

Becoming A Proverbs 31 Man An Introduction

Quite often when we think of Proverbs 31, we think of the Proverbs 31 woman based around verses 10 through 31. What most don't consider is that this applies to men as well, perhaps even more so, particularly when you consider that we all are striving to be the bride of Messiah.

I am sure you have heard it say that 'behind every strong man there is a stronger woman'. I'd like you to rephrase that statement a bit:

“A strong man is made stronger by his bride.”

If he is strong and she is weak, then this can lead to all kinds of marital problems. And if she is strong, and he is weak, we might quickly find ourselves dealing with a classic case of Ahab and Jezebel! Being unequally yoked in this life with a partner who is not sharing the same belief system as you is a dangerous road to travel!

The beauty of Yahweh's plan, 'one man and one woman echad (united) for life' (Mark 10:6-8), is that when a man, strong in his faith, is supported by his bride, also strong in her faith, the synergy they create together not only allows them to accomplish much, but also they both grow in strength that much faster, and far beyond what each was capable of separately!

So this thought brings out the question:

‘If I want this to be true in my life, how then do I become a stronger man?’

Well, this is my goal!

I undertook this project to not only help me understand what it means to be a strong individual in my faith, but to guide me, in every aspect of my life, to become the bride of Messiah!

My desire is for you to also gain new insights into Proverbs 31 and perhaps find new applications of it in your life too!

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Chapter 1: A Birds Eye View

Let us begin with a verse by verse read through of Proverbs 31. And discuss a few ideas on how this might apply to us in our lives today.

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Pro 31:1 The words of King Lemuel, the prophecy that his mother taught him:

This starts out by Solomon remembering the advice his mother, Bathsheba, taught him when he was young. How many times in life do we take for granted what our mother taught us at a young age, and yet, years later find that it is a strong foundation in our understanding of the world around us?

Solomon was no exception.

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Pro 31:2 What, my son? And what, the son of my womb? And what, the son of my vows?

Bathsheba saw him as a completion of a promise; fruit she bore, not only to her husband ('son of my womb'), but it seems also as a completion of a vow to Yahweh ('son of my vows') as she clearly knew he was destined to King. Any vow we make is made to Yahweh. And as a result, King Solomon, as is each of us born through a vow, belongs to Yahweh. Even the very name used in this chapter, Lemuel, which is used no where else in scripture means "Belonging to El" (Strong's H3927).

Lev 27:2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When a man shall makes a singular vow, the persons shall be for Yahweh by thy estimation.

Solomon reiterates this gem he has learned, in Ecclesiastes, where he tells us that every vow we make we will be held accountable to:

Ecc 5:5 Better it is that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay.

And the book of Jacob assures us that every vow we make we will be held accountable for, and as a result should be very careful with our words:

Jac 5:12 But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay, lest ye fall into condemnation.

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Pro 31:3 Give not thy strength unto women, nor thy ways to that which destroyeth kings.

The first advice Bathsheba gave to him was not to pursue things that will doom him to destruction. If only he had heeded this advice! We all have had, or do have, things in our life that we do, that we know aren't good for us, and yet we do them anyways. We may even spend too much time worrying about frivolous activities, of which there is no profit, and not enough time focusing on how to make Yahweh's will in our lives a reality. This misdirected energy can destroy even a king.

And what better example of that is there except Solomon himself? He may not have practiced it himself, but at least he had the wisdom to pass this advice on to his sons! And in turn to us!

If you are pursuing activities, and knowledge, that is outside of Yahweh's will for you in your life, then it is pure vanity, and as such it will lead to your destruction!

Job 15:31 Let not him that is deceived trust in vanity; for vanity shall be his recompence.

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Pro 31:4 It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine, nor for princes strong drink:

Clearly Bathsheba was grooming him to be king, and even though he was a prince, and prized by his father David, she gave him great counsel and guidance that stuck with him.

This too applies to us. In our lives we cannot allow any vice, any addiction, or any distraction to pull our focus off course. Whether it be wine, or smoking, or a can of coke, or that new video game that just came out; what ever it is, if you allow it to shift your focus, even just a little bit, you may soon find yourself heading in a whole different direction!

Think about it this way, when the U.S. sent astronauts to the moon, if their rocket was off course by one degree, just one little degree, when they launched into space; that one degree over the 384,400 kilometers it takes to reach the moon would have put them 6,710 kilometers (4,169 miles!) off course by the time they reached the moon. But they never would have reached the moon! Not only would they have missed it completely, but it would have cost them all their lives as they would have flown off into space never to return!

Fortunately for us, this is where grace comes in, Yahweh's grace allows us time to make those course corrections we need in our life, in order to obtain the goal: Eternal Life!

Not to mention that to put anything before Yahweh is idolatry, which in and of itself is worthy of a death sentence (Exo 20:4-5).

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Pro 31:5 Lest they drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted.

These are two additional strong reasons to not allow these mental and physical lusts to take control of our lives! So that we have a clear mind, not tainted by the world, to make decisions and judgments that need to be led by Yahweh, and also that we may never forget Yahweh's commandments, statutes and judgments to pervert them!

What more reason than that do we need to take the power away from our addictions and start focusing on Yahweh's will, and it's fulfillment in our life?

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Pro 31:6 Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts.

Compassion. This is a strong character trait that every true believer should strive to have in their life. Compassion to care not only for those who are close to us and in a clear need (one perishing), but also to those who may never have experienced the kindness of someone with genuine compassion (heavy hearted).

An added benefit of working on compassion in our lives is that through it we can nurture **ALL** of the Fruits of the Spirit! Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness and Self-Control!

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Pro 31:7 Let him drink, and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more.

This poverty speaks, I think, less to the lack of financial wealth, as the world would measure poverty, but more to the poor in spirit, those lacking the understanding of the Good News message! Those whom, either through ignorance or for their own protection, Yahweh has not revealed Himself to.

And perhaps, just perhaps, through your compassion and exhibition of the Fruits of the Spirit, they too will know His truth, and 'remember his misery no more'!

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Pro 31:8 Open thy mouth for the dumb in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction.

Standing in the gap. Perhaps your entire life, every experience you have had, every trial Yahweh has brought you through, is for one single purpose; to stand between the unjustly persecuted and the executioner. Perhaps your whole life was for this one moment. Do you truly want to miss it? Do you honestly think that you will be forgiven if you don't act?

Est 4:14 For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?

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Pro 31:9 Open thy mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy.

Joh 7:24 Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment

How can you possibly judge righteously if you don't know right from wrong? Good from evil? Blessing from cursing? You couldn't defend yourself, much less the poor and needy, without the right training, without a strong foundation in the Truth; in the Bible!

It is amazing how many people focus on the Proverbs 31 woman, and they always start at verse 10! Look back at how much you may have missed, by dismissing these first 9 verses! There is so much there, so much of Yahweh's truth! His desire for you in your life! And yet so many men skim through this chapter thinking it only applies to women. And so many women only start at verse 10!

A note for the guys out there reading this: from this point forward I want you to ignore one thing: the pronoun 'she'. I don't want you to dismiss it arbitrarily thinking it only applies to women. I don't want it to distract you from the message contained within each verse. From Yahweh's will and desire for how we should be living our lives, in order to grow in our strength and our character in service of Him!

The rest of this chapter not only shows us, as men, whom Yahweh desires us associate with in this life, but, in my opinion, it also shows us to a much greater extent how we are to be a servant of Yahweh and become the bride of Yahshua Messiah!

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Pro 31:10 Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies.

Pro 12:4 A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: but she that maketh ashamed is as rottenness in his bones.

We each search for a partner in this life; be it for companionship, or a desire to build a family, or for a myriad of other reasons. But how many of us look within ourselves to see what virtues we bring to the table? What gifts and Fruits of the Spirit do we exhibit, and strive to grow in, in order to be valued far above jewels?

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Pro 31:11 The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil.

Have you ever violated someone's trust? Have you ever had someone else violate yours? We live in a world of truce breakers. And as such, we need to strive every day to be like Daniel, and be faultless in the eyes of others. And the result of this is that everyone gains!

Dan 6:4b ...but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him.

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Pro 31:12 She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.

Admit it, you've had that moment, or twenty moments, where you have been frustrated, or distracted, or disconcerted, or just outright flustered. And in those moments, we have dealt less than fairly with those around us. We've let our emotions control a situation, and not allowed shalom (peace) to take over in order to deal well with those whom we love.

The more distant a person is from us the more room for patience we seem to have.

Why is it that those whom we love the most we have the least room for patience?

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Pro 31:13 She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands.

I have never sheered a sheep in my life, and isn't flax a hard little brown seed someone said was good for us? Fortunately for me, there is more here than wool and linen!

Have you ever taken your skill set, the skill set that Yahweh has given you, and used them in a purely selfless way to help another? Perhaps even to your own

detriment, or at your own expense? If you have then you can truly understand what it means to ‘take delight in the works of your hands’!

And if you haven’t then you, at least thus far, have missed out on one of the purest forms of satisfaction! But don’t worry! That maybe why you are reading this! Perhaps you are being given an opportunity to work on changing that! Praise Yahweh for that!

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Pro 31:14 She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar.

Remember when you ordered a special item which no one understood why you wasted your money on it, but you had to have it? Do you remember that feeling inside as the delivery man walks up your driveway with the much anticipated item in his hand? The delivery van is our merchant ship of today; it brings us stuff from the four corners of the globe.

But there is more to life than just *stuff*. And when you are on this walk, stuff is nearly meaningless, or at least it should be! The deeper idea here is that you will go to any length, to any distance, in order to provide for those who trust in you for provision. Just as Yahshua gave his life to provide for our future, we too need to set no limit on what we will sacrifice for Him.

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Pro 31:15 She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens.

Let’s face it. We all like to sleep in from time to time. But very few of us rise *before* the sun! Those who do tend to have a track record of accomplishing more with their day. Putting the rest of us to shame!

Here also, not only does she rise early, but she isn’t too tired to make sure that her maidens get a portion of the spoil! Presumably to share with their families.

When we have a prized catch that we think we worked hard for, rose early to find, in order to share with our family, do we also think to those around us who may not have done the same? Or do we say indignantly ‘they got what they deserved’ and stuff our face with our game? Even at the simplest level, we need to understand that none of this *stuff* is ours. It all belongs to Yahweh, and as such, until we give our Father, His ten percent, we do not even have the authority to delegate the other ninety! And that other ninety percent we are not to horde under our mattress. It is to be used to feed our family, but also it needs to be used to provide for those around us.

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Pro 31:16 She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard.

‘She examined a field...’ (as some translations have it) This makes me think of her walking around like a storybook detective, magnifying glass in hand, searching out every inch. In reality, it is very much like that. Before she decides on a field to purchase and plant, she searches it out thoroughly in order to gain insight to determine if that land will bare fruit, if that land will be worth her money, time, and effort, and she does not purchase it only because she likes working hard. It comes down to focusing our efforts in a specific area of need, in order to maximize the fruit born from the work of our hands.

Do you ever look that deeply into your ministry work? Into your *life*? When is the last time you stepped back and took an honest, hard look at your actions? Have you just been casting your seeds upon the stony places (Mat 13:20)? Perhaps you are tilling a field that has yielded no fruit meanwhile your neighbor has a field with more fruit than he can handle alone and needs a simple servant to help in its care?

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Pro 31:17 She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms.

1Ti 4:7 But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto righteousness.

1Ti 4:8 For bodily exercise profiteth little: but reverence is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

We understand from 1 Timothy that physical strength and exercise profits is a little, but when we speak of strength, we forget the opposite: laziness and weakness. Our strength comes through our Messiah, Yahshua. But this requires action on our part. If we do not take an active role in our spiritual lives, and bring that into every aspect of our life we have no strength, and we risk losing our eternal life over it. Our righteousness **is our** strength.

A wise elder once told me:

“Righteousness without growth becomes self-righteousness.”

And in light of this verse I’d like to add:

“Our strength, without exercise becomes our weakness.”

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Pro 31:18 She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night.

I have a secret to share: I have cooked meals before and until they were done I have had no clue if they would taste good or not. So I let my wife be the taste tester, with mixed results. She hasn't kicked me out of the kitchen, so I'm taking that as a good sign!

But it is to each of us, to assess our gain, the fruit we are baring for the Kingdom, and decide whether it is pure, and holy, and good. Just as I should be the one taste testing dinner!

What may seem at first glance to be two random thoughts is by no means coincidence. Where this verse is started with our merchandise (the fruit we bear), our understanding of its taste (its worth to Yahweh) is measured under the candle (the Bible). Without the Bible there to guide us how can we ever measure and test our 'merchandise' and understand its value to Elohim?

Psa 119:105 Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

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Pro 31:19 She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff.

I had never heard of a distaff, other than reading it in the Bible, so I had to look it up (Strong's H6418). Turns out it seems no one else knows what it is either! But they all seem to agree it is something similar to a spindle and is used to weave or sew.

Regardless of what it is, if you are only focusing on the surface here, you are totally missing the mark.

When 'she layeth forth her hands' The word for Layeth (Strong's H7971) is understood to be done with confidence, and with skill. Do you have confidence that the works of your hands are edifying to Yahweh, and those around you? Do you have the skills necessary to conduct a ministry? Skills that come through constant practice, focus, and training?

It was once told to me that 'perfect practice makes perfect.' Now we know we cannot be perfect, as Yahshua and Yahweh are perfect. But we can practice and learn in such a way that we are constantly improving our skill set, with less and less mistakes.

Imagine a toolbox. If all you have in there is a hammer, then everything is a nail. But if you add in a roll of duct tape, suddenly a whole new world of opportunities to use your tools has opened up! As you grow in your walk and develop new skills, you will be filling your toolbox with the tools Elohim deems necessary for you to complete any task He assigns to you. And some things He may put you through are specifically to acquire a new tool!

A great way to acquire new tools is to apprentice yourself under someone who has the tool you desire to acquire. This is the core of discipleship. Going out, two by two, and building the tools needed to continue growing, and to help others grow as well.

Mar 6:7 And he called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits;

Another thing you need to do with that toolbox is sharpen the old tools, keep them from rusting away from lack of use. We've all heard it said 'if you don't use it, you'll lose it' and that has never been more true than when applied to the Gifts and Fruits of the Spirit.

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Pro 31:20 She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.

Each one of us needs to build (in some cases tear down and rebuild) out lives to be a servant oriented life. We should not only have time set apart to address specific needs as they arise, but also be watching for the immediate needs as they occur.

We have all passed by a homeless man with a sign 'will work for food'. When is the last time you have stopped the car, and seen if they would come mow your lawn? Or wash your car? Or simply had a bagged lunch in the back seat for just such an encounter? These are your opportunities to be a light in the world. Did you miss them?

Mat 25:35 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

Mat 25:36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

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Pro 31:21 She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet.

'She is not afraid.' And why is she not afraid? Because she has planned ahead and prepared for every contingency, and possible obstacle. She has had the foresight to look far enough into the future to make sure there are warm clothes to wear, not just for herself, but for her entire household!

We need to build, for ourselves, a plan. A plan of action, that is thought out, in detail, covering all aspects of our life even the parts we don't want to talk about,

and make sure there are emergency preparedness plans for every unexpected road block. There are no unforeseen outcomes if you've planned for them all!

We also need to make our plans in such a way, so as to build our lives into a servant's life. We need to make our plans *only* within the boundaries of Yahweh's will for us in our lives.

Pro 16:9 A man's heart deviseth his way: but Yahweh directeth his steps.

If we make our plans according to His will there is nothing on this planet that can stop them from happening. Because nothing happens unless Yahweh allows it.

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Pro 31:22 She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple.

First impressions are more important than most people realize. It only takes a fraction of a second to build an impression, and opinion, about someone. And the single biggest factor in that is our outer appearance. There are many factors to this: clean, well kept clothing, showering, shaving, hair grooming, and even how we carry ourselves, our posture, a confident smile, and good eye contact all play into building a good first impression.

Every day matters, as it may be our last, and none of us knows who Yahweh may put in our path today. This isn't something to only practice at Sabbath meetings!

We also need to be careful on the other side of this. When we are the one building a first impression of another, we need to be careful to not have any preconceived ideas as to who that person is, and make judgments about their character before we even give them a chance to prove themselves trustworthy!

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Pro 31:23 Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land.

Who we associate ourselves with, even our family, reflects upon us. Who we associate with, *especially our family*, influences us. This could weaken our character and ministry. But it is just as important to remember that this most definitely can *strengthen* our character, *strengthen* our resolve, *strengthen* our relationships, and *strengthen* our faith!

If the man is noble of character: honest, sincere, caring, then these things reflect upon his wife as well.

If he is known to be untrustworthy, this too will reflect upon his wife.

In a relationship between a man and a woman, both parties are in a position of power and in a position of influence. We greatly effect the others outlook, insight, attitude, and bias in any given situation. The man could not be sitting in the gate (a position of honor and judgment making) if his spouse was a constant negative influence in his life. He gains respect from the others around him when his own life and his own house is in order.

This comes through mutual support. He supports and represents his household, and in turn she supports and represents his character.

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Pro 31:24 She maketh fine linen, and selleth it; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant.

Not only is the Proverbs 31 woman supporting her husband in his ministry, but she is also supporting her household by having a ministry of her own. Idle hands are the devil's playground. And in our lives, as believers, the adversary is constantly looking for ways to creep into our lives and tear us apart. Down time, or idle time, is one of the simplest ways for him to attack us!

We need to fill our days, not only working out our own salvation, but also in service to those with whom we surround ourselves, in order to help them in their ministry with the gifts that Yahweh has blessed us with.

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Pro 31:25 Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come.

Remember from verse 17 we understand that our righteousness is our strength. Also our attitudes, actions, and appearance is our honor. If we have a negative outlook on life, it will affect us, and those around us (if they stay around for long). When we always have a smile on our face, and have a kind word to say, how can we do anything else but rejoice at the Day to come?

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Pro 31:26 She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness.

Open mouth, insert foot. That happens far too often in the world today. Everyone wants to just throw their opinion in on a situation, without even asking if that opinion is needed!

We have two ears and one mouth. We should be slow to speak and quick to hear. If we do not hear what the other person is saying how can we even know what advice to give? If we are not grounded in sound doctrine; doctrine that Yahweh Himself gave us through His Bible, how can we ever even know what true wisdom is?

And if we do speak, it should always be done from love. Kindness and compassion are paramount to building rapport with others, especially if we do have sound wisdom for them that we believe they need to hear!

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Pro 31:27 She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.

As the bride, we need to be aware of the actions of those around us, we need to discern if an action an individual took is of Elohim or not, and take action when necessary. If we walk through life blindly and live as the world tells us: 'don't judge', then we are condoning their sin, and in doing so we also are adding in our own sin for not putting their sin outside the camp.

Remember Achan, in Joshua chapter 7. He stole from items that were set apart to Yahweh, and hid them under his tent. Now, I can not imagine, that not one person in his entire household did not know anything about it. But the ramifications of having that sin inside the camp were widespread!

Jos 7:24 And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had: and they brought them unto the valley of Achor.

Jos 7:25 And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? Yahweh shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones.

His sin, not only caused the Israelites to lose battles against the city of Ai, but his sin caused his entire family, and everything that belonged to him, to become cursed, burned, and buried in rocks.

One of our commissions, as the spiritual people of Yahweh, is to always be watchful, always be diligent, and to be quick to isolate sin. Not only within ourselves, but also to purify our relationships with those whom we surround ourselves. This is at the heart of sanctification. If we put the sin out of the camp, those who are still inside the camp can grow and flourish that much more!

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Pro 31:28 Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her.

We are blessed way beyond what we could ever imagine to impart upon others. We are blessed to have the grace of Yahweh through the blood of His Son Yahshua! And yet Yahshua takes it even further; He tells us that if we bless others He in turn will bless us that much more!

Luk 6:38 Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

This is Yahweh's economy. And it never works on paper. Because Yahweh's ways are not man's ways!

When we give for His purposes, He, in turn, will give us blessing beyond imagination! Don't believe me? Try it. Follow Yahweh's will and see how much He will bless you!

And the blessings we receive will be a powerful witness to others that our obedience to Yahweh comes first, and that He is not negligent in His promises!

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Pro 31:29 Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.

The Hebrew word used here for virtuously (Strong's H2428) can be understood as working with strength, working with power, with substance.

To me, how I understand this is that I am just another worker in the field. The harvest is ripe, and even though there are many out there doing their work, if I am focused in the right direction, and working with all my strength to bear as much fruit as I can in the time I am allotted, then my reward will exceed my every desire and expectation.

But also this word virtue can be taken as valor (again Strong's H2428). And from this understanding, through all of my labors I need to always take the high road, I need to always keep myself in check and remember Whose employ I am in. Because without my Saviour, I am nothing. And to keep that in perspective means that any *and all* fruit that I am privileged enough to work with must be born through virtue, and with valor, and this is truly the only way in which it can be pure. And that none of it is mine, all glory goes to Yahweh!

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Pro 31:30 Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth YHWH, she shall be praised.

No one *should* be able to attack me for my character. If I am ever attacked it is because they are focused on my character flaws. We not only need to constantly be looking internally to refine ourselves, but we also need to be careful to never judge a book by its cover. We should never show favoritism to someone because of their charm, wit, intellect, position, or beauty. We should never be a respecter of faces, in any form.

If I **walk with conviction**, I *will* **walk without compromise**, which *is* **being mature in my faith**, and that *leads* to **bearing fruit for the Kingdom**.

It has to be done in that order, and the praise will come. Perhaps not in this lifetime, but this life is vanity anyways and who needs it!

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Pro 31:31 Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates.

Did you notice that this verse doesn't say she *takes* of the fruits? Or that she *seeks* the praise? All too often some people desire a pat on the back. They will not take on seemingly menial tasks in order to help a brother, unless, they get some kind of brownie points for it. They desire a ministry which they can brag about, and one that is seen by many, that puts them in the spotlight. Through that they puff themselves up and try and make themselves appear great in the eyes of others. There is no profit in this!

Mat 6:1 Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.

Mat 6:2 Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

Mat 6:3 But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:

Mat 6:4 That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.

We need to assess, within ourselves, what our motivations for doing any given action are, particularly if that action puts us out front, in the eyes of others. If your intentions are anything but pure, look out! Only Yahweh knows the heart of man, and it is never my place to condemn, I simply desire that you look within yourself for that answer.

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Chapter 2: Making A Plan Of Attack

By now you may have the same questions running through your head as I myself had when I began this study. How can I begin to apply these principles to my life? How can I become the Proverbs 31 bride? As I asked myself these questions I prayed in order to seek His will. And this plan of action is the path He has shown me. I do not claim it to be the only way, as it is focused around the things that I know I need to work on.

Understanding that this will require a more diligent, daily, active focus on my part, I have defined a specific purpose statement for what I intended to do and I laid out a plan of action. This method, by the way, is how nearly every successful person in the world is able to discipline themselves to *focus, achieve, and maintain* their goals!

So let us start by gathering from Proverbs 31 all the character traits we wish to develop within ourselves, sorted and organized, in order to begin laying out a plan. Let's start by looking at the goal.

What is your desired outcome from this life change?

Please note: your goal in this does not necessarily need to be exactly like mine. As Yahweh has a different purpose for each one of us in our lives, so too our goals may seem to vary somewhat from one another.

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The Goal

Within the context of Proverbs 31, my purpose in this life is to be, not only the male counterpart to all these traits, but also to embody these characteristics, in my role in the bride of Messiah.

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The Plan

I know that in order to accomplish this above stated goal it will require me to shift and narrow my focus in life. In order to do this I know that I do not want to allow lusts of the flesh, or mind, to distract me from a life of service. I also know that I can not do this alone. Not only do I need Yahweh's help and guidance in this but I also need to employ an accountability partner and also to seek advice from those around me.

A great place to seek support in any pursuit is through the role models Yahweh has put in your life.

Pro 27:17 Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.

This can easily be accomplished by staying in steady communication with my mentors and friends about my ministry and personal life. I also need to take seriously their insight and counsel. I can also keep apprised of others ministries through them so that if I spot a need in another's ministry where I can utilize my gifts, I can support my brethren as well. If I am given a suggestion, as long as it is not a clear violation of Yahweh's commands I should take seriously all recommendations from them, after all, Yahweh put them in my life for my growth! And I don't know everything, I surely know that others can see where I have drifted off track quicker than I can sometimes.

If I am going to be successful in this goal, I need to acknowledge my single biggest adversary: **myself**.

In order to be successful I am going to need to take my every thought into captivity. This starts with my prayer life and Bible study. And that should be a daily focus for me. There are other adversaries to take into account, society and Satan for example, but if I can control myself, they can have no effect! There has not been one sin in my life that I did not commit. 'The devil made me do it' is a lie. I did it! ...all by myself.

But also my ego needs to be squished down. And for me personally that often rears its ugly head in conversations. I have a tendency to interrupt others while they are talking and talk over them, instead of valuing their ideas and input as much as I seem to value my own. So I need to learn to be slow to speak and quick to hear.

Pro 29:20 Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words? There is more hope of a fool than of him.

I think I can accomplish this with a few simple practices. I should maintain eye contact and focus within the conversation. I can repeat, in my head, what people tell me, as they are telling me. I can also place my tongue on the roof of my mouth when others are talking or cover my mouth with my hand while others are talking, and wait for them to pause before offering a response (if one is even needed) in order to keep myself from interrupting them. And lastly I need to not step into the conversations of others that have nothing to do with me. With practice, these things should help me be a better listener! And keep the ego in check!

Another area I need to work on is to reduce worldly influences that tempt me away from my focus. And a big one for me is the internet. I need to limit internet use, news, and email exposure, to only what is minimally necessary.

And so that I do not easily get distracted I should always keep focused on the goal I set for myself. To do this I should build a plan of action and I need to review it as often as necessary, but never less than monthly, in order to maintain perspective. And I should write weekly objectives down as well so that I always meet goals and deadlines.

All of this seems like a good solid foundation upon which I can build the new me. So now I need to pull out of Proverbs 31 not only some of the new character traits I want to develop, but also those that I already possess. Remember, not only do you want to acquire new tools, but you cannot neglect the ones in your toolbox already!

One of the traits that I prize highly, and value greatly, in others is honesty and trust. I think there is not one single kingdom in the world that would last without this. So I need to focus on continuing to be honest and sincere in all my words and deeds. In doing this I need to watch the words I speak so I should focus and form a complete thought before speaking aloud. I should never dismiss what others say, and as long as it is not in conflict with Yahweh's will I should incorporate their input into my life.

Sometimes I can't see the forest for the trees, but maybe my brother can!

I also should only utilize the Matthew 18 (Matt 18:15-17) process, when necessary, to support my brother or sister I may find in a fault. And I need to always repent to others directly, and quickly, when I sin against them.

A big part of being trustworthy is keeping my word with others. This comes through focus. Focus on the words that I speak. Focus on completing my commitments quickly, immediately fulfilling any tasks which can be completed without delay. And if it is a longer term commitment that can't be completed quickly, I should not trust my memory and should write it down. I need to do this when the commitment is made, along with an expected timeframe for completion.

To prevent being lost in an assumption, resulting in disappointment and wasted time, I need to discuss with the other parties involved all necessary turn around times, planned meetings, etc. in order to have an agenda outlined from the beginning. I need to ask quality follow-up questions, for clarity, as to not be led to misunderstand the intent and desired outcome of a commitment that I have made. For me it is a sign of respect when others follow through quickly and correctly in all commitments. So I, too, need to stick to timelines, at all times, and I should have others review the work, before the deadline for any issues.

I need to be diligent in being compassionate to the physical and emotional needs in others. This requires me to be alert and attentive to health and emotional changes in others. And I should ask sincere questions of them in private. If there is another who can help them better than I can, I need to seek others to help in service for those in need. To know who to ask I need to be aware of the gifts of others and be mindful how they can best be utilized and need to coordinate with relevant parties to best use the gifts we each have.

I need to always be aware of unjust persecution of brethren, and not just brethren, but of everyone! I need to stand in the gap, no matter the consequence for me. Before I take action I must pray for protection and discernment prior to stepping into a given situation. I need to be mindful of injustices and trials others are going through and be ready to step in, if needed, to protect the unprotected. And I should always stop immediate threats, and then assess the situation, before taking any additional action. In this I need to be careful not to make hasty, misinformed judgments.

I can prevent myself from making hasty judgments by not stepping into a situation before I have the facts. I should gather the facts by listening to all parties involved, consult others when necessary and pray for Yahweh's guidance.

If it comes to me to make a judgment, I must be fair in all my actions, seek Yahweh's will for all judgments I am asked to make, and never make them in haste. This can be accomplished through prayer before every decision, and following the Matthew 18 (Matt 18:15-17) process.

As a believer in Messiah I need to show trust in others, as I desire them to trust in me. In order to prove myself trustworthy I should keep private conversations private. I should not share observations and second hand information. I need to open up and reveal my vulnerabilities to those around me, and allow others to complete tasks without my direct oversight with the knowledge that they are perfectly capable of performing those tasks. And I must always forgive and forget when others seek forgiveness, and possibly even when they don't.

I desire to always provide for the needs, and spiritual growth of my family. This can be accomplished through being diligent in our finances. I need to discuss plans and ideas well in advance with my family and always be looking at potential outcomes in order to identify pros and cons of all decisions.

I should not incur any major expenses without counseling with my wife and always avoid instant gratification purchases in order to allow time for seeking Yahweh's will through prayer. A good practice for me is to wait a minimum of 24 hours before spending a sum larger than \$20. I should always have a financial reserve for emergencies and unexpected expenses, including laying out a budget and sticking to it, and any deviation needs to be accounted for. I should always be watchful of obstacles and redirect our course when needed and never make rash, off the cuff decisions.

In order for me to be a stronger man, I need to support my wife to be stronger as well. I need to be kind, caring, patient, and loving with my wife. I should always show her I care by helping more with household tasks such as making the bed, helping with dishes, and taking over dinner preparation. It is never my place to be a dictator to her. We need to work together and complement each other in our different functions if we are to fulfill our mission properly. I need to create an environment in which she will feel free to encourage, assist, and correct me. In case there is some wrong doing, it is both her duty and my duty to stand in the gap and make the other aware of the issue and offer constructive criticism. Everybody has a blind spot when it comes to seeing his or her flaws objectively.

Pro 12:1 Whoever loves instruction loves knowledge, but he who hates correction is like a brute animal.

Yup. That's me (the brute).

With her I must always be slow to frustration, and verbalize my concerns appropriately. Silence is good, too much silence is not. One example: If I do not remain sleeping long after she gets up I can accomplish more in a day, and not cause her the undue frustration of my sleeping in.

I need to be mindful, supportive, and helpful to her in all ways in order to meet her goals.

Constant communication is a must. I must prove my worth to her through my actions.

Idleness is not something I want to allow in my life. If it creeps in I am opening a door for the adversary to come and corrupt my way. I need to make all the works of my hands be for the Kingdom of Yahweh. I need to utilize the skills, fruits and gifts Yahweh gave me to help my family, my brethren, and anyone He puts in my path.

Pro 26:13 The slothful man saith, There is a lion in the way; a lion is in the streets.

Pro 26:14 As the door turneth upon his hinges, so doth the slothful upon his bed.

Pro 26:15 The slothful hideth his hand in his bosom; it grieveth him to bring it again to his mouth.

Pro 26:16 The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason.

I need to make prudent decisions on where we live, the work I do, and the plans we make in order to be efficient with the time I am given. This can be accomplished through prayer, fasting and Bible study. If I set a monthly meeting for my wife, and myself, for example on the first of every month, we can reassess

where we are relative to the fruit we are bearing, and also that our focus is on Yahweh's longer terms goals in our life.

I need to look far enough ahead to anticipate a tool I may be lacking in my toolbox. I need to study and develop any necessary new skills in order to maximize the results. I need to identify areas of need within the congregation and my household and determine if my skill set can help, or if it is best left to others.

I should always use my gifts to help others expand their ministries by offering assistance to others when a need is observed, and never refuse to help when requested. I should also be mindful to not be distracted away from ministry work for too long so as not to lose momentum and focus. I can utilize my wife as an accountability partner to maintain focus and encouragement in all things. For some things I may need to employ someone else as my accountability partner.

My strength is not physical. My strength comes from Yahweh.

Php 4:13 I can do all things through the Messiah which strengtheneth me.

This comes through fear of, faith in, and following the teachings of Yahshua and Yahweh. And this means I need to embrace the true biblical definitions of wisdom and understanding.

Job 28:28 And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of Yahweh, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.

I need to always be ready to prove this to myself and to others. This is accomplished through complete emersion in prayer, Bible study, research, fasting, and repentance.

I should also stay positive in times of trial and when others need encouragement. A negative attitude needs to be quarantined perhaps even more so than a physical illness!

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Chapter 3: Bringing It All Together

Okay, now that I have laid out all the concepts that I have learned in Proverbs 31, I need to build it into a very specific plan of action, step by step, so that I can have a clear and concise plan of action to this new life I am building for myself.

- 1) Do not allow lusts of the flesh, or mind, to distract me from a life of service
 - i) Submit to and consult with people Yahweh has put in my life when guidance is needed
 - (1) Stay in communication with mentors

- (a) Discuss ministry and personal life, take counsel as needed
 - (b) Keep apprised of others ministries
 - (c) Utilize all recommendations from them
 - (d) Encourage them in their ministry
 - ii) Take every thought into captivity
 - (1) Start and end my day in prayer and Bible study
 - (2) Be slow to speak and quick to hear
 - (a) Maintain eye contact and focus within the conversation
 - (b) Repeat in my head what people tell me
 - (c) Place tongue on roof of mouth when others are talking to keep focused
 - (d) Wait for them to pause before offering a response
 - (e) Not step into conversations that have nothing to do with me
 - (f) Place my hand over my mouth when others are talking
 - iii) Reduce worldly influences that tempt away from my focus
 - (1) Limit internet, news, and email exposure, to only what is minimally necessary
 - iv) Always keep focused on my SPS and Plan of Action
 - (1) Review as often as necessary, but no less than monthly to maintain perspective
 - (2) Write weekly objectives down in order to meet goals and deadlines
- 2) Being honest and sincere in all my words and deeds
 - i) Focus and form a complete thought before speaking aloud
 - ii) Do not dismiss what others say, incorporate their input into my life
 - iii) When necessary, utilize the Matthew 18 process to support brethren
 - iv) Repent to others directly, and quickly, when I sin against them
 - v) Focus on completing my commitments quickly
 - (1) Immediately fulfill any tasks which can be completed without delay
 - (2) Write down any longer term commitments, when they are made, along with an expected timeframe for completion
 - (3) Discuss with other party necessary turn around times, planned meetings, etc. in order to have an agenda outline
 - vi) Ask follow-up questions to clarify and not be led to misunderstanding intent and desired outcome of commitment
 - vii) Follow through quickly, and correctly in all commitments
 - (1) Stick to timeline at all times
 - (2) Have others review the work, before deadlines to correct any issues
- 3) Be compassionate to physical and emotional needs in others

- i) Be alert and attentive to health and emotional changes in others
 - (1) Ask sincere questions in order to make a viable plan of action
- ii) Seek others to help in service for those in need
 - (1) Know the gifts of others and be mindful how they can best be utilized
 - (2) Coordinate with relevant parties to best use the gifts we each have
- 4) Stand in the gap, no matter the consequence for me
 - i) Pray for protection and discernment prior to stepping in
 - ii) Be mindful of injustices and trials others are going through and be ready to step in if needed to protect the unprotected
 - (1) Stop immediate threats then assess the situation
 - iii) Be careful not to make hasty judgments
 - (1) Do not step into a situation before I have the facts
 - (a) Listen to all parties involved
 - (b) Consult others when necessary
 - (c) Pray for guidance
- 5) Be fair in all my actions, seek Yahweh's will for all judgments I am asked to make, and never in haste
 - i) Pray before every decision
 - ii) Follow the Matthew 18 process
- 6) Show trust in others, as I desire them to trust in me
 - i) Keep private conversations private
 - ii) Do not share observations and second hand information
 - iii) Open up and reveal my vulnerabilities to those around me when relevant and necessary
 - iv) Allow others to complete tasks without my direct oversight with the knowledge that they are perfectly capable too
 - v) Forgive and forget when others seek forgiveness, and possibly when they don't seek it
- 7) Provide for the needs, and spiritual growth of my family
 - i) Be diligent in our finances
 - (1) Discuss plans and ideas well in advance
 - (a) Identify pros and cons of all decisions
 - (b) Pray about all decisions before they are made.
 - ii) No major expenses without counseling with my wife and seeking Yahweh's will through prayer
 - (1) Wait a minimum of 24 hours before spending an unplanned sum larger than \$20
 - iii) Always have a financial reserve for emergencies and unexpected expenses
 - (1) Lay out a budget and stick to it
 - (a) Any deviation needs to be accounted for
 - iv) Always be watchful of obstacles and redirect our course when needed
 - (1) Never make rash, off the cuff decisions

- 8) Be kind, caring, patient, and loving with my wife
 - i) Show her I care by helping more with household tasks
 - (1) Making bed
 - (2) Helping with dishes
 - (3) Taking over dinner prep
 - (4) Help with any other activities she deems important to her
 - ii) Be slow to frustration, and verbalize my concerns appropriately
 - (1) Silence is good, too much silence is not
 - (2) Show her the patience she deserves
 - iii) Wake up earlier in order to accomplish more in a day
 - (1) Do not remain sleeping long after my wife gets up
 - iv) Help her in all ways in order to meet her goals
 - (1) Constant communication is a must
 - v) Prove my worth to her through my actions
- 9) Make all the works of my hands be for the Kingdom of Yahweh
 - i) Utilize the skills, fruits, and gifts Yahweh gave me to help:
 - (1) my family
 - (2) my brethren
 - (3) anyone He puts in my path
 - ii) Make prudent decisions on where we live, the work I do, and the plans we make in order to be efficient and effective with the time I am given
 - (1) Through prayer, fasting and Bible study
 - iii) Every month, reassess where we are relative to the fruit we are bearing, and our longer terms goals, and Yahweh's desire for us
 - iv) Study and develop any necessary new skills in order to maximize results
 - (1) Identify areas of need within my community, and household and determine if my skill set can help
 - v) Use my gifts to help others expand their ministries
 - (1) Offer assistance to others when a need is observed
 - (2) Do not refuse to help when requested
 - (3) Do not refuse help when others offer it
 - vi) Do not be distracted away from ministry work for too long so as not to lose momentum and focus
 - (1) Utilize my wife as an accountability partner to maintain focus and encouragement
- 10) My strength is not physical. My strength comes from Yahweh
 - i) This comes from Fear of, Faith in, and Following the teachings of Yahshua and Yahweh
 - (1) This is accomplished through complete emersion in the following:
 - (a) Prayer
 - (b) Bible Study
 - (c) Research
 - (d) Fasting
 - (e) Repentance

- ii) Stay positive in times of trial and when others need encouragement
 - (1) I should always have a smile ready
 - (2) I should always be vocal in my appreciation to others for the blessings they have given me
 - (3) I need to quarantine any negative attitudes that I develop

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Chapter 4: A Lifetime Commitment To Change

Wow, okay! I have made an ambitious plan to become the Proverbs 31 man, and I hope you have too!

Now is the time to start. Do not delay, if you don't have time to start today, don't think you will have any more time tomorrow!

If you are not married, you need to find a strong accountability partner. With your accountability partner you should sit down and go line by line through your plan, so you both are clear on the goal and the steps you are going to take to achieve your goal.

This is not an 'I'm going to lose 5 pounds diet'. This is a permanent, lasting lifelong commitment.

Once you seem to have mastered one point, you need to keep that tool sharp; you never know when you will need it! Make notes on your plan of action; expand on it as you see a gap in it. Reassess your goal, and each point, on a fairly regular basis, along with your accountability partner and your mentors, in order to verify that you are on track, and that you aren't blinded to a fault in your understanding of these traits.

Yah willing you will find yourself with a heavy toolbox, full of shiny well honed tools, neatly organized and always comfortable in your hand!

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Chapter 5: Finding The Support You Need

First and foremost your number one resource for support is always Yahweh and Yahshua. Study His Word, read His desires for your life, immerse your life in the doctrines that Yahshua handed down to you in His Bible.

Secondly, Yahshua left in place for you a support system. A group of individuals, that He hand picked, to guide and mentor you in life. These people He has placed in your life are an amazing asset. Take advantage! This is why they are here! They have a few tools that you may never have even heard of! Sometimes we may not know who they are, just pray to your Father and He will reveal them to you when you need them the most!

Your accountability partner is your day in day out sounding board. Ideally this is your spouse, but if you are not married, you need to select someone who knows you well enough, and is close enough to you to call a spade a spade. Someone who will catch you when you stumble, support you when you need it, and call you out when you are in a fault!

And lastly, seek the support of like-minded believers who are walking on this narrow path. They are great inspiration, and have amazing testimonies, that can lift you up when you need a boost. And of course they can be your prayer warriors who would see it as a blessing to pray for your growth!

I pray you found this project edifying. And, more so, I pray that Yahweh blesses you in all that you do.

Pro 16:9 A man's heart deviseth his way: but Yahweh directeth his steps.

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