

Proverbs

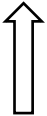
Knowing the God of Prudence



Lesson 3 *Understanding Roles & Relationships*

Day 1- Friendship

Proverbs 17:17, 18:24, 27:5-6, 9, 17



Father, as I read your word, please help me to see and understand your wisdom. Help me to delight in your word and practice your ways.

1. The two phrases in Proverbs 17:17 are joined with the word *and*, showing us that these two phrases are not opposites but similar. What does the wisdom of 17:17 equate with a friend?
 - a. How does wisdom define a true friend in this verse?
 - b. When is it hardest for you to love a friend?
2. What does the proverb in 18:24 imply is the difference between a companion and a friend?

3. Put the wisdom of Proverbs 27:5-6,9 and 17 in your own words.

Digging Deeper

In John 15:13-15 Jesus is talking to his disciples, his closest followers. From these verses, what does it mean to be Jesus' friend?

¹³ Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.

¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵ No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.



It has been said, that to have a good friend, you must be a good friend. Have these proverbs revealed any aspects of true friendship that you need to work on?

Day 2-Marriage

Proverbs 2:16-17, 5:18-19, 6:20, 14:1,19:13, 21:9, 19, 12:4

1. The wisdom of Proverbs 2:16-17 describes someone who is unfaithful to the marriage covenant. How does verse 17 depict marriage?

Picture and Ponder

"The wise person knows that fulfillment does not come from seeking it directly but is, paradoxically, a by-product of keeping promises and sacrificial service."¹

2. What are the different spheres in which a man and woman are partners in a wise marriage according to 5:18-19, 6:20, and 14:1?

3. What is a quarrelsome wife compared to in Proverbs 19:13, and 21:9, 19? Why are these comparisons fitting?
 - a. Why do you think 21:19 adds fretful alongside quarrelsome?

 - b. How would you describe being quarrelsome?

 - c. How can you take steps to avoid this trait?



Proverbs 12:4 says,

A virtuous and excellent wife [worthy of honor] is the crown of her husband, But she who shames him [with her foolishness] is like rotteness in his bones.(AMP).

Married and unmarried alike, as believers we are the bride of Christ—and he gave himself up for us to make us beautifully holy for him! (Eph. 5) We tend to think we could be a much better wife—if only our husband was a much better husband! But in Jesus we have the perfect groom; and it is only by our union with him that we can become a virtuous and excellent bride.

- ◆ Psalm 45:11 tells us, *the king is enthralled by your beauty, honor him, for he is your Lord.* This is true because Jesus is the King, and we are his bride. Pray that you will believe this truth, and that believing it, you will live out of its fullness and honor Jesus your King on the path he has put before you.

Day 3-A Wise Woman

Proverbs 31:10-31

As you read Proverbs 31:10-31 try and resist the temptation to categorize the woman presented in these verses as outdated or unrelated to the life that you lead; leave behind feelings of futility and resentment of the standard of womanly perfection presented here. Instead, let's look at her as lady wisdom—the antithesis of the adulterous woman at the beginning of Proverbs—who shows us concrete examples of how to live out a life of wisdom in different spheres of influence. This is not a snapshot of a week in the life of Mrs. Perfect, but a portrait of wisdom lived out over the lifetime of a woman who fears God. That being the case, we can all benefit from the wisdom presented here regardless of the role God has placed us in at this moment in time.

Scholar's Note: Proverbs 31:10-31 is an acrostic poem where the first word of each line begins with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet. It is in effect “the ABCs of wisdom.”² It is also very much like an ancient hymn, especially Psalm 111, extolling the works of wisdom.³ Lastly, it has the flavor of heroic literature. “The vocabulary and the expressions in general have the ring of an ode to a champion.”⁴

Picture and Ponder

Bruce Waltke, among other scholars, argues that Proverbs 31:10-31 belongs “to Israel’s heroic poetry, characterized by recounting the hero’s mighty deeds, usually his military exploits.”⁵

- This woman is “valiant” or “strong” (ESV “excellent,” verse 10), a word often applied to military strength (as in “mighty men of *valor*,” (2 Kings 24:14).
- The food, clothing, and income she provides for her household is described as “spoil” (ESV “gain,” verse 11), another martial term (see, for example, Numbers 3:11, Deuteronomy 2:35, Joshua 8;2).
- As she approaches her work, she “girds her loins with strength” (ESV “dresses herself with strength,” verse 17), a striking image associated with “heroic or difficult action” (*Book of Proverbs*, 526).
- She “laughs” (verse 25) at the time to come “like a victorious warrior or a victorious king,” as Peter Leithart puts it (“Proverbs 31:10-31, Introduction”).

- Her husband declares that she has “done valiantly” (ESV “done excellently,” verse 29), another phrase linked to warfare (1 Samuel 14:48, Psalm 60:12, 118:15-16).⁶

1. What phrase in verse 30 sums up the theme of this poem?

a. What point is the writer making in comparing the deceit and vanity of charm and beauty?

b. What does this wisdom teach us?

2. We learn from verse 10 that the excellent woman is hard to find. How does the writer describe this rarity in verse 10?

Scholar’s Note: “It is interesting to notice that this woman, like wisdom, is worth more than rubies.”⁷ cf. (Proverbs 3:15, *She [wisdom] is more precious than jewels, and nothing you desire can compare with her.*

Proverbs 8:11...*for wisdom is better than jewels, and all that you may desire cannot compare with her.*)



Verse 10 calls this wise woman *excellent*, which in the original language is often translated *valor*. Expositor’s commentary explains the significance: “it depicts the greater heroism as moral and domestic rather than only exploits in battle.”⁸ *Strength, might, ability, efficiency, and substance* are other translations of the word *excellent* that we see portrayed in this wise woman. These military words give us the

impression there are foes to vanquish and victories to win for a woman who fears the Lord.

- ◆ One commentator says, "In their care for their households, wise women are on the frontlines of God's holy war"⁹ How does this hero/warrior motif relate to your life? How are you a champion for your husband and/or children?

- ◆ What kind of heroism does it take to raise children and manage a household?

- ◆ What kind of bravery and courage do you need today in the role that God has placed you in?

- ◆ How does fearing the Lord play into this?

3. What virtues are displayed by the wise woman in verses 11-12?

♥ How could you put these wise virtues into practice in your life right now?

Day 4-A Wise Woman

Proverbs 31:13-31

Verse 13 begins all the practical ways wisdom is worked out in the life of this Godly woman.

1. Read verses 13-31. What virtues or qualities are displayed in these verses?
2. What kind of financial wisdom do you see displayed in these verses?
3. How is her wise living productive and beneficial for others?
4. Verse 27 says, *She looks well to the ways of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness.* How should the fear of the Lord inspire you to be a faithful steward of your time and talents?



The desire to honor God through wise living comes only through the life of His Spirit living within us. The ability and power to carry it out, comes through keeping in step with the Spirit (Gal. 5:25) and being united to Jesus, the true wisdom of God.

- ◆ What ways could your home thrive more if you intentionally cultivated the wisdom seen in this passage? What quality or virtue do you need to focus on and pray about?

- ◆ Galatians 5:22-23 lists some of the fruit that God grows in our lives because of the life of the Spirit within us. Verse 25 says, *If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.* What does it mean to keep in step with the Spirit?

Day 5-Parenting

Proverbs 3:11-12, 22:15, 29:15, 22:6, 23:25-26

1. Proverbs 3:11-12 compares God's discipline of his children with an earthly father's. What is connected to discipline in these verses? Why is this true?
 - a. What does loving discipline look like?

 - b. Why is discipline needed according to the wisdom of 22:15?

 - c. What two things are being compared in 29:15 and what is the fruit of each?

Scholar's Note: Proverbs 22:6 has been called “the most misunderstood of all the proverbs.”¹⁰ “Almost every English translation of this verse adds a word to the text that is not in the Hebrew. The word “right” or “should” is not in the Hebrew. Literally the verse should be rendered, *Train a child in his way, and when he is old he will not depart from it.*”¹¹

2. If we consider for a moment the literal translation of 22:6 as stated in the Scholar's note, and we **take into account Proverbs 22:15 and 29:15**, (remember we read a proverb in light of all the other proverbs) what would *his way* or the way of a child be?

- a. How have you observed this in life?

For Discussion

There are a lot of different parenting philosophies out there; what do you think would be the main differences between a secular/humanistic and a biblical /God honoring viewpoint?

Picture and Ponder

“The clear warning of the Proverbs—despite the messaging we receive from Disney movies—is that following your own heart or your own “way” is the epitome of foolishness...This verse is a warning that parents must correct their children’s foolish character before it is set...If you allow your child to be self-centered now, they will be later.”¹²

3. In Proverbs 23:26 a parent says to their child, give me your heart. What does it mean to hold your child’s heart?

- a. In the next part of the proverb the parent tells the child to *observe my ways*. What ways of yours would you like your child to observe? What ways would you not like them to observe?



We want our children to grow up and be good neighbors and citizens, productive members of society, but more than that—more than anything—we want them to follow Jesus.

- ◆ How does your disciplining of your children reflect who God is?

- ◆ What sin or shortcomings of yours get in the way of loving discipline? Pray for God's help in this.

Resources:

Parenting

Shepherding A Child's Heart by Ted Tripp

Parenting by Paul Tripp

Parenting With Loving Correction by Sam Crabtree

Raising Passionate Jesus Followers by Phil Comer

Marriage

What Did You Expect? by Paul Tripp

When Sinners Say I Do by Dave Harvey

This Momentary Marriage by John Piper

The Meaning of Marriage by Tim Keller

Love & Respect: The Love She Most Desires; The Respect He Desperately Needs by Emerson Eggerichs

Godly Woman

Feminine Appeal by Carolyn Mahaney

Let Me Be A Woman by Elisabeth Elliot

(A)Typical Woman by Abigail Dodds

¹ Keller, Timothy, with Kathy Keller. God's Wisdom For Navigating Life. P.247 Viking 2017

² Expositor's Commentary Copyright © 1998-2018 Olive Tree Bible Software

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Hubbard, Scott Article <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-proverbs-31-warfare>

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Expositor's Commentary Copyright © 1998-2018 Olive Tree Bible Software

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Leithart, Peter. Proverbs 31:10-31 Introduction. as quoted by Scott Hubbard
<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-proverbs-31-warfare>

¹⁰ The Complete Jewish Study Bible p.1099 2016 Hendrickson Publisher

¹¹ Akin, Daniel L. and Jonathan Akin, Exalting Christ in Proverbs, p.135 B&H Publishing 2017

¹² Ibid. p. 136

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