

## WOMEN'S SUMMER BOOST WEEK 2

### 1.1. The proverbs 31 woman.

In Proverbs 31:10-31, we read about a nameless woman, who represents the wife a man should be looking for. She is amazing in the way she grabs hold of life, and makes the most of it. Again, in the end, she carries the praise. Again, this is God's way of revealing His values and priorities. We read about her today because God decided centuries ago that this woman carried a rolemodel function we need today.

*proverbs 31:10 A wife of noble character who can find?  
She is worth far more than rubies.*

Let it be clear from the get-go: this piece of writing is going to describe to us what character God calls noble. It is obvious that God loves this type of woman.

In the Ancient Near East, women did not have many rights. They were not equal to men, and were expected to "lay low". Yet, the kind of woman God wants in His Bible, is usually one of strength. She does not confuse submission with passivity. She does not confuse responsibility with rebellion.

God presents a woman who does not blame the world for what she does not have, but who sets out to make this life work. For the benefit of others and herself.

And whereas some women mostly feel tired and flawed reading this, that is not how people would have read it then.

Allow me to reassure you that "her lamp does not go out at night" does not mean she never slept. We see the same principle in the new testament, in an engagement context that has nothing to do with work. It just means she has enough oil to keep her lamp burning at night. She doesn't need to be awake for that, it only requires her careful planning of expenses.

What we see here, is a woman who embraces life. Her life. She does not hide behind her husband. She owns life, and in return, her husband is blessed for it. It's a heart issue. She wants only good for her husband, not bad. And it is not a "wishy" kind of want, it has some walk to the talk! This woman has found ways to show this to her husband, so that in return, he fully trusts her.

*Proverbs 31: Her husband has full confidence in her  
and lacks nothing of value.*

The poem goes on to describe how she provides for her family by working diligently, showing how she has her priorities in place. First the family, then the extended household with servants, and stretching out her hands to the needy with what she can.

In business, she has deep insights:

*Proverbs 31:16 She considers a field and buys it;  
out of her earnings she plants a vineyard.*

Her mind is set on expanding, yet there is no recklessness in her. She considers a field first: how much work does it need? How favourable is the land in terms of sunlight, soil,...? And mostly: does what I know the land requires, interfere with my current responsibilities? (In other words: will this bless my household and those around me, or will this shatter my focus and overwhelm us, possibly leaving us financially stretched beyond our capacity?).

She does not lightly commit, but when she has considered, she does not hesitate.

She is marked by strength, dignity and choosing words that reflect wisdom and give life. She instructs faithfully, knowing the responsibility that comes with the wisdom entrusted to her. Speaking life into her children, but also in those that seek her wisdom.

*Proverbs 31:25-26 She is clothed with strength and dignity;  
she can laugh at the days to come.  
She speaks with wisdom,  
and faithful instruction is on her tongue.*

Because of the way she lives selflessly, she has earned influence and so has her husband.

But make no mistake: all these things are just expressions. They are not the essence of what God loves about this woman. It is not the time to feel rejected or not enough because we don't have a business mind. Neither is it appropriate to say that it takes a man to live out this calling. All of these things are her life and the expression of her secret.

What this is really all about, is revealed with a wink in verse 30, right before the end. It is the key to "how does she do all that???"

*Proverbs 31:30 Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting;  
but **a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.***

This woman should be praised because she fears the Lord. That's it!

That does not mean that she is afraid of Him, but that she stands in awe of Him. The amplified translation, which is a bit more elaborate, describes the reaction of the Israelites after being saved out of Egypt as following:

*Exodus 14:31* When Israel saw the great power which the Lord had used against the Egyptians, they **feared** the Lord [**with reverence and awe-filled respect**], and they believed in the Lord, and in His servant Moses. (AMP)

In the same way, God expresses the heart's attitude he wants the Israelites to have towards Him in Deuteronomy 5:29

*Deuteronomy 5:29* Oh that they had such a heart in them, that they would **fear [and worship Me with awe-filled reverence and profound respect]** and keep all My commandments always, so that it may go well with them and with their children forever!

So that is what this woman is doing. She makes it practical to worship Him with awe filled reverence and profound respect. And in doing so, she melts away our greatest fears of being a wife who values submission. She grabs life by the horns and makes something beautiful out of it for everyone who comes near to her.

Left to ourselves, we tend to drift towards idleness and victim thinking, not owning our lives! This woman simply does not eat the bread of idleness. She does not mindlessly waste hours on social media or indulging in the latest gossip. She has a remarkable discipline to her life that seems supernatural. The key is that self-discipline was never the goal of this woman. Fearing God was. Anything else will always fall short.

The praise of this woman is undeniable and all throughout the poem. Towards the end, it just bursts out:

*Proverbs 31:28* Her children arise and call her blessed;  
her husband also, and he praises her:

<sup>29</sup> "Many women do noble things,  
but you surpass them all."

<sup>30</sup> Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting;  
but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.

<sup>31</sup> Honor her for all that her hands have done,  
and let her works bring her praise at the city gate.

Wow.

This woman looks vastly different from the passive-submissive woman we're so afraid of having to become. Or the one we've been hiding behind, never stepping out, just laying low.

#### Word of encouragement

Fearing the Lord is something we all can do. We may not be the people who set up a business, we may never touch a needle or sewing machine in our lives. Our arms

may have bingo wings as we spread them out to the needy, rather than strong for the task and none of that matters. Our God just wants us to live a life that is in reverent awe of Him.

The more we focus on that, the more we can expand and we find ourselves considering fields that we were just dreaming about before. And the fields aren't even the goal, standing in awe of our Maker is!

The more we focus on just that, fearing God, the more we become that woman that is showered with praise by God!

Prayer pause

What do you want to retain from this passage on the Proverbs 31 woman?

What caught your attention to chew on more? Take time to do so.

Pray about what spoke to you.