

Dispatch 16

10.19.06 (Thursday) East Africa Mission Dispatch #16 "An Excellent Wife":

Twelve traits of a godly woman from Proverbs 31 (In this dispatch please feel free to use the outline points and verses to guide you in your prayers)

Dear Prayer Warriors,

"An Excellent Wife": Twelve traits of a godly woman from Proverbs 31 How many men today can say that from the taking of their wedding vows through the raising of the children, through the empty nest and beyond that their wife has striven to transform herself by submission to the Word of God and resisted all temptations to conform to the model as espoused by the world and practiced freely without contradiction both in and out of the church. She has done this without clear teaching or peer pressure but rather because of her deep devotion submission to God and to God's Word.

What a joy to be married to the woman of Proverbs 31.

I. Proverbs 31:10 "An excellent wife, who can find? For her worth is far above jewels."

This is so true. When I was first engaged, Wyman (Mitch) Mitchell the youth minister who led me to Christ and first started me down the road of Scripture memory and devotion to the Word took me aside. He shared with me earnestly that many a minister's testimony and ministry had been compromised by a worldly wife who wandered from the home. His wife Mel too pressed upon me the importance of a godly wife in submission to the Word of God, then he said, "A wife will either double or halve your ministry, there is no middle ground". I determined then and there that they meet Eleanor and as we walked out of their house after an afternoon together Mel whispered in my ear, "John, this is a dear, sweet, godly woman - she will double your ministry!" and I can testify to the truth of both the counsel of Mitch and the discernment of Mel.

II. Proverbs 31:11 "The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain."

In our relationship I have never had a cause to distrust Eleanor in any area of our marriage, home or finances. In terms of our "purse", she has always had unlimited access and she has never used this to her advantage. In fact there was a time when El paid all the bills. An older businessman told me that this was a big mistake, that "he who holds the purse, rules the home"

I pointed out to him only if the one holding the purse was ruled by something other than the Spirit of God and the Word of God. That prophecy fell fallow upon the ground. First in our personal finances and later in the administration of GCI I have never had any reason for

anything other than total trust in Eleanor. This is true also in the area of her teaching. I need not wonder, as some ministers must, if what proceeds from her mouth in counseling, in group share time or in her teaching ministry will come back to haunt me. Her reliance upon the inerrant Word of God and her submission to its authority is total. You will not find her preaching to or teaching or exercising authority over men, you will not find her explaining away the Word of God to young women, but rather calling them to conformity of the Word of God. I have complete and utter trust in Eleanor when it comes to the instruction of the Word of God and have never had cause for embarrassment in her presence nor in reports returning to me from her teaching. My heart trusts in her and I have never had any lack of gain from this trust, not materially and not spiritually.

III. Proverbs 31:12 "She does him good and not evil all the days of her life."

I know of no other living person who so loves me as to put my physical, emotional and spiritual needs above their own as Eleanor. She does not contradict me or undermine me in public, she lavishes her love upon me in private. She so cares for my physical needs so that I must watch carefully that she herself is not deprived. She watches over me spiritually through her ministry of intercession and I can recount specific examples of how her prayers have blessed my ministry or saved my life. The happiest days of my life have been spent in her presence and I cannot not think of one evil thing she has ever done to me and the good is beyond number, it is incalculable in its expanse. Like Sarah before her, whose spiritual daughter she truly is, she has never said "no", she has never said, "wait", she has never said "yes", but in your heart you know she does not mean it, rather her "Yes" to God's will and to travels with me on the mission field have always been the "Yes" of a woman of faith. I am truly blessed.

IV. Proverbs 31:13 "She looks for wool and flax, and works with her hands in delight."

Eleanor has always used her creative skills to bless her family and to lift the financial load. She continues to do this now to bless those in the ministry. Recently I came in from my lectures to find her at the ironing board, iron in hand, needle and thread between pursed lips making verse packs for the pastor's wives in her Wednesday night Bible study.

V. Proverbs 31:14 "She is like merchant ships; she brings her food from afar."

This may seem no small thing to some but when it means shopping in Russia, Belarus, Finland, Kenya, Cameroon or some other exotic locale it can be a daunting task. Shopping where they do not speak your language. Shopping where you do not recognize the food. Shopping where it means

haggling and bartering with those who swing between begging and bullying the best price out of this foreign woman. When it means carrying, not driving the groceries home. Where it means going not to a supermarket but from store to store, from market to market, in the elements, be they snow, sleet, rain or the pounding tropical sun. Then this verse takes on meaning. I have never heard one mumber of complaint from Eleanor, not because of the budget she is forced to work with, not because of the culture and language barriers she is forced to cross, not because of the inconvenience as compared to what her friends back home are experiencing. She is truly a servant of God and a blessing to me.

VI. Proverbs 31:15, 27 "She rises also while it is still night, and gives food to her household, and portions to her maidens... She looks well to the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness."

When I have early morning meetings and have to get up before dawn, she always gets up and makes sure that I have a good breakfast, take my vitamins, she will pack my briefcase and make sure my clothes are ironed and matching. I know many ministers, who, once their wife and children reach a certain age, can no longer expect a home cooked sit down meal at the end of a hard day in the battle. Rather, as often as not, they come home to a dark or dimly lit house. They either put something cold in the oven themselves or can wait for their wife to get home and settle for eating out or take out. Eleanor still cooks for me and cooks my favorite meals. Even when on the mission field she will cook faithfully in the most unusual situations.

The night before leaving for Nigeria Eleanor pulled out all the stops. She had sneaked "fixins" for a real Mexican dinner without my being aware and I had a wonderful dinner with her that last night and an even more memorable send off. Eleanor is a godly woman who knows how to take care of her man.

VII. Proverbs 31:17, 25 "She girds herself with strength, and makes her arms strong...Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she smiles at the future."

Every morning she and Patiance walk over two miles sharing in verses and praying. She takes care of her body, her health and her appearance. I shudder sometimes at the androgynous unisex look that the wives of some senior pastors and executives of Christian organizations slip into. I praise God for a wife whose hair is still her glory and who dresses to please the Lord and honor her husband. One of her noblest character traits is her strength as exhibited in her stability, calm and bravery as manifested in a gentle quiet spirit no matter the situation or adversary.

This has had a real impact on my ministry, expanding it in many ways and her quiet faith which smiles at the future brings calm and dignity to every situation, no matter how trying. As in El's own words, "It looks like the Lord is bringing our way another adventure. Shall we pray?".

VIII. Proverbs 31:20 "She extends her hand to the poor; and she stretches out her hands to the needy."

Eleanor is always thinking of others. Whether it is cooking to make sure that seminary or young single staff have a hot meal, or making sure there is a hot cup of tea and bite to eat for the elderly night watchman, Eleanor is always thinking of others. She can be found coming home from shopping with extras to give the workers who she knows cannot afford a bag of sugar or extra cornmeal.. It was Eleanor's idea to host the Mukolwes each Friday night for pizza night and games.

IX. Proverbs 31:26 "She opens her mouth in wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue."

Eleanor leads a study for the wives of the pastor's at one of the largest, if not the largest church in Nairobi. These women in turn minister to and have watch over some 600 women who are active in Bible study and church ministry. In addition to this she takes the wives on our Saturday couples study, spending in depth time with them from the Word of God as it concerns their relationship with God and with their husbands. Eleanor was recently invited to speak at the Hannah Project Conference, where she taught over 300 women on principles of child raising and motherhood from the Word of God. She is indeed in a position to teach the younger women the principles of Titus 2:3-5

"Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips, nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be dishonored."

It takes more than the gift of teaching to be able to fulfill this mandate. In fact many women teachers do not know what to do with this passage. Even though it is clearly to be the centrality of any women's conference or Bible study few address these issues. For not only must you have the character described but you must also have made the sacrifices of obedience described. Some women have the gift, some have the character but all too often they have not followed the injunction of Romans 12:2 - "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." Having exchanged their testimony for conformity to this world in terms of a secular or spiritual career over a ministry to their family, independence over a ministry to their husband, personal pursuits over a ministry to their children and love of this world versus love of God, their husband and their children, they now are reduced to teaching on generic gender neutral issues as if there were no explicit Biblical injunctions concerning roles and

responsibilities concerning husband, wife, children and the home. I thank God for a wife who can with a clear conscience and concrete examples from her personal life teach with boldness and clarity the younger women to conform not to the world but the will of God as revealed in His holy, inerrant, unbroken written Word of God.

X. Proverbs 31:28 "Her children rise up and bless her; her husband also, and he praises her, saying:"

It is no wonder that her children are devoted to her. When at home they all call weekly just to talk with her and experience her loving concern. While on the road they constantly email her, talk with her on the phone and dote over her as they express concern for her health and well-being (knowing how sacrificially she gives herself to others). When we call the kids the first words out of the grandchildren's mouths are "Where's Meemaw, I want to talk to Meemaw" Her birthday is never forgotten, Mother's day never passes without flowers, cards, gifts and calls, anniversaries are the same as are all holidays. Eleanor is loved by her children and they are devoted to her.

XI. Proverbs 31:29-31 "Many daughters have done nobly, but you excel them all. Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised. Give her the product of her hands, and let her works praise her in the gates."

How can I ever express my thanks for the blessing Eleanor has been to me, to the family, to the ministry and to the glory of God. Please accept this short epistle is in some small way expressing her praise and the honor she is due.

By His mercy,

II Corinthians 4:1

Rev. John S. Mahon

Grace Community Int.

Nairobi, Kenya

P.S. If you would like to contact Eleanor about speaking to your Bible study, ladies group or women's conference you may do so by emailing her at eleanormahon@yahoo.com



El Encourages Staff Wives



El Encourages and Counsels Missionary Wives



El Supports My Ministry



El Make Bible Verse Packs



El Provides Special Meals for Me on the Mission Field