

Week 3: A Woman with Open Arms

Day One:

Hypothesize with me: if the Proverbs 31 was in our world today, and was driving her Jaguar (remember: this is successful chick) when a homeless person approaches her at an intersection, how would she react? How would you react? Are you *sure* he's homeless? Is she really needy??

1. Read Proverbs 31:20.

Our girl is not just a God-fearing hard worker; she is charitable. Earlier in Proverbs, vs. 9, we read a parallel idea. "Plead the cause of the poor and needy." Another translation says it like this, "... Defend the rights of the poor and needy."

Did you know that approximately 75% of the Old Testament is poetry? You can find parallel poetry in the creation story of Genesis 1. And all of the Psalms and Proverbs are poetry. Poetry was a common form of Hebrew writing for several reasons: it was easier to sing, easier to memorize and parallel poetry (like our current verses) emphasized something of great importance.

Knowing this, you can surmise the importance of the virtuous woman not only extending her hands to the poor but also defending their rights.

Day Two:

1. Repeat aloud Proverbs 31:20 five times.
2. Write down any thoughts you have about these verses.

Day Three:

1. Repeat aloud Proverbs 31:20 five times.
2. Write down any thoughts you have about these verses.

Day Four:

Lets review the intended meanings of “poor” and “needy” in this verse. The word “poor” is translated from the Hebrew word transliterated aniy (aw-nee). This word literally means depressed, in mind or circumstances. The original word for “needy”, ‘ebyown, literally means a sense of want, destitute.

1. Write what you think Proverbs 31:20 should say (use the literal translation).

The woman of worth not only aids those who are financially poor. She aids those that are emotionally and spiritually poor – depressed in mind.

2. Do you find it easiest to give to someone who is financially, spiritually or emotionally needy?

Day Five:

God's people are to be compassionate.

1. Read Leviticus 19:10 and 23:22

The Israelites are clearly instructed that the gleanings from their vineyards and fields should be left to the poor of the land.

2. Are there things in your life/work that may be inconsequential to you, but others who are destitute may benefit from?

Day Six:

1. Read 1 Corinthians. What is needed to give rightly?

From our discussion last week, we learned that work is necessary but that it has no purpose unless it is done sacrificially, as unto Christ. Likewise, nothing is gained in giving unless one is giving with the first purpose of love.

2. Read Ezekiel 16:49

Ezekiel compared Sodom to those who have hardened their hearts to the poor and needy.

3. What three things led to Sodom's insensitivity?
4. Are there areas of arrogance, over-contentment and complacency in your life that affect your ability to give in love to those in need?

Though selfishness may creep into our lives, we must model a giving Spirit. Think of it like this: In our past discussion, we noted that through work our faith is demonstrated.

In the same manner, being Christ-like entails demonstrating characteristics of Christ, and to do that, we must reflect His giving nature.

5. Read Proverbs 14:21

6. In your notebook, write out a prayer based on Proverbs 31:20. We do this because we are literally asking God for what we know He wants for our lives. It confirms that we desire God's Will. Here's an example:

Lord God, aid me in helping others. Provide me with opportunities to open my arms to the poor and extend my hand to the needy. Forgive me that this doesn't come easily, and help me be willing to give others the help that they need. In Jesus' name, Amen.