



## Part 10: Meeting Ms. Wisdom

### INTRODUCTION — Three Amazing Women

- King Lemuel's Mom (A historical woman)
- The strong woman / Nobel wife (A composite ideal)
- Ms. Wisdom (Wisdom personified)

### LOOK TO THE BOOK – Wisdom From Lemuel's Mom

#### Proverbs 31

- Proverbs 31 contains two poems.
  - The first is a brief warning against self-indulgence and calls us to use power to serve others.
  - The second takes on the form of a heroic hymn, a poem that typically celebrates the victory of soldiers, except it celebrates the wise and strong woman. It is permeated with strength language and military imagery.
  - Verses 6-7 could mean: A) Let the poor get drunk and stay drunk – their lives suck anyway. B) Poetic contrast – i.e., Son, you're above this. Leave the booze for those who don't have your high calling. C) Use alcohol strategically, as medicine and pain killer. D) Offer hospitality and opportunity for celebration to the poor and outcast. Give them a reason to party and occasions to step away from their hardships.
- Luke 14:12-13**
- The text is not literal, but poetry and hyperbole. For instance, taken literally, this woman would never sleep (see **verse 15 and 18** and contrast with **Psalms 127:2**). Remember, "Do you believe the Bible is literally true?" is a meaningless question. Like, "Do you believe the sky is happy?" We believe the Bible is true in everything it is meaning to say.
  - The strong woman breaks expectations and stereotypes by being equally competent in family roles and entrepreneurial adventures. This does not mean the ideal woman must do both, but can do either or both.
  - Though in a position to be served, her guiding motivation is to serve anyone in need, family, friends, and strangers.
  - The faithful instruction of **verse 26** is literally *the torah of hesed*.

### TAKE OUTS – I'll Have That to Go Please

#### TAKE OUT #1 – Moving From Being Moral to Being Loving

Just because you can doesn't mean you should. King Lemuel had every opportunity and excuse to indulge in women and wine. But he was called to live his life, not for what he could get away with, but for what he could give to others. Beware if your regular motivation for making good choices is that you would get caught otherwise. (E.g., I won't cheat on my taxes because I might get audited. I won't have sex because I might get pregnant. I won't lie, cheat, or steal because I might get caught.) Love is motivated by the good of all, not the promotion of self.

#### TAKE OUT #2 – Stage Three Attraction

We are attracted to people on three levels: 1) PHYSICAL – we like what we see. 2) PERSONA – We click with their style, vibe, tastes, and interests. 3) CHARACTER – We are drawn to their priorities, which help everything else align. Always insist on stage 3 attraction in any committed, close, and/or romantic relationship. And beware of people who try too hard at promoting themselves in the first two levels.

**Romans 13:14; Galatians 3:27 Ephesians 4:24; 6:11,14-17, Colossians 3:12-14; 1 Peter 5:5, Revelation 3:4-5; 19:7-8 Psalm 132:16; Isaiah 61:10; Zechariah 3:3-5 (Also see 1 Timothy 2:9-10; James 2:1-13; 1 Peter 3:3.)**

#### TAKE OUT #3 – Wisdom Isn't Wise Until Embodied

At the end of a book discussing wisdom, Proverbs gives us a flesh-and-blood example of wisdom in action: industrious, others-centred, and God-honouring. Ironically, wisdom is not actually wise unless it is learned to the point of full acceptance, embodiment, and unconscious action. Otherwise, it is just knowledge. Wisdom is more like a learned skill than a learned topic, more like riding a bike or playing an instrument than studying history or debating philosophy. Learning is necessarily a self-centred process that only becomes loving once the skill is fully acquired and dedicated to the service of others. Do you want to be wise? Study, learn, and apply immediately. Repeat.

### CONCLUSION – We Need Each Other

Genesis 1:26-27

### HOME CHURCH QUESTIONS

#### Warming Up...

1. We've reached the end of *Soul Sisters*. Thinking back, what has been the one biggest lesson that God has been showing you through this series?
2. Review this week's message and talk about what most challenged, puzzled, or encouraged you.

#### Look to the Book...

3. Re-read **Proverbs 31**. A) What verse or idea stands out to you the most? Why? B) Consider this quote from Jerram Barrs in *Through His Eyes: God's Perspective on Women in the Bible*. "Our culture makes the mistake of believing that fulfillment comes to us when we live to love and serve ourselves. It does not. Fulfillment comes about only through loving and serving other people. This is true for women, and it is true for men. This is the way God is, and this is the way he has designed us to be." What evidence do you see of this idea in **Proverbs 31**? C) Look at ways the strong woman of Proverbs 31 parallels Wisdom in **1:20-33; 3:15; 4:6; 8:14; 8:18; 8:22-31; 9:4-6**. Talk about ways your life demonstrates wisdom and ways it doesn't.

#### So What?...

4. What changes would your life undergo if you took the woman of **Proverbs 31** as your role model? What steps are you willing to take this week to move in that direction?

The Meeting House | Sunday, September 6, 2009 | Bruxy Cavey

Notes are available online at [themeetinghouse.ca/teaching](http://themeetinghouse.ca/teaching)