

PETE BUMGARNER MINISTRIES

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PROVERBS 31

STUDY GUIDE



PROVERBS 31

SCRIPTURE READING

Proverbs 31

I. BACKGROUND

- A. Solomon was chosen by God to succeed his father David as king of Israel.
- B. Two sons of David, Absalom and Adonijah, tried to usurp his throne, but their attempts were unsuccessful. (II Samuel 15-18; I Kings 1)
- C. Because of his selection by God and his father David, the tremendous support received from his mother, and awareness of his God-ordained purpose for ascending to the throne, Solomon was the best man for the position.
- D. Solomon realized his inadequacies and asked God for wisdom and understanding that would give him the ability to discern between good and evil and to execute righteous judgment properly. (I Kings 3:7-9)
- E. God honored Solomon's request and assured him that He would be with him as long as he obeyed the commandments of the Lord. (I Kings 3:10-14)
- F. Solomon forsook the counsel of both his father and mother and pursued his own interests. (I Kings 2:1-4; I Chronicles 28:9)
- G. The counsel in Proverbs thirty-one given unto Solomon by his mother is godly counsel that, if followed, would have prevented his demise.
 - 1. Solomon's mother warned about two specific pitfalls, women and intoxication.
 - 2. Solomon did not heed his mother's warning; he pursued both women and intoxicating drink. (I Kings 11:1-8; Ecclesiastes 2:3)

- 3. Solomon's course of life was altered by the influence of women who lacked virtue.
- H. In all of Solomon's pursuits, he never found the virtuous woman of whom his mother had spoken. (Ecclesiastes 7:26-28)
- I. Who can find a virtuous woman? The question remains, and the search must continue.
- J. Proverbs thirty-one is not just about finding a good woman; it is about finding one who is compatible to your God-given purpose.
- K. It is vital that those in leadership understand their accountability to God and their responsibility to the people.
- L. It is imperative that one choose a mate who will support and enhance his God-given purpose, not divert him from it.
- M. This principle is the foundation for Proverbs thirty-one.

II. INTRODUCTION

- A. A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband. (Proverbs 12:4)
 - 1. A crown adorns and enhances the head.
 - 2. A crown speaks of authority; it does not usurp authority.
- B. Not every woman is a virtuous woman.
 - 1. The Hebrew definition of "virtuous" means force or strength of body and mind.
 - 2. A virtuous woman will use both her strength and ability in assisting her husband, not undermining him.
 - 3. A virtuous woman is a woman of excellence and great worth.
- C. A virtuous woman is priceless.

1. She cannot be purchased for any amount of money.
2. This virtue comes as a result of applying God's Word to one's life.

III. INSTRUCTIONS TO KING LEMUEL

- A. Verses one through nine are instructions given by King Lemuel's mother regarding the responsibilities of a king.
- B. It is believed that Lemuel is a symbolic name of King Solomon.
- C. The name "Lemuel" means (belonging) to God.
- D. The king's responsibilities were divided into two categories, his personal life and his public life.
 1. One's attention and ways govern his personal life.
 - a. King Lemuel's mother instructed him not to be consumed with women. (Proverbs 31:3)
 - (1) From the instructions given concerning the virtuous woman, we know that King Lemuel's mother was not suggesting that he remain unmarried.
 - (2) She was warning him of the impending dangers that can occur when a man is diverted by women.
 - (3) Positions of authority carry with them a certain attraction to the opposite sex. It is imperative that one not allow the attractions to become distractions.
 - b. She further instructs that he not choose ways that are destructive to kings. (Proverbs 31:3)
 - (1) The lifestyle of a leader can be an asset or a liability to his future.
 - (2) A leader's personal decisions affect both his own welfare and the welfare of those whom he leads.

2. One's conduct and consideration affect his public life.
 - a. King Lemuel was warned against becoming intoxicated. (Proverbs 31:4-5)
 - (1) Intoxication perverts one's ability to make quality decisions.
 - (2) Soberness and clear thinking are vital to right leadership.
 - (3) Strong drink is for those who are physically ill or sorrowful of heart. (Proverbs 31:6-7)
 - b. He was also warned against perversion of judgment.
 - (1) He is admonished to speak on behalf of those who cannot speak for themselves, giving justice to those who are desolate or defenseless. (Proverbs 31:8-9)
 - (a) Solomon is instructed to speak personally on behalf of those who can't speak for themselves.
 - (b) He is told to act as an arbitrator for those who cannot help themselves.
 - (2) He is also instructed to give righteous judgment.
3. One's private life has a direct influence upon his public life.
4. A leader must be a man of integrity, both privately and publicly.

IV. ATTRIBUTES OF A VIRTUOUS WOMAN

- A. Listed below are the characteristics of a virtuous woman, as found in Proverbs 31:
 1. She is trustworthy. (Proverbs 31:11)
 2. She does good to her husband, not evil. (Proverbs 31:12)

3. She is not idle, but works willingly. (Proverbs 31:13)
4. She demonstrates thriftiness. (Proverbs 31:14)
5. She is self-motivated and considerate. (Proverbs 31:15)
6. She is proficient in business. (Proverbs 31:16)
 - a. She uses good judgment.
 - b. She makes wise investments.
 - c. She invests her return.
7. She is healthy, strong, and tireless. (Proverbs 31:17)
8. She evaluates her actions and is cautious not to become self-contented and relaxed. (Proverbs 31:18)
9. She is efficient. (Proverbs 31:18)
10. She is skillful, demonstrating initiative; she is not lazy. (Proverbs 31:19)
11. She is charitable, benevolent, generous, and merciful. (Proverbs 31:20)
12. She is confident and fearless. (Proverbs 31:21)
13. She takes pride in her physical appearance. (Proverbs 31:22)
 - a. She does not allow her obligations and endeavors to affect her physical appearance. She makes no excuses.
 - b. She understands the importance of keeping herself attractive, while doing all the other things for her household.
14. Her husband is known and respected among the elders. (Proverbs 31:23)
 - a. Why is her husband known?
 - b. Why is her husband mentioned here?

- c. Because of his virtuous wife the husband is known.
 - d. Women can make their husbands look either good or bad.
15. She is prosperous as a result of good business transactions. (Proverbs 31:24)
 16. She clothes herself from inside out, bringing dignity, strength, and joy to herself. (Proverbs 31:25)
 17. She speaks with wisdom and kindness. (Proverbs 31:26)
 18. She constantly looks after her household and does not partake of unprofitableness or laziness. (Proverbs 31:27)
 19. She earns the respect and praise of her husband and children. (Proverbs 31:28)
 20. She is not content with being average; therefore, she excels. (Proverbs 31:29)
 21. She is to be praised for her fear of the Lord rather than her beauty and grace. (Proverbs 31:30)
 - a. Beauty is deceitful and fleeting.
 - b. Praise should be given for what one does and what one is, not for who one is.
 - c. Credit is to be given where credit is due. (Proverbs 31:31)
- B. The virtuous woman of Proverbs 31 is very uncommon, yet very needful. Her diligence and determination cause her to excel beyond her peers.

V. SUMMARY

- A. Solomon forsook the counsel of his parents and in all of his pursuits, he never found the virtuous woman.
- B. A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband.

- C. A virtuous woman is priceless.
- D. A virtuous woman will aid and assist her husband in fulfilling his God-given purpose; she will not lead him away from his purpose.
- E. Although the virtuous woman seems to be uncommon, she is in existence and she is worthy of pursuit.
- F. The characteristics of a virtuous woman are not unattainable; however, they only manifest as a result of desire.

VI. CONCLUSION

- A. “Who can find a virtuous woman?” is not a question to be put aside as history; it is a relevant question to anyone who plans to marry.
- B. Each of us is placed on earth with a God-given purpose. Choosing the right mate can enhance the fulfilling of that purpose; choosing the wrong mate can hinder or prevent it.
- C. Unmarried men must look for “the virtuous woman;” all women should seek to be “the virtuous woman.”

