



Proverbs: Pathways to Wisdom

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Session 4: Wisdom in Practice – Proverbs 31 **(May 28, 2026 7:00 PM)**

Intro Question...

- As you reflect on our study of Proverbs so far, what has changed in your perception of the Book of Proverbs?
- What major themes from Proverbs jump out at you?

Opening Prayer

God of love, as we enter our final study of Proverbs, grant us once more the eyes to see and ears to hear the purpose you have for us on our path. Tie together the long cords that have run throughout this study. May they bind our hearts to yours as we seek the way of wisdom. Amen.

Session 4 Video – “Wisdom in Practice”

The wisdom that is depicted in Proverbs 31 is the ultimate model of wisdom. The author of the Book of Proverbs was a genius. Not only was the author able to compile all of these proverbs and put them together in such a way that readers thousands of years later can still learn from and apply the proverbs to their lives, the author saved this wonderful poem (for) the very end of the book and organized the proverbs in such a way that there would be foreshadowing leading up to this ultimate example, this model of wisdom.

- Is this a surprising culmination for you? Why or why not?
- In what ways do you see the themes discussed throughout Proverbs depicted in this person?
- Do you think she was a real woman, or is she an ideal? If she was real, who might she have been?

Who is *This* Woman?

Scripture Focus – Proverbs 31:10-31

The woman who is commonly described as “virtuous”, “capable”, “excellent”, or “noble” in Proverbs 31:10 certainly resembles each one of these adjectives. Yet, one potential modifier is frequently overlooked. The same Hebrew word that is translated to the adjectives listed above is also used dozens of times elsewhere in the Bible to indicate physical strength, force, and even an army (i.e. 2 Kings 18:7). On other occasions, the word relates some sort of moral valor (i.e., Ruth 3:11). Based upon the description of this woman in Proverbs 31:10-31, it is clear that both of these nuances in meaning apply. “Warrior woman” (literally, “woman of strength”) is a colorful translation that encompasses the perseverance, determination, and sacrifice it takes to live life in a way that consistently honors the Lord – especially under pressing expectations and in unfortunate circumstances. This is my translation of the Hebrew, eshet chayil, which I will use throughout this chapter. - Hernandez

- What do you think of Hernandez’s personal translation of “warrior woman”? Does it seem appropriate?
- Who are the “warrior women” in your life? What characteristics encourage you to assign these women this title?
- Who has been an exemplar of wisdom in your life?

Foreshadowing Wisdom

There are several examples of foreshadowing the appearance of the warrior woman throughout the Book of Proverbs, including mentioning the father and mother together and using language that will be returned to in Proverbs 31. Mentioning the father and mother would have been particularly unusual in the world of the Israelite social elite. “By repeatedly mentioning the parents together,” Dr. Hernandez writes, “the writer of Proverbs conveys that the book’s wisdom emerges from both the mother and the father.”

Scripture Focus – Proverbs 23:24-25

Scripture Focus – Proverbs 15:20

- Given the prominence of men in ancient Israelite society as is depicted in the Old Testament, are you surprised that the mother is so frequently mentioned in Proverbs? Why or why not?
- How are you starting to see the “warrior woman” peeking around the corners throughout the text?

The Warrior Woman: “Worth Far More than Precious Jewels...”

Scripture Focus – Proverbs 31:10

Scripture Focus – Proverbs 3:13-15

Scripture Focus – Proverbs 8:10-11

- What do you think are some types of riches that might be mentioned today as less valuable than wisdom?
- There are more parallels in the book – phrases regarding bed coverings, wealth, and strong women. Do you find all of this compelling evidence of Dr. Hernandez’s argument?
- After reading the Proverbs 31:10-31 passage, how might you explain Wisdom being personified as a woman in chapter 8 and elsewhere? Could the woman be the same, ideal image of wisdom?

A Portrait of Genuine Wisdom

The connections mentioned above suggest that the author of Proverbs is working toward a complex illustration. Despite the fact that all of the proverbs may not have originally come from the same source (10:1, 25:1, 30:1, 31:1), the author of the Book of Proverbs assembled the materials into a singular composition throughout which many of the same major wisdom-related principles are reiterated. The repetition of themes relating to how people should live on the way of wisdom eventually drives toward the exemplar of wisdom in Proverbs 31.

Up to this point in our study, we have approached Proverbs as puzzle aficionados. We encountered the individual proverbs as disconnected puzzle pieces. We then took the time to read through them, supposing that there was a “big picture” at the end. We noticed that many of the pieces of proverbs “looked alike.” As we began to assemble the puzzle, we noticed, through repetition, that patterns became evident, and corner puzzle pieces (major themes) emerged. As these corner pieces surfaced, some of the more difficult proverbs began to fall into place. This entire process comes to an end in Proverbs 31, where the final puzzle pieces are organized and the big picture of Proverbs materializes. In this section, we are going to arrange a couple of the final pieces together and observe the aesthetics of this masterful poem that sketches the picture of the extraordinary warrior woman. – Hernandez

Hernandez mentions other characteristics of the warrior woman that are found throughout the Book of Proverbs: her love of family, her hard work, her honest wages, her care of the vulnerable, her wise speech, her humility, and her lack of fear. Hopefully, the puzzle pieces with which we began have taken shape into a more complete image of wisdom.

- How has the focused structure in the Book of Proverbs surprised you?
- Why do you think we tend to view the Book of Proverbs as merely a collection of random, pithy sayings?
- How does having this “road map” and image of the warrior woman as an example of wisdom help you see your way toward and further down the path of wisdom?

Closing Prayer

God of all wisdom, who guides us in all our pathways, thank you for bringing us together here. Thank you for the Book of Proverbs and for the time we have had together to study and to share. Thank you for opening our ears and eyes to hear your voice as we have read and discussed, seeking your wisdom in the text and in our conversation. As we leave our study space this evening, we ask you to tune our ears and voices to your music and regulate our heartbeats to your rhythm, that we may be singers of your song, here and in the broader world in which we live. That world is yours, and so are we. Amen.