

Pro. 31:10ff

Note especially **verse 12**. Compare **v. 23** and **Pro. 12:4; 18:22; 19:14**.

Considerations in interpreting this acrostic poem:

- “Proverbs” contains “figures” or “riddles”, 1:6.
- Literally taken, this is a picture of a rich woman.
- This woman is pictured as always busy with material and financial pursuits. Nothing is said of time and efforts directed toward affection for her husband and children (When would she have time?). Nothing is said of subjection to her husband. Will her husband and children praise her (v. 28) for what is *literally* said about her in this poem?

If taken literally, note things *absent* in description of the “excellent wife”:

- Spiritual priorities – time, effort, to study, grow, teach (some, vv. 26,27 – but, balance?)
- Companionship with husband (when have time? energy?)
- Affection for husband
- Submission to husband
- Conjugal duties

Contrast:

- The purpose for woman being created, Gen. 2:18 (Lk. 2:52)
- The Lord’s clear indication of what is more valuable in a woman, Lk. 10:38-42.
- The things to be taught young women, as well as the approved conduct of older women, Tit. 2:3-5.
- A woman entitled to being “enrolled” or “put on the list” by the church, 1 Tim. 5:10.
- The commendation given Eunice and Lois, 2 Tim. 1:5, 3:15.
- The natural tendencies of men and women spoken of throughout the Bible indicating the desire and need for companionship, affection, and conjugal privileges.

She is pictured as making **clothes** for the poor, her household, herself, her husband, and for sale, vv. 19-24....then, vv. 25. “Strength and dignity are her **clothing**...” Consider v. 25b through v. 27 in the light of v. 25a.

vv. 13-18 – Imagery of a trader who wisely and diligently works at her ventures in order to provide best food and drink for her family.

vv. 19-24 – Imagery of a seamstress, making garments for (1) poor (2) household (3) herself (4) husband (5) others.

19 She stretches out her hands **to the distaff**, And her hands **grasp the spindle**.
20 She extends her hand to the **poor**, And she stretches out her hands to the needy. 21
She is not afraid of the snow for her **household**, For all her household are **clothed with scarlet**. 22 She makes **coverings** for **herself**; Her **clothing is fine linen and purple**. 23 Her **husband** is known in the gates, When he sits among the

elders of the land. 24 She makes **linen garments** and sells them, And supplies **belts** to the **tradesmen**. 25 Strength and dignity are her **clothing**, And she smiles at the future. (NAS95).