

-Save This Page as a PDF-

The Wife of Noble Character

31: 10-31

The book of **Proverbs** comes to a close with the addition of this poem about **the wife of noble character**. A careful reading of the passage shows that **her** value is derived from **her** character of godly **wisdom**, which is beneficial to **her** family and to the community as a whole. Traditionally, this poem was recited by husbands and children at the Sabbath table on Friday after sundown. It is a paradigm for godly **women**.



The theme of the poem, **the wife of noble character**, captures the ideals of **wisdom** that have filled the book. It may well be that these verses sum up more than merely portraying the ideal wife. **The woman** presented is a wealthy aristocrat who runs a household estate with servants and conducts business affairs – real estate, vineyards, and merchandise – domestic affairs, and charity. It would be quite a task for any **woman** to emulate. **She** is the idealized **wife**, in an ideal home, in an ideal society; **she** is not just some man's dream **woman** but represents a universal type of **woman** or instructions for the bride-to-be. Moreover, nothing is said about **the woman's** personal relationship with **her** husband, **her** intellectual or emotional strengths, or **her** religious activities.

In general, it appears that **the woman of Proverbs 31** is a symbol of **wisdom**. Therefore, this poem plays an important part in the personification of **wisdom** in ancient Near Eastern literature. Indeed, many commentators correctly invite a contrast to the earlier portrayals of **Madame Folly** lurking dangerously in the streets (**to see link click [Bo](#) - Madam Folly's Invitation to Death**) - **she** was to be avoided - and **Lady Wisdom**, who is to be embraced (see **[Bn](#) - Lady Wisdom's Invitation to Life**). **The wife of noble character** in this chapter stands in the strongest contrast to **the adulterous woman** in the earlier chapters.⁵⁶⁹ In conclusion, this **wife** has been canonized as a role model for all Isra'el for all time. **Wise** daughters aspire to be like **her**, **wise** men seek to marry **her**, and all **wise** people aim to exemplify **the wisdom she** symbolizes.⁵⁷⁰