

“The Woman of Valor”
Proverbs 31
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Introduction: In reading Proverbs 31 it is important to keep in mind the context and the nature of this chapter.

1. A loving mother writes it to her son. Verse 1 states, “The words of King Lemuel, An oracle that *his mother* taught him.” These words flow from the loving heart of a mother who wants her son to be blessed. She’s describing the qualities and characteristics of a godly woman and urging her son to cherish and honor these qualities.
2. Proverbs 31 is an acrostic poem. As a poem, Proverbs 31 isn’t a demanding description of every characteristic a woman should perfectly embody. It’s a *joyful celebration* of womanly excellence, resourcefulness and skill. As John Piper has stated: the qualities given in Proverbs 31 are like stringing pearls. The writer gathers together these beautiful qualities of an excellent woman and holds them up for all to admire.
3. We can all learn from this woman of valor (“an excellent wife”). Bruce Waltke states, “This valiant wife has been canonized as a role model *for all Israel* for all time. Wise daughters aspire to be like her, wise men seek to marry her, and all wise people aim to incarnate the wisdom she embodies, each in his own sphere of activity.”

Key Points:

1. **She fears the Lord (verse 30)**
 - a. The most important quality of the valiant woman is that she knows and honors God above all else. She has an awe-filled, humble regard for her Creator and Lord.
 - b. Every other activity and quality of this woman is based on this all-essential trait:
 - i. Because she fears the Lord ... she does her husband good.
 - ii. Because she fears the Lord ... she works with willing hands.
 - iii. Because she fears the Lord ... she buys a field and plants a vineyard. Her entrepreneurial ventures have integrity and purpose in serving her household.
 - iv. Because she fears the Lord ... she cares for the poor and shares with those in need.
 - v. Because she fears the Lord ... she can laugh at the days to come. She doesn’t fear the unknown future.
 - vi. Because she fears the Lord ... she opens her mouth with wisdom. Her life and words instruct others.

vii. Because she fears the Lord ... she does not eat the bread of idleness. Her knowledge of God motivates her to work diligently.

2. She gives her life away.

- a. The Proverbs 31 woman is others focused. Her life is intertwined with family and community. She is spending herself for the good of others.
 - i. Verse 12: She does her husband good. She is not just running a household—she is doing good to the man God has called her to help.
 - ii. Verse 15: She provides food for her household. She's concerned not just for her children but also for the people who work in her home. So she's running a home business making garments of wool so she can trade them and then bless her household with delicious food.
 - iii. Verse 18: She is making a profit from her investments and hard work and then using her wealth for the benefit of others.
 - iv. Verse 20: She opens her hands to the poor. She's involving herself in the needs of others. She's giving herself away to serve in the community.

3. She is capable.

- a. The Proverbs 31 woman is skilled. And she has worked to develop her capability. She has cultivated abilities through practice. She has educated and cultivated her mind.
- b. She is skilled in working with her hands and creating clothing (vs. 13.) She has learned to trade and barter and do business (vs. 14). She works with real estate and has agricultural skill (vs. 16). She has a sense of style; she's elegant and dresses in an attractive way (vs. 22). She is able to teach others and speak with wisdom (vs. 26).

4. She is influential.

- a. Proverbs 31 shows us the incredible power of a woman of courage and determination who fears God and serves others with her abilities. She exerts an amazing influence on the world around her.
 - i. This influence touches her family as her children and husband honor her and express their esteem by stating that she has lived a worthy life of wisdom. (vs. 28-29)
 - ii. This influence also touches the community. Her faithful oversight in the home releases her husband to be a leader in the civic affairs. (vs. 23)
 - iii. She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue. This godly woman influences others through her words. This woman's life gives her a platform to teach and instruct other women (vs. 26)

Fellowship Starters:

1. A godly woman knows and fears the Lord. Is there anything you are living for—personal success, a husband, your children, etc.—more than you are living for God and His Kingdom?
2. Josh taught us that the Proverbs 31 woman is capable. How can this chapter stir godly ambitions for the Lord? How can you develop your mind, your body and your talents to make an even greater impact on God's Kingdom?
3. As Josh taught, the Proverbs 31 woman gives her life away. Is there need around you—in your home or in the church—that the Lord is calling you to help meet?
4. Concerning godly womanhood, are you following what the world values or are you valuing what God says is praiseworthy?
5. In what one Proverbs 31 quality would you like to grow?
6. Men, how can you encourage, cherish and honor the values of womanhood described in Proverbs 31?