**PROV. 31:10-31 VIRTUOUS PEOPLE 5/10/2020**

The Virtuous Woman in Proverbs 31 is often used as an example for women on Mother’s Day. Proverbs 31:10, *“Who can find a virtuous woman?”*  The word “virtue” in English means: *good quality, high merit, great worth.* All of those are great definitions, but in the Hebrew text the word is ***chayil***, which means *“a force, might, power, strength, whether of men, means, or resources, such as an army.”* This adds a little different flavor and depth to the meaning. My mother was just such a person: quiet, gracious, pleasant, not given to anger, but she was strong when it counts, a force for good.

To illustrate, I’ll never forget when I was about five years old. Our local grocery store got a liquor license and began to sell alcohol. They put up a big Hamm’s Beer display at the entrance (you know the one with the cute bear as a mascot?) My quiet, gracious mother asked to speak to the manager. She politely but firmly informed him that she did not bring her children to the grocery store to introduce them to the glories of alcohol consumption. She then stood by until the embarrassed manager had the display removed to the back of the store!

Good quality, high merit, great worth, but strong, a force for good. That describes a virtuous person. If you think about it, the Virtuous Woman is an example for all of us, both male and female. This is the kind of person every one of us should be. With that in mind, consider these seven attributes that describe *virtuous people*.

**1. Virtuous people are extremely valuable!**  *“…her price is far above rubies”* (v. 10). They are in great demand. They are the employee that everyone is looking for, the spouse that every young person wants to marry, and the leader that every community needs. Recently I spoke of a young lady who has grown up in our church. When she gets married and moves away, it will leave big hole in her family, her church, her school, and her friends. Because of her continual service to others, she will be sorely missed. No doubt she will fill a great void in the lives of others wherever she goes. She is living her life virtuously!

**2. Virtuous people work to make others successful.**

Pr 31:11-12 The *heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.*

**a) Notice the trust:** *“Her husband safely trusts in her.”* Trust takes a lifetime to build, but can be destroyed in a moment. Great care with our words and actions will pay big dividends when building trust. Secret accounts, friendships, and activities can undermine trust. We’ve always allowed our teenagers great freedom to act like adults, unless we find out they have betrayed our trust. It helps to warn them ahead of time that it is their freedom at stake if they deceive or hide things from us. It is then our responsibility not to over react when they honestly confess a bad decision. Attempt to keep calm and maintain the position of a helpful coach, rather than the mean, explosive parent.

**b)****Notice the goal of the virtuous person:** *She works to do him good.* There is a motive to her actions. It is simply to do good. To work for the benefit of others. It is said of Jesus that, *“He went about doing good”* (Acts 10:38). The greatest leaders do not insist on being served, they serve those they lead (Mark 10:45).

**c) Notice also the commitment:** “*all the days of her life.”* I have to admit, during hard times in our relationships, a sense of commitment may be all that holds us together. God did not intend for this to be a ball and chain. He intended it to be a blessing. If you missed it, last week we talked about how to make that happen ([5 Love Languages](https://vbcmontrose.org/home-builders-lessons)).

Pr 31:23 *Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land.* You’ve heard it said that, “behind every great man is a good woman.” That is very true. None of us attain much success without the help of others. Here’s a couple questions to ask your spouse this week: “What can I do to help you today?” “What would help you succeed in your duties?” Husband, wife, parent, employer, are you committed to building life-long trusting relationships that seek to do good to others? That’s what virtuous people do!

**3. Virtuous people work for a living.**

Notice how many verses deal with the virtuous person’s sense of industry!

**a) She is always busy producing something!** - v. 13 “*She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands.”*  v. 17-19 *“She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth 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. 24 “ She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and* *purple.* *She maketh fine linen, and selleth it; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant.”*

**b) She provides for all those of her household** – vs.14-15 *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. vs. 21-22 She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet. V. 27 She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.*

**c) She invests for the future.** - v. 16 *She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard.* Virtuous people are working people! They are busy building, planting, fixing, investing and caring for those under their roof. They are not obsessed with leisure. They keep busy producing the things that are needed by others.

**4. Virtuous people are generous.**

Pr 31:20 *“She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.”* What does this busy, industrious person do with the proceeds from all their hard work? They share it with those who are in need. The virtuous woman is always producing something. She has been blessed with an entrepreneurial spirit and is constantly preparing more food, sewing more clothing, growing more produce. Her continuous work and investing is not just for herself and her household. She looks around her and reaches out to the poor and needy. She is aware of their needs and is generous to share the fruit of her labors with them. Virtuous people are generous people. They work hard, produce much, then they share with others.

**5. Virtuous people use wisdom.**

Pr 31:26 “*She openeth her mouth with wisdom…”* Virtuous people think, speak and act with wisdom.

**a) They think before they speak.** - Pr 29:20 *“Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words? there is more hope of a fool than of him.”*

**b) They are not angered easily**. - Pr 15:1-2 *“A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger. The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright…”*

**c) They know when to keep quiet**. - Pr 21:23 *“Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles.”*

**d) They know there is always someone watching.** - Pr 15:3 *The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.*

Virtuous people understand wisdom, and they use it for their own and the benefit of others.

**6. Virtuous people are kind with their words.**

Proverbs 31:26b *“…in her tongue is the law of kindness.”* Virtuous people are kind and gracious with their words. Even animals recognize their kindness by the tone of their voice. They are the encouragers, the ones that cheer for the home team, even when they’re losing. They are the ones who seek out the child left behind at recess, the loner at the potluck, the wounded soul at church.

**a) Virtuous people recognize the power of their words.** Pr 15:4 *“A wholesome tongue is a tree of life:”* Pr 18:21 *“Death and life are in the power of the tongue…”*

**b) They build up with their words, not tear down**. Pr 12:18 *“There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is health.“*

Virtuous people live by the law of kindness, and they know how to speak it. They can inspire a struggling student, motivate a discouraged employee, or mend a heartbroken child.

**7. Virtuous people will reap what they have sown.**

Pr 31:28 *“Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her.”* You will not hear the virtuous person tooting their own horn. They don’t have to. Others will be doing that for them, especially those closest to them. My wife recently celebrated a birthday. Her grown children put together a video compilation of each child, and each grandchild telling why they love “Nana.” All of the responses centered around how she has poured her life into theirs. By the time it was over, we were all in tears. What a beautiful reward for the work she has done! The Bible promises over and over that we will reap what we sow, both good and bad (Gal. 6:7; Ecc. 14:14; Matt. 12:36; Romans 2:16; 14:12). V. 31 *“Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates.”*

**CONCLUSION:**

If you choose to live the life of a virtuous person, work hard, pouring your life into others, doing them good, being generous, speaking wisdom and kindness, you will be rewarded. I hope you have experienced the benefit of a virtuous mother, and use today as an opportunity to praise those who deserve it. But these principles are not just for mothers. May God bless you as you strive to follow this godly example of Scripture!