

A Magnificent Mother

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[0 : 00] Turn in your Bibles this morning to Proverbs chapter 1.!

Proverbs chapter 1 beginning there in verse 1. Proverbs of Solomon, son of David, king of Israel, to know wisdom and instruction, to understand words of insight, to receive instruction in wise dealing, in righteousness, justice, and equity, to give prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the youth.

Let the wise hear and increase in learning, and the one who understands obtain guidance to understand a proverb and a saying, the words of the wise and their riddles.

The fear of the Lord is the begin of knowledge. Fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Let us pray. Our Father God, we are so very blessed to be able to hear your word that you have graciously revealed to us in the scriptures.

[1 : 30] You have given to us all that we need for life and godliness. And while we enjoy the privilege of holding it in our hands, we recognize the frailty of our own flesh.

The tendency we have of allowing our minds to drift away from those things that are of eternal value. To be distracted. To be discouraged. To be discouraged.

To be discouraged. And we are so very thankful that we who know the Lord Jesus as our Savior have the blessing of the indwelling Spirit who is in us and is actively engaged in helping us grow to be more like Christ.

Christ. And so this morning our prayer is this, is that the Holy Spirit would help me to preach the word and your dear people to receive the word and to allow the work of the Spirit to produce the fruit that brings glory to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

And we ask this because we have the privilege. In Jesus' name. Amen. Well, today is Mother's Day and it's a day that very rightly we set aside to give thanks to the Lord Jesus for godly mothers and for those who have had such a significant influence on us.

[3 : 10] And you may have thought to yourself when I started in Proverbs chapter 1, how is he going to get to a chapter or a verse that has something to do with Mother's Day?

That's not hard. Turn to Proverbs 31. I read Proverbs chapter 1 because context is important.

And I thought it was appropriate for us to understand that the beginning of the book of Proverbs, which tells us why the book was written, frames the issue of value and instruction against the backdrop of a fear of the Lord.

And I'll tell you ahead of time that's where we're going to end up. It is important for us when we hold the word in our hand and as we listen to preaching this morning that we remind ourselves what we are doing is really listening to what God says to us.

And the thing that is the greatest, clearest announcement of what God says is when I read the scriptures. Do you understand that?

[4 : 22] That's God's word. That is what he has to say that is eternally valuable. And when I read this morning in the prayer from the Psalms, do you remember what he says?

That you have magnified your name and your word. It will last forever. You are here this morning, I trust, to hear what God has to say.

And so as we look this morning at a text that reminds us of the role and value of a godly wife and mother, I want to read another small portion of the scripture to you from Proverbs chapter 31 there in verse 10 through 12.

Verse 28.

Verse 28.

[5 : 36] I want you to recognize as we kind of get into the passage in a larger context.

Let me frame what the scriptures tell us here. And it is this, that God has counsel on life choices. He gives us advice. And when he gives us advice, it is something that is preeminently important to us.

And when a man stands up to preach the word and he stands before God's people, it is incumbent upon him to make the word of God clear and plain.

That's his responsibility. It's a sad thing to recognize that today some preaching really aims to get as close to entertainment or the modern theories of self-help as is conceivably possible.

And you see this evidence when you hear sermons or when you hear comments or see them at various places in which the thing that really is marked out as significant, hey, come hear the pastor because he really tells good jokes.

[7 : 01] I remember last week actually reading an article on the internet in which a pastor was talking about how much he loved fishing. And so he made it a point.

He was kind of announcing what his pulpit ministry involved. And he says, listen, I try to weave fishing into every sermon. And I thought, wow, now that's a real reason to go hear a pastor.

You know, how many of you really like to fish? I like to eat them, you know, but so, you know, preaching is really not about entertaining.

It is really not about giving you advice on how to make more money or be happier or to get along with your neighbors or whatever else it is. It is really at the heart of preaching.

Its primary value is this, is bringing you face to face with the creator of this universe, first with a sense of guilt and shame, and then with a hope in the finished work of Christ.

[8 : 06] Do you understand that? When the word is preached, we always should be in awe that the God of this universe has revealed himself to us rather than just turning us into ashes.

And he has chosen to help us know who he is and do that through the Lord Jesus Christ. And when you think about that, there's no other response but awe and just joy and glory.

And so here we are this morning at a very practical moment in our lives. And we are dealing with a passage that God chose to give to us for our sakes.

The book of Proverbs is actually filled with advice, practical advice on how to control your tongue, how to control your anger, how to manage your finances, all different kinds of things. And here at the very end, Solomon.

Now, can you ponder this? Solomon, by the way, the perfect model of how to live a chaste and godly life with one wife for all of his life? Gag. But there he is.

[9 : 11] And this is the word of God. This is the scriptures. Holy Spirit inspired him to write it. And he gives us advice. That's valuable.

I want you to recognize that when scripture tells us something, it is telling us something for our benefit and our blessing. When God says, do this or don't do that, he's not just giving us arbitrary, whimsical rules.

He's saying it as an expression of his character. And he's also saying it for our benefit. One Bible scholar put it this way, when God says no, he's also saying it will hurt you.

And so when we listen to his counsel and we attend to it, we should recognize that our longing and interest in obedience is not merely to avoid his chastening.

But really, we should obey also with a sincere desire that when we obey, we are saying thank you to him. And we are expressing our thanksgiving for his wisdom and his goodness.

[10 : 21] Everything that a good God says is good for his people. I say this because here we are in Proverbs 31. And God is giving us very clear indication about what a man should look for in his wife.

By extension, you find King Lemuel's mother advising him on what to look for. And you would imagine that there would also be mothers out there, not only of sons, but mothers of daughters who are thinking, hey, this is what God wants me to encourage my daughter to become.

And so as we look at this passage, beginning there in verse 10 and carrying on through to the very end of the chapter, we recognize that God has explicit things to say that are valuable.

I want you to understand that the implication of the passage is this, is that God intends for us to be thoughtful and deliberate in choosing a wife. And so I want you to recognize here in this passage three things, what, how, and why.

What, how, and why. So let's talk about the characteristics of a good wife. What, how, why. We find first of all in verse 10 through 12, and let me read that passage again.

[11 : 43] Here's what the author Solomon says, an excellent wife who can find. She is far more precious than jewels. The heart of her husband trusts in her. We do find there that God wants us to understand that a good wife is worth something.

She's special. She's valuable. And God tells us that a good wife is a priceless gift. Proverbs chapter 18, let's go back just for a moment to frame.

By the way, you remember one of the rules of understanding Scripture is the best way to understand Scripture is to use... Can we say that loudly just so that everybody gets it, everybody knows that?

Okay. The best way to understand Scripture is... Scripture. Okay. So we go to Proverbs chapter 18, verse 22, and here's what it says. He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the Lord.

Lord, Judith is the second most priceless gift I've ever received in all of my life. My first was salvation through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, delivering me from the absolute misery of my dark and wicked heart and giving me eternal life.

[12 : 53] The second one was my wife. And here in Proverbs chapter 18, verse 22, it says, Hey, listen. A wife is a good thing and indicates favor from the Lord.

Look at Proverbs chapter 19, verse 14. House and wealth are inherited from fathers, but a prudent wife is from the Lord. Now, what does prudent mean?

Listen to me. This is the honest truth. For much of my life as a young person, I was fully persuaded that the kind of wife I needed was one that was giggly and kind of a cheerleader and just, you know, really came down to this.

I wanted someone that would spend her life saying, Tim, Tim, he's my man. If he can't do it, no one can. You know, it's like I really wanted to say, Oh, Tim, you're so wonderful.

You know, and any of you that know Judith, she's in the nursery today. She said, By the way, you remember I'm in the nursery. And I said, Okay. Judith is not one who is gifted with extreme decorum and diplomacy.

- [14 : 02] You know, when she tells me what she's thinking, it's usually in one sentence and it's necessary. A prudent wife is one who is thoughtful and attentive to the need that is there. And as you look at the passage, it makes it very, very clear that a prudent wife is a gift from God. Now, I want you to move on and we want to deal with the what, how, and why. And I'll tell you ahead of time, we're not going to spend much time on the how. Because if I did, we would be here until probably Monday afternoon. And all of you who are women would just be kind of, You can deal with that on your own. We'll get there. But I want you to recognize that what we think about here is what does a good wife do? Going back to Proverbs chapter 31, in verse 12, it says, She does him good and not harm. Think about that with me for a moment. When God created this universe and created the earth in particular and populated it first with all the animals and all the trees and all the living things except for man, everything he made, he made in pairs.
- [15 : 30] Isn't that right? Male and female, male and female, male and female, except for Adam. And when he made Adam, he made Adam alone. And in order to help Adam discover that there was something missing, what did he do? He put Adam through this kind of lesson. Name this, name that, name the other thing. And finally, there was not found for Adam a helper that was suitable. And God then brought Eve into Adam's life. And in bringing Eve into Adam's life, his purpose was to, what does it say? A helpmate suitable for him. And so when we stop and think about the role and responsibility that a wife has in a husband's life, we recognize this, that it is her divine appointment to be her husband's helpmate. And it's summarized for us there in verse 12. It says, here's what a godly wife does. She does him good. That means that her goal is to do what is best for her husband.
- [16 : 43] That means she invests her energy and her affection in loving him and in helping him and encourage him and respectfully admonishing him. By the way, are there times that you need to speak the truth? And the answer is yes. Yes. I have to tell you, earlier this week, well, last week. This week's just getting started. But earlier last week, Judith and I were engaged in a conversation. And it ended up that I reminded her of how Job dealt with his wife. How many of you remember Job's wife after she'd about had it with the way things were rolling out? What did she say to him? A piece of wifely advice that should have gone in the toilet the minute it was said. She said, curse God and die. You know, I was just really upset. And how did Job handle that? Shut up. Don't ever say that. Don't ever say that. Job is the model of biblical discretion.
- [17 : 48] He says, you are speaking like one of those foolish women. Guys? Yes. I hope that when it is necessary for you to give biblical counsel to your wives, that you speak with that level of discretion. And all of men said, yes, amen. I need to work at that. Right? Right? And women? When it is necessary for you to bring biblical counsel to your husband, don't do it like a fishmonger's wife. You know what I mean by a fishmonger's wife? You know, it's like shouting out in the neighborhood and everybody knows you're upset with them and probably justifiably so. But dial it down.

And let him hear the word of truth with a gentle, gracious spirit. What it says in Ephesians is speak the truth in love. A godly wife does what is good.

That means that when she has to speak, there are times that she has to say exactly what is true and put it on the table for the sake of truth and for the sake of God.

[18 : 56] Now, there are also times where a godly wife has to act like Abigail. And you can go to 1 Samuel chapter 25 later. Don't go there now. Okay? But in 1 Samuel chapter 25, we find the illustration of a wife who spared the entire extended family by doing what was necessary and also letting Nabal, the wicked man, know eventually what needed to be done.

So as you think about what a good wife does, understand this, that a good wife does what is good for her husband. And I'm going to comment very briefly on the second portion of the text.

And if you were to look there in verse 13, she seeks wool and flax and works with willing hands. She's like the ships of the merchant. She brings her food from afar. And I could go on all the way down to verse 29.

And if I were to take the time to go through all of that, first of all, you would end up being a little fatigued to recognize how much she did. But I'm going to comment very briefly on the second portion of the text.

What we find in that passage, remember, what does a good wife do? She does what is good for her husband. Secondly, how does she do it? We have a fairly lengthy passage that tells us the details. Now listen to me.

[20 : 14] Proverbs chapter 31 is written as a mnemonic device. A, what's the next thing that happens if you're teaching reading in your home?

What do we do? A is for apple. B is for boy. Or who said ball?

There was no ball in my school. See, a mnemonic device means that it is put alphabetically. And then, you know, so you can remember. And so you can imagine good Hebrew mommies were teaching their boys, Hey, honey, when it's time for you to go kicking tires, here's what you're looking for.

You are looking for one who is going to do you good all her life. Let's start with Aleph. That's A in Hebrew. Let's go to Beth.

Let's go to Gimel. Let's go to Daleth. Let's go to He, Wau, Zion, Heth, Teth, Yod, Kav. There we go. Okay. And so you're going to work your way through. And so, hello. Mom, coach your boys.

[21 : 22] Coach them when. Do not coach them when it's time to go out the door doing a little bit of window shopping. You coach them when they're four and five and six.

And don't hesitate. They are actually thinking about playing house long before you think they are. How many of you have heard what I said? They are.

I won't refer to who it was, but one of my sons came home and he shared with me that there was a little girl that was interested in him. And he was like in first grade.

And I said, honey, you've got to work at this. He says, I can't help it. They just like me. So I thought, you know, okay, we're at the moment of teachable opportunity.

I said, so, what is it you like about her? Well, I really like what she does with flax.

[22 : 28] Oh, she's good. Okay. Here's my point. God cares about us ministering to our children and teaching them ahead of time what to look for.

And all God's people said, yes. Okay. Well, God shows us how a godly wife does good. Extensive passage.

And one of the things that I would just summarize it with is that you see a woman who is actively engaged pretty much all the time in the well-being of her family.

Okay? So, guys, when you're thinking about someone who you might be interested in and you find that she thinks she is the center of the universe and the reason she exists is so that everybody else would be satisfied and pleased in serving her, you're probably not looking in the right direction.

I'll never forget dating a girl that was a beauty queen. I don't know why she dated me.

[23 : 43] I don't know why. But, you know, I remember actually showing up at the house to pick her up for a date. And how many of you know that I like being early?

Early? I mean, it's like early is good. Early, in fact, is godly. You know, there's nothing like being early. It's really important. I showed up early. And by the time she rolled down the steps to make a presentation, you know, it was about 45 minutes past the time that I had anticipated.

And that was already about nine strikes against her. But then when she shared, I mean, she was attractive. She was just a knockout. But when she shared, it took her four hours to do her hair and her makeup.

I thought, not for me. Okay? A godly wife puts her energy into being a blessing to her family.

That's what we see. But here's really the most important piece. This is the most important thing we find in this extended passage.

[24 : 50] Put your finger on verse 30. You might underline it. Charm is deceitful.

And beauty is vain. You know what that's saying? What's on the outside really is not absolutely reliable.

Nor does it last. But a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised. What the scripture does here is it tells us why a godly woman and a wife acts the way she does.

What motivates her? What prompts her to be the way she is? And here's what the passage tells us. It tells us that a good wife fears God. That's at the heart of it.

The most significant thing about the woman that Solomon portrays here for the body of believers that are together here this morning is this.

[26 : 00] It tells us that a godly woman fears the Lord. What stands above all else? The thing that is most prized is what her view of God is.

A.W. Tozer said this. What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing we think about.

So, if the most praiseworthy characteristic of a good wife is her fear of God, we should take the time to stop just for a moment this morning and ask ourselves, practically, do I fear God?

Do I fear God? Another associated question would be this. What does it mean to fear God? Interestingly enough, if you were to think through the book of Proverbs, the subject of fearing God is one of the central themes to the book.

Fifteen different times it appears. We find it at the very beginning of the book. We find it at the very end. And woven in 13 other times, we see a picture of what does it mean to fear God.

[27 : 24] And if I were to ask you this morning, would you characterize yourself this morning honestly, intuitively, instinctively, I am one who fears God.

I would probably have to say that there are many of you here that don't think that way. God's our bud. I mean, He's the one I can talk to.

You know, He is our Father. He's loving and He is gracious. But this issue of fearing God is not just an Old Testament theme. It's something that weaves its way throughout Scripture from all the way in Genesis to the book of Revelation.

And so here is the Holy Spirit instructing us to understand that fearing God is important. So what does fearing God involve?

It's not just abject terror. Though His divine presence and power is overwhelming. Let me put it this way. Fearing God means knowing Him for one thing.

[28 : 38] And I want you to look over at Proverbs chapter 9. We're going to take a little bit of time to understand this. Proverbs chapter 9 verse 10. So just stop for a minute. I want you to think very practically.

Do I really fear God? Is fearing God something that is front and center in my thinking? I was thinking the other day. Just, you know, strange little weird mind that I have.

I was in Home Depot. That's where I go a lot of times just to kind of feel good. And I was walking up and down the aisles. And I happened to pick up something.

And I thought, I want to put this. I don't. How many of you are like me? I mean, don't put anything in your pocket. Right? Never put anything. Never put anything in your pocket when you're in a store. Why?

I don't want to ever forget. I have the ability to forget between the front door and, you know, wherever I am. It's like, don't put it in my pocket. Put it in the cart. And I'm thinking, so why don't I steal? Why don't I steal?

[29 : 38] Why don't I steal? The reason I don't steal is not because I'm afraid of getting caught. Because a lot of people get away with stealing at Home Depot.

The reason I don't steal is because I have a wholesome, healthy fear for the God of this universe that someday Tim Kenoyer is going to stand before.

And I don't want to stand there ashamed. And I thought that. I'm not going to steal this little quarter-inch drive because I fear God.

Fearing God, in Proverbs 9, verse 10, it says, The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight. There are some of you sitting here that really honestly can say, I don't fear God.

Well, you don't know Him. You don't know Him very well. Do you follow that? The lack of a fear of God in practical terminology has its roots in not knowing Him.

[30 : 49] Furthermore, fearing God means listening to His Word.

Proverbs 15, verse 33. Remember, one of the things that I said is Proverbs has a lot to say about fearing God, and we're just going to touch on a couple of them. Proverbs 15, verse 33.

The fear of the Lord is instruction in wisdom, and humility comes before honor. Fearing God means listening to His Word.

Listening to His Word. Listening to His Word. Listening to His Word. Remember I said that, practically speaking, there are a lot of people that don't fear God?

And if I were just to parse it out, one of the indicators of that is, how much time do you actually spend in the Word of God, in private communion with God, paying attention to His Word, hearing what He has to say?

[31 : 53] If you don't listen to His Word, you don't know Him very well. And the less you know Him, the less inclined you are to fear Him. Well, in broader terms, I want you to look to Exodus 20, verse 18 through 20, and we're just going to touch on this as we close.

Exodus 20, verse 18 through 20. Very interesting passage in which the law was given to the children of Israel, and it was given to them in a pretty spectacular, dramatic way that got everybody's attention.

Have you ever heard people say, in reference to the Word of God, well, that's just your opinion, right? I mean, well, you know, immorality is wrong. Well, that's just your opinion. Or, you know, stealing, that's just your opinion.

I mean, let me tell you. When Israel received the law, I don't think there were any in the crowd that were saying, well, that's just what he thinks. Scared spitless.

Well, here we are, Exodus 20, verse 18 through 20. Now, when all the people saw the thunder and the flashes of lightning and the sound of the trumpet and the mountains smoking, the people were afraid and trembled, and they stood far off.

[33 : 10] You got that? Were they afraid? Yes. Yes. And they said to Moses, you speak to us and we will listen, but do not let God speak to us lest we die.

There's a little bit of abject terror there, isn't there? Wouldn't you agree? How many of you have been afraid in the thunderstorm? I mean lightning cracking. How many of you have ever gone to a basement in a thunderstorm or a tornado?

Warning. Warning. How many of you have ever been in a thunderstorm when you're out in a tent? Now, that amps it up a lot, doesn't it?

These people had no tent. They had no basement. They had no bathroom to hide in. They couldn't crawl into the tub. They were just out there in the open, and God was letting it rip, and they were scared spitless.

Verse 20. Don't be afraid. For God has come to test you, that the fear of him may be before you, that you may not sin.

[34 : 23] Huh? That's pretty interesting, isn't it? Don't fear. He's testing you that you will fear.

Now, how many of you wish the Scriptures were just intuitively obvious, just like that? The fact of the matter is, here's the way Martin Luther explained it.

He said, there's a difference between servile fear of judgment, you know? When I am driving the speed limit, and someone said to me, you use a lot of illustrations like this, so it's probably an indication of an ongoing process of progressive sanctification.

But when I'm driving the speed limit, and I see an officer of the court over there on the side, no big deal. Okay?

When I am playing fast and loose with the limits, you know, and I suddenly, I look in the rear view mirror to see whether the light's lit up, you know, because I'm thinking that could be a signal.

[35 : 30] Servile fear is that fear of judgment. It's a fearful thing to fall into the hands of a holy God.

It is appropriate to have a lasting fear for the Holy One of Israel. But on the other hand, there is a filial fear as the kind of fear that a father, a child has for his father that is wise and good.

Listen to me carefully, dads. Listen. There is no place for you terrifying your children by your abusive treatment of them ever.

They should fear your righteousness, not your anger, because here's the fact. The day is coming that they will be bigger than you and stronger than you, and you will not be able to rely upon physical mistreatment to stir their hearts to fear.

They should fear the office that you carry as a representative of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[36 : 47] Filial fear means fearing God in a way in which we have an awe of Him, with a sense of His holiness, with a sense of His justice, with an overwhelming sense of His power and His glory, and a longing and a delight to please Him.

You know, when I was serving tables last night with Tyler, Tyler was my helper, and Tyler and I were taking care of one of the tables, and I am not really a good waiter, you know, that kind of thing, and so I was kind of anxious a little bit that I was going to spill something on somebody.

I mean, anybody else out there kind of, you know, I was like, ah, a little bit of fear. I don't want to mess this up. And when we have that fear of God that is in awe and delight, we want to do what's right.

Let me close with this as we think about the fear of God. It comes from John Newton's hymn. It was grace that taught my heart to fear.

Do you know what that's saying? The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. And we start out. We start out recognizing that the God of this universe, holy and awesome, cannot overlook sin.

[38 : 22] And there is no way around the shame and the guilt that sin produces in any man's heart. Now, we may dull our conscience, but it never goes away.

And it is appropriate for us, when we think about the sinfulness of our own heart, to have a sense of fear. But here's what John Newton says.

It was grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved. Do you know what it's saying?

That the God who has the right to judge us and condemn us for all eternity, for the hardness and the blackness of our heart, was willing to send Jesus to die for my sins.

And he offers to me the gift of everlasting life. Come unto me. Come unto me. Come unto me. And I'll give you rest. I don't know where you are this morning, but you're really in only one of two conditions.

[39 : 44] I trust that most of you who are here know Christ as your Savior, but do you need to mature and grow in your appreciation for the holiness of our God and to fear Him aright and to grow in your knowledge of the Holy One?

Yes. Would it be appropriate for you, who know the Lord Jesus Christ, who know the Lord Jesus Christ, to cry out with humility and say, listen, I have let too many things distract me from the glory of Christ and the glory of the Father, and I want to know Him.

And I want to know Him better. And today is the day I rededicate myself to that. There may be some of you here that do not know Christ as your Savior. You may be sitting here and you've grown up in church.

I may have even baptized you, but you're not saved. And the only fear you have today, truthfully, is a fear of eventual judgment.

There is no remedy for that darkness except for coming with broken humility and saying, I am a sinner justly condemned by a holy God, but I believe that God sent Jesus to be my Savior and He died for my sins.

[40 : 55] I cannot save myself. My own efforts are valueless. And I will not offend God by suggesting that anything I do earns merit.

I will believe in Jesus Christ alone. Let's pray. Father God, this morning, the Word puts us on the spot of saying yes or no.

Yes. Yes. I fear God and I want to grow in knowing Him better. I'm thankful for the Lord Jesus Christ and I want my life to reflect His glory.

I want to be the man. I want to be the woman. I want to be the boy or girl that displays the glory of our Creator, our God and our Savior.

There are some here also that do not know Christ. And this morning, I would plead with you, Father, that you would bring them to the place where instead of saying no and sulking off to eventual destruction and eternal suffering, they would humble themselves this morning and say the thing I need more than anything else is complete forgiveness for all of my sins through the finished work of Christ and I claim that gift and that promise.

[42 : 34] And we pray that this morning would be a day of decision that honors God. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.