

Holy Women Pursuing Perfection

Proverbs 31 Woman, SACOG – Kansas City
(Sermon Notes) By Warren Zehrung – 7/6/2013

When considering what to present in a forum like this one – teaching the Holy Women of God it is important to ask the question, “What is **needed** - what is **helpful** – what might be lacking?”

You do not want to go home from an event like this having been **entertained** ... but rather having been **changed**. Or at least having **learned** some things that will help you to change into the Godly Woman you want to be.

If this symposium were presented in the world it might contain the latest **trends** and **fashions**... the latest electronic **devices** smart phones, Kindles, GPSs, apps, Facebook, tweets, twitters, and formats for being in constant contact with peers, clients and social acquaintances.

But we are blessed with something much more **enduring** than passing fads, styles and gadgets. We have been blessed with the foundational basics of the eternal **principles of Jesus Christ for women**.

* SPS God intends women in the Church to be women of spiritual character, fortitude, wisdom, courage, and strength. God intends that His Holy Women grow to be all they can be.

The Book of Proverbs contains the **unchanging** universal principles of life and human interaction – from God’s point of view. They never stop working and being effective. That is because as our Creator – God knows what makes us tick.

The Book of Proverbs is like a **gold mine** – you have to dig for the treasures that are in it. Thank God for the Sabbath - a time to worship and praise God – and learn from His Word to grow spiritually.

Proverbs 31:

10 Who can find a virtuous woman? For her value is far above rubies.

She is priceless and precious in God’s eyes.

However, we find ourselves in a hostile culture that wishes to **define** the “Perfect Woman” for us. Movies, magazines, advertisements and TV depict the “**Perfect Woman**” as a beautiful winner of the Miss America, Miss USA, Miss Universe...

Her **skill sets** today would no longer be her piano solo or dance routine of yesteryear. Today she is free, unrestrained, unfettered by rules and conventional traditions.

Today, the “Perfect Woman” might represent her skills in daring **martial arts**, reckless abandon, adventurous travels, with a penchant for alluring men and discarding them – and last but not least – she is a woman who is exciting and in touch with her own sensuality.

If you have not yet discerned the **problem** with this modern woman lifestyle, it is this: It eventually leaves a woman cast aside like the rusting hull of a shipwrecked yacht – strewn on the rocks of some distant shore.

- * Today we will be looking at **special traits** and Godly characteristics of women – from a Biblical perspective.

What does God expect of holy women in today's world? Women today, even in God's Church, are **not** being **taught as they should be** to become Proverbs 31 women.

- * The particular subject that we will be addressing in this symposium is the Godly woman who has **come out of this world**. The woman who **is** fulfilled, happy, contented, compete, useful, respected, needed and loved. Not the worldly woman who finds herself by middle age → used up, wasted, lonely, an obsessive-compulsive nervous wreck, depressed, worn out, and probably on Prozac.

Let's recognize that this is Satan's world – and one of his primary goals is to chew up women and spit them out.

- * A "virtuous" woman is "priceless" in that her faithfulness, devotion, dedication to a Godly life are the fruit of fulfilling her God-given **feminine** role.
- * A "virtuous" woman lays down her life for those she loves, motivated by a deep, abiding love for God's way and Truth.
- * Money cannot purchase what a virtuous woman brings to the table – and that is the loving care and Godly concern that can only be provided by a deeply **converted woman**.

She is more than moral and righteous – she is virtuous and worthy to be placed on a pedestal in that she actively and openly demonstrates her Godly morality and righteousness in every activity and aspect of her life.

The Hebrew word translated "virtuous" means to be of many resourceful character traits, abilities, substance, and worthiness.

- * Let's understand that women are heirs to the Kingdom of God with all the rights and dignity that men possess. If the truth be known, women are even now Children of God – same as men – to be born eternally into the Family of God.

That shouldn't **need to be said** – but alas, sometimes it is. It was taught by too many Pastors that women were lesser citizens and told to submit and stay in their place.

There are still the residual effects within God's Church of women being taught that they were to submit to all men – even those who were not their husband.

Ephesians 5:

21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

Submitting yourselves one to another means, "making it work out." It means that you are able to rely on one another.

These Scriptures in Proverbs 31 describe God's ideal qualities for women. But, is it even possible for a woman today to live up to the standards of the Proverbs 31 woman? All women do not grow up with a proper understanding of their Godly role.

We find that there are two extremes: Some women do not learn to take Godly initiative – and other women go overboard "doing their own thing." The Proverbs 31 woman is God's ideal. It takes **a life-time** to fully grow into this kind of Godly wisdom.

Some women think, “I’d sure like to get married and learn how to be a Proverbs 31 woman.” It does not work that way. A young lady should put on the attributes of a Proverbs 31 woman – long before she contemplates marriage. Let’s not get the cart before the horse.

A young man does not say, “If I ever get married I’d be faithful to my wife.” He should be faithful to her all his life before he meets her – that’s Godly character.

Studying the Proverbs gives a Godly woman a tremendous foundation on which to build. Proverbs 31 women are very rare. We will see a glowing tribute to Godly women.

What does God expect of holy women in today's world?

There are **not** many women today who have set their life's goal to be a trustworthy, virtuous woman. Is it possible for a woman in today's culture to live up to the Godly standards of the Proverb 31 woman?

What does it take for a young lady to grow into the mature woman described in these verses? Proverbs 31 is not about **romantic love** like in the Song of Solomon – it is more about a mature woman with her **life all together**.

The Proverb 31 woman is mature in mind, in spirit and in heart. In today’s world way too many women – having gone off on wrong tangents – find their lives on the rocks.

Too many women have not been fully nurtured to become all that God intends them to be. Physically, all young women grow up, but not all women mature in their minds, hearts and spirit – some remain little girls all their lives...

That is because their life’s choices and environment were not conducive to the maturation process that God intends.

Does the Proverbs 31 woman exist today – who is she? Young ladies should set a goal for themselves of becoming a modern Proverbs 31 woman! It is a goal that **is attainable**.

* A woman should be able to attain to her highest potential – both in this life – and in the Kingdom of God. We will see that these Scriptures are relevant in modern society.

These Scriptures in Proverbs are meant to show the ideal system that God has ordained. It is good for us to see and know it.

In God's sight and in ours – a Proverbs 31 woman is priceless. Let’s go through these verses: - and we will see a glowing tribute to the good woman.

First of all we see that the Proverbs 31 Woman is **rare** indeed. God speaks highly of her industriousness and her other qualities.

Proverbs 31:

- * **10** Who can find a virtuous / an excellent / a woman of valor? For her price is far above rubies, more precious than Jewels.
- 11** The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil [no lack of gain from the spoils of conquest.]

“Trust in her,” is not talking about her faithfulness – as much as it **attests to her dependability** and **capability**. Her husband safely relies on her – he trusts her judgment. The sense of this verse is that because of his reliable and resourceful wife – he is much better off – she is not costing him. She makes good decisions.

Some husbands erroneously think that their wives are “Costing them” and holding them back – they are yet foolish in their understanding.

Yes, she is faithful to her husband – but that is not the question here. The husband trusts her judgment to make good and right decisions. That frees the husband up to achieve even greater successes in his own endeavors.

There is a difference between our “needs” and our “wants” – we must know the difference.

Matthew 6:

33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things [clothes, food necessities], shall be added unto you. [Those are the “**needs**” – not the “wants.”]

34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

I hope we understand the difference between wants and needs. As children of God, our **needs being met** is an eternal spiritual principle that we rely upon.

The Proverbs 31 woman is committed to her husband's success – even before she meets him.

Proverbs 31:

12 She will do him good and not evil / harm all the days of her life.

“Do him good” means that she fully justifies the **confidence** he places in her. That is a developed – lifelong trait.

Proverbs 19:

14 House and riches are the inheritance of fathers: and a **prudent wife** is [a gift] from the LORD.

She is intelligent and skilful. Women have insight. They are cautious, discerning, sensible, discreet and wise. Some people are born into wealth – others work their way up by the sweat of their brow – but a Proverbs 31 wife is **a gift of God**.

The wife is the Godly helpmate of the husband – a divinely provided helpmate to him. She is God's gift to the husband – therefore to the family.

She is the perfect complement to him in terms of personality, managerial skills and talents, and spiritual gifts.

If the husband tries to rely upon his own abilities **only**, he is not taking advantage of **all** the resources that God has provided to him. He misses out on a lot.

If the husband “shushes” his wife when she speaks, he is stymieing her growth, and throttling his own potential.

The Proverbs 31 woman and her husband have a **valuable symbiotic** working relationship whereby they achieve more together than the two of them working **separately**.

By themselves they cannot get as much done. But together: They are more than the sum of two individual parts.

* Spiritually, the sum of their gifts is greater → they achieve much greater growth. It is the 1+1=3 principle. One plus one is greater than two!

A Godly marriage is a spiritually **synergistic covenant**. Synergy is the interaction of multiple elements in a system to produce a **greater sum** than their individual effects.

A married couple should produce greater results than the sum of their individual efforts acting independently.

Wives are given insight and sometimes discernment – which we men do not always possess. The Proverbs 31 wife is cheerful in her work – enjoys what she is doing. She knows quality when she sees it. She sees to it that there is an ample supply of materials, supplies and clothing for her family.

Proverbs 31:

13 She seeks wool, and flax, and works willingly with her hands.

She is not just a “supervisor” – she is fully “hands-on” involved in all the household responsibilities. She considers her household's needs as her highest priority. This begins way before marriage – and it is much more than a “hope-chest” full of items. She develops her sources. She is “service minded.” She knows where to shop to get the best bargains.

Proverbs 31:

14 She is like the merchants' ships; she brings her food from afar.

She is no sluggard – and she is not lazy.

Proverbs 20:

4 The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing.

He makes excuses, “It is too cold to work today...”

The Proverbs 31 woman does not find **excuses** not to do her duties.

Proverbs 31:

15 She rises also while it is yet night [5 o'clock in the morning], and gives food to her household, and portions to her maidens.

“Portions to her maidens” Yes she has maids – but it is not because she is **waited on hand and foot** – it is because she has so much going on – she has to have the extra help – she is a good employer and boss and **director of operations**.

House Maids and domestic servants increase the productivity and ability of the matrons of the home. Some people think the purpose of maids is to do all the work while the **woman of the home** sits around and eats bon bons. Not so!

Having the extra household help frees up the wife to be of even greater service to others – visiting the needs of the elderly and the needs of sick brethren, the poor and the fatherless, and the community. She practices **pure religion**.

James 1:

27 Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

She is good to work for. She “Gives food to her household” means that before daybreak she get the day's meals going first thing – lunches for the kids – and so forth.

She is thoughtful in her planning and execution – shops and compares – watches trends – finds good bargains – not wasteful.

Proverbs 31:

16 She considers a field, and buys it: with the fruit of her hands, she plants a vineyard.

God reveals here that women have a knack for real estate – they come by it naturally – they are good at it.

My wife Sharon (mother of four and grandmother of twelve) found **real good deals** on the homes we have lived in – and we always made a handsome profit when it was time to move on.

We recognize that it was God who made it possible, but Sharon put me and the **entire family of 6** through Ambassador College off the proceeds the home and land deals that she put together.

With my experiences, background and training – I could **have never done** what God gave her the talent to do.

“She plants a vineyard” – doesn’t mean so much that she does it with her own hands – as it means she directs her resources and profits in a productive way.

In other words – she invests for the future – wisely.

She takes care of herself physically. She maintains her health with enthusiasm and eagerness.

Proverbs 31:

17 She girds her loins with strength, and strengthens her arms.

“Girds her loins with strength,” means she develops her

God given talents. She keeps her **mind** straight and her **eyes** open.

The Proverbs 31 woman develops her God given talents. Today those would include computer skills and possibly being bilingual, etc.

She has a good eye for opportunities – works long hours – plans for the future. She keeps the home fires burning. She is hospitable and folks are welcome anytime.

Proverbs 31:

18 She **perceives** that her merchandise is good: her candle / lamp goes not out by night.

She “**perceives**” is an interesting word - Hebrew “ta am” means that she can taste it. Someone pursuing a successful goal says, “I can almost **taste** victory.”

Psalms 34:

8 O **taste** and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusts in Him.

She does not “boss” people around, but is courteous and gentle – yet firm.

Proverbs 31:

19 She lays her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff.

She utilizes the **latest technology** available – like having the best sewing machine to dress others. We spoke to a church lady yesterday who actually made the suits her husband wore to church services.

She sets an example with her work for others to measure up to. She sets the standard for her household. She is generous and helpful to her staff. Notice – she is not self centered, like so many women today are. Too many people today are a “god” unto themselves. You would think that the **sun** rises and sets and the world **revolves** around them.

When women make it all about themselves – and **their** careers – they don’t realize it – but they are limiting their overall potential and development.

The Proverbs 31 woman was not born that way – she was developed – it took a lot of work – and diligence on her part. She has compassion for the poor. She is generous.

Proverbs 31:

20 She stretches out her hand to the poor; yea, she reaches forth her hands to the needy. [Notice the New Testament pure religion concept.]

Have you ever noticed that those who seem to have the greatest **responsibilities** – are the SAME ONES who make time to serve God’s people? Believe it or not – one of the reasons the Proverbs 31 woman is **doing so well** – is because of her generosity and kindness.

Notice the eternal principle here:

Proverbs 11:

24 There is [a person] that scatters, [Gives to the poor] and yet increases; and there is that withholds more [stingy] than is meet, but tends to poverty.

It is that spiritual component of generosity of 1+1=3 again! This Godly principle is why for 200 years America has been **so rich** – while third world countries remain **so impoverished**.

That Spiritual principle seems backward to the unconverted mind – but it is not backward – because of Godly love. You cannot **out-give** God.

The Proverbs 31 woman is not easily deterred from her duties. Some people fall into the habit of almost looking for a reason or excuse to get out of work. She is ready and prepared for whatever obstacles come her way.

Proverbs 31:

21 She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet. It means double thickness and prepared for adverse weather conditions.

Her family is well dressed for the cold – or any occasion. Some people will say she is materialistic – but God shows that it is good to have nice things also.

Look at how Jesus Christ adorns his bride in Ezekiel 16. God does not want His people poor and barefooted.

Ezekiel 16:

10 I clothed thee also with brodered work, and shod thee with badgers' skin, [mink coat today] and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk.

Silk is good, strong, smooth, beautiful material.

Ezekiel 16:

- 11** I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thy hands, and a chain on thy neck.

God wants His wife to look healthy and beautiful – not being unclean and having unkempt hair.

Ezekiel 16:

- 12** And I put a jewel on thy forehead, and earrings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thine head.
- 13** Thus were thou decked with gold and silver; and thy raiment was of fine linen, and silk, and brodered work; thou didst eat fine flour, and honey, and oil: and thou were exceeding beautiful, and thou didst prosper into a kingdom.
- 14** And thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty: for it was perfect through my comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord GOD.

Jesus Christ wishes His wife to be beautiful and elegant. He made women to be striking.

Proverbs 31:

- 22** She makes herself coverings of tapestry / bed coverings; her clothing is silk and purple.

The Proverbs 31 wife is a loving and giving wife. She is committed to her husband's success. She wants him to be a success. They are a team – serving and helping one another – submitting to each other in the fear of God – for the benefit of all.

Abigail is a good example of a Proverbs 31 woman – let's take a look at her. We are introduced to Abigail in 1 Samuel 25 as the wife of a stubborn and evil man, Nabal.

After Nabal's death, Abigail became one of David's wives. She is my personal favorite wife of David's wives.

We first meet her as a resigned and tolerant woman, in a very challenging situation that took great wisdom and love on her part because of her foolish husband.

She also dealt brilliantly with a powerful military leader—the future king David, who was angry with her foolish husband for his offensive treatment of David and his men.

Abigail was a Godly woman of good behavior, attitude and a beautiful woman in the way she conducted herself.

When the Bible says that Abigail was of “good understanding” it means that she had a good deal of Godly wisdom and fortitude.

In a rude and condescending fashion, Abigail's husband, Nabal, snubbed David's request and sent the messengers away empty-handed.

Nabal's curt refusal infuriated David, who immediately determined to destroy Nabal and his household.

Upon learning the foolish and potentially deadly blunder her husband had committed, Abigail prepared and hurriedly delivered a substantial store of foodstuffs and provisions to David as a peace offering.

As a Proverbs 31 wife, Abigail covered for Nabal's blunder by stepping in when Nabal stepped out. She saved the entire household when Nabal was negligent.

She demonstrated leadership, maturity, wisdom and discretion in defusing a potentially deadly situation. Her example made a deep impression on David.

When Abigail returned home from her successful mediation effort with David, she was confronted with another challenge to her skills. Because of his oppressive, angry temperament, Nabal would not have been an easy man to live with. **Abigail made it work!**

1 Samuel 25:

14 But one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife, saying, Behold, David sent messengers out of the wilderness to salute our master; and he railed on them.

Nabal was totally unreasonable and foolishly unappreciative of David's protection.

A young man in Nabal's household realized that Nabal had made a terrible mistake so he went to warn Abigail of the coming trouble. He knew to appeal to Abigail because obviously she was the level-headed one in Nabal's household.

What would Abigail do? Only a Proverbs 31 woman would be this resourceful.

* 1 Samuel 25:

18 Then Abigail made haste, [she had to work fast!] and took two hundred loaves, and two bottles of wine, and five sheep ready dressed [ready to cook], and five measures of parched corn, and an hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them on donkeys.

Abigail sent veritable truckloads of produce! Who today could put together a stash like that at a moment's notice? Obviously some very serious planning, saving, working and storing had been an ongoing process with Abigail.

David fully intended to wipe out Nabal – lock, stock and barrel – that included men women and children – even Abigail, too.

1 Samuel 25:

23 And when Abigail saw David, she hastened, and lighted off the donkey, and fell before David on her face, and bowed herself to the ground,

- * How would you describe Abigail's heart here? Yielding, Conciliatory, Submissive, appeasing David, Respectful.
- * Brethren, foolish people who do not understand the **principles of God** at work see Abigail as a rebellious, non-submissive wife – but let's examine the full meaning of God's intent.
- * We will see that Abigail not only saves her husband Nabal, she saves David – whom she knew God had great plans for with respect to all Israel and the Kingdom of God.

Abigail saves David from making a horrible error that would have destroyed his reputation and life.

- * Abigail takes the blame for letting things get out of hand – and reveals that she was aware of the working of God's Holy Spirit in David's life, and God's great plans for David. (see 1 Samuel 25:30.)

Abigail, in great faith in God, realized that even though King Saul wanted to kill David, his life would be preserved by God for God's greater purposes and Plan.

I hope that when you read and study the Holy Scriptures you are always seeking the higher – spiritual – meanings that apply. In the same way that Abigail took the blame for Nabal – Jesus Christ took the blame and paid for our sins.

And in the same way that Abigail knew that God would set David on the throne of Israel, we know that God the Father will establish Jesus on the throne of His Kingdom.

1 Samuel 25:

39 And when David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, Blessed be the LORD, that hath pleaded the cause of my reproach from the hand of Nabal, and hath kept his servant from evil: for the LORD hath returned the wickedness of Nabal upon his own head. And David sent and communed with Abigail, to take her to him to wife.

1 Samuel 25:

41 And she arose, and bowed herself on her face to the earth, and said, Behold, let thine handmaid be a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord.

Only a servant's servant! – Abigail is a type of Christ and the true Church – showing the correct attitude of Church brethren towards others.

The Proverbs 31 Woman has put all Godly principles to work in her life – achieving what God considers success.

Proverbs 31:

29 Many daughters have done virtuously / excellently, but thou excel them all. [You surpass them all].

When a husband desires to have an excellent wife – the first thing he should do is: **Start treating her like one.** Men, you want a Proverbs 31 woman – yeah – start treating the ladies like they are Proverbs 31 women. Don't hold them back.

Proverbs 31:

23 Her husband is known in the gates [City Hall Downtown], when he sits among the elders of the land.

Elders refers to the old sages / City Fathers.

“The gates,” means family court – city hall – courthouse – Judges of the city.

Her husband is able to devote himself to public affairs – as a respected member of the community.

He doesn't have to worry about things falling apart at home when he is gone to work – because of his wife's dependability.

“Husband is known” – that means he has **a good reputation** for having a good wife and an orderly household. Because of his wife's sterling example – his reputation is bolstered.

Proverbs 31:

24 She makes fine linen [garments - Somewhat like a shawl, cloak, or poncho – (even pajamas some experts say sleep wear.), and sells it; and delivers [trade barter, sell] girdles /sashes, belts unto the merchant.

25 Strength and honour [dignity] are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come. [She does not have to worry about the future.]

“Strength and honour” [dignity] also have the connotation of being financially secure and protected, and the esteem which comes with it.

It is possible to destroy your life’s potential physically or spiritually. Ladies, please do not make that mistake.

She is wise and kind. She exhibits good sense and discretion.

Proverbs 31:

- 26** She opens her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness. [...teaching of kindness.]

There is a right human dignity:

Proverbs 31:

- 27** She looks well to the ways of her household, and eats not the bread of idleness. [She does not foolishly waste time or resources – like those who max out their credit cards.]
- 28** Her children arise up [rise and stand up with respect], and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her. [Down at the courthouse he tells the other men the wonderful things she’s accomplished.]

“Good job honey” ...That was great...You are so special...

Everybody needs encouragement.

Proverbs 31:

- 30** Favor / Grace / Charm is deceitful, and beauty / good looks is passing/ is vain: but a woman that fears the LORD, she shall be praised. / is to be praised. [continuously.] Like Mrs. Loma Armstrong
- 31** Give her [your wife] of the fruit of her hands / let her have her profits; and let her own works praise her in the gates. / Her works speak for themselves. Give her credit where credit is due.

In marriage, a man’s role is to nurture his wife into being a Proverbs 31woman. Too many men put a lid – a gag order on their wives – stymieing their Godly development.

This message is followed by an interactive question and answer session of single men and women from 23 States and 2 Canadian Provinces.

End: Holy Women Pursuing Perfection