

# GOD PORTRAYS WOMEN

by

Grace McAllister

Copyright © 1954

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### A VIRTUOUS WOMAN BATHSHEBA'S SONG OF INSTRUCTION

Proverbs 31

SOLOMON'S ADVICE to his son in the first chapter of his Proverbs was to hear the instruction of his father and not to forsake the law of his mother. As king he recalled the conferences that his mother held with him discussing the important things of life. Her encouragement toward that which was good and her warning concerning the evil he would meet within and without he remembered very distinctly.

Evidently one occasion that impressed him was when she began her remarks with an almost ejaculatory prayer for wisdom in what she was about to say, it was so important. **“What, my son? and what, the son of my womb? and what, the son of my vows?”** (v. 2).

Was she thinking of the time when Solomon was born and they called in Nathan for the dedication service? Was it then that, chastened by their late bereavement, like Hannah, she made vows concerning the upbringing of Solomon to fear the Lord? If God had destined him to be king of His people she wanted him to be a worthy king, and she devoted herself to training him for God.

The life of a king is not just a social whirl of entertainment and parties. He needs his strength and vitality for the proper execution of justice and administration of his kingdom. His time and strength must not be dissipated with wine and women. She was more anxious for him to have the blessing and gratitude of the underprivileged, the needy and the afflicted than the applause of the gay, popular crowd. Compassion and discernment need a clear head and an unbiased mind. He was to be the judge, therefore his dignity must be preserved. She pleaded with him to be the advocate for those who have no helper, and never to pass hasty judgment, even for the worst of men who may even be condemned to death. He must be humane and compassionate.

She knew too that the woman he chose for his life partner could either make or break him. She was particularly concerned that they might be alike spiritually, both walking in the fear of the Lord. The sense of the presence of the Lord gives character to every phase of the Christian's life.

**“Who can find a virtuous woman?”** (v. 10)

Where shall we find a woman of moral strength and resources, full of mental energy? A suitable wife for Solomon could not be purchased, for her worth was much greater than the most precious jewels.

In the delineation of her qualifications there was an absence of any mention of beauty of features, form, height, complexion, hair or external graces. There was not one word about her looks, her youthfulness or her family connections. Bathsheba was interested in the genuine values of her future daughter-in-law.

**“The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he hath no need of spoil”** (v. 11).

She was to be perfectly trustworthy, affectionate, loyal and true. Her husband should be able to confide in her his business affairs and respect her judgment because he would feel assured she would look after his temporal and spiritual interests in every way.

Many wives are at great disadvantage, not knowing their husband’s affairs. The husband argued that he wanted to spare his wife business worries. But if she were intelligent as to their circumstances she would accommodate their mode of living to their income and save much embarrassment and misunderstanding at home and abroad.

**“She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.”**

Every day will produce something constructive that reflects a benefit to her husband. It never occurs to her to wonder how she will “put in” the day. Indolence never brings happiness or contentment.

**“She seeketh wool and flax and worketh willingly with her hands”** (v. 13).

Her hands are not idle, but are capable of a variety of accomplishments. There is a heartiness and cheer in her busyness as well as a thriftiness. She does not buy everything readymade but puts a bit of thought and love and individuality into what she makes.

**“She is like the merchants’ ships; she bringeth her food from afar. She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens”** (v. 14).

She is a capable housekeeper and does not leave the management and shopping to servants; she does not stay in bed in the morning while the members of her family look after themselves. She rises and sees that they are properly fed, yes, spiritually as well as physically. I think she sees that they have family prayers to fortify them for the urgent needs of the day.

**“She giveth a task to her maidens”** (v. 15).

She will keep a systematic household, where each one contributes to its efficiency.

**“She considereth a field, and buyeth it; with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard”** (v. 16).

She has business shrewdness and her husband considers her capable of good investments. These are not neglected, but she has studied out the correct use of the field whether for grain or for a vineyard.

**“She girdeth her loins with strength and strengthened her arms. She perceiveth that her merchandise is good; her candle goeth not out by night. She layeth her hands to the spindle and her hands hold the distaff”** (v. 17-19).

She has personal health and vigor. We are told to gird up the loins of our minds, meaning that we are to control our thoughts. Our loins are to be girt about with truth, that is, truth is to control our ways.

She sees what she has to offer is of the best quality; nothing inferior is ever allowed out of her hands. She not only orders things done but demonstrates how to do it. There is always a light burning in the darkness. Does this speak of her testimony to the world as persistent and bright?

The fire Thy love has kindled  
Can never be put out;  
The Spirit keeps it burning,  
(Though dimmed by things without),  
O make it burn more brightly,  
By faith more freely shine,  
That we may value rightly  
The grace that made us Thine.

**“She stretcheth out her hand to the poor, yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy”** (v. 20).

Her kindnesses are not limited to special days or occasions. She takes a personal hearty interest in those with fewer advantages. I like that word, **“stretcheth out her hand”** to the poor. They are always welcome and they find a listening ear and helpful counsel and encouragement. She will give them a helping hand to work their way through school. Yea, she will reach forth her hands (plural) to the needy. She is compassionate and runs to give aid with both hands, delighting in mercy. The more she has through her industry, the more benefits are distributed. Such a one would not encourage beggary but would incite others to industry and helpfulness. She is the Old Testament Dorcas, a friend of the widows and fatherless.

**“She is not afraid of snow for her household, for all her household are clothed with scarlet. She maketh herself coverings of tapestry”** (vv. 21-22).

She believes in preparedness for any emergency. In time of adversity she is not suddenly frightened but has the poise and confidence that experience and foresighted readiness give. Her household has double garments. I think too that morally, through her instruction, they are prepared to meet the shocks and severe tests of life.

Her home shows her industry, individuality and artistic ability. Its furnishings are covered with tapestries, the work of her hands, perhaps the rugs on her floors are her own design. From the East come the most exquisite rugs. She too is clothed in garments suitable to her station. She is not one who tries to lead the styles, her world is not “dress,” yet she is not conspicuous by her oddity or eccentricity, but dresses creditably to her husband who sits in the gates.

**“Her husband is known in the gates, where he sitteth among the elders of the land”** (v. 23).

Her husband is chief magistrate and highly respected, not only for his position but for his example and his home life. Paul carefully gives instruction for the qualifications necessary for those who hold office in the church such as bishops, elders and deacons. Particular attention is called to the qualifications desired in the wives of these men. The home life reflects itself in the public and religious life of the head of the home.

**“She maketh fine linen and selleth it; and delivereth girdles unto the merchants”** (v. 24).

Her accomplishments are varied and of a fine character. Nothing shoddy leaves her hands. A lazy, slovenly, untidy Christian is as much a dishonor to Christ as one who is vain, haughty or boastful. The more she prospers the more she has to give.

**“Strength and honor are her clothing, and she shall rejoice in time to come”** (v. 25).

When people meet her they are not so impressed with the style of her clothes as they are by her strength of character and her high principles.

Her attractiveness is her considerate, Christlike spirit. Her understanding of others and her gracious dignity tell of one who walks with God. A frivolous empty life will not have joy in time to come but rather vain regrets. Those who are steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord have the comfort of knowing that their labor is not in vain in the Lord (I Corinthians 15:58). They shall rejoice in time to come.

**“She openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law [or instruction] of kindness”** (v. 26). She is not a chatterbox, but what she does say is edifying, helpful, cheerful, encouraging and instructive. No doubtful stories or injurious gossip, to grieve the Holy Spirit, pass her lips. She teaches kindness by precept and example. You remember Paul’s words, **“I beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ”** (I Corinthians 10:1).

Christ was always a gentleman, always reasonable. **“Thy gentleness has made me great”** is beautifully paraphrased, **“Thy loving correction has made me great.”** Her corrections and instructions were so lovingly given they were happily accepted by those privileged to receive them. Ephesians 4: 29-32, **“Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers . . . Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice. And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.”**

May we be uniformly kind and our **“speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt”** (Colossians 4:6). Paul instructs the women to be teachers of good things. Priscilla was able to instruct her distinguished guest Apollos in the way of God more perfectly.

**“She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. Her children arise up and call her blessed; her husband also praiseth her”** (vv. 27-28).

She is vigilant as to the development, progress, manners, speech and orderliness of her family. She does not nag but intelligently encourages each individual under her influence. She knows nothing of the boredom of indolence. Her children have learned naturally to rise up before the hoary head, especially before their mother who has earned every courtesy. And her husband, who has lived most intimately with her, has nothing but praise for her. He does not withhold the expression of his appreciation of her while she lives. She is an intelligent, well-informed woman, whose wise counsel is valued. Some seem to enjoy giving praise after one’s death. Her family have found her easy to live with and they own she makes their home a happy one.

**“Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all”** (v. 29) seem to be the words of her husband’s commendation.

**“Favor is deceitful and beauty is vain: but the woman who feareth the Lord, she shall be praised”** (v. 30).

Popularity, the outward graces, and beauty of face and form may fail. But true piety and inward beauty of soul produce a light that shines more and more unto the perfect day. We are told to **“show piety at home”** (I Timothy 5:4).

**“Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates”** (v. 31).

She is one of those whose adornment is her good works, her chaste and quiet spirit which is of great value in God’s sight. Her “yesterday’s” smile upon her and she shall rejoice in time to come.

Such is the wife that Bathsheba would choose for Solomon, a help meet for a king.

~ end of chapter 11 ~

<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>

\*\*\*