

Explore the Bible: August 16

By Laura Lee Leathers

Finding Honor • Proverbs 31:10-16, 23-31



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Back in the 1960s, the Girls' Auxiliary (under the WMU family) was a mission group for girls ages 10 to 16. Leaders were to encourage young women to study and memorize Scripture, learn about and be involved in missions, develop leadership skills, and participate in activities. There was a seven-step process in earning awards starting with, Lady-in-Waiting and ending with Queen-in-Service. When a girl reached step three, Queen, one of the requirements was to memorize Proverbs 31:10-31.

Using the Hebrew alphabet, it's written in acrostic form (see Psalm 119 & Lamentations 1-4), and it poetically describes the virtues and character of a godly woman. In *Preacher's Commentary, Vol. 15 – Proverbs*, David A. Hubbard writes: "The poem begins with introductory verses that describe the woman's worth, reliability, and virtue (vv.10-12) and concludes with a lengthier encomium paying tribute to her character, wisdom, industry, love, and piety (vv.25-31). Between the introduction and conclusion is a cluster of descriptions of her specific tasks, habits, and accomplishments (vv.13-24)."

Commitment to Her Husband (Prov. 31:10-12 ESV). Who can find an excellent wife? The emphasis is on the scarcity and rarity of finding this individual. She can be found, but it will take a strategic search (v. 10a, Ruth 3:11, Prov. 18:22). Excellent

or virtuous means trustworthy, capable, noble character, resourceful, and strength. A woman possessing these virtues is worth more than rubies.

Verse 11 reads, "The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain." An initial reading of this verse may imply that the reference is to marital fidelity; however, the rest of the verse points to economic security. Gain is a reference to "booty" or "plunder." He can trust her with the valuables, She is loyal and adds to the family wealth by being wise and thrifty. In verse 12, she does him good as long as she lives.

Wise in Her Work (Prov. 31:13-16). Does reading this passage make you tired? Establishing and maintaining a successful home takes skill, planning, knowledge, and hard work. It's important to note that different seasons of life bring changes in responsibilities. The godly woman is described as: productive, engaged, working diligently with her hands, and bringing food to the table from afar. She rises early to prepare meals and feed her family.

Demonstrating an entrepreneurial spirit, she considered a field, bought it, and planted a vineyard. Her industrious spirit made an impact within the home and community. Notice the references to her hands: sewing, seeking to help others, and serving. It is important to realize, "Proverbs 31 destroys the mistaken notion that a woman who works at or from home is unproductive" (Lifeway).

Sure in Her Reputation (Prov. 31:23-27). Character is who you are; reputation is how others see you. Men gathered at the city gate to handle matters of business and legal issues. A man's wife, known for her noble character, would have been an asset to her husband's reputation. Her integrity and character also made an impact in the marketplace.

Fear of the Lord is epitomized in her character traits:

strength and dignity, wisdom, the teaching of kindness, integrity, preparing for the future, and industrious. Her household is the top priority.

Honored Through Fearing God (Prov. 31:28-31). Her highest blessing was being honored by her family. Her children arise and call her blessed, Her husband praises her because of her excellence. Hard work is another way she's respected.

“True holiness and virtue command permanent respect and affection, far more than charm and beauty of face and form” (The MacArthur Study Bible). The greatest honor? To be known as a woman who “fears the Lord.”

Be wise! Make it a habit to read a chapter daily from the book of Proverbs. It teaches the **Path of Wisdom – Reverence – Obedience – Virtues – Education – Righteousness – Blessings – Success.**

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