

Gleanings from the Book of Proverbs

Mothers

Scripture Reading: Proverbs 31:1-31

Please keep in mind that Proverbs chapter 31 is not just a place in the Bible that teaches about mothers, it is attributed to teachings by a mother. Before we look into those teachings, let’s look around in the book of Proverbs and see what is said concerning mothers.

Proverbs 1:8; 6:20 – Godly mothers work in harmony with the father to teach and enforce the Word of God. This is the ideal. We know that there are situations where mothers must attempt to do this without the support of the father (II Timothy 1:5).

Proverbs 4:3 – Mothers are known for their love and nurturing. Sadly, there are exceptions to this principle (Proverbs 14:1).

Proverbs 10:1; 23:24-25 – Mothers can experience great joy and gladness because of their children. Or they can experience great sorrow and heaviness because of their children.

Proverbs 15:20; 19:26; 20:20; 23:22; 28:24; 30:11,17; – There is great reproach and condemnation for those who despise, dishonor, and mistreat their parents.

Proverbs 31:1-31 – The Words of a King, Reflecting the Teachings of His Mother

Proverbs 31:1-2 – Many scholars believe that Lemuel is a reference to Solomon. If that be true, we are observing the teachings of Bathsheba (II Samuel 11:1-27; Matthew 1:6-17). She speaks with tenderness. Her bond with her son is precious and reflects her commitment to God.

Proverbs 31:3-7 – Her first area of instruction is about keeping priorities. She speaks of keeping his heart, mind, and body free of entanglements that would put him in bondage. Uncontrolled behavior with women and alcohol; living a life of indulgence in pleasure and entertainment is a lifestyle that renders a king unfit for his calling. Keep your mind clear and treat your body as a sanctified vessel to do God’s work.

Note: In Proverbs 31:6-7 Lemuel’s mother is not encouraging people that are poor and miserable to give themselves over to drinking themselves to death. This is a statement of irony. It is actually teaching us that those who use alcohol to escape their problems are those who are destined to destruction and death. Young Lemuel is being counselled to not choose this path in life.

Proverbs 31:8-9 – Life for a King, one who is given great power and authority, should be dedicated to the benefit of others. This is especially true when considering those who helplessly are in bondage to the oppression of others.

Note: This mother taught her son, who was a prince and would become a king. We have been made kings and priests unto God through Jesus Christ (Revelation 1:5-6; I Peter 2:5,9-10). In view of that fact, we should heed the words of Lemuel’s mother and apply them to our lives. See Matthew 5:13-16; Philippians 2:1-16.

Proverbs 31:10-31 – Lemuel’s mother now addresses the subject of obtaining a virtuous wife, who would also, hopefully, become the mother of her son’s children. These great virtues are not intended to be a burdensome call to be a “wonder woman.” Rather, these virtues should reflect the heart-desire and the values of a godly, dedicated wife and mother.

- Proverbs 31:10 – Having a godly wife is worth more than physical wealth (Proverbs 18:22).
- Proverbs 31:11-12 – She is truly an asset to her husband’s efforts. The love and trust between them will provide confidence, hope, peace, and prosperity.
- Proverbs 31:13-19,21-22,24,27 – She is trustworthy, faithful, industrious, and resourceful.
- Proverbs 31:20 – Her compassion extends, beyond her family, to others. She is a gracious and generous giver.
- Proverbs 31:23 – Because she is a great partner and supporter of her husband, he has a good reputation in the community.
- Proverbs 31:25-26 – She focuses on personal strength, integrity, wisdom, and kindness.
- Proverbs 31:30 – Above all else, whatever she does, she does “as unto the Lord.” She is first and foremost a servant of the Lord.
- Proverbs 31:28-30 – Husbands and children would do well to bless and encourage their wife / mother. Emphasis is on the inner person, not outward beauty or the other vain things that the world tries to make popular. This reverent woman is dependent on the Lord. Her service as a wife and mother is sacred to her
- Proverbs 31:31 – As we honor her, it is also important to cooperate with your wife / mother. Let the things that she does prosper and flourish.