

Prayer Challenge Journal

The
“Proverbs 31”
Woman

A life-changing thirteen days of focused prayers –
thirteen minutes per day!

Pearl Ihuoma Akazue

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Introduction

Over the past few weeks to months, I have watched a lot of challenges on social media. While there is absolutely nothing wrong with spreading some cheer in these challenging times that we are all going through - but how about we spend some time in prayer asking God for that one thing which we so much desire: to be “Proverbs 31” women, I thought?

I prayed about it and told God that if I had just 20 women join me, that it would be great. As God laid it in my heart, I wrote down what would be the “structure” for the challenge and designed graphics to inform as many as I could about it. **To my greatest surprise, 145 ladies from different locations around the world signed up for the challenge in the very first 24 hours! On day 2, the Whatsapp group created for the challenge had been completely filled and a sister Whatsapp group as well as a Facebook group had to be created.** In the following days, more ladies joined in..., and on the last day of the challenge, we had about five hundred ladies who had voluntarily joined the challenge from seven different countries!

The challenge was simple: **13 minutes of focused prayer and a verse (or two) of scripture for 13 days!**

Many times, we complain about not having enough time for prayer and studying the word of God – but 13 minutes is just about the amount of time we spend in the shower in a day! We might not be able to read the entire bible in a day, but even a simple verse can go a very long way...

Each new day, as we studied God’s word together, prayed for each other and shared insights, something spectacular was happening: God was changing us and different things in our lives were changing. We began to understand that becoming the “Proverbs 31” woman was not merely a

destination, but a journey of faith. We came to full realisation of who are in Christ.

It was an experience that is too beautiful to put to words; and that's the inspiration for this piece. I tried to put together a comprehensive list of the contributions from the challenge but it was not feasible to do so. I have selected a few contributions to share in this piece from the WhatsApp and Facebook platforms; some of the contributors have opted to be anonymous. As you prayerfully read through their contributions, I hope you are inspired to document your prayer journey. I pray that this piece is a transforming experience for you, as it was for every one of us who took part in the challenge.

Would you like to join us on this journey? Can we form a community of women daily striving to please God, loving our spouses and parenting our kids with a difference? I invite you to join us and to encourage your family and friends to do the same.

With love,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pearl Ahazue". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of "Pearl" and "Ahazue" being significantly larger and more decorative than the rest of the letters.

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Rules of the “Proverbs 31” Woman Prayer Challenge

Thanks for your interest in joining me on this 13-day journey: **the “Proverbs 31” woman prayer challenge**. We have a common goal, in that we are all aspiring to be the best version of woman God made us be - but we need God’s help to achieve this goal.

For the next **13 days** (I strongly advise that you take this challenge over the course of thirteen consecutive days), I would be sharing bible verses for you to meditate on all through your day prayerfully. Also, I would be sharing prayer points. I understand you have a busy schedule, so this would take just **13 minutes**.

Here is all you need to do:

1. Identify a quiet place where you can find time alone to be with Jesus. This place could be in your living room, your bedroom, your kitchen...or even your bathroom.
2. Get the atmosphere set. For me, I like to have some worship songs playing gently in the background. Whatever works for you, just get comfortable with it.
3. Now, set your timer for 13 minutes - not less than that (this is very important). Feel free to increase the time if you wish to. **For these 13 minutes, you are not praying for anything else but the prayer points of the day.**
4. If you have a prayer journal, this is a time to get it out and write out whatever God is impressing on your heart. It doesn’t have to be lengthy; a simple sentence or two is fine. If you don’t have a prayer journal, you should consider getting one.

5. To keep us accountable, I would kindly ask that you drop a message every day stating that you have completed the day's challenge. It would also be great if you share the insights you have gained from the scripture of the day and your time with Jesus so that we can all learn (you could share on your social media platforms with the hashtag **#Proverbs31WomanPrayerChallenge2020**; kindly tag **@piakazue on Instagram** or **Pearl's Odyssey on Facebook** as well). This would serve as reminders to others and encourage others to do theirs as well.

6. If you miss a day, you get to start all over again from day 1...

May God make this experience a worthwhile one for us all in Jesus' name.

The “Proverbs 31” Woman

I have met several amazing women in my lifetime. Some of whom I have learnt lifelong lessons from, others I have admired from a distance. However, there is only one woman I aspire to be like: she is the “Proverbs 31” woman. The story of the virtuous woman as documented in Proverbs 31:10-31 is one that most people are very familiar with. I have read this passage severally while trying to unravel the mystery this woman is – and I have pondered on it deeply in a bid to fully understand what this woman is really about. I am so blessed to be surrounded by women who exemplify some of the traits associated with the Proverbs 31 woman. Still, I have realised that finding a woman who perfectly matches the biblical description of this woman is not the easiest of tasks.

I find that there are several schools of thoughts when it comes to the Proverbs 31 woman. The first school of thought believe that no one woman possesses all the attributes described. They think that amiable characteristics from different women were pulled together to create an image of what the “ideal woman” should look like if at all she exists. They believe that women can strive towards perfection, but true perfection can never be attained. The second school of thought believe that a woman could possess all the capabilities, but not singlehandedly. She must leverage on a lot of help to meet all these criteria. She must be able to effectively manage her time, people and situations to her advantage. The third school of thought believe that one woman could possess all the characteristics listed even with minimal help from the people around her. She is in a way “self-sufficient”: she relies solely on God for strength to keep going.

Irrespective of the school of thought you might belong, we can all agree that the Proverbs 31 woman possesses some sterling attributes. Every woman today can learn from these attributes. In fact, everyone can learn

lessons from her if we see her as a representative of the bride of Christ, which we are. With inspiration from the Holy Scriptures, here are some attributes of this exceptional woman which we can learn practical lessons from.

She is very rare and exists in a class of her own

*“Who can **find** a virtuous woman? for her price is **far above** rubies... Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou **excellest them all**”*

(Proverbs 31:10, 29 KJV; Emphasis mine).

The “Proverbs 31” woman is not your typical everyday woman. She is one-of-a-kind! Rubies are one of the most expensive gemstones, and this is because they are extremely rare. Can you think of anything precious that is easily found? Well, rubies aside, very good things do not naturally come easy. They are most times hidden, and a lot of effort is required to find them. This woman is by far more valuable than this precious gemstone. As she is not ubiquitous, it takes special favour from God to meet her. I imagine that one can only meet a woman who perfectly personifies her attributes once in a lifetime. In addition to being rare, this woman does not fit into the same class as other women – she stands out in every way.

She is trustworthy

*The heart of her husband doth **safely trust** in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. (Proverbs 31:11 KJV; Emphasis mine).*

It is no coincidence that the first thing mentioned about this woman, aside from how rare she is, is her trustworthiness. She understands that the foundation of any relationship is based on trust. Her intentions are

genuinely pure. This woman has over time, built up trust with her husband, and her loyalty to him is unquestionable. She has never (and would never) let him down. He does not need to worry about anything or to distract himself with frivolities.

She has good intentions towards her husband

*“She will do him good and not evil **all the days of her life**”*

(Proverbs 31:12 KJV; Emphasis mine).

Knowing the right thing to do and failing to do so counts as evil - the Bible calls this sin. She has painstakingly studied her husband. More than anyone else, she understands him. She knows his likes and dislikes, and makes conscious effort to do the things that he likes – the things that make him happy, satisfied and fulfilled. She avoids those things that make him displeased. She does not just do these on her “happy days” but every blessed day of her life. This is not trivial. This means that irrespective of her mood, she keeps doing what is right and does not allow her emotions to get in her way.

She is diligently industrious

*She **seeketh** wool, and flax, and **worketh willingly with her hands**. She is like the 'merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar. She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff. She **maketh** fine linen, and **selleth** it; and **delivereth** girdles unto the merchant. She...**eateth not** the bread of idleness.*

(Proverbs 31:13, 14, 19, 24, 27b KJV; Emphasis mine).

This woman is not slack in her ways, neither is she idle. Once she determines to do something, she goes all out to get it done to the best standards possible. She seeks for the best quality materials that would be required to get the job done, and she uses these to get the job done. She

is a master of her craft. She is loaded with knowledge and skills. She knows she can achieve anything she determines to accomplish.

She is watchful and vigilant

*“She riseth also **while it is yet night**, and giveth meat to her household, and a **portion to her maidens**” (Proverbs 31:15 KJV; Emphasis mine).*

While others sleep, she wakes up at night to commune with her heavenly father asking for wisdom and strength to do all she needs to do. She does not take anything for granted; she prayer-proofs her home. She can never be faulted because everyone around her is well attended to, not just her immediate family members.

She is strategic

*“She **considereth** a field, and **buyeth** it: with the **fruit of her hands**, she **planteth** a vineyard” (Proverbs 31:16 KJV; Emphasis mine).*

Before she takes any step, she thinks critically about it. She is not one to act on impulse. She backs up her thoughts with her actions. She leaves everything in her care better than she met it. The Proverbs 31 woman did not leave her field to lie fallow; she transformed it into a beautiful vineyard, and she put in the work needed to bring about this transformation. She does not rely on anyone to get the job done, she puts her hands to work. Proverbs 31:16 is one verse that has been erroneously misconstrued by many women. I have heard disturbing stories of women who have gone ahead of their husbands to secretly make investments in a bid to become like the Proverbs 31 woman. Sadly, such women have through their actions compromised the trust in their marriage and in more severe cases, completely destroyed the marriage. It is important to recall that the Proverbs 31 woman has already won the trust of her husband. I

believe her husband was carried along as she made investments with the family resources. One thing is clear concerning this woman: she maximally utilises the resources available to her for the benefit of her household.

She is an articulate planner

*“She **perceiveth** that her merchandise is good: her **candle goeth not out by night**. She is **not afraid of the snow** for her household: for **all her household** are clothed with **scarlet**. She **looketh well** to the ways of her household...” (Proverbs 31:18,21,27a KJV; *Emphasis mine*).*

She is not “cheap”. She goes for excellent quality and durable supplies for her household. She is on the lookout for the best deals for her home, and it is not in her to waste family resources. She puts in her very best in all that she does, and would not mind burning the midnight candle if she needs to get things done. She has a plan for everything – she does not wait until her stock is depleted before she replenishes it. She is always prepared for anything, and nothing takes her by surprise. No member of her household is left out of her nurturing care. Everyone is adequately catered for. She looks after her family not just in the physical sense, but more importantly, in the spiritual sense. She safeguards them all with prayers.

She is elegant

*“She **maketh herself coverings** of tapestry; her clothing is **silk and purple**. **Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain...**” (Proverbs 31:22,30a KJV; *Emphasis mine*).*

No doubt, she is a stunning woman; beautiful inside out. She knows that her beauty comes from within, but she does not neglect her outward appearance. She understands that she does not need to reveal certain

parts of her body that should best be left covered. She is comfortable in her own skin. Her outfits are of exceptional quality and show her taste for good things. Anywhere and anytime you meet her, she always looks well-kept and stylish. Her beauty is not all there is to her; underneath lie unquantifiable treasures.

She is genuinely concerned about others

*“She **stretcheth** out her hand to the **poor**; yea, she **reacheth** forth her hands to the **needy**” (Proverbs 31:20 KJV; Emphasis mine).*

While she takes excellent care of those directly under her care. She goes the extra mile – she makes conscious effort to reach out to those who need help. She can quickly identify the needs of others and is ever ready to lend a helping hand whenever she has the opportunity to do so.

She brings honour to her husband

*“Her husband is **known** in the gates, when he **sitteth among the elders** of the land” (Proverbs 31:23 KJV; Emphasis mine).*

As a result of her stellar attributes, her husband is well known. He is the envy of other men. They continuously sing the praises of his wife and perhaps wish they could be as lucky as he is. This man should certainly not be taken for granted because he is exceptional. It takes a virtuous man to spot a virtuous woman. He is full of wisdom, and this is what qualifies him to sit with elders.

She renews her strength every day

*“Strength and honour are her **clothing**; and she shall **rejoice** in time to come. ...a woman that **feareth the Lord**, she shall be praised” (Proverbs 31:25,30b KJV; *Emphasis mine*).*

This woman knows that her strength is not from within – but from God. She waits upon the Lord daily to renew her strength, just as she puts on her clothing every day. She is optimistic about the future because she honours God and draws strength from him. She is confident that God would handle any difficult situation on her path, so she does not fret about it. Deeply rooted in her heart is the fear of God.

She chooses her words carefully

*“She openeth her mouth with **wisdom**; and in her tongue is the law of **kindness**” (Proverbs 31:26 KJV; *Emphasis mine*).*

Under the pressures of wifely duties, motherhood and her numerous business ventures, it is easy to get all worked up and say things that might be somewhat hurtful. The Proverbs 31 woman is very mindful of this. She would instead remain silent rather than utter a hurtful word. She knows that her words are like eggs; once broken, they cannot be put together again. Likewise, when words are spoken, they cannot be recalled. This woman does not open her mouth carelessly. Every word she speaks is graceful, spirit-filled and well-articulated. She is very considerate of others in her thoughts, and this shines through in her words.

She is well commended – but she does not let this get into her head

*“Her children **arise up**, and **call her blessed**; her husband also, and he **praiseth** her. ...let her own works **praise her in the gates**” (Proverbs 31:28,31b KJV; *Emphasis mine*).*

Everyone who meets this woman has a kind word to say about her: her husband, her children, non-members of the family. She does not live a double life. Her conduct at home is exemplary to her household; those who have seen her in her worst state. Her life is a testimony.

These qualities might seem to be overwhelming to the average woman, but I firmly believe that this level of virtue can be attained by a woman who depends on God wholly every step of the way.

Day 1

Father, thank you for the gift of
womanhood!



*“I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully
made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul
knoweth right well.”*

(Psalms 139:14 KJV, Emphasis mine).

Day 1

Many times, when we come to the presence of God, we have a very tall list of requests and complaints.

How about we **just** appreciate God today?

No requests – just appreciating God for all he has done for us so far...

- For making you/me a **“woman”**!
I know this sounds trivial – but it is not.
Have you ever thanked God for this?
God has created you and me to be **nurturers**: give a woman a house, and she transforms it into a home; give her a seed, and she gives you a child.
God has given us peculiar abilities to leave everything around us better than we met them.
God has given us exceptional strength to do much more than we can ever imagine that we can.
- For life, for good health, for sanity...
- For peace and tranquillity despite the raging storms all around us...
- For creating us delicately and wonderfully.
- For mindfully paying attention to us even though we are undeserving...
- For not dealing with us according to our sins but showing us mercy even before we have asked for it...
- For all our gifts and abilities.
- For our amazing families - husbands (or future husbands), kids (or future kids), parents, siblings, friends turned brothers and sisters whom God has brought our way to be a blessing to us.

Feel free to add to this list.

You might be tempted to stop before your 13-minute timer goes off. Please don't – just persevere. Keep appreciating God for his faithfulness over our lives...

Day 2

Father, help me walk in line with your
purpose for my life.



*“The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, **I have loved thee with an everlasting love:** therefore, with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.”*

(Jeremiah 31:3 KJV, Emphasis mine).

Day 2

When God created us, He made us for a specific purpose – and for His pleasure.

He deposited treasures of inestimable price inside us, hidden from the ordinary man.

The devil knows this, that is why he tries to steal our joy and peace, kill that sweet communion with our Heavenly Father that should be growing every day, and ultimately destroy us forever!

He tries to lure us with empty promises, which he cannot fulfil. so that we would hurt the one who truly loves us.

We try so desperately to help ourselves but then it feels like we are in quicksand and we are crumbling underneath the devil's yoke.

Not anymore!

Today, I take authority over my heart and intentionally hand it over to God.

Forgive me for those times that I had taken you for granted and neglected you, times that I had tried to figure things out myself and failed helplessly, times when I betrayed your trust and did things that were hurtful to you, times when I had walked ahead of you.

I ask that you pardon me for all my wrongdoings. Let your joy and peace flood my heart.

Today, I choose grace over grind.

I quit trying to do things by my own strength, and I rely entirely on your never-failing strength.

I choose to partner with you henceforth.

I know you have great plans for me and the most authentic things I would ever know about myself are the things that you have said concerning me.

Help me derive my sense of worth from you and from knowing that you approve of everything that I do.

Help me to do that which is needed to earn a commendation from you.

Help me discover and live in line with your perfect will and purpose for my life.

Day 3

Father, give me **empathy**.



*“And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, **Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.**”*

(Matthew 25:40 KJV, Emphasis mine).

Day 3

When a person dies, it is customary for people to observe a minute of silence in honour of the dead. Ironically, millions are dying by the second without ever knowing Christ or coming to the realisation of His love for them. Our world is sick right now. **Do you ever take a minute to say a prayer for a lost soul?**

It appears that we have left the upper room with its fires for the supper room with its smokes... We have placed ourselves first and others last.

Heavenly Father, strip me of any iota of selfishness.

Give me a heart that is sensitive to the needs of others.

Give me a genuine interest in the wellbeing of others.

Make me an answer to someone's prayer.

Can you think of anyone who needs prayer?

- Those who have lost loved ones to the COVID-19 pandemic, diseases, and social injustice...
- Frontline workers who put themselves and their families at risk not to mention wear ing themselves out in a bid to ensure that the sick are adequately provided for...
- Families that have lost their means of livelihood during this period - the worst form of recession that the world has ever experienced...
- Innocent young ladies whose innocence have been snatched away in the cruellest way imaginable...

The list is endless...

Can you say a one-minute prayer for ten persons in need of prayer?

Day 4

Father, make me a woman of **wisdom!**



*“Which yet my soul seeketh, but I find not: one man among a thousand have I found; **but a woman among all those have I not found.**”*

(Ecclesiastes 7:28 KJV, Emphasis mine).

Day 4

There is a science to cooking. The right quantities of the right ingredients have to be combined in the correct order, and at the right time to create the perfect blend of flavours and textures characteristic of good cooking. Beautifully, God has provided us with His “recipe” for living through His word and the Holy Spirit. His recipe is fail-proof!

Many times, we try to concoct our own recipes using the ingredients which God has already provided us with. At times, we get “decent results”, but many times, we end up with..., well, an edible hazard. We select bits and pieces from God’s word and move on to do things our way. We fail in the process and get discouraged.

We need wisdom.

I found it intriguing that not even a woman of wisdom could be found among a thousand! Indeed, there is a kind of wisdom that distinguishes one out of a crowd! This wisdom can never be earned by one’s age, exposure or education, but must be earnestly sought after in the place of prayer.

Virtuous men are rare – but virtuous women are even rarer!

As women, we need this kind of wisdom today to live in our ever-changing world.

- We need wisdom to be found by virtuous men (for the singles), to be the best wives to our husbands and mothers to our kids.

- We need wisdom to support our family and loved ones, to choose the right company of friends and in our dealings with our employers or employees.
- We need wisdom to impact our world...

Much more importantly, we need wisdom to live a life that honours God.

Father, make me a woman of wisdom!

Day 5

Father, make me **beautiful!**



“Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.”

(1 Peter 3:3,4 KJV, Emphasis mine).

Day 5

The way the world adjudges beauty is a lot different from God's perception of beauty.

A lot of women today fail to realise that true beauty transcends the physical. It is not dependent on our body size or the size of its parts, the colour of our skin or eyes, our body structure, the length or colour of our hair, and all the likes.

God looks at the inner beauty; the beauty of the heart, deeply rooted.

It is intangible and indestructible.

It cannot be bought or enhanced with makeup: there is nothing anyone can add to God's already perfect creation.

It is not gotten by wearing ornaments or expensive raiment.

*“Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me,
All His wonderful passion and purity.
Oh, Thou Spirit divine, all my nature refine.
‘Till the beauty of Jesus be seen in me”.*

In my desire to look appealing, help me never to neglect the inner beauty of meekness and quietness, which is of great value to you.

Thank you because you perfectly and meticulously made me; distinct from anyone and everyone else.

Give me the wisdom to take care of my body in a way that honours you and is befitting for your temple.

Help me to see myself the way you see me – as the beautiful woman you have made me be.

Help me carry myself with poise as the bride of Christ.

Let my outward beauty be a reflection of my inner beauty. When people look at me, let them not see me but your beauty radiating through me.

Father, make me beautiful indeed.

Day 6

Father, make me **fruitful!**



*“And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, **that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.**”*

(Psalms 1:3 KJV, Emphasis mine).

Day 6

I dread the story of the fig tree which Jesus cursed (as detailed in Matthew 21:18-20). From a distance, the tree looked luscious, and its canopy of leaves gave it an appearance of fruitfulness - but it lacked fruits! Instead of being a source of blessing to Jesus and His disciples, the tree could not meet their need. As a result, it was cursed!

God planted us so that we can be fruitful.

Can you think of any area of your life where you have been unfruitful and unproductive?

Areas that you have not completely surrendered to Jesus?

Areas where you are struggling and halting, overpowered by sin and the devil?

Father, I yield every fibre of my being to you.

Purge me of any form of unfruitfulness in every area of my life.

Help me abide in you, the true vine, so I can receive all the nourishment that I need to flourish.

Prune me, so I can produce more fruits.

Open my eyes to the opportunities around me that I can harness to be a blessing to humanity and for profit.

Reveal my gifts to me so that I can use it for the benefit of your kingdom, my family and my world.

Let everything that I do produce increase on all sides: my life, my family, my business, my career, my ministry.

Help me to be a profitable steward for your kingdom.

Day 7

Father, season my **words**!



*“The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, **that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary**: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned.”*

(Isaiah 50:4 KJV, Emphasis mine).

Day 7

Seasonings, when added in the right quantity, enhance the flavour of food and bring out the best in what should have been an otherwise bland meal. Do you know that your words can be “seasoned”?

“Seasoned words” encourage and build up the hearers.

Words are so powerful; they have creative power!

God called this world into existence using words, and every day, we frame our world through our words.

Under the pressures of life (chores, work, caring for the family, and all), it is easy for things to get out of hand... The result? We utter words that we do not mean - hurtful words.

Father, I admit that I am no superwoman, and there are times that I have uttered words that do not glorify you. Please forgive me for those times.

Forgive me for every abusive, careless word and in fact, negative word I have ever spoken.

Henceforth, help me to only speak words that edify; words that are seasoned with grace, laced with kindness and filled with love - especially on those character-building days.

May my words be laden with wisdom.

Teach me the fine art of knowing when to speak and when to keep silent while you do the talking.

Help me to only speak whenever you would have me speak. When I speak, give me the right word, at the right time, for the right person and help me say it in the right way.

Help me, also, to control my emotions so I can always be sensitive to your bidding.

May my speech always be pleasing to thee.

Day 8

Father, make me **trustworthy** and teach me to **trust** without boundaries



“Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him.”

(Job 13:15 KJV, Emphasis mine).

Day 8

Father, it is stunning that you did not promise me a rosy passage through life, but you gave the sweet assurance that through the ups and downs, you would be with me.

I know that I have done things in the past that I am not proud of; things that have compromised the trust between you and me first, and then the people that I love the most.

I am ready to partner with you to do things differently, going forward.

I realise that I have little experience in life (in fact, no one comes to this world pre-experienced to handle life's hurdles; we all learn as we live). Help me to rely less on myself, and trust you with all my heart as you lead me step-by-step along the way.

Even when I don't seem to know where you are leading me or how things would unfold, help me to rest on your promise - that you would be with me always.

When life's trials and troubles make it seem that things are out of control, and you are nowhere in sight, help me to hide in the Rock of ages - my unshakeable foundation.

As I lean on your strength, help me Lord to be a dependable woman;

- One that you can trust to do your will at all times;
- One that her husband can trust to keep her marriage vows and uphold Godly values in our home;
- One that her children can trust to keep her promises and cater adequately to their needs;

- One that friends can trust would always uphold Godly standards and give God-inspired advice;
- One that can be trusted to deliver honest reports at work with minimal supervision;
- One whose word is her bond.

Father, I don't want my confidence in you to be based on the tangible. Help me to trust you when things are working out beautifully for me. Help me to trust you during the waiting seasons. Help me to continue to trust you even if you decide it is best for me not to have that thing which I so greatly desire (that man of my dreams, or child, or job, or whatever it is).

Help me to always remember that you have my best interest at heart, and you would make everything work out for my good. When the trials come, help me to stand true to you like Job. Make me that woman you can confidently trust to pass the test.

Day 9

Father, **strengthen** me!



“But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.”

(Isaiah 40:31 KJV, Emphasis mine).

Day 9

Heavenly Father, thank you for helping me keep up with this challenge so far. Thank you for the blessings and testimonies so far. Thank you for how sweet it is to dwell in your presence! Thank you for the fellowship of prayer I have shared with my sisters here.

Father, I ask for the grace and strength to continue in this habit of consistent, focused prayers - even after this challenge is over. May this be the beginning of a reawakened relationship with you.

In life, there are lots of battles to be fought and won – and these battles can never be confronted by physical strength. I am overwhelmed whenever I try to figure things out on my own, so help me to rely more on your strength and trust on your promises.

Help me to always remember that you are all-powerful and can never be overpowered. At times when my strength fails me, help me to rest in thee - so you can replenish my strength.

Help me to wait upon you until you renew my strength, and not give up before you are done with me. Forgive me for those times I have sought for help in the wrong places.

Give me the grace to be steadfast in prayers when I am at my wit's end.

Father, I also ask for physical strength to do those things which you would have me do. Take away every form of laziness and idleness from me. Empower me to do exploits.

Day 10

Father, make me **pliable** in your hands.



“We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.”

(2 Corinthians 4:8,9 KJV, Emphasis mine).

Day 10

I believe there is incredible power in prayer to change things. I find that most times, when we pray, God changes us, and then we change things. So, we can ultimately say prayer changes things.

The process God allows us to go through while He changes us is never easy. As we ask God to make us the Proverbs 31 woman, there are areas of our lives that he would need to refine, and it would be tasking.

Also, trials would come because the devil would seek to rob us of the good things that God has purposed for us. When trials come, Lord, help me to stand.

On this lifelong journey of continuing dependence on you,

- Father, make me as clay – ever pliable in your hands.
- Take away any rigidity in me that would stifle the creative process you are taking me through.
- Help me to accept that I am a work-in-progress so you can mould me into that woman you have created me to be.
- While you work on me, help me to be still.
- Help me to always remember that I am nothing without you, and there is nothing that I have that was not given to me by you.
- Help me to always sit at your feet every day, no matter how busy my day might seem. Remind me that my strength stems from you.

Give me an understanding of the fiery and reckless love you have for me, despite my imperfections.

I know you never start a project that you cannot complete, so I can never be an abandoned project.

Keep my eyes on you at all times...

Day 11

Father, give me an eye for **details!**



*“Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because **an excellent spirit was in him**; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm.”*

(Daniel 6:3 KJV, Emphasis mine).

Day 11

There are several things about God that I find fascinating; one of which is His attention to detail. I love how articulate He is in planning and orchestrating things. When God names a person, He goes down to provide family details... When He gave instructions on how the tent of meeting was to be built, He included a plan for decorating it as well. When God intricately made you and I, He knew us by name from our mother's womb; He formed our body parts and numbered the strands of hairs on our head!

From the account of the virtuous woman, we can tell that she is very articulate in looking after the affairs of her family. Only God can help us achieve this goal.

Father, I am not the most meticulous of persons, so I ask that you help me to be a better planner of my life and my home.

Take away every form of carelessness, complacency and lackadaisical attitude in me. Replace these with attention to details.

Take away every spirit of negligence. Give me the grace to take great care of those things which you have entrusted into my care.

Give me the spirit of diligence and excellence. Let all that I do show forth your glory.

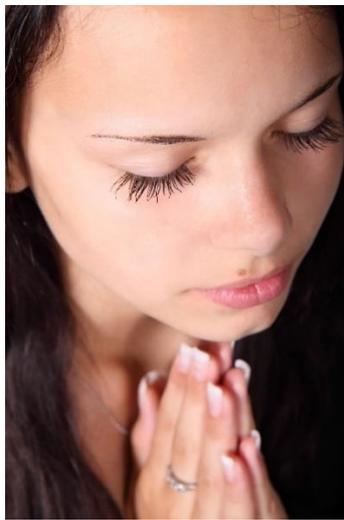
Give me the wisdom to make good use of the gifts you have blessed me with to the benefits of humanity.

Help me identify the needs of those around me and empower me to meet those needs.

Bless the work of my hands, Lord, and teach me to profit.

Day 12

“**Ask** what I shall give thee.”



*“And Jabez was more honourable than his brethren: and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, Because I bare him with sorrow. And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, **Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me! And God granted him that which he requested”***

(1 Chronicles 4:9,10 KJV, Emphasis mine).

Day 12

Today, I feel God is saying:

- He has set before us an open door; one that no one can shut.
- He has given us a blank cheque; so we could ask for whatever we desire.

I once heard the story of a very wealthy king who invited a skilled sportsman to teach him to play golf. At the end of the visit, the king requested the sportsman to ask for anything he desired, and it would be granted. Not wanting to ask for too much, the sportsman thought of a perfect souvenir to take home, so he asked for a *golf club*... When the sportsman was leaving, the king bade him farewell telling him he would hear from him concerning his request. Days turned to weeks, and the sportsman was yet to hear from the king. He wondered why a simple golf club would take the king so long to acquire; until one day, he received a parcel from the king. The package looked so small that he wondered how a golf club would fit into it. On opening the parcel, he understood why it took that long for the king to grant his request. The parcel contained the deed to a massive property in a choice location, with a well-lain golf course, equipment and staff to take care of the property!! Clearly, the king's idea of a *golf club* was different from that of the sportsman.

Many times, we tend to limit God with requests that are too petty. Don't make that mistake (see 2 Kings 13:17-19). Also, do not ask for the mundane (learn from Solomon; 1 Kings 3:5-15).

Today, we have a golden opportunity. We are committing into the hands of God all our personal requests. **Feel free to drop a request [here](#) if you need prayer support.**

If you fail to ask, you won't receive anything.

Day 13

Father, thank you for **everything!**



“What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me?” (Psalm 116:12 KJV)

Day 13

This challenge has been an incredible journey – such a refreshing experience for me. I hope that it has been same for you. If only it could go on and on!

While we would be officially concluding this group challenge today, it does not end here. I hope that this would be the beginning of a journey of unending intimacy with God. A transformational experience...

Heavenly Father,

- Thank you for the sweet fellowship, which we have all shared here these past few days. Despite the physical distance between us, we have felt your presence so strongly. You have ministered to us through your word and the prayer points. You also inspired us through those messages you dropped in our heart during our personal times of prayer; some of which we have shared in the group.
- Thank you for all the prayers you have answered. Thank you for giving us the grace to accept your invitation to prayer and to keep up consistently these past few days.
- Thank you for the excellent work you have started in me... I can already see positive changes, and I know that I am still a work-in-progress.
- Thank you for my future husband – you are perfectly crafting out our love story, and at the right time, you will orchestrate our meeting.
- Thank you for my husband – you are giving him the wisdom to lead our home in a way that honours you. Everything he lays his hands on is blessed and prosperous. You are also supplying me the grace to be submissive and supportive to him.
- Thank you for my children – they are made for signs and wonders. They hold the answer to the problems their generation would

encounter. God-derived excellence shines through all that they do. They outshine their peers and show forth your glory.

- Thank you for my friendships – you are pruning those friendships that weigh me down and prevent me from doing those things which you have called me to do. You are connecting me to those people that will bring me closer to you. People that have the shared goal of pleasing you at all times.
- Thank you for those who are going through one difficult time or the other, because your light shines through their situation.
- Thank you for each new day, I am becoming more and more like the virtuous woman. I have a deep-seated appreciation of the fact that I was explicitly handcrafted by God as a purposeful woman with a heart that is genuinely concerned for those in need (especially those in need of your saving grace). I am filled with wisdom, beautiful in and out, and I yield bountifully. My words are seasoned with wisdom, love and kindness. I am strong and trustworthy. God has entrusted great things in my care.
- Thank you for those times that you have fought battles for me – even without my realising it.
- Thank you for the opportunity to come freely before your throne of grace and mercy, knowing that I can never ask you for too much. Your wealth is inexhaustible and knows no boundaries.
- Thank you for everything... (**Feel free to add to the list**).

My profound gratitude goes to you all for taking this journey with me. It has been a real blessing spending this time with you – sharing insights from the word of God and virtually forming a prayer chain.

If you have testimonies, please feel free to share them here...

May God make us “Proverbs 31” women, indeed!

Bonus Lessons and Prayer Points

Waiting patiently on God

Someone sent me a message, and I think it is going to be helpful to us:

It was about a lady who was frying akara (bean cake, it's a Nigerian delicacy), and had a little girl standing beside her. The little girl stood by her side crying and requesting for some. The lady explained to the little girl that the akara was hot and she would have some when it cools down, but the little girl would have none of it. She wanted her akara right away! The little girl cried until the lady handed her one akara ball. Immediately the akara touched her hand, the little girl screamed and threw the akara away - it was too hot for her little tender hands.

Many times, we are like the little girl. We want God to grant our requests right away - even when the timing isn't right.

The lady pulled the little girl to her side and explained to her the importance of patience and waiting. The little girl had learnt her lesson. She stopped crying and started singing excitedly instead until the akara was served.

We must learn to be still while God is "frying" our miracles. We should be patient for God to act in his time: no tantrums, no giving God ultimatums, and all that. Sometimes, God just needs to do some refining to that man before he brings him your way... Or is it your job? Promotion? Anything?? God is working on it!

Tip on prayer

Have you seen the movie "war room"? If you haven't, I would recommend you do... It is such a powerful movie and there are important lessons to learn from it...

Prayer is such a powerful tool. However, for any tool to be effective, it has to be used properly...

We need to see prayer as a hobby, a habit and a pleasurable activity. We need to see God as our Heavenly Father, our friend...our lover.

We need to be proactive about building our relationship with God. Trust me, cultivating a prayer habit isn't going to be easy - but it would be worthwhile. We need to keep asking God for strength (Philippians 4:13). You won't always feel like it (Romans 7:19). During those "off-days", I read my prayer journal, or write letters to God describing how I feel, or I just listen to worship songs and sing away... I find that it is during these times that I need even more prayers (James 5:13).

A woman who prays would be trusted by her husband. You find that he would confide in you first before anyone else because he knows you would pray for him. He would be more comfortable telling you his deepest concerns because you would support him with your prayers, unrestrained love, and sound wisdom that can only be gotten from an intimate relationship with God. Prayer makes you cheerful even when things are bleak. You would find you wear a new expression - an expression of grace that is evident for all to see. You have peace of mind and joy unspeakable.

Ooohh... How I wish I had suitable words to describe how beautiful prayer is!

I pray that your prayer life would flourish...and grow into a loving and fulfilling friendship that has no bounds...

Even a beautiful gift (in this case, the akara) at the wrong time would be too difficult to handle like the akara in this story. You don't want to spoil something beautiful because you lack the patience to wait for it to happen. God has an appointed time for everything...

Wait for it!

The fellowship of Prayer

“If any two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it will be done for them of My Father which is in Heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matthew 18:19-20 KJV, Emphasis mine).

God is pleased when His children pray, but God is more pleased when His children pray in fellowship.

There's nothing that will bind us together as a church more than praying.

If you've ever had a prayer partner, you know that your hearts are linked together.

There are times when God comes when the church prays, and it is glorious and wonderful!

This is what we call “the fellowship of prayer.”

Heartfelt intercessory prayers

In recent times, I have received myriads of prayer requests - very touching ones.

I have been moved to tears...

I have cried...

I have prayed...

I am still praying...

I know this challenge is over technically and this group would be on hibernation in two days' time...but in the meantime, can we please say a prayer together?

Heavenly Father, I pray for a divine encounter for those homes where the love fires have dwindled. I speak the peace of God into every broken home... Father, the great fixer of the broken, may your love reign supreme in such homes. I ask that you begin to work on the hearts of every member of the home and calm every raging storm in a way only you can. Uproot the root cause of divisions and bickering.

Father, I pray for open financial doors for your daughters and their families. Open doors for new jobs, promotions, business ideas, inventions, scholarships, recognition, awards, publications, academic excellence...all to the glory of your holy name.

Father, I pray for those going through challenges in their walk with you. Teach us all to cast out cares on you because you care for us. Help us to understand that challenging times do not last, and they would surely come. Make the difficulties we experience to draw us closer and closer to your side. May our worship of you never be based on material things but on a sheer desire to know you, to love you and to serve you.

Father, I pray for the healing of bodies. I speak restoration to body parts in need of replacement. May the all-atoning blood of Jesus cleanse off any illness and infirmity in the name of Jesus.

Father, speak peace into our hearts... We do not ask that you take away the storms that we face, because they help us grow and appreciate you more. Still, we ask that you help us remember that you are with us during the storm and that the storm cannot swallow you up or overthrow us...

.....

I have come to the point where I do not even have words to say...and that is totally fine because, Father, I know that you understand my silence just as much as my words...if not more.

.....

Father, help us to know that our lives on earth are for but a few moments. Help us to live purposefully while we live, and whenever it pleases you to take us home, help us to leave knowing that we lived to your glory. Teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom...

Fix me, Jesus!

Early this morning, as I prayed for the single ladies in this group, God dropped a prayer topic in my heart and I think I should share it...

Here it is...

Fix me Jesus!

We have prayed in the last few days for God to make us virtuous women...and as the greatest matchmaker, for Him to link us up with His sons. We believe God has answered these prayers...

However, before the answer comes, it is important to ask God to prepare us...

Father, are there lessons you want me to learn during this phase of life? Traits you want me to imbibe now that would be helpful in my future? Work that you would have me do and can best be done in this phase of life? Please help me partner with you as you work on me... Give me a teachable spirit and help me learn at your feet.

Are you hurting from past mistakes, wrong decisions, misjudgements, disappointments, betrayals? Father, heal me from inside out. Any wounds of the past that have not yet healed or that is taunting me, please fix it for me.

Am I harbouring unforgiveness towards anyone? Father, search my heart and expunge all unhealthy feelings; feelings that are not of you...

Father, how can I love another when I don't understand what true love means? How can I love another when I don't love myself? Teach me to love genuinely. The "1 Corinthians 13" kind of love... Teach me to love you first, then to love others as much as I love myself.

How can I say I am your child, Lord, without my life showing it? How can I consistently spend time with you in prayer without your fragrance rubbing off on me? Henceforth, let there be a noticeable difference in me: in my comportment, in my looks, in my interaction with others....in every area of my life.

Even married folks can say this prayer:

Lord, are there areas of my life that I have not yielded completely to you? Things I had taken for granted, and is causing strain in my marriage or in my home? Fix me Lord.

Are there things I can do differently (improve upon), or change completely, so that it is evident that you are doing something great in me? Help me, Jesus. Fix me!

Feel free to adapt this to your needs...

Fix me, Jesus!

PS: There is a soundtrack titled "Fix me, Jesus". Be sure to listen to it.

Have we attained the goal?

We started the prayer challenge with one goal: a desire to become the Proverbs 31 woman. As we conclude, one question lingers... Can we say we are the Proverbs 31 woman?

Well, it depends...

It depends on how you perceive the "goal".

If you see the goal as a destination, then you would realise that you are now way closer to the goal that you were before we started...

If you see it as a test, then you are more likely to ace through successfully now than when we first started...

If you see it as a process, then you would enjoy every bit of the adjustments you have gone through in these past few days - knowing there is a beautiful outcome at the end of it all..

The truth is, **there is no end to this journey we have begun**, my sisters. **We all need to keep pressing towards the goal purposefully, intentionally and consistently each day.**

It is not going to be easy, but I assure you that it is worthwhile. Nothing good comes easy, and that is why it is important to support each other in prayers, and otherwise.

I pray that God helps you continue this momentum even long after this challenge is over.

If you ever think there is anyway I can assist on this journey, please feel free to reach out to me... I would be happy to assist in anyway I can...

Most importantly, I pray you understand that I don't have all the answers...but I know someone who does! You know Him too!! I pray we always remember that God is our source and we can always run to him...

Why 13 minutes per day for 13 days?

To be candid, I wish I knew! That is what God laid in my heart. Maybe it's because 13 is the reverse of 31...or perhaps, God has an interesting sense of humour (with His precision in the number)... When Naaman went to Prophet Elisha for his healing, he was told to bathe in river Jordan seven times. Why not three, five or even thirteen times, I wondered? Well, just maybe there is a blessing that can only be released after the 13-minute threshold is crossed? Who knows? I think this is a great question, and some day we would probably understand why...

Free Resources for Participants

There is a free e-book for those who complete this challenge. This book is typically sold, I am told, but it has been kindly donated to participants of the challenge by the author (who is the husband of one of the participants of the challenge on WhatsApp).

Kindly [send me an email](#) with the subject “The Ideal Virtuous Woman” to claim your copy!

Final Words

It has been an enormous blessing fellowshiping with you these past few days...

We thank God for the victories we have won through prayers, and for the testimonies which would begin to manifest in our lives...because God has answered all the prayers we prayed.

I implore you to continue the habit of persistent, consistent and focused prayers. That is the only way to scale through life's hurdles and be effective as women. That is the only way to become the Proverbs 31 woman...

I might never know or met the majority of you reading this piece, but I want you to know that you would always be dear to my heart. I pray for every one of you...and I love you all!

I hope you always treasure these times we shared doing this challenge because I always will...

Keep wearing that smile on your face...

Cheering you on...

Pearl Akazue