

## ***Praise God for Women!***

Proverbs 31:10-31

June 9, 2024

I came across some really good advice for us husbands on the internet. Men, when your wife does something wrong, just explain to her how your mother did it and she'll be so thankful for the advice. Not all women are like your mom. Each one is different. Today we're going to celebrate God's gift of womanhood.

One of the sad realities of the last several years is the sudden spike in transgenderism. Biological men who want to be women and women who say they're men trapped in women's bodies. So much so that many are having reassignment surgeries in an attempt to change their biological gender. While such procedures may alter outward appearances, every cell of their bodies still bears witness to their birth gender with either two x chromosomes for females or an x and y for us men. But it goes much further than just those two chromosomes. Researchers at Israel's Weizmann Institute of Science discovered that many of 20,000 genes they studied are only expressed in either women or men. While obvious differences were found in genes controlling body hair, fat storage, muscle building, and milk production, they also found some 6,500 genes, over 20 percent of all our genes, behave in certain ways based on a person's biological sex and surgeries nor hormones can change that. God knows what He's doing. Even though one of our Supreme Court Justices doesn't know what a woman is, God's perfect creation is clear on the matter as is His Word.

As we mentioned last week, we're going to use our time in June to reclaim the month and the institutions that rightfully belong to God. Last week, we talked about how to use the true 7-colored Rainbow, which belongs God, to tell other people about Jesus. Today and next Sunday, we'll be talking about God's design for men and women. I'm perhaps getting the cart before the horse a bit, talking about Godly womanhood before we talk about Godly manhood, but Mother's Day is already past and Father's Day is next Sunday. So men, your day's a coming. Please open your Bibles today to Proverbs 31.

While some churches have jumped on the LGBTQ bandwagon, others have endeavored to hold a Biblical line on human sexuality. And while we should and we must do that, perhaps we are in part to blame for failing all these years to celebrate what it means to be a man or a woman. While both are human beings, there are many obvious differences between them that He has created for His glory and for our good. He knows what He's doing. If you were born a female, you're supposed to be! That's God's design! Celebrate it! If you were born a male, we'll get to you next week.

Let's see if we can get a Biblical understanding of what Godly womanhood looks like. If you are able, please stand as we read from Prov 31:10-31 A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies. 11 Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value. 12 She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life. 13 She selects wool and flax and works with eager hands. 14 She is like the merchant ships, bringing her food from afar. 15 She gets up while it is still dark; she provides food for her family and portions for her servant girls. 16 She considers a field and buys it; out of her earnings she plants a vineyard. 17 She sets about her work vigorously; her arms are strong for her tasks. 18 She sees that her trading is profitable, and her lamp does not go out at night. 19 In her hand she holds the distaff and grasps the spindle with her fingers. 20 She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy. 21 When it snows, she has no fear for her household; for all of them are clothed in scarlet. 22 She makes coverings for her bed; she is clothed in fine linen and purple. 23 Her husband is respected at the city gate, where he takes his seat among the elders of the land. 24 She makes linen garments and sells them, and supplies the merchants with sashes. 25 She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come. 26 She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue. 27 She watches over the affairs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness. 28 Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: 29 "Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all." 30 Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised. 31 Give her the reward she has earned, and let her works bring her praise at the city gate.

Me talking about the blessings of womanhood is like an Italian talking about how great it is to be an American. Nonetheless I can share what the Bible says for the Bible elevates women. Together, men and women reflect the image of God! That's as high as it gets! Many other religions, especially Islam, denigrate women and view them as property to be used and discarded rather than cherished and protected. Sadly, Christianity has sometimes made that same mistake. Godly women, the Bible says, are of the greatest worth, greater than rubies, and some are named Ruby, but for any man or woman not to know and appreciate the value of a woman is sinful.

Early in our Bibles, we find that man was incomplete without her. It was the first time in all the creation account that something was not good when God said, "It's not good for man to be alone." And so, He fashioned a special creation not just for Adam, but that the two of them might together bring God glory. Women are completers, not competitors. As Proverbs says, they bring their husbands good, not harm. I'm so thankful for all the good Nancy brings me. We'll talk more about marriage later this month, but let's understand today the high value that God places on women. They are not second class humans, Christians, or anything else. Sadly, Eve has gotten much of the blame for the fall into sin, but a careful reading helps us understand that it was Adam's failure and that God held him chiefly accountable. As often happens, men blame women for their own sins.

The end of this Prov 31 passage alludes to a woman's beauty. Say beauty. Women are beautiful, amen? When Adam first saw Eve, the Living Bible says he exclaimed, "This is it!" Perfecto! Bingo! Bulls Eye! Song of Solomon goes into more detail on that as do some of the other Proverbs. Praise God for our beautiful women, but we are advised not to focus on that, for it is fleeting. We have other pretty women in the Bible like Jezebel who misuse their beauty to deceive and lead others into sin. Like any other gift, beauty can be used for good or evil.

Are there roles for men and women? Yes. We find those throughout the Bible. But both roles are indispensable! Both roles are vitally important! Both roles glorify God! In a play, whenever roles get mixed up, the plot crashes and so it also does in our culture when we mix up the roles of women and men.

We find in this Prov 31 passage many insights as to what God sees those roles to be what He considers important character traits for women. This virtuous woman is out buying and selling as a business woman. She's into real estate, textiles and foodstuffs. She's planting vineyards and sewing clothes. She's decorating her home and providing for her family. Shew. I get tired just reading it. Does that mean a woman has to do all those things to be godly? No! But it also expands some traditional thinking about what godly women can and cannot do. It's important not to consider our own values or preferences as the godly model for Godly womanhood is very broad.

But being a godly woman is more about who you are than what you do. Vs 25 tells us she is strong and dignified and vs 26 says she's wise and faithful and those are qualities that can and should be demonstrated by all women. Say strong. Anyone who thinks women are weak has never been with one when she gave birth. Our Bibles hold up various strong women. We'll start with Eve who became the mother of all living. We learn from her that one of a woman's God-given roles is to bear children. In spite of what some of our nation's leaders proclaim, men cannot yet do that! Women, I hope you understand what a high privilege this is! Only you can bring a new life into this world! God has made your bodies in such a way as to not only nurture and care for a child as he or she develops within you but even after that child is born. We men can't do either! By nature, most women are nurturers. Some see this as a sign of weakness, it is not! That is a virtue we desperately need! Do you think God is weak because He nurtures and cares for us? Do you think a mama bear is weak as she attacks anything and everything that might harm her cubs?

Part of being a nurturer is being a disciplinarian. Although this role is shared with dad, many times it's mom's responsibility to tell the child no and back it up with armed force. I remember more spankings from my mom than from my dad and let me tell you mom was a strong woman when she turned me over her knee! As vs 17 says, her arms were strong for her task! Nurturing and discipline requires strength under control.

You want a strong women? How about Jael in Judges 4 who drove a tent stake through King Sisera's skull? She gave him a splitting headache. Men, be careful who tucks you into bed. Women are strong. Now their upper body strength may not be the same as men's. Nor their ability to swim or run as fast. That's part of the way their two x chromosomes have fashioned them to be. So now we have some boy who says he's a girl outswimming or outrunning or outlifting his female competitors. Really? And sadly, our society and even our leaders applaud this instead of condemning it. And we end up with women getting raped and abused by men sharing locker rooms and bathrooms. Please, for God's sake, for our daughters' sakes, for our wives' sakes, let's stand up and call this sin out for what it is. Strong women have worked too hard for too long to be overrun by some man pretending to be a girl. Praise God for strong women!

The virtuous woman in Proverbs 31 is not only strong, she's dignified and wise. Say wise. In Proverbs 8, wisdom is actually personified as a woman. We find Hagar in our Bibles who was abused by Abraham and Sarah but was wise enough to do what was best for her son. We find Tamar. She's not often held up as a role model, but she had been denied and mistreated by her deceased husband's family. She did what she could to get what was hers and she ends up in the genealogy of Jesus Christ! She wisely understood relationships which is another gift that many women have that we men are clueless about. Don't run from it, celebrate it. Don't use it to manipulate or control, but use it to bless your family and your church.

Deborah was another wise woman who was a judge, or leader, of Israel. There's also the unnamed wise woman in 2 Sam 20 who saved her whole city by convincing her fellow citizens to cut the head off a rebel named Sheba and toss it over the city wall to David's army general. When they did, the army spared the city and all who were inside. A wise woman indeed. Praise God for wise women!

Prov 31 tells us godly women are also faithful. Say faithful. We find Hannah in our Bibles who gives us a model of prayer and then of faithfully keeping her promises even when it's hard! We find Ruth who we studied in depth a while back who faithfully kept her promises. In the New Testament, we find Mary and Martha both with very different gifts and temperaments. Mary seems to be the social butterfly, but with a spiritual hunger, while Martha is the workhorse, the cook, and the boss. We can learn from both of them. In Acts 9, we find young Dorcas, who was a disciple. It says she, "was always doing good and helping the poor," by making clothes for them. Part of what it means to be a godly woman is serving others which we learned from vs 20 of today's scripture where we read, "She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy." What a blessing it is at Antioch to have so many women who are always doing good in so many ways and many who help the poor! We even have some who sew like Dorcas.

Where would we men be without the ladies? Mark Twain said scarce. Many churches including Antioch would be hard-pressed to have music, food, Sunday School, Bible School, prayer teams, youth leaders, nursery, grief groups, or many other important ministries if it weren't for our women! Praise God for each of you! Many of Jesus' most devoted followers were women and women are often more open spiritually and lead me to Jesus. Godly women are faithful women who are strong, wise, and dignified.

Now do all women do all things? No! And you're not supposed to and you can't. Too often, we expect all women to be all things. Stop it! Each one is a unique creation! A special custom built model for the tasks God has assigned for her. Some are not able to bear children. She's still a complete woman. Some are not all that nurturing. She's still a complete woman. Some, like Dorcas, could probably never drive a tent stake. Praise God. Some can't sew. We've got to allow each woman to discover the gifts God has given her and to use them in the ways He's designed rather than expecting every woman to be all things. There's a broadness within godly womanhood to honor and respect.

Just because a female doesn't check all the traditional boxes doesn't mean she's not woman and therefore must be a man in a woman's body. This thing of gender dysphoria, not sure what you are, is not new, it's been around for years. But we're giving it oxygen and celebrating it instead of addressing it Biblically. I'm not trying to minimize the struggles some legitimately have, but we shouldn't legitimize struggles that don't have to be struggles. God made us male and female. And even in the exceedingly rare cases of intersex, most figure it out without surgery or crossdressing. We're most proud today of what we should be most ashamed of. Just because a woman possesses some masculine qualities or enjoys some manly hobbies doesn't make her a man. It doesn't mean God made a mistake. It doesn't mean she's sinning. It's sin when we deny who God made you to be and actually become someone else or something else. Let's celebrate and honor godly womanhood! It reflects the image of God! And helps us understand the role of the church in relating to Jesus Christ which is huge!

In the book, *Mr. Jones, Meet the Master*, former US Senate Chaplain Peter Marshall says this, "No nation has ever made any progress in a downward direction. No people ever became great by lowering their standards. No people ever became good by adopting a looser morality. It is not progress when the moral tone is lower than it was. It is not progress when purity is not as sweet. It is not progress when womanhood has lost its fragrance. Whatever else it is, it is not progress!...Our country needs today women who will lead us back to an old-fashioned morality, to old-fashioned decency, to old-fashioned purity and sweetness... The very phrase [godly women] sounds strange in our ears. We never hear it. We hear about every other kind of women—beautiful women, smart women, sophisticated women, career women, talented women, ... but so seldom do we hear of a godly woman—or of a godly man either, for that matter... It is a much nobler thing to be a good wife than to be Miss America. It is a greater achievement

to establish a Christian home than it is to produce a second rate novel, filled with filth. The world has enough women who know how to be brilliant. It needs some who will be brave. The world has enough women who are popular. It needs more who are pure.”

Being a godly woman is a high and holy calling. Womanhood is something to cherish and to celebrate! It is a special gift from God! Let’s do what Proverbs says and Give her the honor she deserves as we praise God for women.