

Proverbs 31 Woman

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[0 : 00] As we come to the Word of God together. And just to introduce things, there was a teacher one day who gave her pupils a lesson all about magnets. And the next day she set a written test which included the question, My name has six letters beginning with the letter M and I pick up things. What am I?

And when the test papers were handed back, she was astonished to find that almost 50% of the children answered the question with the word mother. Mother is the one who picks up things. And of course mothers do pick up things, but they do much, much more than just picking up clothes and toys from around the house. And as willing as they are to do such chores, they have a higher calling than that.

We're looking at Proverbs 31. I'm going to preach all about my wife here tonight. Proverbs 31. Or my mother, who's not present, but talking about the blessed woman of God.

The Proverbs 31 woman. My message is about the godly woman. I'm sure there's many godly women amongst us here tonight. The godly woman. The woman to aspire to be.

[1 : 13] And it was women of God who were the first to come to the empty tomb. And it was the women of God who were the last to leave the cross of Christ.

So we can think of godly women through the scriptures. And we might touch on just some of many that are in the word of God we can take heart from today.

And Proverbs 31 kind of rounds it all up. It puts it in a nice little section that describes the godly woman. And apparently Jewish men would memorize this passage.

Really this Proverbs 31 is for the men. Because the men would memorize this passage, this poem, this song of prose, as it were. And they would recite this.

They would sing this as a song of praise to the women in their lives. So Dennis, you've got this homework job to do. You've got to memorize this. And you've got to sing it to Jean every Sabbath from now on.

[2 : 11] No, but you can imagine what it would be. That is, I'm not putting you under bondage there, brother. But I'm sure you'd be glad to sing that to Jean. But men are called to praise the godly women in their lives.

This Sabbath song was such that the family would sing this song every Sabbath in praise of the godly woman. Whether it be the wives, the daughters, the sisters, the mothers, the friends.

The women in their lives, they would sing this song of praise. And so it's a very important passage of scripture that the people of God would pay particular note to.

So let's take it as we read Proverbs 31, just to lead in. As it rounds up, verse 30, it says, The Proverbs 31 woman.

What sets her apart from the rest? What can we learn of her today? There is something that sets this woman apart. She is a God-fearing woman.

[3 : 26] Some women would seek praise for their beauty, for their outward adorning, for their appearance. And they might spend much time on that. Yet perhaps they could miss something, something much more precious, something much more vital.

That true beauty of the inward character, of that virtue, of that moral goodness, of that dignity of soul, of the godly woman, the woman who fears God.

In their search for that which they would aspire to. Many women could miss this.

That matters the most. And so I urge all here to, as we pay attention to these verses of scripture, what can we learn? And for the women here, what can we aspire to?

To rise up and to be a godly woman. To choose God's best. And verse 10, we pick it up as we're going to read through together and comment as we go.

[4 : 31] From verse 10 of Proverbs 31. It says, Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies.

Here is a woman to be praised. A woman who is wise, the excellent wife. It tells of her, her price is far above rubies.

You can't reckon it. You can't really put a price tag. That it is far above rubies. Far above precious stones. This woman. This virtuous woman.

And the sense of this virtuous woman, the sense of that term is this is a woman of strength. A woman of valor. A warrior. A soldier.

As it were. A virtuous woman. A woman of power. The virtue is such that there is a power, there is a strength to this. This is a woman of character. A woman of integrity.

[5 : 32] Now, Boaz knew Ruth to be such a woman. As we read, I can read that one for you. Ruth 3, verse 11. Ruth 3, verse 11.

As Boaz encounters Ruth, he says, And 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.

He came across her in the field and he already had that knowledge of her. That regard of her. That reputation that she had. All the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman.

The same phrase. A virtuous woman. Ruth was such. To be recognised as such. She was known to be such. As a woman of noble character. A virtuous woman.

It speaks of strength. That virtue that comes from God. And here is true value. In these qualities. In these qualities we'll touch on through the remaining verses here.

[6 : 39] The value of this woman of God. These qualities that we hear of. This woman is not cheap. She is valuable. She has a value above rubies.

As many, sadly, might cheapen themselves. This woman is a woman of value. Of virtue. And women of God today.

You are a treasure in God's eyes. You are precious before our Lord. And this true beauty that you know. Is not so much in the outward adorning.

As in the inward. The inward. That as you dress. You dress according to truth. Let's hear more about her. Verse 11. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her.

So that he shall have no need of spoil. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her. She is trustworthy.

[7 : 38] He can have trust in her. Such that she's not a waster. She's not a waster. She is wise. And he can trust her.

To do what is right. She will be subject to her husband. And she will do that which is rightful. Verse 12. She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.

She'll treat her husband well. She is a good helpmate. Character is in her quality. She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.

There's a character quality here. Someone has reckoned character is habitually doing the right thing in the right way. It's not just doing the right thing but in the right way.

That quality. She will do good. She is dependable. Verse 13. She seeketh wool and flax and worketh willingly with her hands.

[8 : 40] So this woman, it tells of her she plans ahead. She seeks for that wool and flax, the resources that she needs to make, that which she wants to make for her family's welfare.

She works willingly. She keeps home. She's industrious. Like Ruth, showed such equality as she laboured in the fields.

She was not afraid of hard work. And she does everything she can to help with the needs of her family. She worketh willingly.

It's not like she's doing it out of being forced to. But there's a willingness. It's like, as we read elsewhere, how we are to serve the Lord heartily from our heart.

Not out of some compulsion or out of some yoke of bondage. But our service is willing. It's freely given.

[9 : 41] It's willing, glad-hearted service. As we should serve the Lord with gladness. And that willingness to work, that willingness to serve, that glad-heartedness of service, such as seen here.

Verse 14. She is like the merchant's ships. She bringeth her food from afar. Now, the picture here is that she is willing to go out of her way to get what is needful.

So the merchant ships, as it were, that they go on long journeys to send and receive goods. And so it's a picture here of the great distances, the great efforts she is willing to expand, to put energy and effort, and to benefit her family by searching out those resources for her family, to bring them to her

That God-given strength of soul. God has given her strength. And her strength comes from the Lord. How does she get to be strong? How does she get such strength?

Her strength comes from God. Amen. That's where the godly woman's strength comes from. From prayer, from the word, from study. As she taps into God's strength.

[16:43] God's supply of strength. That's where true strength is from. From God, isn't it? In 1 Peter 3, Peter addresses the folk there and he says, Who's adorning?

That clothing, that wearing of adornment. Let it not be the outward adorning of plaiting of the hair, of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel.

But let it be the hidden man of the heart, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit. You know, there's that, again, that dress standard, that dress code, as it were, that the woman should have not so much the caring of the outward, not necessarily that that's wrong, but let it be the hidden man of the heart.

The hidden man of the heart. You know, that secret place of character, that secret strength of the inward soul, that quiet spirit, that meekness, and the strength there.

It's like of Moses, it was said, that his strength was his meekness. He's the meekest man. Yet there was a strength of character in Moses. And it tells us in that passage, that verse there, she strengthens her arms.

[17:55] Now, this is not to say, I don't imagine that in this setting, or as God intends it, that this is talking about going to the gym, as if she might have been doing some weightlifting to strengthen her arms, or, you know, gone down to the fitness club to do some exercises to strengthen her arms.

But the strength of her arms, her strong arms, were because she was not afraid of physical labour. She wasn't afraid of a bit of, you know, the, what do they call it, the sweat on the brow, and the putting of exertion, and the, as it were, as it would have been planting a vineyard.

You can imagine, there's some labour there, there's some digging, and some planting, some expending of effort and energy. And she has strong arms because she's not afraid of physical labour.

So it's saying there of this woman of God that she's an all-rounder, really, in all of these ways.

Verse 18, it says she perceiveth that her merchandise is good, her candle goeth not out by night.

It's saying of this godly woman, it says she perceives, she has insight and intuition. Now, Julie's quite a help to me sometimes when I'm inclined to make decisions about this or that, or, you know, might consider who might take certain roles, and Julie gives me her insights, and her kind of intuition, that she can see things that I can't always see.

[19:28] She picks up on things that, as a man, at least for myself, I don't always have that skill, that she has that aptitude of evaluating things.

And I think it's, others might agree or disagree of that, but sometimes a woman can have an intuition and can see things better than the man.

It says of her, she perceives, she's got a perception. She perceives that her merchandise is good. She applies her wisdom and her learning. She's attentive to things, to needs.

It says her candle goes not out by night. So it's saying of this woman, her endurance is such that she doesn't kind of clock off and sort of put her feet up until things are done.

She knows she's got things done. She's devoted to the needs of her family such that she's up at night, in the dark, doing what needs to be done, what she can do, what she has.

[20:30] She does her duty and she's got an endurance there to have a candle going not out by night. Now, of course, like anyone, she needs necessary sleep.

But there's that sense where she puts herself out and goes beyond, above and beyond. Verse 19, she layeth her hands to the spindle and her hands hold the distaff.

Here she is doing some weaving or whatever it be. She's actively productive. She's a hard worker again, that she's not afraid to put her talents and abilities to work, to be productive.

Verse 20, and it's not for herself or her own family alone. Verse 20 tells us, she stretcheth out her hand to the poor, yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.

The Proverbs 31 woman is generous. She is generous. She is a giver. She's not a greedy grasper.

[21:37] She's a giver. Her hands are not tightly clenching and me, me, me. It says her hands are open. She stretches out her hands to the poor.

This woman is a generous person. She is a giver. She is compassionate, not just caring for her own needs, but those of others.

She reaches out her hand to the poor. Now there's always someone poorer than us, isn't there? There always is. And she reaches out to such. She reaches out to others, others that have less than she has, others that have more needs than she has.

And she reaches out her hand with a tender touch to comfort, to counsel, to encourage. What a testimony, this godly woman. And she reaches out to the people with needs.

She gets involved. She provides. Now, you could notice here that she doesn't just wait for them to come to her. She goes out to them.

[22 : 37] She extends herself. She reaches out her hands to the poor. She reaches out. She doesn't just wait for someone to say, oh, can you help me? She actually says, can I help you?

That's the heart of the godly woman. She goes out to others, not just waiting for them to come to her. So, we see this character here. She's loving.

She's overflowing. She's selfless. She cares for the lowly and for the needy. What can we learn from this godly woman?

Verse 21. It says, she is not afraid of the snow for her household. For all her household are clothed with scarlet. And we don't like, we don't sort of think of, you know, Jerusalem as having snow, but the fact is it does get snow.

I saw some footage lately that there's some snow falling in Jerusalem at the moment. And it says, she is not afraid of the snow for her household. She's confident because she's made plans.

[23 : 40] She's confident because she trusts in the Lord to care and provide. She is confident because she watches over her family and she's ready for the future, whatever it holds.

She's prepared her family with clothes that would protect them, would keep them warm and that would look nice. They're clothed with scarlet. There's something, she went extra because the scarlet, the colour of scarlet, apparently it was a more costly colour to have garments of scarlet. Now it's interesting, when we're talking about godly women, sometimes godly women can be the most unlikely of people. Rahab the harlot protected her family in Jericho with the scarlet thread. The scarlet thread. such that, as the story we would know, is such that she assisted the godly spies that went to Jericho and she gave that signal, that sign from her window such that her home and her household would be protected at the time of the downfall of Jericho.

and the scarlet thread was that sign, that testimony, that signal, that picture of the very blood of Christ, the scarlet thread hanging from her window and such that even Rahab had that godly intent as she was saved and God made her a godly woman.

[25 : 22] It didn't matter about what she had done or what she had been, God saved her and transformed her and declared her his saint. Verse 22, she maketh herself coverings of tapestry, her clothing is silk and purple.

Now, we could say here that she is elegant. She is elegant. She maketh herself coverings of tapestry, her clothing is silk and purple.

Now, purple is the colour for royalty. Again, because of its expense and so, it's saying she wears fine clothing, you know, not in the sense of showing off but just as, as the result of her industry. Because she had worked hard, because she had prepared, because she had constructed garments and she worked into the night labouring with the weaving and such, that she had fine clothing, clothing, she had clothing of silk and purple because she had applied herself and God had supplied as a result of her industry.

Verse 23, her husband is known in the gates when he sitteth among the elders of the land. Now, as much as this talking about the man of the house, it's really, again, another sign of the woman behind the man, that she is admirable.

[26 : 42] She is admirable. She's fulfilled her God-given role. She's enabled her husband to fulfil his God-given responsibilities. And the godly woman will enrich her husband.

Her husband is respected in part because of her. Because of her. She is a support to her husband. Someone has said, a wife who fears the Lord increases the esteem of her husband. husband. It's just one other aspect, isn't it? Gentleman here, the wife adds to that. And he's not ashamed of her.

Proverbs 12, verse 4 says, a virtuous woman is a crown to her husband. But she that maketh ashamed is as rottenness in his bones. A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband.

Now, Abigail was a woman. She did her best to help her husband, but he was a fool. Nabal, as the word means fool. And why was Nabal a fool?

[27 : 48] Because he would not listen to her voice. He would not listen to her advice. And so, they say that in 1 Samuel 25, verse 3. Now, the name of the man was Nabal and the name of his wife, Abigail, and she was a woman of good understanding and of beautiful countenance, but the man was churlish and evil in his doings and he was of the house of Caleb.

So, as much as a godly woman might do her utmost to help her husband, if the husband does not heed her advice, he loses out.

So, it's sad in that situation. The virtuous woman, it goes on, is a godly home builder. We see verse 24, we're getting through this now, verse 24, it tells of the godly woman, she maketh fine linen and selleth it and delivereth girdles unto the merchant.

Now, someone has reckoned she's a capitalist here. She's actually applying herself industriously such that her role is extending beyond the home.

She's actually manufacturing here. here. She's starting a manufacturing, a home business, if you like, such that she's playing such a big role that her influence is impacting and extending and reaching out to others.

[29 : 16] And you could think how, as godly women, you could think how my influence as a godly woman can extend to others outside of my home.

And this was such for this godly woman. She was going beyond what was expected of her such as making a contribution far and wider than just her home. So, it's clear from this she's not lazy.

She's working unto the lord. So, there's much truth we can gather here. Verse 25, it says, strength and honour are her clothing. Again, we know she's girded with strength.

It says, strength and honour are her clothing and she shall rejoice in time to come. It's saying she's strong. She's got strength here and she's got honour as well.

It's got that sense she's strong, she's morally strong. This is not just a strength as some would reckon. She's not some superwoman, some wonder woman, as it were, that's got supernatural strength and powers.

[30 : 19] But the strength that she has is a strength that's deep down within, isn't it? The godliness, that moral strength, fear of God, that integrity, that character.

And yet, we know in our world today, such qualities are thought little of. People would, you know, as we know, what the world would praise, what the gossip, glossy magazines would feature of women and men who are braggarts and egotists and self-censored and really just obsessed with materialism and worldliness and fashion.

But the woman and the man who will be praised are those who are God-fearing. The God-fearing strength and honour are her clothing, it says, and she shall rejoice in time to come.

This woman is clothed with integrity, with a spiritual character. She's dignified. There's a dignity about this woman. We see in our world today, dignity is downplayed, isn't it?

It's like that which is praised is the most undignified of things, isn't it? See what the world features as things that are very undignified.

[31 : 49] but for this woman, there's a sense of majesty, a sense of excellency about her. The God-fearing woman, she is praised because she is a God-fearing woman.

She does not fear tomorrow's troubles, but she stands in fear of the Lord, in that godly fear, and she places her hope in God. It says of her that she has not got a fear for the future.

In fact, she rejoices in time to come. There's a joy deep down within, because the joy of the Lord is her strength. As in Nehemiah 8, verse 10, she places her hope in God, her trust in him, and she knows the one who holds the future.

She puts her trust in the Lord. Her hope is in God. And there's a great dignity here to this woman. If she did not have dignity, then she would be as the woman spoken of in Proverbs 11, 22.

Now, I don't think there's any women here present who have got such jewellery, but we see it's becoming more and more common place, where Proverbs 11, 22, it says, as a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman which is without discretion.

[33 : 01] We see women these days walking around with these great big nose rings hanging out from their nose, looking like a cow, as it were.

Forgive me for such a brutal expression, but consider that wearing these big things or whatever it be, this puncturing themselves in every imaginable place, and we see that as a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman, a beautiful woman, which is without discretion.

It's like, where is discretion these days when we see just flesh abounds, doesn't it? Flesh abounds, and discretion is lacking, it's lost.

Modesty, discretion. But if the godly woman, friends here tonight, it says the godly woman rejoices at the time to come, that she's rejoicing, and she's smiling at the future, because her trust is beyond the present, and this world that is hell bound, she's looking unto the lord, she's trusting and hoping in him, she does not fear or worry about the future, because she knows the one who holds the future, she knows the promises of god.

Verse 26 we read on, it says, she openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness, it says of this woman she is wise, she opens her mouth with wisdom, she speaks with wisdom, wisdom, shouldn't our words be few sometimes when we can utter words, unthinking words, careless words, corrupt communication, God forbid, words of gossip, words of murmuring, words of complaint, words of attack, words of criticism, words of hate, this woman is different, she opens her mouth with wisdom, she opens her mouth with wisdom, she speaks with wisdom, she's a teacher, now, there's not too many of the younger age set here tonight, but son, and if you are a son, and your mother's still alive, listen to your mother, amen, listen to your mother,

[35 : 22] I know my mum's still alive, and I know I very much respect my mum and her wisdom, a godly woman opens her mouth with wisdom, and Proverbs 1 verse 8, it says, my son, forsake not the law of thy mother, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, Psalm 111 verse 10, the fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom, Proverbs 15 33, she opens her mouth with wisdom, she's not a pouter, she's a praiser, her mouth is filled with the praise of God, her mouth is filled with wisdom, her mouth is filled with scripture, her mouth is filled with encouragement, her mouth is filled with uplifting, her mouth is filled with praise, wisdom, your mother's here, your children are listening, what you say, let's be such that your mouth will be filled with wisdom, that what you speak will be wise, words that are wise, and you'll live a life mindful, of the

Lord, that's wisdom, her wisdom is practical wisdom too, it says the teaching of kindness is on her tongue, not only is her mouth filled with wisdom, but her words are kind words, the teaching of kindness is on her tongue, you know, we can say words that might be true, but they might be unkind, can't we?

the teaching of kindness is on her tongue, and this applies, I'm sure, equally to men, let's make it, speak kindly, kind words, words to uplift, not words to hurt, kind, gracious words, verse 27, she's watchful, she's an inspiring example, this household runs well because she is running it, she's organising, she's managing, she's looking to the ways of her household, and she's not eating the bread of idleness, she is not laid back, she's very much watchful and active, and we're coming to the last few verses here, verse 28, her children arise up and call her blessed, her husband also, and he praiseth her, and what a blessing, if your mum's still alive, call her blessed, call her blessed, husbands praise her, she's honoured, she's respected, the virtuous woman, she receives the honour of her children's praises, praise God, verse 29, many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all, her husband recognises, he tells her, she's more than just noble, she is excellent, virtuous, encourage her, see those good qualities, praise her, verse 30, favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised, friends, this world is so captivated, and the word captive, speaks of bondage, speaks of chains, it's captivated by things that are evil, isn't it?

The gossip magazines, as I've talked about, the Hollywood movies, the Hollywood style music, videos, and such, it's all flesh, more and more flesh, and it's all about outward beauty, as they would reckon it, as they would paint themselves, but that beauty is vain, it's vain, this word favour, can we talk about the form as well, as if it's all about looks, about form, about fashion, about outward adorning, about beauty, as the world would define that, but what does God say is really beautiful, what God says is really important, a woman that fears the Lord, she, she shall be praised, the woman who is godly, a woman who fears the Lord, a God fearing woman, is a strong woman, a mighty woman, a woman who fears the Lord, this is the ultimate character quality, and here is this inward quality of godliness, young men find a woman who fears the Lord, a wife with godly character, and young women aspire to be, aspire to be, such a woman, a wife with godly character, and wait until there's a godly match.

[40 : 38] Verse 31, give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her in the gates. again, the man is praising this woman, she shall be praised, the woman that fears the Lord.

She's brought so much blessing to others by what she has done for them, and they in turn give praise for that. Let her own works praise her. Her godly character shines in all that she does. friends here tonight, a godly woman. Proverbs 31. It's good to remind yourself of this.

Obviously, the Jews of today, as perhaps tradition applies, reckon these verses were very important, such that they would recall them and recite them.

Sabbath by Sabbath. It's an interesting thought, isn't it? It's a very important chapter, and we can learn much from that.

[41 : 44] Favor is deceitful and beauty is vain, but the woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised. Let's pray. Lord, we know that godliness doesn't come by our own doing, but by what you have done.

And if we pray for every woman in the hearing of this, that they might know what it is to be saved, because that's where godliness begins. That's where life eternal begins in trusting you.

Lord, we pray for every woman, every woman in our lives, daughters, sisters, mothers, wives, mothers-in-law.

Lord, we pray for the women in our circle of acquaintance, and we pray, as it were, for women here present also, that we might all be encouraged to see these wonderful truths of your scriptures, Lord, that the wonderful character qualities that you commend, and that you praise such a woman.

Help us, Lord, to learn from the example of this woman, and to take that to heart tonight. Pray if there's any yet to trust you, that they will call on your name and be saved, knowing the cross was where our sin, guilt, penalty was paid in full.

[43 : 18] And Lord, as believers now, let us be mindful of these truths and put them into action, we pray. In Jesus' name, amen.