

"A Worthy Woman Who Can Find?"

Proverbs 31:10

It's interesting how much of the word of God deals with the relationship with men and women. It ought not to surprise us since the relationship was brought into existence in the beginning (Genesis 2:21-25).

The scriptures have a great deal to say about this relationship: in Malachi 2:15, the Lord says, "Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth." And, husbands are told, "dwell with your wives according to knowledge, giving honor unto the woman, as unto the weaker vessel, as being also joint-heirs of the grace of life; to the end that your prayers be not hindered" (1 Peter 3:7). Solomon said, "Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favor of Jehovah" (Prov. 18:22), and a "prudent wife is from Jehovah" (19:14). This relationship is beyond man's ability to describe. One proverb stated it best, saying "There are three things which are too wonderful for me, yea, four which I know not ... (the fourth) the way of a man with a maiden" (30:19). This relationship is precious in the eyes of men and God. What greater characteristics could a godly woman attain than those of the "worthy woman" of Proverbs 31:10? Yet, these characteristics are not innate: they are learned, and they are learned by few, i.e., "A worthy woman who can find? For her price is far above rubies."

In a striking contrast to the worthy woman is the one that maketh ashamed: "A worthy woman is the crown of her husband; but she that maketh ashamed is as rottenness in his bones" (Prov. 12:4). The difference in the two women is the difference between wisdom and folly. The scriptures tell us, "Every wise woman buildeth her house; but the foolish plucketh it down with her own hands" (Prov. 14:1). Would not the "foolish" woman stand opposite of the "wise"?, and would not the "wise" stand close to the "worthy"?

Many passages reveal characteristics and conditions without further explanation, as is in Proverbs 14:1. Yet, these passages beg for an explanation. Shall I reveal to you

my wisdom in this matter? I think not: I do not have all the questions, much less all the answers. There are some, though, who have ventured to comment on such. To these, I direct your hearing: various excerpts related to Proverbs 14:1.

1. “A good wife is a great blessing to a family. By a fruitful wife, a family is multiplied and replenished with children, and so built up. But by a prudent wife, one that is pious, industrious, and considerate, the affairs of the family are made to prosper, debts are paid, portions raised, provisions made, the children well educated and maintained, and the family has comfort within doors and credit without; thus is the house built. She looks upon it as her own to take care of, though she knows it is her husband's to bear rule, Esth. 1:22.
2. Many families are brought to ruin by ill housewifery, as well as ill husbandry. A foolish woman, that has no fear of God nor regard to her business, that is willful, and wasteful, and humoursome, that indulges her ease and appetite, and is all for jaunting and feasting, cards and the play-house, though she come to a plentiful estate, and to a family beforehand, she will impoverish and waste it, and will certainly be the ruin of her house as if she plucked it down with her hands; and the husband himself, with all his care, can scarcely prevent it" (Matthew Henry, vol. 3, pg. 866-67). "lit. 'wise women (each one) buildeth' &c. Or else, 'the wisdom of women ... the folly' &c. "Buildeth" -i.e., adorns, establishes, and makes happy her household (Ruth iv. 1, "Rachel and Leah did build the house of Israel"). Such a one is taught experimentally by the Word of God how to bear herself towards her husband, her children, and her servants. Hereby, and by the noble offspring which God gives her, according to His promise, she "buildeth her house." The foolish woman, by her negligence, bad administration, self-indulgence, and provocation of God's displeasure, "plucketh down" her house" (Jamieson, Fausset, Brown, vol. 2, pg. 458). In common vernacular, “It’s not always what labor brings in the front door, but what goes out the back.” ret