A Wife/Mother Who Leaves a Legacy

PROVERBS 31:10-31

5-12-2019

Introduction:

A virtuous woman is a more precious possession than all earthly things which are valuable. She is a rare fortune! Notice the legacy she leaves behind: Proverbs 31:28-31

Wives & Mothers: Leave a Legacy worth remembering and imitating!

See God's description of a wife/mother who leaves a virtuous legacy!
Why is she remembered?

I. She Leaves a Legacy because she is <u>TRUSTWORTHY</u> (v. 11-12)

(She is not deceitful or unfaithful in any way)

II. She Leaves a Legacy because she is a <u>HARD WORKER</u> (v. 13-19)

(She does not fall into the trap of laziness)

A. SHE <u>FINDS PLEASURE</u> IN HER WORK (V. 13)

B. SHE <u>GOES THE EXTRA MILE</u> IN HER WORK (V. 14)

C. SHE <u>MAKES SACRIFICES</u> FOR HER WORK (V. 15)

D. SHE <u>WISELY PLANS AND PREPARES</u> FOR HER WORK (V. 16)

E. SHE <u>RECEIVES PHYSICAL STRENGTH AND STAMINA</u> BECAUSE OF HER WORK (V. 17)

F. SHE IS <u>TIRELESS</u> IN HER WORK (V. 18-19)

III. She Leaves a Legacy because she is <u>GENEROUS</u> (v. 20-22)
(She is not selfish)

A. SHE GIVES TO <u>OTHERS</u> (V. 20)

B. SHE GIVES TO <u>HER FAMILY</u> (V. 21)

C. SHE PROVIDES FOR <u>HERSELF</u> (V. 22)

IV. She Leaves a Legacy because she is a <u>BLESSING</u> *(an asset or plus)* (v. 23-25) *(She is not a burden or detriment to her husband and children)*

V. She Leaves a Legacy because her words <u>EDIFY</u> (v. 26)
(She does not tear down and destroy with her tongue)

VI. She Leaves a Legacy because her FAMILY (household) is her <u>PRIORITY</u> (v. 27-29) *(She does not live for self-pleasure)*

VII. She Leaves a Legacy because she really <u>FEARS GOD</u> (v. 30)
(She is not deceitful or vain)

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INTRODUCTION:

Teacher: Susie what do you want to be when you grow up?
Susie: I want to be a doctor.

Teacher: How wonderful! And what about you Julie?
Julie: I want to be a soldier.

Teacher: How commendable! And what about you Hannah?
Hannah: When I grow up I want to be a wife and mother!
Teacher: [dead silence]...

Motherhood is rapidly becoming a "lost art" today! So is Fatherhood. For that matter the very essence of Womanhood and Manhood are being redefined and changed at an accelerated pace. Femininity is under severe attack today! As is masculinity in men. Why? There is a diabolical attempt to destroy the Biblical structure of the family in order to weaken and eventually destroy God's design for marriage and the home. All distinctiveness must be eliminated by the radical left in order to "liberate" people from "archaic roles." I think such contemporary brainwashing is designed to pave the way for an Antichrist, Marxist, totalitarian form of government. To produce this "sameness" there is a need to eliminate the most basic form of domestic authority structure. Distinctiveness of gender (differences between the male and female sexes), and distinctiveness or differences in domestic roles & responsibilities are being systematically dismantled in America (and around the world).

Vision Forum Ministries:

"Only women can be mothers. Have we forgotten this fundamental?

Only a woman can carry in her body an eternal being which bears the very image of God. Only she is the recipient of the miracle of life. Only a woman can conceive and nurture this life using her own flesh and blood, and then deliver a living soul into the world. God has bestowed upon her alone a genuine miracle — the creation of life, and the fusing of an eternal soul with mortal flesh. This fact alone establishes the glory of motherhood.

Despite the most creative plans of humanist scientists and lawmakers to redefine the sexes, no man will ever conceive and give birth to a child. The fruitful womb is a holy gift given by God to women alone. This is one reason why the office of wife and mother is the highest calling to which a woman can aspire.

This is the reason why nations that fear the Lord esteem and protect mothers. They glory in the distinctions between men and women, and attempt to build cultures in which motherhood is honored and protected.

In his famous commentary on early American life, Democracy in America, Alexis de Tocqueville explained:

Thus the Americans do not think that man and woman have either the duty or the right to perform the same offices, but they show an equal regard for both their respective parts; and though their lot is different, they consider both of them as beings of equal value. They do not give to the courage of woman the same form or the same direction as to that of man, but they never doubt her courage; and if they hold that man and his partner ought not always to exercise their intellect and understanding in the same manner, they at least believe the understanding of the one to be as sound as that of the other, and her intellect to be as clear. Thus, then, while they have allowed the social inferiority of woman to continue, they have done all they could to raise her morally and intellectually to the level of man; and in this respect they appear to me to have excellently understood the true principle of democratic improvement.

De Tocqueville contrasted the American understanding of women, with European sentiments:

There are people in Europe who, confounding together the different characteristics of the sexes, would make man and woman into beings not only equal but alike. They could give to both the same functions, impose on both the same duties, and grant to both the same rights; they would mix them in all things — their occupations, their pleasures, their business. It may readily be conceived that by thus attempting to make one sex equal to the other, both are degraded, and from so preposterous a medley of the works of nature nothing could ever result but weak men and disorderly women.

The War on Motherhood

America's glory was her women. de Tocqueville believed this when he wrote:

As for myself, I do not hesitate to avow that although the women of the United States are confined within the narrow circle of domestic life, and their situation is in some respects one of extreme dependence, I have nowhere seen woman occupying a loftier position; and if I were asked, now that I am drawing to the close of this work, in which I have spoken of so many important things done by the Americans, to what the singular prosperity and growing strength of that people ought mainly to be attributed, I should reply: To the superiority of their women.

But this birthright would be exchanged during the last century for a mess of pottage. Perhaps the greatest legacy of the 20th century has been the war on motherhood and biblical patriarchy. Feminists, Marxists, and liberal theologians have made it their aim to target the institution of the family and divest it from its biblical structure and priorities. The results are androgyny, a radical decline in birthrate, abortion, fatherless families, and social confusion.

Incredibly, the biggest story of the 20th century never made headline news [i]. Somehow we missed it. It was the mass exodus of women from the home, and the consequent decline of motherhood. For the first time in recorded history of the West, more mothers left their homes than stayed in them. By leaving the home, the experience and reality of childhood, family life and femininity were fundamentally redefined, and the results have been so bad that if this one trend is not reversed, our grandchildren may live in a world where the both the true culture of Christian family life and the historic definition of marriage are the stuff of fairy tales.

Many “isms” have influenced these trends-evolutionism, feminism, statism, eugenicism, Marxism, and more. But in the end, the philosophical gap between the presuppositions of the Atheists, eugenicists, and Marxists of the early 20th century, and the presuppositions of the professing Church in the 21st century, have narrowed dramatically. The goals of the state and the goals of the mainstream church have so merged, that the biblical family with its emphasis on male headship, generational succession, and prolific motherhood are a threat to the social order of both institutions.

Less than one hundred years ago, the architects of the atheistic communist Soviet state anticipated the death of the Christian family. They explained the need for destroying the Christian family with its emphasis on motherhood, and replacing it with a vision for a “new family.” Lenin wrote:


Lenin

We must now say proudly and without any exaggeration that part from Soviet Russia, there is not a country in the world where women enjoy full equality and where women are not placed in the humiliating position felt particularly in day-to-day family life. This is one of our first and most important tasks...Housework is the most unproductive, the most barbarous and the most arduous work a woman can do. It is exceptionally petty and does not include anything that would in any way promote the development of the woman...The building of socialism will begin only when we have achieved the complete equality of women and when we undertake the new work together with women who have been emancipated from that petty stultifying, unproductive work...We are setting up model institutions, dining-rooms and nurseries, that will emancipate women from housework...These institutions that liberate women from their position as household slaves are springing up where it is in any way possible...Our task is to make politics available to every working woman.

In his 1920 International Working Women's Day Speech, Lenin emphasized:

The chief thing is to get women to take part in socially productive labor, to liberate them from 'domestic slavery,' to free them from their stupefying [idiotic] and humiliating subjugation to the eternal drudgery of the kitchen and the nursery. This struggle will be a long one, and it demands a radical reconstruction, both of social technique and of morale. But it will end in the complete triumph of Communism.

Proverbs 31:10-31 literally describes the ABC's of a woman of excellence. The Hebrew paints a portrait of a virtuous woman by means of an acrostic, using all 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

Each verse begins with a successive Hebrew letter (like Ps. 119), from (aleph) to (taw).

"The whole passage is the hallowing of domestic life, a directory for wives and mothers, a beautiful ideal of how noble a thing a busy mother's life may be, an exhibition to young men of what they should seek, and a reminder for what younger girls should aim" (cited from "The Challenge" - Robert D. Foster, p. 31)

V. 10
Not every woman makes a good wife.

"Find" = Prov. 18:22 - "Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord." (cp. Ecc. 7:26).

"Virtue" = to have moral strength, to be of good quality in every aspect, to have noble and upright character.

Money can't buy virtue!

Virtue comes from God.

Ruth 3:11 - Boaz testified of Ruth: "For all the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman."

Prov. 12:4 - "A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: but she that maketh ashamed is as rottenness in his bones."

A virtuous woman is a more precious possession than all earthly things which are valuable. She is a rare fortune!

Notice the legacy she leaves behind: Proverbs 31:28-31
"Her children arise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her: "Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all." Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain; but a woman who feareth the LORD, she shall be praised! Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her at the gates."

Wives & Mothers: Leave a Legacy worth remembering and imitating!

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Why is she remembered?

I. She Leaves a Legacy because she is <u>TRUSTWORTHY</u> (v. 11-12)
(She is not deceitful or unfaithful in any way)

V. 11

Can your husband trust you? Or do you sneak behind his back?

If your husband can't trust you to be honest, sincere, loyal and faithful, whom can he trust?

But you may justify your sneaking by saying: "My husband is not saved."

--Maybe that's the reason why he isn't (cp. I Pet. 3:1-6)

--Where in the Bible does it teach doing things behind his back, regardless of his spiritual condition?

The only time you must disobey your husband is if he asks you to do something sinful. "Wives submit...as unto the Lord" (Eph. 5:22).

Abraham could trust Sarah!

"Spoil" = she won't rob or ruin what he worked to provide.

"She won't blow his paycheck."

The husband may bring home much or little, but his wife keeps the family possessions scrupulously together, and even increases them!

V. 12

She is honest not deceitful.
She is holy not defiled.

II. She Leaves a Legacy because she is a HARD WORKER (v. 13-19)

(She does not fall into the trap of laziness)

A. SHE FINDS PLEASURE IN HER WORK (V. 13)

V. 13

"Willingly" = "to take pleasure in"

"With pleasure (joy) she works with her hands."

She loves working. It satisfies her to get things done.

She uses her hands. She is industrious. Not afraid to crack her finger nails or ruin her polish.

B. SHE GOES THE EXTRA MILE IN HER WORK (V. 14)

V. 14

She is capable of going great distances to go grocery shopping.

No doubt she gets the best deals, purchases in quantity, etc.

She's thrifty.

C. SHE MAKES SACRIFICES FOR HER WORK (V. 15)

V. 15

She gets up early and stays up late because she places the care for her household above her own comfort.

D. SHE WISELY PLANS AND PREPARES FOR HER WORK (V. 16)

V. 16

Because she is a woman who can be trusted by her husband (v. 11), she can be trusted to wisely handle (invest) the family's money.

She purchases some land and plants a garden.

E. SHE RECEIVES PHYSICAL STRENGTH AND STAMINA BECAUSE OF HER WORK (V. 17)

V. 17
She does not get her strength from "pumping iron" but by work!

F. SHE IS TIRELESS IN HER WORK (V. 18-19)

V. 18
Her merchandise (produce of juice from vineyard [v. 16]) is good (profitable).

Because she is being blessed (reaping good) for her hard work, this spurs her on (excites her) to do even more work - even late into the night.

Do you ever notice that when things are going well, you feel like doing even more (a sudden burst of energy, second wind)

She is a tireless worker (v. 15, 18, 19). (She sacrifices sleep).

III. She Leaves a Legacy because she is GENEROUS (v. 20-22)

(She is not selfish)

A. SHE GIVES TO OTHERS

V. 20

She is not narrow-hearted. She does not limit her care to the circle of what is her own, but in love reaches out far beyond this circle (Delitzch, p. 333)

Her attitude is not, "I worked for it, why don't you?!"

But she recognizes that she has been blessed by God, so she becomes a blessing to others.

She is not selfish. She does not stop with meeting her family's needs, she extends help to others in need!
She gives to those who can't repay her (pure motives).

She doesn't think she is to important to help the poor and needy.

She could say, "It's my money, I earned it, and I will spend it on myself." Rather, she gives and gives and gives!

She not only gives gifts, but also gives a helping hand.

The thought of verse 20 is also an offering of her hands to help the poor and needy.

She is willing to help them, serve them. She is offering a willing hand! She has a servant's heart.

As if she weren't busy enough, she goes a step further and serves others.

Praise God if you serve your family. A double hallelujah for you who also help other families.

B. SHE GIVES TO HER FAMILY

V. 21

"Scarlet" = lit. "scarlets" (plural), referring not only to the best material available, but also to double thickness (cp. LXX)

NOTE: Advanced preparation and planning

C. SHE PROVIDES FOR HERSELF

V. 22

After she has taken care of everyone else, she meets her needs.

"Coverings of tapestry" = either means 1) covers (blankets) for the beds in her home; or 2) coverings (in the sense of lined overcoats; cp. LXX)

IV. She Leaves a Legacy because she is a <u>BLESSING</u> *(an asset or plus)* (v. 23-25)

(She is not a burden or detriment to her husband and children)

Largely due to the wife, her husband is not a bum! Her husband has a high position and good acquaintances (elders).

"Gates" = "The place in the city where the respected men sat to judge and discuss local affairs " (Ryrie) Public business transpired at the city gate (cp. Ruth 4:1)

V. 23

Because of her virtue, her husband has a well-known, reputable name.

When he sits among the elders deciding the affairs of the city, he has a weighty voice among them. Why? His house is in order. He has a godly wife.

Behind every good man is a good woman - backing him up, cheering for him, giving him a good reputation.

I wonder how many potential preachers (deacons, etc.) have been disqualified because of their wives?

V. 24

She is a blessing to her husband because she is not only thrifty with the money her husband makes, she also adds to the income (<u>without it interfering with her domestic responsibilities</u>!)

She is a "keeper (worker) at home" (Tit. 2:5).

V. 25

Her character is what makes her a blessing.

She has strength (power) over changing times (the changes of temporal circumstances).
She has honor (dignity) in that she is elevated above the trials that comes the way of her family.

Therefore, she can look confidently into the future.

She knows the unchanging principle that "You reap what you sow" (Gal. 6:7)

"She shall rejoice in time to come" = "she smiles (laughs) at the future"

She has no anxiety (fear) because she has worked hard and made prior preparations for her family (the are well taken care of).

She does not live from "hand to mouth." She plans. She gets prepared.`

EX: ant that prepares for the winter in the summer (Prov. 6:8).

V. She Leaves a Legacy because her words EDIFY (v. 26)

(She does not tear down and destroy with her tongue)

V. 26a

She thinks before she speaks.

If it won't build up others, she does not utter it!

Her words are not vain (empty, meaningless chatter), but they are practical. They meet needs. They do something beneficial.

Eph. 4:29 - "Let no corrupt communication ... good to the use of edifying..."

Single men: Beware of women who can't control their tongue!

V. 26b

"Law" = Torah - Instruction

As a mother, she instructs her children in a pleasant way, in a loving way, in a gracious way.

"Kindness" = devoted love; she is not the kind of woman where you listen in suspense, wondering what will come out of her mouth.

She faithfully speaks words that are kind, gentle, comforting, soothing. Her speech is graceful, merciful, and compassionate.

VI. She Leaves a Legacy because her FAMILY (household) is her PRIORITY (v. 27-29)

(She does not live for self-pleasure)

V. 27

"Looketh well" = she watches over. She is constantly on the look out

Her eyes are turned everywhere; she is at one time here, at another there, to look after all with her own eyes (Delitzch, p. 339).

She does not allow what needs to get done to go undone, while she folds her hands and sits down watching TV or reading books.

She believes in "work before pleasure."

Her interest is not in self-indulgence but her family.

Sad to say, today women are living for their career, their appearance, their own personal interests, their security, etc.

Prov. 14:1 - "Every wise woman buildeth her house: but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands."

This godly woman lives for her husband and children (v. 28) (cp. Titus 2:4-5, where the aged women are commanded to teach the younger women to be "sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.")

V. 28

When you make your family your priority, they will respect you for it.

Her children rise up in reverential honor and say that she has been blessed by God. (Today, being "Mother's Day," should remind you of the divinely inspired words, "Honor thy mother" (Ex. 20:12).) Her husband also says this, and he goes a step further and praises her.

You might say: "My husband never praises me." Why should he? Are you this kind of woman?

If you are a virtuous woman and your husband still doesn't praise you, then he is a fool! God will deal with him like Nabal, who had a virtuous wife (Abigail). God killed Nabal (I Sam. 25:38) and Abigail became the wife of King David, who did respect her character.

VII. She Leaves a Legacy because she really <u>FEARS GOD</u> (v. 30)

(She is not deceitful or vain)

V. 30

"Favor" = charm
External loveliness has deceived many a man.

It is vain - 1) It doesn't last
2)It doesn't reveal what's inside

The true value of anything is measured by how long it lasts (EX: gold) and how genuine it is (EX: diamonds).

TURN TO: I Peter 3:1-4 (NOTE: 1) Purity 2) Fear of God 3) internal beauty)

Proverbs ends the same way it began, stressing the importance of the fear of God. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (Prov. 1:7)

Her fear of God (beautiful character) is the <u>key</u> to her virtue!
This is her <u>foundation</u>, root, center core.

--She did not sneak on her husband because she feared God.

--She did not waste the money God gave her because she feared God

--She did not cheat on her husband because she feared God.

--She did not commit adultery because she feared God

--She did not lie in bed all morning because she feared God.

--She did not tear her family down with her speech because she feared God.

--She did not destroy her husband's reputation because she feared God.

--She did not train up rebellious children because she feared God.

CONCLUSION: **V. 31**

This verse is a request to God to reward her according to what she deserves. What she sowed, she will reap!

She will be known and praised by others (not that this was her motive, but this is the result).

She will "rejoice in time to come" (v. 25).

Ladies: You are building your own future today.

"The woman you are today affects the woman you will someday be" (Dr. Ben Strohbehn).

You can't just live however you want and this that "when you are ready" you will let God suddenly change you overnight.

You are reaping today what you sowed yesterday.

Don't ruin your tomorrow by ruining today!

Decide to change today so you won't have regret in your tomorrows.

In our selfish culture, with ERA, women's lib, etc., and the "I gotta be me" attitude - it takes a real woman of character to stand up against our society's philosophy.

The world may change, but God's plan for wives/mothers does not!

When you see an unusual son, nine times out of ten, you will discover an unusual mother. George Washington had a pious and devoted mother; the mother of Nero was a murderess. (Foster, p. 31)

Consider Hannah. No wonder she reared a son who had such character as Samuel.

Remember Timothy's grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice, who passed on to her son unhypocritical (sincere) faith (II Tim. 1:5).

Think about Susannah Wesley, who raised nineteen children to love and fear God - spending an hour each week with each one individually to love and train them.

The immortal tribute to motherhood is true: "The hand that rocks the cradle is the hand that rules the world" (W.R. Wallace).