



THE INSTRUCTION OF A MOTHER 31:1-31

The book of **Proverbs** begins with instruction from a father to his son [1:8, 10, 15; 2:1; 3:1, 11, 21; 4:10, 20; 5:1, 20; 6:1, 3, 20; 7:1] and ends with instruction from a mother to her son [31:1]. Twice a mother's directives and commandments are referred to by the father [1:8; 6:20], and the instruction of both father and mother should be in such harmony, that it is one unit.

What is recorded in this section of **Proverbs** is referred to as "*The words of king Lemuel* (not words spoken by him, but words that were spoken to him), *the prophecy* (Divine instruction), *that his mother taught* (trained) *him*" [verse 1]. *Lemuel*, no doubt, with affection for his mother, and realizing the great value of her instruction, recorded some of her teachings. THESE WORDS REVEAL THAT THE KING REMEMBERED THE GODLY INSTRUCTION THAT HE RECEIVED! Remembrance of godly instruction is a matter of extreme importance and benefit [Proverbs 4:20-22; 6:20-23]. He remembers his mother's **affection** in teaching him-"*my son*" and "*the son of my womb*" and he remembers her **dedication**, her **commitment**-"*the son of my vows*" [verse 2]. HE NOT ONLY REMEMBERED HIS MOTHER'S INSTRUCTION, BUT THE MOTIVE AND MANNER IN WHICH SHE INSTRUCTED!

I. INSTRUCTION TO AVOID THE WAYS OF DESTRUCTION [verses 3-7].

1. There Is Warning Given Concerning Uncleaness [verse 3].

☞ "*Give not* (do not hand over, give up, relinquish, or devote), *thy strength* (vigor and energy of mind and body), *unto women*" This is a **warning**, and **admonition** to shun all **adultery**, **fornication**, sexual **uncleaness**, and everything that would lead to, or encourage such behavior. This warning that king *Lemuel* received from his mother coincides with the warnings given by the father to his son in the book [2:16-19; 5:1-14; 6: 24-29; 7:5-27].

☞ "*nor thy ways* (course of life), *to that which destroyeth kings*" The world is filled with that which is **destructive**, that which brings **injury**, causes great **harm**, and results in **ruin**! **Sin**, more than any other plague that may fall upon mankind brings **devastation**, **loss**, **havoc**, and **misery**! SIN LEAVES BEHIND A WIDE PATH OF DESTRUCTION! King *Lemuel's* mother, realizing the destruction of sin, warned her son "*Do not pattern or direct the course of your life toward that which will bring destruction into your life*" She is telling him "*to shun evil*" This warning and instruction not only includes the **avoidance** of evil, but also the **cleaving** to, and the doing of that which is good. This is taught throughout the Word of God [Job 28:28; Psalm 34:14; Proverbs 4:14-15; 14:16; Romans 12:9; I Peter 3:11].

2. There Is A Warning Concerning Alcohol [verses 4-5].

The warnings given in **verses 4-5** are in the context of what is said in **verse 3**. The context being **abstinence from that which is destructive**.

☞ *“It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink”* [verse 4]. The subject here, is *“wine”* and *“strong drink”* and it is twice stated *“It is not for kings”* and then it is added *“nor for princes”*. The instruction and warning given is that **ALCOHOL IS UNSUITABLE AND UNACCEPTABLE TO KINGS AND RULERS!** How much more this is true, concerning the child of God! The Word Of God does address the subject of **abstinence**, and that is what is taught in this verse. God commanded that *priests* not drink alcohol so that they could distinguish between the holy and the unholy [Leviticus 10:9-11]. The *Nazarites* were not to drink *“wine”* or *“liquor”* [Numbers 6:3]. *Samson* was to be a *Nazarite* for life and his mother was told not to drink *“wine”* or *“strong drink”* [Judges 13:4, 7, 14]. The *Rechabites* drank no *“wine”* even when the temptation was put before them [Jeremiah 35:2-14]. The greatness of *John the Baptist* is linked to abstinence [Luke 1:15]. In I Timothy 5:23 *Paul* gives instruction to *Timothy* *“Drink no longer water (no longer drink only water) but use a little wine for thy stomach’s sake and thine often infirmities”* this was medicinal, and the implication is that *Timothy* practiced abstinence, which made *Paul’s* instruction necessary. The use of *“wine”* for medicinal purposes is also stated in Proverbs 31:6-7. *Solomon* said in Proverbs 23:31 *“Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his color in the cup, when it moveth itself aright”* He is saying *“Avoid the allurements, the temptation, and the enticement of wine, deny thyself”*

☞ *“Lest (with the intention of preventing, to avoid the risk of), they drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted”* [verse 5]. The instruction and warning given is based upon the fact that **ALCOHOL IS DANGEROUS!** The Word of God certainly gives some red flags concerning that which is intoxicating. The Bible stresses the dangers and does not minimize the pitfalls of that which is intoxicating. In Proverbs 20:1 it is plainly stated as a matter of fact-*“Wine is a mocker* (it deceives, and can overcome an individual before he is aware, it promises pleasure it does not give, and it exposes one to reproach and disgrace), *and strong drink is raging”* (it can cause disturbance of mind). In Proverbs 23:29-30 there is a list of six possible consequences or dangers of *“wine”* use. They are *“woe”* (grief or despair), *“sorrow”* (pain, uneasiness), *“contentions”* (brawling, not a harmony producer), *“babbling”* (excessive and senseless talking), *“wounds”* (bruises, injuries), and *“redness of eyes”* (dullness). In Proverbs 23:32 another danger is presented *“it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder”* (this speaks of that which is concealed and fatal). This danger is also mentioned in Deuteronomy 32:33. The use of alcohol also brings the danger of **adulterous thoughts**, and **sexual improprieties**, and **loud senseless talking** [Proverbs 23:33]. The drinking of alcohol lowers one’s inhibition, and this is seen from what is said in Habakkuk 2:15. The use of alcohol also brings the danger of a **loss of sense** and a **loss of direction** [Proverbs 23:34]. The use of alcohol also brings the danger of one’s **judgment being perverted** [Proverbs 23:35]. Alcohol goes directly to the brain (the communication center of the body) and interferes with good judgment and sense [Isaiah 28:7-8]. Even low doses of alcohol impairs judgment and coordination, and can deprive one of sense [Hosea 4:11].

II. INSTRUCTION CONCERNING THE PROPER TREATMENT OF OTHERS [verses 6-9].

1. She Instructs Him To Do Good With His Wealth [verses 6-7].

Wisdom teaches us not to think that wealth and earthly provisions are simply for our own indulgence, but rather, that we may be a blessing to those in need.

2. She Instructs Him To Do Good With His Power [verses 8-9].

III. THE DESCRIPTION OF A VIRTUOUS WOMAN [verses 10-31].

Contrary to popular belief the Bible does not present women as second-class citizens. THE BIBLE EXALTS WOMEN! She is referred to as *“the weaker vessel”* [I Peter 3:6], and as the *“weaker vessel”* their husbands are to *“dwell with them according to knowledge giving honor unto the wife as the weaker vessel”* That is, she is to be respected, esteemed, reverenced, admired, adored, recognized, regarded, and shown devotion! God has ordained that the woman be the symbol of the church which *Christ* loved and gave Himself for. The Bible teaches that she is to be loved by her husband *“as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it”* [Ephesians 5:25]. She is to be loved with a peculiar love, with a sacrificial love, with a caring love that shows respect, honor, and delight, with a purifying love, with an edifying love, with an appreciative love, with a protective and providing love, and with an unbreakable love. She is in a place of honor and esteem, that is the teaching of the Word of God! When women try to usurp God’s ordained place for them, they degrade themselves! One of the most devastating, debilitating and destructive movements of the day is the *“Feminist Movement”* Radical *“feminism”* has brainwashed modern culture and has brought degradation upon women and their God-given position of honor! *“Feminism”* is meant to destroy God’s design! Women are being bombarded today with the idea that being a **wife** and a **mother** is bondage, that it is an imprisonment! Many are being convinced that that being a **wife** and a **mother** is like being bound with chains, and an infringement upon one’s liberties! **Today one of the least respected roles in society is that of a wife and mother in the home raising her children!** In a day of negative press against a woman’s God-given role **God’s standards have not changed!** It is amazing how that through the years, society’s perception of a woman has changed, and how that society’s design for her role has changed! If you ever happen to rummage through any old magazines or newspapers, and you look at the women portrayed in some of the ads, you see mothers in dresses rocking babies, and women in kitchens cooking dinner for families, or a woman sitting on a bed reading stories to her children. PICTURES LIKE THAT, ALMOST SOUND LIKE FICTION IN OUR WORLD TODAY! When you look at the woman in advertising today you see her dressed up in a slick business suit, swinging a briefcase as she rushes down a crowded street. Society’s perception of the modern woman is that she works outside the home, building a career, refusing to submit to her husband, exercising her independence, relying on her own resources, not wanting her husband or children to interfere with her personal goals, having her own bank account, and putting the children in the care of strangers! That is the kind of woman that the world applauds! Though culture has changed, and though society’s perception of woman has changed THE BIBLE STILL EXALTS

WOMEN! WOMEN HAVE A VERY SPECIAL PLACE A VERY HIGH PRIORITY IN THE WORD OF GOD! It is important that God's people not allow Hollywood, or the leftist media, or the prophets of political correctness, and other enemies of *Christ* and the Bible redefine Biblical values! And though godly women are an oddity in modern culture, HER GOD-INSPIRED CHARACTER STILL SHINES! The woman described in **Proverbs 31** is rare, as indicated by the phrase "*Who can find a virtuous woman?* [verse 10]. SHE IS NOT THE NORM! The woman described in **Proverbs 31** is invaluable, as indicated by the phrase "*for her price is far above rubies*" [verse 10]. Her value to a nation, to a society, to her husband, to her children, to her home, and to her church cannot be calculated or surpassed! **Proverbs 31:10-31** is a portrait, a description of the **ideal woman**.

1. She Is Described As Virtuous [verse 10].

She is righteous, pure, upright, irreproachable, honorable, and reputable! She is principled, and a woman of moral excellence! She is a woman of inner strength, and convictions! From the description given of her, she is a woman of efficiency! *Ruth* is specifically called "*a virtuous woman*" [Ruth 3:11], and it is said in **Proverbs 12:4** "*A virtuous woman is a crown (an honor) to her husband*" AND AS SUCH SHE SHOULD BE RESPECTED, APPRECIATED, AND LOVED! The "*virtuous woman*" portrayed in these verses is the opposite of the "*evil woman*" [Proverbs 6:24], of the "*clamorous* (loud, noisy, and demanding) *woman*" [Proverbs 9:13], of the "*brawling woman*" [Proverbs 21:9; 25:24], and of the "*contentious and angry woman*" [Proverbs 21:9].

2. She Is Described As Trustworthy [verse 11].

Because of her character and behavior she has the complete trust and confidence of her husband. She can be trusted and depended upon to be discreet and to maintain a well disciplined life in all areas. She will not bring shame and reproach upon her husband in the language she uses, the places she goes, and the clothes she wears, and because of what she brings to his life, he has no reason to leave his home for enrichment. SHE IS A SOLID ROCK AND THEREFORE TRUSTWORTHY!

3. She Is Described As An Asset To Her Husband [verse 12].

"*She will do him (her husband) good*" She is interested in being a benefit, and a blessing to him. SHE ADDS HONOR TO HER HUSBAND'S NAME AND REPUTATION! Her commitment to such is seen in the words "*all the days of her life*" She had a positive influence of good upon her husband! Again, "*A virtuous woman is the crown of her husband*" [Proverbs 12:4]. She contributes to the the spiritual well-being of her husband, unlike *Eve* who invited *Adam* to join her in her sin. Unlike *Solomon's* wives who drew his heart away from God, unlike *Jezebel* who stirred up her husband *Abab* to commit acts of wickedness. Unlike *Job's* wife who counseled him to curse God, and unlike *Michal* who despised her husband *David*.

4. She Is Described As A Devoted Homemaker:

Unlike many today, who consider “*being a housewife an illegitimate profession*” she considers **homemaking** a high and noble call! HER HOME IS A PRIORITY, AND SHE FINDS JOY IN HOME MAKING! She is a willing **worker**, filled with **energy** and **enthusiasm** [verses 13, 18, 19, 21, 24], always considering the “*ways of her household*” [verse 27]. SHE DOES NOT LACK MOTIVATION! She make **provision** for her home [verse 14]. She is a woman of **discipline** with excellent time-management skills, not failing to plan, and not procrastinating [verse 15]. She has **vision** for her family, and she makes wise and careful decisions [verse 16]. She has a spirit of **readiness**, and an **eager attitude**, with **unwavering commitment**, she has a disciplined inner strength and upright manner [verse 17]. She has **insight** and **awareness**-“*she perceiveth*” [verse 18]. She displays great **preparation** and **care** [verse 21]. She takes great care concerning the appearance of her house, doing what she can to make her house **enjoyable** and **comfortable**-“*She maketh herself coverings of tapestry*” [verse 22]. Her husband is a man of influence, and she is **content** to work behind the scenes, with no resentment whatsoever [verse 23]. She is always looking out for the good of her household-“*She looketh well to the ways of her household*” [verse 27]. As a homemaker, she is a **manager**, a **mender**, a **mentor**, an **organizer**, an **encourager**, an **inspiration**, a **motivator**, a **helper**, an **example**, and an **edifier** AND IT IS ALL DONE IN LOVE! She does not consider herself a prisoner in her house, but **she considers homemaking a high and noble call!**

5. She Is Described As Compassionate [verse 20].

She not only demonstrates **devotion** and **concern** to her own home, but **compassion** to others [verse 20]. She is a woman of **sympathy**, **empathy**, **sensitivity**, **warmth**, **love**, and **compassion** toward others!

6. She Is Described As Careful In Her Dress [verse 22].

“*her clothing is silk and purple*” [verse 22]. She took care of her appearance, and at all times she was careful of how she presented herself. She dressed well and in a manner that brought respect unto her husband. She **lived**, **worked**, **dressed**, and carried herself in all modesty and decency. SHE IS A GREAT TRIBUTE TO HER HUSBAND IN HER APPEARANCE AND DRESS! Many will say “*It does not matter what I wear, God looks upon my heart*” The truth is, clothing can reveal the condition of the heart! When **Adam** and **Eve** sinned, they sewed fig-leaves together in an attempt to cover their nakedness {**Genesis 3:7**}. The fig-leaves prompted God’s question “*Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?*” THEIR CLOTHING REVEALED THAT THEY WERE SINNERS! THEIR CLOTHING REVEALED THAT THEY WERE REBELS AGAINST GOD! **In like manner today, many reveal by their clothing that they are sinners and rebels against God!** In **Genesis 3:21** we read that God made “*coats of skins and clothed them*” That clothing testified that they were forgiven. So it seems that our clothing reveals something about our spiritual condition! God’s people should want to dress in such a way that says “*I love the Lord*”

They should want to dress in such a way that shows commitment to the Lord! But instead, many dress in a way that says “*I reject the authority of God*” God’s people need to ask themselves “*What am I saying by what I am wearing?*” YOUR CLOTHES AND HOW YOU WEAR THEM SEND A MESSAGE! THEY SEND A MESSAGE ABOUT YOU! The “*barlot*” was known by her distinctive dress {Proverbs 7:10}.

7. She Is Described As A Woman Of Godly Character [verse 25].

She adorns herself with “*strength* (inner power, stamina, resilience, and courage), *and honor* (dignity, morality, principles, righteousness, and goodness), *are her clothing* (these things can be clearly seen in her), *and she shall rejoice in time to come*” Not only does she live in the present with joy, but she also faces the future with joy! HER FUTURE JOY IS THE RESULT OF HER PRESENT DIGNITY!

8. She Is Described As A Woman Of Wise Speech [verse 26].

“*She openeth her mouth with wisdom*” The wording suggests that her mouth is not always open! She is of a “*meek and quiet spirit*” [I Peter 3:4], she is not a compulsive talker, but when she has something to say “*she openeth her mouth with wisdom*” SHE IS WISE IN SPEECH! Not only does this woman let “*wisdom*” guide her speech, but “*in her tongue is the law of kindness*” What she says is in the spirit and manner of a gentle and benevolent heart, revealing a kindly disposition. SHE DOES NOT SEEK TO BE HURTFUL OR DESTRUCTIVE IN HER WORDS!

9. She Is Described As A Woman Of Reverence [verse 30].

“*a woman that feareth the LORD*” THIS IS THE PINNACLE OF VIRTUE! She is a woman who loves the Lord, a woman who is committed to the Lord, a woman whose priority is the Lord! She is a woman of prayer, a woman of faith, a woman of devotion to God, a woman of praise and thanksgiving, a woman of grace, a woman of purity, and a woman of worship! She has a relationship with God, she has peace with God, she is committed to God’s order, and she has a servant’s heart. The woman portrayed here does not change her ways just because of a new trend. The woman portrayed here in Proverbs 31 is summarized in the New Testament [I Timothy 2:9-10; Titus 2:3-5; I Peter 3:2-4].

The bulk of Proverbs is the wise instruction, counsel, rebukes, and warnings of a father to his son, and closes with the wise instruction, counsel and warnings of a mother to her son. BLESSED IS THE INDIVIDUAL WHO HAS SPIRITUALLY WISE PARENTS! Such a blessing brings an awesome responsibility!