

Proverbs 31:10-31ⁱⁱ

A capable wife who can find? She is far more precious than jewels. The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain. She does him good, and not harm, all the days of her life. She seeks wool and flax, and works with willing hands. She is like the ships of the merchant, she brings her food from far away. She rises while it is still night and provides food for her household and tasks for her servant girls. She considers a field and buys it; with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard. She girds herself with strength, and makes her arms strong. She perceives that her merchandise is profitable. Her lamp does not go out at night. She puts her hands to the distaff, and her hands hold the spindle. She opens her hand to the poor, and reaches out her hands to the needy. She is not afraid for her household when it snows, for all her household are clothed in crimson. She makes herself coverings; her clothing is fine linen and purple. Her husband is known in the city gates, taking his seat among the elders of the land. She makes linen garments and sells them; she supplies the merchant with sashes. Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she laughs at the time to come. She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue. She looks well to the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness. Her children rise up and call her happy; her husband too, and he praises her: "Many women have done excellently, but you surpass them all." Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised. Give her a share in the fruit of her hands, and let her works praise her in the city gates.

ⁱⁱ **About Proverbs 31:10-31**

Proverbs, a collection of concise statements and poetic instructions, is attributed in part to Solomon and to anonymous authors. Many scholars consider 31:10-31 as an epilogue composed

by a later editor who wished to re-present the idealized feminine figure of Wisdom found in chapters 1-9.

Like Wisdom, the ideal wife is of more value than any earthly treasure and is a constant blessing to her family. The description of the wise woman comes to a climax with the summary of verses 30-31. Her wise activities and attitudes spring from her relationship with God. Thus the author describes for us the daily life of an individual who has perfectly mastered the counsel of the rest of the book and embodies it in the way she lives.