

proverbs 31 woman

a Bible study

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deep roots

BIBLE STUDIES

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introduction

One of the many pieces of wisdom my grandma has bestowed upon me over the years is that I need to prepare for marriage. Before I started my first semester of college, she instructed me to dwell heavily on Proverbs 31, so I could be a virtuous wife for my future husband.

After talking to her that day, I printed out Proverbs 31:10-31 and hung it on my bedroom wall amongst my other special verses. I read Elizabeth George's *Beautiful in God's Eyes*, which is all about becoming a Proverbs 31 woman. I tried to find other resources on Proverbs 31, too, whether it be books, blog posts, podcasts, etc.

Yet, nothing stuck. For some reason, I felt like I was going nowhere in furthering my knowledge of how to be a virtuous woman. Wasn't I a "good Christian girl" who stayed out of trouble already? I know how to cook, clean, sew, shop, sell, etc. All of the P31's major qualities were things I already knew by then at 18 years old! What was lurking between

the fine lines of this passage that I must not be understanding?!

WASN'T I
A "GOOD
CHRISTIAN
GIRL"
ALREADY?

If I had all of these things down already, shouldn't there be a

handsome man on a white horse waiting in the wings for me?!

Some days, I would stare at the passage for what felt like hours, trying to discover just what I was missing.

So often, we look at the Proverbs 31 woman as the happy housewife who does her chores diligently and enthusiastically

like Snow White in the 1930s Disney film. She 'whistles while she works' and never complains! However, upon recent study, I've realized that is not what is being depicted here. Instead, this is a strong woman who likes to work out, run her own business, buy her own property, and can even mock the future with her laughter from how unafraid she is. That sounds like a kickbutt woman to me! I would say this is actually

one of the major Girl Power passages of the Bible. I like to joke that this is the original #GirlBoss!

So, my perspective in the beginning had been all wrong. All I wanted from this passage were the answers to getting a husband. Yet, when I looked at this woman through new lenses, I saw a woman who was kind, generous, and helpful, while also strong, independent, and resourceful. Although this woman *has* a man, she doesn't necessarily *need* a man.

One thing that was very important to me when I wrote this Bible study was to show every woman can apply the principles from Proverbs 31. Maybe you are a fashionista, or maybe you feel most comfortable in sweatpants instead. Perhaps your idea of the perfect Friday night is a gathering with friends, or maybe you'd rather do a night-in reading a good book. Whether you are single, married, a college student, a career gal, a mother, grandmother - *whatever* kind of woman you are, Proverbs 31 was written for you.

Although the woman described in Proverbs 31:10-31 didn't actually exist, we can all take a page or two out of her book. Every woman has something to learn from this passage. I hope the Lord opens your eyes to things you've never realized about this incredible woman before, and how you too can be just like her (in your own special way, of course).

May the Lord bless you,

Felicity Lorenz

Owner of Deep Roots

THIS
IS THE
ORIGINAL
#GIRLBOSS!

INSTRUCTIONS

HELPFUL SUPPLIES

- Colored Pencils
- Yellow Highlighter
- Prayer Journal
- Study Bible (Any version will do - we use NASB)
- Hebrew to English Bible Dictionary (Suggested: Complete Word Study - Old Testament by AMG Publishers; some online websites have Hebrew Lexicons, like BibleHub.com)
- Proverbs Commentary (Our favorites: Jon Courson's Application Commentary, Warren Wiersbe's "Be" Commentary Series)

OTHER TIPS

- Whenever a day's study asks for you to research a word in its original Hebrew, pull out your Hebrew to English Bible Dictionary.
- When a question asks you to 'record what you learn', either paraphrase it to the main idea, or write out the entire verse.
- Each day, you will be asked to write in the margins of your Bible the overall quality of a verse. Make sure to record these qualities on pages 6 - 7, too.
- Every day, we give you prayer prompts that correspond with that day's verse. Of course, you can pray them outloud. However, we say to write these prayers down in a prayer journal, rather than just speak them verbally to the Lord, so you can look at these prayers at a later time. One day, you will look back at what you asked God for today, and realize how He responded to that prayer in time. Thus, writing your prayers down is a good habit to get into, so you can keep track of God's answers to your prayers.
- Remember: This is *your* Bible study time. So do as the Lord leads!

SYMBOLS

PROVERBS 31

CHILDREN

GAIN

GATES

GOOD

HANDS

HEART

HOUSEHOLD

HUSBAND

THE LORD

PRAISE

STRENGTH

LUKE 10:38-42

BOTHERED

DISTRACTED

GOOD

JESUS

LISTENING TO

HIS WORD

MARTHA

MARY

TAKEN AWAY

WORRIED

chart

VERSES

CHARACTER TRAIT

Verse 10	
Verse 11-12	
Verse 13	
Verse 14	
Verse 15	
Verse 16	
Verse 17	
Verse 18	
Verse 19	
Verse 20	

Verse 21	
Verse 22	
Verse 23	
Verse 24	
Verse 25	
Verse 26	
Verse 27	
Verse 28-29	
Verse 30	
Verse 31	



AN EXCELLENT
WIFE, WHO
CAN FIND? FOR
HER WORTH IS
FAR ABOVE
JEWELS.

PROVERBS 31 STUDY

week one

“THESE VERSES ARE NOT A CATTLE PROD FOR
A HUSBAND TO USE TO GOAD HIS WIFE TOWARD
GODLINESS. THESE VERSES ARE A SPRINGBOARD
FOR A HUSBAND TO SHOWER ENCOURAGEMENT ON HIS
WIFE.” - STEPHEN ALTROGGE

DAY ONE

Read through the entirety of Proverbs 31. As you read, you may want to mark the following key words. Symbol suggestions have been provided on pages 6 - 7. This may help you read the passage easier and notice recurring themes.

- Husband
- Hands
- Praise/praises/praised
- Strength/strong
- Household
- The Lord
- Gates
- Good
- Gain

Also underline every verb that pertains to the Proverbs 31 woman's actions. Highlight any verses that stick out to you.

Who is speaking in this chapter? Is it a man or woman?

Why would she be giving this advice to her son, a king? (Look at verses 11, 23, 28-29)

So often, messages and books on Proverbs 31 are directed solely to married women. However, this passage is actually targeting *single* men and women! Think about it: Although King Lemuel's mother was describing qualities his future wife should have, his future bride couldn't possibly be able to fulfill all these qualities yet. She didn't have a husband and children who could praise her, and she probably wasn't running a household yet. So, King Lemuel needed to be looking for someone who would be the *kind* of woman to do these things. We could call this passage, "What to Look for in a Future Spouse 101." Thus, if you are single and/or without children, take heart. You can be a virtuous woman without a family of your own yet.

Today in your prayer journal, ask the Lord to:

- Reveal something to you through this passage on Proverbs 31. Ask Him to have the Holy Spirit moving in your heart as you read His words.
- Show you how you can apply what you read in this passage to your life.
- Point out how your strengths and weaknesses, so you can grow more into His likeness.



The Bible Series (2013). Copyright © Lightworkers Media

A KING BY ANY OTHER NAME

Who was King Lemuel? Who was his mother? It is hard to know. Scholars debate on the identity of these two people, because there is no specific evidence. Here are possible theories:

1. King Lemuel was a king of Massa.
2. King Lemuel is actually Solomon, and the mother mentioned is Bathsheba. This keeps with tradition that the entirety of Proverbs was solely written by Solomon.
3. King Lemuel was not a king at

all. Lemuel in Hebrew means “belongs to God.” It is possible this was a spiritual leader to the people.

4. King Lemuel is King Hezekiah under a pseudonym.
5. King Lemuel and his mother are fictional characters that Solomon created to describe his ideas.

What is the truth? It is difficult to say. The best option is to not worry about it, and just appreciate the wisdom we receive from this passage.

DAY TWO

AN EXCELLENT WIFE, WHO CAN FIND?
FOR HER WORTH IS FAR ABOVE JEWELS.

Why are virtuous women so rare? Let's take a look at Proverbs' Adulterous Woman for comparison. Proverbs spends a lot of time on the Adulterous Woman, in order to warn men of the consequences of engaging with her, and to advise to stay away from her. Write down everything you learn about her from each passage.

- Proverbs 2:1-22
- Proverbs 5:1-23
- Proverbs 6:23-29
- Proverbs 7:6-17
- Proverbs 22:14



Queen Esther in *One Night with the King* (2006). Copyright © Gener8Xion Entertainment

VIRTUOUS WOMAN: QUEEN ESTHER

DESCRIPTION	
NAME	Hadassah (also Esther)
BIBLE PASSAGE	Book of Esther
P31 QUALITIES	Brave (v 25)
	Trusted God (v 30)
	Praised by husband (v 28-29)
Queen Esther, whose real name was Hadassah, was a young Jewish girl that changed the course of history. You probably know the story: King Xerxes of Persia needed a new wife after his previous one disrespected him publicly. Esther is eventually chosen to be his bride through a beauty contest, and becomes queen of all Persia. Meanwhile, she had to keep her true identity a secret. Esther would be considered a Proverbs 31 woman, because she was willing to do something dangerous (address her husband unannounced) in order to save her people from genocide. She trusted God enough to obey His calling.	

- Proverbs 30:20

Compare and contrast the Adulterous Woman with the Virtuous Woman in the following chart:

THE VIRTUOUS WOMAN	THE ADULTEROUS WOMAN

Did you notice how the Virtuous Woman seems to represent everything that is good, and the Adulterous Woman represents everything that is evil? What two major Bible figures also show this parallel? (HINT: One rules over Heaven, and the other one rules over Hell.) How does that apply to us? Look up 1 John 1:5-7, and record what you learn below:

Do you know of anyone who acts like the adulterous woman? Are there any qualities in you that are like the adulterous woman? Ponder and pray on this subject thoughtfully.

Today in your prayer journal, ask the Lord to help you:

- Be a virtuous woman that goes against the messages of this world, and instead abides by His Word
- Be a wise woman that honors the Lord with her words and actions, and not give into lusts, gossip, or anything else that is evil in His sight
- Protect your relationships with men physically, mentally, and emotionally, so that your whole being is saved for your husband or future husband.

Normally in the Bible, we see characteristics described, like having self-control, the joy of the Lord, love, etc. In those cases, we ask the Lord what those verses look like practically, on a day to day basis. However, Proverbs 31 is the opposite. You do not have to do each of the tasks described exactly. (After all, is there even enough room in the world for every woman to own a vineyard? And does this mean we all have to wear purple?) We see here specific tasks described in order to demonstrate characteristics. Each verse in Proverbs 31, then, can be summarized by one trait or virtue. On the chart on page 6, write down one word that summarizes the characteristic of the virtuous woman here in verse 10. For example, is this woman precious? Rare? Singular? Hard to find? Valuable? Those are all true, but what word or phrase do *you* think best describes this verse? Write it in the chart. You may also want to write that word beside the verse in your Bible for future reference.

This week, we are going to concentrate on the Proverbs 31 woman's relationship with her husband. Later, we will go verse-by-verse throughout the rest of the passage. Remember, this chapter was meant for singles! So if you are single, do not feel excluded. You can still apply these qualities today.



THE VIRTUOUS ALPHABET

Proverbs 31:10-31 is actually an acrostic of the Hebrew alphabet. J.A. Motyer explains in *The New International Dictionary of the Bible*, "In the common form of acrostic found in Old Testament Poetry, each line or stanza begins with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet in order." Johann Döderlein called it "a golden ABC for women."

According to Sandy & Giese (1995) in their book *Cracking Old Testament Codes*:

In Proverbs 31, the acrostic is significant on several levels. As an artistic device, the poet adorned the virtuous woman with a poem aesthetically fitted to

her character. In addition, the idea of completeness was emphasized as the acrostic listed everything from A to Z and gave the sense the topic under discussion had been thoroughly and completely discussed. ...Furthermore, the acrostic may have served as a mnemonic device to aid the memorizing of the text. ...These levels of significance for the acrostic aid the understanding of the text regardless of whether one spiritualizes the attributes of the virtuous woman, thinks of her as the ultimate woman of virtue, or sees the poem as a concluding description of Madame Wisdom (cf. Prov. 8-9).

DAY THREE

THE HEART OF HER HUSBAND TRUSTS IN HER,
AND HE WILL HAVE NO LACK OF GAIN. SHE DOES HIM
GOOD AND NOT EVIL ALL THE DAYS OF HER LIFE.

Understanding the original Hebrew of passages can give us a broader understanding of what the author is saying. Look up the meaning of the Hebrew words for heart, trust, and gain from verse 11. Be aware that your version of the text may use different terms. You can use a Hebrew to English Bible dictionary, or a website like Biblehub.com. Record their expanded definitions below, including what they mean in certain contexts:

Record what you learn from the following passages:

- The Heart
 - Proverbs 14:30
 - Proverbs 15:13

- Trust
 - Proverbs 11:13
 - Proverbs 20:6
- No Lack of Gain / No Need of Spoil / Lacks Nothing of Value
 - Proverbs 5:18
 - Proverbs 12:4
 - Proverbs 18:22
 - Proverbs 19:14

How is a woman able to do this? Look up the following:

- Ephesians 5:22-24, 33

- Colossians 3:18

Summarize what you have learned today about the virtuous woman's relationship with her husband. (Hint: It may help to consider what you learned about the adulterous woman as contrast.)

Today in your prayer journal, ask the Lord to help you:

- Cause your husband or future husband good all his days, and never evil
- Bring peace to your husband/future husband by your decisions, words, and actions
- Be trustworthy to him, because you bless him with good things in all areas of your marriage

Beside verse 11 in your Bible, record the quality trait that summarizes this verse.

DAY FOUR

HER HUSBAND IS KNOWN IN THE GATES ,
WHEN HE SITS AMONG THE ELDERS OF THE LAND .

Throughout our study, we will see that the Proverbs 31 woman is known for her resourcefulness and kind heart. Here, we see a description of what her husband is like. He is also known in his community. So, Let us take a look at what the husband's reputation should be.

Record what you learn from these passages about reputation:

- Proverbs 22:1
- Ecclesiastes 7:1
- 1 Peter 2:12

In summary, what should our reputation be as God's people? How can you pray for these qualities for your husband/future husband? How can you apply these qualities to yourself? Write your ideas below.

Think of the man you are currently married to or dating. Is he respected by his male peers? Is he known for being a moral man, or is he considered untrustworthy, lazy, harsh, or angry? Write down what comes to mind. (If you are single, write ideas on how a man could be disrespected by his peers.)

Today in your prayer journal, pray against anything in this man that might make other men disrespect him.

Beside verse 23 in your Bible, record the quality trait that summarizes this verse.



DAY FIVE

HER CHILDREN RISE UP AND BLESS HER; HER
HUSBAND ALSO, AND HE PRAISES HER, SAYING: "MANY
DAUGHTERS HAVE DONE NOBLY, BUT YOU EXCEL THEM
ALL."

Here, we see that the Proverbs 31 woman's husband and children praise her publicly for her superior character. Let us take a look through the Bible of other descriptions of what makes a virtuous woman stand out.

Record what you learn from these passages:

- 1 Timothy 5:9-10

- 1 Peter 3:1-6, 8-9

It is interesting to see the parallels here between our earthly husband, and our heavenly husband. Look up the following passages of how Christ declares His love for us:

- Isaiah 43:1

- Jeremiah 31:3

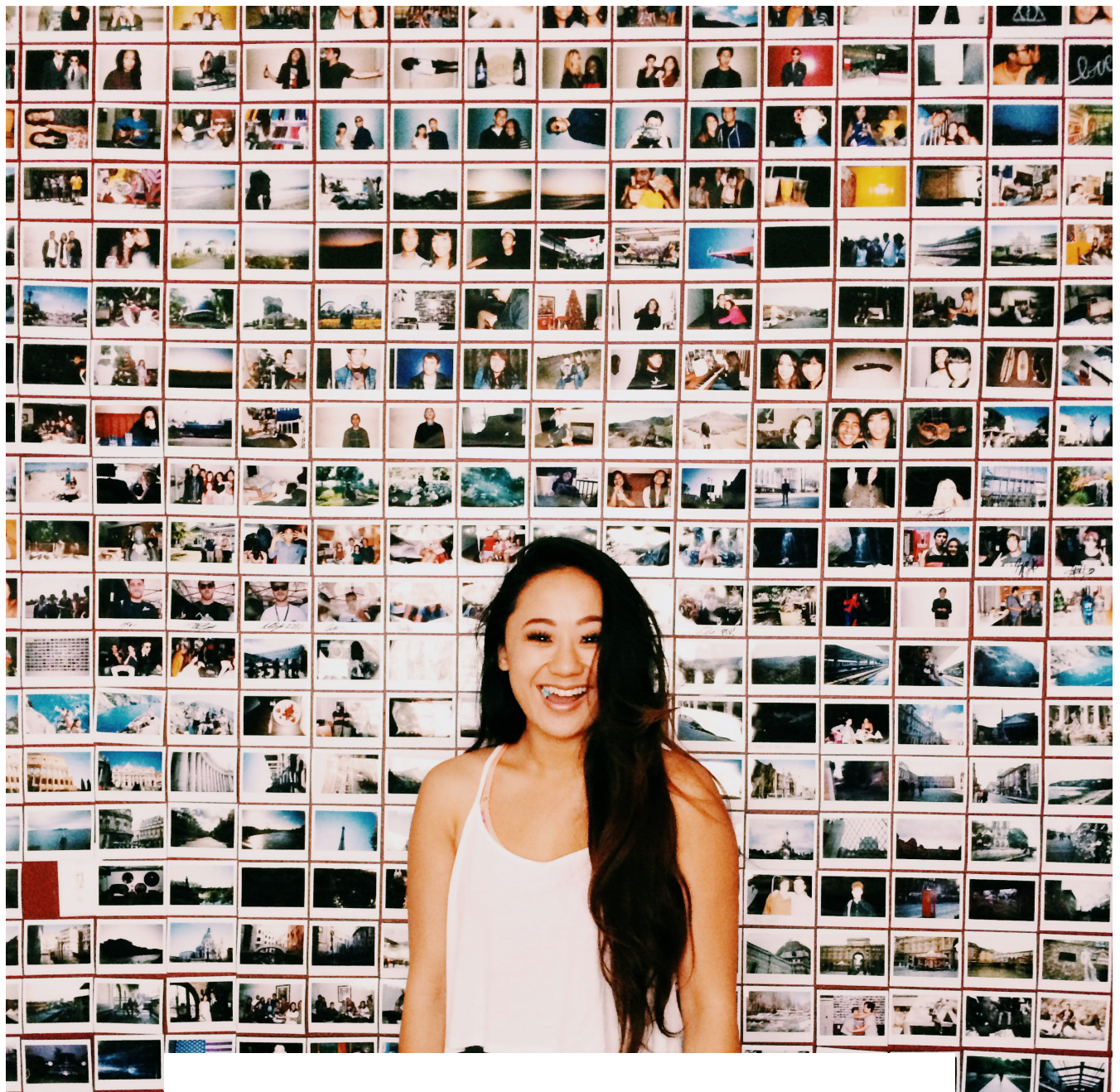
- John 15:9

- Romans 5:8

- 1 John 3:1

Take some time today in your prayer journal to thank the Lord for his declaration of love for you. Pray for your husband/future husband to have this same kind of love for you, that he would declare his adoration for you publicly.

Beside verses 28-29 in your Bible, record the quality trait that summarizes these verses.



IN SUCH A WIFE, THE HEART
OF HER HUSBAND MAY SAFELY
CONFIDE, FOR HE FINDS IN HER
LOVE AND UNSELFISH AFFECTION
TREASURE SO VAST, THAT, LET HIS
CIRCUMSTANCES BE AS THEY MAY,
HE CAN NEVER BE IN POVERTY.
- H.A. IRONSIDE

FURTHER STEPS

If you are already married:

- Pray over how you can better bless your husband in every area of your marriage. Ask the Lord to reveal anything in your heart that is not of Him.
- Write a list of some ways you want to bless your husband this week. This can be doing an act of service, giving him a word of praise, showing physical affection, etc.
- Pray for your husband this week. Ask the Lord to reveal some specific verses that you can pray over him.

If you are not married yet:

- Pray over how the Lord can prepare you to be a wife who will bless her husband. Ask Him to reveal anything in your heart that is not of Him.
- Write your future husband a letter of how you are praying for him, what's happening in your life right now, etc.
- Pray for your future husband this week. Ask the Lord to reveal some specific verses that you can pray over him.



Mary in the Nativity Story (2006). Copyright © Temple Hill Entertainment

VIRTUOUS WOMAN: MARY, MOTHER OF JESUS

		DESCRIPTION
NAME	Mary	Mary is thought to have been a young teenage girl - about fourteen years old - when she became pregnant with Jesus. Although she didn't always understand what God was doing (Luke 2:19), she trusted Him nevertheless (Luke 1:48). We can see how Mary could be considered a Proverbs 31 woman, just by looking at her song in Luke 1:46-55. Even though she could be stoned for being pregnant out of wedlock, Mary nevertheless rejoiced in the Lord. He trusted her with an amazing calling - to mother our Lord and Savior - and she would be the only one to bear it.
BIBLE PASSAGE	Matthew 1, Luke 1	
P31 QUALITIES	Brave (v 25)	
	Trusted God (v 30)	
	Spoke kindness & wisdom (v 26)	