

## RESTORING YOUR FAMILY'S FOUNDATION

## STUDY ONE

## Encouragement for Mothers and Others

*Proverbs 31:10–31*

*You can't be richer than having a mother who loved you.*

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

**M**ODERN families are stressed out! Budgets creak under the strain of rising costs, and many parents are forced to take multiple jobs and work longer hours to make ends meet. To get it all done, parents have learned multitasking—and moms are pros at this.

A typical day consists of taking a business call while carpooling the kids to school. Ordering groceries while sitting through an online training event. Watching a livestream videocast of the kids' after-school program while rushing through the take-out line to pick up dinner.

On the way home, mom texts dad to remember to grab the dog at doggie daycare while she picks up the children and swings by curbside delivery at the market. Finally, all the family members converge in the kitchen for a fast meal followed by homework, chores, bath, story time, bed, and the finish line—mom and dad collapsed in front of the TV . . . and that's a smooth day!

Amid the hectic pace, God's Word offers stability. This *Searching the Scriptures* series can help you shore up your family's foundation so that your home can stand secure against life's demands and culture's shifting winds. Mothers, we begin with your indispensable role in the home and the encouragement the Scriptures have for you. This study is a tribute to mothers . . . and *anyone* who seeks to follow God's way of wisdom.



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## Encouragement for Mothers and Others

*Proverbs 31:10–31*



### PREPARE YOUR HEART

As you open God's Word, ask for the Lord to give you wisdom in your parenting role.

*Father, Your Word is my treasure . . . “more desirable than gold” (Psalm 19:10). I receive it thankfully, asking You to walk beside me and show me the way to parent my children in the way You wisely, graciously, and faithfully parent me. I want to learn whatever You may teach. In Jesus' name, amen.*



### TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

We turn to the last chapter of the book of Proverbs as wisdom's grand finale. Throughout Proverbs, wisdom is personified as a woman, and Proverbs 31 contains a storehouse of womanly advice. In this passage, an actual mother was addressing her royal son, “King Lemuel” (Proverbs 31:1). This mother embodied Lady Wisdom, warning her son to avoid vices that ensnare others:

*Do not waste your strength on women. (31:3)*

*It is not for kings, O Lemuel, to guzzle wine. (31:4)*

*Rulers should not crave alcohol. (31:4)*

She challenged her son to use his power and position for good:

*Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves;  
ensure justice for those being crushed.  
Yes, speak up for the poor and helpless,  
and see that they get justice. (31:8–9)*

And then, King Lemuel's mother painted a portrait of “a virtuous and capable wife” (31:10)—the kind of queen whom any mother would seek for her son's wife. Let's take a closer look at the verses that followed, which were written as an acrostic poem. Each verse began with a successive letter in the Hebrew alphabet to aid memorization.



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### *Searching the Scriptures* Method and Resources

*Searching the Scriptures* is a four-step Bible study method that includes observing the passage, interpreting the meaning, correlating with similar passages, and applying the principles. For helpful instruction, consult the Insight for Living Ministries online web page, “[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#).” There, you can also follow the [link to purchase a copy](#) of Pastor Chuck’s book, *Searching the Scriptures: Find the Nourishment Your Soul Needs*.



### Observation: Wisdom in Action

In the observation phase, we examine what the biblical passage says. Take your time as you read. Notice the action words. Observe contrasts and comparisons, descriptions, and poetic patterns. Careful observation is the key to accurate understanding.

### Her Value before God—Proverbs 31:10, 29–31

The portrait in Proverbs 31:10–31 gracefully models three treasures that wives and mothers hold within their grasp. First, notice that the poem begins and ends by proclaiming women’s exquisite value.

Compare [Proverbs 31:10](#) and [31:29–31](#). From God’s perspective, what gives women lasting value? What doesn’t?

*Consider your value before God, which is easy to forget amid all the things you’re responsible for as a mother. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll*



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### Her Roles as Wife and Mother—Proverbs 31:11–12, 28–29

While the thin veneers of charm and beauty might catch the world's eye, the Lord recognizes a woman's inner character . . . and so do her husband and children. According to *Proverbs 31:11–12* and *31:28–29*, how do they honor her in her roles as wife and mother?

*When a husband respects his wife, he listens when she speaks. He values her opinion. The best advice he will get is from his wife. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll*

### Her Character on Display—Proverbs 31:13–27

If this woman looked in the mirror, she would see herself adorned with value from God and honor from her family. No wonder she stepped out in confidence, as the lengthy center section of the poem illustrates.

In what ways do the woman's actions in *31:13–27* display her character, abilities, and personality? Observe the repeated themes and vivid descriptions.

*Here is a woman who is neither fragile nor fearful. She has great character. She is secure. She is “clothed with strength and dignity” (31:25). She's comfortable in her own skin. She's not trying to be the woman next door. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll*



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### Interpretation: A Realistic View of Womanhood

In the interpretation phase of *Searching the Scriptures*, we seek to understand the meaning of the passage. Instead of seeing Proverbs 31 as a list of to-dos for modern moms, let's try viewing it through the lens of biblical wisdom literature and find a clearer interpretation.

The Proverbs 31 woman illustrates themes woven through the preceding thirty chapters of Proverbs—beginning with the core theme. She is “a woman who fears the LORD” (Proverbs 31:30), a concept which ties back to the opening chapter of Proverbs:

*Fear of the LORD is the foundation of true knowledge,  
but fools despise wisdom and discipline. (Proverbs 1:7)*

This is *the* foundation stone for a sturdy home—*fear of the Lord*—anchoring family members to a relational, reverential, and responsive walk with God.

What does it mean to fear the Lord? For help with the answer, consult your [Bible study tools](#), or for online help, consult [Constable's Notes](#) on Proverbs 1:7 on netbible.org.

What happens in families in which the fear of the Lord is absent? What substitutes for God do family members follow instead?



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The virtuous and capable wife in Proverbs 31 drew her identity from God and followed His ways. *Proverbs 31:25–27* summarizes the results of her close walk with God. Write down the qualities she exhibited because she feared the Lord.

If the woman described in Proverbs 31 could speak, what main message would she give to today's wives and mothers?

*Some people have the mistaken idea that if a woman is godly, she is servile and retiring. That doesn't sound like the women in Proverbs 31 to me. Godliness is a broad perspective. It fits every personality. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll*



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### Correlation: Characteristics of a Woman Who Fears the Lord

In the correlation phase of *Searching the Scriptures*, we can enhance our interpretation with principles from similar passages.

What additional wisdom from Proverbs can we learn about fearing the Lord? Write down what each of the following verses teach you about the qualities of a person who fears the Lord.

*Proverbs 8:13:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Proverbs 14:26:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Proverbs 23:17–18:* \_\_\_\_\_

The point of Proverbs 31 isn't to raise an impossible standard and dare you to achieve it. Rather, it is to encourage you to lay the right foundation for your life. Fear the Lord, see your value in Him, walk in His wisdom (not the world's) . . . and then be the capable person God made you to be! Isn't that a freeing thought?



### Application: Sparkling Beauty of the Rediscovered Jewel

Have you been chasing perfection to earn your worth? What does it mean to you that God values you?



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In what ways does secular society devalue you? How can you turn off those negative messages and fill your mind with God's wisdom?

What is one way you'd like to put wisdom into action amid your hectic pace?

Perhaps you have a person in your life who needs wise counsel. Who is this person? What godly wisdom can you pass along? Pray about what you'd like to say, and then write down your thoughts in your own "mother-to-son" letter.

The world often lures wives and mothers away from their invaluable role by promising a more glamorous life outside their God-given identity. "A wise woman builds her *home*" (Proverbs 14:1, emphasis added). There's nothing more worth pouring your life into than your home and the precious ones in your care.



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The answer to life's busy-ness isn't to get *savvier* but *wiser*—less focused on time-saving “hacks” and more focused on bringing God into the time we have. Family life may not slow down, but family time can become richer as we put into practice these biblical principles for the home.



### A FINAL PRAYER

*Father, You have given me wonderful gifts and none are more valuable than the people in my home. Guide me in nurturing them with wisdom and caring for them. Help me to see my value in You, to set my heart on the things that last, and to give myself wholly to following Your way. In Jesus' name, amen.*

