

The Real Story of Motherhood from Proverbs 31 (Proverbs 31)



We've heard untold numbers of sermons on the virtuous wife, the excellent wife, the perfect example of womanhood, as found in Proverbs 31:10-31, you know, the woman that the rest of us are measured against, and always found wanting. She's Pinterest and Instagram worthy, regardless of where and when you find her, doesn't matter what time of day or night, she's perfection (and by the way, she doesn't exist!)

It seems Mother's Day brings this passage to mind for many pastors to share, but I have yet to find one that tells the real story of motherhood from Proverbs 31, as they rarely deal with verses one through nine.

Maybe because I was thinking fondly of days gone by, having raised a daughter and a son, thinking of them now with a heart of thanksgiving that both are serving and following the Lord. Maybe it was because I sitting in a church many miles away from them on yet another Mother's Day. For whatever reason, I noticed what I had not seen before, as I opened the text for another Mother's Day sermon according to Proverbs 31:10-31, that the real lesson on motherhood should begin with verse one, which reads,

"The words of King Lemuel, the oracle which his mother taught him:"

Did you catch it? His mother taught him. This chapter, which the end is read so regularly, begins with the small fact that his mother taught him. That's the job, isn't it? That's the purpose for us as mothers. To teach our children.

King Lemuel goes on to expound in the chapter about what his mother taught him regarding being a man, about being a king, and yes, about what kind of wife to look for. There's good lessons in there for us as moms, you should read them.

The king's mom made sure that he knew how to be a godly man, to be just, to be sober, to be caring, and to defend others. She took motherhood sincerely enough to instruct him, not as a child but as a future king, knowing that a good man does not happen by osmosis in this world, they must be taught.

So, what are we teaching our children? What will they be as adults?

I look around. I watch, I see. What I find scares me a bit. I see mothers excuse their children's misbehavior - "They're only being kids." "He's just angry and needs to work it out." "We want them to express themselves." Chuck Swindoll made a point to tell his children that "age is no excuse for bad behavior". He's right. I see mothers ignoring their child that is out of control - Whether she's too tired from the everyday battle to get them to behave, or she's been taught to ignore them and they'll stop, or she's just blissfully oblivious in her own world, the child rants while she ignores. I see a generation that has been given every comfort, and therefore, have no clue how to handle things that are tough, so they cry and complain about everything. It's a crazy

The Real Story of Motherhood from Proverbs 31 (Proverbs 31)

world that has everything upside down and no one is willing to say "that's wrong" for fear of being accused of intolerance. Truth's lines have been blurred. I ask you, what are we teaching our children?

Thankfully not every mom has left the teaching to the village. I have seen many moms spending the time with their children to help guide, to shape, to discipline. There are still those who "train up a child in the way he should go..." and that's so very encouraging. Keep up the good work, Mom, you're doing great!

We can learn from Proverbs 31:1-9 that a good mom teaches her children the right things: *to be just, to be sober, to be caring, to defend others, to be the godly man or woman God created them to be.*

Being a Mom is not for wimps. It takes diligence, consistency, and times when we are at our wit's end to get through to the child, but don't give up. The Lord will provide every ounce of strength, every bit of patience and all the self-sacrificial love that is needed to be a great Mom as you lean on Him for wisdom and guidance. Keep teaching - for every moment is a teachable moment.

Every mother knows exhaustion, and yes, every mom desperately fails at times, but God's grace is big. It covers it all, and His mercies are new every morning. Set your eyes on Him, allow His Spirit to teach YOU how to teach those little blessings He has blessed you with, so that they in turn will grow to be adults who bless others.

I don't know if King Lemuel's mother met even half of the requirements of what we call "the perfect woman" spoken about in verses ten through thirty-one, but we know she knew what a man was suppose to be, and what a woman was suppose to be. She taught that neither were to be people that shirked their responsibilities or lost sight of caring for others around them. May the Lord find us faithfully doing the same.

Whether we're a mom, a grandma, or a friend, we can have great impact on the future generations of this world. If we don't know how, then let's learn from God's word. Proverbs 31 is more than just about a perfect woman, it's about being a teacher to our sons and daughters. In God's strength, and by His wisdom, we can do it! Teach!

"The words of King Lemuel, the oracle which his mother taught him: What, O my son? And what, O son of my womb? And what, O son of my vows? Do not give your strength to women, or your ways to that which destroys kings. It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine, or for rulers to desire strong drink for they will drink and forget what is decreed, and pervert the rights of all the afflicted. Give strong drink to him who is perishing, and wine to him whose life is bitter. Let him drink and forget his poverty and remember his trouble no more. Open your mouth for the mute, for the rights of all the unfortunate. Open your mouth, judge righteously, and defend the rights of the afflicted and needy." Proverbs 31:1-9