

# The Proverbs 31 **Wo**MAN

By Raymond Smith, Jr.

**T**wo of the most common passages mentioned in churches today, which refer to wives and their duties are Ephesians 5:22 and Colossians 3:18. These verses provide *some* level of instruction for wives regarding how to relate to their husbands, but are rather brief and are included along with duties of other family members also. The 31<sup>st</sup> chapter of Proverbs is a more complete guide and is often considered the *unofficial standard* passage of scripture used by ministers and laypeople to outline more specific duties, responsibilities or goals for a wife. This passage provides a wonderful illustration of the dynamic and creative energy a wife can exhibit in a marriage. Unfortunately, this passage often produces mixed emotions for wives. It provides inspiration as it shows the potential of godly women who use their creativity and gifts in ministry to their families and others. However, it also can produce condemnation at the same time. For many of them, it seems as though they will never be able to meet the standards of the Proverbs 31 woman. Consequently, wives may feel guilty. I find that most often the focus is centered upon the characteristics and responsibilities of the woman when Proverbs 31 discussed. I believe that we do a disservice by not outlining the responsibilities of the husband which are also addressed (by implication) in this familiar passage of Scripture.

As Christians, we recognize that marriage is a covenant between one man and one woman. In marriage, husband and wife are called to mutual servant hood and submission to each other. In other words, there is mutual responsibility for both parties.

The same is true even in the Proverbs 31 passage. What is specifically listed is information directed at the woman. However, what is implied are directions for the husband also.

As absurd as it may sound, a minister preaching on the familiar subject of "The Virtuous Woman", once stated during his sermon to the congregation that the husband mentioned in Proverbs 31 was actually "pimping" his wife. The implication was that the husband merely sat around during the day while the wife did all the work, ran the household and tended to him; bringing him the spoils of her labor at the end of the day. He came to this rather bizarre conclusion based on verse 23 of this chapter. In truth, there is a connection between the industriousness of the wife and what the husband should be.

## Responsibilities of the Proverb's 31 Husband:

- 1. He must first recognize that God is the provider of a wife. She is a gift that is priceless. This should affect his thought process in how he relates to his wife.**

Understanding and embracing this basic concept should help the husband to be a diligent steward of God's gift to him. He must be careful how he serves and nurtures his wife.

Pr 31:10 ¶ An excellent wife, who can find? For her worth is far above jewels. (NASB)

Pr 19:14 ¶ House and wealth are an inheritance from fathers, **But a prudent wife is from the LORD.** (NASB)



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Pr 18:22 ¶ He who finds a wife finds a good thing, **And obtains favor** from the LORD. (NASB)

**2. He must fully engage his wife daily with his intellect, will, and feelings. He must assure her of his confidence in her, not just his own abilities.**

Pr 31:11 The heart of her husband trusts in her, And he will have no lack of gain. (NASB)

**3. He provides the resources his wife requires to develop personally and intellectually. He encourages her to develop her own gifts and talents and put them to use. He is careful to observe when she needs help and then provides her with the assistance and/or resources she needs to achieve her goals. He encourages her to be creative.**

Pr 31:13 She looks for wool and flax, And works with her hands in delight. (NASB)

Pr 31:14 She is like merchant ships; She brings her food from afar. (NASB)

Pr 31:15 She rises also while it is still night, And gives food to her household, And portions to her maidens. (NASB)

Pr 31:16 She considers a field and buys it; From her earnings she plants a vineyard. (NASB)

**4. He wants her to look good and makes provision for her to dress nicely. He understands that she wants to feel good about her physical self even as he focuses on her inner self.**

Pr 31:21 She is not afraid of the snow for her household, For all her household are clothed with scarlet. (NASB)

Pr 31:22 She makes coverings for herself; Her clothing is fine linen and purple. (NASB)

**5. He must be diligent and hardworking also. His wife's successes are no excuse for him to not develop spiritually, personally and professionally. People should generally be able to observe and recognize his prudent behavior, wise council and compassion for others. He is known and respected within the community.**

Pr 31:23 Her husband is known in the gates, When he sits among the elders of the land. (NASB)

**6. He must learn to be his wife's most ardent supporter. He must learn to commend her privately and publicly. He must learn to boast about her, rave about and praise her.**

Pr 31:28 Her children rise up and bless her; Her husband [also,] and he praises her . . . (NASB)

In my view, this most definitely is an amazing woman. However, I believe that too often people put the entire burden for this woman's awesomeness upon her. There is no question that when a husband consistently provides his wife with the love, provision, emotional support, and cherishing honor the Word of God instructs, (especially in today's culture) *he* is as remarkable as she is.

Let's face it; she isn't the only one who has it going on.



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