



Eternal PERSPECTIVE Proverbs

BIBLE TEXT | PROVERBS 31:10-31

10 An excellent wife who can find? She is far more precious than jewels.

11 The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain.

12 She does him good, and not harm, all the days of her life.

13 She seeks wool and flax, and works with willing hands.

14 She is like the ships of the merchant; she brings her food from afar.

15 She rises while it is yet night and provides food for her household and portions for her maidens.

16 She considers a field and buys it; with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard.

17 She dresses herself with strength and makes her arms strong.

18 She perceives that her merchandise is profitable. Her lamp does not go out at night.

19 She puts her hands to the distaff, and her hands hold the spindle.

20 She opens her hand to the poor and reaches out her hands to the needy.

21 She is not afraid of snow for her household, for all her household are clothed in scarlet.

22 She makes bed coverings for herself; her clothing is fine linen and purple.

23 Her husband is known in the gates when he sits among the elders of the land.

24 She makes linen garments and sells them; she delivers sashes to the merchant.

25 Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she laughs at the time to come.

26 She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.


27 She looks well to the ways of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness.

28 Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her:

29 "Many women have done excellently, but you surpass them all."

30 Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.

31 Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her works praise her in the gates.



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DEVOTIONAL FOR PROVERBS 31:10-31

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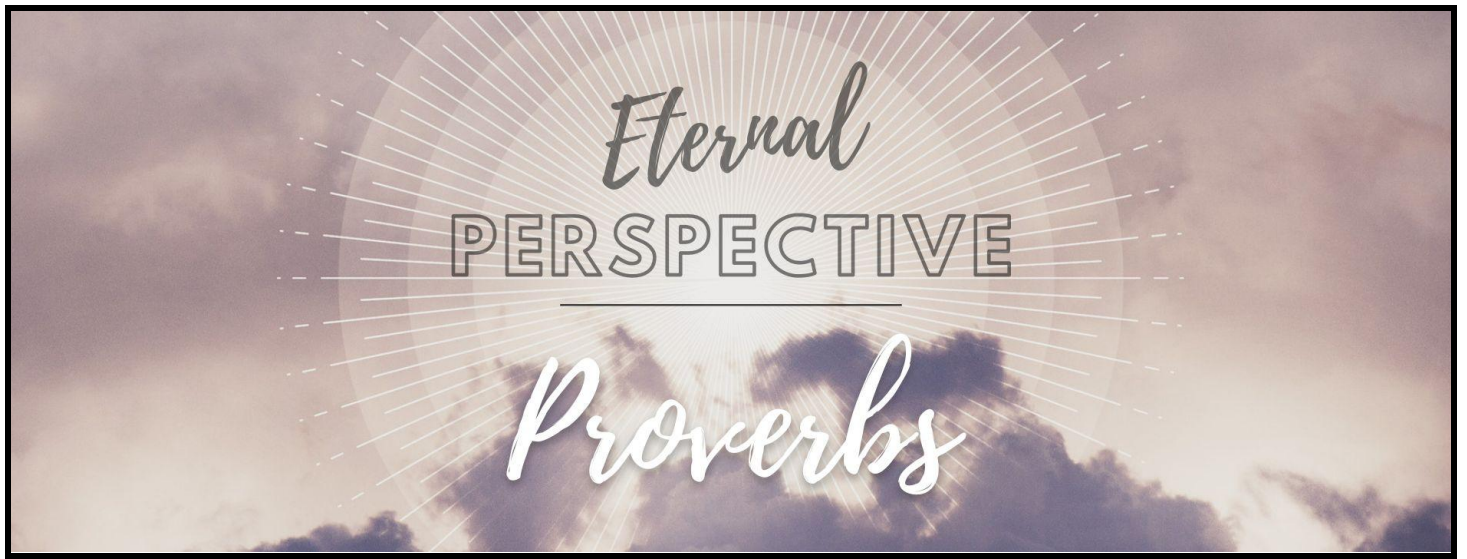
My husband, Bart, and I lived in Dallas for 5 years. I like to think of that time as a transition in our lives—not exactly where we wanted to be, but we were there out of necessity. During our time there, I struggled immensely with comparison, the idea of measuring up, if you will. Along the roads we would travel, we would see Mercedes Benz, Corvettes, and Porsches, just to name a few, along with mansion after mansion lining the streets. I wondered to myself, how will we ever keep up? We don't drive a car like that, or live in a house like that. I felt out of my element.

Comparison is a thief. We all, men and women alike, are guilty of comparing ourselves to one another. Proverbs 31 is a prime example of this, especially for women. This woman is described as "excellent" in the ESV, or in other versions, "A wife of noble character" - NIV, "Virtuous and capable" - NLT. The word excellent in Hebrew means "strength, might, ability."

This is a woman who is hard to find, a rare precious jewel (verse 10). She is trustworthy (verse 11). She works tirelessly and willingly to provide food for her household (verse 15). She is wise in her financial endeavors (verses 16 and 18), therefore, she is generous to those in need (verses 19-20; Romans 12:13; Ephesians 4:28). She is not anxious about the winter months since she has prepared in advance (verse 21-22). Her husband has a good reputation due to his wife's excellent work (verse 23). She is skillful and resourceful (verse 24). She is wise with her words (verse 26). Her family blesses her name because they are blessed by her (verse 28).

In times past, when I have read about the Proverbs 31 woman, I wondered, who can live up to that? I can't be all of those things. We get so caught up in all of her doings instead of the why behind it all. She feared the Lord. The goal of the Proverbs 31 woman is not for us to find another person to compare ourselves with, but to see what she valued. She feared the Lord and because she feared the Lord, the work she did mattered. It was of eternal significance. She was a good steward of the resources she had been entrusted with. Making the best use of her time, talents, and resources, she applied wisdom to every area of her life, in her home, in her finances, in her mind (not being anxious), in the work of her hands, with her tongue. She lived a life of righteousness.

What a perfect bookend as we reflect on the beginning of Proverbs! "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction" (Proverbs 1:7).



Questions:

1. Do you get caught in the comparison trap? If so, what triggers that?
2. Is it hard for you to see that the work you do matters? Are you seeking to honor the Lord because you fear Him?
3. What are some areas you would say that you have grown complacent, or have even become slothful? Share this with your Journey Group or trusted community. Ask for prayer to apply wisdom to every area of your life.