

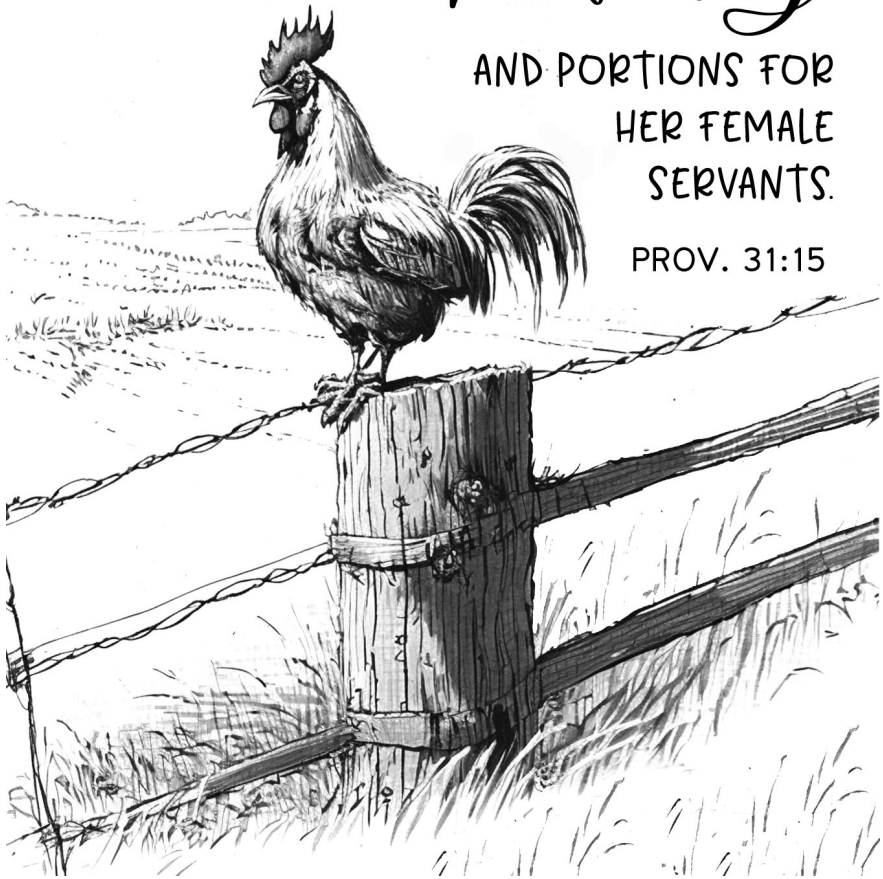
psalm

SHE GETS UP WHILE IT IS STILL  
NIGHT; SHE PROVIDES FOOD FOR

*her family*

AND PORTIONS FOR  
HER FEMALE  
SERVANTS.

PROV. 31:15



## CHAPTER 2

# *She is Selfless*



SCRIPTURE FOCUS: GENESIS 12 & 16

Maybe you're one of those women, who wake up at the crack of dawn ready to take on the day. You know the type: the ones who bound out of bed, greet the morning with a smile, and accomplish more before breakfast than the rest of the world does in a day. I'm not one of those women. I don't even know why I set the clock some days, since I'm hitting the snooze button more times than I care to admit. Maybe I just like to wack something first thing in the morning, or perhaps I'm just created in my own unique way.

Not to say that waking up early isn't great. I want to be a morning person and I pray that one day I will be, because I know that there are benefits to waking up with the sun. As I look at that verse, however, I think it's about something much deeper than yielding our will to the time on the clock. It's about putting an effort into serving our family. And, if you don't have a family? Serve others around you.

## SHE'S NOT PERFECT, SHE'S GROWING

This woman wasn't perfect, and I think that's important to note. The chapter doesn't describe her as flawlessly executing every task or never making a mistake. Instead, it portrays her as someone who is ready and willing to be perfected by God. She is open to growth and change, always seeking to improve herself and her situation.

In essence, The P31 Woman is a model of noble character. She embodies the values of hard work, dedication, and faith, and she puts these into action in her daily life. And while none of us can ever be perfect, we can strive to follow in her footsteps by being faithful to God, loving our families, and dedicating ourselves to virtuous living.

## SHE PUTS OTHERS FIRST

As women we have a lot on our plates. Whether we work inside or outside the home, there are meals to plan and prepare, dishes to wash, laundry to fold, and countless other tasks that require our attention. In trying to balance it all, it's easy to get caught up in our own to-do list, forgetting about the needs and interests of others. But in his letter to the Philippians Paul reminds us to put others first,

*"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others."  
(Philippians 2:3-4)*

When we choose to value others higher than ourselves, we're putting the needs and interests of others first. What does that look like? It could be sacrificing your time away from the television to help your son with

his homework, or maybe it's going out of your way to make your husband's favorite meal. It might mean staying in to catch up on your housework or to spend quality time with your family.

Throughout scripture, we see Jesus selflessly serving the needs of others. Write down how He served under each one of these verses.

John 13:1-17

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Matthew 14:15-21

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Luke 23:34

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John 15:13

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Philippians 2:6-7

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## SHE STEPS DOWN SO OTHERS CAN SHINE

If you know me, you probably know I'm a *Little House on the Prairie* fan. I love everything about Ma Ingalls, who embodied the virtues I strive to uphold. When I think of Ma, I'm fondly reminded of an episode from season one called "Country Girls."

Throughout the episode, we see a parallel between the relationship that Caroline is developing with Mrs. Oleson and the one that the girls are experiencing with her difficult daughter, Nellie. The relationships grow increasingly frustrating with each passing day.

Caroline tries to bite her tongue and turn the other cheek, but as Pa says, "Sometimes that's easier said than done, or we'd all be wearing halos instead of homespun."

And so, after constant needling from Harriet Oleson, Ma finally reaches the height of frustration. When Mrs. Oleson insists that Caroline purchase a plain fabric instead of a pretty blue cotton print, Ma dismisses her while abruptly purchasing a dress length of the fabric.

After the altercation at the mercantile, Caroline is sorrowful that her temper got the best of her. Even so, Pa encourages her to keep the fabric to make herself a pretty dress. Choosing the path of a P31 Woman who values others higher than herself, Caroline secretly gets to work making two smaller dresses for her girls. She continues to sew into the wee hours of the morning, putting the needs of her children before that of her own.

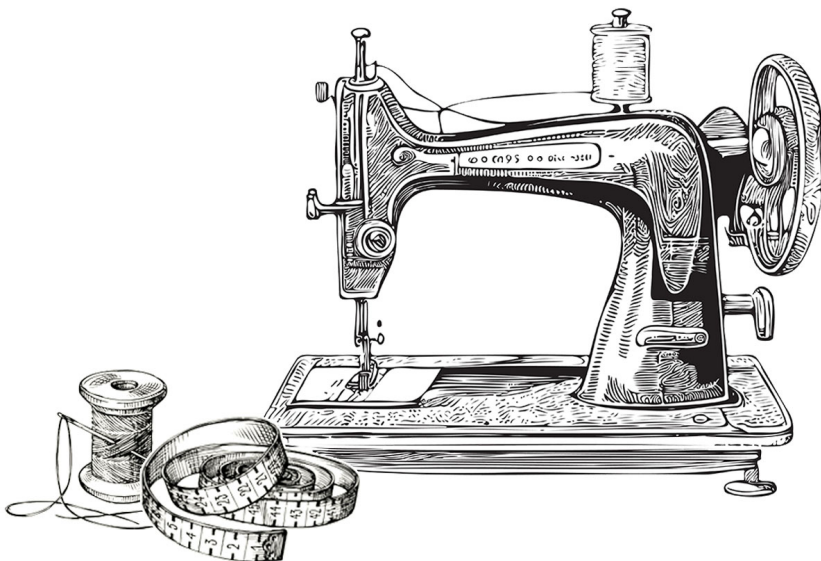
In the closing scene of the episode, parents are invited to attend a family night at the school as students were asked to write an essay about anything they wished.

When it's Laura's turn to read, she stepped up to the front of the class and, in her pretty blue dress, takes the opportunity to express

her gratitude for Ma. She speaks about the tireless work her mother does in taking care of the family and most importantly the sacrifices that she makes.

"She's been selling eggs to the mercantile," Laura says, "and saved enough to buy yard goods to make herself a new dress. This morning, Mary and me found out that she made dresses for us instead. That's because she loves us. That's the kind of mother Ma is, and that's why we love her so much."

*"Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her." (Proverbs 31:28)*



The virtue of a P31 Woman is found in the little things she does. The sacrificial choices that she makes, like giving up on sleep to nurse a hungry baby through the night. Putting off the purchase of a much-needed pair of pants to buy new boots for her children.



Regardless of what our schedules look like, the selfless love of a P31 Woman will always shine through in the little sacrifices she makes.

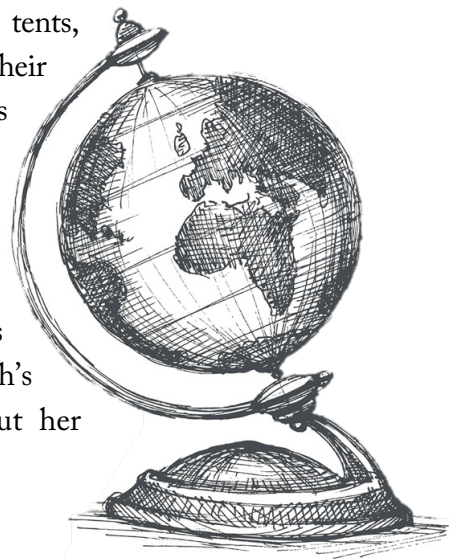
## SHE IS A DAUGHTER OF SARAH

In the last chapter, we talked about the importance of inner beauty, and how Peter talked about the ornament of a gentle and quiet spirit. In that same chapter, Peter goes on to say,

*"For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to adorn themselves. They submitted themselves to their own husbands, like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her lord. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear. " (1 Peter 3:5-6, NIV)*

One of the most striking aspects of Sarah's character was her selflessness. Despite her own desires and needs, Sarah put the needs of her husband and her family first. When God called Abraham to leave his homeland and journey to a new land, Sarah went with him without hesitation, uprooting her home, living in tents, moving their cattle, their servants, and all of their belongings. She supported Abraham in his work for God, even when it put her in difficult or dangerous situations.

Her selflessness was also evident in Genesis Chapter 12 as she was willing to go along with Abraham's plan to present her as his sister to Pharaoh. Although this put Sarah's own safety and well-being at risk, she put her husband's needs above her own.



In Genesis 16, Sarah gave her handmaid to Abraham so that he could have a child. That might be difficult for one to comprehend in the 21st century, but in the context of that time and culture, it was a common practice for a wife to provide her husband with a child through her handmaid. Sarah's selflessness is evident in her willingness to sacrifice her own happiness and dignity for the sake of fulfilling God's promise. Her actions weren't motivated by jealousy or resentment, but by her love for her husband and her unwavering faith in God. However, we also see that her selflessness had its limits, as she felt threatened by Hagar's presence and the possibility that Ishmael would inherit Abraham's blessing instead of Isaac. Despite this, Sarah's decision to ask Abraham to send Hagar and Ishmael away was painful but necessary in fulfilling God's plan.

Finally, when three men came to visit Abraham in the heat of the afternoon sun, Sarah was in her tent, ready to bake bread at a moment's notice. Her story reminds us that sometimes the most difficult and challenging decisions we make are motivated by our love and devotion to our family.

Charles Spurgeon once said,

*I have not the slightest doubt that Sarah's character owed its excellence very much to Abraham: I should not wonder, however, if we discover when all things are revealed that Abraham owed as much to Sarah. They probably learned from each other; sometimes the weaker comforted the stronger, and often the stronger sustained the weaker. I should not wonder if a mutual interchange of their several graces tended to make them both rich in the things of God.*





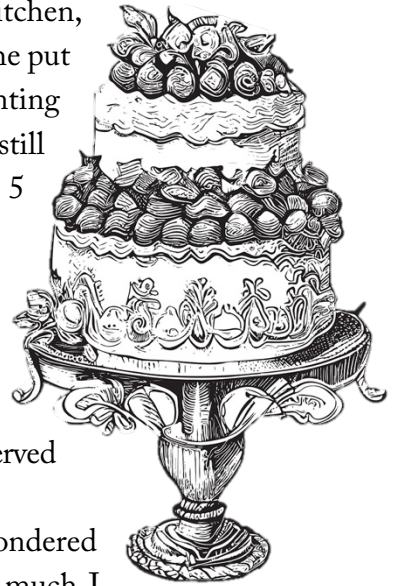
for a family of 8, and when she wasn't in the kitchen, she was cleaning and organizing the house. She put her creativity to use by sewing curtains, painting walls, and making clothes. After all that, she still managed to have dinner on the table at 5 o'clock every night.

Every meal was good, but once in a while it was better. Why? Because every once in a while, she'd open the fridge after dinner and surprise us with a fancy dessert. Sometimes it was a pretty cake, and other days it was Jell-O served in a bougie glass dish.

As I got to thinking about that today, I wondered if I ever said thank you. Did I tell her how much I loved Jell-O, or how good it felt to be treated so well? Did I pause for a moment to appreciate her?

Perhaps you've worked hard all day at cleaning the house and your work went unnoticed. Maybe you made a wonderful meal that took all afternoon, and no one rose to call you "blessed." Maybe you worked hard at the office and someone else took the credit for the work that you did... We've all had days when our work goes unnoticed, and other days when we feel overlooked. It can be easy to fall into the trap of thinking that our work is only valuable if it's noticed and appreciated by others. That's why it's important to keep our eyes on the One Who rewards those who serve.

*"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving." (Colossians 3:23-24)*



## The P31 Challenge

How can I develop a greater sense of selflessness in my own life, and what steps can I take to put the needs of others before my own?

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What are some practical ways I can apply the example of the Proverbs 31 woman to my own relationships and daily interactions with others, in order to become a more selfless person?

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