

PERSPECTIVE

NOVEMBER 2024

wives and moms
AT WORK



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Marjorie Roberson



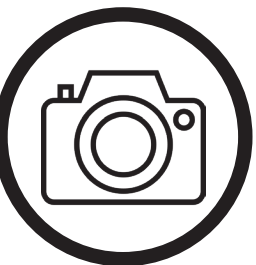
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Wives and Moms at Work

Have you ever heard the term “tradwife”?

I heard it for the first time a few months ago while listening to a podcast and immediately had to Google it for context. Upon my search, images of women wearing dresses and holding pies popped onto my screen. Others showed women with their hair perfectly in place, lipstick on, and high heels fastened while washing dishes at the kitchen sink. At first, I thought these were throw-back images from the 1950s, but to my surprise, these are modern social media influencers—and they aren’t trying to be ironic or satirical. Apparently, the “tradwife” movement began on social media as a way for wives and moms who embrace traditional gender roles to celebrate and promote what this looks like in their homes. That doesn’t sound so bad on paper, but these women are clearly making themselves caricatures of a past ideal. Yet, hundreds of thousands of women follow their lives. There is a market for this kind of content, and there is a reason why.

Wives and moms everywhere are desperate for validation in their work. Whether they work primarily outside or inside their own homes, they want to be seen, valued, and told that they are doing work that matters. Our modern culture holds up an image of a woman who can do it all—an illustrious career, a perfect marriage, thriving children, and a clean, stylishly furnished home—and women are tempted to believe the lie that they can pull it off. They are tempted to idolize their work, using it to define themselves: “This is what I do; therefore, this is who I am.”

Yet, Christian women don’t need to define or promote themselves. Praise God! We are fully and finally defined by our Maker and our Redeemer, Jesus Christ. We are his image bearers, his servants, and his disciples. He is our King, and we have the joyful freedom of submitting to his will for us in every season and in every role he gives to us. We can say confidently, “This is who I am in Christ; therefore, I will live my life for him.”

As a church, we’ve spent this year thinking about work and leisure in the life of the Christian, and this month, we’re focusing on the work of wives and mothers. There is much to say on this topic, but here is our focus for this article: **The work of a wife and mom is a noble calling because it is given to her by her King for his glory, for her good, and for the flourishing of her family.**

In the following sections, I will answer three questions that I hope will be encouraging and helpful to the wives and mothers in our church and those seeking to encourage

them. The reality is that God has given different women different circumstances. This means the needs of their families will dictate the way their work plays out day-to-day in each of their homes. This diversity is a good part of God’s design, so from the outset, I want to encourage us to anchor what we believe about this work on God’s Word rather than personal preference or cultural pressure.

Wives and moms have been given good work to do, and my prayer is that this article is a helpful tool for our church family to encourage the wives and moms in our midst to persevere joyfully in it for the glory of God.

WHAT IS THE WORK OF A WIFE AND A MOM?

God gives wives and mothers important work to do, and it’s not a mystery! The Bible speaks specifically about husbands, children, and homes and provides helpful instruction for them as they seek to steward these gifts well. God, through his Word, casts the vision for their work, and they have the immense joy of living out his good design in their unique set of circumstances.

The Work of the Wife

God’s instructions to wives about their unique roles in marriage should impact the way they view and do their work. First, the wife is to love her husband. Interestingly, when Paul instructs older women to “train the young women to love their husbands and children,” he doesn’t use the Greek word “agape” to indicate sacrificial love (Titus 2:4). He uses the word “phileo,” which is a brotherly or “best friend” kind of love. Carolyn Mahaney describes it this way: “Scripture’s mandate to love our husbands involves far more than merely doing household chores. We are required to love them with nothing less than a passionate, tender, affectionate kind of love.”¹ This is a wife enjoying her husband. It’s delighting in him and showing him that she *wants* to be with him, even and especially in the difficult moments. Wives need God’s help to do this well. If they ask for it, he is faithful to work in and through them to love their husbands generously. It’s out of this love that wives are able to perform our next two responsibilities faithfully.

Second, the wife is to be a **helper** to her husband. In Genesis 2, God makes Adam a helper “fit for him” in Eve. This role of helper is not a result of the fall; it is a part of God’s beautiful design for humanity. This means wives should prioritize helping their husbands as part of their primary work. If you’re unsure what this should look like in your marriage in this season, I want to encourage you to ask your husband a simple question, “How can I be a good helper to you right now?” You might be surprised by

his answer and uncover a specific way to encourage and support him better.

Third, the wife is to **submit** to her husband's leadership. Ephesians 5:22–24 says, "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands." God is sovereign and has given wives their specific husbands for a good reason. This doesn't mean wives are called to be silent in their submission. Remember, God designed wives to be helpers. They need to be honest about their thoughts, opinions, and feelings to help their husbands make wise decisions for their families. Yet, even when they disagree, they can trust God by submitting to their husband's leadership. This honors God and adorns the beauty of the gospel as it reflects Christ's relationship with the church.

The Work of the Mom

God is generous in his instruction to parents. He loves children and desires they grow up into men and women after his own heart. For the mom, this work also starts with **love**. Paul's instruction for women to love affectionately is not just for their husbands, but also for their children (Titus 2:4). Mothers are called to enjoy their children and to love them lavishly. Sadly, this is not always easy to do. Children don't always act lovable, and mothers don't always see them as the gifts they are—a heritage from the Lord (Ps. 127:3). Yet, God lavishes this kind of love on his imperfect children, and by his grace, mothers can pour out this same kind of love on their children. It's from this love that women can partner with their husbands to train and discipline them faithfully.

The mother's next responsibility toward her children is to **train** them in the wisdom and admonition of the Lord. In Deuteronomy 6:7, God commands the Israelites to teach the law to their children as a way of life. He says, "You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise." Similarly, mothers are to teach their children about our glorious God and the good news of the gospel throughout their daily lives—around the kitchen table, in the carpool line, and on the soccer field.

Finally, mothers are to **discipline** their children faithfully. Proverbs 13:24 says, "Whoever spares the rod hates their children, but the one who loves their children is careful to discipline them." It is their responsibility to teach their children what is good, what it means to obey, and what it

means to live a life that glorifies God. Not only will this discipline save them from future hurt, but God can use it to soften their hearts, open their eyes to their sin, and make them feel their need for Christ. Faithful discipline paves the way for a parent's gospel witness. Let's encourage mothers not to grow weary in doing this good work.

The Work of the Home

The work of the home is where the work of the wife and mom converge in **caring for the needs of her family**. Two places in the Bible instruct women to pay careful attention to their work in the home. The first is the Titus 2 passage I have already referenced regarding the work of loving husbands and children. Titus 2:3–5 says, "Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled." The second is 1 Timothy 5:14: "So I would have younger widows marry, bear children, manage their households, and give the adversary no occasion for slander." Why does Paul give these exhortations to women? Though Paul is addressing two different groups of women in different contexts, his desire for their focus to be at home is similar: "that the word of God may not be reviled" and to "give the adversary no occasion for slander." The way these women worked at home directly impacted their local church's gospel witness. Being busy with the work of caring for their families kept them focused on their God-given priorities, helped them fight temptations to idleness and gossip, and ultimately, adorned the gospel to unbelievers in their midst.

I think it's important to note here that Paul is not prescriptive about the tasks required to "work at home" or to "manage the household," and he never claims it is *only* the woman's job to do all the tasks necessary to keep the home running. Paul is also addressing women in a very different context than our post-Industrial Revolution world. We have washing machines and dishwashers, Amazon Prime, and grocery pick-up! Paul's original audience could only dream of the ways technology has eased the physical work of the home, but this doesn't mean the work of the home should no longer be the focus of the wife and mother. This work is not a to-do list of tasks to be completed; it is a heart posture of submission to God to work heartily for the good of her husband and children. It is a focused prioritization of their physical, emotional, and spiritual care.

At Mount Vernon, we have several women who work inside *and* outside the home. In a sense, they have two jobs! Managing it all requires a great deal of time, attention, creativity, and effort. However, my main focus in this article is on the work *inside* the home (though I'll address other work in a moment). The Bible says women have the great joy of setting the stage for family life and cultivating the epicenter of soul nourishment for the people they love the most. How they do this matters because the way they work for their husbands and children has the potential to adorn or scorn the gospel to their own families and the watching world.

God has given wives and moms much work to do, and I have barely scratched the surface of these important responsibilities. My intention in unpacking this work is not to overwhelm the wives and moms in our midst but to give us some biblical language to back the why and what of our work. It is also good for us to see how big this job is, so we feel our deep need for God's help to do this well. We can and do fail at this every day. We sin against the people God has called us to love and serve joyfully and even resent the ways they stand between us and our idols. Praise God, the gospel is for wives and moms. We can repent of our sin and turn to Christ day by day and moment by moment. He will help us to do the work he has called us to do for his glory, for our good, and for the flourishing of our families.

WHY IS THIS WORK A NOBLE CALLING?

In our modern culture, it feels less important to commit to the work of the home than to work in the marketplace. Though, in my experience, people are generally kind and courteous to me when I share that I am a stay-at-home mom, I can sense an immediate lack of interest. And most modern books, movies, shows, and media tell this same story: The woman who works at home is stunted and unhappy because she is spending her talent and potential on a mundane and unimportant profession.

Let this false narrative be so far from the story Christians tell one another of this vital work. This work of a wife and mom is a noble calling **because God is the one who has given her this work to do**. Even when the work is frustrating and feels anything but noble, wives and mothers can rest secure in the worth God has given it. He sees every diaper changed, every teenager corrected, every tear dried, every meal prepared, every affectionate touch as precious and noble work. In his book *Every Good Endeavor*, Tim Keller says it this way, "No task is too small a vessel to hold the immense dignity of work given by God."ⁱⁱ The work of a wife and a mom is worth doing

and worth doing well because it has been given to her by her good and wise God.

This work is also a noble calling **because it glorifies God**. Remember, we are his image bearers. Wives and mothers reflect this uniquely in the work he has given them to do. When wives humbly submit to the leadership of their husbands, their marriages reflect the relationship between Christ and his bride, the church (Eph. 5:32). The way they delight in their husbands and children reflects the way God rejoices over his people (Zeph. 3:17). The way they care for the needs of their children reflects the ways God tenderly cares for us (Isa. 49:15). The way they work to prepare a home for their husbands and children reflects the way Christ is preparing a home for us in heaven (John 14:2–3).

Finally, the work of a wife and mother is a noble calling **because it is for her good and for the flourishing of her family**. This work is not easy. The fall has made the ground of this work hard, and women may face ongoing trials attached to it. Difficult marriages, rebellious children, or family members with special needs or chronic illnesses are just a few of the many challenges wives and moms face in their work. If this is you, I want to encourage you that God sees and cares so deeply for you in your struggle. He is eager to help you do this good work, and he is using it for your good as he sanctifies you and draws you near to him.

All wives and mothers struggle with the hard ground of their own hearts. Our "passions are at war within us," and caring for the needs of our family often conflicts with our own desires (James 4:1–2). As a wife and mom, I am tempted to fall into sinful thought patterns and am not always diligent to "take every thought captive to obey Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5). I often want to blame my struggles in these roles on my circumstances, but really, the problem is my perspective. When I look at my husband and children, I am often wearing sin-stained glasses. I see them as obstacles to my happiness and comfort rather than as gifts to be enjoyed and cultivated for the glory of God. By God's grace, he is using this good work to sanctify me and make me look more like Christ. He clears the smudges off my perspective by prompting me to repent daily and turn to Christ. He is using this work for my good and his glory.

When wives and mothers embrace the work God has given them to do, their families flourish. Most modern families look like one giant game of tug-of-war. The husband and wife pursue conflicting career ambitions while trying to juggle a rigorous schedule of activities and

academics for their children. But when women prioritize the needs of their husbands and children—whether they work outside the home, too, or not—their families look more like a dance than a game of tug-of-war. They are working together with their husbands to glorify and honor God in the ways they work, care for, and love one another and their children.

HOW CAN WIVES AND MOMS WHO WORK OUTSIDE THE HOME DO SO FOR THE GLORY OF GOD?

There is nothing in Scripture that forbids a wife or a mother from working outside of the home. In fact, we have examples of faithful wives and mothers in the Bible working outside the home for the good of their families. Pricilla worked with her husband Aquilla as a tentmaker and partnered with him “to explain the way of God more accurately” to Apollos (Acts 18:3; 26). Not only did she help contribute to the financial needs of her family, but she also partnered with her husband in faithful gospel work. The wife of noble character described in Proverbs 31 is perhaps the most extensive image of a woman faithfully working in her roles of wife and mother. Though this woman is the embodiment of “Lady Wisdom” described throughout the book, there is still much we can learn from the ways she works outside and inside the home. It is from this passage that I will answer this section’s key question.

Wives and moms who work outside the home can do so for the glory of God by working for the good of their husbands and children. The woman described in Proverbs 31 does a lot of work outside the home. She buys a field, plants a vineyard, makes merchandise for profit, makes and sells linen garments, and delivers sashes to a merchant (Prov. 31:16, 18, 24). She also does a lot of work inside the home to care for the physical needs of her husband, children, and servants (Prov. 31:13–15; 21–22). Yet, all of this work, inside and outside of the home, is for the good of those in her care, not for a sense of personal accomplishment or praise. Her heart toward her husband is to do “him good, and not harm, all the days of her life” (Prov. 31:12). Her heart toward her children is to teach them diligently and to work heartily for their good (Prov. 31:26–27). Her work is not exasperating to her family but results in praise and gratitude (Prov. 31:28–29).

OK, I know what some of you are thinking. This image of the wife of noble character is an *ideal*. There is no way any of us can live up to this kind of performance. You’re right; this is an ideal, but wives and mothers can still learn from this powerful image. They can still see that it

is a glorious thing to work for the good of their husbands and children. Whether their 9-5 is inside or outside their physical home, they can ask God to motivate them to work heartily for the good of those in their care and for his glory.

If you’re working outside the home, you have a unique opportunity to adorn the gospel in how you talk about your husband and children to your co-workers. Most offices are rampant with gossip and complaining, but as a believer, you can reflect the love of Christ in the way you describe your love for your husband and children. Even though you’re physically away from them, make it clear to those you work with that your heart is with them, and your desire is to be with them. Work is not an escape from your family and the trials of home life but a place where you are working heartily for their good and the glory of God.

There are good reasons for wives and moms to work outside the home. Perhaps her work is needed to provide for her family’s financial needs or is vital to the good of her community. Maybe her children are older or have left the nest, and she has more time to use her gifts to work in a different vocation. Whatever the case, wives and moms should be prayerful and seek godly wisdom in making these decisions. Her work outside the home will always be secondary to her primary roles as wife and mother.

God has given the wife and mom important work to do, and she cannot do it well on her own. She will be tempted to sin against her husband and children daily. She will be tempted to covet recognition from the world more than recognition from God. She will be tempted to see her husband and children as obstacles to her reaching her potential, both personally and professionally. She will be tempted to count herself as more important than her husband, children, and God’s good design. May we be quick to encourage wives and mothers in the gospel. There is hope in Christ to do this job when they repent of their sin and trust in him for their salvation. Christ is the source of all their good works. Let’s be vigilant to remind wives and mothers that the work God has given them to do is noble work for his glory, for their good, and for the flourishing of their families.

— Marjorie Roberson

ⁱ Mahaney, Carolyn. *Feminine Appeal: Seven Virtues of a Godly Wife and Mother*. Crossway Books, 2012.

ⁱⁱ Keller, Timothy. *Every Good Endeavor: Connecting Your Work to God’s Work*. Penguin Books, 2016.

Every Good Endeavor

Connecting Your Work to God's Work

Written by Timothy Keller

In *Every Good Endeavor: Connecting Your Work to God's Work*, Timothy Keller (along with Katherine Leary Alsdorf) explores a Christian worldview of work and how believers can be faithful stewards in their nine to five. He breaks the book into three parts: God's plan for work, problems with work, and the gospel and work.

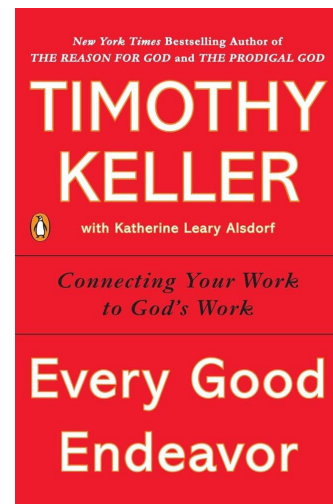
Keller begins by emphasizing that work is an essential part of human existence, rooted in the creation narrative. Whereas a secular worldview sees work as a means to an end or an identity in itself, Keller argues that God ordained work before the fall as inherently good and righteous. It was intended to be fulfilling and a means by which man could glorify God. This has not changed for Christians today.

Part two was particularly helpful to me. There, Keller addresses the pitfalls Christians encounter in their work lives. This resonated with me, as I am surrounded by coworkers driven by ambition, pride, and a desire for more, yet lacking the fundamental goal of glorifying God. The temptation to seek the admiration of man and pursue work for financial gain, material possessions, and societal status is strong. However, by referencing Ecclesiastes, Keller reminds us that such pursuits are ultimately meaningless, akin to chasing the wind.

Where does this leave us? As believers, we have what Keller calls a "new story" for work. We are not driven by worldly success but completely and wholly shaped by a Christian worldview. We desire to glorify God, steward what we've been given, and have the gospel evident in all we do. Regardless of one's vocation, Keller asserts that it can and should be performed as unto the Lord.

This book would be a valuable read for any member of Mount Vernon, especially those tempted to find their identity in their work or view work as a means to an end rather than a means to glorify God.

— Recommended by Alex Freemon



Excerpts from
the Book

1

The Book of Genesis leaves us with a striking truth—work was part of paradise. One biblical scholar summed it up: "It is perfectly clear that God's good plan always included human beings working, or, more specifically, living in the constant cycle of work and rest."

— "The Design of Work" p. 22

2

If someone claims that your professional status is a result of grace, you immediately think they don't know how hard you worked to get into your school, how hard you worked in school and you're at your internships, how you have performed better than your peers at work, and so on. However, you worked with talents you did not earn; they were given to you. You went through doors of opportunity you did not produce; they just opened for you. Therefore everything you have is a matter of grace.

— "Work Becomes Selfish" p. 120

3

[W]e must ask how [work] can be done distinctively and for [God's] glory. As an extension of God's providential work, our labor has its orientation toward our neighbor, and we must ask how it can be done excellently and for his or her good. This latter motivation is available to everyone.

— "A New Conception of Work" p. 186

How Do We Plant Godly Convictions in Our Children

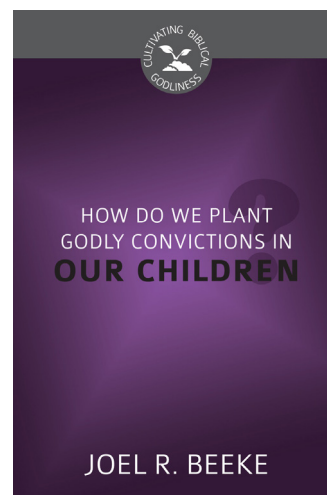
Written by Joel Beeke

In his booklet, “How Do We Plant Godly Convictions in Our Children,” author Joel Beeke guides parents in raising children in the fear and nurture of the Lord. He helpfully reminds us that one day, children will leave the home and follow their beliefs. However, while they are still under our roof, God has given parents the tremendous responsibility to inform their convictions through discipline, the truth of God’s word, and the love of his Spirit. To guide parents in this, Joel presents six principles for parenting found in Proverbs 23.

I was personally helped by the first principle: “Discipline with Mercy.” Borrowing from Proverbs 23:13, Beeke exhorts parents to do the difficult but essential work of spanking young children when needed with a heart of mercy. He helpfully walks parents through how to do this with love, instruction, and compassion. When carried out in this biblical manner, we can have confidence that spanking is not destructive but instead is aligned with God’s own life-giving motives when he “disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness” (Heb 12:10). Beeke’s section on “Directing Children to Fear and Hope in the Lord” is also packed with simple but helpful advice. At the heart of this section is instilling in our children two truths. First, God is holy, always watching, and will punish sin. Secondly, His forgiveness for our sin is guaranteed in Christ. Instilling these truths in our children’s hearts reminds them that their disobedience is not merely against their parents but against God. This is essential to convey, as it also helps them to see the proper response: repentance toward their parents, but ultimately, and much more importantly, repentance toward God.

I was blessed and encouraged by Beeke’s reminders of the biblical prescriptions God has given to parents to help us shape our children. I am convinced that faithful parenting is one of life’s hardest tasks. Even for Christians seeking to parent in a biblical manner, we can still be left questioning what exactly that looks like. Beeke does an excellent job of providing a concise answer to that question in his short booklet. It has already changed the way I parent. I highly recommend it to anyone seeking guidance on how to parent in a God-honoring way.

— Recommended by Ryan James



Excerpts from the Book

1

For years, we care for our children like birds care for their nestlings[...]. Every father and mother, however, will face the day when their precious children leave the nest and fly on their own. They will no longer abide under our wings and will follow their own beliefs and desires.

– p. 1

2

Biblically regulated discipline administered calmly is not child abuse but preventative childcare that can deliver a child from destructive habits and practices.

– p. 7

3

On the one hand, we must communicate to our children the majestic and moral holiness of God so they will fear him and turn away from evil[...]. On the other hand, we must teach them the faithfulness and loving kindness of God so they hope in His word and persevere in doing what is right in His sight.

– p. 16

NOVEMBER

These Scripture readings have been selected to help you prepare for the Sunday morning message. Take Up & Read!

November 1	Psalm 107:23–32	November 17	Romans 14:1–12
November 2	Mark 4:1–34	November 18	Romans 14:13–23
November 3	Mark 4:35–41	November 19	Philippians 3:1–11
November 4	Romans 13:11–14	November 20	Philippians 3:12–21
November 5	Colossians 3:1–11	November 21	Philippians 4:1–9
November 6	Colossians 3:12–25	November 22	Psalm 34
November 7	1 Thessalonians 5:1–11	November 23	Philippians 4:10–23
November 8	Isaiah 62	November 24	Romans 14:13–23
November 9	Ephesians 5:1–21	November 25	Revelation 21:22–27
November 10	Romans 13:11–14	November 26	Revelation 19
November 11	Romans 14:1–12	November 27	Revelation 20
November 12	Philippians 1:1–18	November 28	Revelation 21
November 13	Philippians 1:19–30	November 29	Isaiah 60
November 14	Philippians 2:1–11	November 30	Revelation 22
November 15	Isaiah 45:14–25		
November 16	Philippians 2:12–30		

TAKE UP & READ

NEW MEMBERS



**Steve
Anderson**



**Jonathan &
Lauren
Branton**



**Des &
Heather
Collins**



**Preston &
Lucy Eagan**



**Conner &
Amanda
Mayer**



**Parker
McAlister**



**Ojas
Mediratta**



**Devin &
Kirsten Miller**



MOUNT VERNON

BAPTIST CHURCH