

Proverbs 14

Sunday 12/13/2015

Well, if you have your Bible this morning, I would like to invite you to turn to Proverbs 14. Last week we closed out with Proverbs 13. I think you could probably see now how that is probably one of the most profound chapters in all of the Bible, certainly within the book of Proverbs. We looked at one of the most powerful and probably one of the deepest passages in all the Bible, something that most people never consider, most preachers never preach on it, and most couples, most marriages, most families never understand it either: the importance of a family, ministry, and growing together in God's structure to reach the world. This includes understanding, as we talked about last week, the concept of the third generation of that family, how that in God's mind the thing is not complete as far as the ministry and as far as what God is establishing with that family until you get to the third generation.

Now today we will begin to look at Proverbs 14. Again, we will build a set of principles that we can take and put into our lives that help us to grow and to be everything that God wants us to be. Proverbs 14:1-2, that is about all the farther we are going to get today, and it says:

Every wise woman buildeth her house: but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands.

He that walketh in his uprightness feareth the LORD: but he that is perverse in his ways despiseth him.

I. The Contrast in Proverbs

We know that from our past studies that the book of Proverbs is a book that is built around contrast. We know that contrast is one of the most powerful ways to learn your Bible. There are a number of ways to do it, but contrast is one of the central things that God uses to teach us the Word of God. In this book, the book of Proverbs, with its numerous contrasts which we have pointed out as we have come through, you will find a contrast of two different women. The verse today is about a wise woman and how she builds her house. You will find in the book of Proverbs a good woman and a bad woman. We know that fundamentally she will represent the two lines of religion in the world and throughout the Bible. One will be false and one will be true.

The Bible says in James 1:27:

Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

Along with that, God's wisdom in the Bible, in the book of Proverbs, will always be likened to a female. You will find where wisdom is likened to a "she," where wisdom is likened to a "her." Some people ask that, they wonder about that. That is probably one of the many questions that I get over and over again when somebody starts to read the book of Proverbs or the whole Bible: why wisdom is personified as a "she" or as a "her." Of course, the reason for that is that from a doctrinal aspect, wisdom is personified in the Old Testament through the nation of Israel, which is God's wife. In the New Testament, wisdom is personified through the bride of Christ, which is

the church. You will find it in that aspect. When you understand how God uses it, you will see some great truths about yourself and what God is doing and really what He wants to do.

Today I want to examine what He says in Proverbs 14:1-2 in a couple of different aspects. First of all, we want to look at it historically. That is the easy one. This is Solomon's wife. She is talked about in the book of Song of Solomon. She is referenced in Proverbs 31, and she is a literal woman that he is talking about here. But we want to focus on the next two. Inspirationally, this will be any good woman that gets saved and does what is right with her family, her house. Doctrinally, it will be you and me as the church, the bride of Christ. We build our house, our temple, our body for Him. Yet it is a great model for understanding your marriage. We have talked about the role of the woman in marriage and how important she is and all of that. This goes right along with that for you men out there who want to get some insight into things like that.

II. The Humorous Side of Life

I think I have observed this all of my life, and I am sure you have too: men and women have always been talked about in a humorous way. Some people do not like that. I myself always enjoy a good laugh about myself. I think my closest friends are the ones that I can kid about things, and they certainly kid about me with things. My family does it all the time. I think a person who cannot laugh at themselves will have some issues in life. They will start to take themselves way too seriously. I never get upset when somebody makes a joke about something I do or I say because I know I can really say some dumb things and do some stupid things. To me, there is a value in it. My kids give me a tough time all the time, and I give them a tough time all the time. Just ask them sometime about who Simon is. That is a family joke. Ask them sometime about the water bottle down at Disney World in the hotel. That is another joke within our family. But I get it on them. I get it on them.

I know my youngest daughter, Jamie, is the worst driver on the planet. She is the only girl that can go around a corner going into a cul-de-sac and blow both tires out on the same side. There is a little corner there of a manhole that she just did not miss, and then she just ripped out both tires. I feel sorry for Danny sometimes. I know Danny, he is such a great guy and he is a good husband and a great father. I was there. Danny comes down and she says, and this is Jamie, you have to, and this is part of her charm, this is what you love about her. He comes down and he says, obviously we know what she did. She cut the corner too short, blew up both sides of her tires, and there she is, car sitting like this, two flat tires on this side. Danny says, "Jamie, what did you do?" Jamie said, "Danny, I do not know. I just need two new tires."

She was driving home one night, or afternoon. She sees strange people parked out on the street, automatically thinks they are breaking into her house. So she drives around the block three or four times watching this car, looks back to watch for her, to see what they are doing, runs into a light pole, tears off her rearview mirror, tears off her running board on a deal. I think it was about a week later in Sunday school, it was either Macy or Kinsey. They were telling a story of Lot's wife, and they said Lot's wife looked around and turned into a pillar of salt. Macy raised her hand and said, "That ain't nothing. My mom looked around and turned into a light pole."

My kids give me a tough time as I do them. We as a church, we have a good time and laugh at each other when we see us do something funny or even dumb sometimes. I do some of the dumbest things on the planet. I understand all geniuses have a downside in their social character. Will and I go at it all the time. I pick on Nikki Halliburton all the time, and she picks on me. If I do not, that is one of the truest signs that I really like you. I can dish it out, but I can take it. I do some dumb things.

I told some people a while back, I love when volleyball season or softball season, we go over to Jason's Deli. I love going out there because we all can just sit around together and just all be together. I will tell you, I eat, and I really love just walking around table to table, listening to you guys. Birthday. Jack makes a fool out of himself getting up there and singing happy birthday, which they put a big division down the wall now. You see it over there. You have to sing it on both sides of the wall this time. I just love going around and putting my arms around you guys and saying, "Boy, I really love you." Good time. I was there last year after volleyball one night. Walking around, and I come up and put my arm around, I said, "I really love you guys." Looked down at what two people were not part of our church. I do some really dumb things.

I hate Starbucks coffee. It does not, it is just too strong. I will tell you something about iced coffees: they are for sissies. All men drink hot coffee. My wife likes Starbucks, and that is fine. She likes to get the stuff there. But they came out with a blonde blend, which is a kind of a mellow blend. I really like that. I walked into Starbucks, again, I walked into Starbucks, but several months ago, walked in there, place was lined up. I was there, and the lady says, "Can I help you?" I said, "Yes, I would like a large hot blonde." Blend. Guy behind me says, "I will have one of those too."

I think life is too short to get so upset when much of it is so funny. God has a sense of humor. Just look in the mirror. Our world is so uptight today. I grew up in the 50s and the 60s when we told Polack jokes. People from Poland. I do not know how that ever started. But Polack jokes were the thing. "How many Polacks does it take to change a light bulb? One to hold it and three to turn the ladder." Things like that. Blonde jokes. Now, blondes are supposed to have more fun, so every woman wants to be a blonde. We are just overrun with blondes are supposed to be dumb. They tell jokes about it. Blondes are not dumb. But I will tell you where that started. Maybe you do not even know this. The dumb blonde movement started with two of the dumbest blondes that ever walked the planet: Marilyn Monroe and Jayne Mansfield, who lived back in the 50s. They are both dead. One got killed in a car wreck. The other one got killed by JFK. I mean, by accidental overdose. But they were the dumbest people on the planet. Yet that is where it all originated from.

You have guy jokes. "Nice suit. Too bad they did not have it in your size." Things like that. I have heard preachers get up and introduce another preacher that was kind of overweight. They always said, "You always know, brother so-and-so is on a level. He got the bubble in the middle." Things like that. Bald jokes. "Well, they do not charge me for cutting my hair at the barbershop. They charge me for looking for it." All kinds of things like that.

I had a girl one time years ago in my college class. We had a program where we took missionaries out to buy them gifts when they were home on deposition and deputation. Some of them were in deposition, too. But anyway, we went to this mall, a big mall. I will tell you where it was. It was over here at the old Belden Village Mall, which was years and years and years ago. That was the big mall back then. I am sorry, that is the wrong way. What was it called? Bannister Mall. Bannister Mall. Yes. Belden Village is back in Ohio. That is a big mall, too. So we are all getting organized. We are all getting ready to go. I got about 20 or 30 people, and I take them over to the big map that they all have there at the mall. I am saying, "Okay, you take this group, you take this group, and we will meet back here for lunch in two hours." This girl is studying this thing. I said, "Honey, are you okay?" She, and right on the map, it had this big red thing that says, "You are here." She looked at me with big eyes, and she says, "How do they know that?" Do not take yourself too seriously, folks. There is a lot of funny things in life.

I got a book. I love when I go to old seminaries and reading the tombstones. Seminaries, too. They are one of the same. But I love going to old, I used to work down South Paola, and Osawatomie is right below that, and that is where John Brown was and all that area and all that stuff during the Civil War. There is a really old graveyard down there, and I love just walking through and reading the inscription. You can tell many times when a person was saved by what they put on that. It is incredible. I never forget down there, I saw a woman had written on her husband's tombstone. He died back in the 20s or the 30s, and down there underneath in flowery script was a little saying, "To follow you, I am not content, for I am not sure which way you went." Right on the tombstone. I thought, I like that. I like that. I liked it so much, I bought a book. The book was *Pictures of the Most Funniest Tombstones in America*. It is a great book. The one that won the prize, the funniest one, was by a cowboy. His name was Russell J. Larson from Logan, Utah. On his tombstone, he has at the top five rules for men to follow for a happy life. Then it listed five.

Rule number one, he says, "It is important to have a woman who helps at home, cooks, and keeps the house clean." Rule number two, right under it, "It is important to have a woman who can make you laugh." Rule number three, "It is important to have a woman who you can trust and will not lie to you." Rule number four, "It is important for a woman to have passion and want to spend time with you." Rule number five, "And it is very, very, very important that these four women never meet or you are going to wind up dead like me."

That is classic. I love that book. Oh boy, it said one time, living down south to his friend, he had not seen him for years, he says, "Now what kind of woman did you all marry?" His buddy said, "Oh, my wife has turned into an angel." He says, "Oh man, you are so lucky, mine is still alive."

I was with a group of preachers one time. They were walking out to their car after the service, and the guy had just preached on Abraham and Sarah and how Sarah called him Lord. They were talking and laughing about their wives, and all that stuff. The one preacher said, "You guys can laugh all you want, my wife absolutely worships me." The guy said, "Come on." He said, "Now I am telling you, my wife absolutely worships the ground that I walk on." One of the preachers says, "How is that?" He says, "Three times a day, she brings me a burnt offering: breakfast, lunch, and dinner." And on and on it would go.

In spite of all that not-funny stuff about women, a good woman is one of the best things that could ever happen to a man. A good woman. If you want to sing a hymn right now, "Redeemed" would be perfect. I want to tell you, there are some bad women out there, not very often, but every once in a while you get one that comes here, and you women always rat her out. I mean, you do. Us goofy guys will say, "Oh yeah, she is really..." I am just telling you. That will not last very long around here.

III. Ten Characteristics of a Wise Woman (Inspirational)

That verse says, "Every wise woman buildeth her house." There are some really wise women in the Bible. Did you ever notice that? You have Mary, Mary and Martha. Mary was not too hot. Martha was not too hot, but Mary was. You have Ruth and Naomi. You have the Shunammite back there. Abigail is a good one. I have told you this before, when you get into the New Testament, when Christ shows up, there was never one woman who ever rejected Him. It is a great study. That verse says that every wise woman builds her house. I want to take some time and talk to you about this woman. I want to talk to you about from a doctrinal aspect, and then I am going to talk about an inspirational aspect to the verse. The key ingredients will always kind of lay out a great study for us. In Proverbs, the context of these two women or the contrast of these two women will come out in Proverbs 31. In Proverbs 31, you have the woman that He is talking about that is a wise woman, and it is called the virtuous woman. She is called a virtuous woman. This will be the end result of the Word of God in a woman's life that makes her a good woman. It will also be the end result when we get into the doctrinal aspect of a Christian who is the bride of Christ. We will talk about that a little bit later on. This chapter forms a really good model for every wife, every mother, and every child of God that is sitting here, whether you are male or you are female, because whether you are or you are not, you are still the bride of Christ, and it is important to understand that.

I personally cannot wait until we get to Proverbs 31. Probably some of you are that way too, probably not for the same reason. But I cannot get there because I want to lay it out. That is one of the greatest chapters in the Bible. Some of you just want me to be through with it. But it is a great chapter. Today I want to just take a quick look at 10 characteristics of a wise woman. We are going to look at the inspirational first, and then we are going to look at the 10 characteristics of a wise New Testament Christian, the bride of Christ, the doctrinal aspect of it. We are going to talk about the wife first, the inspirational.

1. Her Price is Far Above Rubies. Proverbs 31:10 says: Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. Most husbands never see the tremendous value of the wives that they have, and most of them never tell them that. It is completely oblivious to them. Proverbs 18:22 says: Who so findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD. In Song of Solomon, she is likened to a black pearl. A black pearl is so rare. Solomon had a thousand wives, and out of all of those thousand wives and concubines, he only found one that had the virtue. That is pretty amazing. In Matthew 13:46, I know it is talking about the church there, but the application is the same. She is called the pearl of great price. A woman who is a wise woman, who builds her house on the things of God, is invaluable. Thursday

night we talked about Ephesians 5:25-29, the five different aspects of a husband understanding his wife. We talked about what it means to sanctify her, to cleanse her, to wash her, to nourish her. But then the last one was to cherish her. See the value in what you have. Let her know how valuable she is to you and to your family.

2. She Seeketh Wool and Flax and Worketh Willingly with Her Hands. Let us look, work our way through these and look at Proverbs 31:10 here again. "Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies." Virtue as defined in the Bible will be defined in Luke 6:19. Here you have a story where Jesus is among the multitudes, and a woman reaches in the crowd and touches Him, and she has an infirmity, and instantly she is healed. The Bible says He did not know who did it because of the crowd, but He knows the Bible says that somebody touched Him and got healed because: And the whole multitude sought to touch him: for there went virtue out of him, and healed them all. That is a definitive passage on virtue in the Bible. Virtue will be the spiritual strength and truth that you give to your family as they grow and mature. Give out what God has given you. It needs to be refilled on a daily basis. Moms are great at this, good ones. A good mother will be the greatest example of self-sacrifice that her children will ever see. Now I know that the husband is the head of the home, I get all that, but while he is out working and doing his deal, and when they have a good union together of understanding how it all works, that mother is there for the early years, and what that child sees in her is the key where that child is going to go. She gives to her family until she is about ready to drop. It wears her out; that is virtue. What goes out of her, the goodness, the strength when she takes and just gives constantly to her family and to her children. The second thing in Proverbs 31:13 is two great key words. "She seeketh wool and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands." Two great words. Two character traits that I look for in anybody that is going to be, I think, good for the ministry. Somebody who seeks and then somebody who is willing. It says that she seeks wool and she seeks flax. Flax is what they take, it is a kind of a Middle East plant that they made thread from. They would take the flax and they would beat it and strip it down and whatever they do, and they would get thread from it that they could make things. The wool here comes from a sheep or a lamb. So what you have is a mother who is wise, and when she builds something with the thread, she makes something with her ability to show, she makes things built on a sacrifice, the wool. She has got wisdom. She has got wisdom. In Genesis 24, when Isaac wants a bride and Abraham sends out his servant to find Rebekah, the Bible says that when he finds her, he is seeking for somebody to serve and somebody to be willing. When he finds her, he finds her right there at the well, a picture of the Word of God passing out water. It is incredible. A good woman will be on the lookout for opportunities and seek it out. Then a good woman will be willing to do what God has showed her to do to make her family better. Literally, our church is filled with women like that, and what a blessing it is. What a blessing it is.
3. She Bringeth Her Food from Afar. Proverbs 31:14, "She is like the merchant ships; she bringeth her food from afar." She knows what she has, the substance of spiritual food for her family. From a spiritual aspect, she is a great cook. She can cook up some great devotions for her children. She can cook up some great discipleship lessons for her family. Did you ever notice that, and this is not by my design, I wish I could say it was, but I would be lying to you. When we give you verses that you go to work on to try to help you with your problems,

did you ever notice they are on little three by five cards? You know what those three by five cards really are? They are recipe cards. They were designed for somebody to write recipes of something you are going to cook. What you do when you put the Word of God on those cards and you put them into your heart, you are building a recipe for life for your family. Women, moms, they build their house different ways. Some women are great cooks. Boy, they can cook up a storm with food. Some women can cook up strife and drama and all kinds of issues and problems. There are even some women who really are good at cooking up meth and doing all the drug scene. But some women can really cook up the Word of God. The recipes for life that they get into that Bible and prepare because she knows that she is bringing her food to her family from afar, the Word of God.

4. She Rises Also While It Is Yet Night. Proverbs 31:15, "She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens." She gets up long before the rest of her family. She prepares their day, not just her day. She is a preparer. She is proactive. She is always looking ahead. She understands. She is not lazy. She is up in the morning with the rising sun. A good wife, a good woman will prepare the day for her family, for her kids. You know as well as I do, ladies, you have got kids. Everything in the world can go wrong with your kids in the morning. You get them up for school, they do not want to go to school. You get them up for school, "I want to wear this." You get them up for school, "I am tired today." You get them up for school, "She has got my shoes. She has got my jacket, brother or sister. They have got this. They have got that." There are a thousand things that go wrong with kids in the morning. She is prepared for that. She always wants to make their day the best at her own expense. When she does not feel good, she cannot stay in bed. She still gets up and takes care of those kids. When she is having a bad time or she is struggling with her own things, most of the time her kids never know it because she prepares. She is that kind of woman. It is never about her. I think of my mom when I was just a little guy growing up. We lived back in a day when most of you guys do not tell me the order was ready, but now you just turn the thermostat on the wall and the gas furnace lights up, and it is cool in the summertime and it is hot in the wintertime. We did not have air conditioning back then, and we did not have a thermostat. We had a coal furnace. You look at some of the old houses around Kansas City, if you pay attention right down under the front porch, you will see a big steel door about 36 by 36. Most people do not know what they are. That was back in the old day. That is where the coal bin was. My dad would, every six or seven months, we would order coal, and a big guy would come up with a big old coal truck, back up to our yard, put a thing down it and open up that steel door. We had a room down there, and he threw the coal down the slide and filled that room up, and we would get two or three tons of coal twice a year. We had a coal furnace. You had to go down and bank that fire. You had to build that fire. You had to know how to build it. My mom was great at banking that furnace, and boy, she would get that thing hot going at night, and you would stay warm all night. She would get up early in the morning before I was, we were ever out of bed, and she would be down there pulling those ashes out, turning that thing, cranking that thing, putting coal in, getting it all fired up. We would get up from school, we would be cold, we would be there. She would sit us, me anyhow, she would sit me on that little chair there over the radiator, and she would put our clothes over on the other radiator on the backs of chairs to get them warm so we

could put them on. That is what moms do. That is what moms do. "She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens."

5. She Considereth a Field and Buyeth It. Proverbs 31:16, "She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard." Her whole world will be her family. Her whole world will literally be her family. She buys the field. That is her family. That shows her commitment. She clears the field, shows her mission. Whenever her hand, she plants a vineyard. That is her vision. She has a commitment to her family, she has a mission for her family, and she has a vision for her family. You know what? A faithful family that understands, she realizes, she understands that concept of a third generation concept. Your kids are the trees, the fruit bearing in your life that you plant. You plant them one at a time. I have got to say this too, the importance of, and most people do not even understand this, the importance of grandmothers. I am a grandfather, but especially talking about women grandmothers. Most people do not even know. We talked about that third generation last week and how important that is, and probably most people never made the connection to 1 Timothy 1:5. When Paul talked about Timothy and he marveled how great Timothy was, you know who he gave the credit to? The first one he gave it to was his grandmother, and then he gave it to his mother, and then it was Timothy. First generation, second generation, third generation. Two generations of mothers will be invaluable. Now I know you can have grandmothers or grandmothers who stick their nose in everybody's business. I have got to say my grandmother or my mother-in-law, Barb's mom, was probably one of the greatest mother-in-laws you could ever have. I know we make mother-in-law jokes. I understand that. But you know she always stayed out of the kids' business. When there were problems in the family, she always just kept quiet about it. Sure she prayed about it. But she never intermingled. She never caused problems. She never did. You are going to find that when you have two generations of mothers, it will be invaluable. The grandparents to provide that first generation stability that the kids see the first generation, the second generation, and then they understand they are part of the third generation. There are actually kids or kids who want to keep their grandkids from the grandparents. I realize in some cases you need to, but many times they feel threatened by them. What a bad way to look at it. You do not feel threatened by it. You realize that that is part of the process of stabilizing that whole concept once you understand it. "She considereth a field, and buyeth it."
6. She Girdeth Her Loins with Strength. Proverbs 31:17 says, "She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms." Ephesians 6:14 talked about the whole armor of God. It talks about: Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; Her strength will be the Word of God, the truth that she has. With God's truth she strengthens her arms, what she does for God. With her arms she holds her kids in the love of the Word of God. She holds her husband in the love of the Word of God. She holds the book above all with her love for the Word of God. Psalms 18:34 says: He teacheth my hands to war, so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms. We talk about our arm. We talk about an army. We talk about being armed, ready to defend the truth of God's Word with her family. That is what mothers do. That is what a wise woman does when she builds her house. She lets nothing come into that family that is going to take away what she knows God wants to do. There are some things out there that will hurt you.

7. She Perceives That Her Merchandise Is Good. Proverbs 31:18, "She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night." Oh, what a great example. What a great verse. "She perceiveth that her merchandise is good." She has perception. She is able to perceive. She does not see things as they appear. She sees things as they really are. She does not look at her family and just see kids. She looks at her family and sees the generation of God's family ministering the Word of God. It says, "her candle goeth not out by night." She is always, for her family, the bright spot that makes it all okay. That is what they do. When little kids get scared of the dark when they are little, you know what mom is? She is the night light that says it is okay. When they get into teenage years and they get scared of the dark, then she is the guiding light that walks them through their issues. Even when they are adults and they have to face many time issues and make decisions on life that they are not sure of and sometimes it makes them afraid, she will be the light of principles and wisdom in their life to guide them. That cannot just happen. That candle of hers, it just never goes out. It just never goes out. It is an incredible concept.
8. She Stretcheth Out Her Hand to the Poor. Proverbs 31:20, "She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy." She has charity. 1 Corinthians 13 talks about spiritual gifts, and most people never see 12, 13, and 14 as one continuous aspect. In those three chapters you have spiritual gifts laid into three different categories. It tells us that for you and me as a Christian, of all the gifts that somebody may desire, the greatest gift is the gift of charity. Charity is to others because it is real to your own family first. You have charity for others, you give unconditionally to others because you have given it to your own family first. She treats her kids, she teaches her kids to love God and give to others. I watch some of your kids that go out down there on Will's team and go out on Darren's team down along the river. I watch how that your understanding of sending those kids out down there with teams like that, really, I cannot tell you what you are building in their lives. I watch those little kids down there, and while they are witnessing to somebody, they are over here actually praying for them. It is incredible. I watch them carry the tracts while the other people are doing it. They are not big enough yet to say anything or do anything, but they just carry the tract like they are carrying the gold from Fort Knox. That is incredible. That gives them an understanding of everything that they have. You know, a wise family with all the presents, all the presents that our kids get. It would be so remarkable for a mom and a dad to say, "You know what, look at all that you have got. I want you to give up one present that we give to somebody that does not have something." "We have got a lady down there, I believe her name is Laura. Laura, I do not even know where she came from. She is down at 18th and Cherry, and she showed up down there by accident one day with a couple of her girls, and she had made up little bags for the homeless people down there, and she saw our people over there, and she came over and she started talking. She has been down there ever since. She called me on the phone a couple of weeks ago. I do not even know if this lady is saved or not. She called me a couple of weeks ago, and she says, "I want you to know," she says, "I really appreciate you letting my kids come down there." She said, "My kids need to understand that they do not have to get it all themselves," and they are out there. Those kids are out there. She brought three families with her last time she was down there, and they are coming to the party next week up at Restart. Now you ladies get all over her and get that family. It is

incredible. But she understands, I do not even know where she goes to church or if she does, but she understands the value of teaching her family charity, unconditional giving to others. It is incredible.

9. She Is Not Afraid of the Snow. Proverbs 31:21-22, "She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet. She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple." Every family in time, winter will set in. There will be some challenges that will come up with your family. There will be some issues that you will have to deal with, things that your kid will now have to face and deal with. Sometimes it will be at school, sometimes it will be with their friends, sometimes it is just peer pressure from others or the world. Maybe it is their first job when they get out there and they really get a taste of what the world is really like. But she is not worried nor is she afraid. You know why? Because she has clothed her first and then her family second with the righteousness of God. She has gotten the flax, made the thread, and then she got the sacrificial wool off the lamb, and she made them clothes. The coverings of tapestry, purple and silk. I think the expression is that we talk about, "I got you covered." Well, when it comes to the winter time that all families face, she has got her family covered. The cold will not affect her family.
10. Strength and Honor Are Her Clothing. Proverbs 31:25, "Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come." Now, I want to say something to you. If all you get out of what you came this morning is what I am about to say, it was worth getting out in the wet and the rain and making your way here today. Because the two great qualities of this woman is strength and honor. Moms, listen to me. Some of you ladies who will be moms down the line, listen to me. When you have the strength to stand for God with your family, say it again. When you have the strength to stand for God with your family, and there will be times that you have to do that. There will be times that you have to shut things out. There will be times that you cannot allow this to happen. It takes strength to be able to do that. When you have the strength to stand for your family, mom, that strength will always bring honor to your family. That should be on every refrigerator of every mom that is saved in this world. Strength to stand for God with your family will always bring honor to your family. It says, "and she shall rejoice in time to come." Two aspects to that. The first one will be in this life, she will rejoice when she sees that third generation complete the cycle. The second thing is in the next life when she rejoices at the judgment seat of Christ when families gather together, arms around each other at the feet of the throne of the Lord Jesus Christ and the crowns get dumped out to the third generation of families who minister together. Incredible.

IV. Ten Characteristics of a Wise Christian (Doctrinal)

Now that is the inspirational. Now let us look at the doctrinal for a moment. Let us look at this from a doctrinal aspect, and that is you and me. You may be a male today, but the Bible says it does not appear what you shall be. You may be a male, but as far as Christ is concerned, you are His bride. You are a female. You are a virgin. You are the bride of Christ. So we can look at this from an aspect of how it applies for me as the bride of Christ building my own house, not the home where I live, but my own body. We will look at it in that sense now quickly here.

11. Virtue. Proverbs 31:10 again, growing up and getting the truth of God and then passing it on to others. I watch you older guys take the younger guys and bring them along. I watch you older ladies take the younger gals and bring them along. I know we are still a young church, and our old crowd is in the 40s and the 50s for the most part, but I watch you. Virtue is the character of God that you have built in your own life, and now you will spend a couple of hours a week, two or three days a week giving it out. I will tell you just as I talked about it the last way, it will wear you out. It is Luke 6:19, you give of what you have and you get tired, and you need to be refilled or renewed every day, filling of the Holy Spirit of God. Ephesians 4:23, "renew the spirit of your mind."
12. Seek and Be Willing. Proverbs 31:13, "She seeketh wool and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands." For all of us, especially in the church, the opportunities to let God use you are all around you. There is no reason for anybody here to say, "I do not know what to do for God," because it is all around you. It is simply the fact that somebody will not seek and they are not willing. There is something for everybody. Seek it out, then be willing to let God use you. Luke 19:10 says God seeks and saves that which is lost. You and I, after we become a saved Christian, we do not seek and save, we seek and we serve. We look for the places to do what God has called us to do and saved us for, but we have to be willing.
13. Food from Afar. Proverbs 31:14, "She is like the merchant ships; she bringeth her food from afar." Oh, I think back to Exodus 16, that great chapter on the manna from heaven when the nation of Israel was out in the wilderness of sin, and there was no food and there was no water. Oh, what a picture is that of my life in this world. Nothing sustains me. The water is no good, the food is no good, and they would have perished in the wilderness of sin if God would not have supernaturally brought the manna down from heaven. For you and for me, we would have died in this old world if God would not have brought down the food from afar. I think in John 4, that great story of the woman at the well, and they have the natural water from Jacob's well that she had come there every day of her life to get water from, and she kept coming back. What a picture that is of the thing that this old world will not satisfy you, and then one day she met the Lord Jesus Christ at that well, and the Lord says, "You know what, sweetheart, the water I have got to give you will spring into everlasting life, and you will never thirst again," because His food was from afar. I think that is probably one of the greatest stories in the Bible. Most people never see the connection. Back in Genesis 29, you have the same well, it was Jacob's well. When Jesus shows up in John 4, hundreds of years later, He is sitting on the same well in Genesis 29. The story is back there that there is a well there, but there is a big stone on that well. The Bible, they go back there and they get talking, and they say, "We are not going to remove that stone until all the three flocks of sheep have gathered together." It clearly tells you that there are three flocks of sheep that have to come together before they are going to water all of them. When all those come together, they move that stone and they give the water to those three flocks of sheep. Some a thousand years later at the same well, the stone cut without hands is sitting on the same well. Now because of the fact that who He is, the stone is gone, the well is there, and now He gives water to the three flocks of Ham, Shem, and Japheth. He waters them. Incredible, incredible, incredible. I love the Word of God. I love it most of all, I do believe. More than what it has done for me, more than what it could do for you, more than what it has made me, but I love it first

and foremost because it is the only thing that I possess that is not of this world. Everything else I own, the fingerprints, the DNA of the world is all over it. When it comes to my Bible and the food that God gave me from afar, that is the only thing in my life that I have that is not of this world. I have come to the point in my life, and all my life I have studied manuscript evidence, I have studied translations, I have studied the lines, and somebody messes with me on the Bible, it will be the last thing they ever wish they did. I get that, I understand that. But to me it is much more than that. I did not study it for that reason. That just kind of happened, and I really do not care what a person believed, but when somebody attacks me, you declare war, we will go to war. But that is not the reason for me. It is much more than that. All those years I studied, all those years I looked at the two lines, all those years I broke down the book of Acts and I saw the churches and the Christian ends all down through history, and I saw all through those years I simply saw the hand of God who worked to get all history lined up so I would have a copy of His Word that He could give me His food from afar. That is what it is for me, man. That is what it is for me.

14. Rises While It Is Yet Night. Proverbs 31:15, "She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens." Wow, night. The great church age in the Bible. It referenced to me as His bride getting up early to get what God has for me, not only for me and my family, but for my people. It is a picture of you and the time you spend studying, laboring in the Word of God because you are going to give it to somebody else and do something with it. The church, your family, and then the people that you work with.
15. Considers the Field and Buys It. Proverbs 31:16, "She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard." One of the greatest verses in all the Bible and why I am here with you today. Matthew 13 says the field is the world. I have told you this before. Christ bought the world. But then He asked me to buy a little field within this world. He asked me to look around in a world that He paid for and simply say, "Bob, I am not asking you to buy the whole world. I am just asking you to consider a field in this world." When you buy it, "I want you to buy it with all the intensity, all the sacrifice, all the tenacity that I bought the whole world with." My field today and my little piece of the action, my little piece of the field of the great world that He bought is right here in Kansas City. I bought it with the same determination, all the same energy level that He had when He bought the world. Today Old Paths Baptist Church is our field in Kansas City. We buy it. We realize we are committed to it. This is our work. It is not somebody else's. We are dedicated to it. We understand that God saved us, brought us here, could have sent you anywhere on the planet. He saved you. He brought you here. You got your Bible learned here. You got taught here. He gave you ministry here. This is your field. "You consider the field and buy it with the hands she planted the vineyard." We started with 12 people. I have said it many, many times. You build a church one person at a time, one couple at a time, one family at a time. You all did not come in the week after we started our church. One of you came here. You came here. You came. Then you came. You showed up on Thursday night. You came here. One by one. We planted a field. Now we have got a vineyard. Now the vineyard is bringing forth fruit. It is just that simple.
16. Girded Loins with Strength. Proverbs 31:17, "She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms." The girding of our loins. Again, Ephesians 6:17, the strength of a

man will always be in his loins. Loins means so much in the Bible. It means a man's strength. It also means a man's future family when it talked about in your loins or future generations you will find. 1 Peter 1:13 gives us a clear example of what the strength of a man is and where it is found and what loins really mean in the Bible for a man's strength where it says: Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; Your strength as a Christian is in your mind. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." There lies your strength. Job 38:3 says: Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me. Our strength will simply be our mind and what we went and go and what we have done with it.

17. Perceives and Her Candle Goes Not Out. Proverbs 31:18, "She perceiveth that her merchandise is good; her candle goeth not out by night." Simply seeing situations as they are, not as people try to portray them to be. Our perception, the book of Proverbs and its contrast, a wise man versus a foolish man, learning how to get discernment, discretion, perspective, key elements that only come from the merchandise of the Word of God. Your candle, Proverbs 20:27 says: The spirit of man is the candle of the LORD, searching all the inward parts of the belly. Never lose that fellowship and relationship of walking in the light as He is in the light. The candle, when you got saved, that candle got lit inside of you, and that candle will never go out. You may cover it up, you may hide it, you may put a bushel basket over it as the Bible says in Matthew, but it will never go out. It seeks down inside your very soul.
18. Stretches Out Her Hand to the Poor. Proverbs 31:19-20, "She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff. She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy." Nehemiah 8:10. What a great verse for this church and for almost everybody in this church where it says: Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the LORD is your strength. That is what we do here. You get the fat on Thursday night and Sunday morning, you get the sweet, you get everything you could ever want. You have got the people ministry, you have got the singles ministry, got the parish stuff, you have got everything you need. You talk about eat the fat and drink the sweet, but then what do you do with that? Then he says, "and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared." There are people out there that have nothing today, and look what we have. Look what God has given us. People get so satisfied with things in the Word of God that they get critical of things. They get an attitude about things. Happens all the time. They get spoiled with the Word of God. They think because they get so much. It is like a person who has gotten millions and millions and millions of dollars. You know what he does? He loses touch with a guy who does not have anything. When you have billions and billions and billions of dollars spiritually right at your fingertips, it is easy to lose touch with those who do not have anything. That is the key, giving to the poor. Charity again for the ones in this world who have nothing, helping others, no ulterior motive, just doing what God has done for us. I think one of my greatest heroes of the last of the Philadelphia church age was a guy who is totally misrepresented today. But it would be General William Booth, who was the founder of the Salvation Army. The Salvation Army that you see today is nothing compared to the original Salvation Army. If William Booth was

alive today, he would have a heart attack and die before he would walk past the first ashtray in the Salvation Army churches. It was an incredible thing. He was born in 1829. He died in 1912. He established an army, we think that was in America, it was in England. That is where it started. His greatest book, he wrote a number of things, but the greatest book that I think he ever wrote and really changed, changed the whole face of England. In fact, King Edward VII actually invited him to his coronation based on the work that he had done. The work was based on one thing that he wrote, and he wrote many, many things. The name of the book was *In Darkest England and the Way Out*. In Darkest England, boy England was dark at the time. Then he said, "Here is the way out." The way out was the gospel of Jesus Christ. Boy, if America ever needed to read a book, it needs to be that book. His final moments, every Christmas Eve, he would address all of the Salvation Army people. They would plug in radios around the world, and he would address everybody in his organization, give them some Christmas message, encourage them. But he was ill in health. In fact, he died shortly after that Christmas Eve. He was in the hospital. He was very weak. Yet, he wanted to give a message to all of his followers in the glorious back then Salvation Army, which was a true Salvation Army. So they got all the microphones and plugged up everywhere, and everybody around the world that was part of his group waited for their general to give them this inspiring message. He was so weak and so tired and so worn out that his message only contained one word. Shortly thereafter, he died. But they held the microphone down, and they said, "Now prepared to hear from our General William Booth." The only word that he uttered was the word "others." Others. That is all it is really about, folks. For you and for me, for the Word of God, for this church, for what God does with us, it is just about one thing. It is about others. Are we willing to take and give to those who have nothing? Are we willing to eat the fat and drink the sweet, but we forget about sending portion to those for whom nothing is prepared? That is the real key.

19. Not Afraid of the Snow. Proverbs 31:21-22, "She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet. She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple." Not afraid of the snow. Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:21: Do thy diligence to come before winter. You know this mom here, this woman, whether it is a mother who builds her own family or it is you and me as the bride of Christ, she knows that there is going to come a time in her life that she needs to get some things done before wintertime sets in. Man's life is like the four seasons. You have a spring when you are born. You have a summer when you are now moving to adulthood. You have fall when you are now fully adult moving in, and then wintertime comes into your life. Most people never stop and think about that, but apple trees do not bear apples in winter. Not in February. Not here anyhow. You realize that she knows that there are some things that need to get done before the wintertime of her life and she cannot do those things anymore. Hey, there will be a time that will come where you will lose the influence over your kids. You better get some things done before winter gets here. The time that you will lose the relationship in your marriage. So you better get some things done before that wintertime gets here. There will be a time when you will not be able to say some things to some people that you need to say right now. So you better say them before wintertime sets in. I do not know how many people that lost a mother, lost a father, had problems with them, maybe did not speak to them for a long time,

and that person dies. The rest of their life they wail and wail and cry. I have seen them stand by that graveside and tell their daddy, "I love you, daddy. I love you, mommy. I am sorry. I am sorry." Too late. Wintertime. There are some things you have got to get done before winter gets here in your life. Some things you better say to some people before you cannot say them anymore or they cannot hear it anymore. It is a time that you will not be able to do the work for God, and your race will come to an end, and the wintertime of your life will set in. But you see, do not be afraid of the snow because she is prepared, and you should be prepared that you are doing those things now before winter gets here.

20. Strength and Honor. Proverbs 31:25-26, "Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come. She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness." Two great qualities again we see that the mother had that you and I should have as Christians, strength and honor. In a Christian's life, strength will be the power of God under control in your life. Simply strength to stand for God now, courage to stay with the Word of God now, not to compromise when you are tempted to. Stay within those laws of God like we talked about a couple of weeks ago. Strength now to make the hard decisions. Lose some things in your life that you have to lose. Maybe you lose some friends, maybe you lose this, maybe you lose that. Sometimes you have to make those hard decisions. Strength now, being able to stand now, strength and endurance now will always lead to honor later at the judgment seat of Christ.

V. The Foolish Woman and the Perverse Man

Then the last part of Proverbs 14:1, "but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands." Hands in the Bible is what you do. Two kinds of women, two kinds of Christians. One will build her house, one will destroy her house. One will build you up, the other one will tear you down. I have seen moms, single, divorced, or remarried, drag the kids through the mud of their lifestyle and let those kids be exposed to guys sleeping over and guys this and guys that or women this and women that, living a lifestyle that is totally outside the Word of God and dragging their kids through the mud of their lifestyle and then actually standing there scratching her head asking herself, "How did that happen?" Listen, kids at 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 will absorb everything you do. Then at 18, 19, and 20, they will do everything you do. A woman will build her family with her husband, with her hands, or she will build it and destroy it with her hands. The Christian, bride of Christ, will build his house, his body, or he will use the very hands that God gave him to do the work of God to destroy it. One inspirational, one doctrinal.

Proverbs 14:2, and I am done. "He that walketh in his uprightness feareth the LORD: but he that is perverse in his ways despiseth him." I want you to listen to something here, and I am done. This is so simple. "Walketh in his uprightness." It does not mean you have any uprightness yourself, any self-righteousness, you do not. But rather you realize that you have to have a moral compass in your life, and that moral compass is a righteous standard that you yourself must walk in. You cannot walk in somebody else's forever. You have to in time develop your own compass that points the direction of north. You cannot use somebody else's all your life. Your own righteousness, your walk based on your walk with God.

Then the last part of that verse, boy it is a real killer. "And he that is perverse in his ways despiseth him." It says that there is a natural spiritual separation between a man that is right with God and a man who is not. That does not sound like it is a very profound statement, but it really is. That Bible says that when you walk in your uprightness, the man who is perverse is going to despise you. There is a real separation God puts between a man who does what is right and when a man does it. You know what? You can see it if you have got any kind of perception at all. You can see it the moment a person begins to go backwards from God, it is so apparent, and you can see it in everything that they do. It says that there is a natural spiritual separation between a man right with God and a man who is not. Yet, and this is what I am telling you, this is why you need to have a spirit, a spiritual moral compass. This is why you need to have strength and honor. Yet you will see God's people all the time getting hooked up with the perverse crowd in spite of that spiritual separation. Now how does that happen? When God puts a natural separation between the perverse man who hates uprightness and the man who is upright, who fears the Lord, how in the world does that natural separation get breached?

Well, it is real simple. Bible makes it real clear that a perverse man despises the things of God, and he will despise your righteous walk with God. So he will not rise up to your level. Now, you have to make a conscious choice to go down to his level. When you do, when you do that, it is simply leaving God and all that He has done for you for the perverse world. You bridge that natural separation by your choosing. The unsaved world will never come to you. You always go to them. As long as you have the righteous moral compass, you will never go to them. They cannot get to you, but it is us who lose our moral direction and our moral courage, who always go to them. Simply leaving God and all that He has done for you for the perverse world. The Laodicean church age, the old church with the Word of God, simply moved down to philosophy and the tradition of men and the rudiments of the world. They did not come to it. Church went to them. The world will not come to you. You will always go to the world. You do that because of the fact that you have no upright moral compass in your life that guides you. God's people going down to the level of perverseness and leaving the things of God. Just that simple. Well, we will hold up there. What an incredible opening in Proverbs 14. We are going to be dismissed here in just a moment.