

w/b 26<sup>th</sup> March 2017 A WIFE OF NOBLE CHARACTER

INTRODUCTION: On Mothering Sunday, Malcolm Kayes spoke to us about the qualities of good parenting. As the subject of parenting has already been dealt with in a fairly recent study (following Doug Horley's sermon on protecting our children), it might be helpful for us to consider the wife of noble character in Proverbs 31 v 10 onwards.

Please note that the qualities are just as useful for men as they are for women and should be considered & applied universally

### **Epilogue: The Wife of Noble Character**

[Verses 10-31 are an acrostic poem, the verses of which begin with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet.]

<sup>10</sup>*A wife of noble character who can find?*

*She is worth far more than rubies.*

<sup>11</sup>*Her husband has full confidence in her  
and lacks nothing of value.*

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

<sup>13</sup>*She selects wool and flax  
and works with eager hands.*

<sup>14</sup>*She is like the merchant ships,  
bringing her food from afar.*

<sup>15</sup>*She gets up while it is still night;  
she provides food for her family  
and portions for her female servants.*

<sup>16</sup>*She considers a field and buys it;  
out of her earnings she plants a vineyard.*

<sup>17</sup>*She sets about her work vigorously;  
her arms are strong for her tasks.*

<sup>18</sup>*She sees that her trading is profitable,  
and her lamp does not go out at night.*

<sup>19</sup>*In her hand she holds the distaff  
and grasps the spindle with her fingers.*

<sup>20</sup>*She opens her arms to the poor  
and extends her hands to the needy.*

<sup>21</sup>*When it snows, she has no fear for her household;  
for all of them are clothed in scarlet.*

<sup>22</sup>*She makes coverings for her bed;  
she is clothed in fine linen and purple.*

<sup>23</sup>*Her husband is respected at the city gate,  
where he takes his seat among the elders of the land.*

<sup>24</sup>*She makes linen garments and sells them,  
and supplies the merchants with sashes.*

<sup>25</sup>*She is clothed with strength and dignity;  
she can laugh at the days to come.*

<sup>26</sup>*She speaks with wisdom,*

*and faithful instruction is on her tongue.*

*<sup>27</sup>She watches over the affairs of her household  
and does not eat the bread of idleness.*

*<sup>28</sup>Her children arise and call her blessed;  
her husband also, and he praises her:*

*<sup>29</sup>"Many women do noble things,  
but you surpass them all."*

*<sup>30</sup>Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting;  
but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.*

*<sup>31</sup>Honour her for all that her hands have done,  
and let her works bring her praise at the city gate.*

## LAUNCH

What are the 3 most important attributes or characteristics that you personally would look for in either a husband or wife (without referring to the Proverbs passage).

- Each group member share their top 3
- Draw up a list of the most popular answers based on which ones score the most
- Now read the Proverbs passage.

Do any of your 'noble characteristics' match the ones in the passage?

## DISCOVERY

What are the 5 most significant noble qualities in a wife that you can identify from this passage?

- Which of these characteristics have potentially fallen into disrepute in our society? Why do you think this has occurred?
- Which quality do you think you need to 'brush up on'? Men should also take part (for themselves not for their wives). What practical steps can you take to develop in this area?

## UNDERSTANDING

Verse 12 is interesting and suggests we can undermine our spouses far more often than we realise. What are some of the subtle and not so subtle ways in which we can undermine our partners? How do we work towards avoiding these destructive patterns of behaviour in future?

- Which verses point to the wife's business flair in how she lives her life? Why is business flair sometimes talked down in the Christian world? In what way does it form part of this woman's noble character? Anyone in the group got a particular business project they would like prayer for?
- What plans do you have to open your arms to the poor and extend your hands to the needy over the next few weeks?

## APPLICATION

Spend time praying for one another that you will develop in any of the areas that you highlighted for improvement earlier in the study