



The Virtuous Woman

The capstone of Proverbs is its final chapter—chapter 31. This chapter is ascribed as the words of King Lemuel, but the words are actually lessons his mother had taught him! Mothers should never forget the great role they play in shaping the minds and hearts of their children. Scholars debate who King Lemuel was. Jewish rabbinic tradition holds that Lemuel is actually King Solomon, thus, this mother is Bathsheba. Many scholars debate this, arguing there is no clear proof that this is Solomon. While that is true, there is no compelling proof of who else it might be either. Whether Lemuel is another name for Solomon or not though, the final chapter of Proverbs is a beautiful tribute to godly women, and a fitting end to the book that began as instruction to a son (1:8).

Women play a great role in Proverbs. Wisdom is personified in the early chapters as a woman to be desired and sought after. Folly is also personified as a woman—one whom entices many men but should be avoided. Warning after warning occurs against the adulterous and sensuous woman. Current culture celebrates the sensuous woman, but godly men should honor the virtuous woman.

In many ways, the choosing of a wife is a great sign of whether a man has chosen wisdom or not, and has a great bearing on how successful he will be in pursuing wisdom. As one author states, “His choice of a wife is the first test of his character, and his success depends partly on her character as well.”¹ Single men should look for a woman who is or is striving to be like the woman of Proverbs 31. Young women should strive to be like the woman of Proverbs 31—not to get a man, but to honor God! Mothers should strive to exemplify this woman’s attributes, and Fathers should greatly value, honor, and love their virtuous wives.

The praiseworthy attributes of the virtuous woman are many. She is busy and industrious. She is skilled and a wise investor. She knows both how to work and how to manage others. She is not a cold-hearted businesswoman however. She is kind and generous—a woman who teaches her children kindness by word and her example of caring for the poor. She is a woman who’s worth is far greater than precious jewels, for she is a woman who honors God. Proverbs opens with the admonition to a son that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. It closes with the reminder “*Charm is deceitful and beauty is van, but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.*”

¹ Bill Arnold & Bryan Beyer, *Encountering the Old Testament*, pg. 321

Questions for Reflection

As you finish Proverbs this week, take some time to reflect on the things you’ve read and learned from this great book of wisdom. Here’s some questions to help your reflection.

1. What was your favorite chapter(s) in Proverbs? Why?
2. What themes or topics particularly stood out to you as you read Proverbs?
3. Have you been pursuing wisdom? After reading Proverbs, what more can you do to pursue wisdom?
4. What characteristics of Christ do you see portrayed in Proverbs?
5. If you are a parent, how can you use Proverbs to teach your children the way of godly wisdom?

“That You May Grow Thereby...”

A weekly Bible reading plan



Proverbs 21-31 Words of the Wise

Overview

This week we conclude the Proverbs. The Proverbs of Solomon continue through 22:16. Proverbs 22:17 through 24:34 are labeled simply as “Words of the Wise” and “More Sayings of the Wise.” Chapters 25 through 29 are more of Solomon’s proverbs, but we are told specifically that these were proverbs gathered and copied by King Hezekiah’s men. The last two chapters are attributed to a man named Agur (30) and a King Lemuel (31). Commentators and historians aren’t positive who these two men were, but their writings round out the book and provide a fitting capstone to this great Old Testament collection of proverbs and sayings of wisdom!

Suggested Reading Schedule

Monday: Proverbs 21-22
 Tuesday: Proverbs 23-24
 Wednesday: Proverbs 25-26
 Thursday: Proverbs 27-29
 Friday: Proverbs 30-31



Know What You Don’t Know

What is the first step to wisdom and understanding? Oddly enough, it just might be knowing that you don’t have knowledge and understanding! Some people think they know everything, when in truth they know very little. To be open to learning, however, one must recognize their own lack, and thus their need, to learn. This is especially true spiritually. This may sound strange in the book of Proverbs, but the words of Agur begin by saying, “*Surely I am too stupid to be a man. I have not the understanding of a man. I have not learned wisdom...*” Should we really seek counsel from this guy? It turns out, that, yes—we should! The next line says, “*...nor have I knowledge of the Holy One.*” Agur recognized his own knowledge and wisdom (impressive as they surely were) was nothing when compared with the most high God. This led Agur to trust in God and seek the knowledge which is from above. He recognized that “*every word of God proves true...*” thus, one should “*...not add to His words, let He rebuke you and you be found a liar.*” Agur’s trust in God’s wisdom led him to desire honesty and contentment (vv. 7-9). It enabled him to assess various relationships among mankind and learn wise action. It moved him to observe God’s creation, and find wisdom that he could apply to his own life and teach to others. Agur acknowledged his own lack of wisdom and knowledge—but that very acknowledgement led him to seek divine knowledge, and therein he found true wisdom. Know-it-all usually know very little. Know what you don’t know, and humble yourself to seek the wisdom that comes from above!

A Proverbial Calendar



The Book of Proverbs is a divinely inspired guide to wisdom. Coincidentally, it is broken into 31 chapters—so if you read 1 chapter a day, you can read through Proverbs in a month. Why not add this to your Bible reading routine? Simply read the chapter that corresponds to the day of the month. Imagine the benefit you’d get from reading this inspired book multiple times through each year!



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