

"A Woman Worthy of Praise" – Prov 31:10-31

Seen on a church sign:

If evolution is true, how come mothers still have only two hands?

God knew there should be mothers

God knew there should be mothers to hear each infant's cry,
To pat away the little tears that fill a baby's eye . . .

God knew there should be mothers to hear a child's first word,
To listen with attention when a child's voice must be heard . . .

God knew that each and every child needs someone close each day
To help them out, to cheer them up at home, at school, at play –

To teach them how to share this world with sisters and with brothers –
And so in His great wisdom, God created mothers.
- Jean Kyler McManus, on a greeting card

We're calling upon a man whose name is mentioned only once in scripture, yet this choice portion of literature seems to last forever in our minds as we look for a godly woman.

His name was King Lemuel, and he had a good mother. Listen to the opening verses of this chapter: *Proverbs 31:1-9: "The sayings of King Lemuel--an oracle his mother taught him: {2} "O my son, O son of my womb, O son of my vows, {3} do not spend your strength on women, your vigor on those who ruin kings. {4} "It is not for kings, O Lemuel-- not for kings to drink wine, not for rulers to crave beer, {5} lest they drink and forget what the law decrees, and deprive all the oppressed of their rights. {6} Give beer to those who are perishing, wine to those who are in anguish; {7} let them drink and forget their poverty and remember their misery no more. {8} "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. {9} Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.""*

In verse 10, King Lemuel begins with both a question and a declaration:

Question: a wife of noble character, who can find?

Answer: she is worth far more than rubies!

Verse 30 sums it all up: *"Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised."*

Many times these verses are presented in such a way that a great deal of guilt is brought forth on the part of the woman and mothers listening. If you do not get up early and buy-and-sell land or provide your family with hand-sewn clothing...these verses are still for your encouragement.

Instead of listing items of activity which should be part of the Christian woman, it is listing characteristics which are then applied to the culture in which we walk and work. The idea: be this kind of woman in your character and your activities will be determined by the particular circumstances which do apply to your life.

1. She is diligent (vs. 13, 17-18, 27)

Proverbs 31:13: "She selects wool and flax and works with eager hands."

Proverbs 31:17-18: "She sets about her work vigorously; her arms are strong for her tasks. {18} She sees that her trading is profitable, and her lamp does not go out at night."

Proverbs 31:27: "She watches over the affairs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness."

This trait seems to be mixed with a pleasant spirit and a good attitude. She seems to possess pride in what she does...she's not happy just to "get by" but in doing a good job. She looks for the best buys, she realizes a profit, and works even into the night.

2. She's industrious and efficient (vs. 14, 16, 24)

Proverbs 31:14: "She is like the merchant ships, bringing her food from afar."

Proverbs 31:16: "She considers a field and buys it; out of her earnings she plants a vineyard."

Proverbs 31:24: "She makes linen garments and sells them, and supplies the merchants with sashes."

She's a thinking individual. In the investment of her time, she looks for dividends and returns. Instead of focusing on the grind, she looks to the benefits her work will bring.

3. She's compassionate (vs. 20, 26).

Proverbs 31:20: "She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy."

Proverbs 31:26: "She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue."

She has a soft heart that can be touched. And this makes her unique and distinct when contrasted to the man: an illustration...a child is hurt and the two responses:

Mother: How are YOU doing? What can I do? (the caring one)

Dad: Why were you running? You scratched the wall! Who's fault was it? (the investigator).

4. She has inner beauty (vs. 22, 25).

Proverbs 31:22: "She makes coverings for her bed; she is clothed in fine linen and purple."

Proverbs 31:25: "She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come."

IF MARRIED: She's a devoted wife:

1. She maintains her husband's confidence (vs. 11a)

Proverbs 31:11a: "Her husband has full confidence in her...."

He's comfortable in being transparent with her. He can share his feelings of insecurity, inadequacy, and disappointment and know she will keep them to herself.

2. She meets his needs (vs. 11b).

Proverbs 31:11b: "...and lacks nothing of value."

She's supportive and affectionate. She encourages his pursuits, and is committed to him and his efforts. Remember when God looked at Adam and said: "It is not good that man should be alone." He made a help-meet that would make him complete. Woman was a special creation of God but also a "corresponding part."

3. She seeks his good (vs. 12)

Proverbs 31:12: "She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life."

4. She aids his influence (vs. 23)

Proverbs 31:23: "Her husband is respected at the city gate, where he takes his seat among the elders of the land."

IF A PARENT: she's a dependable mother.

1. She is disciplined (vs. 15, 18-19).

Proverbs 31:15: "She gets up while it is still dark; she provides food for her family and portions for her servant girls."

Proverbs 31:18-19: "She sees that her trading is profitable, and her lamp does not go out at night. {19} In her hand she holds the distaff and grasps the spindle with her fingers."

This is not a verse teaching you into hell if you don't make homemade biscuits early in the morning, etc. But it is teaching a principle of taking charge of your time so you can meet the family needs. If the role of the husband or father in your house is for him to fix breakfast, then, obviously, the specifics would change.

2. She's organized (vs. 21).

Proverbs 31:21: "When it snows, she has no fear for her household; for all of them are clothed in scarlet."

This verse presents a sense of planning. She takes the challenge of a family as just that, a challenge, and seeks to meet it. It's not just "a cross to bear."

3. **She's dedicated (vs. 27).**

Proverbs 31:27: "She watches over the affairs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness."

What will be the results of this kind of woman (28-31).

Proverbs 31:28-31: "Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: {29} "Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all." {30} Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised. {31} Give her the reward she has earned, and let her works bring her praise at the city gate."

* Her children will bless her! * Her husband will praise her!

* Her peers will be challenged by her! * Her works will bring their own praise!

* Her Lord will be honored by her life!

A Housewife's Lament

"Make the beds, bandage heads, straighten up the room, wash the windows, cut the grass, see the tulips bloom. Drive the children off to school, drive them back again. Have the cubs to their meetings...then I clean the den.

"Serve on my committee, attend the PTA, forgot to buy the children's shoes, I can't do that today. Pay the bills, write a note, fill the cookie jar...Oh, dear, I forgot to go and have them grease the car.

"Catch up on the ironing, scrub the kitchen floor, answer phones and doorbells...need I list some more?

"My pet peeve, I must admit, you surely will agree...when someone will ask: are you employed? I will answer: 'no, not me...I don't work...I'm just a homemaker.'"

A husband's relationship to his excellent wife: (vs. 11-12, 28-29)

Proverbs 31:11-12: "Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value. {12} She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life."

Proverbs 31:28-29: "Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: {29} "Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all.""

1. **He trusts her (vs. 11).** He has no cause for suspicion for her. Deep within, he holds confidence in her.

2. **He benefits from her (vs. 11).**

3. **He's affirmed by her (vs. 12).**

4. **He's impressed with her and sings her praises (vs. 28-29).**

Young men – look for this kind of woman!

Young ladies – strive with God's help to be this kind of woman!

Fathers and married men – Thank God if you have this kind of woman!