

Dear Anthony,

Thank you for writing us at Christian Questions Radio. You asked what the Bible has to say about women working outside the home.

Whether a wife should work outside the home is a controversial question for many Christians today. In Titus 2:4-5 the Apostle Paul tells older women to “train the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands so that no one will malign the word of God.” These scriptures aptly describe the role God wants a woman to assume as a wife to her husband and as a mother to her children. Although the world we live in is vastly different that of ancient times, the principles stated in the above verses are still applicable today. The Apostle is clear that a wife’s first responsibility is to her husband and children. However, neither the above scriptures nor any others found in the Bible forbid a woman from working outside the home. They only describe what her priorities should be. If working outside the home causes a woman to neglect her children and husband, then it is wrong for that woman to work. If she is able to maintain outside employment and still provide a loving, caring environment within the home, then it is acceptable for her to work. We realize that it is not an easy task to be a loving and caring wife and mother when one is working an eight-hour shift. Therefore, each woman must determine how much outside work she can handle without exhausting herself and neglecting her primary role as wife and mother. If a woman can juggle a job and not neglect her domestic duties, then it is perfectly acceptable for her to work outside the home. There is freedom in Christ.

Proverbs 31:10-31 provides us with an example of “a wife of noble character.” Starting at verse 11, the writer praises this woman as one who does everything in her power to care for her family. She works hard to keep her house and her family in order. In verse 16 we learn that she is able to purchase a field and from her earnings she plants a vineyard on it. Verse 18 tells us that she also is a trader of goods in the marketplace and, in verse 24, she is so industrious that she even makes linen garments and sells them in order to provide additional income for her family. This woman's motivation is important in that her business activities were the means to an end, not an end in themselves. She was providing for her family, not furthering her career, or working to keep up with the neighbors. Her employment was secondary to her true calling—the stewardship of her husband, children, and home.

What does the Bible say about women working outside the home? The Bible nowhere forbids a woman from working outside the home. It only instructs the Christian woman on the earthly domestic role she is to fulfill in God’s plan.

We hope we have helped you with your concerns. Please write us again. Be sure to sign up for CQ Rewind at www.christianquestions.net. The service is free without obligation and will provide you with scriptural perspective on many questions and topics.

Sincerely,

Christian Questions Radio