

PROVERBS: ALIGNING TO GOD'S FIXED MORAL ORDER

Part III: Displaying God's Fixed Moral Order

V. Viewing Specific Proverbs Of God's Fixed Moral Order (Proverbs 31:1-9)

I. Introduction

- A. After motivating a young man to heed an observed fixed moral order, the literary genre of the Egyptian *sboyet* that the book of Proverbs uses works to supply actual proverbs to reveal that order, cf. Bruce Waltke, "The Book of Proverbs and Ancient Wisdom Literature," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 136:543, p. 221-238.
- B. Solomon reveals that order to be **God's** order for his son to heed. We continue that study of that order.
- C. However, clarification is in order regarding Proverbs 31:1-9: it contains the saying of a **mother** to her **son**, a **king** named Lemuel, Proverbs 31:1. This is an **uncommon** address for two reasons: (1) the rest of Proverbs save Proverbs 1:8 and 6:20 speak only of a **father's** instruction to a son. Also, (2) the Ancient Near East, being **patristic**, would make such a mother's address to her king-son almost awkward!
- D. Hence, the **valuable role** of a **MOTHER'S** influence on an **adult son** is taught here for our instruction:

II. Viewing Specific Proverbs Of God's Fixed Moral Order From Proverbs 31:1-9.

- A. These words by a **mother** to her adult son were given as an oracle, something the son was to **remember**, 31:1. As such, these words reveal the great and **lasting INFLUENCE** a godly mother can have on her son toward equipping him to live in accord with God's fixed moral order.
- B. The oracle **reveals the influence a mother can have on getting her son to counter what CAN OFTEN be MALE IRRESPONSIBILITY with the preservation of welfare for the VULNERABLE:**
 1. In keeping with the pattern of Hannah when childlessness would have been a hardship, Lemuel's one-time childless and hence distressed mother had asked God for a son, and received Lemuel, 31:2.
 2. As such, she was particularly defensive about his welfare, that he would not lose his strength foolishly in keeping with her nurturing concern as a mother who prized her God-given son, Proverbs 31:3a.
 3. Hence, she warned her son about immoral women, about not spending his physical strength and hence the resulting positional credibility of his kingship on immoral women, Proverbs 31:3b.
 4. In keeping with this theme and growing out of her sensitivity due to her own former distress, the nurturing mother was concerned about her son not giving his strength to substance abuse as it would render him unable to defend **other** oppressed people in his dominion, Proverbs 31:4-9.
 - a. The nurturing mother was concerned that Lemuel not submit to intoxicating drinks, Proverbs 31:4.
 - b. She feared he might yield to such drink and be rendered unable to protect vulnerable subjects like orphans and widows from oppressive injustice, Proverbs 31:5.
 - c. Rather, strong drink was to be used to nurture the emotional welfare of those already dying, 31:6-7.
 - d. Lemuel's mother urged him to judge uprightly as a king and use his position and clarity of mind to defend the rights of the afflicted and needy under him, Proverbs 31:8-9.
 - e. This mother's concern undoubtedly grew out of her sensitivity to the needs of oppressed people, a sensitivity heightened by her past feelings of social pain from being a childless woman, Prov. 31:2!

Lesson: From these proverbs, we see that a **MOTHER'S** typically **NURTURING** tendency coupled with her awareness of personal **VULNERABILITY** to loss in a **MAN'S WORLD** can be used with positive effect to **MODIFY** a young son's native tendency toward a **RECKLESS** or **SELFISH** viewpoint. That equips him to check the abuses done to himself and to the vulnerable under his reign for their blessing.

Application: Since a **WOMAN** belongs to the more vulnerable, nurturing gender, a godly mother (not to mention a godly father!) should **VALUE** the **MODIFYING** insight and influence **SHE** offers toward helping to **INSTRUCT** her **SON** about the plight of weaker and more vulnerable people around **HIM!** She can offer future generations the invaluable gift of a leader who cares about vulnerable people.

Illustration: (1) Britain's late Princess Diana used to take her sons, William and Edward to visit homeless shelters and those dying of AIDS. In doing so, she left England a future king who cares about the oppressed! (2) Abraham Lincoln reportedly said all he ever hoped to be he owed to his mother! In view of his preservation of the union in the civil war, we owe that lady a lot of thanks!