

THE IDEAL WOMAN
Text: Proverbs 31:28-31

INTRO: It has been said that one picture is worth 1,000 words. Whoever coined that phrase must never have read the 31st chapter of Proverbs. The 317 words (NKJ) of vs. 10-31 paint, not one, but many pictures in our minds as we read the poem King Lemuel's mother taught him, & which King Solomon preserved for posterity--the poem about the virtuous woman, the ideal woman.

I. THE IDEAL WOMAN WAS A MOTHER AND A WIFE.

- A. Nothing is said of her physical appearance, facial features, form or figure. All these are of relative unimportance.
- B. Considering the age in which this poem was written, it is not likely she led any crusades or was prominent in society.
- C. Much has changed since Solomon's day. If he were suddenly transported into our age, no doubt he would be greatly amazed. TV, microwave ovens, dish washers, automobiles, air ships, computers, & laser beams are things we take for granted.
 1. One thing that most likely would greatly amaze him would be the advances women have made in modern society: doctors, lawyers, college professors, corp. presidents--almost anything a man can be--successfully.
 2. Yet I am persuaded that with all the amazing changes since his time the inspired writer would have no disposition to make any great changes in his word picture of the ideal woman.
 3. In modern society, the average woman has innumerable options open to her. Without taking away from these many career opportunities, there is no other career she can pursue that is more important or meaningful or fulfilling than

motherhood.

4. Our lives have been changed by such women as Madame Curie, Eleanor Roosevelt, Sandra Day O'Connor, Madlyn Murray O'Hare & numerous others. We have been helpfully influenced by ladies who taught us in school, in Bible classes, & in dozens of other ways--but I dare say in almost every case the ONE woman who influenced us most was our own mother! And you married men--the woman who has had the 2nd greatest influence on you is the mother of your children. **No wonder the ideal woman was a mother & a wife.**

II. EAR MARKS OF THE SUCCESSFUL MOTHER.

- A. Not ideal simply because she was a mother. A few years ago in Houston an abused child was found, who had been locked in a bathroom for years. He is not likely to rise up & call her blessed. He will probably never be able to identify with God as a loving Father. Parenthood & love will probably seem like a contradiction of terms
- B. The ideal woman's success was not an accident or a coincidence.
 1. She was devoted to God, vs. 30. The woman who follows her example will feed, clothe, care for her children--& lead them to Jesus.
 2. She was strong, vs. 25.
 - a. The woman's strength is usually not primarily physical.
 - b. She is strong where it counts most--morally and spiritually. Rom. 1:26 even their w
 - c. This spiritual strength is a trait we are more likely to find in a woman than in a man.

I read somewhere: "It is rare indeed to see a husband & father remain true to God & rear his children for God when his wife is thoughtless & worldly... On the other hand, we have known women who, though married to a godless heathen, went on her sainted course year in and year out to the end of the journey. Not only so, but we have known such to rear a large family of children and win every one of them to Christ & the church. And this she did, not only without the help of her husband, but often with his positive opposition. To achieve a victory of this kind requires strength. It requires the very highest and finest type of strength."

3. The ideal woman was tender, kind, generous, loving, vs. 20, 26.

4. Though she was involved in the market place in addition to her home responsibilities her occupation was that of a homemaker, vs. 16, 24.
vs. 11, 15, 21, 27-31.

SMUDGES ON THE WALL

We are lonely since no little feet go patting on the floor,
And no little dirty fingers make smudges on our door.
No little thoughtless children to let the flies come in,
But now that we are old and lonely, how we'd like to have them back again.

We go into the kitchen to bake a cake at noon,
No little chubby hands are reaching up to lick the spoon.
There are no baby fingers to tie up when they bleed.
It seems our lives are useless now, for us there is no need.

Tho all of them have grown & gone, we still can have a part.
And instead of binding fingers we can bind up wounded hearts.
As they go out to battle with the world and all its woes,
How we want them back again to trample on our toes.

All you who have little ones and feel the need of rest,
Try to be very patient and know that you are blessed.
They will grow up and go away in no time at all,
And you will treasure the beauty of those smudges on the wall.

Let's try to be like children and try to do our part,
And not wander in the world of sin & wound our Maker's heart.
And when this life is over and we get our final call,
May He look with loving kindness at our smudges on the wall.

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Shiloh, Mexia, TX, May 8, 1994