

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

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.

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

1. God's marriage plan is "One Man + One Woman + One Lifetime = Fulfilled Intimacy" (Genesis 2:18-25; Matthew 19:1-9).
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).
3. Proverbs places on the husband the responsibility of guiding the home according to the wisdom of God, but as we shall see in chapter 31, the wife also plays an important part. 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 a 100% devotion to each other and to the Lord.

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

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.

**SHE IS A WOMAN OF ADMIRABLE CHARACTER (31:10-12).**

Just as wisdom is more important than wealth (3:15), so character is more important than jewels. Peter gave this same counsel to Christian wives in his day (1 Peter 3:1-6).

**SHE WORKS WILLINGLY AND SACRIFICIALLY (31:13-24).**

Many get tired just reading these verses.

Note that she works willingly (v. 13); her diligence is not a matter of compulsion but of compassion. She is not trying to build up her poor self-esteem, or to impress others.

Note the reference to the salvation for her children (v. 21).

**SHE FACES THE FUTURE WITH CONFIDENCE (31:25).**

To be "clothed" with something means that it is a part of your life and reveals itself in your character and conduct (see 1 Timothy 2:9-10; Colossians 3:8-14).

This woman can laugh at future problems because she has strength of character and she's prepared for emergencies. She is secure in who she is in God's eyes.

When was the last time you laughed at the future? The picture indicates both faith and an eternal perspective.

#### SHE IS A CAPABLE TEACHER OF WISDOM (31:26).

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

She knows the Bible so well that she can apply it in any situation.

She captures the teachable moments. She is intimate enough with her children that she can help speak God's will and God's ways directly into their hearts.

#### SHE OVERSEES HER HOUSEHOLD WELL (31:27).

This doesn't mean that 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.

Single moms need great support from the church community. Their household responsibilities are doubly hard as they do so much work alone.

#### SHE'S WORTHY OF PRAISE (31:28-29).

It's a blessing when husband and children praise their wife and mother for her ministry in the home.

The suggestion here is that this praise was expressed regularly and spontaneously and not just on special occasions. The father has the opportunity to set the example for the children by continually thanking his wife for what she does for the family.

Even if a worthy woman is not praised, God praises her. God will give her a crown.

#### HER RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LORD IS THE SECRET OF HER LIFE (31:30-31).

The goals of this passage are overwhelming without the grace of God.

To attempt this journey alone is to stumble and fall.

Fearing God means never saying "No" to the Holy Spirit.

**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.

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