

## A WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT- April 2008 “The Woman of Strength”

Today we are looking at (and learning from) the “Proverbs 31” woman found in the Old Testament. Proverbs is a book of wisdom, written for our instruction and benefit. The purpose of the book is to teach us wise, skillful and successful living, making decisions that are practical and line up with the Word of God. If we think about it, we are where we are today because of all the decisions we have made up to this day. God, as always, is ready to help us. Wisdom gives us guidelines for our lives, conduct, and relationships. Most of the Book of Proverbs does this by contrast- good vs. evil, life vs. death, truth vs. falsehood, wise vs. foolish, prosperity vs. poverty, and others. It also speaks of relationships, how to treat people, our thoughts, and the power of our words. Whatever we do, whatever we speak, whatever our circumstances are, whatever decisions we make, we are to seek wisdom. Proverbs 4:7 says “Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom. And in all your getting, get understanding.” God’s truths revealed in Scripture are timeless, and always can be applied to our lives. Proverbs 1:7 says “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.” This is an important part of the teaching on the “Proverbs Woman” as we will see.

In reading Proverbs 31:10-31 you will find this amazing, talented, industrious woman. In various translations she is called “a wife of noble character”, “the virtuous wife” and “a truly good wife”. She is efficient, energetic, helpful, fruitful, has right priorities, focus, is aware of the true needs around her, in proper relationship with her husband and children, and has an open hand and an open heart toward those beyond her household- she is a composite of everything right and good- everything pleasing to God. If you have read this, you may be saying “That’s not me!” Take heart- this woman is an IDEAL- she is not a real person, she is a “divinely inspired” woman set before us in Scripture to teach and instruct us, to lead us forward in the ways of truth of the Lord as we grow in Him. As we examine her character and many stellar qualities we will see that it is not who she is or what she does but “whose she is” that is of most importance.

The most important scripture in the reading is Proverbs 31:30 AMP which says “...a woman who reverently and worshipfully fears the Lord, she shall be praised.” There is to be a great respect to and for our God, our loving God- and an honoring of Him as God alone. We are to esteem Him above all others. The fear of the God is not dread or terror but a love for Him that commands reverence and respect and is demonstrated by our obedience to Him, and a submissive spirit that will yield to Him and do His will in all areas of our lives. We are to be humble, willing, and teachable before Him. “The reverent and worshipful fear of the Lord which is the beginning (the chief and choice part) of wisdom” (Prov. 9:10 AMP) is put forth as the true foundation for a life which is valued by God.... (Joyce Meyer- The Everyday Life Bible-commentary). So we see in this woman her firm foundation- a devotion that is rooted in her relationship with, and love for, God. Everything she is and everything she does begins with this foundation.

Her relationships are right, blessed, and bring glory and honor to the Lord. In her relationship with her husband Scripture declares “Her husband can trust her, and she will greatly enrich his life. She brings him good, and not harm, all the days of her life.” (Prov. 31:11, 12 LB). Notice the love, loyalty, and life-long commitment. She is a caring and thoughtful woman,

has her priorities right, and knows balance in relationships and responsibilities. She knows well her children and their needs and responds to them all. She is an example and model to and for them- ever teaching and instructing and living it before them. Proverbs 31, verses 1-9, is a mother teaching her son. It is our responsibility to do the same- that our children will love and know the Lord, learn of Him and walk in His ways.

The Lord has given all of us the same amount of time, many resources, and we are all gifted. We are to use what He has so graciously given us and do it heartily and cheerfully as unto Him. This woman uses everything she has to bless her household. “She senses the worth of her work” (Prov. 31:18 The Message). Time, talents, energy- “she watches carefully all that goes on throughout her household, and is never lazy” (Prov. 31:27 LB). She is a “responder”. “She is energetic and strong, a hard worker. She makes sure her dealings are profitable; her lamp burns late into the night” (Prov. 31:17,18 NLT) The Amplified Bible reads as follows: “She girds herself with strength (spiritual, mental and physical fitness) for her God-given tasks and makes her arms strong and firm. She tastes and sees that her gain from work (with and for God) is good; her lamp goes not out, but it burns on continually through the night (of trouble, privation, or sorrow) warning away fear, doubt and distrust.” The focus here is others beyond herself- that they will be cared for, blessed, happy and content. She finds ways to bring finance and help to the household and to others. (Prov. 31:16, 24) She is a woman with an open heart and open hand well beyond her household. “She extends a helping hand to the poor and opens her arms to the needy” (Prov. 31:20 NLT). There is a place in her heart (and God’s heart) for those who are without and need help.

Her character is revealed in many ways- including the way she speaks. She is a picture of the gentle and quiet spirit that 1 Peter 3:4 reveals as something beautiful. “When she speaks, her words are wise, and she gives instruction with kindness” (Prov. 31:26 NLT). The same Scripture in The Message says “When she speaks she has something worthwhile to say, and she always says it kindly.” The KJV says “...in her tongue is the law of kindness”.

She is confident in her God, and knows her future in His hands. Prov. 31:25 says “She is clothed with strength and dignity, and she laughs without fear of the future.” The Message says “...she always faces tomorrow with a smile”. No fear, but preparation and readiness, trust and belief in her God.

“Her children rise up and call her blessed (happy, fortunate, to be envied); and her husband boasts of and praises her, (saying) Many daughters have done virtuously, nobly, and well (with the strength of character that is steadfast in goodness) but you excel them all. Charm and grace are deceptive, and beauty is vain (because it is not lasting) but a woman who reverently and worshipfully fears the Lord, she shall be praised” (Proverbs 31:28-20 AMP)!

In Christ,



Toni Quinn

For His Glory Women’s Ministry