

The Virtuous Woman of Proverbs 31:10-31

Historically, we are told that the celebration of mothers and motherhood can be traced as far back as ancient Greece and Rome. As it relates to the United States, President Woodrow Wilson in 1914 decreed that the second Sunday of May be designated and celebrated as “Mother’s Day.” Truth be known, however, every Sunday constitutes “*the first day of the week,*” and properly understood each Sunday (including the second Sunday in May) should be recognized as “*the Lord’s day,*” Rev. 1:10. After all, Jesus was raised from the tomb on the first day of the week, Mark 16:9. The Lord’s church came into existence on “*the day of Pentecost,*” Acts 2:1-4, 47, which under the law of Moses always fell upon the first day of the week. And it was upon this day that “*repentance and the remission of sins*” first began to be preached “*to all nations, beginning in Jerusalem,*” Luke 24:47; Acts 2:5,37-38.

However, notwithstanding the intended clarification set forth in the preceding paragraph, it is my conviction that mothers and motherhood should be honored by all sober-minded people — especially in view of the fact that the Bible has so much to say on this subject. Indeed, the Bible mentions by name many women who were virtuous and holy, whose examples and influence reached both far and wide. Included in that number were such mothers as Ruth (Ruth 3:11), Hannah (I Samuel 1:11), Mary (Luke 1:38), Eunice and Lois (2 Tim. 1:5), etc., etc.

Generally, when Bible students think of what truly constitutes a “*virtuous wife*” (and mother), Proverbs 31:10-31 come to mind. These verses provide a glimpse into an ancient culture, and they use terminology which is descriptive of that culture. However, they set forth principles that are as modern as tomorrow, and they describe the “*virtuous wife*” from several perspectives. Indeed, the “*worth*” of a “*virtuous wife*” is said to be “*far above rubies,*” Prov. 31:10. So we ask **Why is the “Virtuous Wife” so Valuable?**

Because of Her Character!

(1) She is trust worthy, for “*the heart of her husband safely trusts her,*” v. 11. (2) She is industrious, for “*she rises while it is yet night and provides food for her household,*” v. 15; she “*watches over the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness,*” v. 27. (3) She has a proper sense of values, with “*strength and honor*” being “*her clothing,*” v. 25, and not simply material purchased from an expensive dress shop. (4) Also she “*fears the Lord,*” v. 30, and she “*opens her mouth with wisdom, and on her tongue is the law of kindness,*” v. 26.

Because She is a Blessing To Her Husband!

(1) His heart “*safely trusts her, so he will have no lack of gain,*” v. 11. (2) “*She does him good and not evil all the days of her life,*” v. 12. (3) And he “*is known in the gates, when he sits among the elders of the land,*” v. 23.

Because of Her Sacrifices For Her Family!

(1) She rises “*while it is yet night, and provides food for her household,*” v. 15. (2) “*Her husband is clothed with scarlet,*” v. 21, as she obviously knows how to sew and make clothing (v. 19-22). (3) She prepares for adverse times, for “*she is not afraid of snow for her household,*” v. 21. “*She watches over the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness,*” v. 27.

Because of Her Compassion To the Poor!

Indeed, “*she extends her hand to the poor, Yes, she reaches out her hands to the needy,*” v. 20. Perhaps she remembers Deut. 15:11 wherein God said to the Israelites under the Law of Moses, “*For the poor will never cease from the land; therefore I command you, saying, ‘You shall open your hand wide to your brother, to our poor, and your needy, in your land.’*” In every Bible dispensation God has required His people to be compassionate toward others and their legitimate needs. This, of course does not negate the exercise of wisdom and common sense in such instances, for the Scriptures also teach that “*if anyone will not work, neither should he eat,*” 2 Thess. 3:10. It is one thing to assist a person in helping provide his (or her) legitimate needs; it is something else to be an enabler of a lazy bum who is allergic to work!

The Reward of “The Virtuous Wife” (and Mother)

1. She can know that she is a person of great “*worth.*” In fact, “*her worth is far above rubies,*” v. 10. A wife and mother who humbly realizes that she is a person of great value can maintain a wholesome self-esteem, and be motivated to continue such a course of conduct.

2. “*She shall rejoice in time to come,*” v. 25. “*Rejoice*” in this verse is translated “*laugh*” in Eccl. 3:4. She has a happiness which can not be purchased with mere money.

3. She has the respect of her family! Her “*children rise up and call her blessed,*” v. 28. And rightly so, for she has proven to be a blessing to so many!

4. Her husband “*praises her,*” v. 28, and rightly so, for “*she does him good and not evil all the days of her life,*” v. 12. In fact, her husband would be an irresponsible ingrate if he neglected to praise her!

5. She shall be “*praised*” in general, especially in view of verses 30-31: “*Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing. But a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her in the gates.*”

Conclusion:

It would be appropriate to draw the contrast between the “*virtuous wife*” (and mother) of Proverbs 31 with the “*successful*” wife (and mother) as she is perceived in today’s world, especially by the Hollywood crowd.

Interestingly, Proverbs 31: 10-31 describes the “*virtuous wife*” (and mother) with respect to her character, her conduct, the use of her tongue, her actions toward her husband, her children, and to the people with whom she comes into contact. Nothing, however, was said about her scholastic attainments, the color of her hair, the color of her eyes, her height, her figure, or countless other things which seem to occupy the attention of a modern world given over more to vanity than virtue. With God, inner beauty and character take priority over outward beauty and charm.

Scripture teaches each person, saying “*honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise,*” Eph. 6:2; cf. Ex. 20:12. Good wives and good mothers **deserve** honor and respect, and we should never be negligent in expressing to them (by word and action) our love and respect for them, and for the many sacrifices they have made (and continue to make). At the same time, we suggest the importance of wives and mothers really “*zeroing*” in on Proverbs 31:10-31 in order to properly

grasp what, biblically speaking, is involved in actually being a “*virtuous wife*” and mother.

**** —Bobby Witherington

The Perfect Church

“I think that I shall never see
A church that’s all it ought to be!
A church whose members never stray
Beyond the straight and narrow way!
A church that has no empty pews,
Whose preacher never has the blues;
A church whose deacons always “deak”
And none is proud, and all are meek;
Where gossips never peddle lies,
Or make complaints or criticize;
Where all are always sweet and kind,
And all to others’ faults are blind.
Such perfect churches there may be,
But none of them are known to me.
But still, we’ll work, and pray, and plan
To make this one the best we can.”

—Copied