

The Proverbs 31 Woman, Part 2

The single, young man should use this list in Proverbs 31:10-31 as a check list for his future wife before he goes to **match.com**, **chemistry.com** or **eHarmony.com**.

The Proverbs 31 woman is really the Proverbs 31 women. In Proverbs 31:1-9, the godly mother of an unknown king gives him wise advice. In Proverbs 31:10-31, is the check list for a young man to follow when looking for a godly woman to be his wife and the future mother of his children.

First, the author gives the Godly Advice of a Godly Mother in 31:1-9. (See part one)

Next, the author gives the Godly Example of a Godly Wife and Mother in 31:10-31.

These verses are an acrostic. The Hebrew has 22 letters and each verse in Proverbs 31:10-31 begins with a successive Hebrew letter. These verses form the A to Z of a godly wife and mother.

First on the list is her Character in 31:10-12.

A. She is as priceless as a rare jewel and godly wisdom.

There is a similarity of language 31:10 in describing wisdom in Proverbs 3:13-15: "Happy is the man who finds wisdom....she is more precious than rubies." What is a personification in Proverbs 3 is a person in Proverbs 31. This priceless wisdom, however, has to be searched for as if you were mining and excavating for gold (Proverbs 2:4-6). If we are to find this godly wisdom for living we have to emulate the example of the believers in Berea who "searched the scriptures daily" (Acts 17:11). Both a virtuous wife and wisdom are found only as the result of great energy expended. Young men and women should be praying daily for God to lead them to the mate of His choice.

B. She is not like the women his mother advised him to avoid in 31:3.

Those women are like rocks and dirt clogs in a field. Not hard to find. You can pick one up at a bar almost any night of the week. Of course anyone else can pick them up too.

C. The husband of the virtuous woman trusts in her (31:11-12).

He is not afraid she will plunder ("spoil") him (verse 12b) with her check book or credit card on one those shop till you drop trips.

D. This rare jewel can be found only with God's help according to Proverbs 18:22: "Whoso finds a wife finds a good thing, and obtains favor of the Lord."

"A prudent wife is from the Lord" (Proverbs 19:14). Ruth is referred to as "a virtuous woman" by Boaz in Ruth 3:11. According to Ruth 1:1, Ruth and Boaz lived in one of the most morally

apostatized cultures of all time when "every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25). Yet Boaz found Ruth in the marvelous providence of God. It is like Boaz had to dig through a sewer to find this rare ruby.

Next on the list is her Industry in 31:13-27.

What is interesting is what is not on the list. On the check list for a future wife is not listed the color of her hair or eyes. Or how much she weighs or what is her dress size. But the young bachelor should ask to see her hands. Her hands are referred to seven times in these 22 verses. He wants to see if she is a hard worker. Her hands should not be soft from soaking in bubble bath hours on end. One of the qualities that attracted Solomon to the Shulamite woman was her dark tan that she got, not from baking in a tanning bed, but from working long hours in her brothers' vineyard (Song of Solomon 1:5, 6 and 8:11). Solomon knew she was a hard worker and this virtue attracted him to her. Boaz first saw Ruth the virtuous woman gleaning corn in his field and like Solomon was impressed with her industry.

A. She has developed skills in 31:13.

The skills referred to in this verse equipped her well for life in ancient Israel as a seamstress. Today she would be a nurse, secretary, administrative assistant, teacher or a domestic engineer i.e., homemaker.

B. She is a thrifty shopper in 31:14-15. She cross shops and compares prices.

C. She manages well her home in 31:16-19.

1) By selling property in 31:16 and reinvesting in other projects. Apparently she has her realtor's license. She has dressed herself with strength in 31:17. She is like the woman Peter describes who wins her unsaved husband. Her adorning is not "the outward adorning of plaiting of the hair, and of wearing of gold, or putting on of apparel"....but "the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price" (1 Peter 3:1-4). Her focus is not her appearance as much as her godly demeanor.

2) By sowing clothes in 31:19. She has several home businesses.

D. She accomplishes this mammoth task through hard work.

1) She gets up early (31:15a), stays up late (31:18b) and eats not the bread of the idle (31:27). She doesn't park on the couch, eat TV dinners and watch Soap Operas all day.

2) We have all heard the one liner that fits perfectly the Proverbs 31 woman, "Man's work is from sun to sun but a woman's work is never done."

E. She works hard for others in 31:19-27.

1) She works hard so she can give to others in 31:19-20. She closes her hands on her sowing tools so she can open her hands to the needy. She is like Dorcas who sowed clothes for poor widows in Acts 9:36-41 and was wept over at her death because of her sacrificial labor. She never made the Fortune 500 but she wove her way into the hearts of the needy.

2) She works hard for her family in 31:21-27. Her husband can take leadership responsibility because his wife has the house under control. This woman raises the leadership of everyone around her. Her son in 31:1-9 is a leader on the throne. Her husband in 31:10-23 is a leader in the city. She is a leader and teacher of her children (Proverbs 31:26).

F. What is important in your mate? It changes over time. When Solomon wrote his first book, *The Song of Solomon*, he majored on the physical beauty of his bride on their honeymoon. Three times, Solomon intimately describes her beauty. For example read 4:1-2. Now, years later when he is older and more mature, his wife's character is what matters most. He admits in Proverbs 31:30 "beauty is vain" or fleeting.

Lastly, she receives her well earned praise in 31:28-31.

A. From her children in 31:28a.

Honor your mother this Mother's Day season or at least honor her memory. Thank God for several blessings you have because of the hard work of your mother. The first is your life which is the result of her painful childbirth. Next, the fact she stayed up late at night feeding you and wiping your fevered brow when you were sick. She sacrificed so you could have clothes and things.

B. From her husband in 31:28b-30.

Honor your wife today or be thankful for your years together. Give her three compliments today. Compliment her looks. Compliment some things she has done for you or your family or someone else. Compliment her character. Thank her for being a caring wife or mother, or her faithfulness to church, or faithfulness to you.

C. From the public in 31:31 at the gate.

At this Mother's Day season we publicly praise our mothers. In the Hebrew Bible, Ruth follows Proverbs 31. In Ruth, Boaz publicly recognizes Ruth at the public gate in order to secure her as his wife. We should follow the example of both Boaz and the author of Proverbs 31 to be a Proverbs 31 husband or father or son or daughter and thank God for the wife or mother God has blessed us with.