

## Proverbs 31 The Bride of Christ

We will instigate this study beginning in verse 10. Let's assume that these are still the wise words of Bathsheba who is shedding enlightenment to her son Solomon as to the qualities that he should look for in a wife. I have listened to Christian gatherings put up the Proverbs 31 woman as a goal for every Christian wife. It is my opinion, especially since Solomon apparently was unable to find all of these qualities in one woman (he had 700 wives and 300 concubines). However, these are the characteristics that God would use that make up the ideal woman, wife, and mother, perhaps this is also prophetic of the Bride of Christ. I believe that all of these qualities will eventually be found in the true Church, who will become the bride of Christ. We read in Ephesians 5:23-30 *"for the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Savior of the body. <sup>24</sup> Now as the church submits to Christ, so wives are to [submit] to their husbands in everything. <sup>25</sup> Husbands love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her <sup>26</sup> to make her holy, cleansing her with the washing of water by the word. <sup>27</sup> He did this to present the church to Himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or anything like that, but holy and blameless. <sup>28</sup> In the same way, husbands are to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. <sup>29</sup> For no one ever hates his own flesh but provides and cares for it, just as Christ does for the church, <sup>30</sup> since we are members of His body."* (HCSB)

Paul writes in 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 11:2 and the subsequent passages: *I am jealous for you with the jealousy of God himself. For I promised you as a pure bride to one husband, Christ.* [NLT]

**Proverbs 31:10:** *An excellent wife, who can find? For her worth is far above jewels.*

- She is very careful to respect her husband's qualities, which means she will not gossip and complain to her neighbors about his faults; rather she will take them directly

to God in prayer. She esteems the covenantal authority that God has placed in him as the priest of the home and understands that God will hold him alone, accountable for their spiritual well-being. In this manner, she will become a \_\_\_\_\_ to be treasured in her husband's eyes.

**Proverbs 31:11:** *The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain.*

- Her husband can trust her with the most intimate details of his life, and she will greatly enrich his life as a completer since God made the woman out of a man, she is his other half. Jesus quoted Genesis in Matthew 19:5 when he said: *'This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and **the two are united into one.**'* [NLT] Christ \_\_\_\_\_ the church to bring together all that have been called into an intimate relationship with Him for their cleansing and salvation.

**Proverbs 31:12:** *She does him good and not evil all the days of her life.*

- She is a helpmate and not a hindrance, always doing \_\_\_\_\_. Christ's bride is one that takes pains in her duties, and takes pleasure in them, unafraid of mocking or ridicule. She is not stingy with her time dedicated to the study of her betrothed's ways or will, nor to openly share His love so that none are lost. As part of the congregation of our Lord, she applies herself to His business daily, not just on Sundays, or as a performance for others.

**Proverbs 31:13:** *She looks for wool and flax and works with her hands in delight.*

- She understands the principles found in the Word of God: *Wealth from get-rich-quick schemes quickly disappears; wealth from hard \_\_\_\_\_ grows prosperity.*  
Proverbs 13:11 [NLT] "work brings profit, but mere talk leads to poverty!" Proverbs 14:23 [NLT]

The Bride of Christ is similarly instructed: God's Holy Spirit has begun the work and He now calls on His betrothed to work hard to bring in the harvest of souls to the fold, where they may be taught and trained in righteousness. John 4:38: ***I sent you to harvest where you didn't plant; others had already done the work, and you will gather the harvest.*** <sup>[NLT]</sup> Paul adds to this thought in 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 3:8: ***The one who plants and the one who waters work as a team with the same purpose. Yet they will be rewarded individually, according to their own hard work.*** <sup>[NLT]</sup> As a model whom we should emulate, Paul writes: ***So everywhere we go, we tell everyone about Christ. We warn them and teach them with all the wisdom God has given us, for we want to present them to God, perfect in their relationship to Christ.*** <sup>[29]</sup> ***I work very hard at this, as I depend on Christ's mighty power that works within me.*** Col. 1:28-29 <sup>[NLT]</sup>

**Proverbs 31:14:** *She is like merchant ships; she brings her food from afar.*

- The ideal wife will shop for bargains and spend her household money wisely. The engaged Christian will also be wise with our Lord's provision and like the \_\_\_\_\_ ships that ply the oceans bringing food to the needy, the bride of Christ will do that and provide spiritual nourishment as well, sharing the Love of Christ, the world over.

**Proverbs 31:15:** *She rises also while it is still night, and gives food to her household, and portions to her maidens.*

- Just as the ideal wife, who gets up early to provide nourishing \_\_\_\_\_ for her household, so the Church should not be slack in its high calling. 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 9:6- ***Remember this—a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop.*** Paul gives this instruction to the church through Timothy: ***Tell them to use their money to do good. They should be rich in good works and should give***

***generously to those in need; always being ready to share with others whatever God has given them.*** <sup>1st Tim. 6:18 [NLT]</sup> **And the writer to Hebrews confirms this in Hebrews 13:16: *Don't forget to do good and to share what you have with those in need, for such sacrifices are very pleasing to God.*** <sup>[NLT]</sup>

**Compiler's note:** I know some of you will object that God is not PC enough and reject the notion of kitchen duty being the role of a woman; apparently, that is in God's divine wisdom. As a rule, He made women far more compassionate and caring than most men (maybe cleaner and more careful also, and good sanitation is most important where food is concerned.) What is true is that the ideal woman is the completer of her husband, and the husband is the completer of the wife; the two now joined together and become as one flesh! Ladies, if your husband is better in the kitchen, then, by all means, let him cook. Husbands, if the wife is better at finances, then as the other half, let her be the caretaker of the family finances. I don't believe these traditional gender roles are carved anywhere on tablets of stone.

**Proverbs 31:16-18:** She considers a field and buys it; from her earnings, she plants a vineyard. <sup>[17]</sup> She girds herself with strength and makes her arms strong. <sup>[18]</sup> She senses that her gain is good; her **lamp** does not go out at night.

➤ **Now you know why Solomon had to marry seven hundred wives to try and find one this perfect. This thought is what has led me to believe that these qualities are not found in a single individual; rather they are prophetic of the "bride of Christ", comprised of multiple, committed individuals that make up the Church. This ideal bride applies herself to the business of our Lord. She does what she does, with all her power and fortitude, making what she does turn to good by her prudent management and obedience to the voice of God's indwelling Spirit; the same Spirit who keeps the \_\_\_\_\_, the light of God's Word, burning brightly. Romans 8:28: *And we know that God causes everything to***

***work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.*** [NLT]

**Proverbs 31:19-20:** *She stretches out her hands to the distaff, and her hands grasp the spindle. [20] She extends her hand to the **poor**, and she stretches out her hands to the **needy**.*

➤ **Just as the ladies in the past gave their hand to the weavers' spindle, the Bride of Christ is to be generous in labor for the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. Is this not part of the mission of the church? In 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 9:9, Paul writes; *As the Scriptures say: "Godly people give generously to the poor." Their good deeds will never be forgotten.*" [NLT]**

**Proverbs 31:21-22:** *She is not **afraid** of the snow for her household, for all her household are clothed with scarlet. [22] She makes coverings for herself; her clothing is fine linen and purple.*

➤ **She provides protection from the cold winter winds for her family so that neither she nor her household needs to be \_\_\_\_\_.**

**It is God's desire to provide for the needy through His Church. Can't He just override the laws of nature and miraculously provide? Of course, He can, and He often does, but then there would be no opportunity for the Church to grow and learn of His \*provision.**

**\*Part of the curse brought on by Adam's disobedience is that we should earn our bread by the sweat of our brow.**

**Psalm 112:9: addresses the principle of generosity: *They give generously to those in need. Their good deeds will never be forgotten. They will have influence and honor.*** [NLT]

**God lays out His expectation for the Christian in Proverbs 3:27: *Do not withhold good from those who deserve it when it's in your power to help them.*** [NLT]

**Jesus confirms this principle in Matthew 5:42: *Give to those who ask, and don't turn away from those who want to borrow.*** [NLT]

Dr. Luke shows us that the early church followed this teaching in Acts 11:29-30: *So, the believers in Antioch decided to send relief to the brothers and sisters in Judea, everyone giving as much as they could.* They did this by faith, trusting in God to meet their own needs. Times were tough during Roman persecution, more for some areas than for others. Paul tells the Church at Corinth and by proxy, God is telling us: *Right now, you have plenty and can help them. Then at some other time, they can share with you when you need it. In this way, everyone's needs will be met.*  
2nd Cor. 8:14-15 [NLT]

He goes on to explain the principle of cheerful giving in 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 9:6-15: *Remember this—a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop. [7] You must each make up your own mind as to how much you should give. Don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure. For God loves the person who gives cheerfully. [8] And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need, and plenty left over to share with others. [9] As the Scriptures say,*

*"Godly people give generously to the poor.  
Their good deeds will never be forgotten."*

*[10] For God is the one who gives seed to the farmer and then bread to eat. In the same way, he will give you many opportunities to do good, and he will produce a great harvest of generosity in you. [11] Yes, you will be enriched so that you can give even more generously. And when we take your gifts to those who need them, they will break out in thanksgiving to God. [12] So two good things will happen—the needs of the Christians in Jerusalem will be met, and they will joyfully express their thanksgiving to God. [13] You will be glorifying God through your generous gifts, for your generosity to them will prove that you are obedient to the Good News of Christ. [14] And they will pray for you with deep affection because of the wonderful grace of God shown*

*through you. [15] Thank God for his Son—a gift too wonderful for words! [NLT]*

**Proverbs 31:23:** *Her husband is known in the gates when he sits among the elders of the land.*

- **While it may seem unimportant to us in our day:** in the days of walled cities, the gate was the place that many Religious services were held, where the Law was read. It was the place for the transaction of public business, announcements of legal transactions, and for conferences on public affairs. Often it was the place for holding courts of justice and a public concourse, where kings sat in judgment. For her husband to sit at the city \_\_\_\_\_ was a great family honor. For the bride of Christ, it is also a place of honor, one where our Lord will sit as Judge and Administer justice during His millennial reign from Jerusalem. ]

**Proverbs 31:24-25:** *She makes linen garments and sells them and supplies belts to the tradesmen. [25] Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she \*smiles at the future.*

\* The Hebrew word translated in the NASB for Smiles is the word *sachaq*, {saw-khak'}; which literally means to laugh with pleasure almost in a mocking or snickering sense at apprehension.

- She protects her family as the Holy Spirit protects and provides for God's family. The Christian's faith in God as provider and protector, gives us \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.  
**Matthew 6:28-34:** *"And why worry about your clothes? Look at the lilies and how they grow. They don't work or make their clothing, [29] yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are. [30] And if God cares so wonderfully for flowers that are here today and gone tomorrow, won't he more surely care for you? You have so little faith! [31] "So don't worry about having enough food or drink or clothing. [32] Why be like the pagans who are so deeply concerned about these things? Your heavenly Father*

*already knows all your needs, [33] and he will give you all you need from day to day if you live for him and make the Kingdom of God your primary concern. [34] "So don't worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today's trouble is enough for today. [NLT]*

**Proverbs 31:26:** She opens her mouth in wisdom, and the **teaching** of kindness is on her tongue.

- **The Proverbs 31 woman is both wise and kind. Christ's bride ought to be no less. Freely giving godly advice and heavenly admonition, while \_\_\_\_\_ the love and mercy, justice and saintly counsel of our Lord.**

**Proverbs 31:27:** *She looks well to the ways of her household and does not eat the bread of **idleness**.*

- **She shall make provision, not only for her current household but provides for her future comfort when she comes to be old. She has not wasted her productive years in \_\_\_\_\_. So it should be for the bride of our Christ; preparing for a lifetime to meet Him and hear those cherished words, found in "Matthew 25:21: *'Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let's celebrate together!'* [NLT]**

**Proverbs 31:28-29:** *Her children **rise up** and bless her; her husband also, and he praises her, saying: [29] "Many daughters have done nobly, but you **excel** them all."*

- **The Christian, the "bride of Christ," is to be a virtuous spouse, so much so, that the fruit of her labors on this earth may one-day \_\_\_\_\_ and speak on her behalf. May Christ Himself, one day say to His bride; many disciples have you brought along, but in your faith and commitment, love and loyalty, you \_\_\_\_\_.**



**Proverbs 31:30:** Charm is **deceitful**, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised.

- **The words found in 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 3:3-4 seem very apropos here, charm can be \_\_\_\_\_ and outward beauty is fleeting: *Don't be concerned about the outward beauty that depends on fancy hairstyles, expensive jewelry, or beautiful clothes. [4] You should be known for the beauty that comes from within, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is so precious to God. [NLT]***

**Proverbs 31:31:** Give her the product of her hands, **and let her works praise her in the gates.**

- **Romans 14:10: . . . Remember, each of us will stand personally before the judgment seat of God. [NLT] Traditionally; the "bema" [judgment seat] was held at the city \_\_\_\_\_ and for Christ's bride, it will be again. For we must all stand before Christ to be judged. We will each receive whatever we deserve for the good or evil we have done in our bodies. 2 Cor. 5:10 [NLT]**

**Here is a happy thought; "God, by his grace, has formed from among sinful men and women, a church of true believers, to possess all the excellences here described" [ MHC.] washed and made clean and holy by the Word and the power of His Spirit that indwells us.**