

4. READ Luke 23:44 to 24:10. The story of Jesus' death and resurrection has women in heroic roles. Fill in references.

_____ Women were last at the cross. Courage!
_____ Women saw where Jesus was buried. Kindness!
_____ Women were first at the empty tomb. Initiative!
_____ Women "preached" the resurrection to the apostles

5. What kinds of heroic roles and good deeds can girls, young ladies, and single women do in the "fear of the LORD?"

6. Proverbs 31:10-31 does not mention the marriage relationship between husband and wife. How does a trusting marriage allow a wife to flourish both inside and outside of the home?

A Poem in Honor of Praiseworthy Women

Proverbs 31:10-31

May 13, 2018

It is an acrostic **poem** using word pictures and metaphors.

All of my earthly goods are nothing compared to a godly wife
Beautiful inside and out, a godly wife is to be praised
Caring for others, she shares her time and energy freely

Each verse begins with a different letter of the Hebrew alphabet. This was to help husbands and sons **memorize** the poem.

Is this a **real** wife or an ideal composite of Lady Wisdom? (Lady Wisdom is not referred to as a wife or mother in Proverbs.)

Don't compare.

Her standard of living is impossible for most women. She uses her gifts and abilities for community, household, herself, and husband.

She is well off, yet works incredibly hard and is resourceful

(15) *She provides food for her family . . . and **servants***

(16) *She buys a field and plants a vineyard*

(20) *She extends her hands to the poor and **needy***

(22) *She is clothed in fine linen and purple*

(23) *Her husband is respected at the city **gates***

She is described in **heroic**, even military images

(11) *Her husband lacks nothing of value—spoils of war*

(17) *She girds herself with strength—battle ready dress*

(25) *She can **laugh** at the days to come—a battle cry?*

(27) *Watches over the affairs of her house—a scout or sentry*

(29) *You surpass them all—the victor's **triumph***

Compare.

She is a *noble/valiant* woman (10, 29) known by her **actions**

She is **praiseworthy** not because of her charming ways or her physical beauty. Her secret is that she "fears the LORD" (1:7).

Introduction (10 – 12)

(10) A valiant wife is a rare gem, not a **guilt - trip**

- wise daughters **aspire** to be like her
- wise sons look for those character qualities (18:22)
- **all** who lack wisdom should learn from her

ex. She rises early and works **hard** (15, 18-19).

The sluggard rises late and hardly works (6:9-11).

(11) *Her husband trusts in her with all his heart*

*Trust in the **LORD** with all your heart* (Proverbs 3:5)

All other **human** alliances are forbidden because they displace God from the heart (see Psalm 118:8-9).

The exception is the valiant wife, who fears the LORD, cares for her husband body and soul, and places God at the heart.

(12) *She brings him **good** , not evil, all the days of her life*

Conclusion (28 – 31)

(28) *Her children . . . her husband also **praises** her*

(29) She is the most valiant of the valiant women

(30) *A woman who fears the LORD is to be **praised***

(31) *In the city gate her [public] works bring her **praise***

ADDITIONAL NOTE on Proverbs 31:26

While her actions speak clearly, her words are also full of wisdom. The valiant wife and mother is a co-teacher (1:3 and 6:20) in the home with the father. In 31:26, she offers “teaching with kindness” or “loving instruction” that gives the moral and spiritual foundation of her public and private hard work on behalf of others. Wise actions and wise words are praiseworthy in building a godly home.

Life Group Homework

What insight, observation or principle did you find eye-opening, troubling, or helpful?

1) READ Ruth 3:11. Ruth is called a “valiant woman” though she did not have any of the privileged status of the Prov. 31 wife.

Ruth was married, had a husband and children T or F

Ruth was poor and worked picking up leftover grain T or F

Ruth was a foreigner and an alien living in Israel T or F

In what sense could a single, poor, alien immigrant be called “noble” or “valiant?” (hint: look at the end of Proverbs 31)

2) How can you encourage a “valiant woman” by praising her for living life courageously in the “fear of the LORD?” Be creative. Song? Photo? Poem? Gift? Time? Vacation? Walk? Etc?

3) How does the praise of the acrostic poem Proverbs 31:10-31 go beyond occasionally telling your wife/mother she is special? How much encouragement is too much? Ask her 😊

agree/disagree

Many women live under a burden of unrealistic expectations and unhealthy comparisons in our community and church.