

Mother's Day 2019 | David Baumgartner

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[0:00] We welcome you to the media ministry of Bethel Community Church. Knowing Jesus, making Jesus known. The impact that you've had on the lives of everybody here.

Wouldn't you agree? It truly is. I thank the Lord for all the faithful women here in this church. I just wish I had a little guy here with me, standing alongside to encourage me.

I will top it. I will say this, one day of celebration is not enough. Yeah? Yeah. Got some nods from that. I think that's good.

Did you know that motherhood has been celebrated all the way back since the time of ancient Greece? Yeah, that's true. But the modern celebration of Mother's Day here in the U.S., it didn't start until 1908, when this woman by the name of Ann Jarvis, some of you have heard that name before, Ann Jarvis held this memorial celebration for her mother.

And this was at St. Andrew's Methodist Church in West Virginia. Her mother, you see, was a peace activist. And she had cared for wounded soldiers back during the Civil War days.

[1:16] And she did that on both sides of the Civil War. So she was quite a lady. She, through Ann Jarvis' persistence, finally President Woodrow Wilson signed a proclamation.

This was in 1914, making it official, designating the second Sunday of May as the national holiday to celebrate mothers. So today, Mother's Day is the third most celebrated holiday after Christmas and New Year's.

Did you know that? Yeah, it's wonderful. Today, we could consider all the wonderful things that moms have done. You can consider all that you have learned from your mother.

I have something that this guy wrote. There's seven things my mom taught me. First, my mom taught me about anticipating life. She would say, just wait until your father gets home.

She talked about receiving things. You're going to get it when he comes home. She taught him about how to meet the challenges of life.

[2:30] What were you thinking? Answer me when I talk to you. Or how about this one? She taught about medical science. If you don't stop crossing your eyes, they're going to stay that way.

How about this? She talked about humor. She would say, when that lawnmower cuts off your toes, don't come running to me. That's pretty wise, isn't it?

Very humorous. She also spoke about genetics. You're just like your father. And how about this last one? This is about justice. One day, you're going to have kids, and I hope that they turn out just like you.

Rather encouraging there. Here's the thing. I also believe that honoring mothers is scriptural. I do believe that.

Now, where would we find something like that in scripture? Well, of all places, the book of Proverbs. Yeah. As you know, we've been studying the book of Proverbs, and we've been looking at various topics.

[3:36] So this morning, I wanted us to consider what Solomon had to say about this very important topic. If I could ask you guys to hand these out. Thank you very much.

A very important topic of what Solomon has to teach about. He talks about an excellent woman. And in fact, Solomon has an entire chapter that's dedicated to her. So you may, in your Bibles, you're welcome to turn with me to Proverbs chapter 31. And as you turn there, you may notice a couple things.

First of all, you may notice that verse 1 says, these are the words of King Lemuel, the oracle which his mother taught him. Now, archaeologists have never discovered anything about such a man named Lemuel.

And it's commonly believed that King Lemuel is Solomon himself. But he uses this fictitious or this pen name here to write this.

[4:41] Lemuel means dedicated to God. Well, if that's so, if King Lemuel is King Solomon, then his mom would be who?

Bathsheba. But the second thing to notice here, thanks, brother. The second thing to notice here is that here we have words of instruction from a mother to her son.

Moms, you may picture your son. He's grown up. He's about to leave home and his bags are packed. And I have this question. What would your final words be to him?

What would you say? Well, if it had to do with finding a wife, then I would say congratulations because you're in line with Scripture.

In fact, our very passage begins in verse 10. An excellent wife. Who can find? For her worth is far above jewels. I would say this.

[5:44] When considering a spouse, finding the right person is one of the most important decisions that a person will ever make in life. I firmly believe that.

You make the right choice and it will be a profound blessing for the man, for their children, for everyone who comes to know them, and also for generations to come.

In verse 11, the heart of her husband says it trusts in her and he will have no lack of gain. She does him good, verse 12, not evil, all the days of her life.

So that's choosing a right person. What about choosing the wrong person? Let's say, for instance, an unfaithful woman. Well, that will lead to pain, sorrow, sadness, and misery.

Proverbs in chapter 12 says, an excellent wife is a crown of her husband. But she who brings shame is like, listen to this, rotteness to his bones.

[6:51] Man, how more deep can you get from that? Get rather than that. Just to be fair, I also want to say it's also hard to find a faithful man. A good man.

Look with me in Proverbs 20. Many a man proclaims his own steadfast love. Yeah, I'd say that's right. But a faithful man, who can find?

Yeah. That might be a good passage for Father's Day. But anyway, this is Mother's Day, so we're going to stick with this main theme here in Proverbs 31. And I'd like to this morning go through verses 13 to 27.

And I'd like to describe her character. And what I tried to do is I tried to capture the essence of her character with these one-word descriptions.

And you'll notice on your handout there's ten of them. And as you'll see, she virtually excels in every area of life. And because of that, I wanted to say this.

[7:53] Chuck Swindoll, most of you have heard of him. He shares this observation about Proverbs 31. He says that throughout the years, he has noticed that many women seem intimidated by the Proverbs 31 woman.

So I wanted to just add a few comments. If that's you, or if you perhaps know somebody, let me say this. First of all, what we're going to see here today does not describe a particular woman.

No, most likely, this is a composite woman. A composite of all the ideal traits of a wife and a mother could possibly have.

And what we see mentioned in Proverbs, actually. The second thing, not all of these characteristics apply to every woman. No, not all women are married.

Not all women have children. But here's the thing. We can consider the principle behind what we see here. And thirdly, you may know this already, that verses 10 to 31 were written in a very special way.

[9:01] It's called an acrostic. This is where each verse begins with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet. And since it's the Hebrew alphabet, there's 22 letters in all.

Why would someone write like that? Using acrostic. Well, you've probably used acrostics in your life. Acrostics makes things easy to memorize, right?

Yeah, you may have done that in school. Again, picture your son, and he's standing before you, and he's about to leave home. And so you could say to your son, Son, here's an easy way for you to remember what I'm getting ready to tell you.

So with that, let's go ahead and look at the virtuous woman. And I'd like to invite you to follow along with your handout. Like the first, let's go to the Lord in prayer and ask him to bless these words and make them come alive to us this morning.

Heavenly Father, we are so caught up in awe in how you delight us, Lord, in so many good things. Lord, we thank you again for the mothers that are here.

[10:11] We thank you for all the ladies here, all the faithful works that we see in this church, in our families, and in so many other places, Lord. Lord, our cup runneth over.

And we thank you, Lord. We give you the glory. We would ask, Lord, that those of us who need to be encouraged would be so. Those of us who need to be challenged would be so.

That you would have your way with us. Thank you, Lord. In Jesus' name. Amen. Alright. First of all, verse 13.

Notice, she is resourceful. She looks for wool and flax and works with her hands within the light. You may know that flax comes from a plant and that's used to make linen, usually used for warm weather. Wool comes from an animal, which is used to make clothing, typically for cold weather.

[11:13] But here's the thing. She acquires these raw materials to fabricate them into useful items. I believe this verse ties into verse 24. She makes linen garments and sells them and supplies belts to the tradesmen.

Maybe Phoenicians here. Today, very few women make their own clothing. I know my grandmother used to. When I was a little kid, I used to sneak up into her bedroom.

And I would see all these mannequins. And I was wondering, boy, this is strange. But she was a seamstress. And thought, wow, what a neat occupation that must be. Because she got to work in all the different levels of society.

But I think most women don't do that today. Isn't it easier to just go to the mall? Or maybe just to push a button on the computer and it's delivered to your home?

Right? Yeah, I think so. But the motivation behind it is the same. Notice, there's delight and satisfaction that comes in providing for your family.

[12:20] Amen? Yeah. Secondly, she is diligent. Look with me, verse 14. She is like a merchant ships, which brings her food from afar.

Okay, so now we move from clothing to food. And this is where I really get excited. The main point here is in regards to food, she will stop at nothing to get the best.

Get the best. You might want to ask, well, for whom is this food? Who's it for? Well, I think that ties right into the next verse. Notice 15.

She rises also while it is still night and gives food to whom? To her household and portions to her maidens.

Now, we're moving on here because this suggests that this woman has a rather large estate or a household, complete with servants. And if necessary, notice that she will work late into the night to make sure that everybody has what they need.

[13:30] She is the opposite of what we saw last week, the sluggard. So this woman is diligent. Thirdly, she is industrious.

Verse 16. She considers a field and buys it. And from her earnings, she plants a vineyard. She is the only one that has a child. She is the only one that has a child. She is the only one that has a child. She is the only one that has a child.

She is the only one that has a child. She is the only one that has a child. What happened then?

Yeah, you had the beginning of the feminist movement. And their agenda was basically to demean motherhood.

Yeah, you may remember that. Their message to women was, lady, you're being cheated by that no good husband of yours. Here's what you need to do. Get out there and get a job.

Get involved in business. Friends, is that anything new? No. The woman that's described here, she has some business savvy.

[14:30] Notice, she makes wise decisions based on what we would call consideration. Consideration means given careful thought.

Did you know consideration is an essential element in the formation of legal contracts? That's what this lady is able to do. What a woman she is.

Fourthly, she's physically fit. Uh-oh, I might get in trouble here. Verse 17. She girds herself with strength and makes her arms strong.

The word gird here is actually means to be tied or to be bound to something. And in this case, she's bound or tied to strength.

And you know, there's a lot to be said for being physically able to do things. I'm finding it harder and harder every day to do things I was once able to do. Like for instance, I've heard of some women who were able to take grandchildren to the zoo all day.

[15:35] How amazing that is. How amazing. I couldn't do that. But what I want you to notice here, verse 19.

She stretches out her hands to the distaff and her hands grasp the spindle. What's this? Well, the distaff and the spindle, these are parts that are used to weave fabrics.

And this was before they invented the spinning wheel. But it requires tedious work and attention to detail. The main point I believe that this is saying is that there are some activities that are pleasant.

And there are some activities that aren't pleasant. But moms, I'm going to ask you this question.

Have you ever done anything that nobody else wants to do?

Diapers. Clean bathrooms. Clean bathrooms. This woman here exerts herself for the good of others without complaining, without self-pity.

[16:45] She is able and she's mostly, she's willing. What a blessing that is. Fifthly, she is reflective. What does that mean?

Verse 18. Notice this here. She senses that her gain is good. Her lamp does not go out at night.

What this is meaning here, this means here is that this woman measures her life.

And the results of her labors are, we would say, self-evident. How do you measure your life? How do we do that?

This is a good question. But here, whatever metric one uses to measure his or her life, I think the key thing is to ask this. Is your life working right now?

Is it working? Is it working? For a family, that means asking this question. Are my children heading in a good direction? Or are they going to be, does it look like I'm losing them?

[17:53] What does that look like for a church to be reflective? Are the church members becoming more and more like Christ?

It's not how many programs you have, but are we becoming more like Christ, each one of us? If the answer to those questions is no, you have to change things.

Change things while we still have the time. Here's a quote from Albert Einstein, of all people. He says this, the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results.

So, no, this woman, she's reflective. She evaluates her life. Is my life working? Six, notice she's generous.

I don't think this should surprise anyone. Verse 20, notice she extends her hand to the poor and she stretches out her hands to the needy. Here we see her attitude toward those who are, by definition, they're outside of the family.

[19:02] She's not so busy with her income or her home that she can't see the hurts and the needs in others. Rather, she's tenderhearted.

She's generous. Number six. Number seven, she's prepared. Verse 21 says, She's not afraid of snow for her household.

For her household are clothed with scarlet. I know we're in the springtime right now, but I'll ask this question. Snow is really beautiful, isn't it?

Yeah, it is. It's fun to play in. Of course, that means it's cold outside. And so, the big question is, is your family prepared for the snow?

Is your family prepared for the cold weather? If they're not, usually it results in problems. But I think the main point here is that when cold weather comes, or when any circumstances come, this woman sees to it that her family's ready.

[20:09] And notice, they're clothed with the best garments that are available. Notice it says scarlet here. Oftentimes, in the Old Testament, the color scarlet refers to luxury.

For example, when David mourned over the death of Saul and Jonathan. It says in 2 Samuel. It's not on your handout, but let me read it. You daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you luxuriously in scarlet, who put ornaments of gold on your apparel.

So scarlet can mean luxury. The word scarlet can also have ceremonial overtones. And that's because the color scarlet resembles the color of blood.

You may know this verse out of Isaiah. Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord. Though your sins be like scarlet, that would be bright red, they shall be as white as snow.

Though they are red like crimson, that would be a darker red, they shall be like wool. But the main point here is that whether it's a sweater or whether it's a sin offering, this woman knows what her family needs and sees to it that they have it.

[21:32] Number seven, she's prepared. Number eight, she's confident. Verse 22, notice, she makes coverings for herself. Her clothing is fine linen and purple.

Now the color purple most often symbolizes royalty. You may be familiar with the story that Jesus tells in Luke 16. A certain rich man, there was a certain rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, living in splendor every day.

So the indication here is that woman has a very healthy view of herself. She may even consider herself as royalty.

And if that's so, who's her father? Perhaps he's a king. Perhaps he's the king.

The capital K. Which could be why it says in verse 25, strength and dignity are her clothing.

Because of her position, her faith in God, she is confident.

[22:48] And verse 25 says, she smiles at the future. I want to ask you, does that describe you? We were talking about how our faith can impact others.

I think one of the key things is that we have a confidence about us. That we can be so confident that we can smile at the future.

Number eight, she's confident. Number nine, she's discreet. Notice verse 26. She opens her mouth in wisdom and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.

Doesn't it take a great amount of wisdom and discretion to know when to speak and also when not to speak?

Would you agree with that? When this woman does speak, notice here what comes out. Kindness. And her words are so fitting to the people that are around her, they're actually teaching kindness.

[24:00] People are instructed around her. Proverbs 25 says, like apples of gold and settings of silver, is a word spoken in the right circumstance.

Have you ever had a word spoken to you like that? It takes discretion. This is kind of an interesting observation here about discretion.

In the Gospels, I can't find a single example of a woman who got into an argument with Jesus. Do you? Can you think of any?

A woman who took a confrontational stance against the Lord? If you find one, let me know. I could not find one. This woman has discretion.

She is discreet. And number 10, she is attentive. Verse 27, she looks well to the ways of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness.

[25:00] If it's true that her husband is the spiritual leader of the home, then I'm going to call her the quarterback. She's the quarterback. She arranges the plays and makes sure all the players are in the right place, and she executes the plan.

She even calls an audible from time to time. Let me give you a question here. When your child, for those of you who are married with children, when your child is not feeling well, they're sick, maybe they have a fever, who is the first to notice this?

Mom or dad? Yeah, a lot of chuckles out there. Mom is the first to notice. That's because, fellas, she's attentive.

Boy, I'm like oblivious to life. I run into things, hit my head on things. But not so for a woman. So there are the 10 descriptions, and there are some rewards here that are given in this chapter here. Isn't life full of challenges? Happy homes don't just happen by accident. It's a result of hard work. It's a result of sacrificial love. Here are three things that we could say about the woman in terms of rewards.

[26:24] First, she is blessed. Notice here, verse 28, her children rise up and call her blessed. Her husband also, and he praises her.

I know some of you moms, you're still waiting to hear those words, aren't you? Yeah. I heard one tired, frazzled mother of two adolescents, she said, my children don't call me blessed.

They just call me. All the time. When your children are under the age of 12, they usually have no understanding of such concepts. But friends, I'll guarantee one day, on their own, you will hear expressions of gratitude, and they'll come to appreciate you.

So hang in there, and then when you have grandchildren, you can conspire with them. Ways to get even with your children. So first, she's blessed.

Secondly, she is to be honored. These descriptions here, I would say they're rather uncommon. Notice he says in verse 29, many daughters have done nobly.

[27:35] You know, that means a good job, a notable job. But you excel them all, he says. You might want to ask, well, how does a woman live like this? What are her priorities?

Verse 30, charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but here it is. The woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised.

Charm here is anything that makes other people happy. Charm can be good, but if it's pretended, and if it's not rooted in truth, then you'd say that charm is deceitful.

Beauty here is talking about someone's physical appearance. Here's the thing. Charm and beauty are not bad in and of themselves. The thing is this, they're simply not what makes a woman great. But notice what does. A woman who fears the Lord, she's the one who shall be praised. I think this is one of the many reasons that we see in Scripture why a believer should never marry an unbeliever.

[28:51] What does an unbeliever know about the things of God? What does an unbeliever know about things like grace? When a believer marries an unbeliever, they will walk down different paths of life to the tune of different drums, to the beat of different drums.

And in a few years, they'll be miles apart. Maybe even in every way. So she's blessed. She's honored. Thirdly, she is to be celebrated.

Celebrated. Notice what it says here. Verse 31, Give her the product of her hands, and let her works praise her in the gates. Here's what I see as the biblical basis for Mother's Day.

Look what it says. Let her receive the product. In other words, all the good that came out of her efforts. Notice here, her works are praised at the gates.

What's that mean? Well, the gates is the location or the center for the civic and economic life, particularly of Israel.

[30:01] You may notice back in verse 23, where it says, her husband is known where? In the gates, when he sits among the elders of the land.

Perhaps the reason that he's known there is because of her works that are talked about there. Isn't that a thought? Her works are good. They're meaningful. And she's to be celebrated. Did you know there are other women talked about in Proverbs?

Yeah, there are. There's a woman who appears frequently in Proverbs. She's the adulteress. Her lips drip with honey and her tongue is smooth and she hunts for victims.

But in addition to her, there's the noisy woman who's loud and boisterous and nobody wants to be with her. There's the foolish woman, the rebellious woman, the quarrelsome woman, The key thing is this.

[31:09] They're all in contrast to this excellent wife and mother that's here in Proverbs 31. There's a verse in Proverbs 19. House and wealth are inherited from fathers, but a prudent wife is from the Lord.

What a great verse. If I could ask the musicians, come up here. I wanted to ask this question. Men, if you're married, do you see your wife as being from the Lord?

How often, guys, do we take our wives for granted? We can change that. And today's a good day to start. Young men, if you're, it's not easy to find a woman even remotely like this.

But if you find her, it says her worth is far above precious jewels, above rubies even. Don't let her go until you've won her heart.

And if you've already found her, don't forget to nurture that good thing in her. A woman who fears the Lord, she's the one who shall be praised.

[32:20] And I think in the final analysis, we can thank God for all this. Amen. We can. He's the creator. He's the giver of life itself.

And he has committed himself to us by providing a savior through whom we can be reconciled back to the Father. God promises to always be with us, to help us, to comfort us, to change us.

What a great God he is. And he'll do that until the very end. And we can be thankful. Whether you're a wife, a woman, a child, fathers, men, we're all part of this.

And so we can celebrate his work in our lives. And we can start with the ladies this very day.

Ladies, there are some flowers down here. I'd like to ask for, if you have children, the children are here.

Maybe if we could just ask if you ladies will come up and get a flower. Or if you want to wait and ask your child to come up and let them get a flower for you.

[33:32] But we can celebrate today. Let's pray. Dear Lord, thank you so much once again for this description that we find of this, what pleases you.

Lord, I say that we could take all of these descriptions and we could flip them around in some way regarding the men. Because you have things that you have described in your word that you want to see in us too.

Lord, we can celebrate together because this is your plan. And Lord, even though while we were yet sinners, you have provided a way for us to not only be reconciled to you, but Lord, through the power of a new life in your spirit that we can walk in ways that are pleasing to you and also healthy for the family that you have created.

Thank you, Lord, for this. And may you be honored by our lives and our worship of you and our appreciation of one another. We thank you for this in Jesus' name.

And all of God's people said, Amen.