

# Shooting for the Mark

*Aiming for Excellence in  
Parenting*

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# INTRODUCTION

*Behold, children are a gift of the LORD, the fruit of the womb is a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one's youth. How blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them; they will not be ashamed when they speak with their enemies in the gate.*

## Psalm 127:3-5

The time our children have in our home is fleeting. Our charge is to prepare them to live as godly adults before the Lord. For most of them God's plan will include marriage, a relationship that will shape the rest of their life and probably the lives of future generations. My objective in this book is to define the character qualities of a mature man or woman that is prepared for a godly marriage and consider how these traits can be instilled in our children.

Because we are "shooting for the mark," we want to encourage the development of these qualities before marriage. As our children grow older and start to show interest in the opposite sex, we should direct these desires toward godly preparation. We might as well use that energy for something positive!

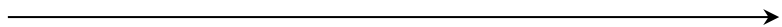
We also encourage you to present these qualities to your child as good criteria for choosing a future spouse. If we want them to have a godly marriage, we must prepare them for a godly marriage. It must be sought through diligent prayer and by following the standard the Lord has given us in His Word. The partner your child chooses will profoundly affect the rest of their life.

As parents, we need to know what to aim for as we

navigate this challenging work. Fortunately, the Lord has given us His Word for that very purpose. Although I do not heavily quote Scriptures and proof-text all of my statements, I have included one or two texts at the beginning of each chapter and some additional passages at the conclusion for further study. As you read these chapters, I encourage you to test everything by God's Word.

This book is divided into three parts. The first part is relatively short, but it is the most important. It includes three essential truths that we should implant in the hearts of our children. First and foremost, they should be taught to seek a genuine conversion. Secondly, they should seek a spouse with a genuine conversion. Finally, they should seek a spouse with a sincere desire to follow Christ. Everything else in this book is intended to be built upon this foundation.

While your children may not yet be saved, it is still important to start instilling other truths as well. We raise our children to think and live as Christians even before they really are Christians for two reasons. First, God's standards are perfect and are a mirror that allows us to see our sin nature and be drawn to Christ for salvation. Secondly, all of that preparation is like pulling an arrow back on a bow. Once Christ comes into their heart, they can shoot forward in Christian growth, aiming for the mark of the high calling of Jesus Christ.



*Proverbs 22:6* - Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it.

*Ephesians 6:4* - Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

1 *Thessalonians* 5:21 - But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good;

*Philippians* 3:14 - I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

2 *Timothy* 3:16–17 - All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

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## CONVINCED OF THE VALUE OF HER HOME TO SOCIETY

*An excellent wife, who can find? For her worth is far above jewels.*

Proverbs 31:10

*Her children rise up and bless her; her husband also, and he praises her, saying: "Many daughters have done nobly, but you excel them all." Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised. Give her the product of her hands, and let her works praise her in the gates.*

Proverbs 31:28-31

THERE IS A GREAT EVIL IN AMERICAN CULTURE that needs to be overcome. It has crept in over the past two or three generations and wounded the home and our entire nation. This great evil is undervaluing the importance of a godly wife and mother in the home.

Hidden under the disguise of “women’s liberation” and “feminism” is an arrogance that looks down upon women who make their families a priority and thereby sacrifice careers and financial gain. Great pressure is placed upon women to “have it all”: a successful career, a happy marriage, wonderful children, and look great at the same time. Yet when you look deeper, you will find that many who seem to “have it all” have sacrificed the things that matter most: their homes.

The writer of Proverbs 31 knew the truth. An excellent wife is more valuable than anything money could buy. No matter how much a woman (or man) could make at a job, it could not purchase the value that could be derived from a woman investing her life in her family. A woman that makes her family the priority in her life (next to God) will reap blessings for generations to come.

Parents, we need to be very careful to uphold the value of a woman’s role in the home to our daughters! We must not let them fall into the trap the world has laid before them. They need to see that while the work of a wife and mother may not always be glamorous, it is often the glue and foundation of a godly home that produces the next godly generation. It isn’t just the home that benefits, it is our entire society! This is why the writer of Proverbs 31 says that her children and husband will praise her and her works (the fruit that comes from her home) will be known “in the gates,” that is, in the community at large.



## APPLICATION

Husbands, do you appreciate and praise the work your wife does in the home? Do your children know how you value her? The way you treat your wife will form your children's perspective of motherhood. If you publicly value her and exalt her contribution to the home, you will be teaching your sons and daughters to respect her. It will cause your daughters to try to follow her example and your sons to seek out a wife with the same convictions.

Talk to your children about this. Can you provide them with some examples of women who sacrificed careers and money to invest their lives in the home? What difference did it make? Can you show them examples of women who sacrificed their homes to pursue other interests? What were the consequences? Help them connect the dots and build convictions about the value of an excellent wife and mother.

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Read about the significance of Hannah's dedication to the Lord to the nation of Israel in 1 Samuel 1:1-2:19.

*Luke 1:26-38* - Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming in, he said to her, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was very perplexed at this statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have

no end.” Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?” The angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God. “And behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age; and she who was called barren is now in her sixth month. “For nothing will be impossible with God.” And Mary said, “Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

2 Timothy 1:3–5 - I thank God, whom I serve with a clear conscience the way my forefathers did, as I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day, longing to see you, even as I recall your tears, so that I may be filled with joy. For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that it is in you as well.