

The Career Woman

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Introduction

“Career” connotes a type of work or a profession for which one prepares, and which one pursues. The term usually implies a job or profession outside of the home. It is increasingly common for women to pursue such a career. What, if anything, does the Bible teach us about Christians who choose to become “career women”?

General Principles

The Bible has little to say directly on the subject, but certain Scriptural principles may be applied.

1. Marriage is honorable for those who are Scripturally eligible (1 Cor. 7:2, 9, 28, 36, 38; Heb. 13:4), although under some circumstances it is unwise (1 Cor. 7:1, 8, 26–38).
2. While no one is obligated to marry (1 Cor. 7:38) or produce offspring if one marries, there is an underlying assumption in Scripture that both men and women will marry, establish their own homes, and produce offspring (Gen. 2:24; Mat. 19:5; Eph. 5:31; 1 Tim. 5:14).
3. Scriptural instructions are given to husbands and wives and to fathers and mothers concerning their responsibilities in the home (1 Cor. 7:2–5, 10–13; Eph. 5:22; 6:4; Col. 3:18–21; 1 Tim. 5:14; Tit. 2:4–5, et al.).
4. The primary responsibilities of wives and mothers are perhaps best summarized in Titus 2:4–5: young women are “to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sober-minded, chaste, workers at home, kind, being in subjection to their own husbands.”
5. Some godly women described in the Bible worked outside their homes and/or pursued a career (e.g., Deborah [a judge], the “virtuous woman” of Pro. 31, Huldah [a prophetess], Lydia [a merchant]).

Applying the Principles

A woman may choose not to marry, but to devote her life to preparing for and pursuing a career (this may have been the case with Lydia). While I know of nothing in the Bible that would make it sinful for a woman to pursue a career after marriage, her husband and her home must come first. If she bears children, she takes on an additional responsibility that takes precedence over her career. Clearly, the teaching of Scripture is that God intends for children to be reared by their parents (especially their mothers), not by “substitute parents” in day care centers. One of the saddest scenes in America is that of the long lines of cars each morning and evening as young mothers or fathers leave and pick up their children. Career mothers are

literally allowing others whose moral standards and attitudes are not even known to them to teach, train, and, in effect, rear their little ones. Millions of children feel a closer tie to their babysitters than they do to their actual parents. When these children begin school, they come home to empty houses until time for Mom or Dad to get home from work, and many of them get into serious trouble for lack of supervision.

Of course, there are circumstances in which a woman would have no choice but to pursue a career (death or disability of her husband, or divorce), even though they might prefer to remain at home. As a widow, Ruth was forced to glean in the fields to support herself and Naomi. However, after she married Boaz and bore him a son, she seems to have stayed home to care for their son (Ruth 4:13-16). Tragically, it appears that many women are willing to neglect husband, home, and children in order to pursue a career when it is not economically necessary to do so. The motivation of such women seems to be to have more material things or to “prove” something. They often find themselves losing their husbands and their children in the process.

Conclusion

The Scriptures do not forbid women (including wives and mothers) to be employed or to pursue a career outside the home. However, they do teach that if one chooses to marry and become a mother, her primary responsibility is to her home – her husband and children. Whatever she allows to interfere with her home responsibilities where she had a choice in the matter, including work or career, violates God's plan for her as a wife and mother (1 Tim. 5:14; Tit. 2:4-5). Both our nation and the Lord's church are paying a heavy price because so many young mothers have made the wrong choice on this issue. **There is no greater, more noble, or more rewarding “career” than that of being a godly wife and mother.**

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