



The Virtuous Woman - Part 2

Welcome to the second part of the teaching, “The Virtuous Woman”.

In part one, we understand as a woman of valor, that we, who continue to trust in YHWH, are truly walking in wisdom. It is our faithfulness to His word that our Heavenly Father carries us through and transforms us into the likeness of our Proverbs 31 woman. She is our example of what is “excellent and more precious than jewels”. It is YHWH’s perspective.

With that in mind, we are not to measure ourselves by the world’s standards, but by His. The role of a woman is not defined by society. Let me rephrase that- The role of a woman, as a believer, should not be defined by society.

Over the years, the images that have been impressed upon our minds of what a woman’s responsibility to her family and community has changed tremendously.

There has been a vast change from stay at home moms growing all their fresh vegetables to career women hiring a nanny. Then we have the latest trend of moms taking a break from their career and staying home for their child’s preschool years before picking up again in the corporate world.

I am sure trends will continue to change over the years into our next generation too. Society's answers to being the ideal woman will always be forever having a new makeover.

Sadly, even as believers, we have allowed society's branding and labeling to define our self worth as a woman. I think this mindset has done major damage to our self confidence and given one more reason why this chapter in Proverbs is daunting for so many of us. It makes us focus on her deeds and not her character.

As a woman, we need to know that we are doing what we should be doing, what we can be doing, and what we are called to do. Society will be so happy to volunteer it's words of insight to you but it seems to always skip the last need we have... the need for what we are called to do.

It will happily tell you what it thinks you should be doing. Society will also set before you many other things that you can be doing. You know, all of those things you feel guilty for because you can't ever fit them into your day's routine.

We are needy. But the real "need" is to remove ourselves from desiring approval from what the world has to say and instead place ourselves in what the scriptures have to say. Let's seek out Yah's perspective instead. He is our calling and our purpose. Our true need will be met when we seek after Him.

Before reading Proverbs 31, I feel like I need to touch a little bit more on the role society plays in our lives.

Why do we feel that we have to be that Domestic Superwoman that everyone admires? Why do we compare what we do to what others do? YHWH has purposed each one of us to be blessed as

we live righteously. So why do we start thinking less of the blessings we are given by looking at the blessings that others have been given?

We all have that one crazy mom in our lives that seems to have it all together. Maybe she has just passed the season of life that you are in now and is experiencing the rewards from it right before your eyes. It is easy to become discouraged when comparing our life to another's.

It is also hard to not let our minds wander to things that we think might make our lives easier; especially as mothers of small children. As we dwell on those things, we slowly convince ourselves that we would be happier "just if" we had that one special thing. But the "just ifs" end up turning into many if we are not careful.

That "just if" you are thinking of "just might" make life easier but it certainly does not equate itself to be happier. Our desires and wants can start turning into covetous thoughts and unthankfulness of the blessings Yah has already given us. We need to call it out and be careful not to fall into it. Here is Webster's simple definition of covetous.

covetous

: feeling or showing a very strong desire for something that you do not have and especially for something that belongs to someone else

I want to encourage you to build one another up. There may be another woman that looks at you and is desiring a "just if" circumstance for themselves because of something in your life. Show love and kindness, building each other up in whatever each

other's calling is. Whether it is singleness or marriage, childlessness or having young children, or those who are in the empty nest stage.

Remember, we are not opponents. Rather, we are women who have so much to offer to one another “just if” we would.

In contrast to society, let's look at the unchanging model of the Virtuous Woman by reading Proverbs 31 verses 13-31.

13 She selects wool and flax and works with eager hands. **14** She is like the merchant ships, bringing her food from afar. **15** She gets up while it is still dark; she provides food for her family and portions for her servant girls. **16** She considers a field and buys it; out of her earnings she plants a vineyard. **17** She sets about her work vigorously; her arms are strong for her tasks. **18** She sees that her trading is profitable, and her lamp does not go out at night. **19** In her hand she holds the distaff and grasps the spindle with her fingers. **20** She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy. **21** When it snows, she has no fear for her household; for all of them are clothed in scarlet. **22** She makes coverings for her bed; she is clothed in fine linen and purple. **23** Her husband is respected at the city gate, where he takes his seat among the elders of the land. **24** She makes linen garments and sells them, and supplies the merchants with sashes. **25** She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come. **26** She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue. **27** She watches over the affairs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness. **28** Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: **29** “Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all.” **30** Charm is

deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears YHWH is to be praised. ³¹ Give her the reward she has earned, and let her works bring her praise at the city gate.

For those of you who are wanting a formula for being the perfect woman, well, here it is. This is truly the ideal woman.

How do you feel comparing your life with hers? Are you cringing yet? In the past, as I dwelled upon these accomplishments and tasks she takes upon herself, I found myself taking note of all my shortcomings and thinking, “no way. If that is the perfect model of a believer, then I am hopeless.”

The Virtuous Woman seems to make time for everything. Not only makes the time but is great at them! She is smart, dresses great, and has food prepared for every meal. I am happy if I can get my teeth brushed and meat out to thaw for dinner before noon. Are we, as women, truly expected to involve ourselves in ALL of these works?

Absolutely not!

If you are looking for recipes to be that perfect wife, mother, or woman of Yah, well, I am here to tell you that these things she does are not it! Looking closer at the book, you will find a recipe that all of us are to live by, but it is just not as evident as we would have hoped for. It takes a little bit more digging and searching out.

I had to stop and think about why this oracle was given in the first place and ask myself. “Do we really think this writing to the King was to diminish all women who do not accomplish these tasks?”

What is the real purpose for the King's mother telling her son about this remarkable woman? What is the reason for her to share all of these amazing feats of accomplishments?"

I know that teachers mean well and want to honor us as women for all that we give and do for others. Little do they know, they are mostly just adding a little bit of more baggage for us to carry home afterwards. It is because most have the focus on the wrong elements of the passage.

Basically, Proverbs 31 verses 10-31 was written as a song or poem. The type of poem today would be called an acrostic. There are 22 lines, or verses as we have them marked, and each line starts out with each letter of the Hebrew aleph-bet in order from first to last.

It would be similar to what our children write out to us in a Mother's Day poem. Except, instead of the acronym mother, it is of the 22 letters of the aleph-bet. It was written in such a way that one could remember the lines and recall easily.

The accomplishments written are not for a task list or prescription for us to do but rather as praises for her daily acts of faithfulness to those she cares for. The elements of this passage to really focus on are not WHAT she does but HOW she does it.

"Woman of Valor" is the name often given to this section of verses in Proverbs. In Hebrew it is called Eshet Chayil. This passage has become a custom for many Jewish husbands to recite each shabbat to their wives. It is a way they show how thankful they are for all their wife's devotion to them and their family.

Within these verses we see a devoted wife and mother. She is selfless, not lazy, compassionate towards the poor and the

unfortunate who have needs. She is involved in others lives and is fulfilled by the goodness she does for everyone she loves. She speaks to others with wisdom, kindness, and grace.

It is a beautiful picture of an awe-inspiring woman. Now, what if I told you this chapter is not only for you and I as women but for the men as well?

It was written directly for the king to understand the character he is to look for in a wife. But with a deeper look, it is for the king to understand the character of wisdom. Many scholars believe this virtuous woman is actually a personification of wisdom.

We surely can not conclude our understanding of the Woman of Valor in Proverbs 31 without looking at another woman also mentioned in this book. Over and over throughout Proverbs we read about her. She is one who is the opposite of our Woman of Valor. She is an adulterous woman in chapter 2, seductive and a smooth talker in chapter 5, and she is loud and undisciplined by the name of Folly in chapter 9.

Let's understand the book of Proverbs as a whole. We can start with Chapter 1 verses 1-8. These explain the reason the book has been written.

Prov. 1:1 The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel: **2** for attaining wisdom and discipline; for understanding words of insight; **3** for acquiring a disciplined and prudent life, doing what is right and just and fair; **4** for giving prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the young — **5** let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance — **6** for understanding proverbs and parables, the sayings and riddles of the wise. **7** The fear of YHWH is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise

wisdom and discipline. ⁸ Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching.

Here in chapter one we see the very character of our Woman of Valor. It is almost as if we are seeing bookends to the words of wisdom. This here in chapter 1 and that of the woman of valor in chapter 31. Let's compare a few verses about the Woman of Valor with other verses we see in the rest of this book.

Prov. 31:15 She gets up while it is still dark; she provides food for her family and portions for her servant girls.

Let's go to verse 15, the word for "portions" in the Hebrew means "statute" or "decree" as found in these verses. Therefore, if these verses are showing this word to mean commands, it seems the same should apply here for our text. Meaning, she is not giving food to her servant girls but rather instructions or commands. It appears that this is the only place in the scriptures where this Hebrew word is interpreted as "portions".

Exactly why this is the case, we don't know. There seems to be more support for this word to be understood in our text that the woman is giving commands to her servant girls.

I found this reference in chapter 9 that is comparable to these verses.

Prov. 9:1 Wisdom has built her house; she has hewn out its seven pillars. ² She has prepared her meat and mixed her wine; she has also set her table. ³ She has sent out her maids, and she calls from the highest point of the city.

See the similarity here in comparing Wisdom with the Proverbs 31 woman? They both prepare their table for their house and they both send out their servants.

The next verse is 18:

Prov. 31:18 She sees that her trading is profitable, and her lamp does not go out at night.

There is more here than having excess real estate or working throughout the day on as little sleep as you can possibly function on.

In Chapter 13, it explains why her lamp does not go out at night. It reads:

13:9 The light of the righteous shines brightly, but the lamp of the wicked is snuffed out.

Isn't it refreshing to know this does not literally mean we are to stay awake at all hours of the night?

Let's compare verses 20-21 to a few verses in chapter 14. We see how our Woman of Valor is kind to the needy.

Prov. 31:20 She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy. **21** When it snows, she has no fear for her household; for all of them are clothed in scarlet.

Chapter 14

21 He who despises his neighbor sins, but blessed is he who is kind to the needy.

[31](#) He who oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God.

These verses show us the conditions of the heart.

This is a pretty big deal here. Take note of your heart's condition, or your attitude, when an opportunity arises in giving to those in need. I have heard too many times since coming into following Torah how people have stopped giving. Yes, there are many reasons why and seemingly logical ones but the heart of the matter is more important. We are to honor Yah and help those that are placed before us in need.

Like these, there are so many verses about this Proverbs 31 woman that we can find throughout the rest of the book. If we take the time to search then we can see her more clearly. The parallels of our Woman of Valor to Wisdom in the rest of Proverbs are too many to ignore.

I pray we can start looking at this woman to learn the wisdom we need to instill in our lives. The more you search, the more you will be encouraged at seeing it truly is wisdom that we are to be seeking. From Proverbs 1 to 31, wisdom is the goal.

With that thought, I'll leave you with this verse.

[1 Corinthians 1:30](#) It is because of him that you are in Yashua Messiah, who has become for us wisdom from God — that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.

We hope you have enjoyed this teaching. Now it's up to you to be a Berean and study it for yourself. That's the only way to grow.

Until next time, Shalom.

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