



DR. JOE K. TAYLOR, SENIOR PASTOR, SOUTH RENO BAPTIST CHURCH, RENO, NV • MOTHER'S DAY • MAY 8, 2022
All Scriptures are printed verbatim with translations noted. • Pastor Joe email address is joe@southreno.com.

“Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing, but a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised.” - Prov. 31:30

A. An Overview of Proverbs 31

What we Learn from a Proverbs 31 Woman:

1. She excels in Her Relationships.

- A. Wife (vv. 10-12, 23, 28)
- B. Mother (vv. 14, 15, 28)
- C. Friend (v. 20)
- D. Worker (vv. 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 24)

2. She excels in Her Abilities.

- A. Create (vv. 19, 22, 24)
- B. Plan ahead (vv. 21, 27)

3. She excels in Her Character.

- A. Outward (v. 25)
- B. Inner (vv. 8, 25, 26)
- C. Spiritual (vv. 29, 30, 31)

Proverbs 31:10, NIV -¹⁰ *A wife of noble character who can find?*

Proverbs 31:10, NASB -¹⁰ *An excellent wife, who can find?*

Proverbs 31:10, NKJV -¹⁰ *Who can find a virtuous wife?*

Proverbs 31:10, GW -¹⁰ *“Who can find a wife with a strong character?”*

Proverbs 31:10, TLB -¹⁰ *If you can find a truly good wife, she is worth more than precious gems!*

B. A Word Study in the Key Verse

“A woman of valor who can find? Far beyond pearls is her value.”

- Proverbs 31:10, Masoretic (Hebrew) Text

Hebrew: אִשָּׁת הַיָּל (e-SHEET, ya-EL) – Means “valor in action.” It denotes strength in action, wealth in action, “A potent response emanating from within.” (Strongs)

The word shows us what wisdom looks like ‘in action.’ (NOTE: The only *instructive language* in the poem says, “Praise her for all her hands have done.”) The writer of this proverb estimates her worth to be “far above rubies.” Think of it as something like the Jewish “you go girl.”

Ruth is the only woman in Scripture who actually bears this title.

- Circumstantially, Ruth’s life looked nothing like the life of the woman in Proverbs 31.
- Ruth was a destitute foreigner who harvested wheat.
- Ruth didn’t spend her day making clothes for her husband—she had no husband.
- Ruth’s children didn’t rise up and call her blessed—she didn’t have any children.
- Ruth was among the poorest of the poor in Israel.
- Here is what Boaz says of Ruth *before* she gets married, *before* she has children, and *before* she becomes a wealthy and influential woman:

“All the people of my town know that you are a woman of noble character.” - Ruth 3:11

But Ruth said [to Naomi], “Do not urge me to leave you or turn back from following you; for where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God, [shall be] my God. - Ruth 1:16

- Be careful of focusing on marriage, motherhood, and domesticity, when it is not our roles that define us, but the integrity and bravery we bring to those roles.

C. Three things you didn’t know about Proverbs 31

1. Proverbs 31 is a poem about valor (ie., Wisdom in action)

2. The target audience of Proverbs 31 is actually men—not women.

Proverbs 31:1–3, NASB -¹ *The words of King Lemuel, the oracle which his mother taught him: ² What, O my son? And what, O son of my womb? And what, O son of my vows? ³ Do not give your strength to women....*

3. Proverbs 31 defines true valor.

- Valor isn’t about *simply what* you do, but about *why* and *how* you do it.

Ruth is identified as a woman of valor, not because she checked off some Proverbs 31 to-do list by getting married, keeping a clean house and producing children, but because she lived her life with incredible bravery, wisdom, and strength. She used her unique gifts, insights, passions, and callings to bring hope and healing to the world. She, before God, lived her life with valor.