

**PROVERBS SERIES NINE**  
**THE IDEAL WOMAN**  
**Drs. Roger and Julie Barrier**  
**Proverbs 31**

ROGER

Turn to Proverb 31—the ideal woman.

This morning Julie and I are team teaching this Proverbial description of the ideal woman. After all, the male perspective alone on this passage is bound to be overly biased, mistaken, misinformed and wrong (at least according to some.) Therefore, I welcome the opportunity to have Julie’s help and input as we teach this passage together on an ideal woman.

**SLIDE:** JULIE: When I was growing up, most little girls played with Barbie and Ken: Barbie was the ideal woman. All the girls want to be Barbie—beautiful perfection. Never gets tired or old. Married the perfect person.

ROGER: Ken came with the dream house and pink convertible.

JULIE: Every girl aspired to be Mrs. Ken and if they didn’t, they were failures.

However, Mattel decided that Ken and Barbie fight after 40 years break up. Now Barbie has the hots for

ROGER

**SLIDE:** Blain.

If Ken and Barbie can break up after 40 years, what is our world coming to!  
Even Barbie was not the ideal woman with the ideal life we thought she had.

Remember two things as we examine the truths in this passage.

JULIE

**SLIDE:** 1. God’s marriage plan is “One Man + One Woman + One Lifetime = Fulfilled Intimacy” (Genesis 2:18-25; Matthew 19:1-9).

Where two people love the Lord and love each other, God can guide and bless them. It’s not a “fifty-fifty” arrangement, because “two become one”. Rather, God intends for them to have 100% devotion to each other and to the Lord.

ROGER

**SLIDE:** 2. God’s plan for husbands is to lay down their lives for their wives in the same way as Jesus laid down His life and died for His church (Proverbs 5; Ephesians 5:25-33).

JULIE

Show me the love.

SHOW ME from My fair lady Love is not just words, love has to be lived.

ROGER

By the way, these characteristics of the ideal woman apply to all women. God speaks here to teenagers, singles, single mothers, young women, middle-aged women and older women as well.

King Solomon wrote most of the proverbs, but, he did not write this one.

He had 700 wives and 300 concubines made him the expert—but, God didn’t allow him to write this passage. Written by King Lemuel.

He did learn one lesson that means more than all the others:

**SLIDE:** Proverb 5:18: Rejoice in the wife of your youth.  
Should have done it right the first time.

When you look at Proverbs there are many words of advice about women and wives.

**JULIE SLIDE:** Proverb 19:14: Houses and wealth are inherited from parents,  
but a prudent wife is from the LORD.

**ROGER SLIDE:** Proverb 18:22: He who finds a wife finds what is good  
and receives favor from the LORD.

**JULIE SLIDE:** Proverb 14:1: The wise woman builds her house,  
but with her own hands the foolish one tears hers down.

**ROGER SLIDE:** Proverb 12:4: A wife of noble character is her husband's crown,  
but a disgraceful wife is like decay in his bones  
A crown or a cancer: What a choice!  
Socrates

**JULIE SLIDE:** Proverb 19:13: A foolish son is his father's ruin,  
and a quarrelsome wife is like a constant dripping.

**ROGER SLIDE:** Proverb 21:9: Better to live on a corner of the roof  
than share a house with a quarrelsome wife.

Husbands occasionally create problems for their wives, but Solomon doesn't mention any of them.  
But the bible is full of instructions on the responsibilities of husbands.

**JULIE**  
What do you mean occasionally?

**JULIE**  
**SLIDE:** SWAN. Turn into gorgeous to get ideal husband—Didn't get make over on the inside. Need  
extreme makeover on the inside. Now, ladies, we must not miss this. Nowhere does this passage  
describe the ideal woman as outwardly beautiful. Our culture would lead us to believe if you're not  
bulimic and beautiful you're not worth anything. The plain truth is that men never struggle with these  
issues. When is the last time you heard a man say, "Do I look fat?" or "Do I have my mother's thighs?"  
Being beautiful is not the answer. In fact, Proverbs 11:22 says:

**SLIDE:** Proverb 11:22: Like a gold ring in a pig's snout  
is a beautiful woman who shows no discretion.

**ROGER**  
The finest description of the ideal wife is found in 31:10-31.  
This poem is an acrostic with the initial words of the twenty-two verses all beginning with successive letters  
of the Hebrew alphabet (like Psalm 119). The acrostic form was a device to help people commit a  
passage to memory. Perhaps Jewish parents instructed their sons and daughters to memorize this poem  
and use it as a guide for their lives and in their homes.

**JULIE SINGS**

M is for the million things...

**SLIDE: She is a woman of admirable character** (Proverbs 31:10-12).

**SLIDE: 10** A wife of noble character who can find? (What others see).

She is worth far more than rubies. (What God sees. Titus)

11 Her husband has full confidence in her (What her husband sees—discreet, steward, faithful and lacks nothing of value).

12 She brings him good, not harm, (What children see in the home as she supports and encourages him. Best gift children can give to their children is Christ like love modeled in their marriage).  
all the days of her life.

Just as wisdom is more important than wealth (3:15), so character is more important than jewels.

Good character implies that you will respond to every life situation with integrity and consistency.

ROGER and JULIE interactive about Abigail. (Who do you most admire for their noble character?)

Who is one of your biblical heroines?

Abigail's husband Nabal is a real jerk. His name means "fool".

Nabal was an obnoxious drunkard who insulted King David when he asked for food to feed his troops.

Nabal flatly refused. This is not smart. David was on the way to kill him, when Abigail, his wife ran out to meet David's troops with 100 hungry man dinners and a large apology. David spared Abigail. When Nabal sobered up and discovered his neck was on the line, he died of a heart attack. David was so impressed with how Abigail handled the crisis that he married her.

Now that's a woman of character.

(Roger's questions: What about her character did you like best?)

(What would you say to women who are married to jerks?)

Hang on until he has a heart attack....Not really. I would say you have no control over his actions, but you do have control over your own. What model do you want your children to See?

An angry, bitter woman-or a gracious forgiving one?

JULIE

The next section of the chapter teaches this:

**SLIDE: She knows how to work (Prov. 31:13-24).**

This makes me tired just reading this.

ROGER AND JULIE

**SLIDE: 13** She selects wool and flax and works with eager hands. (Oh good, she gets to shop)

**SLIDE: 14** She is like the merchant ships, bringing her food from afar. (And they didn't have cars)

**SLIDE: 15** She gets up while it is still dark; (with no alarm clock) she provides food for her family (without the aid of lean cuisines) and portions for her servant girls. (who gets to have maids?)

**SLIDE: 16** She considers a field and buys it; out of her earnings she plants a vineyard. (She is into real estate)

**SLIDE: 17** She sets about her work vigorously; her arms are strong for her tasks. (she is buff)

SLIDE: 18 She sees that her trading is profitable,  
and her lamp does not go out at night. (she is a night owl)

SLIDE: 19 In her hand she holds the distaff  
and grasps the spindle with her fingers. (she is into needlework)

SLIDE: 20 She opens her arms to the poor  
and extends her hands to the needy. (she gives to Goodwill)

SLIDE: 21 When it snows, she has no fear for her household; (what snow?)  
for all of them are clothed in scarlet.

SLIDE: 22 She makes coverings for her bed;  
she is clothed in fine linen and purple. (I like this part; more cute clothes)

SLIDE: 23 Her husband is respected at the city gate, (she is proud of her husband)  
where he takes his seat among the elders of the land.

SLIDE: 24 She makes linen garments and sells them,  
and supplies the merchants with sashes. (she is an entrepreneur)

ROGER

Many things to say here: just draw out two things.

JULIE

Note that she works willingly (v. 13); it is not a matter of compulsion but compassion. She loves her husband  
and therefore seeks to please him and care for her family.

Now ladies, don't miss this. The wife is not trying to build up her poor self-esteem, or to impress others.

Our culture talks about a housewife as some demeaning, menial career. God says it is a noble calling. It  
is also the hardest job in the world. Before you disagree, men you just try it for a week. And those of  
you women who have to work, I know it is really hard to be away from your family. I am so sorry you  
have to carry such a heavy load. God sees your heart and will give you the grace to do what you have to  
do. You see, the godly woman is motivated to minister to her family.

ROGER

(v. 21) she has no fear for her household;  
for all of them are clothed in scarlet.

JULIE: Does this mean that they all wore red sweaters?

ROGER

In the Bible, to be "clothed" with something means that it is a part of your life and reveals itself in your  
character and conduct. (see 1 Tim. 2:9-10; Col. 3:8-14).

Reference to salvation for her children

JULIE

Now here is another thing she does well....

SLIDE: **She faces the future with confidence (Prov. 31:25).**

SLIDE: 25 She is clothed with strength and dignity; (This didn't come from Dillards.)  
she can laugh at the days to come.

A woman worries about her future until she gets a husband. A man never worries about his future until he  
gets a wife.

This wife can laugh at future problems and troubles because she has strength of character and she's prepared  
for emergencies. She is a woman of faith who knows that God is with her and her family.

"She laughs at the time to come....."

“Laugh”: When is the last time you laughed at the future. Picture indicates both attitudes of faith and an eternal perspective. She’s wearing scarlet because she has invited Jesus into her life and she knows she will go to heaven when she dies.

My friend Sandy has not had an easy life. But people call her “the walking party”. She’s Not only fun, she knows how to make people feel good about themselves.

Do you laugh at the future? Or are you afraid of the future?

ROGER

Answer is in the first part of the verse. Strength and dignity: she has endured difficulties, like many here, and she had emerged victorious. Confidence for the future.

JULIE

Plus, she is clothed in scarlet.

ROGER

**SLIDE: She is a capable teacher of wisdom (Proverbs 31:26).**

**SLIDE: 26** She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue.

Remember that earlier in the book, Solomon used a beautiful woman to personify wisdom; this godly wife does the same.

Knows Bible so well she can apply it in any situation.

Captures the teachable moment. Doesn’t use bible like a bludgeon.

Knows how to make the word come alive in their hearts.

Mary, Jesus’ mother is a perfect example. How do you think Jesus quoted scriptures like Psalm 22 throughout his ministry? Mary was the mom who taught him.

JULIE

The next verse is more difficult for me:

**SLIDE: She oversees her household well (v. 27).**

**SLIDE: 27** She watches over the affairs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness.

It doesn’t mean all the sheets are alphabetized, her coupons are all clipped or her sweaters are all in plastic baggies.

She cares for the comfort and ease of her family with an organized household.

ROGER

No one does all these well.

I have an expectation that revolves around the need for order. When I got married I imagined Julie would be a lot like

▶ **SLIDE #:** June Cleaver on *Leave It to Beaver*. But I did not get June Cleaver.

▶ **SLIDE #:** I got Lucy Ricardo.

JULIE

I've learned to be a little more organized and neat but it takes work. It's not a matter of what's comfortable for me, but I must consider Roger's needs.

ROGER

Roger and singles moms. Julie to GGBTS for a week and Roger was single dad.  
Pay bills, fix cars, kids ready for school; work 2 jobs.  
Bill Nicholson-helped Elaine by vacuuming the rug.

JULIE

**SLIDE: She's worthy of praise (vv. 28-29).**

**SLIDE:** 28 Her children arise and call her blessed;  
her husband also, and he praises her:  
29 "Many women do noble things,  
but you surpass them all."

It's a blessing when husband and children praise their wife and mother for her ministry in the home. Don't just say thanks to your Mom once a year on Mother's day. She needs your appreciation and approval all year long.

Other side of worthy; not only getting praise, she is worth a lot in what she does.

Even if she is not praised, God praises her. Even if your family never gave you appreciation— God will give you a crown.

ROGER

Dr. Ewy letter. Thanks, hand on my hand. Do all this for people and you wonder if it is really worth it all. Saying thanks is really important, especially to that woman who stands beside you day after day.

JULIE

The last verse teaches that

**SLIDE: Her Relationship With The Lord Is The Secret Of Her Life (31:30-31).**

**SLIDE:** 30 Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting;  
but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.  
31 Give her the reward she has earned,  
and let her works bring her praise at the city gate.

All of this seems overwhelming without the grace of God.  
Women's one-a-day vitamin. Estrovin, not even Starbucks is enough.  
To attempt this journey alone is to stumble and fall.  
Fearing God means never saying "No" to the Holy Spirit.

Often I feel like I disappoint God, my husband and others, but I know that my husband believes that I have the potential to be a godly woman and so does my Heavenly Father. That Confidence sustains me in my worst moments, in my failures.

Who is on your list of Superheroes? MegaBills like Graham and Bright that impact a generation of earth-travellers?

**SLIDE:** My superhero is named Wanda Tacker, the mild-mannered daughter of a poor East Texas farmer. I call her Mama. Her five grandchildren call her Cutie, a nickname she dubbed each of them when they emerged from the womb, red-faced and screaming. Why do I see my mother as a spiritual giant? Because somewhere alone her daily journey Mama disappeared and Jesus took her place. Cutie didn't have an ideal childhood. Mom and Pop Blakely, her parents, divorced and remarried three times, and Mom suffered through the bloody battles of each passionate dissolution. Wanda was a stunning beauty, but she never thought of herself as beautiful.. She never thought of herself at all. Ever since I was old enough to notice, Mom was laying her life down for those around her. Daily, quietly, constantly, she prayed, cooked, stayed, mended and served. She prayed for others over the kitchen sink suds, during her daily jaunts around the neighborhood, and when insomnia overtook her midnight hours. Mom is the most observant person I know. Sherlock Holmes would never have needed Watson if Cutie was around. Mom remembers what people like, she knows how they are feeling, and discerns where they hurt before they ever utter a word. She is a woman of few words, but I believe it is because such great compassion is not easily articulated. Cutie knows the Father and His heart beats through her veins.

ROGER

DON'T BE OVERWHELMED. No woman does all these things well. This is the presentation of the ideal wife! No one is perfect. So here are two applicable words of advice.

**SLIDE:** 1. For Men and Children: Encourage your wife or mom when she does these things well. Positive reinforcement blesses the heart and promotes repetitive behavior.

JULIE

**SLIDE:** 2. For Women: Focus on one or two characteristics and do them well. Don't try to do all of these at once.

ROGER

Julie and I would like us all to join in praying for the women of our church. If you'd like to receive prayer why don't you stand please for a moment.

You may not want to stand. You may not feel worthy but God thinks you're worthy and we do to.

JULIE pray

ROGER pray