

## **THE PROVERBS 31 WOMAN** (PROVERBS 31:10-31)

This is the chapter that every woman loves, and it's also the chapter that every woman hates. First, I'll show you why women love it. Then, at the end, I'll show you why they hate it.

You see, this chapter is actually a poem. And in Hebrew, it's an acrostic – each verse begins with the next letter in the Hebrew alphabet. For example, if it was written in English, the first few verses would look something like this:

An **awesome** wife, who can find her?  
 A **blessed** lady, her husband trusts her.  
 A **caring** woman, she does him good all her life.  
 A **diligent** worker, she is skillful with her hands.<sup>1</sup>

So, through this creative structure, the chapter is describing the ideal woman *from A to Z* – the type of woman that every girl should look *to* and emulate, and every guy should look *for* and marry!

### **1. She is trusted by her husband.** (10–12)

***Proverbs 31:10–12 “An excellent wife who can find? She is far more precious than jewels.<sup>11</sup> The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain.<sup>12</sup> She does him good, and not harm, all the days of her life.”***

When verse 10 opens with the words “Who can find an excellent wife,” it's not implying that she doesn't exist – it's just pointing out that she's a rare treasure.<sup>2</sup> For two reasons...

- **Because of her wisdom.** (10b) *“She is far more precious than jewels.”*

This woman has something that is more valuable than all the jewels in the world: *wisdom!* Notice how wisdom is described...

***Proverbs 8:11 “For wisdom is better than jewels, and all that you may desire cannot compare with her.”***

<sup>1</sup> Akin, J. (2017). *Exalting Jesus in Proverbs* (D. Platt, D. L. Akin, & T. Merida, Eds.; p. 171). Holman Reference.

<sup>2</sup> Akin, J. (2017). *Exalting Jesus in Proverbs* (D. Platt, D. L. Akin, & T. Merida, Eds.; p. 172). Holman Reference.

So, when it says she's far more precious than jewels, it's a reference to her unusual wisdom. We'll hear more about her wisdom in a few moments, but her husband is saying, "Men, *this* is the kind of wife you want to find – a godly woman who is worth more than all the money in the world!"

- **Because of her integrity** (11-12) *"The heart of her husband trusts in her... She does him good, and not harm, all the days of her life."*

Her husband has no suspicions about her because she does him good and not "harm," which means "mischief." In other words, he has full confidence in her *character*, her *conduct*, and her *consistency* ("all the days of her life")<sup>3</sup>...

**Proverbs 12:4** *"An excellent wife is the crown of her husband, but she who brings shame is like rotteness in his bones."*

## 2. **She is a hard worker.** (13–19)

**Proverbs 31:13–19** *"She seeks wool and flax, and works with willing hands. <sup>14</sup> She is like the ships of the merchant; she brings her food from afar. <sup>15</sup> She rises while it is yet night and provides food for her household and portions for her maidens. <sup>16</sup> She considers a field and buys it; with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard. <sup>17</sup> She dresses herself with strength and makes her arms strong. <sup>18</sup> She perceives that her merchandise is profitable. Her lamp does not go out at night. <sup>19</sup> She puts her hands to the distaff, and her hands hold the spindle."*

By using her home as a base of operation, notice how hard this lady works...

- **Using her hands.** (13–15; 19) Verse 13 says she "works with willing hands" taking care of the family's clothing. And in verses 14-15 she's up before dawn taking care of food for the family. Then in verse 19 she's sewing and making wool. **BUT** she also works hard...
- **Using her mind.** (16–18) This lady is smart and capable on many levels...
  - Evaluating property to buy (v. 16).
  - Considering how to stay fit and healthy (v. 17).
  - Managing their money and planning ahead (v. 18).

<sup>3</sup> Akin, J. (2017). *Exalting Jesus in Proverbs* (D. Platt, D. L. Akin, & T. Merida, Eds.; p. 172). Holman Reference.

### 3. **She is compassionate.** (20)

***Proverbs 31:20 “She opens her hand to the poor and reaches out her hands to the needy.”***

In other words, she’s generous and thoughtful toward the less fortunate. She sells some things for profit, but she also gives to the poor and the needy.<sup>4</sup>

### 4. **She is prepared for tough times.** (21–22)

***Proverbs 31:21–22 “She is not afraid of snow for her household, for all her household are clothed in scarlet.<sup>22</sup> She makes bed coverings for herself; her clothing is fine linen and purple.”***

Remember, during this time they couldn’t check the weather report on their phone or app. There was no weather man on TV warning her about an approaching snowstorm that could catch her family off guard. She had to be prepared for such things. And she was...

- **First she took care of others.** (21–22a) She’s not afraid of the bitter cold because her family is clothed in “scarlet,” which not only describes the color (crimson) – it also describes the thickness of their clothing. It can be translated “double garment” or double layer. So, her family is ready for the bitter cold.<sup>5</sup>
- **Then she took care of herself.** (22b) It says, “Her clothing is fine linen and purple,” which was very high quality. In other words, this woman wouldn’t have been caught dead wearing pajamas to Walmart. She cares how she presents herself!

### 5. **She is a blessing to her husband.** (23)

***Proverbs 31:23 “Her husband is known in the gates when he sits among the elders of the land.”***

The implication is that her character and dignity only *enhances* her husband’s reputation in the community. Even though she is *more* than competent in her own right, she handles herself in a way that honors her husband’s leadership rather than undermining it. She respects her

<sup>4</sup> Buzzell, S. S. (1985). Proverbs. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, p. 973). Victor Books.

<sup>5</sup> Ross, A. P. (1991). Proverbs. In F. E. Gaebelinein (Ed.), *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs* (Vol. 5, p. 1132). Zondervan Publishing House.

husband and builds him up rather than tearing him down. And she does this *inside* and *outside* the home.<sup>6</sup>

She makes her man better not worse. Some women can take a great man and they drag him down to mediocrity. But this lady could take a mediocre man and lift him to greatness. An excellent wife makes her husband better than he could ever be on his own!<sup>7</sup>

## 6. She walks in wisdom. (24–27)

***Proverbs 31:24–27 “She makes linen garments and sells them; she delivers sashes to the merchant.<sup>25</sup> Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she laughs at the time to come.<sup>26</sup> She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.<sup>27</sup> She looks well to the ways of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness.”***

I told you we would come back to her wisdom. Notice *how* she walks and speaks with wisdom...

- **By trusting God with her future.** (25) “She laughs at the time to come.” In other words, she can face life with confidence because she knows her future is secure in God’s hands. She trusts her future and her soul to a sovereign God. So, she smiles at the unknown future, including death, because she’s prepared to meet her Maker.
- **By speaking truth to others.** (26) It says, “She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.” Her conversations are marked by kindness and truth, NOT gossip and drama.
- **By staying busy without being a busybody.** (27) “She does not eat the bread of idleness.” There’s a difference between being *busy* and being a *busybody*.

Paul specifically warned women against this...

***1 Timothy 5:13 “Besides that, they learn to be idlers, going about from house to house, and not only idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying what they should not.”***

<sup>6</sup> Buzzell, S. S. (1985). Proverbs. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, p. 973). Victor Books.

<sup>7</sup> Akin, J. (2017). *Exalting Jesus in Proverbs* (D. Platt, D. L. Akin, & T. Merida, Eds.; p. 175). Holman Reference.

## 7. She is admired by her family. (28–29)

***Proverbs 31:28–29 “Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her:”<sup>29</sup> “Many women have done excellently, but you surpass them all.”***

Her children tell her (and others) how she has impacted their life and how her influence continually shapes and guides them.<sup>8</sup> And her husband – the one who knows her best – is quick to compliment her as well. In fact, the children probably learned to praise their mom by watching Dad do it. They learned it from him.

## 8. She is honored by the Lord. (30–31)

***Proverbs 31:30–31 “Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.”<sup>31</sup> Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her works praise her in the gates.”***

The chapter ends with an eternal perspective: *“Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.”*

In other words, charm and beauty are great, but they can’t make a great woman. Physical appearance doesn’t last. But this woman knows what DOES last, she knows what is eternal. Her greatest passion in life is NOT her husband, children, appearance, or her ability to make money. Her greatest passion is to *know* the Lord, *obey* him, *please* him, and *honor* him. The applause and praise of the world mean nothing to her. But the applause of the Lord Jesus means everything to her.

And at the end of her life, when she looks back over her years of service to God, to her family, and to others, she will quietly and confidently say, “No regrets.”<sup>9</sup>

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At the beginning of the message, I told you this is the chapter that every woman *loves* and *hates*. They hate it because they say: “There’s no way I can measure up to this!” But remember, if you *could* measure up to this standard of perfection, then there would have been no need for Jesus to come and die for you. He measured up to this ideal standard *for* you. And as you walk faithfully with Jesus, He will manifest these characteristics *in* you and *through* you.

<sup>8</sup> Akin, J. (2017). *Exalting Jesus in Proverbs* (D. Platt, D. L. Akin, & T. Merida, Eds.; p. 178). Holman Reference.

<sup>9</sup> Akin, J. (2017). *Exalting Jesus in Proverbs* (D. Platt, D. L. Akin, & T. Merida, Eds.; p. 180). Holman Reference.