

Dear Friend,

Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter. I hope it will encourage you to believe that your life and active testimony will make a difference in our generation.

We are living at a time of peril, as described by the apostle Paul in 2 Timothy 3:1–9. Perhaps in our history there has never been a greater need to witness the miraculous changing and keeping power of Jesus Christ. You and I have the opportunity to live for the purposes of God. As society progressively continues to unravel around us, we have the incredible privilege of being living representatives of the Savior who loves, died and lives for all who will come to Him.

The Scriptures declare that we are His bride. His eye of love and favor is upon us. There is nothing, with the exception of indifference to His calling, that can stop you and me from becoming all that He has always intended us to be. One of the prophets tells us that the eyes of God scan the earth to reveal His strength toward those who love Him.

Let us be a bride worthy of Christ's attention.

Yours, in Christ,

Pastor Carter Conlon

A BRIDE WORTHY OF CHRIST'S ATTENTION

by Carter Conlon

*“Who can find a virtuous woman?
for her price is far above rubies”*
(Proverbs 31:10).

In the last chapter of Proverbs, we see a bride whom God Himself took notice of. I believe the Lord desires us to consider what it was about her that caught His eye. After all, the Scriptures say that God's eyes search to and fro throughout the earth to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose hearts are right toward Him. As the bride of Jesus Christ, you and I ought to ask ourselves, “Am I the virtuous bride that He is looking for?”

***Can God look
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It is similar to the question that God once asked Satan: “*Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth?*” (Job 1:8). God saw something of an enduring quality in Job and He called him a perfect and upright man. This does not mean that he was without fault, for there is no perfection in any human being apart from Jesus Christ within us. The perfection God saw in Job was sincerity, integrity and uprightness in his walk. Job was a man who feared God and shunned evil.

Ruth was another example of someone who caught the eye of her redeemer at that time. Boaz, the kinsman-redeemer, had the power to bring her into an extraordinary inheritance in a place of safety. He said to her, “*It hath fully been shewed me, all that thou hast done*” (Ruth 2:11). Ruth had been doing what she knew to be right—she was kind to her mother-in-law and she continued faithfully gleaning in the field. Boaz later said these incredible words to her: “*And now, my daughter, fear not; I will do to thee all that thou requirest: for all the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman*” (Ruth 3:11). She had caught his eye!

Can you say that today? Are you one who shuns evil and pursues what is good? Can God look at you and say that there is a sincere and upright heart inside of you—that He has found someone who has caught His eye?

■ CHARACTERISTICS OF A VIRTUOUS BRIDE

Let us look at Proverbs 31 in order to gain a greater understanding of the characteristics of this virtuous bride that the Lord is asking us to consider.

“The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. She will do him good and not evil all the days

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of her life" (Proverbs 31:11–12). We see that this bride seeks to honor God. She is trustworthy, seeking to honor her husband all the days of her life. Do you seek to honor God? Is that the core of what you are living for and why you profess to be a follower of Jesus Christ?

"She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands. She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar" (Proverbs 31:13–14). She seeks the best of materials to work with and willingly goes to work. She makes sure that the work she has been given to do is of the best quality possible. She is not merely grabbing whatever is close by and making do with it—unlike the preacher who does not have a message from God, has not spent time in prayer and ends up on the Internet on Saturday night pulling up somebody else's thoughts. Such a person will never catch the eye of God. No, the bride goes far—all the way to the throne of God. She goes to those places that may be inconvenient and inaccessible to the lazy person.

"She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens" (Proverbs 31:15). She gets up early and spends time in prayer, specifically naming those under her care to ensure that they are well provided for. She rises and says, "God, You have given me charge of these people around me, and I do not want to merely have scraps to offer them. I want to have meat to provide for those who are

under my care—a word in season for someone who needs it."

"She considereth a field, and buyeth it" (Proverbs 31:16). She is industrious and brings increase to her husband's house. She considers the harvest and considers what she is called to do. The Scripture says that the kingdom of God is like a person seeking goodly pearls. When he finds a pearl of great price, he goes and sells everything he has so that he may own that field (see Matthew 13:45–46). Likewise, the virtuous bride finds something of great value: the heart of God. She finds that reaching out to fallen humanity is really what the kingdom of God is all about—bringing people into security and safety through Jesus Christ. She finds this field, considers it, and buys it: *"With the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard"* (Proverbs 31:16). She plants something that will grow—something that will need attention and that will bring increase to her husband's house.

"She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms. She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night. She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff" (Proverbs 31:17–19). She keeps herself strong and takes inventory of the quality of her work. She is unafraid to have it judged by Christ Himself, for she perceives, as far as she knows, that her work is good. All the while, her light does not go out, meaning that she refuses to give up regardless of how dark or difficult the days are.

"She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy. She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet." (Proverbs 31:20–21). The virtuous bride is one who gives to the poor, concerned about those in society who are in need. Perhaps

she once knew what it was like to need strength, and she found that a kind hand gave it to her. She is not sitting at home and reading the Scriptures in order to focus on herself. Everything is bringing her to focus on the needs of other people as well as her own household.

You and I ought to take a moment to consider: How do we carry ourselves throughout the day? Is it with such dignity that we bring honor to the King?

"She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple. Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land." (Proverbs 31:22–23). Carrying herself with such dignity ultimately brings public honor to her husband. Consider the time when the Queen of Sheba, who was outside of the kingdom of God, journeyed all the way to the temple simply because she had heard a report about Solomon. The queen testified, "When I saw the dignity—when I saw how you walked into the house of God and the divine order of those around you who are serving the kingdom of God—my breath was taken away" (see 2 Chronicles 9:3–4). Her heart was stirred to the point where her breath was gone!

You and I ought to take a moment to consider: How do we carry ourselves throughout the day? Is it with such dignity that we bring honor to the King? Do we stir the hearts of those

around us? If ever there was a time when you and I are called to walk with dignity, it is now. There is no other way to do this but by having an inner bearing of Jesus Christ. We must be gripped by the Spirit of God. We must have another mind, another heart, another spirit. We cannot be of this world, embraced by foolishness.

“Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come. She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness.” (Proverbs 31:25–26). She has great hope for the future. Even in the days we are living in, I have great hope for the future. I am not rattled by anything I read in the news. I do not expect things to get any better in the world, for my value system is not here anymore. The reason I have great hope is because in my heart I see multitudes coming back into the kingdom of God. I see prodigals from everywhere coming home, sinners returning to the house of God.

“Her children arise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her” (Proverbs 31:28). In other words, the children around her love her and consider her ways worth following. They look at this bride, and they rise up, saying, “The blessing of God is here! Why would I go anywhere else or consider any other kind of lifestyle? Why would I be drawn into things that are powerless and of no profit? I see something here that I desire.”

■ THE FRUIT OF HER HANDS

The last verse in the chapter contains a phenomenal thought: *“Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates”* (Proverbs 31: 31). What exactly is the fruit of her hands? Could it be that God wants to give something to His Church—something that He desires to do in our lives that we have not fully considered yet?

In order to understand this, let us look at the first generation church as described in Acts, chapter 4. Keep in mind that they were only a stone's throw from the Day of Pentecost. The disciples were heading out in one accord, making a difference in their society. A layman had just been healed in the temple, which brought Peter and John into trouble with the authorities. They were then ordered to stop speaking in the name of Jesus.

What did the disciples do at that point? They gathered to pray! *“And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus”* (Acts 4:29–30).

Notice that they did not pray, “Lord, protect us. Prosper us, give us homes, give us food.” They had advanced beyond praying for their own needs, for they understood that as they sought first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, all these things would already be added to them. Instead, they were praying for something that only God could give. They essentially prayed, “Lord, darkness is encroaching upon the testimony of Jesus Christ. It is rising up, trying to silence Your voice and the testimony of Christ in this generation. Grant that with all boldness, we may speak Your Word as You stretch forth Your hand to heal. Let signs and wonders be done in the name of Jesus!” This did not mean that they were going to stand boldly in the marketplace and become obnoxious. What they were asking of the Lord was that He would stretch forth His hand and do *more* through them!

I believe that the fruit of your hands is simply this: God stretching out His hand through yours. As you walk righteously as a virtuous

bride, you have the right to go to the throne and say, “Lord, stretch out Your hand through my hands. As I speak in Your name, let my hands be used to anoint the eyes of the blind, to unlock prison doors. Let my hands be signposts; let them be gentle; let them be as the hands of God in this generation. Let my hands be given to the needs of others, that once again You might be brought to reputation in this generation!”

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The Scripture says when the disciples had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with great boldness. We also see another outworking of this prayer: *“And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all”* (Acts 4:32–33).

The immediate fruit resembled that of the bride in Proverbs 31. Suddenly the disciples were of one heart and one soul. There was a release from

selfishness, and now each of them was doing exactly as the virtuous bride—looking to the left and to the right toward the needs of others.

In contrast, as we look at our generation today, it is easy to conclude that we may be one of the most selfish generations of all time. Self-focus permeates every level of society and has ultimately resulted in all the turmoil we are experiencing in our world today. I believe the testimony of the Lord's Church in these last days will be, "It's all about you! God loves you, God can set you free, God will provide for you, God knows the way out of your situation!"

This is a call to faith—a call to go deeper and farther than we have ever gone before.

"Give her the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates" (Proverbs 31:31). In other words, let her own works declare who she is, and let her influence be felt in the city. I believe the Lord is going to do something so sovereign in His Church that people will have no choice but to stop and acknowledge her. Whether they agree or disagree, they will have to stop because the tenderness and kindness, the decorum of God, will be so clearly upon His bride. She will no longer be considered irrelevant and insignificant in this generation.

■ A CALL TO FAITH

And so the question remains:
Who can find a virtuous woman?

Today if you are able to say, "Lord, as much as I know, I am walking in the truth that You have revealed to me. I am not playing religious games or holding onto things that You have clearly told me to surrender. I am walking away from evil, and I am walking toward Your work on the earth"—then the Lord says at the end of His question, *"Give her the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates"* (Proverbs 31:31).

This is a call to faith—a call to go deeper and farther than we have ever gone before. It is a faith that moves to action, believing God for the impossible. It is a faith that says, "I am not settling here. I refuse to get something that is convenient and cheap and bring that as a testimony to the work of God. No! I will go farther, following wherever God leads me so that I might become all that He is calling me to be. I will trust God for the miraculous, asking Him to shake the place where I am, fill me again with the Holy Spirit, and stretch out His hands through me to bring healing to this generation. By the grace of Almighty God, I will be the bride who catches the eye of Jesus Christ!"

Carter Conlon
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CARTER CONLON

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TIMES SQUARE CHURCH

Times Square Church was founded in 1987 by Pastor David Wilkerson, author of "The Cross and the Switchblade." It is an interdenominational church located in the heart of New York City.

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WEEKLY SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Sunday	10:00AM	3:00PM	6:00PM
Tuesday	7:00PM	Prayer Service	
Friday	7:00PM	Church Service	

This newsletter is an edited version of "A BRIDE WORTHY OF CHRIST'S ATTENTION" a sermon given on January 8, 2012 in the sanctuary of Times Square Church in New York City. Other sermons are available by visiting our website at tscnyc.org. You are welcome to make additional copies of this sermon for free distribution to friends. However, for all other forms of reproduction or electronic transmission existing copyright laws apply. This sermon cannot be posted on any website or webpage without permission from Times Square Church. Unless otherwise noted, all scripture references are from the King James Version.