

## Love and the Perfect Woman

We already went over what the Bible says about the role of a wife. To review, God has called us to be our husband's helper, to bless him, to make a new family unit with him, to submit to his leadership, to influence him for the good, to respect and honor him at all times, to pray for him, to hold the marriage together and to take care of his physical needs.

Today we're going to dive into what the Bible says about Godly love and the bar God sets for the "perfect woman".

### God's Kind of Love

Since this is the most popular verse read at weddings I am sure you all are familiar with 1 Cor 13:4-8a. As Pastor Dave said last week, love IS. Love is not a feeling it is an action. God so love the world He GAVE... John 3:16. I believe it is Maureen that has a bumper sticker on her car that says "Love is a verb".

The New Testament was written in Greek. The Greek language has several words translated to English as "love". Here are a few;

Eros - Eros is physical love or sexual desire. Eros is the type of love that involves passion, lust, and/or romance.

Philia - Philia is affectionate love. Philia is the kind of love that strong friends feel toward each other. However, it doesn't stop there. The Greek philosopher Plato thought that philia was an even greater love than eros and that the strongest loving relationships were ones where philia led to eros.

Agape - Agape is often defined as unconditional, sacrificial love. Agape is the kind of love that is felt by a person willing to do anything for another, including sacrificing themselves, without expecting anything in return. Agape is the love that allows heroic people to sacrifice themselves to save strangers they have never met. Agape is God's kind of love. Agape is Jesus on the Cross.

The Greek word used in this passage of Scripture is Agape. Let's explore the specific way this kind of love operates;

Patient (suffers long)- Many of us struggle with patience, but this encourages us to be patient and to remember that love is patient, in and of itself. This can be a convicting message to some of us, but it's important to consider how it plays out in our own lives. The lesson in the Bible verse "Love is patient" is that if we did truly love our neighbor, we should be able to exercise patience toward all men, just like Jesus did.

Kind – Being kind is being nice, helpful to others with no expectation of a reward. It implies a sweetness and gentleness.

Does not Envy (jealous) or Boast – This kind of love doesn't get heated up with envy or jealousy and doesn't go around bragging to make themselves look better than others.

Is not Arrogant – God's kind of love doesn't get proud or puffed up.

**This is the way God loves you** and because God loves you, you can love like He does (1 John 4:19). God is love (1 John 4:8). Wives should love their husbands by being patient and kind, don't be envious (jealous), boastful, arrogant, proud, rude, self-seeking or easily provoked. Think no evil of your husband, don't rejoice in his sin but rejoice in the truth! Bear all things, believe all good things, hope all things, and endure all things for him and for the sake of your marriage.

## **The Perfect Woman**

Proverbs 31:10-31

When we look to God's word to find guidance about how to be the best wife and mother we can be, we simply cannot escape Proverbs 31. Who wouldn't want to be as talented, productive, strong, caring, and fearless as this woman?

But as normal human beings, many of us are more likely to cringe when this seemingly perfect woman is set before us as the example. Who can find her, indeed! Not everyone has good business sense or opportunities. Many do not have the gifts and creativity to make clothes for the family and household.

### **The key – SHE FEARS THE LORD**

Before we study the characteristics of this woman we need to look at verse 30 to see the MOST important thing about a Godly woman – her fear of the Lord. We should read the whole chapter in light of verse 30

The Proverbs 31 woman fears the Lord — in other words, she sees the wisdom in wanting to obey what God tells her to do and to honor the Lord with her whole life. And what is “the fear of the Lord” in Proverbs? The beginning of wisdom (Proverbs 1:7, 29; 2:5; 9:10; 15:33).

It is her heart for honoring the Lord with her life, and thus living with true wisdom, that God wants women to imitate and follow. When you go back and read through all of what she does in light of verse 30, you begin to feel the spirit of this woman.

### **She is TRUSTWORTHY vs 10-12**

A woman who fears the Lord wants to love and honor her husband. Clearly, the Proverbs 31 woman's husband affirms her efforts, because it says his heart trusts in her (Proverbs 31:11). He trusts her not just generally, but in the deepest places of himself. “She does him good, and not harm, all the days of her life.” She doesn't just do him good on occasion, but every day — implying even and especially when she may feel she has reason to be angry or upset with him. It is important to her that her husband trusts her. She wants him to be able to confide in her and know she will keep his counsel. She wants to guard his honor, and not speak unfavorably of him before others. Clearly, he can depend on her to keep commitments she makes to him. She consistently manages the home in a way that he feels secure entrusting it to her. Her husband can trust her to make good decisions and to seek him for direction when needed.

We do not need to have special gifts to be trustworthy; we simply need to value our husbands in a way that honors them and the Lord.

### **She is HARDWORKING vs 13-16, 19, 22, 24, 27**

The Proverbs 31 woman works hard. She buys materials, makes and sells clothing, grows, buys and prepares food and purchases property. She is the head of (in charge of) the home. We learned last time *the man is the head of the wife* and *the woman is the heart of the marriage*. Here we see the woman is in charge of the day-to-day tasks within the household. *She is the head of the household*. Jesus and the Church is like this. He has left us to “do business” until He returns (Luke 19:13). This woman has many gifts and does many things, but the point of this passage is not to admonish every

woman to do everything she does. The point is that we need to be willing to work hard at what God is calling us to do, and that it pleases God when we desire to do our labor as excellently as we can.

### **She is STRONG vs 17**

Verse 17 says, “She dresses herself with strength and makes her arms strong.” Physical strength — taking care of the temple of her body — is a priority. Her “workout” may never involve a gym, but she was up and moving, eating right, and tackling physically demanding tasks.

And physical strength isn’t the only kind of strength mentioned. She’s not afraid of the weather (Proverbs 31:21), or apparently much else. “Strength and dignity are her clothing” (Proverbs 31:25). She is strong in wisdom (Proverbs 31:26). She is not a worrier — in fact, she laughs at the future (Proverbs 31:25)! You do not get the impression she gives much thought to what others think about her at all.

### **She is KIND AND CARING vs 20, 26**

Verse 26 says, “The teaching of kindness is on her tongue.” We see evidence of the ways she lives this truth when she daily does her husband good (Proverbs 31:12), her children rise up and call her blessed (Proverbs 31:28), and she opens her hand to the poor and needy (Proverbs 31:20). Do those around us delight in our kind and caring spirit? We can all, with God’s help, work to have kind dealings with the people God places in our lives, and we can all make it a point to devote some of our time, talent, and gifts to helping those less fortunate.

### **To Conclude**

The woman written about in Proverbs 31 does not present an impossible standard; she presents a godly standard — what we would call “Christlike” today. These verses should inspire us to desire her fear of the Lord, her dedication to earning the trust of her husband, her work ethic, and her strength and kindness. Her heart, mind, and body are strengthened by her devotion to the Lord for the family and the work He has entrusted to her care. As we follow her example, and the kind of life that flows from her faith, we will be blessed — and be a blessing to others.