***Godly Women Series 2019 Part 5***

Prov. 31: “An Excellent Wife”

Prepared by Nathan L Morrison for Sunday May 19th, 2019

Text: Proverbs 31

# **Intro**

1. There are examples both good and bad in the Scriptures.
2. Men and women alike can provide us with sources of strength and inspiration.
   1. Eve: “Mother of all living” (Gen. 3:20) and an example of moving past sin!
   2. Sarah: Mother of nations (Gen. 17:16), Mother of saints (Gal. 4:26,31), Mother of godly wives (I Pet. 3:6), and is an example of faith and overcoming one’s weaknesses!
   3. Ruth: An example of faith and virtue (Ruth 1:16-18; 3:11)!
   4. Abigail: An example of faith, respect, wisdom, and concern! (I Sam. 25)
3. Godly role models are greatly needed today!
4. *Prov. 31:1-10*
   1. King Lemuel *(Heb. “dedicated to God”)* begins speaking an oracle taught to him by his mother!
   2. It could be described as, “What shall I say to you, and what gems of wisdom will I pass on to you, my son, whom I have dedicated to the Lord?”
   3. She was grooming him for godly leadership!
   4. She was wise to instruct her son to not spend his time in sensual lust or give his time as leader to strong drink but to “judge righteously” and “defend the afflicted.”
   5. She then tells what kind of woman he ought to seek after (her worth is far above jewels).
5. Prov. 31 describes the ideal wife and mother – “An excellent wife, who can find?” (31:10)
   1. Prov. 31:10-31, these 22 verses are written as an acrostic; that means each beginning letter of each verse is a letter of the Hebrew alphabet (loses that when translated).
   2. Called The ABC’s of the Ideal Woman!
   3. She is the woman most (if not all) godly women want to be like!
   4. She is the woman most (if not all) godly men (even some unbelievers) look for!
   5. Some ask, “What is the ideal kind of wife or mother like?” God describes her for us.
6. The value of an “excellent” (virtuous) wife can be seen in contrast to a “contentious wife”
   1. Prov. 19:13: “…the contentions of a wife are a constant dripping.” (Annoying!)
   2. Prov. 25:24: “It is better to live in a corner of the roof than in a house shared with a contentious woman.”
   3. Not all women are alike, and not all make “an excellent” wife or mother.
   4. That rarity makes her special, valuable, and one must look for her!
7. The virtuous woman of Proverbs 31 is an ideal and what godly women ought to strive for, and what godly men ought to search for!
8. **Relationship of the “Excellent Wife”**
9. Prov. 31:10: Virtuous – An excellent woman is hard to find; her value is far above jewels (NKJV: “rubies”).
   1. “Excellent” = *Heb. chayil (Str. 2428):* excellence, excellent, great, might, mighty, nobly, strong, valiant, valor, virtue, virtuous. *(Ruth 3:11: Ruth was an “excellent,” “virtuous” woman)*
      1. Her worth is because of her rarity!
   2. What makes a jewel (NKJV: ruby) so valuable?
      1. Many translations use “jewels” or “precious stones” instead of “rubies”.
      2. Much of her worth is because of the effort it takes to find her.
      3. If you just want to find a rock, you can find those anywhere.
      4. But, if you want to find a “jewel,” those have to be sought after longer, and harder.
      5. *They are not easy to come by!*
10. Prov. 31:11-12: Trustworthy – Her husband is able to “safely trust” (NKJV) her.
    1. He has no need to be jealous.
       1. He knows that because she is “virtuous” that she will be faithful to him.
       2. She doesn’t cause him to doubt her motives by her actions. (i.e. “girls’ night out”)
    2. He has no need to doubt her motives with their wealth.
       1. He knows that she will do him good and not evil.
       2. He knows that he will have no lack of gain because of her.
       3. She won’t be a spendthrift, but rather she will be a “helpmate” (Gen. 2:18: “Helper”).
       4. Many women have destroyed their husband’s heart and career by causing him to distrust her. (Many men have done the same too)
11. The virtuous woman from Prov. 31 is virtuous and trustworthy!
    1. She is a treasure to her husband and a source for great comfort!
    2. She has a wonderful relationship with her husband built on trust.
12. Husbands and wives ought to have a wonderful relationship and be able to “safely trust” each other!

### **Behavior of the “Excellent Wife”**

1. Prov. 31:13-19: Industrious
   1. Prov. 31:13: She “works with her hands in delight” (NKJV: “willingly”).
      1. She is not a complainer about the tasks of caring for her family.
      2. Sometimes we can “kill” the effects of a kind deed by complaining about having to do it.
   2. Prov. 31:14-15: It also says that she “brings food from afar”.
      1. Mothers sometimes go to great lengths to get just the right kind of food to please her family.
      2. That’s why she seeks wool and flax. She desires the best that she can afford for her family.
      3. She takes care of the needs of her household (even the servants!).
   3. Prov. 31:16: “She considers a field and buys it; from her earnings she plants a vineyard.”
      1. There is nothing wrong with a mother helping to provide for her family.
         1. I Tim. 5:14: Paul said of young widows who get remarried they were to “keep house.” Some have taken that as a wife cannot work outside the home. Greek for “keep the house” = *oikodespoteō [oy-kod-es-pot-eh'-o] (G3616):* to be the head of (that is, rule) a family: - guide the house.
         2. Some wives & mothers can “guide the house” and work outside the home.
         3. Husbands, listen to your wives!
      2. But a mother has to remember that her first priority should be to her family (Titus 2:3-5: Older women to teach younger women to love their families).
   4. Prov. 31:17-19: She prepares herself for her tasks with great vigor and enthusiasm.
      1. She is not afraid of strenuous work.
      2. She takes a quiet, humble satisfaction in the results of her labor.
      3. After the others have gone to bed, she often works late into the night.
2. Prov. 31:20-24: Provider – She is a good provider & is charitable!
   1. She finds time to provide for those less fortunate (31:20) – she is charitable!
   2. She provides for her family (31:21, 24)
      1. Men tend to think that after we come in from a hard day at work, we can just crash on the couch. *(We may just want to “shut down” for a while)*
      2. The old adage goes, “A man’s work is from sun to sun, but a woman’s work is never done!”
      3. A mother works just as many hours as her husband does and then cooks dinner and keeps working getting the kids and things ready for the next day!
      4. She does not dread the approach of winter because there is plenty of warm clothing in the closets.
   3. She provides for herself (31:22)
   4. She provides for her husband (31:23)
      1. A woman has a great impact on the reputation of her husband.
      2. I Cor. 11:7: Man is the image & glory of God, “but woman is the glory of man.”
      3. He can devote himself to his job without worrying about conditions at home.
3. She is hard working, sees to the needs of her family, and finds time to be charitable!

### **Character of the “Excellent Wife”**

* 1. Prov. 31:25: Strength & Honor (NAS: “Dignity”) – “Strength and honor (NKJV) are her clothing, and she smiles at the future.”
  2. This is a woman who must surely fear the Lord
     1. When a woman chooses to clothe herself in strength and honor, she is displaying divine wisdom (The kind that can only come from walking with God).
     2. Only with the peace that comes from walking with God, can a woman “smile at the future” or (NKJV) “rejoice in time to come.”
     3. She doesn’t fear the future, she rejoices in it and can smile!

1. Prov. 31:26: Wise – She speaks with wisdom and kindness *(Abigail – I Sam. 25:3).*
   1. The godly wife and mother is loving and kind in her speech *(Eph. 4:15: Truth in love).*
   2. She also gives good advice to her family because her words are based on the “teaching (NKJV: “law”) of kindness” – Husbands, listen to your wives!
2. Prov. 31:27: Productive – She keeps in close touch with the affairs of her household.
   1. She does not waste time or engage in shallow, unproductive activity.
3. Her character is strength, honor, and wisdom & she gives her family confidence to face the future!

### **Family of the “Excellent Wife”**

1. Prov. 31:28: Blessed – “Her children rise up and bless her.”
   1. Children, honor you mothers – Eph. 6:1-3 (Goes for both parents)
   2. They love you and only want the best for you.
2. Prov. 31:28-29: Praised – Her husband also blesses her; and he praises her.
   1. Do you see what he says to her? “Many daughters have done well, but you excel them all.”
   2. Men, praise your wives!
   3. This man is simply saying, “There are some good women out there, but you’ve got them all beat. You are the best!”
   4. Eph. 5:25, 28: Husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved the church!
   5. I Pet. 3:7: Husbands are to live with their wives in an understanding way. Not that they are “weaker” physically, but that they are precious and fellow heirs with Christ!
3. Her family sees and appreciates all she has done for them and is deserving of their praise!

### **Faith of the “Excellent Wife”**

1. Prov. 31:30: Faithful – “Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised.”
2. Prov. 31:30: The pathway of her greatness lies through her recognition of spiritual values.
   1. *A woman may have charm but no common sense! A woman may be pretty but no morals!*
   2. Godly men need to understand this: Your first criteria when searching for a godly wife should be her spiritual values.
      1. *Ruth – Ruth 1:16-18; 3:11: The community knew she was a “a woman of excellence.”*
   3. Men, look for a wife that is first and foremost a Christian – a mate with like-minded faith *(such as Abigail for David – I Sam. 25).*
   4. Search out a woman with a heart for God – Her worth is far above jewels! (31:10)
3. Prov. 31:31: Her works are cause for her praise! *(Sarah, the mother of nations, is still a godly role model for wives [I Pet. 3:6] and for all saints [Gal. 4:26, 31])*
   1. Husbands and children ought to praise their wife/mother for all the hard work she puts into working for the family, whether at home or at a job *(even greater responsibility!).*
4. An “excellent wife” is “excellent” or “virtuous” because of her faith in God!

# **Conclusion**

1. Wives/Mothers, are you living out the virtuous life of a godly wife and mother?
2. Husbands, are you honoring God by honoring and praising your wife?
3. Children, do you honor, obey, love, and praise your mothers?
4. Women, do you strive to be godly and practice the attributes that make for an “excellent wife?”
5. Men, do you search high and low for “an excellent wife,” one who is worth more than jewels?
6. Only in obedience to God can one be worthy of praise.
   1. The “excellent wife” in Prov. 31 built up her husband and influenced those around her.
7. *Prov. 31:10:* “An excellent wife, who can find? For her worth is far above jewels.”
   1. It is noteworthy and fitting that Proverbs should end on this very positive note about women. Three women have been prominent in this book: the personification of Wisdom (seen as a woman inviting learners to her banquet), the immoral (adulteress) woman or seductress, and finally, the “excellent wife,” or woman of virtue.
8. May we all strive for God’s ideals, and give praise and honor to the godly women in our lives!
9. If you are not a Christian, you need to be. Repent and be baptized!
10. If a Christian in error, repent and be renewed!
11. Whatever your requests may be, come forward ***NOW***and let them be known while we stand and sing.