

# THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

## PROVERBS 29-31

Rarely do Senate Chaplains get involved in controversy. They usually keep a low profile - but not Chaplain Byron Sunderland. He served the Senate during the Civil War. Once, he invited former slave, Frederick Douglas, to preach at his church, Washington's First Presbyterian.

In April, 1864, Sunderland opened a Senate session by praying, "Dear Lord, in Your will and infinite wisdom give to the rulers and legislators assembled in this Congress... *more brains – more brains, Lord.*"

Apparently, the need on Capitol Hill hasn't changed much.

The great need in America – then and now - is wisdom. Not data, or education, or philosophies, or facts – but godly and biblical wisdom.

Former US President, Herbert Hoover, once said, "Wisdom consists not so much in knowing what to do in the ultimate as in knowing what to do next." Wisdom is not merely abstract or philosophical – it's practical.

As we've learned in Proverbs, God's wisdom deals with the nuts and bolts of life. It emphasizes what to do next. Tonight we'll finish the book...

Chapter 29 "He who is often rebuked, and hardens his neck, will suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." Here's the most frightful feature of hell – your status there is permanent.

Once you're in hell there's no more "remedy."

No matter how bad life gets on earth there's still always the possibility of change. But once you pass through the door of eternity you forfeit all hope for an about face. Your fate is sealed. In Dante's "Inferno" he writes on the gates of hell, "Those who enter abandon all hope."

Verse 2 "When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when a wicked man rules, the people groan." Here's every Christian's incentive to get to the voting booth and put righteous people in office.

"Whoever loves wisdom makes his father rejoice, but a companion of harlots wastes his wealth." He throws away his morality and money.

"The king establishes the land by justice, but he who receives bribes overthrows it." Before I eat my grits I first like to butter them up.

By the way, I hope you don't put sugar on your grits... it's the sure sign you're a Yankee. True Southerners put butter on their grits – not sugar.

But Solomon says, like a bowl of grits, before a man springs a trap on a neighbor he first butters him up. Verse 5 "A man who flatters his neighbor spreads a net for his feet." He lulls him to sleep by buttering him up.

Verse 6, "By transgression an evil man is snared, but the righteous sings and rejoices. The righteous considers the cause of the poor, but the wicked does not understand such knowledge." He cares only for himself.

"Scoffers set a city aflame, but wise men turn away wrath. If

a wise man contends with a foolish man, whether the fool rages or laughs, there is no peace. The bloodthirsty hate the blameless, but the upright seek his well-being. A fool vents all his feelings, but a wise man holds them back.”

There was a psychological fad in the 60s and 70s that advocated total disclosure. “Let it all hang out...” There were encounter sessions where you told everyone in the group exactly what you thought of them.

According to Proverbs 29 this is foolish. “A fool vents all his feelings...”

Certainly, it’s good to have a friend in whom we can confide - to be able to share our feelings with someone who can help us work through them - but to just spew out hateful and hurtful thoughts in a reckless and self-absorbed way is horrible. We have no right to say whatever we think.

I’ll never forget the fellow who came up to me on a Sunday night and wanted to apologize for the terrible thoughts he had been thinking about me. I’m glad he stopped short of elaborating... I could’ve gone a long time without knowing someone was thinking horrible thoughts about me.

Please, if you think terrible thoughts about Pastor Sandy don’t tell him. If you think good thoughts, *he’ll be glad to hear it*. But if a bad thought hasn’t left your mouth – it’s between you and God – not you and me.

Here’s the point. An unbridled regurgitation of feeling can do irreparable harm. Not all our feelings should be verbalized. Restraint is still a virtue.

Verse 12 “If a ruler pays attention to lies, all his servants become wicked.” A leader can’t get caught up in innuendo and speculation – or he’ll think everybody is out to get him. You’ll become paranoid.

“The poor man and the oppressor have this in common: the LORD gives light to the eyes of both.” It’s not the absence of light, but whether their eyes are opened or closed that distinguish them from each other.

“The king who judges the poor with truth, his throne will be established forever. The rod and rebuke give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother.” We use to think it was vital for Kathy to be home with the kids when they were toddlers, but we soon realized it was just as crucial, if not more so, for mom to be home with our teenagers.

It doesn’t take long for a kid to mess up – academically, socially, morally... Parents need to limit their kid’s unsupervised time.

I read a survey that said, most teenage sex occurs not after midnight in a parked car, but at home, after school, while parents are still at work.

Verse 16 “When the wicked are multiplied, transgression increases; but the righteous will see their fall. Correct your son, and he will give you rest; yes, he will give delight to your soul.” Sons need correction. I’ve been there and done that. It’s an exhausting job to discipline your child consistently and correctly – but notice the end result, “rest.”

The end result of not doing a good job is a lifetime of anxiety.

Verse 18 “Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; but happy is he who keeps the law.” In 1 Samuel 3:1 the author sums up the spiritual climate at the time, “The word of the LORD was rare in those days; there was no widespread revelation.” *Sounds like today!*

We live in a time where the proclamation of God’s word is a rarity.

And without a prophetic voice our world has become more and more permissive. People have “cast off restraint.” People today are like spoiled brats. They hide behind claims to personal freedom and individual liberties, but the truth of the matter is they just don’t want to be told, “No, you can’t.”

Man’s pride won’t concede a moral authority greater than himself.

Verse 19 “A servant will not be corrected by mere words; for though he understands, he will not respond.” This is why it takes the convicting and convincing work of God’s Spirit to cause a man to confess his sin and bring him to a place of repentance. It takes more than “mere words.”

Verse 20 “Do you see a man hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him.” It’s been said, “A wise man thinks about all he speaks; a fool speaks about all he thinks.” Think before you speak.

“He who pampers his servant from childhood will have him as a son in the end.” Kindness breeds loyalty. A servant or employee whose boss treated him like a son is liable to later

treat that boss like a father.

Verse 22 “An angry man stirs up strife, and a furious man abounds in transgression. A man's pride will bring him low, but the humble in spirit will retain honor. Whoever is a partner with a thief hates his own life; he swears to tell the truth, but reveals nothing.”

The man's silence makes him an accomplice to the crime.

“The fear of man brings a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD shall be safe.” Fear is our worst enemy! It's a trap! It stifles us and cripples us.

It's not God's will for you to fear your boss, or neighbor, or relative, or even your mother-in-law. The Bible teaches perfect love casts out fear.

Fear grows because I fixate on what a person can do to me instead of what I can do for them. Love will drive out fear. Love liberates the soul.

Chapter 29 closes, “Many seek the ruler's favor, but justice for man comes from the LORD.” Human justice is flawed. God is the author of perfect justice. “An unjust man is an abomination to the righteous, and he who is upright in the way is an abomination to the wicked.”

Proverbs 30, “The words of Agur the son of Jakeh, his utterance. This man declared to Ithiel - to Ithiel and Ucal...” The names in this verse are unknown. They could be proper names referring to men not mentioned elsewhere, but Hebrew names are also words with their own definition.

For example, “Agur” means “collector.” “Jakeh” means “obedient.” “Ithiel” means “with me is God.” And “Ucal” means “enabled.”

So if you interpreted verse 1 translating the names as words, it would read, “The words of the collector (or Solomon) the son of the obedient (or David), his utterance. This man declared to those who God is with - Yes, who God is with and who have been enabled by him.” It’s a possibility.

Verse 2 tells us what this man, Agur, declared, “Surely I am more stupid than any man, and do not have the understanding of a man. I neither learned wisdom nor have knowledge of the Holy One.”

As we’ll see Agur was not a foolish man. In fact, he was quite wise. But the mark of true wisdom is the realization of how little we actually know.

“The more you learn the more realize there is to learn” – and this is especially true when it comes to the knowledge of the Almighty...

I’ve heard it put, “The knowledge of God is so deep the theologian can never touch bottom, and so shallow even a child will never drown.” Here’s the point, the knowledge of the Godhead is beyond our grasp, but the truth He reveals is simple enough that even a child can understand.

Verse 4 reels off a few questions... “Who has ascended into heaven, or descended? Who has gathered the wind in His fists? Who has bound the waters in a garment? Who has established all the ends of the earth?

What is His name, and what is His Son's name, if you



know?”

The questions in verse 4 are much like the questions God fires at Job toward the end of Job’s story. They were intended to expose his ignorance and arrogance. They were designed to whittle a haughty Job down to size.

In Job 38:4 God challenges Job, “Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements? Surely you know!”

For 35 chapters Job had questioned God’s fairness - now God is pointing out Job doesn’t know as much as he thinks he does.

Albert Einstein enjoyed sailing. One day he was out on his sailboat with a friend. The two men were discussing the profundities of universe when suddenly the great physicist lifted his eyes to the skies and stated...

“We know nothing at all. Our knowledge is but the knowledge of schoolchildren.” And it’s true. God doesn’t communicate to us all there is to know – but He does tell us all we need to know.

Verse 5 “Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him.” The word “pure” means “tested, reliable.” The purer the medal the stronger its resistance. God’s Word is strong and sure.

And notice, “Every word of God is pure...” There are academics who say it’s not the words themselves that are important. God has inspired the thoughts and ideas of Scripture. The exact words don’t matter.



That's not true. Solomon knows better, "every word" is *God's word*.

It reminds me what God told Jeremiah (26:2), "Stand in the court of the LORD's house and speak to all the cities of Judah, which come to worship in the LORD's house, all the words that I command you to speak to them. Do not diminish a word." Apparently, every single word was significant.

Remember Jesus' statement, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will by no means pass away." The words are important to God.

Vs 6 "Do not add to His words, lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar." Remember the warning in Revelation 22:18-19 about human edits of the Bible - adding to or taking away from Scripture. It appears in the last chapter of the Bible. It's as if God tacks it onto the whole of Scripture.

"If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the book of life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."

Verse 7 contains a wise and sincere prayer. "Two things I request of You (deprive me not before I die): remove falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches - feed me with the food allotted to me; lest I be full and deny You, and say, "Who is the LORD?" Or lest I be poor and steal, and profane the name of my God."

There's a danger in having *too little* or *too much*. Too little

could tempt me to *rip you off* to feed my family. Too much might cause me to *rip God off* and deny Him praise. Only the Lord knows what I can handle.

Verse 10 “Do not malign a servant to his master, lest he curse you, and you be found guilty. There is a generation that curses its father, and does not bless its mother. There is a generation that is pure in its own eyes, yet is not washed from its filthiness. There is a generation - oh, how lofty are their eyes! And their eyelids are lifted up. There is a generation whose teeth are like swords, and whose fangs are like knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men.”

It sounds like Agur is pretty pessimistic about the future. He's not too crazy about the younger generation. He sees his kids and grandkids as disrespectful, self-righteous, judgmental, angry, greedy...

It sounds like the attitude my generation had toward our fathers.

The youth of the 60s were so idealistic. We were self-righteous and judgmental toward the post-war culture of our parents.

But look at what happened in the 80s when baby boomers got into positions of power and wealth. The 80s became the decade of greed.

It's easy for a child to criticize a father until he becomes a father.

For the rest of the chapter Agur is going to prove that he

was an astute observer of life. He's going to look around at nature and provide a series of illustrations. There's wisdom all around us, waiting to be gleaned...

He says in verse 15, **"The leech has two daughters - give and give!"**

And these little leeches are like some people. They're nothing but bloodsuckers. All they can think of is their own selfish interests.

There's is the *gimme' generation*. They're never satisfied.

**"There are three things that are never satisfied, four never say, "Enough!": the grave..."** Funeral Homes are recession proof. Inflation and unemployment figures don't affect the death rate. The grave never says "enough." Or **the barren womb...** A woman continually longs for a child.

**"The earth that is not satisfied with water..."** I can soak my lawn one day, and the next day it needs to be watered all over again.

**"And the fire never says, "Enough!"** It burns as long it's fed.

Proverbs 30:17 is one of my favorite verses in the Bible.

Every teenager should be forced to memorize this verse.

**"The eye that mocks his father, and scorns obedience to his mother, the ravens of the valley will pick it out, and the young eagles will eat it."** Hear ye, hear ye...

This means the teenager who bucks and kicks against his parents had better stay inside... If you're a rebellious teen, and you're walking down a street, and a flock of birds land on you – knock you down - and start picking out your eyeballs – *don't say Pastor Sandy didn't warn you!*

Every time a bird with a sharp beak flies over a rebellious teenager without swooping down on top of them... God is showing mercy!

Verse 18 “There are three things which are too wonderful for me, yes, four which I do not understand: the way of an eagle in the air, the way of a serpent on a rock, the way of a ship in the midst of the sea, and the way of a man with a virgin.” An eagle soaring, a snake slithering, a ship sailing, and a couple sparking are scenes of mystery and marvel and majesty.

Think of the last in the list, “the way of a man with a virgin.” *Recall your first love - that first kiss?* How you dreamed of this person, and when you were around them you're heart felt like it was beating out of your chest.

A mother begs her son to take a bath for three years – now all of a sudden the boy is showering and fluffing his hair three times a day.

What is it about the sexes that cause us to react in this way? That stirs our emotions and hormones? It's amazing that God has designed life to be so pleasurable and beautiful - yet so astounding and baffling.

A huge eagle you'd have a hard time picking up becomes weightless on the wings of the wind. A snake with no legs moves quicker than its prey. A ship with a heavy cargo refuses to sink, but glides across the surface.

All prove that life is a beautiful mystery.

In contrast to a man with a virgin, verse 20 gives a different picture.

“This is the way of an adulterous woman: she eats and wipes her mouth, and says, “I have done no wickedness.” She denies her sin.

How can people who were once so innocent become so callous? As Agur observes life he’s amazed at both its beauty and its ugliness.

“For three things the earth is perturbed, yes, for four it cannot bear up:” Here Agur reflects on life’s irritations – and life is full of frustrations...

First is “a servant when he reigns... This is authority without character.

A man who’s been a servant is use to taking orders not giving them. If he doesn’t learn to handle authority he’ll misuse and abuse his power.

Here’s another of life’s frustrations. “A fool when he is filled with food...”

This is wealth without work. A fool can eat, but a job is not high on his list of priorities. He’s good at eating off another man’s table. You will never *maintain prosperity* without knowing what it took to *obtain prosperity*.

Next is a real irritation, “A hateful woman when she is married...”

This is relationship without responsibility. Here’s a gal who goes out of her way to get a husband – she’s nice and thoughtful and caring – it’s all about her man – until after the wedding. Now all the responsibility rests on him. Here’s a woman who wants a happy home, but she’s a hateful wife.

The final embarrassment or frustration he mentions is “a maidservant who succeeds her mistress.” This is promotion without preparation.

Here’s a woman who goes from washing dishes to hosting parties. She’s thrust into a position that requires charm and culture, but she’s never been trained. The maidservant is ill-equipped. She’s eager and enthusiastic, but she’s oblivious to the issues or the rules of the game.

Verse 24 “There are four things which are little on the earth, but they are exceedingly wise:” Here the author points to the animal kingdom.

If this “Agur” or “collector” was actually Solomon it would be consistent with his resume. 1Kings 4:32-34 tells us, “(Solomon) spoke three thousand proverbs, and his songs were one thousand and five. Also he spoke of trees... he spoke also of animals, of birds, of creeping things, and of fish. And men of all nations... came to hear the wisdom of Solomon.”

Evidently, the king was an expert in zoology.

Here he points to little creatures who are extremely wise...

“The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their food in the summer...” Ants are wise enough to store up food for a rainy day. They mooch off our summer picnics so they’ll have plenty on Christmas Day.

“The rock badgers are a feeble folk, yet they make their homes in the crags...” Rock badgers are also know as

"coonies" or "hyrax."

Today, these little guys are all over Israel. The rock badgers are fat and furry - cute and cuddly. They're a slightly larger than chipmunks.

But the rock badgers are extremely vulnerable to predators. They survive by hiding in rocky, hard to reach places.

David may've been watching a rock badger when he wrote Psalm 61:2, "When my heart is overwhelmed; lead me to the rock that is higher than I. For you have been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy." We too are more vulnerable than we think. Let's take shelter in Jesus.

Here's another little lesson. "The locusts have no king, yet they all advance in ranks..." Locust don't need a king to enforce submission, because they know the value of organization. The locust intuitively understands rank and knows his place. They all work together.

Finally, "The spider skillfully grasps with its hands, and it is in kings' palaces." A spider squirts adhesive that allows him to attach himself to walls and ceilings. He knows how to hang on and persevere.

He joins the list of little creatures that teach big lessons.

Verse 29 "There are three things which are majestic in pace, yes, four which are stately in walk: a lion, which is mighty among beasts and does not turn away from any; a greyhound, a male goat also, and a king whose troops are with him." Ephesians 4 instructs Christians to walk in a manner worthy of our calling. Our position as a child of God is



a gift of grace, but once we become members of the family we need to learn to act like it.

Here're we're giving insight into how to adopt a godly walk...

First, **stride like a lion**... be bold, courageous, fearless...

Second, **run like a greyhound**... be quick to obey and do good...

Third, **stand like a goat**... be steady and reliable, avoid slip ups...

Fourth, **march like a king with his troops**... be confident and full of faith.

Put it all together and you've got a new dance. The believer's shuffle - *a lion's stride, a hound dog's run, a goat's crouch, and a king's march.*

Verse 32 warns us, **"If you have been foolish in exalting yourself, or if you have devised evil, put your hand on your mouth."** If you've been boasting or bucking God's will - you need to shut-up and repent.

**"For as the churning of milk produces butter, and wringing the nose produces blood, so the forcing of wrath produces strife."** Apparently, you can learn a spiritual lesson even from a bloody nose.

Chapter 31 **"The words of King Lemuel, the utterance which his mother taught him..."** The OT records the kings of Israel and Judah, and **Lemuel** doesn't appear on any of the lists. Jewish sources identify **Lemuel** with Solomon. Apparently, it was his mother's pet name for her son.

If King Lemuel was Solomon this makes for a fascinating scenario...

Remember, Solomon's mother was the infamous Bathsheba – the bathing beauty that became David's partner in adultery and murder.

Bathsheba then would be the author of the passage on the virtuous woman. Perhaps in the years after she'd thrown away her virtue, she learned to appreciate and admired its importance in a woman's life.

The possible ironies behind this text are amazing...

She speaks in verse 2, "What, my son? And what, son of my womb? And what, son of my vows? "*Lemuel*" means "devoted to the Lord."

Here's Bathsheba's advice to her son, verse 3, "Do not give your strength to women, nor your ways to that which destroys kings."

Wow, who better than Bathsheba to speak on *this* subject...

Her husband, David put his lust for a woman ahead of his love for God and it nearly brought down his kingdom. She was party to the disaster.

Understand adultery is never worth the price. You're swapping a few moment of pleasure for years of pain. *Don't give your strength to a woman* – remain strong in the Lord. Pursue and seek after God.

Sadly, Solomon wasn't listening to this advice. His downfall was the same as his dad. He multiplied wives, many of them pagan women. It was out of Solomon's harem that idolatry gained a foothold in Judah.

She continues, “It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine, nor for princes intoxicating drink; lest they drink and forget the law, and pervert the justice of all the afflicted.” Alcohol is not for people in positions of authority and leadership. A king can be called on in a moment’s notice to make a decision of national importance. The country can’t run the risk of him being tipsy or his mind fuzzy.

That said, with all the cocktail parties in Washington DC, and beer guzzling at the White House, no wonder we’re in such a wreck.

This is also why the NT makes alcohol off-limits to pastors. How would you like to call your pastor for counsel and find him drunk or hungover?

We’re told, “Give strong drink to him who is perishing, and wine to those who are bitter of heart. Let him drink and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more.” Here’s the only good use for alcohol – it’s a great anesthetic. It’s good at *dulling pain*, and *causing pain*.

Verse 8 “Open your mouth for the speechless, in the cause of all who are appointed to die.” If ever there was a verse commanding us to speak out against abortion, this is it! Every year millions of unborn babies are appointed to die, and none of them are able to speak for themselves.

It’s time we “*opened our mouth for the speechless.*” But that’s not all...

“Open your mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy.” Abortion is not the only social issue

that should concern us. Christians should also need to speak out against poverty and injustice.

This is why it's naïve to equate God's agenda with a Republican Party. I'm glad the Republican platform is pro-life. But on issues like justice and poverty it could be the Democrats may have the more godly perspective.

Personally, I'm neither Republican nor Democrat. I'm a Christian.

I suppose politically I'm an Independent. Rather than vote along party lines, I want to always remain free to cast a biblically-informed vote.

Well, verse 10, here she is... We've been waiting on her... Looking for her... Here she is, not Miss America, but better... the virtuous woman.

Verse 10 begins, **"Who can find a virtuous wife?"** Throughout the Proverbs we've been warned about **"the perverse woman"** and **"the contentious woman"** – it's good to know there's an alternative.

There are women who love God and know how to love a husband and raise a family. They're not controlled by worldly fads and fashions – or addicted to comfort and conveniences. They control their tongue and reserve their passions. They're gracious and kind even at home.

For single men I wish I could say the market was glutted with virtuous women, but that's not true – not in Solomon's day, or our day. Even the writer of Proverbs admits **"For her worth is far above rubies."**

A virtuous woman is a rarity. This makes her extremely valuable.

I was always told if I ever found the woman described in Proverbs 31 I should marry her immediately. When I found her, I did exactly that... But here's the good news, I don't think she was the last - so pray and look!

And the next few verses describe what you should be on the lookout for... It's interesting in the original Hebrew these last 22 verses form an acrostic. There are 22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet, and each verse begins with a succeeding letter. This aided in the memorization.

Verse 11 **“The heart of her husband safely trusts her; so he will have no lack of gain.”** He's not worried when she goes to the store with the Visa. He trusts his wife. He and his wife are on the same page. She voices an opinion, but she submits to his leadership. There's no competition.

**“She does him good and not evil all the days of her life.”** Notice her commitment to her husband is for life! She's a lifelong blessing!

**“She seeks wool and flax, and willingly works with her hands.”** She's got a sewing machine, and catches the specials at Cloth World. She makes clothes for the kids. *She doesn't even know the latest designer labels.*

Verse 14 **“She is like the merchant ships, she brings her food from afar.”** Watch her when she pulls into the driveway with the groceries. Her boat is full of provisions from that distant land called Kroger.

**“She also rises while it is yet night, and provides food for her**

household, and a portion for her maidservants.” She’s up before daybreak packing lunches for her kids to take to school.

“She considers a field and buys it; from her profits she plants a vineyard.” She’s even got a few tomatoes plants she keeps up.

Verse 17 “She girds herself with strength, and strengthens her arms.” A couple of times a week she’s at the gym doing aerobics - firming up!

“She perceives that her merchandise is good, and her lamp does not go out by night.” She’s up late at night clipping coupons out of the newspaper, or surfing the net looking for the latest deals – trying to stretch the funds.

“She stretches out her hands to the distaff, and her hand holds the spindle.” She’s not too proud to even wear her own homemade outfit.

Verse 20 “She extends her hand to the poor, yes, she reaches out her hands to the needy.” Check her out... She's up to her eyeballs in taking care of her own family, but she’s not too busy to come up to the church and help Marvin with the Disciple’s Dinner. She’s full of compassion.

“She is not afraid of snow for her household, for all her household is clothed with scarlet.” She keeps good tires on her car in case it snows. And while she watches television she’s knits a scarf for one of the kids.

“She makes tapestry for herself; her clothing is fine linen and purple.

Her husband is known in the gates, when he sits among the elders of the land.” This woman makes her husband the envy of every man. They gawk and talk and wish they had a wife as good and godly as his bride.

“She makes linen garments and sells them, and supplies sashes for the merchants.” On top of everything else she does, the virtuous woman has a part-time job she works that brings in some money to help her hubby pay the bills. She’s industrious. She’s opened up a side business - a cottage industry. She even deals with the merchants in town to sell her wares.

And here we find some balance. We often point to passages where a wife’s focus is homeward. A man is work-oriented. But if that doesn’t mean a husband can’t help with housework – it doesn’t mean a wife can’t make a little money. Here the virtuous wife finds a way to help with the finances.

Verse 25 “Strength and honor are her clothing; she shall rejoice in time to come.” She’s not a complainer. She has an optimistic view of the future.

“She opens her mouth with wisdom, and on her tongue is the law of kindness.” Her kids and husband go to her for advice and counsel.

“She watches over the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness.” She has no idea Oprah and soap operas are on TV.

Verse 28 “Her children rise up and call her blessed...” Her kids brag on this woman. When her daughters grow up they want to be like their mom. When her sons grow up they want



to marry women like their mom.

And to top it off, she's all her husband talks about... "Her husband also, and he praises her: "Many daughters have done well, but you excel them all." The guys at work get tired of hearing about his wonderful wife.

Verse 30 "Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing, but a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised." Her complexion will weather, her skin will sag, her hands will wrinkle - but she'll never lose her beauty. She's attractive on the inside. She will be gorgeous for all eternity.

Always remember a pretty shell doesn't necessarily make for a tasty nut. Nobody treasures a gift because of the pretty wrapping paper.

And the last verse, "Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her in the gates." Here's a final word to husbands...

Men, if you are married to a virtuous woman - or at least a woman who aspires to be - never take her granted. *She is more valuable than rubies.*

Pamper her... praise her... respect her in front of the kids... brag on her to your buddies... most of all, love her with all your heart.

This gentlemen, is great wisdom!