

## ***Married to Jesus 2 4-29-01***

I'd like to continue where we left off last week on what it means to be the Bride of Christ. We saw some of the important aspects of that in the need to be in submission to Him and to bring Him glory. Proverbs ends with the description of the perfect wife, and because marriage is a picture of Christ and the church, we should see some instruction as to what we should be like.

Prov 31:10 (NIV)<sup>10</sup> A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies.

Why do we have a noble character? It's because we are new creations that are to take on the character of the most noble King of kings. We married into royalty so we are nobility. Those fairy tales of the Prince finding a wife amongst the peasants came true in our case. Ever wonder why we are so attracted to those stories of the romantic rescue? There is a real fulfillment to them in Jesus.

Valued more than rubies? Yes you were bought with the something of much greater value, the blood of Christ. If the father of the Bride had asked for a handful of rubies, the prospective groom would have to give up hope, for it would be beyond the ability of anyone but a great king. And yet what was asked for our price was greater - thank God our Father is a great King who can and was willing to pay - the blood of his own Son. That is a value far more than rubies. It should forever humble us that He loved us to that extent!

Prov 31:11 (NIV)<sup>11</sup> Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value.

It is amazing that Jesus gave man the great commission. He has confidence in us. We shouldn't let Him down. I'm always in awe of the trust Jesus places in man who so often fails. I know in my life He has trusted me with treasure in this earthen vessel, and I have failed time and time again, and yet He trusts me again. That is love. He remembers my frame - that I am dust and still He wants to include me in what He is doing - so He trusts me with another assignment.

We lack nothing of value for we have the pearl of great price. In Jesus we have all the treasures of heaven - everything that is of lasting value.

Prov 31:12 (NIV)<sup>12</sup> She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life.

This is the noble wife. We see those that are not so noble and sometimes we may even be those. Our actions can bring him harm by being a bad testimony. As wife so greatly loved, that should grieve us deeply. But Jesus sees us as the finished product that lives as a good testimony to the work of God in us. We exhibit the fruits of the Spirit - and people smell the sweet savor of Jesus.

Prov 31:13 (NIV)<sup>13</sup> She selects wool and flax and works with eager hands.

She is productive in many ways. The bride of Christ should not be idle. She has the greatest cause that one could have. And so she is busy seeing that her husband's home is productive. We know that is not for the sake of busyness, but as her husband has directed her. Thank God we have his Spirit to guide us into what is truly productive for the Kingdom, fruit that remains.

Prov 31:14,15 (NIV)<sup>14</sup> She is like the merchant ships, bringing her food from afar.<sup>15</sup> She gets up while it is still dark; she provides food for her family and portions for her servant girls.

Food from afar: Makes me think of the rich treasures in some obscure passages in the Old Testament. Like a ship, she has gone far to find valued treasures and brought them home to share with her family in the Lord. Have you sailed far lately and found some rare truth to feed the family of God? This noble bride is up before dawn to make sure she has something to enrich the souls of those who are close to her. I had a friend in Japan that would always ask when he saw me, "What is the Lord showing you?" Do you have something to feed the hungry souls? Are you a hungry soul? Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for they shall be filled. And when you are filled you will have enough for others.

Prov 31:16 (NIV)<sup>16</sup> She considers a field and buys it; out of her earnings she plants a vineyard.

She is investing in future fruit. After careful consideration – she invests in what will produce fruit in the future. You can do that in many ways. One way is an investment of time, another the investment of your physical goods, and another is of your talents. The concern here is for the future fruit – that people might come to see Jesus. As we are about to read, this is no lazy woman.

Prov 31:17-19 (NIV)<sup>17</sup> She sets about her work vigorously; her arms are strong for her tasks.<sup>18</sup> She sees that her trading is profitable, and her lamp does not go out at night.<sup>19</sup> In her hand she holds the distaff and grasps the spindle with her fingers.

There is a motivation that drives her. She wants to advance her husband's kingdom through hard work and wise choices. Her focus is not her comfort but his glory. The lamp of the word that guides her feet is always lit, helping her decide which way to turn, keeping her from stumbling, always ready for a call.

Prov 31:20 (NIV)<sup>20</sup> She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy.

This noble woman is not just concerned about her own needs, but ministers to her husband's needs by feeding the poor and helping the needy. He told her that when she did this to the least, she did it to Him, and so she reaches out to them.

Prov 31:21-22 (NIV)<sup>21</sup> When it snows, she has no fear for her household; for all of them are clothed in scarlet.<sup>22</sup> She makes coverings for her bed; she is clothed in fine linen and purple.

Storm on the horizon? No problem, she is prepared with the clothing that will insulate them from the storm. She has been faithful to help her family clothe themselves in Jesus, which insulated them from the full blast of circumstances and trials.

Prov 31:23 (NIV)<sup>23</sup> Her husband is respected at the city gate, where he takes his seat among the elders of the land.

He's the Chief Elder – the most respected. We have the picture in Revelation where around the throne are the 24 elders. How honored we should be that we belong to Him- the Chief Elder.

Prov 31:24-25 (NIV)<sup>24</sup> She makes linen garments and sells them, and supplies the merchants with sashes.<sup>25</sup> She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come.

We rely on our husband's strength, and we share the dignity that is his, for we belong to Him. Does the future hold some difficulty? Is there a storm on the horizon? We can laugh at it, for our husband is Sovereign even over the future. He has prepared us for what ever He will bring our way and as our Protector and Provider He will safely see us through whatever comes. In Him, Bride of Christ, you can laugh at days to come. Not if you clinging to things that wont last, but if you are clinging to Him alone. For He will never leave you or forsake you.

Prov 31:26 (NIV)<sup>26</sup> She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue.

I've notice that wives often repeat things their husbands have shared - his perspective. This is especially true with the Bride of Christ. We speak what we have heard from Him. We pass on the instruction we have learned from Him.

1 Peter 4:11 (NIV)<sup>11</sup> If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God.

1 Cor 2:13 (NIV)<sup>13</sup> This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words.

We should be most discernibly belonging to Christ by the words we speak. James said if we can't control our tongue our religion is worthless. Out of the heart the mouth speaks. I think that was the first thing that caused people to see Jesus was very different. "They wondered at the gracious words that proceeded from his lips." They were words of wisdom and faithful instruction, and ours should be like his.

Prov 31:27 (NIV)<sup>27</sup> She watches over the affairs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness.

If you are watching out for the family of God, there is always plenty to do. Food for the sick, ministry to the wounded and troubled, encouragement to those in trial, are just a few of the many needs in the family. This noble wife is busy tending to these needs – not idle. She sometimes burns the candle at both ends, because she cares. It is an expression of her love for her husband.

Prov 31:28-29 (NIV)<sup>28</sup> Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her:<sup>29</sup> "Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all."

This noble bride is called 'blessed' by those in the family that she cares for – the young ones in the Lord. It is a blessing to be trusted with our husband's household needs. And our husband says we are also. In fact, He praises us. We live for Him – give our life to him – praise Him for all He is to us... but you know what? He praises us with these words. If you have been busy with the Kingdom business because of your great love for Him hear Him say it to you: "Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all."

To be at work in submission to Him is a noble thing. And even though it is expected and the right thing to do – He still speaks those words of praise, because He loves us, and He knows it thrills our hearts. Makes your heart race a bit to hear Him say it, doesn't it?

Prov 31:30 (NIV)<sup>30</sup> Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.

There are some real charmers out there. If you didn't have discernment you'd think they were overflowing with the fruit of the Spirit. There is an outward beauty in the world – if you've got a lot of money you can make it last a few more years into eternity. But God sees through all that. The real catch of all eternity has married you! You feared the justice of God and came to Him for mercy and He praises you as you submit to His loving and wise leading.

Prov 31:31 (NIV)<sup>31</sup> Give her the reward she has earned, and let her works bring her praise at the city gate.

I always have to be careful when we come across this truth. We can't earn salvation – it is the gift of God. But there are heavenly rewards. Again and again the word of God says every man will receive his own reward ACCORDING to his own labor. That is not salvation. It is in addition to salvation. Some think it could be the crowns the Bible mentions. Everyone's labor is different so the rewards must vary quite a bit. One thing is certain. Your husband takes note of all you do at his direction. He is planning on rewarding you because He is just. He gave you salvation. That was free to you. Now as you labor for Him, He keeps track and will reward you as richly as He justly can. You know why? Because He is in love with you.

I know we can wallow in our failures and past blunders. That doesn't get us anywhere. It is this goodness of God that leads us to repentance. It causes us to want to be as devoted as we can be to Him and do what ever would delight his heart. If you want to focus on something – focus on his love, his encouragement, his praise for what you did through Him. You'll be drawn even closer. Focus on how willing He is to forget your sin because of what He did for you on that cross. Please take time with Him to read over this passage again on your own and see what He has in mind for you.