

Wisdom Personified; Jesus Prophesied

Proverbs 31

Big Idea: Wisdom is more than a virtue to know, it's a person to follow; so, we follow wisdom and experience God.

¹⁰ An excellent wife who can find? She is far more precious than jewels. ¹¹ The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain. ¹² She does him good, and not harm, all the days of her life. ¹³ She seeks wool and flax, and works with willing hands. ¹⁴ She is like the ships of the merchant; she brings her food from afar. ¹⁵ She rises while it is yet night and provides food for her household and portions for her maidens. ¹⁶ She considers a field and buys it; with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard. ¹⁷ She dresses herself with strength and makes her arms strong.

¹⁸ She perceives that her merchandise is profitable. Her lamp does not go out at night. ¹⁹ She puts her hands to the distaff, and her hands hold the spindle. ²⁰ She opens her hand to the poor and reaches out her hands to the needy. ²¹ She is not afraid of snow for her household, for all her household are clothed in scarlet. ²² She makes bed coverings for herself; her clothing is fine linen and purple. ²³ Her husband is known in the gates when he sits among the elders of the land. ²⁴ She makes linen garments and sells them; she delivers sashes to the merchant.

²⁵ Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she laughs at the time to come. ²⁶ She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue. ²⁷ She looks well to the ways of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness. ²⁸ Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: ²⁹ “Many women have done excellently, but you surpass them all.” ³⁰ Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised. ³¹ Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her works praise her in the gates.

Big Idea: Wisdom is more than a virtue to know, it's a person to follow; so, we follow wisdom and experience God.

Wisdom Personified; Jesus Prophesied

1. Wisdom Personified (vv. 10-31).
2. Christ Prophesied.
3. Live like Wisdom, live like Christ.

1. Wisdom Personified.

¹⁰ A [warrior] wife who can find? She is far more precious than jewels (*cf.* 3:15). ¹¹ The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of [plunder] ... ¹⁵ She rises [like a lioness] while it is yet night and provides [prey] for her household and portions for her maidens... ¹⁷ She [girds her loins] with strength and makes her arms strong...

²⁸ Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: ²⁹ “Many women have done excellently, but you surpass them all.” ³⁰ Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.

vv. 11, 14, 18, 21 show continual action.
Most of the other verses are past tense.

She's on a mission.

The word translated “excellent” (*chayil*) is closely associated with the term for a warrior and has military undertones.

The word for “gain” is the word used for “plunder” (Prov. 31:11).

She rises up like a lioness and provides food for her household, where the word for food is “prey” (Prov. 31:15).

She “girds her loins,” as if dressing herself for battle (Prov. 31:17).

She is far more precious than jewels and, in Proverbs 3:15, the same words are used to describe wisdom.

Wisdom's husband (vv. 1-9).

- i. Shows restraint with women (v. 3) and alcohol (v. 4).
- ii. Upholds the laws and protect the poor (v. 5).
- iii. Speaks for those who can't speak for themselves (v. 8).
- iv. Judges fairly (v. 9).
- v. Defends the defenseless (v. 9).
- vi. Cherishes his wife (vv. 1-9, 11, 23, 28-29).

Wisdom lives faithfully for many years.

- i. Consistently a blessing to others (v. 12).
- ii. Serves willingly & proactively (v. 13).
- iii. Prepares spiritually & physically (v. 21).
- iv. Provides for her house (vv. 18-24)
- v. Speaks truth with kindness (v. 26).
- vi. Fears the Lord (v. 30).

Most of the verbs in Prov 31 are past tense and point to recurring action. So, these are not things every woman should do all the time.

vv. 10-31 are an acrostic poem, based on the Hebrew alphabet.

Her freedom likely stems from two sources.

First is her privileged status in the nobility—she and her husband, who is the king, wear expensive purple or scarlet clothing (vv. 21–22), and she has maidservants (v. 15). Secondly, and perhaps even more importantly, she has a husband who cherishes her (vv. 28–29) and allows her to reach her full potential.

Proverbs 31 is not a checklist for perfection; it's a picture of divine wisdom lived out in everyday life.

Every day: Seek wisdom, it's rare & valuable (8:11).

- i. Understand that wisdom is relational, not just knowledge; seek Christ (1Co 1:24).
- ii. Value what God values (v. 10, 30; 1Pt 3:3-4).
- iii. Live so others honor God through you (vv. 28-31).

Nothing can compare with wisdom (Pro 8:11).

2. Christ Prophesied; the wisdom of God.

- i. Jesus “is a tree of life to those who lay hold of” him (Pro 3:18).
- ii. Christ went about doing good (v. 12; Acts 10:38).
- iii. He came not to be served but to serve (v. 13; Mk 10:45).
- iv. Jesus is the Bread of Life (vv. 14-15; Jn 6:35).
- v. Protects his household with scarlet (v. 21; Isa 1:18; Eph 1:7).
- vi. Redeems the world; plants a Church (v. 16; Mt 13:38; Jn 15:1).
- vii. Clothed with righteousness and majesty (v. 25; Isa 11:5).
- viii. Christ shepherds/guards His Church (v. 27; Jn 10:11).
- ix. The redeemed praise and worship Him forever (v. 28; Rev 5:12).

A lot of this is largely allegorical, so I don't want press this too far. But, it is interesting ...

Jesus is the only one who ever lived Pro 31 perfectly.

Christ doesn't just command wisdom; He embodies it, imparts it, and empowers it in His people

The Spirit-filled church becomes like Wisdom.
The King/Christ cherishes his Bride/Church (Eph 5:22-32).

The church:

- i. Shines with His righteousness (Rev 19:7–8).
- ii. Is clothed in Jesus' strength (v. 25).
- iii. Becomes fruitful in His service (v. 16, 18).
- iv. Lives with mercy to the needy (v. 20).
- v. Brings praise to his name (v. 30-31).

3. Live like Wisdom; live like Christ.

- i. Wise-living *is* Christian living...
- ii. Let the character of Christ/Wisdom shape how you live.
- iii. Rely on the strength of God to transform you.

Wisdom is more than a virtue to know; it's a person to follow.

Follow Jesus.