



new life fellowship

Sermon Title: **Proverbs: A Vision of Becoming Wise**  
Speaker: **Sherin Swift, Connections & Equipping Pastor**  
Scripture: **Proverbs 31:1-12**

**31** The words of King Lemuel. An oracle that his mother taught him:

<sup>2</sup>No, my son! No, son of my womb!

No, son of my vows!

<sup>3</sup>Do not give your strength to women,  
your ways to those who destroy kings.

<sup>4</sup>It is not for kings, O Lemuel,  
it is not for kings to drink wine,  
or for rulers to desire<sup>[a]</sup> strong drink;

<sup>5</sup>or else they will drink and forget what has been decreed,  
and will pervert the rights of all the afflicted.

<sup>6</sup>Give strong drink to one who is perishing,  
and wine to those in bitter distress;

<sup>7</sup>let them drink and forget their poverty,  
and remember their misery no more.

<sup>8</sup>Speak out for those who cannot speak,  
for the rights of all the destitute.<sup>[b]</sup>

<sup>9</sup>Speak out, judge righteously,  
defend the rights of the poor and needy.

**Ode to a Capable Wife**

<sup>10</sup>A capable wife who can find?

She is far more precious than jewels.

<sup>11</sup>The heart of her husband trusts in her,  
and he will have no lack of gain.

<sup>12</sup>She does him good, and not harm,  
all the days of her life.

(NRSV)

**Sermon Outline:**

Chapter 31 of the book of Proverbs is not just for women, but for everyone. The words in this final chapter of Proverbs are for all of us to pay attention to and live out every day of our lives.

Chapters 1 – 9 of Proverbs help to frame our approach to the Book of Proverbs so that we understand value in the wisdom of this book. The same type of intentional care was given to the penning of Chapters 10 – 29 of Proverbs, as well as the final two chapters to close out the book of Proverbs. When we think about these wise sayings of the time, it makes sense that great deal of care was taken to record these sayings in the book of Proverbs.

Wisdom is not the same as Law.  
There are no guarantees.

Chapter 31 of Proverbs, begin with a mother addressing her son who is a king. In the first few verses, she is asking him to steward his authority well over all those who are under his authority. In verse 10, the mother shifts to talking about her son finding a capable wife, or partner, to help him rule well. “A capable wife” , as is referred to in this passage, might be translated as a wife of valor, strength.

Proverbs starts with a Father talking to his Son.  
Proverbs ends with a Mother talking to her Son.

Proverbs starts with Lady Wisdom.  
Proverbs ends with Wise Lady (Wisdom).

Proverbs starts with: An invitation to listen to Lady Wisdom calling.  
Proverbs ends with: A vision of to emulate of Lady Wisdom.

All the important parts of what Proverbs is teaching us about Lady Wisdom is included in this last chapter of Proverbs. Over and over again we hear that God is offering a life of generosity, integrity, and justice.

We are invited to see this vision of how to live wisely, with integrity and for justice in every part of our lives, partnering with others who are living as wise people.

Chapter 31 is meant to be a vision to inspire all of us and not to exhaust us. We are all worthy of love and respect and don't need to perfect to be a good Christian woman.

You don't need to be a wife or married person to live a Godly Christian life – you are valuable to the Kingdom of God.

If you call Christ Savior, you are called to be the bride of Christ. We are all in covenant with Jesus and joined as one union in Christ.

The invitation for us to embody Proverbs 31 is to live a life of generosity, integrity, and justice.

### **Sermon Summary:**

This Sunday, Sherin Swift, Connections & Equipping Pastor, continues our sermon series on the book of Proverbs. Pastor Sherin focuses on the Proverbs 31 woman and how both men and women can become wise living a Godly life.

### **Sermon Questions:**

1. How does this scripture connect for you the topic that was discussed today? What words resonate with you? Why?
2. In your family of origin, were you taught that you needed to exhibit certain characteristics to be a “good” or “Godly” wife? Or were you encouraged to seek out a “good” or “Godly” wife? What were those characteristics that this type of wife was to embody? Does what you grew up learning still hold true for you today? Are you trying to be that person or are you looking for this type of person? Journal your responses to these questions, offering them up to God in your quiet time.
3. For those of us who don't feel as though we have a lot of power, how do you feel when you hear that the even with small power comes a lot of responsibility? Have you been in a situation where you maybe you spoke out of turn, or your words were not used wisely? What type of effect did your words have on those around you? Are you able to share your responses with your small group?
4. How do you feel when you hear that Chapter 31 is to be a vision to inspire us and not to exhaust us? We are to use Chapter 31 as an ideal and not a standard for us to follow. Does hearing this help free you from trying to live up to this standard? Are you able to reframe the way that you read and approach this chapter of Proverbs? Offer your responses up to God, giving yourself grace, knowing that you are enough and valuable to the Kingdom of God.