

**I. Introduction:**

- A. After a couple of years we come to the last verses of the *Book of Proverbs*.
1. These are not actually proverbs but a poetical treatise on the beauty and characteristics of a good wife.
  2. And most likely it was patterned on some actual person's wife. Solomon's? Probably not.
  3. It is unlikely that Solomon's wives were anything like the ordinary wives in Israel – or in Post Falls.
  4. But we **don't know** the writer or the subject, and maybe it is a good thing that we have no names.
- B. In my mind I began looking for a nice 3 point message for this scripture to be ended with a poem.
1. I came up with only two points, but I did find a poem – a piece of Hebrew poetry.
  2. Tonight I'm only going to give you point number 1, leaving the second for next Wednesday.
- C. I know people who do not like my use – or anyones use – of the original languages.
1. Some say that God has preserved His word perfectly in English and when anyone refers to Greek and Hebrew they are inserting the intellect of man into God's Word.
  2. The truth is just the opposite; in referring to the original language we are seeking out the Spirit's intent.
  3. And there is sometimes genuine beauty lost in the translation from Hebrew into English.
  4. For example, in these verses each verse begins with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet – in order.
  5. It would be as if verse 10 begins with the letter "a," 11 with "b," 12 with "c" and so on.
  6. If some expert in Hebrew doesn't point that out we'd never know.
  7. Is it important? I really don't know for sure. But I do know for sure that the Holy Spirit ordained it that way.

**II. Point one has to be an exposition of the passage.**

- A. *"Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies."*
1. The word *"virtuous"* is rooted in *"strength,"* so this is speaking of a morally strong woman.
  2. Here is a person with strength of character.
  3. She is not easily pushed around – with advertising, for exa., women's magazines or afternoon TV shows.
  4. *"Who can find her"* suggests that this sort of woman is rare. And why is she rare?
  5. Because in any society where men are godly men, these women are swept up into marriage quickly.
  6. *"Her price is far above rubies."* – did the writer think that rubies are more beautiful than diamonds or gold?
- B. *"The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil."*
1. I suppose we could say that this wife takes care of things at home – finances, groceries, children, home life
  2. She makes no demands & applies no pressure for her husband to go out as a pirate or thief – taking spoil.
  3. But perhaps the meaning is more personal.
  4. Can't we say that the heart is the seat of a person's love?
  5. This woman's husband loves her and has no reason not to trust her, and as a result he doesn't look for anyone beyond his wife. She lives in such a way there is no desire to conquer other women.
  6. By the way, *"safely trust"* is one Hebrew word, not two. Proper trust is always completely safe.
- C. *"She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life."*
1. Some wives **are** evil and appear to want to hurt their husbands. There may be any number of reasons.
  2. Sometimes it might be argued that those husbands deserve it.
  3. But not in this ideal marriage.
- D. *"She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands."*
1. Why does she seek wool & flax? In order to spin the fibers into yarn & linen for clothes & other things.
  2. She doesn't sit around the house doing nothing, nor is she isn't out working in the man's world.
  3. But she has projects at home which can be a blessing to her family in a number of ways.
- E. *"She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar."*
1. She does whatever is necessary within reason to keep her family clothed and fed.

- F. *“She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens.”*
1. We should probably understand the word *“household”* to be *“family?”*
  2. If so, then what is the meaning of *“maidens”*? Aren't these young ladies who work for her?
  3. If they are servants, why aren't they the ones rising early and preparing breakfast for everyone?
  4. Doesn't this shed light on the character of this good and virtuous wife?
- G. *“She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard.”*
1. This may have been a Hebrew sort of thing.
  2. It might not be possible in our society with the price of land and property laws.
  3. But the idea of planting a garden with fruits and vegetables for her family or even for trade or sale, is not a bad idea in any society.
- H. *“She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms.”*
1. She takes care of herself so that she can be an on-going blessing to her husband and family.
  2. I know some ladies who sacrifice themselves, including their health, for the sake of their their family.
  3. I'm not sure that is necessarily a Biblical principle.
- I. *“She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night.”*
1. This *“merchandise”* is the profit earned through effort and trade.
  2. This perfect wife sells or donates her hand-made projects and her fruits and vegetables.
  3. And she makes sure they are above average quality, even if she has to burn the mid-night oil or candle.
  4. The reference to her candle not going out probably speaks of her constant preparedness.
- J. *“She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff.”*
1. I wonder when the spinning wheel was invented.
  2. This *“spindle”* probably refers to an earlier method of making yarn – a drop spindle.
  3. With a spindle, fibers of wool or flax are twisted and blended together, so they can be woven or knitted.
  4. The *“distaff”* may speak of the rod or stick on which the yarn was collected after having been spun.
- K. *“She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.”*
1. She isn't always about making a profit – trading her goods for something of equal or greater value.
  2. When she sees people in need whom she can help, she stretches out her open hand with something in it.
- L. *“She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet.”*
1. She is prepared for the inevitable with clothing sufficient for whatever season.
  2. And it's good quality clothing, too; usually made by her own hand.
- M. *“She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple.”*
1. This isn't saying that she covers her body with tapestries, but that **she herself** makes them.
  2. There may be some tapestries hanging on her walls, but more likely they are covering the beds and some of the furniture.
  3. And when possible, her clothing and that of her family is the best available – even silk when possible.
  4. *“And purple”* – Do you remember what the widow Lydia's business involved? She was a seller of purple.
    - a. She sold a special, expensive cloth dyed purple by the people of her home town Thyatira.
    - b. Or perhaps she sold the dye itself.
- N. *“Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land.”*
1. This woman's husband has time to associate with the political and religious leaders of the community.
  2. She makes sure that he is not bound to her apron strings
  3. She makes sure that he is presentable to those elders.

O. *“She maketh fine linen, and selleth it; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant.”*

1. Again there is a reference to her industry and resourcefulness in helping to provide for her family.
2. She’s not manufacturing wheels or plows, she’s making various kinds of garments.

P. *“Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come.”*

1. For her own clothing, this woman is girded foremostly in honesty, modesty and godliness.
2. From time to time, Solomon has referred to things which made mothers rejoice. Do you remember?
3. When children are honorable and wise; when they are industrious and honest; when they are good and righteous – parents rejoice.

Q. *“She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness.”*

1. I am currently reading a book which depicts life as it probably was in Jesus’ day.
2. One of things it suggests is that the average woman was uneducated and illiterate.
3. They were often little more than slaves to their husband masters. But there were exceptions.
4. If the depiction in that book is accurate, the woman of this example is very much the exception.
5. This woman is intelligent and wise. She knows God’s Word and she knows how to live its principles.
6. She hasn’t been beaten into the dust like many others, and it shows in her kind treatment of those others.
7. She doesn’t talk like a whipped dog, but rather of a woman of love and character.

R. *“She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.”*

1. This woman thinks more of her family than she does of herself.
2. When she sees something which needs to be done, she does it.

S. *“Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her.”*

1. When I hear children praise their parents, I am not only pleased with those children, but with the parents.
2. It means those children have been raised well.
3. Also, as I read this verse, I hear a spiritual element in the sentiment.
4. The Lord has been blessing this woman who is praised and called *“blessed”* – blessed.

T. *“Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.”*

1. Here we have that word *“virtuous”* once again.
2. Whoever this man is who is praising his wife, in his mind there has never been a better spouse.
3. In that attitude there is a formula for a great and happy marriage.

U. *“Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised.”*

1. In this we have the last great proverb of the book.
2. Would you be surprised if I told you the word *“favour”* is related to *“grace?”*
3. Grace is *“unmerited favour”* and in the case of the Lord it is eternal.
4. But in the world the favour and graciousness of people comes and goes, and it is therefore deceitful.
5. Also – generally speaking outward beauty is deceitful too, because over time it, too, goes away.
6. But when a woman’s true beauty is internal and spiritual, it is eternal.
7. When her life displays itself in the worship of Jehovah, her praise will go on for ever.

V. *“Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates.”*

1. When a woman lives in the awe of the Lord, the works of her hands will be pleasing in God’s sight.
2. And when the fruit of her hands pleases the Lord, then other honest men and women will recognize her, and her praise will be spread from the gate throughout the city.