

A Virtuous Woman

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[0 : 00] I'm thankful to be loved by the Lord, and I'm thankful that the Bible tells me so.! So let's open our Bibles up this morning to the book of the Proverbs.

And I'd ask you to find chapter 11 to begin. It's the first verse. And have your fingers ready. I'm going to bounce around through the Proverbs by way of introduction.

Last week was Mother's Day, and I did not bring anything related to mothers by way of a message. Kind of finished off a thought from a previous week.

But I also noticed that several of you mothers or ladies were not here, and you are today. So I'm coming at you now. I shouldn't say I'm coming at you. I'm just going to give you something that's from the Word of God, and I hope it ministers to you and challenges you at the same time.

And so just ladies, understand this is geared toward and aimed at you. Not mothers. This is not making up for last week at all. This is just something the Lord put on my heart yesterday, because I was spinning my wheels all week long.

[1 : 14] Well, since Wednesday, really. Thursday, nothing. Friday, nothing. Saturday, nothing. And I just dug this old message out and looked it over and prayed about it and thought, this feels like what I should do today. So here we go.

When you read through the Proverbs, I don't know if you do this, but when you do, one thing that you are introduced to is several different women that are mentioned. And it's no surprise, because Solomon is writing this to his son, historically speaking.

He says, my son, all the time. And he cares, very much cares about the type of woman that his son would be attracted to or would take to wife. And so he writes really to not just the son as a specific, but in general to young men to be aware of and to be considerate of the women in this world.

And he mentions several different kind of women. So I'd like to highlight these as we go through. And it's going to start off pretty negative, because he had a reason for that. But then we'll come back and see some of the positive ones.

So let's start in chapter 11 and take a look at verse number 22. 11.22, as a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman, which is without discretion.

[2 : 27] A fair woman would be a beautiful, pleasant to look upon woman. She has beauty. But in this case, she has no discretion. So he likens her to something that is just a good-looking piece of fruit, or jewel, rather.

I was going to say an apple. A jewel is something glorious, but it's in a snout of a swine. That kind of detracts a little bit, doesn't it, from that gold. And that's the discretion.

The lack of discretion in a beautiful woman really detracts from her beauty and from desiring her and to marry and to be with her for your life. Look at chapter 14 and verse number 1.

Here's another woman that he mentions. 14.1, every wise woman buildeth her house, but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands.

There's a foolish woman. And this woman is destructive to her home, to her household, not to the structure, but to the household, the people in it. Because in that house, there's no peace.

[3 : 33] Back in chapter 9 and verse 13, take a look at that, about this foolish woman. The Bible says in chapter 9 verse 13, a foolish woman is clamorous.

She is simple and knoweth nothing. She'd destroy her own home with all her clamor. She's loud. She's stubborn. She's obnoxious.

She's stubborn. Keep looking ahead in chapter 19. Another description of a woman here in chapter 19 and verse 13. A foolish son is the calamity of his father, and the contentions of a wife are a continual dropping.

They're that noise that gets under your skin and never goes away. And it's the contentions, the yapping, the always in your ear about something all the time.

And Solomon says, that's just, I can't stand that about a contentious wife. Look ahead at chapter 21. There's more. Chapter 21 and verse 9.

[4 : 46] And don't take offense, ladies. We're not attacking you. Just reading Bible. So if the shoe doesn't fit, Cinderella, you don't have to worry about it, right? There's more. There's good ones coming.

Chapter 29. But you know what? The tension does come quickly, doesn't it? You feel like, this is talking about me. Are you talking about me? Maybe. Maybe. 21 verse 9.

It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop than with a brawling woman in a wide house. A brawl. It's never a brawling man.

It's a brawling woman. And the biggest house you could have, if she's in there, you're going to know she's in there and you're going to know where she's at because her mouth never stops.

She's contentious. She's wanting to fight, fight, pick a fight about something. You say, you could get up in there in that corner of the housetop. That's all you've got. It's just that little closet.

[5 : 40] That one room studio that you can barely turn around. And that's better if you don't have the brawling woman in there. And Solomon had experience with this. That's why he's saying what he's saying.

Look at chapter 21. Look at verse 19. It is better to dwell in the wilderness. Really? The wilderness? It's better to dwell in the wilderness than with a contentious and an angry woman.

Amen. Amen. 27. Now look at 25. Look at 25. This is Bible truth 25 and verse 24.

This is something that Solomon repeated. I wonder why he repeated it. Verse 24. It is better to dwell in the corner of the housetop than with a brawling woman and in a wide house.

Why couldn't you just say that one time and move on, Solomon? Why twice? He had to say it again. Look at 27 and verse 15. Another one. This is a contentious woman again.

[6 : 47] 27, 15. A continual dropping in a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike. That's what the man said.

The contentious, the brawling, the angry woman. There's another one yet. Two more. Chapter 30. Find 30 and verse 22. I'll start in 21.

30, 21. For three things the earth is disquieted, and for four that it cannot bear. For a servant when he reigneth, and a fool when he is filled with meat. For an odious woman when she is married.

An odious woman. That's a woman that's worthy of hatred. Or she's worthy of being despised. We might say she's despicable. But when she's married to a man, boy, the earth cannot bear that.

Putting that woman with a man. Putting that woman with a man in a house. A wide house even. An odious woman. Now chapter 30. I missed a verse 20 says, such is the way of an adulterous woman.

[7 : 54] There's the adulterous woman. She eateth, wipeth her mouth, says, I've done no wickedness. So there's the adulterous woman. She's called elsewhere the strange woman in chapter 2 and chapter 5, chapter 7.

She's the woman that flattereth with her words. That's dressed in the attire of an harlot. That knows how to go after the simple. And knows how to get what they have.

And take all their substance and bring them down to a piece of bread. That's what that woman knows how to do. She's an adulterous woman. She's just in it for herself to get what she can get. And then to move on.

And so we've seen a fair woman, an attractive woman, but has no discretion. And what she's likened to a pig. A foolish woman that can destroy her home and be clamorous.

Contentious, brawling, angry, odious women. And Solomon's known them. He's known them all. And he writes to his son about them. You better beware of these things.

[8 : 56] But that's not the only kind of women there are. So now let's see what else there is in this passage. Look at chapter 19 and verse 14. There's also a prudent woman. In chapter 19 and verse 14.

House and riches are the inheritance of fathers. And a prudent wife is from the Lord. Solomon said that. A prudent wife is from the Lord.

In chapter 14 and verse 1. We read this already. There's the wise woman. 14.1. The wise woman buildeth her house, but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands.

A wise woman. And then there's one more that I want to point out. Now there's two. 11 and verse 16. 11 and verse 16.

A gracious woman retaineth honor. And strong men retain riches. The woman retains honor because she's gracious.

[10:03] I've known some gracious women. And you could say something stupid around them. Just show your immaturity. And they're just gracious. They just smile.

They just let it be. They encourage you instead of attack you. They're just gracious, godly women. There's some of them. Now look at chapter 12. And we're kind of narrowing it down to where we want to be.

In chapter number 12 and verse number 4. Here's the mention. A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband. But she that maketh a shame.

There's another one. Is as rottenness in his bones. Today we want to focus in on this virtuous woman. That's the one. And that woman's called a crown to her husband.

And the Bible before the Proverbs end. It gives a very thorough description of what a virtuous woman is. And what she looks like. And how she behaves.

[11:02] So I want to take you to Proverbs 31. And we're going to park right here for the sermon this morning. Proverbs 31. And see what this is all about.

Solomon had some things to say about women. He knew women more than I will ever know women. I can confidently say I don't know women. And they don't know men.

The women that I know. That's just the way it is. But Solomon had some wisdom inserted into him. And we understand how things turned out for him. Through his history.

Through his reign. It was not just in five years. It was in 40. But when he started. He had some serious wisdom and knowledge input. And then he got attracted to women. And found out that he could have.

Literally have anything he wanted. And anyone he wanted. So he thought. But it turned out there's one thing that he couldn't have. And he wanted it. And I'll show you that here shortly. But before we get to that.

[12:00] In Proverbs 31. To give you a little background here. It says at the beginning. The words of King Lemuel. The prophecy that his mother taught him. And it's often believed. That this is another name for Solomon.

Lemuel means devoted to God. And it's the words that his mother Bathsheba taught him. As he ascended the throne. It seems that his mother wanted to input some truth into her son.

His father was going the way of all men. And he was going to the grave. And his mother greatly loved this son of hers. Solomon. And put some truth into him. Said hey stay away from wine and strong drink.

That's not fit for you son. You're a king now. Stay away from that stuff. But by verse 10. She gives a lengthy description about a virtuous woman.

Something she's teaching her son. And what's really great about this. Is from verse 10 to 31. Is 22 verses. And you wouldn't know it in your English Bible.

[13:01] But in Hebrew there's 22 letters to the alphabet. And in the Bible several times. For instance in the Lamentations. Is one case very much. In a few of the Psalms. You have what we could call an acrostic.

Meaning. You're familiar with acrostics in business. They'll use the word stand. S-T-A-N-D. To make their five points. Or in the fire. World of fire prevention. There's different things.

F-I-R-E. And it means this. This. This. And this. It all has to do with safety responses. And they use acrostics all the time. Here they use the alphabet. A. What we would have is A-B-C-D-E-F. But here.

It's the Hebrew alphabet. From verse 10 to 31. Begins with the first letter of the alphabet. The verse 11 begins with the second letter of the alphabet. And so what I'm showing you is this. This is a very thorough and a thought out poetic description of a virtuous woman.

This is what the book is going to close with. Is this poetry. This very deep. Very well constructed. It's not just random thoughts and just scribbling some things.

[14:05] And by the way. Don't forget that. It's this is. She put her heart and soul and everything into knowing. Into conveying this to her son. And she's displaying here.

What a virtuous woman is. And what her son should be looking for. Now before we go any further. Let's pray. And then we'll look at the passage. And kind of break it down and outline. And Father. Please bless the reading of your word. The studying of your word. And the preaching of your word. May it be received by your people. And may you work in the hearts of each young lady. And old lady alike. In this room. That this truth. And this would be the goal. That this would be instilled in them. And that it wouldn't be the vanity. Or the beauty. Or the outward appearance. But something on the inside. That would be revealed in them. That Christ in them. Would shine forth. In their life. In their demeanor. In their countenance.

[14:59] In their disposition. In their testimonies. And God. Would you raise up in this church. And in my family. Some virtuous women. That you'll be pleased with. That will glorify Jesus Christ.

With their lives. Please do a work today. May this not be in vain. We ask in Jesus name. Amen. Amen. So guys. You're not off the hook here.

If anything. You should know what the Bible says about these things. One day. You might be raising some daughters. Or you might be seeking a spouse. And you need to know that the beauty is vain. You need to learn how to look for what things God calls good qualities. In a woman. And men can be supremely carnal. And completely driven.

And devoted to their carnal flesh. And if that flesh runs you. And makes all your decisions. You're going to find yourself in a mess. So you need to be paying attention to. Okay. Verse number 10.

[16:00] Let's first begin by understanding. The virtuous woman. Her rarity. How rare she is. Verse 10 says. Who can find. A virtuous woman.

It's a question. And it's a good question. But it's a question. That never gets answered in the passage. You know why? Because they're rare.

They're so very rare. They're few and they're far between. What follows that question. Is not an answer to where a virtuous woman can be found. But rather it's a description of.

What a virtuous woman would look like. As you're seeking one. Who can find a virtuous woman? Hmm. Solomon couldn't find one. Solomon you think.

Well the king. I mean come on. He could have any woman he wanted. And he did. You think. Well if he wanted to find some virtuous woman. He wanted to find the best of the best. Surely he'd find one.

[16:57] A king over a nation. Not just a good looking man. He's the wealthiest man. The wisest man. Nobody on the face of the earth. In the past or present. Compares to him.

He could absolutely have any woman he wanted. And he wanted. A virtuous woman. Look at Ecclesiastes. Just turn a few pages to the right. Find chapter 7. We know from the account in scripture.

That Solomon. Took to himself. Seven hundred. Women to wife. Seven hundred. On top of that. He had three hundred concubines.

Mistresses if you will. Totaling a thousand women in his life. Do you know why he understood what an odious woman was like? Do you know why he understood what a brawling and a contentious woman was?

Do you know why he told his son about them? Because he knew them very very well. Do you know why he said that about that fair woman? Without. Because he's attracted to the fair women.

[18:03] He looked for the fairest among all the land and took them. And then later his mom says, Solomon, beauty is vain, son. That's not what you should be looking for.

He found out I've got a bunch of beautiful women yet they don't have any discretion. They're not the kind of women that I would want to raise a family with. They don't take care of others. They care for themselves. They just want what they can get out of me because they see me as rich and the guy. I'm the man and they want to be up here. They want to be the queen. He found plenty of them. But look, he wasn't looking for one of them. Look at chapter 7. Come to the end of this. In verse 25, near the end of his life, he's going to look back and say what he's done with his life.

In verse 25, I applied mine heart to know and to search and to seek out wisdom and the reason of things. And to know the wickedness of folly, even of foolishness and madness.

The whole spectrum. I sought to know it, understand all of it. Why people do what they do and what there is to be found in it. And here's what he concluded with this search. Verse 26.

[19:07] And I find, I find it from searching. I find more bitter than death the woman whose heart is snares and nets.

It's like a web. Her hands as bands, they take hold. Whoso pleaseth God shall escape from her, but the sinner shall be taken by her.

Why is he so hard on this woman? I find more bitter than death this woman that she's just out for herself.

Just trying to get something for herself. And she just sucks all the air out of the room and all the energy out of my life. In verse 27. Behold, this have I found, saith the preacher, counting one by one, all the way up to the thousand that he had.

One by one to find out the account which yet my soul seeketh. Look at that. Currently, I'm still seeking. Which yet my soul seeketh, but I find not.

[20 : 14] One man among a thousand have I found. But a woman among all those have I not found. A thousand, huh?

That's exactly what the Bible says. A thousand. Seven hundred and three hundred. Out of a thousand, I could find a man. Find a good man, a faithful man.

But in all his searching, counting one by one, going through them one after another, he could not find that woman.

The virtuous woman, church, she's rare. She's a rare breed. He found plenty of others. He testifies, I found the loud ones.

I found the stubborn ones. I know that very, very well. I found the ones whose hearts are snares and nets. They use their looks and they use their whining and their fussing and their crying and their nagging to get what they want.

[21 : 13] I know them. There are plenty of them I've gone through. But I can't find the virtuous woman. No, you know why? Because she's rare. But come on, Solomon, you're the king.

Can't find her. I can't find her. He finds the ones that are looking for something to get. The more money, they say, the more problems. And you can imagine when it comes to women and finding a good wife, maybe having all that money and all that success and all that popularity is not helping anybody find a good woman.

She's rare. A virtuous woman is rare. She's so rare that in the entirety of the word of God, there's only one woman that is identified as a virtuous woman.

I'm not saying there's only one that's there, but I'm showing you as far as being identified by word, only Ruth is called a virtuous woman. She's the only one.

And we'll look at it at the end here. Her character matches exactly what we read here in Proverbs 31. So who can find a virtuous woman? And by the way, if you're a young man or single, it's a good thing to be in search of.

[22 : 21] There are virtuous women out there. And God has them, and they love God, and they have a heart for the Lord, and they're not trying to make themselves known.

And there are plenty of the other ones out there too. And they do want to make themselves known. And there's plenty that will want control of everything, and they won't ever allow you to do what God's called you to do.

So be cautious. But a virtuous woman is worth looking for, and she's worth holding out for, and praying to God for. And so let's move on to something else. In verse number 10, I want you to see not just her rarity, but also I want you to see her value.

Her value, the verse says, who can find a virtuous woman for her price is far above rubies. The value of something is often determined by the rarity of that item.

For instance, we have things in our world called precious stones. They're really, they're stones. Otherwise, they're just stones. But it's their rarity. It's their rarity and their beauty that brings them value.

[23 : 24] But if they were such a beautiful stone and they were everywhere you could find, then the value goes down considerably. It makes me wonder, it's just a side note. I wonder, I know how God has set stones in the foundations of the new Jerusalem, and how the glory of God lighting that city must bring some kind of light show and glorious color display.

And I can't help but wonder if he created the earth that way back in the day. Did he really just put all of these precious, glorious, colorful stones, just scatter them into the mountains and say, hide and seek, you know, go find something.

See if you can go find some cool stones out there. You have to dig really, really hard. I don't know if that's, I wonder if that just wasn't something that got destroyed and overlaid. And if in fact, way

back, he had some things lined out and some stones set and made them for a purpose with all their beauty and color.

But nevertheless, they've pretty much been buried and melted and all of these things. And it takes some real work to get them back. But we're talking about the value of a virtuous woman.

I wonder if silver in Solomon's day, it was made of stones in Jerusalem. Do you remember reading that?

[24 : 40] He was so wealthy, even the city, the capital city, silver was just like stones. It lost its value because it was so plenteous and plentiful. That's something that's just incredible to consider.

And yet that wise and rich and powerful king couldn't find a woman and he couldn't pay for one.

With all of his riches and all of his might, her value is, oh, its price is far above rubies.

And we read it in chapter 12 that a virtuous woman is a crown to her husband. A crown identifies a king. It identifies it's the identity of his wealth and power and riches and value.

Her price is far above rubies. Now let's consider that and turn in some other places in the Word of God. Find 1 Peter and chapter number 3. 1 Peter chapter 3.

I want to take you to a couple places to look at about the value of a virtuous woman. I've got four places that I want to turn you to.

[25 : 47] We'll do this quickly. 1 Peter chapter 3 verse 1. 1 Peter chapter 3 verse 1. Likewise, you wives, be in subjection to your own husbands, that if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives.

While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear, whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plating the hair and wearing of gold or of putting on of apparel.

Those things are valuable. The apparel, the gold, the hair that's plated, it's broided or braided or it's got some fanciful things worked into it to draw attention and to be beautiful.

But that's not, that value is in one realm. But look at verse 4. But instead of let that being your adorning, let this be your adorning. Let it be the hidden man of the heart.

And that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit. Watch this. Which in the sight of God is in the sight of God of great price.

[26 : 59] Her price is far above rupees. In the sight of God, and it should be in the sight of any godly man, is a woman that doesn't have corruptible things that adorns her, but rather the inside, a meek and a quiet spirit.

I know people make mock and they say, make jokes about she's pretty on the inside and just wants to mock the outward appearance that doesn't match up to the faces on the magazines.

I know the jokes and some of it's pathetic. Because the truth is God's not interested in any of that.

The outward beauty, the things that get so emphasized in our age, the flesh.

God says clearly what's of great price to him. And it's that hidden man of the heart, a meek and quiet spirit. There's enough brawling women in the world. There's enough contentious and angry women.

But something that's beautiful to God, that has high value to God, and should be to any man of God, is a woman with a meek and quiet spirit. We're talking about her value here.

[28 : 09] It's a great price. Look back now at 1 Timothy chapter 2. These are the things that should adorn the virtuous woman.

It's her spirit and her subjection. We've covered these things in Sunday school lessons a few weeks ago. And I've never been the macho, macho man.

I've never attempted to try to boast or be bold or speak big. It never turned me on at any, ever, ever, ever, ever. And just a side note, my wife was just with her parents and with her siblings, and her older brother was getting on her about something.

And he made a comment to her and said something like, Oh, yeah, I bet Toby tells you about this and that. And she's like, No, he doesn't. He doesn't ever talk like that to me. And I thought, Praise the Lord.

Because inside of my flesh, that man is in there. It would just be that jerk. But no, God has changed me and brought me back to not treat her certain ways. And inside the woman ought to be a meek and quiet spirit.

[29 : 17] But on top of that, look at chapter 2 of 1 Timothy verses 9 and 10. There's the adorning.

It's a meek and quiet spirit. It's the hidden man of the heart. It's God inside of them that is seen on the outside. In verse number 10, it's good works that come through.

Good works that are displayed. That's how she adorns herself. Watch the value go up, ladies, when you adorn yourself with good works. When your testimony is that you're a good person, a good worker, that you serve God with your heart.

Watch your testimony go way up. Look at Titus chapter 2. Just hit these while we're close and then we'll move. Titus chapter 2. There's more to say, but I'm trying to move through this to get you moving.

Titus chapter 2, I'm going to begin reading in verse 3. The aged women likewise, that they be in behavior as becometh holiness, not false accusers.

[30 : 35] Notice that's how their mouths run, false accusers. Not given to much wine, teachers of good things, that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, a fair woman without discretion, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.

These lists are aimed to the women, the aged and the young women alike. This is God's word to you, ladies. You either rebel against it or you receive it.

And it's not going to be me telling you, you need to do this. It's going to be the word of God in that quiet, still voice inside of you saying, that's what I want you to be.

This is what I want you to be. You. You either fight against it and say, that guy thinks he knows what he's doing about me. It ain't me. It ain't me.

I love it. It ain't me. I'm just reading it. Look at 1 Corinthians chapter 11. Last verse here. 1 Corinthians 11.

[31 : 48] Talking about her value. I'm showing you the list, the things that God puts value upon for the woman.

Just noticing this quickly because this has to do with the order in the home. In verse 1, Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the ordinances as I delivered them to you.

But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ and the head of the woman is the man and the head of Christ is God. And I've pointed this out multiple times. The order in the home. God, Christ, man, woman, and then children and so on. Pets, if you need the pets. The right order in the home. God made that. And if you have a problem with that, if that's a problem in your spirit, in your soul, in your being, and in your home, then you're going to pluck it down with your hands. That's who you are, a foolish woman that can't submit to the order that God has for you in this life. You say, My husband did my husband. Shut up and submit to the order that God has given you in this life.

[33 : 04] Because that is where the value is. Being a virtuous woman. Now, Solomon looked for one. Solomon had money. Solomon could have got rubies.

We know he had silver and we definitely know he had gold. But he couldn't buy one. Because her price, her price, of a woman that fits that criteria, her price is, is far above rupees.

Money can't buy this. It's impossible. The kind of women money can buy are the kind of women that money can buy. And Solomon was looking for a virtuous one.

Couldn't find her. Come back to Proverbs 31 and let's read now some things about her character. First, her rarity. Secondly, her value.

Showing you the things that God values. And it's not the things that men value. And now her character. We're going to go through this passage and I won't read it straight through it first.

[34 : 11] We'll work our way through it and just lay out for you by way of an outline the kind of character that a virtuous woman has. Notice in verses 11 and 12, she's trustworthy.

She's a trustworthy wife. In verse 11, the heart of her husband doth safely trust in her so that he shall have no need of spoil.

He doesn't have to worry that she's going to spend all the money he made. He doesn't have to worry that it's all gone as soon as it comes in the door. Because my wife, the heart of her husband does safely trust in her.

He trusts that she's not going to be a fool. He trusts that she's going to do what's right so that he'll have no need of spoil. Verse 12 says, She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.

What a blessing for a husband to be able to safely trust in his wife. He can also confide in her because she's trustworthy. She's not going to ruin him.

[35 : 13] Men have secrets too. And the most intimate relationship in their life ought to be ultimately the home, the wife. And he has secrets.

He has things that he wants to get off his chest or he wants to just let loose on. And to have a wife that's trustworthy that he can confide in is a wonderful thing. He doesn't have to say, Well, as soon as I tell her, it's going to go to her mom and then it's going to go around the horn because that's the way it happens.

No, he can safely trust in her. She's a trustworthy woman. She won't ruin him financially. She won't ruin his character. A woman and a man in a marriage, they tend to not just spend all their time together in their lives, but they tend to know things about each other that you wouldn't want other people to know.

And a woman that's virtuous can keep those things in and can keep those secrets of her own husband because she knows if I told people this would hurt him, this could ruin him, and it's not fit to spread this abroad to anybody because she's trustworthy.

He can count on her. She's a faithful woman and her desire is toward him and he knows it. When the children know that dad's away, that doesn't change a thing in the home.

[36 : 33] You know why? Because his heart can safely trust in her. She's not going to say, Oh, do whatever. Just don't let your dad find out because she's a virtuous woman.

She has character. I want you to see also in the passage that she's a hard worker. She's a hard worker. Don't be afraid of these verses, ladies. Let's read these together. Look at verses 13 through 19.

This is a description of her character. She seeketh wool and flax and worketh willingly with her hands. She's like the merchant's ships. She bringeth her food from afar.

She riseth also while it is yet night and giveth meat to her household and a portion to her maidens.

She considereth a field and buyeth it. With the fruit of her hands she planteth the vineyard.

She girdeth her loins with strength and strengtheneth her arms. She perceiveth that her merchandise is good. Her candle goeth not out by night. She layeth her hands to the spindle and her hands hold the distaff.

[37 : 34] She's working. She's making things. In verse number 21 and 2, she is not afraid of the snow for her household, for all her household or clothed with scarlet.

She maketh herself coverings of tapestry. Her clothing is silk and purple. Verse 24, Strength and honor are her clothing and she shall rejoice in time to come.

And now verse 27, She looketh well to the ways of her household and eateth not the bread of idleness. Idleness. Boy, isn't that a plague for some women today?

Idleness. Spend more time with their phones or their televisions than being active, than being busy. This character of a virtuous woman is that of a hard worker.

Now, understand, this is not their actual daily life. She's not, for instance, verse 15 says that she riseth also while it is yet night. And then verse 18 says that her candle goeth not out by night.

[38 : 38] Well, if we're going to take this literally, she's 24-7 non-stop. That's impossible. This is not the case of her everyday life. This is the character of the woman. She has a work ethic.

She gets things done that need to be done. And when something else comes up that needs to be done, she gives herself to that. She girds her loins with strength and she gets after that because she's a worker.

She's a hard worker. I want you to notice it said several times something about her hands. In verse 13, she worketh willingly with her hands. In verse number 16, it says that she buyeth it a field.

The fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard. In verse 19, she layeth her hands to the spindle and her hands hold the distaff. Those hands are busy. Those hands are active.

They've got something working all the time. I bet her hands aren't soft. She's a virtuous woman. I bet her hands aren't on the cover of any magazines. I bet they're not beautiful in that sense.

[39 : 42] Which, hands and faces on the covers of magazines, you can pretty much say likely they're just worthless. They're worthless. They may take a pretty picture, but they don't know how to do any of this stuff right here.

A virtuous woman is a hard worker. She works hard. She provides for her family. She cares for her household. She's not a slacker. She's not a cheater.

She's not a sluggard. She's not lazy. Look at verse 31. Give her of the fruit of her hands and let her own works praise her in the gate.

She's worth that because she's worked for it. She's praised for her work ethic, for her labor. There's a lot of lazy women in the world that have these entitled expectations.

Well, I'm this. You should give it to me. You work and I spend. Shopping is not a job. Filling the trunk of your car with bags is not a job.

[40 : 45] It's not a duty of a woman. This woman would be repulsed by that attitude. She's a hard worker. She's also kind. Verse number 20.

Look at verse 20. She stretches out her hand to the poor. Yea, she reaches forth her hands to the needy. She's a giving woman.

Verse 26 says, She openeth her mouth with wisdom and in her tongue is the law of kindness. She's a kind. She has compassion toward others.

She's unselfish with all of that work that she's doing for her husband, for her household. She's even looking upon the needs of others and seeing them and stretching forth her hands to the needy.

A kind woman. We read earlier in Proverbs a gracious woman. Some of the sweetest ladies I've ever met and ever know are those who are these three words.

[41 : 45] Compassionate, unselfish, and caring. Anytime you're around they just want to take care of you. Just want to feed you. Just want to do something nice for you. Like what do I do?

What did I deserve? I just walked in the door and what can I get you? What can I do? Just busy about caring. Kindness. They're known for sympathy and for being considerate and looking on the needs of others.

That's a virtuous woman. One more thing. We read it in verse 26. She's wise. The Bible says in verse 26 she openeth her mouth with wisdom. That's the only mention of her speech in this chapter. The other ones, we got a little glimpse of their speech, their contentions, their fighting, their anger, their brawling women. They're clamorous.

But this woman, when she opens her mouth, wisdom comes out. Kindness comes forth. The Bible says out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

[42 : 50] Showing us that inside the heart of this virtuous woman is kindness and wisdom. Sound speech. I realize that that's a lot to live up to when it comes to the character.

But let it be the goal. Let the Bible set the standard and let you look up to the standard. Say, well, I'll never be there. But look up to the standard and work your way to the standard.

Her character. It's a lot, I know. But I want to close or finish this portion with her reputation. She has a reputation. And it's not just described all there through that, but verse 28 says this, Her children arise up and call her blessed.

Her husband also. And he praiseth her. This woman is respected. And she is honored. And she is praised. And she deserves every single bit of it.

In verse 31, we read it, that her own works, let her own works praise her in the gates. There's praise from her husband. There's praise for her accomplishments.

[44 : 01] There's reverence and honor from her children. They rise up. This doesn't so much happen here, but in the old church we had a big platform and there's a seat where I sat and the pastor sat over here.

And when a young lady or a group of ladies would come to sing, they'd come up the steps and come over and we would just, we'd stand up. We'd stand up while the ladies came to take the platform and they're just godly women to sing to glorify the Lord.

And we didn't stand the whole time. We just stood while they came. They got to their place and then we sat back down. And why? As a kid, I saw it and then eventually I did it. It was just reverencing the godly lady that deserves the reverence.

It's just respecting. And that's what the children are doing to their mother when she comes by. They stand up, Mom, what can I get you? Reverencing.

Boy, kids today don't even look up from their phones when their mom comes in and starts talking to them. They don't even turn, don't even address her. But this virtuous woman deserves this praise.

[45 : 11] You know, some get this kind of concept. Oh, don't praise me. Give all the glory to God. Or men might get this, don't you let, women, don't you let that happen.

Don't let men praise you. They'd look at that and say, let her work praise her. No way. Give God the glory. And I say, no, you know, it's worthy in the right context to give praise where it's due and to give honor where it's due.

The reason being, you want your children, you want the rest of this world to look up and realize what should be respected and honored is the virtuous woman.

Instead, they're surrounded with a culture that respects and praises and honors the fair woman without, you know what happened? This is a little while back. Some stupid awards for the world. They're awarding whoever the singers are, whoever the actors are, I don't know. So some beautiful woman, I mean, the form is perfect, the face is perfect, she's gloriously beautiful, gets up in front of the crowd, gets her award and gets praised and then she says, she blurts out explicit, filthy language into the microphone and then the whole crowd just stands up and claps and praises her filthy mouth and her wicked, rebellious attitude.

[46 : 31] That's who they praise. So, yes, it's right to give honor to a virtuous woman and yes, it's right to give honor to the woman who has the right reputation and deserves the honor because the world's doing it the wrong way and they have been all their life.

Your children need to know, no, we don't worship that, we don't applaud that, we don't praise that wickedness and we elevate the true virtues. Someone with some character and some kindness and some wisdom.

This woman has a reputation and ladies, you're all here today, you have a reputation too. You have a reputation because you've earned a reputation. Now, I may not know everything to know about you but the people in your inner circle do.

The more they know about you, the more that reputation has been formed. You've earned it. It could be that you're untrustworthy. It could be that you're foolish.

It could be that you're contentious. It could be that you're an angry woman. Better be careful what you say. It doesn't take much to set her off. Or it could be that in your mouth it's the law of kindness.

[47 : 42] That you're gracious. My wife was talking to me and she got to see her grandmother. She's still alive. She's 95 years old. But she lost her previous grandmother years ago when she was just a teenager.

and the memories she has of her previous grandmother are just amazing. Just top shelf of a woman. She'll tell stories about the way she treated people, the way she talked, the way she acted. Just gracious, wonderful, and godly. Raising all these boys. I had a dozen kids and I think 10 or 11 are boys. Raising them all, getting them all in line, getting them all in church by herself.

And she was a godly woman. And she may, well, I won't say anything else there, but she had a reputation that she earned and it stuck with her and it's somebody that she aspires and looks up to in her own life, even in her passing.

Because she had an example. A virtuous woman with a reputation. Now I want you to consider as we read this chapter, most of it, that there was no mention of her outward countenance and appearance.

[48 : 51] Verse 30 is the only mention of beauty and it says that it's vain. There's nothing valuable in beauty. Favor is deceitful. Beauty is vain. But a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.

She'll get praise if she fears the Lord. If beauty, men, is the first thing on your list, or if beauty, young ladies or ladies, is the first looks, is that's the first thing on your list of which you have to be and appear.

You've got a bad list. There's something backwards, out of position on your list. Because that shouldn't even make the list. You have the looks that you were born with.

You can touch them up if you need to or do what you can. I would recommend surgeries. I think that's just wrong. Color your hair is about the... I won't comment anymore. That's none of my business.

But I know the beauty is vain. I know that much is true. If God gave you looks, it's vain. That's all it is.

[50 : 00] Don't use them to try to attract someone or something because you'll end up with somebody who's just attracted to looks. You want to let it be the hidden man of the heart.

You want to let it be the good works that comes out of you. You want it to be known that you fear the Lord. And ladies, if you can let that be your testimony, a meek and quiet, submissive spirit that is willing to work and fearing God, boy, that price is so high up there.

Solomon couldn't find her. Now, we're going to close by going back to the book of Ruth. And I'll quickly just take you through this little glimpse here of the only woman that's named Virtuous.

Find Ruth chapter 3. And the reference I mention is in verse 11.

And we'll notice that Ruth is a virtuous woman. We'll see her rarity. There's only one of her. In verse 11, Now my daughter, fear not, I will do to thee all that thou requirest, for all the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman.

[51 : 10] That's the only mention. It's Ruth. So, the virtuous woman is rare. Let's notice her value. Her value. Look at chapter 4.

These are the four points. Her rarity, her value, her character, and her reputation that we saw outlined in Proverbs. Let's see it come true in Ruth. Chapter 4 and verse 15.

The women are praising Naomi. And then they bring up her daughter-in-law, Ruth. He shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life and a nourisher of thine old age.

For thy daughter-in-law, which loveth thee, which is better to thee than seven sons, hath born him. Naomi had two sons.

Ruth was better than those two. If she could have had five more on top of it, still that daughter-in-law, Ruth, was better than all seven. Having seven sons in a Hebrew culture and family, that's pretty important.

[52 : 13] That's a pretty big deal. But thy daughter-in-law, Ruth, oh, the value of her. You just can't find it in a son. You can't find it in seven of them.

Look at her character. Come back to chapter 1 and notice that she's trustworthy. In chapter 1 and verse 16, she's pleading with Naomi.

Ruth said, And treat me not to leave thee or to return from following after thee, for whither thou goest, I'll go. Where thou lodgest, I will lodge. Thy people shall be my people, thy God, my God. Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death, part thee in me. saying, I'm never going to leave your side.

When she saw that she was steadfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking of her. Ruth said, Don't make me go. I will stay with you until you die.

[53 : 11] I am not leaving your side. She's not trustworthy. She's also a hard worker. Chapter 2 and verse 2, she has an idea.

Ruth the Moabitess said unto Naomi, Let me now go to the field and glean ears of corn after him in whose sight I shall find grace. Let me go work. Let me go work all day long, just bending over in the field, picking up what I can pick up, finding whatever I can find, and I'll fill a basket and bring it back here for us.

And verse 17 says, So she gleaned in the field until even. That woman was out there all day long. I wonder how many of you have ever worked a full day in your life.

She was out in the field all day long, bending over, down on the ground, scrounging to find what they left behind, filling up a basket.

She was a hard worker. That was her idea. Nobody said, You better go get something. We're going to starve. No, she said, I got an idea. I'll go work. I'll go work all day long, and I'll come back and do it again if it means taking care of you, Naomi.

[54 : 22] Notice her kindness. In verse number 12, I'm sorry, verse 11 of chapter 2, Boaz, he meets her. And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath fully been showed me all that thou hast done unto thy mother-in-law since the death of thine husband.

And how thou hast left thy father and thy mother and the land of thy nativity and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore. He says, I heard about you, Ruth, and all that you're doing for her.

You're willing to leave your parents. You're willing to leave your land. You're willing to leave everything and come to a strange land for her. You're a kind woman. Not only that, but look at chapter 3 and verse number 10.

And he said, Blessed be thou of the Lord, my daughter, for thou hast shown more kindness in the latter end than at the beginning, inasmuch as thou followest not young men whether rich or poor. You're not looking for a husband, a young man. That would be your age. You're good looking. You could find anyone anywhere. He says, You're coming and willing to give yourself and marriage to me?

[55 : 34] Why? To take care of her. You're willing to give up your life to care for her? But he says, This kindness that you're showing Naomi is more than the beginning of leaving your father and mother, that you would be married to me for her and to raise up seed of me to raise up her

husband's name on this land.

He says, That is some kindness that's in your heart, woman. She's a virtuous woman. And then we see finally her reputation. Again, verse 11, at the end where all the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman.

She's a woman that is trustworthy, hardworking, faithful, kind, and compassionate, gives of herself, asks nothing in return.

The value is through the roof to find one of those. They're so rare. Do you know how Boaz took notice of this woman? She wasn't dancing half naked in front of him.

She wasn't showing him flesh to entice him. She didn't come knocking on his door and saying, What do you think? You know how he took notice? It was in verse 5.

[56 : 57] She's out there in the field. Then said Boaz unto his servant that was set over the reapers, Whose damsel is this? Who is this woman?

She's out there gleaning the corners and throwing what she can into the basket like the poor people of our country do, like the widows do, or the fatherless children that come out in here, the poor, the poverty.

So who is she? Who is this woman? He noticed her just in the field, bent, breaking her back, working, unselfishly, caring for someone else, providing.

Just get a basket full of barley to take it home. Barley is a cheap crop. He didn't hear her running her mouth. He didn't hear her out there complaining, Oh, what happened to me?

What happened to us over there? It's horrible. God wasn't kind to us. No, he didn't. She wasn't making eyes at him. And she wasn't even looking for a man.

[58 : 07] She just humbly, kindly, compassionately taking care of somebody else. She was a virtuous woman. If you're a woman here and a single woman at that and you want a young man, a rich man, a powerful man, any man to notice you, I recommend you serve God with all of your heart.

I think, number one, that'll help keep some of the garbage away. And number two, when your heart's on God and the right man comes along, you'll know it far more than when you're seeking him and seeking him and seeking him.

This virtuous woman had God bring a man together to her and she wasn't looking for it. I wonder if there's any virtuous women in here this morning.

Solomon was king over all of the land, powerful, rich, and wise, and he found none. You know why he didn't find any?

Because the virtuous woman, all of the virtuous women in the land weren't looking to be wife to the richest man in the room or the most powerful man in the planet.

[59 : 24] They weren't looking for what they could get out of their life. The virtuous women in Israel were just busy working, just serving, just content to do their job. When Solomon was looking, he was finding the pretty ones.

He was finding the ones who were saying, pick me, choose me, choose me. But the virtuous women were busy. Their character was keeping them busy.

And he couldn't find one. So this morning, ladies, do you fit God's description? Do you even come close? I know it's a high bar set, so it'd be easy to just slam you with stuff.

There's no need for that. The bar the Scripture sets is very high and you are flesh. You have inside your old nature a contentious woman. You have an angry woman.

You have a tendency to rebel and to fight against the establishment of God that's in you. If you understand that, that's something you have to put down. That's not your husband's job to put it down in you.

[60 : 24] That's your job to put it down as you walk with God and seek to fear the Lord. I wonder if in your life, if there's any reason for anybody to rise up and call you blessed.

Do you have a reputation? There's an old man a long time ago who said, every woman secretly, secretly hates every woman.

And the meaning was that women are, they're jealous, they're envious, they're spiteful, and they smile, but underneath, they secretly hate.

There may be truth to that. I'm not a woman. But those things do reside inside women and some have a reputation for it. I was at a nursing home.

I was in a nursing home ministry for years and different ones and then I visited a ton of them over the years to visit some ladies that were up in years and at the end of their lives.

[61 : 29] And over time, I could tell you how a visit was going to go after knowing a certain woman. And sometimes, I could walk into a room of an old saint of God and she just would light up with joy to see me coming to visit her and to sit and read the Bible with her and just talk about the birds outside of her window or whatever it was.

And some of these ladies, they'd want to know about my wife and the children. They'd want to know about the church and the pastor or just anything they could know just absorbing and thankful.

And then there's other ones that I'm just kind of checking off the list. Got to go see so-and-so because as soon as I go and sit down, all I'm going to hear is complain about this, complain about that. It's just this and this person hasn't done this and that's how I've got to deal with that.

And it's just their spirit. It's just their nature. There's such a difference in some ladies. And some are gracious and kind and warm and others are cold and bitter and hard.

And I know at the end of your days, I imagine that some of the worst can come out more and more as you maybe lose your mind or lose control of things. I don't know.

[62 : 41] I don't want to see me if I get to that day. The Bible says add to your faith virtue. Finally, I've got to quit but I was thinking this morning about a woman that I knew.

I didn't know her well. I knew her by name, an older woman in our church. And she sat in a specific place. I can tell you exactly where she sat every time. I don't know if I've ever had a conversation with her.

I think about all I did was shake her hand at times if we'd have a hand-shaking time. I don't know how old I was but I definitely went from sitting in the back of church and just dragging in late to moving up to the front of the church and dressing up and just having my Bible and being responsive and hitting the Lord did a work in my heart and I wasn't doing it for anybody.

It was for God. It was for me and I made changes in how I attended church and I was wide open. I wanted the Lord and nothing else. And I remember leaving church one day.

I could walking back the middle aisle and went to take a right to go through that aisle to the side exit and it was about almost like dead center of the sanctuary. And I remember turning to leave and this woman said, Toby?

[63 : 59] And I stopped and turned and I looked and I said hi and I shook her hand and she reached out and she grabbed my hand and then did the two hand thing. And so I knew she's going to give it to me and I'm just going to have to stand here and take it.

No matter what it is I'm going to listen to whatever this old lady has to say. And so she grabbed my hand and she's holding on not letting me leave and she said, Toby, I just want you to know that I'm praying for you.

I know that God's working in your heart and I can see it and I'm praying for you. And she let me go and I just left. I'll never forget her face.

I'll never forget her name. That woman who was just one of the crowd is now, to me, a virtuous woman. She saw a young man and said, I need to pray for him.

And that blessed me. Man, that made such a difference in my day just to thinking that there's this woman, I don't barely know her, but she's caring about me, taking my name to God, wants to see me go on for Christ.

[65 : 01] What a blessing. So that's just one. Is there any virtuous women in this church? There may be. There may very well be a bunch of them.

Maybe all of you are in some way. Out there, I don't expect to find too many. But God willing, in here, you're surrendered to the Word of God and the Holy Spirit.

And the Lord has made some changes in you. But if you've heard something this morning that is not lining up with your life, the chances are you need to get on your knees and surrender that to God.

You need to get that thing right and let the Lord change you from the inside to being a virtuous woman. It's a high standard. You're not going to just leap and get there overnight. But you understand somewhat of what God's looking for.

Father, as we dismiss, thank you for the Scripture. I know, Lord, that there's much to say here this morning. I pray that it was received by these young women and old women alike.

[66 : 00] I pray that the Word of God bears fruit and is effectual. Lord, it's powerful. It's sharp. It discerns the thoughts and intents of our hearts.

It does that. But I pray that it would bear fruit. Lord, I pray for the youngest to the oldest that you would find this fruit of virtue in them.

That you would not only see it, but that you would cultivate it by your Spirit within their hearts. Lord, help them to shed some of these carnal attitudes and to grow past that, to get victory over those things that may have them in a bad reputation.

Help them to get victory, to be renewed in the spirit of their minds. Pray, God, that you will raise up virtuous women that could bring glory to the Lord Jesus Christ, that could be a wonderful help to a man that seeks to love and serve you.

I pray that you'll protect the single young ladies here from any fool, from being deceived, from getting their eyes on someone or something that has no business in their life.

[67 : 13] please give them wisdom. Please give them surrender. Help them to hold out until you give them the green light. Help the young men in here to know what to look for and not to jump the gun, but to pray and to be faithful.

And Father, would you bring a spouse that is fit and suitable for serving the Lord Jesus Christ to these men and women that are searching and would you be glorified in all of it?

With your heads bowed still for just a few moments, we'll dismiss, we'll get out of here soon enough. You can go back to your home and your lives, but still while we're here, would you take a moment and consider if you don't meet up to that standard, ladies, if God has put something on your heart, if He's revealed something in you, there's no shame in leaving your pew and bending down on this altar and talking it over with Him.

There's no shame in surrendering yourself to the use and to the will of God. That's actually a virtuous thing. That's a mark of a virtuous woman that wants to surrender to God.

Let's sing something together or play something please, would you? Thank you.