

# A Nobel, Excellent and Virtuous Wife

Proverbs 31:10-17

Part I

**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:**

On a certain isolated Pacific island, when a young man proposed marriage, it was customary to announce it to the entire village. Then he and the whole community would go to the young woman’s home. Her father would come outside and then – in front of the community – the father and suitor would barter. Obviously, they didn’t view themselves as doing anything chauvinistic, even though we might view it that way somewhat.

The main item of value on this island was the cow. Therefore, the suitor would offer the father a certain number of cows for his daughter. The average bride was worth two cows, perhaps three if she was unusually bright or attractive. The all-time record was four cows.

The most eligible bachelor on the island was Johnny Lingo. He was handsome and wealthy. Imagine all of the excitement among the women of the island when Johnny announced one day that he had selected a wife. But then he shocked everyone by announcing that his choice was a girl named Lisa. Lisa was not even in the top ten. She was regarded as rather plain and frightfully shy. Some of the jokers in the crowd even suggested that Lisa’s father might pay Johnny a cow or two. The community gathered at Lisa’s house for the bartering. Then came and even greater shock. Johnny’s opening bid for Lisa was eight cows Her father almost fainted, but he managed to say yes.

That very evening Johnny and Lisa were married. They departed for their home on an adjacent island. For a full year no one saw Johnny or Lisa. Then on their first anniversary they returned to visit their parents. From the moment they arrived at the dock, the grapevine went ballistic with gossip. Everybody said, “Come and see Johnny and Lisa You won’t believe it” Everybody came, but nobody noticed Johnny. All eyes were on Lisa. She had been transformed She was a vision of loveliness. She was poised, warm, friendly, and confident.

At the end of the day as Johnny and Lisa were preparing to return to their home, one of Johnny’s long-time friends pulled him aside and said, “I want to know the secret of this amazing transformation in Lisa. How did it happen?” Johnny said, “I will tell you. From the time Lisa was born, she had been treated as though she was not worth very much. She had begun to believe that about herself. But I announced to the community that she was an 8-cow wife, and I have treated her just that way. She has become that vision of herself that she sees every day in my eyes.”

-Author Unknown

## **Transitional Statement:**

How the wife thinks of herself and how she is treated is very important.

## Lesson:

### I. First of all, the question is raised about who can find an excellent wife.

Proverbs 31:10a

*1 An excellent wife, who can find?*

#### A. The word “excellent” NASB

1. NIV uses the word “Noble”
2. KJV uses the word “Virtuous”
3. The Hebrew word here is Chayil (khah’-yil) meaning force or strength
  - a. Does this run a bit contrary to your understanding about a wife?  
  
-Why?
    - b. In 1 Peter 3:7 we see instruction for the husbands to treat their wives as a weaker vessel.  
  
-In many ways I think we have missed the point.
    - c. I know some men and probably some woman as well who have just bought into the idea that woman are frail and weak. Somehow they can’t help themselves and are gullible in many ways.
      1. Whatever this passage is saying....I’m quite certain it’s not saying that
      2. I would like to suggest that this passage is not assigning a description to the wife but instructing the husband on the frame of mind for approaching the wife.

#### B. The question “*who can find?*” presents two thoughts:

1. First, that a strong godly wife should be the goal of every man aspiring to marriage.
  - a. She is to be sought after
  - b. And held in high regard
2. Then the words themselves in their basic translation present the idea of godly woman (coming forth) in strength.
  - a. So God’s encouragement to the wives and even future wives here today, is not to hide behind an obscurity of weakness....but to come forth in strength, to be the woman that God has designed you to be.

- A strength which God describes in the verses to come

## **II. Strength for the godly wife begins with an understanding of her worth.**

Proverbs 31:10b

*“For her worth is far above jewels.”*

- A. In my counseling through the years I often see the destructive power of people who don't understand their value or worth.
  - 1. It is sad to see so many people buying into the idea that worth or value has to be earned or deserved.
- B. Woman of God listen to me today
  - 1. God has assigned your worth and has given you great value.
    - a. Bryan Williams on NBC did a segment May 4, 2009 about how much a house wives work is worth..... \$122,000.00 per year
    - b. But God says that their value is more
      - Exceeding even the finest of jewels.
  - 2. You have great worth, even if your knot headed husband doesn't recognize it.
- C. I can't tell you how much kingdom business has been virtually stopped dead in its tracks because low self esteem.
  - 1. Ladies when you don't understand your God given value, your homes suffers and your focus becomes misdirected and Satan begins to rule your life through fear.
  - 2. I can hear the very words of our Lord in many different passages saying “fear not...ye of little faith”

## **III. Well, one of the basic platforms for the strength of the wife is simply having her husbands trust.**

Proverbs 31:11

*11 The heart of her husband trusts in her,  
And he will have no lack of gain.*

- A. First of all trust is a basic word used to describe the confidence that we have in another person who we have entrusted with something.
- B. Here in this text the strong godly wife has gained her husbands confidence or trust.
  - 1. But how did she get it?
  - 2. Did he just blindly give it to her?

C. I want to suggest that trust is not blindly given ...but earned

1. Faith (in a trust sense) is described in Hebrew 11:1 as including evidence
2. In essence trust is built through time and continual behavior
  - a. Time and time again the strong wife chooses the right
  - b. She is not tossed about by every wave of emotion
  - c. She always tells the truth...never trying to hide anything
  - d. She is dedicated to her husbands direction
  - e. And she handles her husbands valuables with great respect.

D. Notice here that the heart of the husband is specifically mentioned

1. That is, the essence of all he is both intellectually and emotionally believes and trusts in her....because she has earned it.

E. To which the text says "*He will have no lack of gain.*"

1. In short his trust has been well placed.
2. And his trust has fruitful returns.

#### **IV. Then a strong wife treats her husband good.**

Proverbs 31:12

*12 She does him good and not evil  
All the days of her life.*

- A. It might be easy to start thinking about what kind of things the wife does for her husband and whether they are good or bad.
- B. But here the primary meaning has to do with how the wife treats the husband
- C. That is, the way that you:

<u>Strong Woman</u>	<u>Week Woman</u>
1. Talk to him.....Kind and loving	Sarcastic, hateful or rude
2. Hold your face.....Smile in love	Sneer at him in disdain
3. Think of him.....Look for best	Spend all your time grieving over his bad qualities.
4. Forgive him.....Quick to make amends	Secretly plot out her own revenge or forming a diabolical plan to make him pay.
5. Listen to him.....Seeing value in his ideas	Or think of him as a fool
6. Trust him.....Believe in him	Or do you trust only in yourself.
7. Follow him.....Looking to him for leadership and direction.	Or do make everything about getting your way.

D. The strong godly woman constantly seeks out the good of her husband....all the days of her life.

1. The definition here also includes the idea of a ripening fruit.

a. i.e. something that is to grow and sweeten through time.

E. But a particular note: Nothing in these verses say anything about the man and whether he deserves this treatment.

1. Let me tell you there are a lot of men that don't deserve their wives !

2. But the New Testament says that husbands can be won over with such treatment (1 Peter 3:1).

## **V. A strong wife takes care of covering or clothing her family**

Proverbs 31:13

*13 She looks for wool and flax*

*And works with her hands in delight.*

A. First of all a strong godly woman considers the need for her families covering or clothing.

1. The husband might have an industrial job and need heavy canvas pants and work-shirts to protect him.

a. Or he might need a suit and tie.

2. While the children might need shorts for the summer time heat

a. Or baby clothes....or diapers

B. Clothing a family is serious business, not to be taken lightly.

1. Thrown into the mix is that she also considers what is appropriate dress and what is not.

a. Her work is before the Lord and she takes that very seriously

b. Something that seems to be a continual issue in our society

C. But with these things in mind she goes out and seeks the materials of wool and flax to make these garments.

1. The language here points to her willing pleasure in doing it.

a. She doesn't feel like a slave, sighing in her heart dreaming of being somewhere else.

b. But with great pleasure and love in her heart she gives thought and action to her families needs....Her work is done in delight !

## VI. A strong wife feeds her family

Proverbs 31:14-15

*14 She is like merchant ships;*

*She brings her food from afar.*

*15 She rises also while it is still night*

*And gives food to her household*

*And portions to her maidens.*

*16 She considers a field and buys it;*

*From her earnings she plants a vineyard.*

A. She is like a merchant ship, bringing food from afar.

1. I can't help but think of my wife loading her grocery cart at Wal-Mart.
  - a. By the time she is done the cart looks like a merchant ship for sure.
2. But she doesn't just turn down the first aisle and find peanut butter on sale and load up a cart full of peanut butter and announce to the family that we will be eating peanut butter for the next two months.
3. No, but she takes a carefully thought out list.
  - a. She has looked at her budget and considered the nutritional values needed along with what is pleasing and filling.
  - b. She considers her budget and often times goes to many different markets to make the best food for her family.
4. This is not a spur of the moment thing.....but carefully thought out in love

B. She rises while it is still night.

1. Adjusting her schedule to meet the needs of the family.
  - Making sure her husband and kids have breakfast and lunches packed.
2. Sometimes getting up even earlier to put the beans on in the so they will be tender, and ready and on time for the next days meal.

C. Then she considers a field and buys it and plants a vineyard

1. The woman of strength will go to any length to feed her family
  - a. She also is storing up for the winter
  - b. Planning ahead
2. Remembering that she does this with her husband's trust.

D. You see, a godly wife is dedicated to feeding her family to the best of her ability. And she will go to any lengths to accomplish it.

## **VI. A strong wife wraps herself in strength.**

Proverbs 31:17

*17 She girds herself with strength  
And makes her arms strong.*

- A. A strong godly wife girds herself with the strength of the Lord.
  - 1. First of all she recognizes that her own strength is not enough
  - 2. And that she needs strength for the tasks ahead of her
- B. A she goes to the right place for strength.
  - 1. She goes to her maker and lays out her need.
    - a. Knowing fully that He will supply
  - 2. Let me make this perfectly clear.
    - a. Godly woman know where there strength comes from.
    - b. And it is not from the husband.
- C. But she steps up to the throne of God and wraps His truths around her waist.

### **Conclusion:**

**I want to point out that this passage doesn't say that a strong godly wife never struggles.**

**But it does indicate that she is to be growing in these things throughout her life.**

Proverbs 12:4 “An excellent wife is the crown of her husband...”

-Not a crown of thorns but glorious adornment

Thinking back to our opening story, the truth is...God doesn't make anything less than an 8 cow woman.