersonal relationships that year. He attended this course and decided to become more appreciative of his non-Christian wife who hadn't come to any of the meetings. When I next spoke to him, he related what later happened because on the way home from the Camp Meeting he bought a big heart-shaped box of chocolates and a huge bunch of roses. When he melodramatically presented them to her she burst into tears. After considerable efforts at consoling her she blubbered, "It's been such a terrible week - the fridge broke down, the dog twice sicked up on the carpet, the car got a flat tyre, our five-year-old flushed the car keys down the toilet, I broke my favorite teapot, and now you come home drunk!"

Of course, showing respect cuts both ways.

In the Norwegian novel, "Lasso Around The Moon", Agnar Mykle describes one character like this, "Had Pelle chosen to become a salesman every middle-aged housewife would have filled her house to the attic with sewing machines, vacuum

cleaners and spare clocks; she would gladly have got the family into debt just to hear young, white-haired Pelle call her 'Madame'. His **manners and behaviour** had a greater effect on women than an English royal wedding or winning a prize in the lottery. His **voice and his laughter** were a song, a chorale, an arrow in their flesh (like) a nibble at the lobes of their ears, or a sonnet ringing in their heads. He made them important, turned them into goddesses (by) setting a rainbow above their kitchen sinks." (Panther Books 1960, p27)

Goethe once said, "When we treat a person the way he appears to be we make him worse: when we treat him as if already he is what he potentially could be, we help him to become what he should be."

Let us remember too, the way that God treats us.

An anonymous poet once wrote,  
"Isn't it odd  
To be like God.  
Who sees the facade,  
Yet still loves the clod  
He made out of a sod?  
Now isn't that odd?"



## Overhead Transparency...

The *prima donna* wife chooses the better of two courses. We have these pictured on the screen.

Here is course #1, The Neverending Story:

-> Maggie feels unloved. She wants to feel accepted and valued.

-> She endeavours to draw out some reassurance from Egbert.

-> He feels 'got at' and is made to feel inadequate

-> So he ignores her (Helen Rowland said that when she married she "exchanged the **attention** of many men for the **inattention** of one."), or he teases her (In the 1991, 20th Century Fox version of Robin Hood, Maid Marrison was being fitted for a wedding dress. The seamstress cautioned the corset fitter by exclaiming, "Not too tight, she's being married, not tortured." To which remark, Maid Marrison asks, "What's the difference?"), maybe he even rebukes her.

-> and so Maggie feels unloved -> She looks for reassurance -> He feels 'got at' -> So he responds negatively -> and she feels unloved -> Etc, etc.



I read the following quote in a *TV Week* from the TV program, "Roseanne" on Network Ten. Roseanne said, "Your daughter's upstairs, feeling unloved, unwanted and alone, and she's not even married!" (TV Week 18/6/94, p45)

Zsa Zsa Gabor, who was married several times said, "A girl must marry for love and keep on marrying until she finds it." But this is not the way it needs to be.

Consider the contrast to this in course #2, The Power of Respect:

In this first instance, it starts down the bottom when Maggie feels unloved. She wants to feel accepted and valued. -> She is aware of the fragility of Egbert's ego, so she watches him so that she may compliment him for his positive actions. Then she finds opportunity to compliment him honestly. -> She listens to him and takes an interest in the things he enjoys. -> Maggie then gives him the freedom to engage in masculine hobbies, sports and creative pursuits. -> She does not nag him.

Wives, God has given you the power to actually change your husband into what you and God want him to be - it's called the power of **respect**.

Hugh Thompson relates the following story about a wife who attended a marriage seminar and learnt about this power, by starting to observe her non-Christian husband prayerfully. She soon became aware of his positive actions: his firm love in disciplining the children, his reliability whenever he made a promise, his intellectual sharpness, and his honesty.

She expressed her appreciation in word and in action. He gradually became more tolerant of her church involvement and one day even attended a meeting with her. Conversion to Christ followed and he testified, quote, "When my wife began to show me respect it created for me a bigger mould into which I wanted to pour myself. I wanted so much to be the type of man she saw me to be.... This led me to the desire to receive Christ."

So the first layer of gold-foil is respect.



Overhead Transparency...

2. The second layer of gold-foil is **extending**.

Proverbs 31:20 and 26 says, "She stretcheth out her hands to the poor; yea, she reacheth out her hand to the needy.... In her tongue is the law of kindness."

Charity which begins at home soon extends beyond the house walls.

3. The third layer of gold-foil is **affection**.

Paul instructed Titus to instruct the older women of Crete to "teach the young women to ... love their husbands and...children" (Titus 2:3,4)

4. And the fourth layer of gold-foil is **learning**.

The *prima donna* wife is a woman of learning - she is no dumb blonde, for Proverbs 31:26 says, "She open her mouth with wisdom."

These four layers of gold-foil in the character of a *prima donna* wife clearly indicate the gentleness of fine gold.



Overhead Transparency...

She is, however also endowed with **gold-ingot strength**.

1. This strength is demonstrated by her being **gold plated**.

Seven times in Proverbs 31:10-31 her **industrious hands** are mentioned.

Verse 13 says she works eagerly with her hands and talks of her earnings as the fruit of her hands in **commercial industry**.

Verse 19 talks of her hands engaged in **domestic industry**.

Verse 20 talks of her hands being extended to the needy in **social industry**.

And verse 31 talks of the product of her hands as the reward of her **personal industry**.



Gordon Moyes, in an article entitled, Why Snow White Stuck To Prince Charming, ran the following Wanted Ad.

**"Wanted: Mother and Housewife.**

A position is available for a live-in manager to cope with the demands of a lively team of five individuals of differing needs and personalities. The succesful applicant must be an organiser, co-ordinator, sandwich-maker, nurse, companion, chid-care supervisor, sexual partner, cleaner, tea-lady, social secretary, financial manager, girl-Friday, and producer of future family members. Skills at catering, cleaning, laundering, pet-care, toilet training, homework and finding lost socks and car keys essential. Driver's licence preferred.

**Qualifications:**

The succesful applicant must possess great skills, boundless energy, and the highest level of personal responsibility. The applicant will work on her own, make all senior decisions and be responsible to all family members. The applicant must be able to work long hours, be constantly on call and cope without showing signs of stress. The succesful applicant will need to co-ordinate family relationships, relate to doctors, teachers, dentists, tradesmen and a range of shopkeepers for

the purchase of all group requirements. Skill for cleaning the pool, doing the garden and mowing the lawn are a distinct advantage. A degree of deafness to loud rock music would be an asset.

The job demands skill in interpersonal relationships, requires good health and the capacity to carry on even if ill. A good sense of humour, imagination, warmth, intelligence and creative skill are required for helping children complete school assignments and enabling the leader of the team to get over his hurts and bruises encountered in his office *or at the golf* course.

The successful applicant will be expected to give moral training and spiritual guidance to all team members and to set an example in personal living for the community at large.

**Conditions:**

The hours are not fixed but the applicant can be assured of a challenging workload that will exercise all waking hours. 24 hour on-call availability is required.

**Salary:**

An allowance will be paid for keep and team expenses by the income-earning member of the household but should this prove inadequate the successful applicant will be required to take a

second job to supplement the income.

**Benefits:**

Normal working benefits such as four weeks holiday per annum, sick leave, 17.5% holiday leave loading, worker's compensation, long service leave and superannuation benefits are not applicable as they would detract from the significance of the position. An annual Breakfast-In-Bed consisting of cold toast and weak tea will be provided. This position is freed from the Equal Opportunity Provisions as it is felt that men are best employed in less strenuous occupations.

(Adapted from Gordon Moyes, Why Snow White Stuck To Prince Charming, Good News Australia, June/July 1989, p5.)

\* \* \* \* \*

\* (Illustration to use if time allows:

\* ~~Master~~ C. Day Lewis' proposal of marriage:

\* "Come live with me and be my love,

\* And we will all the pleasures prove

\* Of peace and plenty, bed and board,

\* That chance employment may afford.

\*

\* I'll handle the dainties on the docks

\* And thou shalt read of summer frocks:

\* At evening by the sour canals

\* We'll hope to hear some madrigals.

\*

\* Care on thy maiden brow shall put

\* A wreath of wrinkles, and thy foot

\* Be shod with pain: not silken dress

\* But toil shall tire thy loveliness.

\* Hunger shall make thy modest zone

\* And cheat fond death of all but bone -

\* If these delights thy mind may move,

\* Then live with me and be my love.")

\* \* \* \* \*



Let us take a few moments to dispel a few myths...



### Overhead Transparency...

Myth #1: Housework is slave labour.

In the western world, militant feminists have protested that a non-career wife who stays home to care for her family is an unpaid slave. However, homemaking is a calling even Jesus is willing to undertake. In John 14:2 he says, "In my Father's house are many rooms.... I am going to prepare a place for you." (NIV) Jesus talked of salvation in the language of the household - "He saved us through the washing of rebirth" says Titus 3:5 (NIV). Washing nappies and babies bottoms are really no different from Jesus washing the disciples' feet at the last supper (John 13:4-17). Cooking, preparing and serving meals are not below Jesus either. Jesus cooked bread and fish on an open fire for the disciples after His resurrection (John 21:9), twice an angel ministered charcoal-baked bread to Elijah preparing him for a forty-day fast (1 Kings 19:5-8) and twice Jesus shared loaves and fishes with multitudes (Matthew 14,15).

When you recall the Shepherd's Psalm and the phrase, "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies" (Psalm 23:5) maybe you

would do well to remind yourself of your high calling with a sign on your kitchen wall reading, "Divine Service performed here three times daily!"

b) Myth #2: Mothers in this day and age no longer belong in the home.

In reality, motherhood is a home-based ministry. Isaiah expresses concern for the newly weaned baby that receives no instruction from his mother in Isaiah 28:9,10.

Dr W. H. Worth of the Department of Elementary Education, Alberta University (Canada) has demonstrated that

"1) 80% of a child's mind is formed by age eight,

2) the most rapid growth of stable characteristics occur before age eight,

3) changes in the environment are most likely to influence children under eight years of age,

4) things learned in those early years are the most difficult to alter or replace, and

5) young children need individual attention in such matters as affection, firmness, values, answering questions and character building."

Kahlil Gibran, reflecting on Psalm 127: 3-5, said, "You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth."

Even the great teacher Socrates said, "The truly wise (person) throws away (her) books and plays with (her) children."

Lorna Bryan in her quaint little poem 'Winter Interval' says,

"Urged by the female five-year-old  
(Whose rose-red garb defies the cold),  
I postpone all those household chores  
To join in snowplay out-of-doors."

Infants need the regular care of Mother as a sound foundation in the formation of their character.

c) Myth #3: Outside work is un-Christian.

The *prima donna* wife of Proverbs 31 is involved in numerous outside activities: Knitting, spinning and weaving (verses 13, 19); real estate deals and agriculture (verse 16), commercial trading (verses 18, 24); and employing staff (verse 15).

Many new testament women were known to have occupations outside the home, however there are four cautions I would briefly like to share in regard to taking up an outside job.

(i) The needs of the children as already discussed.

(ii) Undermining a husband's headship.

The husband is the head but the wife is not the neck to control the movement of the head or to prevent the head from turning without her.

Proverbs 12: 4 says that "A wife of noble character is her husband's crown." She becomes his crown by **enhancing** his authority not ~~undermining it~~. <sup>In this she</sup> ~~undermining it~~ In this she reveals a true beauty of character. Will your work schedule conflict with his so that his day job and your night job mean you pass like ships in the night? Are you planning to be financially independent so that he no longer feels he is the provider, thus 'de-masculinising' your man?

(iii) A third caution in regard to taking up an outside job is the exposure to dangerous relationships. The working wife who looks her best at work may become emotional prey to her boss or fellow workers, and through weariness she may become irritable and less attractive to her husband. The frustrating Neverending Story we addressed earlier may set in, driving her to seek outside emotional fulfilment. **And**

(iv) fourthly there is the trap of false economy. This is where a working wife may need to buy and maintain a second car and absences from home may mean costly TV dinners, baby sitters or child-minding, after-school care, etc. A second job may also adversely affect your husband's income tax, and you too may need to pay additional taxation.

Let us return to looking at our *prima donna* wife's **gold-ingot strength**.

Firstly, we said that her strength is demonstrated by being **gold plated**.



Overhead Transparency...

2. Secondly, this strength is demonstrated by her being **organised**.

The industrious wife of Proverbs 31, who is involved with some six careers, is no muddler. The context shows that her husband and children do not suffer because of her outside commitments. Her appointment diary is monitored and priorities take precedence. Because she plans, she plans to succeed. And because she plans to succeed, she succeeds in her planning.



3. Thirdly, this strength is demonstrated by her being **loyal**.

Proverbs 31:10-12 says, "Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. / The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. / She will do him good all the days of her life."

And if the husband does not believe the word, "they may be won over without words by the behaviour of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives" (1 Peter 3:1, 2)

4. And finally this strength is demonstrated by her being **Divinely directed**.

Proverbs 32: 25, 30 says, "She shall rejoice in days to come.. (the) woman who feareth the Lord."

1 Peter 3:6 says that you are Sarah's "daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear." (NIV) Sarah, as you may recall from the story in Genesis 20, experienced supernatural protection during her time in a pagan harem due to an unwise decision by her husband Abraham.

Give yourself completely over to the lord.

In his book "Marriage as God Intended" (Kingsway), Selwyn Hughes tells of Elaine, a middle aged woman whose illnesses were diagnosed by the doctors as psychosomatic. She sought counselling of Pr Hughes and he asked her to name her biggest problem. She immediately said it was her husband, Tony, for he never noticed when she cleaned the house or dressed smartly for him. She was counselled to do these things "for the Lord" and to tell God she was doing them "for the Lord".

To her amazement, recounts Selwyn Hughes, when she next cleaned the house for Jesus, although Tony still didn't notice, she distinctly felt the Lord saying to her heart, "Well Done!" And within a few weeks, Tony, observing her changed attitude, also sought counselling.

Do you want to become or have a *prima donna* wife?

God can make it happen for you. Trust Him!



Question &  
Answer session...