

# Women of Valor

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*Proverbs 31:10-31*

## INTRODUCTION

- A. Illustration about angel taking a mother to heaven, Encyclopedia of 15 000 Illustrations, #7983—Indeed, a mother never stops loving.
- B. Today is Mother’s Day, a day set aside to honor mothers.
  - 1. Scripture admonishes us to honor our mothers.
    - a. Those who struck or cursed father or mother was to be put to death (Ex. 21:15, 17).
    - b. “Cursed is the one who treats his father or his mother with contempt” (Deut. 27:16).
    - c. Paul quoted Deut. 5:16 in the Ephesian letter—“Honor your father and mother” (Eph. 6:2).
    - d. It is good and acceptable before God to repay our parents (1 Tim. 5:4).
  - 2. This morning, we want to study a passage which speaks of the ideal mother.
    - a. READ TEXT.
    - b. Prov. 31 are the words of King Lemuel which his mother taught him (Prov. 31:1)—It could be that this poem was taught to King Lemuel by his mother so that the king would find a good wife.
      - 1) Good wives are not easy to come by, especially in the society in which we live.
      - 2) The Scriptures praise a good wife.
        - a) “An excellent wife is the crown of her husband” (Prov. 12:4).
        - b) “He who finds a wife finds a good thing” (Prov. 18:22).
        - c) “A prudent wife is from the Lord” (Prov. 19:14).
    - c. Traditionally, this poem was recited by husbands and children at the Sabbath table—this was the way husbands and children praised their wife and mother.
    - d. Throughout the book of Proverbs, Solomon warns his son against the adulterous woman—This ideal wife stands in sharp contrast to that woman.
    - e. The image presented here is of a wealthy family and how diligently this wife manages the household.

## HER HUSBAND CAN TRUST HER, vv. 10-12

- A. A virtuous wife is worth far more than rubies, v. 10.
  - 1. The word “virtuous” means “might,” “valor,” or “ability.”
    - a. The term was often used to denote strong men going into battle.
    - b. A virtuous woman is capable to complete the task in front of her.
  - 2. Her worth is more than rubies.
    - a. In Proverbs, wisdom is said to be more precious than rubies (3:15; 8:1 1).
    - b. The poet means to say that a good wife is a more precious possession than all the earthly treasure one could have.
- B. The heart of her husband safely trusts her, v. 11.
  - 1. In this age, few men can totally trust their wives.
    - a. A woman might destroy that trust by lying to her husband.
    - b. A woman might destroy that trust through reckless and careless behavior.
  - 2. However, the virtuous woman can be trusted—Her husband can trust her because she has proven herself capable.
  - 3. Her husband will have no lack of gain—this woman’s husband lacks nothing of value.
- C. She does her husband good and not evil all the days of her life, v. 12—Because she loves her husband, she

seeks to do that which will do him good.

- D. The picture we have here is of a wife seeking to please her husband and do him good.
  - 1. Wives are to be submissive to their husbands (1 Pet. 3:1).
    - a. This is no excuse for husbands being tyrants.
    - b. This means that a woman should seek to honor and please her husband.
  - 2. Women, are you seeking to please your husband? Can your husband trust you?

### **HER HOUSEHOLD CAN DEPEND ON HER, vv. 13-15**

- A. Here the poet presents a picture of a large household which needs tending.
- B. She seeks wool and flax and willingly works with her hands, v. 13.
  - 1. She seeks wool and flax to provide clothing for her household.
  - 2. This is not a lazy lady, for she willingly works with her hands.
- C. Like a merchant ship, this woman brings her food from afar, v. 14.
  - 1. This simile suggests that the virtuous wife brings a continual supply of abundance.
  - 2. Her household has no need to worry about not having food--This woman makes sure they have food.
- D. She rises while it is yet night to provide food, v. 15.
  - 1. By rising early in the morning, she puts her household before her own comfort—Her household is more important to her than her sleep.
  - 2. She provides food for her household--Again, we are told that her household has no lack for food.
  - 3. She also provides food for her servants.
    - a. Many people in power might have been tempted to mistreat their slaves.
    - b. But this woman of valor makes sure her servants have food on their tables.
- E. This woman had a household who depended upon her, and she always came through.
  - 1. Illustration about boy's mother being in the hospital and the family being lonely, Illustrations Unlimited, #3, p. 376.
  - 2. Is your family that dependent upon you?

### **HER BUSINESS CAN THRIVE UNDER HER, vv. 16-18**

- A. The poet here pictures the ideal wife as a shrewd business woman who makes wise investments.
- B. She considers a field and buys it; from her profits she plants a vineyard, v. 16.
  - 1. Apparently, she is able to sell the field she bought for more than what she paid for it.
  - 2. From these profits she buys plants to make a vineyard—Surely, she sold the fruit of her vineyard.
- C. She girds herself with strength, and strengthens her arms, v. 17.
  - 1. This verse presents this virtuous woman as a tireless worker, for “girding” is an expression for preparation for serious work.
  - 2. This is a woman who is not afraid to work—she welcomes the opportunity.
- D. She sees that her merchandise is good; her lamp does not go out by night.
  - 1. What she sells and trades is quality material.
  - 2. Her lamp does not go out by night could mean a couple things:
    - a. This could mean that the virtuous woman burns the midnight oil.
    - b. However, this could also mean that her house flourished without calamity.
- E. The virtuous woman worked tirelessly for her family. Do you work tirelessly for your family?

### **HER FAMILY AND THE POOR ARE PROVIDED FOR, vv. 19-21**

- A. The virtuous wife stretches out her hands to the distaff, and her hand holds the spindle, v. 19.
  - 1. The idea here is that the virtuous woman spins the wool and flax she sought.

2. “Distaff” is the straight rod used for spinning, the spindle is the round circular part used for spinning.
- B. The virtuous wife helps the poor, v. 21.
1. The text literally says that she “opens her palm” to the poor, this phrase means that she gives to the poor with liberality.
  2. God expects his people to be generous to the poor.
    - a. The Law of Moses instructed the Israelites to care for the poor.
      - 1) The Israelites were not to gather all their grapes, they were to leave the gleaning of their vineyard to the poor and the stranger (Lev. 19:10).
      - 2) God told the Israelites, “You shall open your hand wide to your brother, to our poor, and your needy, in your land” (Deut. 15:1 1).
    - b. The New Testament teaches us to care for the poor.
      - 1) We are to support those who are weak, the poor (Acts 20:35).
      - 2) “Pure and undefiled religion” is to care for orphans and widows in their distress (Js. 1:27).
- C. This woman is not afraid of snow, for her household is clothed with scarlet, v. 21.
1. A fall of snow in Palestine during the winter months is not rare; this snow is often accompanied by freezing cold.
  2. The virtuous woman does not worry about the freezing cold, her household is clothed in scarlet.
    - a. The word “scarlet” could mean “two cloaks,” suggesting double garments for warmth.
    - b. It is also possible that the scarlet was made from wool which would preserve warmth.
    - c. Either way, this woman provided for her family.
- D. Sister, do you provide for your family in this manner?

### **HER CLOTHING IS MADE BY HER, vv. 22-24**

- A. She makes tapestry for herself; her clothing is fine linen and purple.
1. Fine linen and purple were very costly; this woman had nice clothing.
  2. One is reminded of the rich man in Lk. 16:19 who also wore nice clothing; he was lost not for being rich but for not giving to the poor.
- B. Her husband is known in the gates as he sits with the elders, v. 23.
1. This virtuous woman had an important husband.
    - a. He sat at the gate with the elders of the land.
    - b. The “gate” was the place of the assembly of the elders who had judicial responsibilities.
    - c. Likely, this man himself was an elder who helped judge the people.
  2. Behind every successful man stands a good woman.
  3. The President and First Lady were walking through the streets of Washington.
    - a. They saw one of the First Lady’s former boyfriends collecting garbage.
    - b. The President said, “Aren’t you glad you didn’t marry him. You’d be married to a garbage man.”
    - c. The First Lady said, “Had I married him, he would be the President.”
- C. She makes linen garments and sells them; she supplies sashes for the merchants, v. 24.
1. This woman was not lazy, and her industry found expression in business.
  2. The weaving of fine linens was a common trade for women in Palestine.
- D. This woman makes and wears fine linen; her husband is an important man.
1. Are you an industrious woman? Do you work hard at what you do?
  2. Do you stand behind and support your husband?

### **HER MOUTH SPEAKS WISDOM, vv. 25-27**

- A. Strength and honor are her clothing, v. 25.
1. Being clothed with strength presents this woman as being industrious—she is far from lazy.

- 2. Being clothed with honor presents this woman as having true dignity.
- B. This lady shall rejoice in time to come—Since this woman is industrious, she is confident of the future.
- C. She opens her mouth with wisdom and on her tongue is the law of kindness, v. 26.
  - 1. This refers to the woman’s speech as kind and gracious.
  - 2. She uses good, practical common sense in her discussion, and her instruction is reliable.
- D. She watches over the ways of her household, v. 27—She makes sure that her household does what is right.
- E. She does not eat the bread of idleness, v. 27—She is no sluggard.

### **HER FAMILY PRAISES HER MERITS, vv. 28-29**

- A. Her children rise up and call her blessed, v. 28.
  - 1. Those who know this woman the best rise up to praise her.
    - a. Many times close family members don’t look upon each other the way the public does.
    - b. After all, those in the same household know everyone else’s warts and all.
  - 2. Yet, this woman is of such quality that her children praise her.
- B. Her husband also praises her by saying, “Many daughters have done well, But you excel them all,” v. 29.
  - 1. Her husband apparently speaks for the entire family.
  - 2. This family knows other women who do great things, but no one like this virtuous woman.
- C. If your husband and children were to rise up, what would they call you? Would they praise you?

### **CONCLUSION**

- A. Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing, v. 30.
  - 1. The real beauty of a woman is not outward, but inward.
  - 2. 1 Pet. 3:3-4.
- B. A woman who fears the Lord shall be praised--Her family and friends will honor her devotion to God.
- C. She should be given of the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her in the gates, v. 31.
- D. We need more godly women in this world.
  - 1. If every child had a godly mother, crime would drop dramatically.
  - 2. If every husband had a godly wife, divorce would be rare.
  - 3. Are you a godly woman?
    - a. You cannot be a godly woman outside of Christ.
    - b. Do you need to come to Jesus now?