

Married women. Married women face pressure from their culture as to what their roles should be as well as certain standards of beauty and attractiveness. Yet, they should strive for the role and characteristics that are beautiful to God (Genesis 2:18; 1 Peter 3:1-6).

Young women. Younger women must decide many things about who they will strive to become and what they will look for in a husband. They should recognize the true beauty of the things described in this text and commit to learning the needed skills and character (Titus 2:3-5). Looking for a man who prioritizes these characteristics is crucial to a successful marriage!

Older women. Older women have, hopefully, come to possess the characteristics described in this passage and demonstrated it throughout their lives. If they have, they should be diligent in trying to guide the younger women into these ways (Titus 2:3-5).

Married men. Married men should learn to value the characteristics described in this passage above all other characteristics (i.e. above physical attraction) and praise their wives for them (vv. 10, 28). If he is not married to such a woman, he should try to lead her to this goal through caring and loving shepherd-like leadership (Ephesians 5:25-33; 1 Peter 3:7).

Young men. Young men should value the characteristics described in this passage above all other characteristics they look for when selecting a wife (Proverbs 31:1, 10)! If a young man carefully follows this wisdom from God, he will reap the benefits of having such a wife throughout his life. But, if he doesn't, he will endure the consequences (Proverbs 1:29-33).

Older men. Older men should continue to praise and lead their wives in the ways previously discussed. Then, they should also be diligently working to train the younger men to value such characteristics in their spouses or potential spouses (Titus 2:2, 6-8).

Conclusion

There is a woman and man described by Proverbs 31. All women should strive to model themselves after this woman who is clearly valued in the Lord's sight. Then, all men should possess the kind of character that they also value this kind of woman. So, while our society paints many pictures of men and women, let us let this passage work to define us!

The Proverbs 31 Woman And Man



Proverbs 31:10-31 provides a detailed picture of a virtuous/excellent/noble wife. While many emphasize this section of Scripture toward women, notice these lessons were first taught to a man (who later became king) named Lemuel by his mother (v. 1). Therefore, this is a section of Scripture that is helpful to both women and men for various reasons! In fact, there is not just a "Proverbs 31 woman" being described; but also a "Proverbs 31 man"!

The purpose of this lesson is to learn from Proverbs 31:10-31 so as to learn the character and worth of the woman who is described and to make applications of this passage to different groups of people today.

Her Character Described

Noble. King Lemuel's mother poses the question as to who can find a noble (excellent, virtuous) wife (v. 10). Therefore, this woman possess a character that excels above others. As we continue reading this chapter, it is clear that this woman is one who strives for excellence in everything she does; not one who settles for mediocrity and failure (specifically related to her family)! In fact, she helps lift up her husband (v. 23). Although she may often play a less visible role than her husband, his success is largely due to her contributions. And, her excellence results in her works praising her (v. 31), as such excellence gets noticed!

Trustworthy. Such a noble (excellent) woman gains the trust of her husband (v. 11). He can trust that whatever is left to her care will be properly taken care of to the best of her ability. This is crucial because a husband may entrust some of the most important things about his life to his wife (i.e. the wellbeing of children, household affairs, aspects of his own wellbeing, finances). With such a wife, though, he does not have to watch over her to micromanage her work because he safely trusts in her, that

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whatever she does will prosper and that she will do what is good and not evil all the days of her life (v. 12).

Hardworking. This woman has prepared herself and has a knowledge of how to work for the good of her family and possesses those basic skills (vv. 13, 16, 22). Plus, she does her work willingly! She does whatever is needed to get provisions for her family, even through buying, selling, or trading (vv. 14, 24). And, she is an early riser who is not lazy when it comes to the care of her household (vv. 15, 27). All of this demonstrates that she has no aversion to hard work and that she possesses the skill and will to fulfill her role in the home with excellence!

Selfless. This woman is clearly not a woman who is focused on selfish ambitions that are not in line with God's desires or her family's wellbeing. Rather, she is sacrificial in her nature. In fact, not only is she an early riser and a hard worker, but she is someone who is always "on call" (v. 18). Her family can always depend on her and know that she is available. And, her heart is willing to give of herself to help those who are poor and needy (v. 20).

Resourceful. This woman's diligence and care extends to situations in which providing for her family takes greater ingenuity. Before she will watch her family suffer or do without things that would be beneficial for them, she finds ways to provide (vv. 13-14). Then, notice how she makes resourceful decisions that will be helpful for her family and not put an extra burden on the family, through her own efforts and earnings (v. 16).

Strong. Though this woman is caring and sensitive to her family's needs, this does not make her weak! Rather, the woman described in this chapter would put most (if not all) men to shame concerning their strength (vv. 17, 25)! For, she is able to face great challenges with strength to overcome them in ways that benefit the family. And, she possesses the physical strength to accomplish the work that she does – and to do it with excellence.

Wise. This woman's work is not accomplished in some kind of haphazard kind of way in which she wishes things will turn out for the good of her family. Instead, every step that she takes is being guided carefully with wisdom. So, she evaluates what she does before she takes the actions (v. 16) and make the proper preparations for what her family will need before they need it (vv. 21, 25). Furthermore, she is so wise that the counsel and words she offers reflect that same wisdom (v. 26), spreading this wisdom to others (i.e. her family).

Loving. This woman demonstrates true love that is selfless and acts in the best interest of others. Then, she also speaks in love and kindness (v. 26). This characterizes the words that are on her tongue. And, this is true

regardless of whether she is giving wise counsel or whether she is responding to various circumstances. Although there are certainly many frustrations such a woman will experience, her character of love will always shine through.

God-fearing. Above all else, this woman knows that Jehovah God is worthy of being feared (v. 30). But, this is not some kind of empty intellectual knowledge. Instead, she has such a deep reverence for God and terror of violating His laws that she is diligent to seek God's will in all that she does. Furthermore, such a God-fearing woman will want to share these powerful truths about God and teach His will to others (in her home as well as outside it). And, she will possess the integrity to do what is right even when no one else is watching!

Her Worth Identified

Far above jewels. The woman in this section of Scripture is not viewed as a slave of the family who is being forced to hard work so that everyone in her family has what they need and want at her expense (by herself or by others). Rather, she does all these things by choice – because that is who she is. As a result, she is not a replaceable family servant, but a truly precious and indispensable foundation of the home! Such a woman could never be paid all that she is truly worth – as she is worth far more than valuable jewels (rubies, v. 10).

Worthy of praise. This woman not only leads to her family members excelling and being praised (v. 23), but she should also be the recipient of praise (v. 28). This should especially come from the members of the household who have been most impacted by her diligence. For, the positive impact she has made on her family is both beneficial in the short term as well as the long term. Then, while many people praise different women for many things that do not last, what makes this woman worthy of praise will not end (v. 30)!

Surpasses all others. When you compare this woman to others, there is no comparison (v. 29)! Others have mistakenly focused their lives on things that are deceptive and fleeting, while she has built her life on what is most valuable and that will last (v. 30). So, her value is not shallow or superficial in nature that will soon fail to impress. Then, while there may be many women who do some good things and express some genuine care and skill in what they do, her focus on excelling sets her apart from all the rest!

Applications