

A WIFE'S GUIDE TO COMPANIONSHIP

By God's design, a godly wife is to be her husband's companion-helper. Read and study Pro. 31:10-31 along with the expanded list below to get a biblical description of this role. As you consider the application questions below, pray for humility (a learner's spirit) and an honest self-evaluation. Highlight problem areas (ask your husband for input!), confess sin (including sins of commission and omission) to God and (when needed) to your husband, prayerfully commit to change, and follow through with a concrete plan.¹

1. LIVE FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS

The Christian's motivation for godly living is a passion for Christ and a deep appreciation for the work of the Gospel in our lives (cf. 1 Jn. 4:19; 1 Pet. 1:17-19). Since we will live for the things we treasure, true biblical obedience is impossible to sustain apart from a Gospel-centered perspective and passion.

- In times of temptation, do you employ thoughts centered on Gospel truths to motivate you to make wise choices? (Heb. 12:1-3)
- Is obeying God more important than having your own way? (Ro. 12:1-2)
- Does the Word of God direct your life? (Col. 3:16) (Evidence of this will be that you gratefully submit to God by graciously submitting to your husband.)
- When your husband sins, is your response characterized by humility and gentleness or spiritual pride and impatience? (Gal. 6:1)

2. BE A WIFE OF EXCEPTIONAL WORTH (V. 10)

Commit to pray faithfully for your marriage, that it will glorify and please God. Regularly review, study, meditate upon this passage and work to grow in the areas listed in this study.

- Do you pray for your husband daily? (Col.1:9-12)
- Do you honor the pattern of marriage as God has prescribed? (Eph. 5:22-33)
- Are you submissive even when you don't feel like it? (1 Cor. 13:5b "Love does not seek its own way"; 1 Cor. 13:7)

3. BE TRUSTWORTHY (V. 11)

She's trustworthy, reliable, and always looking for ways to help him become both spiritually and materially productive.

- Can your husband depend on you to do as he asks even when he's not at home? (Eph. 5:22)
- Do you respect his requests even if they don't seem important to you? (Phil. 2:3-4)

¹ This study is adapted from a variety of sources, including *Helper By Design* by Elyse Fitzpatrick (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2003), *The Excellent Wife* by Martha Peace (Bemidji, MN: Focus Publishing, Inc., 2005), and *Tying the Knot Tighter* by Martha Peace and John Crotts (NJ: P&R Publishing, 2007).

- Do you demonstrate loyalty to your husband? (Eph. 5:33b)
- Are you thrifty with your family's material resources and wealth? (1 Cor. 4:2)

4. SHOW KINDNESS, GOODNESS, AND RESPECT TO YOUR HUSBAND (V. 12)

She's focused on being a help to him and on being a source of good in his life.

- Do you treat your husband as well in private as you treat your [pastor, neighbor, friends, etc.] in public? Does the way you treat him demonstrate a meek and quiet spirit? (1 Pet. 3:4)
- When your husband sins, do you reprove him gently and in private so as to give him hope and point him to the Lord? (Gal. 6:1; Mt. 18:15)
- When he sins against you, do you seek to become more like Christ by being a "friend of sinners" or do you respond as if you expect him to be sinless? (1 Pet. 2:21-25)
- Do you quickly repent and ask forgiveness in order to avoid bitterness towards him? (Eph. 4:31-32; Mt. 5:23-24)
- Do you show grace and mercy to your husband in a way that reflects the grace and mercy God has shown (and regularly shows) to you? (Mt. 5:5,7)
- Do you receive correction in a gracious manner so as to be a student of your critic, or do you respond with a defensive posture, attack him, etc.? (Mt. 7:3-5)
- Do you encourage your husband when he experiences setbacks and discouragements? (2 Cor. 1:3-4; 1 Thes. 5:14)
- Do you prefer him whenever possible? How often do you spend time with him doing something he likes to do? (Ro. 12:10)
- Is your dress and makeup applied in an attractive, modest manner that is pleasing to your husband? (1 Cor. 7:34b)
- How frequently do you initiate a special time of physical intimacy with him? (1 Cor. 7:3-5 – *Note that the same command is given to both husband and wife, so both have equal ability from God to fulfill it.*)

5. WORK IN A GOOD, DEPENDABLE, AND JOYFUL MANNER (VV. 13-16)

She finds joy in helping her husband and others through honorable labor. She helps her husband by freeing him from concern about more routine matters such as food and clothing; she is conscientious and anticipates the needs of those in her care.

- Are your meals prepared gladly and with care and attention to your husband's nutritional needs and preferences or are they hurried and limited in variety? (1 Cor. 7:34b)
- Is the atmosphere of your home a place of comfort, rest, and retreat for your husband, or does it more closely resemble a war zone? (Jas. 4:1-10)
- Do you instill in your children a priority of joyfully honoring their father, even when he behaves sinfully? (Ex. 20:12; Eph. 6:1-3)

- Do you lead your children in a joyful welcome for your husband when he comes home from work? (Ex. 20:12; Eph. 6:1-3)
- What kind of tone do you think you set in your home? How would the rest of your family answer? (Phil. 4:4-5)
- Do you save some of your energy for him every day?

6. STRENGTHEN YOURSELF (V. 17)

She seeks to become physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually strong so that she can be a source of strength and help to him and others, as well.

- Do you exercise regularly and eat well? (1 Cor. 6:19-20)
- Do you spend regular time with the Lord in prayer and reading, studying, and meditating upon His Word? (Ps. 1)
- Do you have transparent friendships with other godly women who can be a source of counsel, encouragement, and accountability in your life? (Titus 2:3-5)

7. BE FRUITFUL AND GENEROUS IN YOUR LABORS (VV. 18-24)

She helps her husband plan for the future and thinks with an eternal perspective. She also sees that others beyond her family need her help, and she is generous with them.

- Do you work with your husband to anticipate future needs and plan for them instead of worrying about them? (Jas. 4:13-17)
- Do you prioritize your responsibilities to your family above other activities? (Gen. 2:24; Titus 2:4-5)
- Is your labor fruitful or do you regularly find yourself with important things left undone? (Pro. 6:6-11)
- Is your home reasonably clean? Is it organized or chaotic? (Titus 2:4-5)
- Do you regularly practice hospitality to others? (1 Pet. 4:9; Heb. 13:1-2)

8. GUARD AND ADVANCE YOUR HUSBAND'S REPUTATION (V. 23)

A man's good reputation begins with his home and thus the virtue of his wife.

- Do you do all that you can to help him look good and accomplish his goals? (Gen. 2:18)
- When you talk about him to others, is it in a positive light? *Never* slander him, even if what you are saying is true. (Eph. 4:29; Col. 4:6)
- Are you warm and gracious to his family and friends? Is your commitment to him obvious to them? (Gen. 2:24; 1 Pet. 4:9; Col. 4:6)
- Do you contradict him in front of others or compare him unfavorably with other men? (Eph. 4:29)

- Do you put him first over the children, your parents, your friends, job, ladies' Bible study, etc.? (Gen. 2:24)
- Do you consider his work as more important than your own; willingly and cheerfully changing your schedule for him when necessary? (Phil. 2:3-4)
- Do you seek to always believe the best of him in any given circumstance? (1 Cor. 7b "Love believes all things")

9. LIVE WITH DIGNITY AND AN ETERNAL MINDSET (V. 25)

She seeks to be a woman of profound moral fiber and worth; she's confident, trusting in God's work in and plans for her life.

- Do you take personal responsibility for your failures and repent? (Mt. 7:3-5; Jer. 31:29-20)
- Are you free from sinful concern (worry) about matters of the future? Instead, are you most concerned with how you can be faithful in your current circumstances? (Phil. 4:4-9)
- Do the problems you experience seem "light" and "momentary" to you because of your focus on the "eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison" that awaits you in Heaven? (2 Cor. 4:16-18)

10. COMMUNICATE WITH WISDOM (V. 26)

She's wise and kind and she helps others by sharing these gifts; she speaks the truth in love.

- Are your words to him kind, soft, and gentle? Are they pure and delightful, and do they bring comfort to his heart? (Col. 4:6)
- Do you regularly praise him and express gratitude to him? (Ro. 13:7)
- Do you speak to him in a way that builds him up instead of tears him down; this includes your nonverbal communication (e.g., facial expressions, tone of voice, posture, etc.)? (Eph. 4:15,29; Pro. 21:19)
- Do you frequently talk for him or interrupt him or do you listen carefully so as to understand him? (1 Cor. 13:5a "Love is not rude"; Jas. 1:19)
- Are you more interested in correcting your husband's grammar or pronunciation than in hearing what he says? (Jas. 1:19)
- Do you make good suggestions to help him in his goals? When you do, do you also give him the freedom to not use your suggestions? Are you offended if he doesn't use them? (Gen. 2:18; Jas. 4:6)
- Do you try and manipulate him with threats, verbal attacks, crying, etc., so as to have your way? (Eph. 4:25)
- Do you encourage him with godly speech – frequently speaking to him about the joys of meditating on the Lord and His Word? (Ps. 9:14; Phil. 4:4-5)

11. USE YOUR TIME WISELY (V. 27)

She watches over her household and doesn't waste the precious time that her God has granted her.

- Do you conscientiously guard against laziness? (Pro. 6:6-11)
- How much time do you spend on the phone? How much *profitable* time do you spend on the phone? In light of Pro. 10:19, how much time *should* you spend on the phone?

12. GENERATE AND SUSTAIN EVIDENCE OF YOUR LOVE FOR CHRIST AND YOUR FAMILY (VV. 28-29, 31)

She was greatly respected by her family; both her husband and her children praised her for her wisdom and excellence. Her accomplishments also give testimony to her faithful labors. In all this, Christ is most exalted.

- Would a complete stranger who observed you continually for a month find clear evidence of your passionate love for the Lord and your family? (1 Ti. 2:9-10)
- Would your family agree?

13. FEAR GOD (V. 30)

True holiness and virtue command respect and affection, far more than charm and physical beauty. (cf. 1 Ti. 2:9,10; 1 Pet. 3:1-6). It is notable that Proverbs ends where it began with a reference to the fear of the Lord.

- Do you have an appropriate reverential fear of the Lord? (Ps. 2:11)
- Do you seek to be a help to your husband by controlling sinful fear and worry and worshipping the Lord through obedient, God-glorifying living? (Phil. 4:6-8)
- Does the way you obey God allow your husband to see Christ in you? (1 Pet. 3:1-4)
- Do you guard against self-pity by cultivating gratitude and contentment in your life and remembering God's wise and loving sovereignty? (1 Thes. 5:18)
- Do you have an abiding conviction that nothing is worth sinning against God? (Ps. 119:104,128)
- How would your non-Christian acquaintances characterize your fear of the Lord based on how you treat your husband? (1 Pet. 3:13-16)
- Do you ultimately trust the Lord for your husband's sanctification or do you try to be his personal Holy Spirit? (1 Pet. 3:1)
- Do you seek to love your husband as you love yourself? (Mt. 22:36-40)