

In Pursuit of Virtue

—Judith Yoder

What is a virtuous woman?
Indeed,
that is an intensely momentous question.
For how can we attain that which we cannot define?
After sundry attempts to attain the ultimate,
a conclusion has been reached.

A virtuous woman
exudes an aura of quietness and confidence
even in the midst of direly vexatious circumstances,
because she knows she is in God's perfect will.

She is not afraid to stand
alone
or to be
"different"

if it glorifies God.

She does not heap up for herself
the tawdry tinsel
of this world,

nor help others build empires to self.

She realizes that there is a time to speak
and a time to be silent,

and is not found guilty of empty babblings.

She will not plague people
with long-winded eulogies of her accomplishments,
aspirations,
antiques,

figments of her imagination,
or grouching about her illnesses.

She whines not, neither does she flirt.

Her wisdom is boundless,
her tact and endurance indeed astounding,
and your likelihood of meeting her is virtually nil.

Why?

Because we have slipped into a
mindless,
spineless
torpor.

We have become quite imbalanced.

One extreme
is completely mealy and wobbly-souled,
the other,
odiously brazen.

We are in dire need of young women who will abstain
from being bedizened slaves to fashion and public opinion
and rise to resolute maturity.

Let us be totally dedicated to seeking God.

For only in seeking Him
Is true virtue and equilibrium found.

My Cranky Self

I grumble in the morning, "There's so much to do,
It's my turn to do dishes, why couldn't it be you?"
The baby is sick with a fever you say;
There goes my hopes of sewing today.
Don't touch me, don't bump, I already said "No,
I'm not gonna help you if you're so slow."
I complain and I grumble, 'til I'm all tied in knots.
I've been disrespectful to mom, and cross with the tots.

At night when upon my bed I lay
I feel very miserable as I think of my day.
"I'm awfully terrible," I tell myself with a groan,
Where is the good example that I should have shown.
In my dreams I'm so often lovely and sweet;
I imagine myself blessing those whom I meet.
I picture myself a kindhearted girl,
Singing and cleaning 'til my head's in a swirl,
Rocking baby brother who's teething and sick;
Laughing along with an annoying trick.

But I've been thinking, and come to a conclusion;
To think good works "happen" is just a delusion.
It takes time with God, reading and praying,
And with a tender heart, His will obeying.
And suddenly a flame in your heart will spark,
Glowing from within, it shatters the dark.
No longer need I be a sweet girl in my "dream";
I can be the *real* thing, a cheerful sunbeam.

—JoAnna Raber (Age 17) Ephrata, PA

GUILTY

I never cut my neighbor's throat,
My neighbor's gold I never stole;
I never spoiled his house and land;
But God have mercy on my soul!

For I am haunted night and day
By all the deeds I have not done;
Oh, unattempted loveliness!
Oh, costly valor never won!

—Marguerite Wilkinson