

A Nobel, Excellent and Virtuous Wife

Proverbs 31:18-23

Part II

Scripture: Hebrews 13:4 *“Marriage is to be held in honor among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.”*

Introduction:

I heard a lot of discussion this week about how many cows that you ladies might be worth. Ed Seufferli told me that his wife was worth 4000 cows. That might leave some of us men needing to step up to the plate. You’ll have to see him for the details.

I spent a lot of time laboring over a way to begin this lesson and I searched the internet from one end to the other looking for ideas when I thought about my grandmother...Olga Biffle. This is my mother's mom and I don't think that I have mentioned her before, but in my mind she stands as one of the greatest woman that have ever walked the face of this planet.

To say that grandpa didn't make much money would be an understatement. I grew up watching grandma plant and work gardens, pluck chickens, can food, make dresses and bandage wounds and still find time to play with me.

Boy did she love God, more so than anyone I have ever meet. She taught me the Lord's prayer and encouraged me to be pleasing to God in my life.

She was the perfect example of kindness and care for others and just as Jesus had girded himself with a towel, I hardly ever saw my grandmother without her apron.

Now, grandpa was another matter all together. He was really honoree and sometimes meaner than a rattle snake. During his life he decided that God didn't exist and he smoked and drank his life away in misery. I still remember on occasion cringing at how harsh he was with grandma. He cussed at her like a sailor, with no respect at all.

I tell you this because I never once heard my grandmother say one bad thing about him. As a matter of fact she always pointed out his good qualities. No matter how hateful he might be she returned love to him. He was probably one of the worst family leaders in the world, but she honored him anyway.

Transitional Statement:

Much of who I am today comes down to me from the influence of a godly grandmother, who honored God with her humble attitude toward her husband and family in life.

The strength of a godly wife goes beyond any power of this earth that we can dream of.

I. A strong wife looks for the best in all things and strives with all diligence to make it happen.

Proverbs 31:18

18 She senses that her gain is good;

A. The word “*senses*” is the Hebrew word for perception.

1. Perception is the way we look at and understand the things around us.

B. This strong wife she sees things in a positive light.

1. She is careful not to be drug down by negative thinking

2. Or feelings of despair.

a. This is where some ladies get into trouble because taking care of a family is an overwhelming job.

3. But this strong wife takes great labor in making the best of what she has.

a. She looks for the potential in all things.

b. I remember my grandmother, who didn't have much at all, saving scraps of clothing to make quilts.

4. The strong wife understands that her glass is not just half full, but overflowing in the Lord.

C. Now the text here goes on to say that “*her lamp doesn't go out at night.*”

1. When the family is fast asleep, and mix of silence with an occasional snore is heard....many times her lamp is still burning.

a. Because more often than not the strong wife has to work late because taking care of a home and the family is a tremendous responsibility.

2. When I think of burning midnight oil (Working late into the night)

a. First of all, I think about how hard it is to loose sleep.

b. When I worked for the power plant....I never volunteered for the midnight shift and only worked it when it was forced upon me.

b. But a strong wife isn't forced,....she is committed.

-Willingly giving up what is precious to her for the success of her family.

-Kind of sounds to me like the heart of Jesus.

3. Failure for her family is no option to her.

II. A strong wife is a hard worker

Proverbs 31:19

*19 She stretches out her hands to the distaff,
And her hands grasp the spindle.*

- A. Not only has this strong lady went out and gathered the wool and flax but now she is spinning it and making cloth out of it.
 - 1. She didn't go the fabric store and buy a bolt of material, but she is making her own cloth.
 - 2. She is merely doing what ever is necessary to cloth her family.
- B. So far, in thinking about this strong wife, I have wondered when this strong wife ever gets a break.
 - 1. The truth is,... many times she doesn't.
 - 2. Strong godly woman often work their fingers to the bones.
 - 3. But they do it as a labor of love.
- C. This lady doesn't make herself out to be a princess on a pedestal to be served
 - 1. But this strong lady has girded herself with a towel like Christ (John 13) and without regard for herself, considers her families needs ahead of her own. (Phil 2:4).
- D. You see, a strong godly wife is characterized by the word "work"
 - 1. She is not lazy or idol by any means
 - 2. But she is a dedicated "go getter"
- E. Are you wondering where this type of resolve comes from in a woman?
 - 1. She understand that the efforts of her hands are committed to God (Col 3:23).

III. Then a strong wife reaches out to the poor and needy.

Proverbs 31:20

*20 She extends her hand to the poor,
And she stretches out her hands to the needy.*

- A. In the last verse and this verse the strong wife's hands are going out away from herself.
 - 1. She stretches out her hands to the distaff & extends her hands to the poor.
 - a. That is, the activities of her hands are not concentrated on herself.
 - b. But, they are directed outward to help others.
 - 2. A strong wife has learned to deny herself (Matthew 16:24)

B. But this strong wife doesn't limit her goodness to her own household

1. Who she is and what she has become....has no boundaries
2. She can't turn it on and off like a light switch.

C. In helping those beyond her home we see in her:

1. A heart attentive to the needs around her...
 - a. She is always on the lookout for a need.
 - b. Not willing to turn a blind eye
2. A heart of compassion toward others.
 - a. Not a judgmental heart
 - b. But a soft heart....a heart bent on helping others succeed.

IV. A strong wife prepares her family well.

Proverbs 31:21

*21 She is not afraid of the snow for her household,
For all her household are clothed with scarlet.*

A. Here the strong wife is not fearful of the driving snow and cold temperatures becauseshe is prepared.

1. When the snow flies it is not a frantic, mad dash to cloth the family.
 - a. She hasn't put things this off until the last minute.
 - b. But she has planned on the snow and made provisions for it.

B. This strong wife, remains peaceful even when the storms of life come.

C. Here the text adds that her household is clothed with scarlet.

1. With red being opposite of white snow, I think the context means that they are safe and warm.

V. A strong wife makes herself honorable

Proverbs 31:22

*22 She makes coverings for herself;
Her clothing is fine linen and purple.*

A. I believe there are two things going on in this verse.

1. First, not only has this strong wife taken care of others, but she also takes care of herself.
 - a. She understands that the entire family, including herself, has to be taken care of.

b. I have seen woman who love their families so much that they take care of them....while they let themselves go...physically and emotionally.

-This destroys any sense of family balance.

c. But this strong lady understands the importance of meeting her own needs.

-She makes a little time for herself.

-Takes time to consider her own needs.

d. It might best be understood by the statement:

-Martyrs while seemingly noble...leave stranded families.

2. Second, she is clothed in linen and purple....that is the clothing of royalty

a. Here to think that a strong wife must have the clothing of royalty would miss the point.

b. It seems to be a symbolic thing here.

- In other words, her dedication and actions have clothed her in great honor.

- It's not up to anybody else to bestow upon her some honorary title....she has earned it.

VI. A strong wife lifts her husband up

Proverbs 31:23

*23 Her husband is known in the gates,
When he sits among the elders of the land.*

A. Here the gates of the city is mentioned

1. First of all the city gates was the most public of places.

a. Often times the hub of a city

b. The city gate was a place of business

c. A place of meeting

d. And a place where people would leave through to go on journeys and where people coming would arrive at.

2. The city gates were also a place of strength

B. At these gates, the text says, her husband is known

1. But how is he known? ...This is a huge question.
2. Certainly he has done some things that make him self known
 - a. But here the specific emphasis is on how the wife has made him known.
3. The strong wife understands what Paul wrote in 1 Cor 11:7 where it says that the wife is to be the glory (honor) of her husband.
 - a. That is the strong wife lifts her husband up
 - b. She points out his good qualities to those around her
 - c. She offers him her praise and honor.
 - d. A strong godly wife doesn't go around running her husband down.

-Even if he is the worlds biggest knot head.

4. I want to suggest something about godly wives.

- a. In many ways, you are a greater testimony of who your husband is than he is of himself.

-You see if you really want to get to know a man....you always talk to his wife.

- b. A strong godly wife realizes the power of praise and honor to encourage her husband to be what he needs to be.

C. One of the greatest ways a woman brings honor to her husband is by understanding that God has appointed the husband as the head of the family.

1. Ephesians 5:23 *“For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church...”*
2. From this old country boys perspective, one of the most disgraceful things I have ever seen in this world is a wife who forces her way with her husband, riding rough shot over all his decisions, constantly pushing her way, never trusting his leadership.

D. But more than understanding that the husband is the head of the family is needed.

1. God's direction includes “submission”
2. Ephesians 5:22 says *“Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord.”*

- a. Really what would leadership be without anyone to follow, right?

3. Submission, in many ways, has been given a black eye

a. Because of its abuse.

- Abused by men who try to force it on their wives
- Abused by wives who simply reject its idea.

E. But, submission is nothing less than a beautiful thing.

1. First and foremost, submission is a middle voice verb

- a. Meaning it is something that a person does to themselves
- b. i.e. it is something done willingly.

2. Then submission is for the “Lord’s sake” 1 Peter 2:13

a. Something done ultimately to please God

3. Husbands can be won over through godly submission

a. 1 Peter 3:1 *“In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives,”*

b. Submission is a force....a potential energy with great power

4. 1 Peter chapter 3 goes on to connect this submission to the idea of beauty.

a. Not some external look...but a measure of the heart given over to faith in God.

5. Submission is also connected to one of the greatest corner stones of our faith....humility

a. 1 Peter 5:5 *“You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.”*

b. James 4:10 *“Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.”*

6. Submission also includes the idea of:

a. Respect and honor Eph 5:22-33

7. James 3:17 includes submission as an integral part of heavenly wisdom

8. Submission has its roots in faithful trust of God. James 4:7
 9. Submission in many ways is the golden gate of the noble wife.
- f. So because of this strong godly wife's treatment, her husband is welcomed among the elders of the land.
1. He has a place of honor....promoted by his wife
 2. Because his godly wife has been all of these things for him

Conclusion:

I found this quote that I would like to share with you:

“Some women have made fools out of men, others have made men out of fools!”

- Vance Havner

Proverbs 12:4 the crown of her husband