

# Savvy and Successful

## Proverbs 31

What are your thoughts on whether women should stay at home or get a job outside the home?

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Does it make a difference whether there are children?

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*“She rises also while it is still night And gives food to her household And portions to her maidens. She considers a field and buys it; From her earnings she plants a vineyard.”*

Proverbs 31:15-16

The Proverbs 31 woman apparently worked both outside and within the home. We do not know her division of time, but we do know that she was involved both in business deals and a variety of domestic duties. One thing that we can learn from her example in both realms is her savvy. Just as in the business world, there is a need for skill and ingenuity in the home. Managing a home wisely is a complex, diverse, and taxing job, and calls for no less skill and savvy than other jobs.

Let's look at some of the verbs used to describe the Proverbs 31 woman's activity, both inside and out of the home. This chapter uses the words look (or seek), consider, sense (or perceive), looks well to (watches over) the affairs of her household to describe what the woman is doing. Verses 23, 24, and 27 also describe ways in which the woman is savvy. Her husband is well known and respected, indicating that not only does she maintain her own good reputation and is wise in the words she speaks, but is also careful of the impression she gives of her husband, she is a skilled craftswoman, she is capable in business dealings, and she is astute in the management of her home and family. She is wise with time, wise with how she spends money, and wise with how she interacts with people.

It is clear to see that this woman is not bumbling along throughout life, nor is she being controlled by one crisis after another that she must muddle her way through.

We can see that not only does the woman make smart decisions moment by moment, but she spends time using her mind to evaluate and plan. She is engaged in mental preparation for a variety of situations.

Describe a woman you know personally who is savvy in some way.

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Just as we see the Proverbs 31 woman and wise women around us demonstrating a knack for dealing with life astutely, we can and should approach life in such a manner, as well. This includes making wise decisions in every area of our lives. Finances, parenting, words, and time are just a few of the areas that we can easily make poor choices in if we do not purposefully seek to be wise in them.

In what area do you tend to make hasty or unwise choices?

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All of us have blind spots and areas that we tend to be foolish in. That does not mean that we are off the hook about those things. It may mean that we need to put forth extra effort, be deliberate in how we handle those types of situations, and seek help from wise individuals around us, both in the area of accountability and by gathering any wisdom they may have from their own study or personal experience.

Learning from older women is a good thing. Much of the wisdom we have access to comes from watching mature Christian women as they handle daily situations with money, with interactions with their husband, children, and in every area of life.

Do you have a woman that you look up to? Why?

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Esther demonstrated wisdom and savvy when she played a key role in saving her people from death. She did well in how she used her knowledge in her marriage. Though Esther's marriage is not a marriage that would be typical in our American culture today, she did demonstrate a wise, tactful, and respectful use of her influence with her husband, the king, that sets an example that we can follow today.

Deborah was a savvy woman with insight that others sought. She had a position of leadership and influence in her community, but instead of using that in a self-seeking way, she used the wisdom and position she had to serve the Lord and to communicate His message to those around her.

Now, it is also noteworthy that many women mentioned in Scripture are savvy, but use their ability for evil rather than for good. God has blessed women with some special traits and abilities, but we must be careful in how we use them. When we have insight into a situation we must be careful to use it for the good of others. It is also important to note that savvy is not to be used in opposition to submission, rather as a part of it. We are not to be blindly submissive, but to make wise decisions that consciously exercise submission to our husbands and others to whom God has instructed us to submit, and to use any wisdom or insight that we have been granted to support these individuals.

Have you seen an example of a woman who could have used her gifts in a self-serving way, but chose to glorify God? What impact did it leave?

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This trait requires a difficult and subtle balance. We are to be both wise as serpent and innocent as a dove (Matthew 10:16). Our knowledge does not mean that we are to use it to control situations or people.

All wisdom comes from the Lord (Proverbs 2:6), and time seeking God's guidance is what provides us with insight into the many situations we will face daily which require wisdom. This time of direction is a necessary part of our lives that shapes who we are and how we think.

Jesus sets an example for us in the wise use of this trait during His time on earth. As God Himself, He has all the knowledge and wisdom that exist, but He didn't flaunt it or use it inappropriately. He was not prideful; He did not use it for his own benefit, but rather for the good of others.

Likewise, the woman in Proverbs 31 is not using her savvy for selfish gain.

*"Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves."*

Matthew 10:16

"For the LORD gives wisdom; From His mouth come knowledge and understanding."

Proverbs 2:6

Even when she is working outside the home, she seems to be doing it for the good of her family. She is using her prowess to be a help, not so that she can gain recognition, power, or wealth from it.

We should not feel that we need to squelch our abilities, as all our abilities and talents have been given from God. We do need to seek His guidance for when and how to use these abilities.

What is an area in which you need to develop wisdom by reading books on the subject, seeking God's perspective through Scripture reading and prayer, and by gathering the wisdom of other godly individuals?

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What do you need to do in response to this lesson?

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