

Monday, May 11, 2020

Turn off the outside "noise" for a couple of minutes and consider this message from God's Word.  
I am praying that it calms your spirit and encourages your heart.

PROVERBS 31 (TNIV)

<sup>1</sup> The sayings of King Lemuel —  
an inspired utterance his **mother** taught him.

<sup>10</sup> **A wife of NOBLE CHARACTER who can find?  
She is worth far more than rubies.**

<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 "THE LAW OF KINDNESS" is on her tongue.**

<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> **HONOR HER** for all that her hands have done,  
and let her works **BRING HER PRAISE** at the city gate.

I started Sunday's message off with a quote about the place of women in ministry from a well-known preacher that I felt was patronizing at best and devaluing of and denigrating to women at worst. (Just as questionable was the inconsistent exegesis that he applied to the topic.)

So to cap off MOTHER'S DAY, can I give equal time to another thoughtful biblical scholar on the same topic? David Allan Hubbard is one of my top five Old Testament mentors. He was the longtime President of Fuller Theological Seminary but also a Professor of Old Testament. A brilliant scholar; a compelling communicator. He made the Bible come alive!

When he came to the end of his wonderful commentary on the book of Proverbs, he gave this summary of THE WOMAN OF NOBLE CHARACTER described in Proverbs 31, or as I called her, "A WOMAN WORTH EMULATING":

**"WISDOM, the other dominant woman in Proverbs, officially addressed her invitations and advice to the young men of Israel (1:22–23; 8:4). And the book has been crammed with her words to the budding leaders of the land.**

**But listening and watching all the while must have been a whole set of remarkable women. They sensed that neither giftedness nor righteousness were matters of gender. They grasped the truth that society's well-being rested on their shoulders as surely as on the backs of the men who held office.**

**Quietly but steadily they too ate at wisdom's table and found life and favor from the Lord (8:35). As they did, they took on wisdom's attributes and demonstrated both her beauty and her bounty. In turn, they became teachers, proclaiming and demonstrating wisdom's sense of piety, prudence, and fairness.**

**Because of their lives, wisdom's call to the people took on clarity and credibility. No wonder the sages, wise men that they were, found no better way to conclude their canon of wisdom than with profound counsel from Lemuel's mother and the striking portrait of an excellent woman.**

DAVID A. HUBBARD, *Proverbs* (The Preacher's Commentary, Vol. 15)

But Dr. Hubbard didn't just champion the ministry of women *in writing*. One of my favorite stories about him took place in the 1970's. Next door to Fuller is Pasadena's prestigious University Club. They didn't allow women to become members until 1986, and women could only attend if invited by a male member, and they had to enter the club through a side door.

Now Dr. Roberta Hestenes was the first tenured woman faculty member in the School of Theology at Fuller; and later became the first woman president of a Christian college in the Council of Christian Colleges and Universities; the first woman to serve World Vision US and International as a board member, chairperson, and International Minister; and the first ordained woman in the PCUSA to pastor a church of 2,000 members. And she is an outstanding preacher of the Word.

Dr. Hestenes was invited to a meeting at the University Club, so of course she had to enter the club through a side door.

So Dr. Hubbard, an internationally respected leader, insisted on walking **with** her as they both entered the club through the side door.

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*Father, today we celebrate your gift of Mothers, but also your gift of women in general to the body of Christ! May we always seek to welcome and affirm their partnership in ministry. May we mobilize and equip them to serve in the manifold ministries of the family of God. May women be treated with honor and respect at Bethany. And may all of us, whether male or female, young or old, find in the PROVERBS 31 WOMAN someone to be emulated because of her noble character, the wisdom she has cultivated over the course of a lifetime, the kindness with which she speaks, the generosity she freely shares with the needy, and that wonderful sense of humor which adds humble perspective to her everyday life!*

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**HAPPY MOTHERS DAY! I along with some of our staff enjoyed seeing many of you today on your FAMILY FIELD TRIP after watching the service online at home!**

**Pastor Doug**