



The Proverbs 31 Man

Loving Your Wife from Strength

By Bill Yeary



Proverbs 31 is usually referenced as the chapter on the character of a Godly woman or on being a virtuous woman. Not to take away from that, but with the text of that chapter being from Lemuel, king of Massa (which some say is an alternate name to Solomon), the theme of the chapter seems to be more about the honor due a wife from her husband and the woman she becomes.

But the part not usually talked about is verse 3 where the man is instructed to not to give his strength to women nor his ways to that which destroys kings.

Prov. 31:3 Do not give your strength to women, nor your ways to that which destroys kings.

Some Biblical characters that in one way or another gave their strength to women which had a detrimental effect were David, Sampson, and Solomon. The one most noted is usually Ahab, which gave his strength to Jezebel.

Here are some takeaways from these examples.

1. Husbands should not trade their strength or bargain their place of authority to gain their wife's affection. Neither should the wife use or withhold her affection as leverage to control the husband and their relationship.
2. Husbands should not let the wife have their authority or allow her to assume his role, even though the wife may attempt to "take over" due to her inability to trust him or due to her own insecurities that makes her want to be in control. This "out of order" relationship could happen due to several reasons.
 - a. Husband doesn't honor his wife due to his own low self-esteem or selfishness, thus out of her own need to have worth and significance she feels she needs to be free from her husband's authority to achieve her own worth.
 - b. Husband does not like making decisions or is afraid to make decisions, thus his wife feels she has to "rescue" the family.
 - c. Husband needed a male mentor/father figure to gain the confidence to assume his role.
 - d. Husband craves/needs approval, acceptance, and affection to such a degree that he is willing to compromise to obtain it. The wife sees the power she has over him and thus chooses her need for security by choosing to use her approval and love as leverage to get what she wants.
3. Women are not weaker than men, but husbands should honor them as weaker vessels by giving them more honor and understanding. 1 Peter 3:7 Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.

That can mean being more sensitive to their needs or being more careful with their feelings. That can also mean that the husband needs to bear the brunt of the pressures of life being in the role of being the stronger vessel.

4. Eve was first deceived, but the man gave away his position when he chose her over God (his physical needs over his desire for relationship with God). Where was Adam anyway when Eve was being tempted? If the man does not take his place, the wife feels like she must become the decision maker. She then blames the man for not leading. He then backs off even more from being the leader because he doesn't like ridicule and he isn't sure she will follow. It is hard to lead when no one is following and particularly if your leadership is being resisted or condemned. The wife may like the feeling of being in control and the false sense of security it brings. She then wants to keep the control because of the feeling of power it brings and her need for security. In time she becomes used to it and may resort to belittling, blame, anger, and defiance to keep her position. And if the wife has insecurities, especially being under the authority of a non-honoring husband, she will trust herself over her husband and feel more secure with her decisions over his.

So how should a husband resolve this?

1. This requires the husband to not give his strength away, but to choose to love his wife from his strength. He must create the environment for her to be able to trust. He must choose to honor her. Not because her behavior is good, but because she is a person of value, and she is his wife. This is a process that resolves over time. He must choose to love again and again, to desire her again, and to compliment her regardless of how he may be mistreated or how he feels.
2. He must choose to respect himself and not compromise his dignity. He must choose to retake his place of responsibility and make the difficult decisions without letting those decisions be defaulted to his wife.
3. There will be confrontations and he must choose to communicate with respect. He must choose to not dishonor her with anger, blaming, condescending attitude, and harsh tones.
4. This requires a new relationship. One that has extra communication, extra sharing, and extra honor. It requires the husband to have a heart to want to protect and nurture his wife with an attitude that wants to bring his wife to her healing and a place of honor; even when she fights against you, withholds affection, and blames you.
5. It requires the husband to see his wife as God sees her. It requires him knowing when to stand his ground and how to do that in a Godly way. It requires heart expressions that complement, encourage, and nurture that helps his wife overcome insecurities that promoted low self-esteem and her need for power.

6. If the husband does not give his wife an identity of togetherness through the marriage relationship, she will find her connectedness through other means. The proverb 31 woman had achievements, but the purpose was to add to her household. If the wife has reidentified herself apart from her husband and to other things or other people, she may feel like she really does not need him anymore. If the husband attempts to assume his role of authority, she will feel like she is losing her self-worth and identity of who she is as a person. She will want to fight anyone that she feels is trying to take that away. God wants married people connected and not acting solely as independents. The intents of the husband and wife should be about that which brings them closer together as a couple and as a family; not that which separates them or allows them to function as an independent without accountability to the one we are supposed to be in relationship with.

7. In prayer the husband and wife may need to come against the victim spirit (unfairly treated, damaged, low self-esteem, feeling unlovable), the spirit of self-pity, and the Ahab and Jezebel spirit. To be able to do that effectively, you must identify your own issues and have a heart to heart with the Lord about bringing that to a new attitude on how you see yourself and how you treat your mate. Your marriage may be your assignment by God to bring your mate to their healing and place of honor. You may feel that you need healing yourself. The way of God is that when we choose to bring healing and honor to another, it is reaped in our own life.

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