A Tribute to Mother
Proverbs 31

Most of the Book of Proverbs are short statements about some truth. Yet, Proverbs 31 is the longest passage on any one subject in Proverbs. There are 22 verses on the subject of godly women.

-Earlier in the book of Proverbs young men are warned against the wrong kind of woman. Solomon warns against the adulteress whose lips drip honey but who bring about death and destruction. Proverbs warns against the noisy, loud woman, the quarrelsome woman, the rebellious woman, the foolish woman. Young men looking for a mate are warned to stay away from and avoid all such women.

If you were to see the last 22 verses of Proverbs 31 in the Hebrew, you would find that each one of these verses begin with each of the 22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet.

Notice that 31:1 states that these words were taught to King Lemuel by his mother. -Well, who is King Lemuel? Most Bible students believe that Lemuel is the “pet name” given to Solomon by his mother, Bathsheba.

You remember Bathsheba. She is the woman who was bathing in plain view of King David. She was taking a bath. That’s the reason she is called Bath-sheba, you see. David lusted after her, called for her, committed adultery with her. When David found out she was with child, David had her husband killed and married her himself. You will remember that that baby died. Then she and David had a second child. His name was Solomon. The words of Proverbs are the words that he remembers his mother teaching him.

Solomon remembers his mother, Bathsheba, as a godly woman. When we first meet her we see her in sin and shame, but she met the lord and was transformed into a godly, virtuous woman.

-Proverbs 31 is actually two poems. The first nine verses records what Solomon’s mother TAUGHT him, the rest of the chapter deals with what he THOUGHT of his mother.

-She taught her son to be a wise king and he thought of his mother as an excellent wife.

Proverbs 31:10-31 describes the kind of woman every Christian should search for as a life mate; a wife.

Four things I would focus on about a godly woman:

A. Her Valor – 31:10

The word “virtuous” does not just refer to her character, but also to her courage, to her capabilities and to her strength that enables her to face life.

-The indication is that such a woman is rare. They are not on every corner. The word “virtuous” refers to more than purity. It means to be strong in all moral qualities. She is a woman with strength of character.

-Where does this strength of character come from? Note 31:30. She FEARS the Lord and she is FAVORED of the Lord. There is a deep inner strength and beauty that comes only from spending
quality time with the Lord.

B. Her Value 31:10

“Her price is FAR ABOVE rubies” She is priceless. The most valuable stone of that day was a ruby because it was such a rare stone.
She is of great value to her husband. 3:11
- The word “trust” has to do with fidelity. He has not reason to be jealous of her. Her heart belongs to her husband. Notice: “The heart of her husband does safely trust in her.” Fidelity is so important in marriage. There is no thought or suspicion that his wife even might be unfaithful to him. It never entered his mind.

Let me say a word to young people. It is very important to keep yourself pure BEFORE marriage, because if you fail to do so, your life AFTER marriage will be filled with suspicion and distrust.

I’m thankful that I can truthfully tell my son that his mother and I were both sexually pure before we married. When Janice and I were married 40-plus years ago, in 80% of the divorces, one or both of the mates became impure BEFORE marriage. The percentage is higher today because more couples become impure before marriage. In fact, young people are made fun of if they are not impure before they finish high school.

Remember that it was Bathsheba that Solomon is thinking of. Her life has been so transformed that David safely trusted her.
- The husband ought to be able to trust his wife and the wife ought to be able to trust her husband. But the word “trust” here has a broader meaning than to trust in the area of fidelity. He can also trust her in the area of finance.
- “He shall have no need of spoil.” She doesn't put financial pressure on her husband. She doesn't expect him to continually earn more so that she can have more. She is not a spendthrift. She is not going to charge and charge and over-spend and get the whole family in debt until they’ll never get out of debt.

The meaning of 31:12 is, “The wife lives to make her husband happy and the husband lives to make his wife happy.” Wouldn't that change the atmosphere of most homes? She is also of great value to her children. 31:28. She does not neglect her children. She cares for them physically, emotionally and spiritually.

Tribute to Mother

I've been thinking, Mother. For a long, long time now, I've carried some I.O.U.'s around with me. In fact, my wallet bulges with them and it's high time I sorted them and paid up. For you taught me to pay my debts promptly.

Mom, I owe you for night watchman services. The nights you got little sleep because of real or imagined noises around the house, the nights you stayed up feeding the baby, or doctoring us, or just praying for us.
For we surely needed it!

The nights you didn't "count sheep", but talked with the Shepherd, the nights you kept vigil by going over all the poetry and scripture verses you knew from memory. What I.O.U. can never be repaid for watchman services.

I.O.U., Mom, for your services as chief cook and bottlewasher. I.O.U. for your success in substituting, making it

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stretch, and perhaps just a little self-denial when there wasn't quite enough pie to go around.

I.O.U. for making strong healthy adults out of us with leftovers and a limited budget. And I.O.U. for teaching your daughters the basics and economics of good cooking to pass on to our own growing family.

And I.O.U. for all the medical attention and advice. Mostly we were a healthy lot, thank the Lord, but you nursed us through measles and colds and cut fingers and stubbed toes.

"Don't forget to wear your boots," you'd admonish, or, "Brush your teeth," you'd remind us every morning.

You were always a healer of broken hearts, too, I remember, and nursed us through all our small crises in an amazing way; even through puppy love.

The entertainment I.O.U. is large. The special times you lovingly prepared at Christmas, the togetherness at birthdays, each one being a real occasion. The games or story telling and popcorn on a winter evening, the picnics at the huckleberry plains on a summer afternoon, the times we were housebound because of impassable roads, the joy you taught us for the simple things of everyday living. Yes, we paid little for homemade entertainment, but I.O.U. just the same.

There is a huge I.O.U. here for construction work. You didn't know you were an architect and builder, did you? You worked hard to build our hopes and dreams, our confidence. You exhausted yourself in the hot sun, the rain, and winter blizzards, cementing your family together with the glue of love and fidelity.

You built us a strong foundation upon the Solid Rock, Christ Jesus, to stand firmly in the storms of life. You did what no other builder could do – you molded a temple out of clay – a building fit for the Master's use.

You hammered into us dependability, reliability, and just every ability it takes in life to get along with others in a wholesome, meaningful way. To say nothing to the bricks of trust, stability, self-discipline, mortared together with biblical moral standards and unchanging values.

My I.O.U. for teaching and tutoring services is well beyond my ability to pay. Most of what I've learned of life I learned at your knee. You taught me to love God, to pray, to love His Word. You told me of Christian virtues as laid down in the Bible, along with all everyday wisdom.

Yes, the payment of all these I.O.U.'s is long overdue. You worked all those years very cheaply, doing without, making do, pinching pennies, denying self. My I.O.U.'s add up to much more than I can repay. My debt to you is awesome.
How can I pay all these I.O.U.’s, Mother? I know that you would say, “No charge for love.” But I know that you’d mark the whole bill “Paid in full” for a kiss and those four little words which are priceless: “Mother, I love you!”

If your Mother is still living, tell her now how much you love and respect her. Remember: Dead noses smell no roses.

C.Her Vigilance – 31:13,15

She is not afraid of hard work. Remember that Bathsheba is a queen; yet, Solomon remembers his mother as a hard worker.

D.Her Voice – 31:26

“The law of kindness is on her lips.” She is never vindictive, cutting, or mean. What comes from her lips is tempered with kindness.

E.Her Vision – 31:30

She knows that outward beauty is short-lived, but inner beauty is lasting. She is a lady in every respect.

But look what Bathsheba taught her son. She dealt with three areas:

A.Strange women – 31:3

God had commanded that the Kings of Israel were not to multiply to themselves wives or wealth – Deut. 17:17; I Kings 11:1-4  Solomon didn't listen to God or to his mother.

B.Strong wine – 31:4-5

For kings and leaders to be effective leaders requires the use of one's full faculties.

C.Sound wisdom – 31:8-9

Always defend the weak and the poor. Plead for those who cannot plead their own case. Solomon failed in all three areas. He taxed the poor until they were broken. When Solomon died his son came to the throne and he, too, over taxed the people and the people rebelled and the kingdom was divided.

The book of Ecclesiastes tells us how far Solomon backslid. His heart was turned from the Lord. But do you remember the principle found in Proverbs 22:6? -Solomon would say over and over when he was away from the Lord, “I hate life...This is vanity.” Thankfully, Solomon turned back to the Lord. Ecc. 12:13-14

Have you turned from the Lord? If so, you can come back to the Lord and He will abundantly
pardon.