

Praising Mothers

By David Feddes

Happy birthing person's day! We're so thankful for those of you who are or have been chest feeders, and it is wonderful to have a day honoring you.

Actually, we don't live in a society that honors mothers very much. We have a lot of our most intellectual folks telling us not to use the word "mother" anymore. We should use other phrases because some might feel excluded if we were to refer to female persons who have children as "mothers." We live in a society that doesn't value motherhood or want to even say the word if we can help it.

And of course, there are other challenges to the valuing of mothers as well. When society is sending the wrong signals and when other aspects of our life are sending the wrong signals, we need to turn to the Word of God and hear what God has to say to women whom he treasures, and to wives and mothers.

Proverbs 31 is a beautiful picture of women. At the same time, it can be an intimidating one—where after you hear it, and you say, “I feel like a failure.” But you need to realize that this comes at the end of a whole book devoted to wisdom.

The book of Proverbs is filled with wisdom and various sayings of how to live a wise life. Near the beginning of the book, it talks about two women, Lady Wisdom and Madame Folly. Lady Wisdom calls you to follow in the ways of wisdom. Madame Folly is a prostitute trying to lure you into being stupid.

The book of Proverbs closes with a picture of perfect female wisdom. In the original language, each verse starts with a different letter of the Hebrew alphabet. It's a poem from A to Z. The Hebrew alphabet only has 22 letters and starts with Aleph, but you get the idea. Proverbs 31:10-31 has 22 verses, an alphabet of wisdom, and how such wisdom comes through in the life of a woman. This passage not only describes a woman's worth, but it tells others to praise this woman's worth. So let's listen to this great poem from the Bible.

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.

Unpraised

- By society
- By children
- By husband

Unpraised by society

We live in a society that doesn't praise motherhood or being a great wife. So we need to focus on, first of all, how we're so different from what God's Word says. We live in a society that speaks of "birthing persons" and of "chest feeders" and of trans women. We live in a society which urges women to shout their abortion rather than praising motherhood; which encourages people to go on what's called a "slut walk" to show that they don't value faithfulness to one man. "We do what we want with our bodies," they say. They keep sending the signal to men that women are to be viewed as porn objects, so men don't need to think about things like marrying a woman, or serving as a husband to a wife, or helping a mother.

Sometimes there's also just the message: Whatever career you're interested in is much more important than having children or being kind to them or bringing them up. In fact, you might be doing something really and seriously harmful by becoming a mother. Save the planet and ditch any children at all.

So those are the signals that come at women, and they come from a variety of angles—from government and government policy, which tends to favor one approach, and it's not the approach of motherhood, which instead subsidizes not having children at all. Do you remember when *Roe v. Wade*, the national right to abortion, was reversed? One of the first things the big corporations did was say, "Hey, we'll pay four or five thousand bucks for every abortion you have." They weren't going to be so generous, of course, if you chose to have the children. But the big corporations, the government, the schools, the media—they keep sending these messages.

We need to understand that we're in a constant bombardment of that sort of thinking in our society. And it can have an impact, even if you say, "Well, that's a bunch of rot. I'm still a mother. I'm not a birthing person." But if you're bombarded for years on end from every angle with an anti-family and anti-mother message, then sometimes you just are haunted by those lies—and they trouble you.

But even in a society which often neglects or even opposes motherhood, we could be okay if women are encouraged and praised in other ways, by the people closest to them: their children and husband.

Unpraised by children

But kids don't always appreciate their own moms very much. The moms do a lot for the kids, but the kids might not say thank you, or think take mom for granted: "Hey, that's what moms do. That's their job." That may be so—but moms do just a little better when their kids recognize what their moms do for them and appreciate it and say thanks, or tell their mom they love her.

Unpraised by husband

If you're a mom and wife, even if your society isn't praising you much and the kids are stingy with the compliments, if your husband recognizes what you're doing and is excited about who you are and about the ways that you're blessing him and blessing your children, and if he's encouraging and praising you—that goes a long way toward feeling valued, toward recharging your energy and your batteries. If your husband gets involved and is eager to help you, and not only help you but even take the lead in doing the things that are needed in a family, then that's going to encourage you and bless you.

But when a husband fails in that responsibility or neglects it, then it's a lot harder. A wife needs a husband to be proud of, and a husband who's proud of her. It's very hard for a mom who's been abandoned by a husband completely. It also can be hard for a mom who has a husband, but he's not exactly generous with praise.

Sometimes a husband may tell her what she's doing wrong. Some husbands are even abusive in the ways they treat their wives—whether with violence or with terrible words or vile descriptions of them. And that can really make a woman struggle. It is very hard for her to be a joyful wife and mom if that's how her husband treats her.

A husband, even if he's not an abuser, may fail to honor and encourage his wife. He seems to have the ability to praise his favorite teams really loudly. But his wife—if she had two hearing aids turned on high volume—might not ever hear any compliments from the bozo. We husbands may be praising our favorite teams, or we have lots of time for TV, and we think that husbandly leadership is determining who gets to click the TV remote control and choose what to watch. That might not be what the Bible is talking about when it encourages husbands to take the lead in the family! "I get to control the clicker." You are a real he-man!

We really do need to hear what Proverbs 31 says about praising a godly wife and mom who's doing the things God calls her to do.

Women need to be treasured. It's easy when you're a mom, especially with young kids, to feel like a slave. You have diapers to change, a child to nurse and nourish, noses to wipe, clothes to wash, meals to cook, kids' fights to intervene in—those can be draining—and make sure the homework is getting done. There's a lot of different things you do that are a drain on energy. They may be joyful things and wonderful things, but let's face it: when we talk about the glories of motherhood on Mother's Day, that's one thing. When you're actually doing the stuff, the stuff can be kind of hard to distinguish from slavery. You're doing an awful, awful lot for children.

So it is very important that we husbands recognize and praise and help her with such tasks, to serve and bless the women in our lives that God has blessed us with.

Praising mothers

As we think about all this, I want to emphasize again what Proverbs 31 says near the end of the passage. It speaks of praising mothers: "Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: 'Many women have done excellently, but you surpass them all.' ... a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised... let her works praise her in the gates. (31:28-31)

I mentioned earlier the men who are verbally abusive or never give any compliments. Sometimes men who are verbally abusive toward their wife have a very low view of women in general, and their wife is just the closest specimen. To such a husband, all women are inferior, and his wife is even lower than the rest. A biblical husband takes a very different approach: "Many women do excellently, and you're the best of the whole bunch." Such a husband has a high view of women—and of his woman in particular.

Here the Bible speaks of children praising and husband praising. What's it mean to be praised "in the gates"? Well, "the gates" are the community center or the public square of the society. A godly wife and mother is to be praised by children, by husband, and by society.

Before we get into those three areas of praise, I want to highlight again a woman's worth that comes through in this passage. I preached on a while ago, and I'm not going to give the whole sermon now or we'll be here a very long time, but there were seven things that I highlighted from this passage at that time.

A woman's worth

- Warrior
- Wife
- Worker
- Merchant
- Minister
- Mother
- Worshiper

The first is simply as a warrior. Literally, when it says “an excellent wife,” it can also be translated “a **woman of valor**, who can find?” She’s a warrior. There are warrior women in the Bible. You read of a woman named Jael, who gave refuge to the enemy general who had been oppressing the nation and had been killing and raping women. She took him in, gave him a meal, put him to sleep—and then she pounded a stake through his head.

Or consider Esther. Queen Esther is Jewish, but her husband, the king, is Persian. Esther finds out that the king’s chief of staff is a homicidal maniac, a genocidal maniac who wants to wipe out her entire people. So Esther arranges things and then springs a trap, so that the murderous enemy gets hanged. You sometimes have to have the warrior women who stand up and do what needs doing.

Even if you’re not pounding a stake through somebody’s head—and I don’t recommend it highly—you need to sometimes have a warrior mentality to deal with enemies. We know that every one of us has the enemy of our souls constantly after us—Satan himself. You have to have a willingness to fight and a courage within you in order to be the kind of woman God wants you to be.

Proverbs 31 praises a woman who serves as a **wife** and who is a blessing to her husband—and we’ll say more about that later.

She’s obviously a **worker**. She does a lot. Her life as a worker includes buying fields, working as a **merchant**, building things, and conducting financial transactions.

She’s a **minister**, a word that means servant. She’s a minister in at least two ways. First, she a giver. Proverbs 31 says that she *helps the poor*. She ministers to the needy. The Bible speaks of a woman named Tabitha. The most striking thing about her is that she died and was raised to life again by the power of Jesus through the apostle Peter. But Tabitha was a woman who was always doing kind things to help other people out. She was a minister to the poor.

Another aspect of being a minister is somebody who is *ministering words of truth and wisdom*. A woman who imparts wisdom and truth to her children is being a minister to them—helping them to know God’s Word. A woman who is mentoring younger women in how to be a godly wife, how to be a godly mother, how to be a woman who serves the Lord and praises the Lord—you’re a minister to younger women.

The Bible also tells of women who evangelized others and led them to the Lord or explained to them the Word of God more adequately. That’s what a woman named Priscilla did with an excellent speaker named Apollos. He had a way with words. He knew quite a bit about the Bible, but he didn’t understand Jesus very well yet. Priscilla didn’t say, “Hey dummy, I’ve got some wisdom for you,” or reprimand Apollos publicly. She just said, “Hey, could we have a word?” Then she and her husband spoke with Apollos and “explained the way to him more adequately.” From then on, he was launched into even greater ministry. Ministering--the ability to help needy people or to instruct others in God’s truth--that’s what godly women often do.

A woman's worth also comes through in being a **mother**. Being a mother who gives birth and who brings up children in the ways of the Lord and nurtures and encourages and builds up—this is vital. The Bible speaks of many mothers. Above all, Mother Mary, the mother of Jesus, was constantly treasuring things in her heart about her Son. Sometimes it wasn't easy. Mary didn't understand, for instance, when twelve-year-old Jesus was left behind at the temple, why he wasn't more careful to stick with mom and dad and do things exactly the way mom and dad had planned out for him. She found out that God sometimes had plans for her Son that went beyond what she understood.

None of us is a parent of Jesus himself. But in another sense, Jesus says, "Whoever welcomes a child in my name welcomes me" (Matthew 18:5). When you're bringing up children sometimes you won't understand or like something they do—not just when they're bad, but when they're at their best. If God comes first for them and they're following God's path, it may feel kind of awkward and strange to you, because that's not what you had planned for them. But that's okay. Sometimes there will be an awkward moment, as there was between Mary and Jesus. But to be a mother and to see what God makes of your children is one of the great glories of life.

The most important thing about a woman is that she fears the Lord. She's a **worshiper** of God. You might have these other roles in varying degrees, but the most important thing is if you treasure God—and know that God treasures you. Not every woman gets to become a mother, but you're still precious to God. Not every woman gets to become a wife, but you're still precious to God. And some of us have different gifts in terms of work or being a merchant or business person or whatever. But the core of it is: if you're serving the Lord in the way he's called you to serve him, and you're worshiping him, then a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.

Those are things that shine through in this passage that I just wanted to summarize briefly. But the thing I want to emphasize from this passage today and in this message is the importance of praising mothers, as the passage concludes with children calling her blessed, her husband praising her, and her works praising her in the gates. And so, let's look at those in succession: husband, and children, and society.

Praised

- By husband
- By children
- By society

Praised by husband

When you're a husband, you have a tremendous privilege and responsibility because God has positioned you to help your wife flourish—to be a great mom, to be a mighty woman of God. God has positioned you to support and help her in that.

Proverbs speaks of an excellent wife and of the value of getting a wife. "Rejoice in the wife of your youth" (5:1). "A gracious woman gets honor" (11:16). "An excellent wife is the crown of her husband" (12:4). "He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from

the Lord"(18:22). "A prudent wife is from the Lord" (19:14). Those are the kinds of things that Proverbs says. So if you've got a prudent, a wise, and a good wife, then you can be thankful to God for what he's given you.

And you prize her. "An excellent wife who can find? She is far more precious than jewels. The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain. She does him good, and not harm, all the days of her life" (31:10-12).

You prize her—and when you prize her, you don't keep it to yourself. You praise her. In the words of Proverbs, "Her husband praises her: 'Many women have done excellently, but you surpass them all' (31:28-29).

In order to praise somebody, you first have to **notice**. You have to notice what is wonderful and excellent about her. You have to pay attention. And once you notice, don't just prize her and say to yourself, "Boy, I'm kind of thankful I have a really great wife." You should say that to your really great wife—not only prize her inwardly, but praise her outwardly.

Now, a reminder: the Bible tells the husband that you are to love your wife as Christ loved the church and laid down his life for her (Ephesians 5:25). The way you live as a husband is a sermon. The sermon is about Jesus and how he treats his church. It is either going to be a helpful sermon or a real stink bomb of a sermon. Because if you are unfaithful to your wife, your sermon is: Jesus is unfaithful to his church. If you're mean to your wife, your sermon is: Jesus is mean to his church. If you don't care for your wife and help her out, you're saying: that's how Jesus treats his church. I could go on with various examples.

So you're going to be preaching a sermon; the only question is whether it's a bad sermon or a good one. It's the same way in relation to your children. The relation between a father and children is meant to reflect the way God the Father loves his precious people. So you're either preaching a really good sermon, or a really bad one, or one somewhere in between—but you can't help preaching it if you're a husband and father. It's very wonderful—and pretty scary—to be in that position. When you're preaching the wrong sermon in the way you treat your wife, it can be very destructive to her. And when you're preaching the wrong sermon in the way you treat your kids, it can be very destructive to them.

Now, having said all that, let's notice again: you've got to notice your wife's excellence. And then, when you're praising her and encouraging her and complimenting her, you **nourish** her excellence.

Think back to when she first became a mom. When a mom has a baby, one of the things she does is to nurse that baby. When you're nursing a baby, you have to take in more nourishment than just for yourself. You're eating for yourself, but you're also eating for your child, because your child is getting all their nourishment through you. And that means the total nourishment you need is more than usual.

Now apply that more broadly. If you're a husband to a woman, you should be encouraging her and nourishing her in the faith anyway, and in your love for her. But when she's got kids, she's

going to need a little extra—a little extra praise, a little extra encouragement, a little extra nourishment of her spirit—because she’s got more responsibilities. And when she bears more responsibilities, you have more responsibility to help and nourish her in various ways.

Ephesians 5, the very passage that tells husbands to love your wife as Christ loved the church, also says, "Husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself" (Ephesians 5:28). When you love your wife, you're also loving yourself. If you want to be happier, make your wife happier. If you want to flourish, help her to flourish.

Some of you may be saying, “Yes! I’ve got a wife like that. She makes me happier. And and I’ve got to do better at loving her and building her up.”

But others might say, “That all sounds nice, but you don’t know my wife. How can I praise her? I don't see much that's very praiseworthy about her.” Really now? If you're married to a woman, you are married to somebody who is created in the image of God. If you're not seeing it, it might be that you're not noticing very well what's going on. If you're married to a Christian woman, you are married to someone who was bought with the precious blood of Jesus Christ Himself. That’s what He was willing to do for her. You say you can't find anything that would move you to even give her a compliment? If you're married to a Christian woman, you're married to someone who has the Holy Spirit of God living in her, and working in her, and doing stuff in her. You need to have your eyes open to what the Holy Spirit is doing. And when you see the Holy Spirit at work—you notice it, you praise it, you nourish it, and you build it up.

That's true, by the way, of all interactions among Christian people. Even with all of our faults and all the difficulties that we have, always be watching in your fellow believer: What is the Holy Spirit up to? It's easy for us to say what we don't like about others. But ask yourself, What is the Holy Spirit up to? Notice it. And then affirm it and build on it.

If you know a person with the Holy Spirit and you're saying, “I can't see anything worth praising about them,” all you're doing is saying something about your own eyeballs—you can’t see. You need to have the ability, with God's help, to look and to notice, and then to nourish what God is doing in that precious person whom God loves.

At the same time, let’s just say you couldn’t really find hardly anything at all that's praiseworthy in your wife. Well, what does the Bible say? It says, Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church. Jesus didn’t start out with His church being this beautiful and wonderful and lovable thing that just had everything right about her. Jesus loved her when she had a lot of big faults, and He did everything to make her His, and to cleanse her and make her pure and wonderful.

So even if you had a wife who didn’t have very many redeeming qualities, then you would need to ask: "What can I do to help her? What can I do to bring out in her what Christ has designed her to be?" Then go and do that. Because as a Christian husband, you lay down your life for your wife, even if you have a wife with many flaws. When God has put you in her life, you have a responsibility to be like Jesus toward her and to help her.

Husband, notice your wife's excellence, praise her excellence, and nourish her excellence. And if you're having a hard time seeing her excellence, just ask: What qualities does she have that I'm overlooking? What are the excellent things she does that I'm overlooking? And ask yourself: Might she flourish more if I were building her up more?

You know, this praise thing works two ways. You can wait and say, "I'm waiting to see something more praiseworthy before I give any compliments." Or you might say, "I'm going to praise what I see currently, and who knows what other praiseworthy things might come of that?" Did you ever realize that when you praise and notice and rejoice in something, after a while, it tends to grow and multiply?

That's true in your dealings with your wife. It's also true in your dealings with your kids. Sometimes those of us who are parents can see what needs straightening out with our kids, and then we proceed to try to straighten it out. Sometimes that's necessary. The Bible talks about discipline and correction—that's true. But the importance of encouraging and praising and nourishing a child's spirit is very great.

So if we're looking for more that's praiseworthy, one of the things to do is to praise what's already there and encourage it so that it will keep growing. That's true of a wife, of children, of a fellow Christian—of our interactions with each other—to notice and to nourish what God is doing in one another. The Bible says, "Encourage one another and build each other up" (1 Thessalonians 5:11). That's the way Christians should treat each other in general—and it's certainly the way to treat the most precious person in your life.

A godly woman is to be praised by her husband, and by her children as well.

Praised by children

"Honor your father and your mother"—that's one of the Ten Commandments. That's the bedrock commandment, in fact, for how you deal with humans. If you look at the Ten Commandments, the first four commandments deal with God and how you relate to God. The last six commandments deal with how you relate to people. And the first of those is: Honor your father and your mother. That is basic. You start at home. You start out as a child—one of the first commandments that you put into practice is honoring mom and dad.

What does Proverbs say about those who don't? "A foolish man despises his mother" (15:20). "There are those who do not bless their mothers" (30:11). That is not a neutral observation. It's denouncing those who do not bless their mothers.

What do godly children of a godly mother do? "Her children rise up and call her blessed" (31:28). If you're five years old, you don't listen to sermons for very long, do you? Your mind wanders during a long sermon. That's okay. If you're five years old, just listen to this part of the sermon. All you've got to do is say: "Mom, thank you. Mom, I love you." If that's all you do in response to this sermon, you've done one of the great things a five-year-old can do in response to a sermon.

If you're a teenager, you're no longer a little kid. You might say, "I'm not going to draw one of those little scribbly crayon pictures that Mom says is nice but now I know in hindsight was kind of ugly. Now that I'm older, I can't make nice pictures or little goodies for Mom. I can't go out and pick a dandelion for her or expect her to say, 'Oh thank you, honey, that's wonderful.'" When you're in your teen years, you have to find other ways to bless and thank your mom. But don't just think, "Oh, I'm mature now. I've grown beyond all that." It's worth a lot to your mom if she knows that you appreciate her and love her.

Those of us who are grown up might say, "Now that I'm older, I have a new appreciation for how much my mom and my dad did for me! I don't think I appreciated it fully while I was growing up, but I'm beginning to understand more and more." Better late than never. But don't just realize it; do something! Maybe you took your mom for granted growing up, but now that you understand more, it may be time—as a grown-up—to go to her and say: "Mom, I still love you. I still treasure you. And I really am starting to realize how much you've done for me, how much you blessed me." So don't just say to yourself, "I wish when I was 17 I would have complimented my mom more." You can't turn back the clock. All you can do is praise her now, whatever stage of life you're at now. Honor her and bless her. "Her children rise and call her blessed."

Praised by society

At one level, society is what it is. Some of us can try to make a difference here or there. Some can go into the political realm and help to make a difference—right here, right here in our town, in its affairs. Some can get involved in political life. You can vote and have some impact. You can get involved in other aspects of society. Maybe some have artistic gifts—you get involved in entertainment, and maybe you'll produce something that's more family-friendly.

But let's be honest—our society is a mess right now when it comes to understanding family and what is healthy for family. And it's not going to get better anytime soon. We can't count on our current politicians or parties to make things better. Our society is in trouble.

Then again, what is our real society? We need to get our heads on straight, because for too long we think our society is that above which a certain flag waves. Our society is the Church of Jesus Christ. Our primary society is the people called out by God to follow Jesus Christ and love him. And rather than just wringing our hands about what's gone wrong in politics and government, we need to make life what it's meant to be in the church. With the help of the Spirit of God—in our society of disciples, in our church—we are going to praise godly mothers, we are going to praise godly husbands and wives, we're going to encourage children, we're going to "give her the fruit of her hands, and let her works praise her in the gates." For believers "the gates," the public expression of our community, is the Church of Jesus Christ, and we know the gates of hell are not going to prevail against that.

So let's try to make a positive impact where we can in the realm of politics and entertainment and all those other things. But let's realize that if we're to be praising a godly woman in society, then our primary society has to be the community of believers—where we together believe the

Word of God, where we gather, are filled with the Spirit of God, and live by the Spirit of God. So in the church—let her works praise her.

Praised

- By husband
- By children
- By society
- By God

Praised by God

Let's not overlook the phrasing of Proverbs 31:31. It says "Let her works praise her." What she does and who she is speaks for itself. Her very works and who she is are already praising her and showing her to be praiseworthy, even when some who should be praising her aren't doing so. Her works praise her even if husband, children, or society don't notice her works. There is somebody who always notices: God himself.

Woman of God, your husband, children, and church society should be praising you, but even if they don't, you can truly say, "I still have an audience of One. He is the One who created me in his image. He is the One who redeemed me with his own precious blood. He is the One who lives in me by his Holy Spirit. And whoever might be praising or not praising me—if God values me, that matters most. And if I value Him, that matters most.

The Bible calls all of us to praise God. But it also has this wonderful revelation: God praises us who fear and love him. He doesn't worship us in the same sense worship him, but he does praise us. He does say "Well done!" He does smile on those who are walking in his ways.

Who do you think inspired Proverbs 31? No mere human came up with this. This is the Word of God himself. He says, "A woman who fears the Lord is to be praised. When we think of praising a woman of noble character, we can think of husbands, children, and society praising her. But let's not forget—most important of all—God Himself. He's the source of Scripture. He's the one who is praising mothers in this wonderful passage.

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

Unpraised

- By society
- By children
- By husband

Praising mothers

Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: “Many women have done excellently, but you surpass them all.” ... a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised... let her works praise her in the gates. (31:28-31)

A woman's worth

- Warrior
- Wife
- Worker
- Merchant
- Minister
- Mother
- Worshiper

Praising mothers

Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: “Many women have done excellently, but you surpass them all.” ... a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised... let her works praise her in the gates. (31:28-31)

Praised

- By husband
- By children
- By society

Excellent

Rejoice in the wife of your youth. (5:1) A gracious woman gets honor. (11:16) An excellent wife is the crown of her husband (12:4). He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the Lord. (18:22) A prudent wife is from the Lord. (19:14)

Prize her

An excellent wife who can find? She is far more precious than jewels. The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain. She does him good, and not harm, all the days of her life. (31:10-12)

Praise her

Her husband praises her: “Many women have done excellently, but you surpass them all.” (31:28-29)

- Notice her excellence.
- Nourish her excellence.

Praised

- By husband
- By children
- By society

Honor & bless

Honor your father and your mother. (Exodus 20:12). A foolish man despises his mother. (15:20)
There are those do not bless their mothers. (30:11) Her children rise up and call her blessed.
(31:28)

Praised

- By husband
- By children
- By society
- By God

Praising mothers

Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: “Many women have done excellently, but you surpass them all.” ... a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised... let her works praise her in the gates. (31:28-31)