

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

First Quarter 2015: *Proverbs*

Lesson 13 “Women and Wine”

Read for this week’s study

Proverbs 31; Job 29:15; Proverbs 8; 1 Cor. 1:21; Rev. 14:13.

Memory Text

“Do not give your strength to women, nor your ways to that which destroys kings. It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine, nor for princes intoxicating drink” (Proverbs 31:3, 4, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. A Toast “To Life”?
- III. A Toast “To Death”
- IV. A Virtuous Woman
- V. She Works
- VI. She Cares
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Moderator: Zdravko Stefanović

A. Introduction: The climax of the book

The last passage in Proverbs is in the form of an alphabetic acrostic poem. That is, each verse begins with the next letter of the Hebrew alphabet. So, verse 10 starts with the letter Aleph, verse 11 starts with the letter Beth, and so on. Since there are 22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet, the poem is 22 verses long. In practical terms the descriptions in the 22 verses illustrate the assertive and industrious approach of this woman. The opening words in verse 10 were translated by the King James Version translators as “the virtuous wife.” Meanings have changed over the centuries. A literal and more accurate translation of the Hebrew would be “heroic woman” or “lady of noble character.” The references to this lady are not limited to chapter 31.

“A wife of noble character is her husband’s crown,
But a disgraceful wife is like decay in his bones” (12:4).

“He who finds a wife finds what is good
And receives favor from the Lord” (18:22).

“Houses and wealth are inherited from parents,
But a prudent wife is from the Lord” (19:14).

B. Characteristics

Some of her characteristics are: precious, diligent, unselfish, strong, wise, generous, reliable, worthy of praise. **Which of these do you desire the most to be a part of your own character?**

According to verse 30 her character is summarized as the woman who respects the Lord. On what basis does the author conclude that this busy lady fears the Lord? He doesn't mention her prayer life or her attendance at church at all. Instead, she works industriously, gets up early, plans ahead for hard times, is an entrepreneur who finds ways to make money for her family and is generous. People look at her respectfully. She is wise and teaches her children with wisdom. She is a kind person. In other words she has put into practice the Lord's instructions that are spelled out in the rest of the book. The description of her helps us to understand more clearly what is meant by “the fear of the Lord.” Simply put, if one respects the Lord, it is evident in the honest and generous and reliable way one lives. **Is this what Jesus meant when He taught about “the light of the world”—not so much by religious practices as by a lifestyle of integrity and compassion?**

C. Mother as the model

1. A surprise: At the end of this book that is so overwhelmingly focused on how young men should live we meet a female heroine whose behavior exemplifies the teachings of the entire book! Under the guise of finding the right woman, the author has highlighted the important practices and values taught in the rest of the book. Mother becomes the model at the very end.
2. Real or unreal. Some readers find the description of her activities an impossible standard. **Do you think that she is real? Would you expect one person to accomplish every one of the activities listed in this poem?**
3. A super woman. **Who is she?** Possible answers include: The mother of Lemuel, Bathsheba, the author of this poem, the ideal person. **Which answer(s) do you favor?**
4. Identity or action. **Is it possible that what she does is more important to the author than who she is?**
5. She reminds us of Lady Wisdom from Proverbs 8. **How do these two women compare with each other?**

6. The outcomes. Notice the blessings that come to the heroic woman and to her family. At the city gate where the men would sit, her husband is shown respect because of her. What the men say to her husband makes him so proud of her that he hurries home and tells her what the other men have been saying, “Many women do heroic things but you surpass them all” (v. 29). Her children also stand up in her presence in respect. In ancient cultures, a man’s status or standing depended in part on his wife’s behavior. But there is no note of submissiveness to her husband or servitude in the description of her. **If a parallel description of the husband were written out, what would it contain?**

D. Notable examples

Verse 30 states “Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord shall be praised.” The woman who fears the Lord is the one who gets praise. The heroic wife takes to heart the counsel and advice in Proverbs and puts it into practice. Her deeds show that she respects God’s instruction. So, we should “Go and do likewise!”

Have you heard of Irena Sendler, Ivan Cankar’s mother, and others?

An old translation of the **alphabetic acrostic** from Proverbs 31:10-31

A man who has found a vigorous wife has found a rare treasure, brought from distant shores.

Bound to her in loving confidence, he will have no need of spoil.

Content, not sorrow, she will bring him as long as life lasts.

Does she not busy herself with wool and thread, plying her hands with ready skills?

Ever she steers her course like some merchant ship, bringing provision from far away.

From early dawn she is up, assigning food to the household, so that each waiting-woman has her share.

Ground must be examined, and bought, and planted out as a vineyard, with the earnings of her toil.

How briskly she girds herself to the task, how tireless are her arms!

Industry, she knows, is well rewarded, and all night long her lamp does not go out.

Jealously she sets her hands to work, her fingers clutch the spindle.

Kindly is her welcome to the poor, her purse ever open to those in need.

Let the snow lie cold if it will, she has no fear for her household; no servant of hers but is warmly clad.

Made by her own hands was the coverlet on her bed, the clothes of lawn and purple that she wears.

None so honoured at the city gate as that husband of hers, when he sits in council with the elders of the land.

Often she will sell linen of her own weaving, or make a girdle for the travelling merchant to buy.

Protected by her own industry and good repute, she greets the morrow with a smile.

Ripe wisdom governs her speech, but it is kindly instructions she gives.

She keeps watch over all that goes on in her house, not content to go through life eating and sleeping.

That is why her children are the first to call her blessed, her husband is loud in her praise:

Unrivaled art thou among all the women, that have enriched their homes.

Vain are the winning ways, beauty is a snare; it is the woman who fears the Lord that will achieve renown.

Work such as her claims its reward; let her life be spoken of with praise at the city gates.

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

“Do not get your stimulus from wine, where there is danger of excess; but let the Holy Spirit stimulate your souls.” It is interesting that through the history of mankind, we have needed some stimulants. Man was never designed to survive on this planet alone, and God, knowing how difficult things would be, had made provision that when we felt depressed the Spirit would stimulate us. When there was hostility the Spirit would bring love. When we were sad, the Spirit would bring joy. “Love, joy, peace,” and that whole long list. But of course when you are under the influence of this Spirit, this Spirit is stimulating you, it never would lead to a loss of self-control, the last of the fruits of the Spirit, so there’s no danger of excess. But man, who has not wanted to come under the stimulus of the Spirit of God, has still needed stimulus; and he’s tried everything under the sun, through the years. And one of the most popular methods of finding love, joy, peace, and all these others, has been alcohol, though the ancients didn’t know what it was. But when they went to religious services, they got filled with the spirit, and they called it spirit. You know, that’s why alcohol is called spirits. You go to the Spirit Shop to get alcohol.

It always amuses me when I drive by “Ye Olde Spirit Shoppe”. It’s the same word for the Holy Spirit. Isn’t it true, when people are depressed, they drink and they feel better. When the

Russians and the British and the Americans were at the Yalta Conference, and you know there wasn't the warmest feeling between them all, the cocktails and the vodka flowed, and they had arms around each other, and they made very ridiculous decisions at times; but they thought it was love! Of course truth wasn't there, or self-control. But all through the years, people have used artificial stimulants.

Now there's only one group that tries to survive with none. They'd rather die than take artificial stimulants. But they're not stimulated by the Holy Spirit, either. They are known as the lukewarm Laodiceans. And God says, "I'd rather you were cold, than just lukewarm." So, you see, what's worse? To be stimulated by an artificial stimulant, or stimulated not at all? Well, neither one is a live option, I hope. The only way is to let the Holy Spirit stimulate you. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in all 66 – Ephesians & Colossians*, recorded May, 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/67MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/68MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

The life on earth is the beginning of the life in heaven; education on earth is an initiation into the principles of heaven; the lifework here is a training for the lifework there. What we now are, in character and holy service is the sure foreshadowing of what we shall be. {AH 535.1}

The faces of men and women who walk and work with God express the peace of heaven. They are surrounded with the atmosphere of heaven. For these souls the kingdom of God has begun. They have Christ's joy, the joy of being a blessing to humanity. They have the honor of being accepted for the Master's use; they are trusted to do His work in His name. {AH 535.2}

To us in the common walks of life heaven may be very near. Angels from the courts above will attend the steps of those who come and go at God's command. {AH 534.5}

Our heavenly Father lays blessings disguised in our pathway, which some will not touch for fear they will detract from their enjoyment. Angels are waiting to see if we embrace opportunities within our reach of doing good—waiting to see if we will bless others, that they in turn may bless us. {TMK 335.4}

We are to cultivate heavenly excellences of character. We are to learn what it means to have good-will toward all men, a sincere desire to be as sunshine and not as shadow in the lives of others. {3BC 1164.3}