

The words of King Lemuel. An oracle that his mother taught him:

²What are you doing, my son? What are you doing, son of my womb? What are you doing, son of my vows?

³Do not give your strength to women,
your ways to those who destroy kings.

⁴It is not for kings, O Lemuel,
it is not for kings to drink wine,
or for rulers to take strong drink,

⁵lest they drink and forget what has been decreed
and pervert the rights of all the afflicted.

⁶Give strong drink to the one who is perishing,
and wine to those in bitter distress;

⁷let them drink and forget their poverty
and remember their misery no more.

⁸Open your mouth for the mute,
for the rights of all who are destitute.

⁹Open your mouth, judge righteously,
defend the rights of the poor and needy.

¹⁰An excellent wife who can find?

She is far more precious than jewels.

¹¹The heart of her husband trusts in her,
and he will have no lack of gain.

¹²She does him good, and not harm,
all the days of her life.

¹³She seeks wool and flax,
and works with willing hands.

¹⁴She is like the ships of the merchant;
she brings her food from afar.

¹⁵She rises while it is yet night
and provides food for her household
and portions for her maidens.

¹⁶She considers a field and buys it;
with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard.

¹⁷She dresses herself with strength
and makes her arms strong.

¹⁸She perceives that her merchandise is profitable.
Her lamp does not go out at night.

¹⁹She puts her hands to the distaff,
and her hands hold the spindle.

²⁰She opens her hand to the poor
and reaches out her hands to the needy.

²¹She is not afraid of snow for her household,
for all her household are clothed in scarlet.

²²She makes bed coverings for herself;
her clothing is fine linen and purple.

²³Her husband is known in the gates
when he sits among the elders of the land.

²⁴She makes linen garments and sells them;
she delivers sashes to the merchant.

²⁵Strength and dignity are her clothing,
and she laughs at the time to come.

²⁶She opens her mouth with wisdom,
and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.

²⁷She looks well to the ways of her household
and does not eat the bread of idleness.

²⁸Her children rise up and call her blessed;
her husband also, and he praises her:

²⁹"Many women have done excellently,
but you surpass them all."

³⁰Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain,
but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.

³¹Give her of the fruit of her hands,
and let her works praise her in the gates.

Working Life

'Wisdom at work'

Proverbs 31

The foolish man at work (v1-9)

- the abuse of sex

- the abuse of drink

- the abuse of power

⇒ don't play the fool at work

⇒ do look to the perfect King

The wise woman at work (v10-31)

- wisdom at work

⇒ be the wise worker

⇒ praise the wise worker

⇒ marry the wise worker

