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“But a Woman Who Fears the Lord is to Be Praised”: A Practical Vision in Proverbs 31

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April 6, 2018

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Abstract

J. N. Andrews Honors Thesis

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Title: “But a Woman Who Fears the Lord is to Be Praised”: A Practical Vision in Proverbs 31

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Advisor: A. Rahel Wells, PhD

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Proverbs begins with an exposition on what the “fear of the Lord” entails and ends with the description of the woman of noble character who fears the Lord (Prov 31:30). Since few scholars have considered the woman of Prov 31 in connection to the “fear of the Lord,” this project overviews aspects of the “fear of the Lord” in the Old Testament, including all specific verses containing the phrase, and examines the significance of their connections with Prov 31. The contributions of this study include theological and practical implications of what it means to live a life fearing the Lord.

“BUT A WOMAN WHO FEARS THE LORD IS TO BE PRAISED”: A PRACTICAL VISION IN PROVERBS 31

Introduction

The goal of this research project is to study the theological connection between what it means to “fear the Lord” and the woman of noble character in Prov 31. In a popular understanding of Prov 31, many have associated this woman with an afterthought in the book; however, Proverbs begins with an exposition on what the “fear of the Lord” entails and ends with the description of the woman of noble character, who is described as “fearing the Lord” in Prov 31:30. Thus, this project overviews all aspects of the “fear of the Lord” in the Old Testament and examines the significance of the connections with Prov 31.

The completion of this project marks a continuation of my learning in religion and theology, as well as my personal desire to pursue a career in healthcare along with motherhood. Some of the classes that I have taken, such as Fundamentals of Spirituality and Ethical Healthcare, Personal Spirituality and Faith, and Prophetic Writings in the Old Testament have laid the foundation for a project that seeks a theological and canonical approach to understanding what it means to “fear the Lord.” The afore-mentioned classes as well my personal interests led me to desire a practical vision of the “fear of the Lord.” I aspire to shed light on connections with several different passages on the “fear of the Lord” and the implications for the woman in Prov 31 as a model for living out that practical vision.

What does it mean to “fear the Lord”? In theological discussion as well as in the personal devotional life, a better understanding of what “fearing” God entails may be

crucial in developing a clearer picture of a life in obedience to God's calling for us. Christians understand what it means to love God, but are confused as to why God commands us to fear Him. This misperception may have been fueled by misguided literature on this topic. Paul Boudreau expressed in his essay that the "fear of the Lord" is "being afraid" or "living in terror."¹ Furthermore, Lynn Japinga, a feminist theologian, notes that the term "fear" can paralyze, make us sick, cautious, and closed.² Walther Eichrodt adopts Rudolf Otto's definition of the "fear of the Lord," which is a human response to an encounter with the "Holy," an "oscillation between *mysterium tremendum* and *fascinans*."³ Others, such as Zimmerli, explain the "fear of the Lord" as "an emotion of fear," because "[we] are afraid of God and of the consequences he may exact on [us]."⁴ Scholars like Gerhard von Rad, however, disagree, stating that it is not a human emotional response, but obedience to God's will and His commands.⁵

Thus, the definition of the "fear of the Lord" is not only misunderstood but often mystified in the church. Authors such as Fout and Cate reexamine the Biblical theme of fearing God, outlining the various passages where the "fear of the Lord" appears by looking at the context. They propose that the fear of God is an appropriate "relational

¹ Paul Boudreau, "Fear Not," *US Catholic Magazine* 66/7 (2001): 49.

² Lynn Japinga, "Fear in the Reformed Tradition," in *Feminist and Womanist Essays in Reformed Dogmatics* (ed. Amy Plantinga Pauw and Serene Jones; Columbia Series in Reformed Theology; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2006), I, 2.

³ Walther Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament* (trans. J. A. Baker; vol. 2; OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1967), 269.

⁴ David Clines, "The Fear of the Lord Is Wisdom (Job 28:28): A Semantic and Contextual Study," in *Job 28: Cognition in Context* (ed. Ellen van Wolde; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 64.

⁵ Gerhard Von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel* (trans. James D. Martin; London: SCM, 1972), 66; idem, *Old Testament Theology* (trans. D. M. G. Stalker; vol. I; New York: Harper, 1962), 433,438.

disposition toward God”⁶ as well as the basis for proper human acting and thinking. Although these authors have given insight to what the term may refer to, these authors do not specifically address the connections of one who fears God to the woman of Prov 31. In addition, authors such as Goh and Yoder, explore the woman of Prov 31 through intertextual readings and analyses of the chapter; however, these authors do not expound upon how her lifestyle and actions are parallel to one who fears the Lord. A few authors make a brief mention of the woman of Prov 31, specifically of verse 30, in which she is called a woman who fears the Lord. For instance, Hawkins suggests that she is a female mentor for society to emulate and follow after; yet, the article lacks a thorough analysis of the connections between her life and what it means to fear the Lord.⁷

The hope of this research is to contribute to the scholarly discussion surrounding the question of what it means to live a life “fearing the Lord” from a theological perspective, as well as to explore the practical implications that Christians can follow and take after. This project will examine how the woman of Prov 31 lives out the characteristics of one who “fears the Lord.” I will be expounding upon those actions to the specific verses containing the “fear of the Lord” and showing how the two themes relate to each other.

⁶ Robert L. Cate, "The Fear of The Lord in the Old Testament," *The Theological Educator* 35 (1987): 41-55.

⁷ Tom R. Hawkins, "The Wife of Noble Character in Proverbs 31:10-31," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 153 (1996): 12-23.

Methodology

One of the main purposes of theology is to face contemporaneous ideologies and philosophical currents. Using the lens of the “fear of the Lord,” I approached this theological analysis from various texts found in the Old Testament, especially those in Proverbs, to apply this lens to the woman in Prov 31. The six steps that I will be using are loosely based on M. Erickson’s *Christian Theology*.⁸

First of all, I gathered and examined all of the passages mentioning the “fear of the Lord” in the Old Testament. Second, using the inductive reasoning hermeneutical approach, I analyzed each text to determine the passages’ context and implications for Prov 31. This approach involved asking a number of questions to each text in order to attain three primary objectives: (1) to understand what the passage is saying, (2) to understand what it means, and (3) to understand how it applies to the reader. These questions included the following and were asked of each passage: (a) Who is the person who “fears the Lord”? (b) What characteristics do they exhibit? (c) What actions do they perform and to whom? (d) What does “fear of the Lord” mean? Or refer to? and (e) Are there connections to the woman in Prov 31?⁹

Third, I studied the treatment of the passages by various biblical commentaries to understand how these passages were viewed historically and currently in theological thought. Fourth, I looked through the various passages and identified themes from both the results of the inductive hermeneutical approach, as well as the commentaries. Fifth, I attempted to coalesce these themes into a coherent whole, identifying the theological

⁸ Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1993), 59-80.

⁹ For brief answers to these questions yielded by the research, see Appendix C.

connections between the “fear of the Lord” and the woman of noble character as presented in Proverbs. Lastly, I determined the application from the passages for our current understanding of how a woman should exemplify the “fear of the Lord.” Ultimately, these last two steps culminated my research and show how Prov 31 is written with the purpose of portraying the ideal life of someone who “fears the Lord.”

It must be noted that my lack of knowledge in the Hebrew language may have served as a limitation of this research. Looking at the original language may have strengthened this study, as it decreases the variety of translations and potential misinterpretations. However, because this project was not a specific word study but an analysis of a theological concept—the “fear of the Lord”—and what it entails, Hebrew was not a requirement. It was sufficient to read the context of all the passages in the Old Testament containing the phrase and to ask theological questions to gain a deeper understanding of the “fear of the Lord” in connection to Prov 31. Another limitation may have been the choice of the New International Version (NIV) translation used to study the passages of the Bible. English Standard Version (ESV) is one of the most literally translated versions of Scripture and would have been the most accurate to use for this project. But as I consistently used a single translation, and consulted commentaries on each passage, this mitigated the possible misunderstandings.

One of the strengths of this research is that all of the passages of the Old Testament containing the “fear of the Lord” were analyzed using the inductive hermeneutical approach to gain a better understanding of the phrase. It was not limited to a book or a collection of books by the same author; rather, the entire Old Testament

served as the background knowledge of this research, which was later honed down to further explore specific passages in detail that were closely interconnected with Prov 31.

Results and Discussion

Proverbs begins with an exposition on what the “fear of the Lord” entails and ends with the description of the woman of noble character who “fears the Lord” (Prov 31:30). I will first describe the characteristics of the woman in Prov 31, and then examine some of the connections between her life and the one who “fears the Lord” elsewhere in Proverbs (see the full research in Appendices A and B). Since few scholars have considered the woman of Prov 31 in connection to the “fear of the Lord,” I then give an overview of aspects of the “fear of the Lord” in the Old Testament, including all specific verses containing the phrase, and examine the significance of their connections with Prov 31 (see the full research in Appendices C and D).

Proverbs 31 contains a description of a woman commonly known as “the wife of noble character.” The poem is structured into four parts: a nine-verse characterization (31:10-18), a two-verse chiastic unit (31:19-20), a nine-verse characterization (31:21-29), and a two-verse closing (31:30-31).¹⁰ The two-nine verse characterizations are in a chiasm, balancing each other with a sevenfold description of the woman: strong character, benefits her husband, good works and wise speech, expertise at handcrafts, industriousness, commercial benefit to her family, and strength. This sevenfold characterization signifies the “comprehensive grasp of all the godly virtues of an ideal

¹⁰ Andrew E. Steinmann, *Proverbs* (Concordia Commentary, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2009), 638.

wife.”¹¹ As one who “fears the Lord,” a close analysis of her lifestyle and characteristics may assist in gaining a better understanding of what the “fear of the Lord” entails.

Proverbs 31:10-18

- 10 A wife of noble character who can find?
She is worth far more than rubies.
11 Her husband has full confidence in her
and lacks nothing of value.
12 She brings him good, not harm,
all the days of her life.
13 She selects wool and flax
and works with eager hands.
14 She is like the merchant ships,
bringing her food from afar.
15 She gets up while it is still night;
she provides food for her family
and portions for her female servants.
16 She considers a field and buys it;
out of her earnings she plants a vineyard.
17 She sets about her work vigorously;
her arms are strong for her tasks.
18 She sees that her trading is profitable,
and her lamp does not go out at night.

Starting with verse 10, the woman is described as someone “worth far more than rubies.” In other words, she is of superior value, full of worth, and desired of possession. She cannot be compared even to rubies, gems of great worth. By this, the poet immediately points to the fact that she is wise, as the priceless treasure of wisdom worth more than jewels (Prov 3:15; 8:11).¹² In other translations, she is called “virtuous” or “excellent.”

In verse 11, it is clear that the wife is a responsible and trustworthy person, as her husband has “full confidence in her.” She does not lack anything of value and will benefit

¹¹ Steinmann, *Proverbs*, 638.

¹² *Ibid.*, 640.

him. In verse 12, the wife of noble character does only good and not evil. The phrase “all the days of her life” denotes eternal life through faith.¹³ Even her husband is blessed because of her. Starting in verse 13, there is a theme regarding the types of things that she does for business, that also continues further into the poem. With eager hands she selects wool and flax—materials for textile process—which shows that the woman is diligent, willing, and decisive.

In verses 14 and 15, the wife’s industriousness is made clear. She is compared to a “merchant ship” that brings food from faraway places, noting her characteristics of being prepared well in advance. In verse 15, it is evident that she is a determined, early riser, getting up while it is still dark out. She leaves her own convenience behind and cares for those around her, providing food not only for those in her family but also her servants. She does not show partiality, but treats everyone equally.

Beginning with verse 16, the poem depicts the wife of noble character as a “businesswoman.”¹⁴ She is wise, carefully and thoroughly thinking through before purchasing land and dealing with finances. It is evident that she is skilled at buying an estate, making enough profit to plant and maintain a vineyard.¹⁵ In verse 17, she is vigorous and energetic in her work, and is described as one whose arms are strong and healthy. Some scholars even point out that these characteristics are typically male-linked attributes, meaning the woman is depicted as a “warrior” girded up for battle.¹⁶

¹³ Ibid., 640.

¹⁴ Christine Roy Yoder, “The Woman of Substance (’ŠT-ḤYL): A Socioeconomic Reading of Proverbs 31:10-31,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 122 (2003): 427-447.

¹⁵ Steinmann, *Proverbs*, 641.

¹⁶ Ibid., 641.

Verse 18 once again goes back to highlight the wife's hardworking, industrious traits, as she makes sure that her goods are sufficient for trading. Furthermore, she fulfills her duties as a wife and mother by ensuring that the lamps burn throughout the entire night.

Proverbs 31:19-20

- 19 In her hand she holds the distaff
and grasps the spindle with her fingers.
20 She opens her arms to the poor
and extends her hands to the needy.

The next verse goes back to the wife's handicraft. She is skilled in usage of the distaff and spindle, which is made into thread and yarn as expressed in verse 19. In verse 20, it is evident that she is not only hardworking and thorough with business, but also in regards to showing compassion for those around her. The wife shows justice and mercy to the poor, extending her arms to the needy, obeying the commands in Prov 31:8 and 9.

Proverbs 31:21-29

- 21 When it snows, she has no fear for her household;
for all of them are clothed in scarlet.
22 She makes coverings for her bed;
she is clothed in fine linen and purple.
23 Her husband is respected at the city gate,
where he takes his seat among the elders of the land.
24 She makes linen garments and sells them,
and supplies the merchants with sashes.
25 She is clothed with strength and dignity;
she can laugh at the days to come.
26 She speaks with wisdom,
and faithful instruction is on her tongue.
27 She watches over the affairs of her household
and does not eat the bread of idleness.
28 Her children arise and call her blessed;
her husband also, and he praises her:
29 Many women do noble things,
but you surpass them all.

Verses 21 and 22 returns to the woman's work of crafts, specifically pointing out those are woven for her family members. She does not fear the cold, for she has prepared their clothing for the winter. It can be further argued that she, then, does not have to worry about their health, as she provides the warmth needed to prevent sickness. It can also be noted that due to her diligent hands, she has coverings for her bed and fine clothing made of purple and linen, signifying luxury and wealth. Scholars even point out the usage of the word "bedspread," which the wife makes for her and her husband to enjoy the sexual union God has bestowed upon humanity. In such a case, the husband and wife share a sacred bond of marriage, blessed by God upon the "entire relationship of the believing couple, including their intimacy."¹⁷

Verse 23 implies that because the wife is a respectable woman, those closely associated with her are also honored. Her husband is "respected at the city gate," perhaps partly because she is of value. Verse 24 returns to further describe the wife's hardworking abilities and the financial benefits she brings to her household as a businesswoman. She sells her handmade linen and sashes to the merchants for profit. It is clear that her merchandise is of high quality, purchased by other traders to be sold.

It is shown in verse 25 that she is not only clothed physically with fine linen and luxurious garments (31:22), but also with strength and dignity. She is strong, a woman of "valor."¹⁸ Because she knows the Source of her strength and dignity, she has a cheerful countenance,¹⁹ joyful for the time to come, not fearing the uncertainties of the future, but

¹⁷ Ibid., 642.

¹⁸ Naphtali Gutstein, "Proverbs 31:10-31: The Woman of Valor as Allegory," *Jewish Bible Quarterly* 27 (1999): 36-39.

¹⁹ Jana K. Riess, "The Woman of Worth: Impressions of Proverbs 31:10-31," *Dialogue* 30 (1997): 141-151.

rather anticipating what is to come. She knows that the future is in the hands of God and can rest assured in such truth. Built upon the previous verse, it is clear in verse 26 that because of her faith and confidence in God, she has wisdom. Thus, wisdom and faithful instruction is what she speaks of and she is a knower of the truth. She realizes her duty to share what she has learned with those around her.

Verse 27 once again emphasizes the wife's diligence. She is not idle, but has eager hands that claim responsibility over her household. She watches over the affairs of her household and holds herself to a high standard, striving to be productive and not lazy. The wife's value can be clearly seen in verse 28, where those in her household call her blessed and praise her. She is a wonderful mother and wife to her family and husband, as well as a respected businesswoman. Just as Prov 31:10 places an estimate of her worth as far more than usually possible, the family praises and adores her. Verse 29 is the actual praise from her husband. She stands out above the crowd of noble women.

Proverbs 31:30-31

30 Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting;
but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.
31 Honor her for all that her hands have done,
and let her works bring her praise at the city gate.

Verse 30 concludes that the wife is a woman who fears the Lord, and is one who does not focus on cultivating her outward appearance, but rather her internal beauty of faith. As a result of fearing God, or possibly as part of the definition of fearing God, the woman is honorable, praiseworthy, and fruitful in all that she does (verse 31).

Themes of Proverbs 31

All the characteristics of the woman of noble character can be categorized into three broad themes—righteousness, fruitfulness, and power. First and foremost, the wife of noble character has strong faith in God and stands firm in her principles of *righteousness*. She does only good and not evil (31:12), shows justice and compassion (31:15, 20), and is not lazy but diligent (31:17). She does not fear the future but rests assured in God (31:18, 21), speaks and instructs with wisdom (31:26), and fears the Lord (31:30).

Secondly, the wife of noble character is *fruitful* in all that she does. She is a woman of many skills and accomplishments. This theme of constant activity and work can be seen woven throughout Prov 31. She selects wool and flax (31:13), brings about useful resources from these raw materials with a distaff and spindle (31:19), and makes clothing for her family and herself as well as coverings for the bed (31:21,22). The merchants buy her sashes and linen garments to sell to others (31:24). She also provides food for the family, bringing it from afar (31:14), watches over the household and all its affairs, and is not idle (31:27). In the concluding remarks about her life, she is to be honored for “all that her hands have done” and to be praised for “all her works” (31:31). She bears fruit in all that her hands find to do. Furthermore, the woman also gains fruitfulness from “fearing the Lord.” Because she “fears the Lord,” she receives wisdom (30:26), peace (30:21,25), wealth (30:16,22), praise, and honor (30:32). Her faith also bears fruit and thus, she receives blessings from living a life in the “fear of the Lord.”

Lastly, the wife of noble character is painted as a woman of *power*.²⁰ In other translations, the woman of noble character is called the “woman of valor,” the same expression used to describe a “mighty man of valor” in the book of Judges.²¹ She works “vigorously,” a word used in Exod 15:2, 13 and 1 Sam 2:10 to denote power and heroic deeds. Her arms are strong (31:17), and she is known to be clothed with strength (31:25). This repetition of words referring to her power and strength emphasize the capacity in which she is able to perform physical duties. In addition, the reoccurring references to body parts—including hands, palms, and arms—often associated with power and physicality in the Bible, accentuate the fact that the wife is a hardworking, physical laborer.²² According to some scholars, the word “food” used in verse 15 is actually closer to “prey,” depicting the wife as a warrior.²³ Even the phrase “surpass them all” is an expression that often signifies triumph and victory.²⁴

In addition, the woman characterizes *power* since she exemplifies leadership and high status in society and in her household. Her husband is respected at “the city gate” (30:23), where greeting and recognition by the elders of the city was a desired honor. The implied reputation of the woman and the wealth she also brings into the family elevated her husband in the eyes of those around him.²⁵ Moreover, to be a wife of such a man with

²⁰ M. Beth Szlos, “A Portrait of Power: A Literary-Critical Study of the Depiction of the Woman in Proverbs 31:10-31,” *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 54 (2000), 97.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 97.

²² Szlos, “A Portrait,” 98.

²³ Frank E. Gaebelin, *Psalms-Song of Songs*, The Expositor’s Bible Commentary with New International Version of the Holy Bible (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991), 1129.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 1129.

²⁵ Francis D. Nichol, *1 Chronicles to Song of Solomon*, The Seventh-Day Adventist Bible Commentary (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1977), 1053.

a position among the elders suggests her high social status as his wife. The way that the merchants look to her to provide goods to sell (30:24), the way she watches over her home and all its undertakings (30:27), and the way her family members praise her and call her blessed (30:28), make it evident that she is highly respected, honored, and holds power in society and in the home.

As explored in detail above, the woman of noble character possesses qualities—such as divine wisdom, discernment, industriousness, righteousness, and a strong sense of justice, peace, and physical strength—which can be encapsulated into themes of righteousness, fruitfulness, and power as recorded in Prov 31:10-29. The next verse concludes the description of her life with the mention that she is a woman who “fears the Lord” (31:30). In light of the above, this serves as a summary statement of all the characteristics that the woman of noble character exemplifies. Thus, all of these actions and demonstrations of these attributes are not separate from the “fear of the Lord.” Rather, the phrase “fear of the Lord” encapsulates all that she lives out. In other words, because she “fears the Lord,” qualities such as divine wisdom, discernment, industriousness, righteousness, and a strong sense of justice, peace, and physical strength are manifested naturally. These are the results of a life lived in the “fear of the Lord”; the two cannot be separated. If one lives in the “fear of the Lord,” she will be righteous, bear fruit, and hold power.

Connections to Proverbs 31 in the Rest of Proverbs

The remaining chapters of Proverbs support this idea that the “fear of the Lord” encompasses righteousness, fruitfulness, and power. Since the “fear of the Lord” serves as a major theme in Proverbs, the book begins with a prologue explaining the purpose of

writing Proverbs (Prov 1:1-7). Then verse 8 states that “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.” In other words, the “fear of the Lord” is the source of all of the descriptions and characteristics mentioned in the previous verses—such as wisdom, discipline, understanding, prudence, righteousness, justice, fairness, knowledge, and discretion. In such a way, the “fear of the Lord” encapsulates all of these attributes, and the attributes cannot be distinct from the “fear of the Lord.”

The themes of righteousness, fruitfulness, and power that are found in the woman of Prov 31 and Prov 1:1-8, are also carried into the rest of Proverbs (see Appendix A). For instance, *righteousness* is described in Prov 8:13, 14:2, and 14:6, where one who “fears the Lord” does only good and hates evil. Those who “fear the Lord” are upright in their conduct and hate pride, arrogance, evil behavior, and perverse speech.

Fruitfulness is exhibited in the blessings received from living a life in the “fear of the Lord.” Those followers of God gain blessings such as knowledge, understanding, and wisdom (1:7; 2:5; 9:10; 14:16). The one who “fears the Lord” also benefits in protection, health, and life for him/herself and those associated with him/her (10:27; 14:26-27; 19:23; 22:4; 24:21; 29:25). On top of that, wealth and honor (22:4) follow those who “fear the Lord.” Furthermore, a continual motif in the character of one who “fears the Lord” is that of peace, untouched by trouble and content in all circumstances (15:16; 19:23; 23:17; 24:21). In the midst of threats and potential factors for fear, those who “fear the Lord” can face the world with confidence because of their steadfast faith in God. The “fear of the Lord” leaves no room for fear of anything.²⁶

²⁶ Tremper Longman, *Psalms*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2014), 388.

Power is demonstrated in Prov 22:4, since the individuals who “fear the Lord” are called honorable. It is also evident in Prov 8:14, in which wisdom describes the “fear of the Lord” as having understanding and power. By such qualities do “kings reign and rulers make laws that are just; princes govern, and all nobles who rule on earth” (8:15,16). All verses containing the “fear of the Lord” in Proverbs share commonalities, including the principles of righteousness, fruitfulness, and power. Thus, all who live in the “fear of the Lord” exemplify these characteristics in their lives. A life lived in the “fear of the Lord” encapsulates all of the elements of the themes explored in Prov 31 and throughout the book.

Connections to Proverbs 31 in the Old Testament

To confirm that the “fear of the Lord” entails righteousness, fruitfulness, and power, I analyzed four characters in the Old Testament who were known to live a life in the “fear of the Lord”: King Hezekiah, King Uzziah, Job, and the man in Psalm 112. These are just some of the ones chosen from numerous passages in the Old Testament that I examined, and a sample of the research questions I asked of each passage (for the rest of the passages and results, see Appendix C).

Verse	Who fears the Lord?	What characteristics do they exhibit?	What actions do they perform and to whom?	What does the “fear of the Lord” mean? Or refer to? Result?
Jer 26:19; 2 Kgs 18-20	King Hezekiah	N/A	Did what was right in the eyes of God; Removed high places, idols; Kept the commandments of God	Righteousness Trust in God Obedience to commands Blessed Successful Wealthy Wisdom Protection Powerful Victorious
2 Chr 26	King Uzziah	N/A	Did what was right in the eyes of God; sought God during days of Zechariah	Teachable Learnable Success Fame Power Righteousness
Job 1-42	Job	Blameless; Upright	Maintained integrity; Did not speak deceit or wickedness; Never let go of righteousness	Wealthy Righteous Blessed Prosperous Honored
Ps 112	Man	Righteous; Gracious; Compassionate	Delights in God’s commands; Keeps God’s commands; Obedience	Righteous Obedience Given light Just Compassionate Blessed Wealthy Peace Honored Victorious

In Jer 26:19, it is recorded that Hezekiah “feared the Lord.” 2 Kings 18-20 gives a detailed account of Hezekiah’s life, which also depicts the three main themes that the

woman of Prov 31 exemplifies in her life. He shows *righteousness*, as he sought God, doing what is right in the eyes of the Lord (2 Kgs 20:3). He also removed the high places, destroying idols and Asherah poles (2 Kgs 18:4). King Hezekiah trusted in the Lord and kept the commandments of God (2 Kgs 18:6). As a result, he was *fruitful* in all that he did and gained blessings as well. God was with Hezekiah and gave him success in all that he undertook (2 Kgs 18:7). It is clear that Hezekiah was also blessed in monetary terms, as he was able to pay the king of Assyria three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold (2 Kgs 18:14), and had many storehouses filled with silver, gold, spices, and fine oil (2 Kgs 20:13). 2 Kings 20:20 makes it clear that King Hezekiah accomplished many achievements in his life, such as making a pool and tunnel to bring water into the city. God gave Hezekiah wisdom to carry out his battle plans, which in turn protected Jerusalem from being conquered by Assyria. In addition, God promised Hezekiah that Judah and Jerusalem would “bear fruit” (2 Kgs 19:30) as a result of their obedience to Him. Because he sought God’s counsel, King Hezekiah was *powerful*. God gave him victory in his battles against the Philistines (2 Kgs 18:8). God Himself defended the city (2 Kgs 19:34). As a king, Hezekiah had a high position of power and led the people of God in a life of “fearing the Lord.”

King Uzziah’s life recorded in 2 Chr 26 also exemplifies the characteristics of the woman of Prov 31. King Uzziah did *right* in the eyes of the Lord, sought God, and was taught the “fear of God” (2 Chr 26:5) by Zechariah. King Uzziah was *fruitful* because God blessed his kingdom, granting him success in all that he undertook. He rebuilt the towns of the Philistines, fortified towers in Jerusalem, and built towers in the desert as well as cisterns for the vast amount of livestock, owned fields and vineyards, denoting his

wealth and prosperity (2 Chr 26:6,10). Along with his wealth, Uzziah had an army full of skilled men that strengthened his kingdom even further. When he went to war against the Philistines, Arabs, and Meunites, God gave him victory. King Uzziah became more and more *powerful*, and the Ammonites brought tribute to him. His fame was continually known to the surrounding nations as king (2 Chr 26:15,16).

Job was a man whom God Himself presented to Satan as one who “feared the Lord” (Job 1:1). He was *righteous*, as God called him blameless and upright, avoiding evil in all his doings (Job 1:8). Even in the midst of destruction and death of his children, Job “did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing” (Job 1:22). He still maintained his integrity (Job 2:3). In response to his friends who mock God, he says, “as long as I have life within me, the breath of God in my nostrils, my lips will not speak wickedness, and my tongue will utter no deceit. I will maintain my *righteousness* and never let go of it” (Job 27:3,4,6). In the end, God says to Eliphaz the Temanite that Job has spoken of God what is right (Job 42:7,8). Because of his faith, God blessed him and made him *fruitful* in all his possessions and life—he owned seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen and five hundred donkeys, numerous servants. He also had ten children and prayed for them often (Job 1:2-5). God protected Job by putting a hedge around him, his household, and everything he had. Thus, because Job feared God, those associated to him were also blessed. God honored his faithfulness, making him more prosperous than before. He was also known as the “greatest man among all the people of the East (Job 1:3),” denoting his status and *power* in the country.

Furthermore, the psalmist describes a man who “fears the Lord” in Ps 112, often known as a wisdom psalm²⁷ which also shares the themes found in Prov 31. First of all, the man’s *righteousness* “endures forever (Ps 112:3). He finds “great delight” in God’s commands (Ps 112:1). Therefore, he only does what is right and avoids evil. He does not only keep God’s commands, but also finds joy in obedience. Even in darkness, he is given light (Ps 112:4). The man is described as gracious and compassionate, one who is generous and lends freely (Ps 112:4,5). In whatever he does, he exemplifies principles of justice. He remembers the poor, giving gifts to them (Ps 112:9). Because of his faith, he is *fruitful*. His children and those associated with him are also blessed (Ps 112:2). He has wealth and riches (Ps 112:3). He has peace and nothing makes him fear the future (Ps 112:6,7), because he trusts in the Lord and his security is placed in Him. Because of his righteousness, he is honored (Ps 112:9) and is given triumph over his enemies (Ps 112:8), highlighting his *power* and strength.

The previous chapter, Ps 111, describes God Himself. This chapter also has connections with the woman in Prov 31, and the man who “fears the Lord” in Ps 112.²⁸ As God’s *righteousness* endures forever (Ps 111:3), the man’s righteousness will endure forever (Ps 112:3). As God’s character includes the *fruitfulness of* grace and compassion (Ps 111:4), the man is also gracious and compassionate (Ps 112:4). God provides food (Ps 111:5), and the man is generous and gives freely (Ps 112:5). God is just (Ps 111:7), and the man “conducts his affairs with justice” (Ps 112:5). Because of God’s faithful steadfastness (Ps 111:7,8) and *power*, the man will never be shaken, and his heart will

²⁷ Gaebelien, *Psalms-Song of Songs*, 706.

²⁸ Longman, *Psalms*, 388.

remain steadfast, never fearing the future (Ps 112:6-8). These two psalms—Psalms 111 and 112—are companion psalms,²⁹ in which the latter is a description of a man who reflects the character of God described in the former.

Similarly, Deut 10:12-22 expounds upon God’s command to “fear the Lord.” From this passage, it is interesting to note that the “fear of the Lord” is in conjunction with the character and actions of God. “Fearing God” includes obedience, loving God, serving Him wholeheartedly, and observing the commands of God *because of who He is*. As in Prov 31, the themes of righteousness, fruitfulness, and power can also be seen in this passage about God’s character. God is *righteous*, as He has set His affection and love on His people (Deut 10:15). God is just and compassionate, does not show partiality, defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves and provides for those who are deemed as outcasts (Deut 10:17,18). He is *fruitful*, performing “great and awesome wonders” (Deut 10:21) that are deserving of praise. To God belongs the heavens and the earth, which depicts the *power* of God; He is mighty and awesome (Deut 10:14,17).

Ultimately, the Messiah is the only one who perfectly obeys the commands in Deut 10:12-22 and exemplifies the “fear of the Lord” in connection with the themes of righteousness, fruitfulness, and power. Isaiah 11 describes the “Branch from Jesse” (Isa 11:1)—the Messiah—who has the Spirit of the “fear of the Lord” resting on him (Isa 11:2b,3). *Righteousness* and faithfulness are described as his clothing (Isa 11:5). In fact, he “delights” in the “fear of the Lord” like the man in Psalm 112. He knows right from wrong and stands up for the poor and needy. He does not judge with unfairness; rather, only with justice. In addition, the Branch will *bear fruit* (Isa 11:1), and receives the Spirit

²⁹ Ibid., 389.

of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and power, and the Spirit of knowledge. The imagery in verses 6-8 depict peace and security, and the Root of Jesse has a place of rest (Isa 11:10). The theme of *power* is exemplified as the Messiah has victory over the wicked, his enemies (Isa 11:4). The Messiah Himself lives out the “fear of the Lord” which embodies the themes of righteousness, fruitfulness, and power also found in the life of the woman of noble character in Prov 31.

Conclusion

Proverbs 31 is not an afterthought of Proverbs; rather, it is an intentional, purposeful conclusion of an important theme of the “fear of the Lord” interlaced throughout the book. The woman of noble character exemplifies the “fear of the Lord” and all of the characteristics that it entails—righteousness, fruitfulness, and power—in her daily life. Through an in-depth study of her life in connection to the “fear of the Lord,” it is clear that to live a life in the “fear of the Lord” is to live a life reflecting God’s character and who He is.

The characteristics of the woman of noble character in Prov 31, as well as those of Hezekiah, Uzziah, Job, the man in Psalm 112—such as wisdom, industriousness, fruitfulness or wealth, righteousness, a strong sense of justice, peace and strength—correlate with those that God Himself embodies in Deut 10 and Isa 11. The woman of Prov 31 and the other characters live out those qualities as a result of choosing a life that is in the “fear of the Lord.” Through steadfast faith in God, the woman of Prov 31 reflects the character of God to those around her. Her life of “fearing God” results in wisdom and wise actions: doing good, not doing evil, imparting wisdom to others, and receiving blessings such as peace, wealth, and honor.

However, God's command for us to live in the "fear of the Lord" is not left for us to achieve on our own. Rather, the Messiah not only exemplifies "the fear of the Lord" but also gives us the power to live out the "fear of the Lord" as written in Isaiah. Through His life of perfect obedience, we are "made righteous" (Isa 53:1-12). Though sinners, by faith, we can claim the life that the Messiah lived in the "fear of the Lord," so that His character may be lived out through us. As discussed above, we do not pursue a life that "fears God" separate from pursuing righteousness, justice, wisdom, etc.; rather, by seeking God and His righteousness, all righteousness, fruitfulness, and power will be added unto us as well (cf. Isa 55:6-13).

The "fear of the Lord" as a reflection of God's character through the Messiah's life also denies righteousness by works. It is not a matter of forcing ourselves to be righteous, wise, just, loving, and compassionate, but asking God to live in us, so that His character—which embodies all of those qualities—may be manifested in our lives. Isaiah 64:6 makes it clear that "all our righteous acts are like filthy rags." Living a life that "fears the Lord" is nothing of our own doing but an act of God. He promises, "*I will* sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; *I will* cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. *I will* give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; *I will* remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And *I will* put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws" (Ezek 36:25-27). Living a life in the "fear of the Lord" is righteousness by faith in Him who has already lived it out for us.

Put another way, righteous actions are "filthy rags" if they are simply outward behaviors. All the qualities that the woman of Prov 31 and those who "fear the Lord"

possess are a natural result from their pursuit of God. Perhaps that is what the wise Teacher in Ecclesiastes means when he says that even growing and increasing in wisdom is a “chasing after the wind” (Eccl 1:17). Although righteousness, wisdom, knowledge, wealth, peace, and joy are good characteristics, they are, on their own, meaningless. The Teacher concludes, however, that the whole duty of man is this: to “fear God and keep His commandments” (Eccl 12:13). The only and most meaningful matter in this life is fearing God and keeping His commandments, which will naturally manifest these godly qualities. It is not a matter of chasing after these distinct characteristics—for this is meaningless—but rather, a chasing after God’s own heart and letting the Messiah’s “fear of the Lord” live out in our own lives.

This project also clarifies what it means to “fear the Lord.” As I used to confuse “the fear of the Lord” with terror of God, perhaps these feelings are relatable for people in the church today as well. From this research, however, it is clear that the “fear of the Lord” is not being scared of God and consequently obeying Him; rather, it is a matter of reflecting His character in our day-to-day life. The woman of Prov 31 serves as a model for us to follow, teaching us that the “fear of the Lord” will “inspire us to be faithful stewards of the time and talents God has given. Wisdom is productive and beneficial for others, requiring great industry in life’s endeavors, and is best taught and lived in the home—indeed, the success of the home demands wisdom. In addition, wisdom is balanced living, giving attention to domestic responsibilities as well as business enterprises and charitable service.”³⁰ Living a life that “fears the Lord” will be manifested in all things, great and small.

³⁰ Gaebelien, *Psalms-Song of Songs*, 1130.

Thus, this clarification of God's command for us to "fear the Lord" reaffirms God's character of love. He does not demand mere obedience as a consequence of His might and power, nor is the "fear of the Lord" a mere human emotional response of terror and being afraid. The "fear of the Lord" is God's request for us to reflect Him in all aspects of our lives, and this request He does not simply put on us to achieve on our own. He sent His Only Son—the Messiah—to not only exemplify but to accomplish a life of the "fear of the Lord" in our stead. It is nothing of our own doing, but God's. Indeed, God is love!

Furthermore, a popular belief in the church is that the calling of a woman is either to be a full-time mother or a full-time worker for God, callings which are both highly commendable but seemingly irreconcilable. As the times are currently changing and ideologies such as feminism continue to rise in society, however, the number of Christian working mothers are increasing. Women who pursue a career and have children are often made to feel ashamed and guilty for seeking a life in which both duties demand much attention. Proverbs 31, however, describes a woman who works as a business woman, yet also raises children and is known as a wife of noble character, a woman who "fears the Lord," and one whom God honors and praises. This research project exonerates working mothers in the church, encouraging them to pursue the "fear of the Lord" and to reflect God's character of righteousness, fruitfulness, and power, both in the domestic and workplace aspects of life. Whether a full-time mother or not, she who "fears the Lord" is to be praised. The church, then, should be a place where these women pursuing both careers and motherhood are encouraged, refreshed, and continually inspired to seek after the character of God.

Although this research is centered on the woman of noble character in Prov 31, her life lived in the “fear of the Lord” is not only for women to follow and emulate. The “fear of the Lord” is exemplified not only in her life, but also in many others, including the lives of Hezekiah, Uzziah, Job, the man in Psalm 112, and ultimately the Messiah. Reflecting the character of God through faith in the Messiah is not gender-specific. For anyone seeking to follow God and His commands, the “fear of the Lord” must be lived out in all aspects of life—not by our own works, but by faith in Him who has already accomplished it for us.

Future research could include looking at the connections between the “fear of the Lord” and specifically its relation to wisdom. There are quite a few verses that have the phrase “fear of the Lord” and wisdom tied together. Also, looking at the “fear of the Lord” in the New Testament in relation to God’s character may be interesting to study. As I have looked at the “fear of the Lord” in connection with the woman of Prov 31, a further study in the “fear of the Lord” in conjunction with wisdom or the New Testament could be beneficial to understanding the importance and results of seeking a life that is in the “fear of the Lord.”

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APPENDIX A

Table 1: Connections to the “Fear of the Lord” in Proverbs

Verse	Themes
Prov 1:7	KNOWLEDGE
Prov 2:5	KNOWLEDGE
Prov 9:10	WISDOM KNOWLEDGE UNDERSTANDING
Prov 10:27	HEALTH LIFE
Prov 14:26, 27	LIFE PROTECTION
Prov 15:16	PEACE
Prov 19:23	LIFE PEACE UNTOUCHED BY TROUBLE
Prov 22:4	LIFE WEALTH HONOR
Prov 23:17	PEACE CONTENTMENT
Prov 24:21	LIFE PEACE
Prov 29:25	SAFETY LIFE TRUST IN GOD
Prov 31:30	PRAISEWORTHY EVERLASTING
Prov 14:2	RIGHTEOUSNESS

Prov 14:16	WISDOM RIGHTEOUSNESS
Prov 8:13	RIGHTEOUSNESS

APPENDIX B

Characteristics of the Woman of Noble Character

Verse	Characteristics
A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies.	Noble Full of value Virtuous Excellent
Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value.	Responsible Accountable Those around her lack nothing/do not stop getting good things Trustworthy
She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life.	Brings only good things Does only good, not evil
She selects wool and flax and works with eager hands.	Eager hands Decisive Willing
She is like the merchant ships, bringing her food from afar.	Prepared Seeks only good things
She gets up while it is still night; she provides food for her family and portions for her female servants.	Early riser Determined Caring Equal Just Provider Remembers the servants
She considers a field and buys it; out of her earnings she plants a vineyard.	Business woman Wise Careful thoughts Knows how to deal with money
She sets about her work vigorously; her arms are strong for her tasks.	Strong Energetic Diligent Hard worker
She sees that her trading is profitable, and her lamp does not go out at night.	Wise Eager Prepared/Ready Seeks to do everything with all her might Does not fear the future
In her hand she holds the distaff and grasps the spindle with her fingers.	Hardworking Thorough

She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy.	Caring Warm hearted Just Obeys God's commands of Prov 31:8,9
When it snows, she has no fear for her household; for all of them are clothed in scarlet.	Prepared Thorough At peace Does not fear the future
She makes coverings for her bed; she is clothed in fine linen and purple.	Prepared Thorough
Her husband is respected at the city gate, where he takes his seat among the elders of the land.	Respectable woman Those closely associated to her are respectable
She makes linen garments and sells them, and supplies the merchants with sashes.	Prepared Thorough Business woman
She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come.	Strength Dignity Honor Prepared (She shall rejoice in time to come) Joyful Looks forward to the future
She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue.	Speaks with wisdom Knowledgeable Faithful Instructing Law of kindness/Teaches kindness
She watches over the affairs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness.	Eager hands Not idle Responsible
Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her:	Blessed Loved Praised Mother Wife
Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all.	Surpass others Excels Noble Capable
Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.	Fears God Praised

Honor her for all that her hands have done, and let her works bring her praise at the city gate.	Honorable Praiseworthy Eager Fruitful Deserving of reward
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APPENDIX C

Aspects of the “Fear of the Lord” in the Old Testament

Verse	Who fears the Lord?	What characteristics do they exhibit?	What actions do they perform and to whom?	What does the “fear of the Lord’ mean? Or refer to? Result?
Exod 9:20, 30	Officials of Pharaoh	Strict and quick obedience	Obey the command of God given to Moses	Obedience to His command
Exod 14:31	Israelites	Trusting of God and His servant (Moses)	Trust in God and in Moses	Trust
Lev19:14	(Law)	Obedience to law	They do not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block in front of the blind (and laws before v 14)	Obedience
Lev 25:17	(Law)	Obedience to law	Does not take advantage of others	Obedience
Deut 6:2	(Command/Law)	Obedience to law	Obedience of God-given commands	Obedience Long life
Deut 6:13	(Command/Law)	Obedience to law	Serve God only and take oaths only in His name	Obedience to God only
Deut 6:24	(Command/Law)	Obedience to law	Obey God’s commands	Prosperity Longevity Righteousness
Deut 10:12	(Law)	Obedience to law	Walk in God’s ways, love God, serve God with all heart and soul, observe	Beneficial

			God's commands	
Deut 10:20	(Law)	Obedience to law	Hold fast to God and take oaths in His name	Obedience
Deut 31:12, 13	People—men, women, children, aliens and their children	Follow carefully all the words of law, obedience	N/A	Teachable Learnable Obedience
Josh 4:24	Israelites crossing Jordan river	Knowledge of power of God	N/A	Obedience
Josh 24:14	Command by Joshua to Israelites	Serve God with all faithfulness	Throw away gods forefathers worshiped and serve God	Obedience
1 Sam 12:14	Command	Serve, obey God, do not rebel against His commands	N/A	Obedience Protection
1 Sam 12:24	Samuel	Not sinning against God, serve God faithfully with all heart	Consider great things God has done for you	No fear of God? Both you (Israel) and your king (Saul) will be swept away
1 Chr 16:25	David	Praises God	Thanksgiving to God	Greatness of God
2 Chr 17:10	Kingdoms of lands surrounding Judah	Respects God and His appointed king/kingdom	They did not make war; rather, they made allies with them	Peace Prosperity Gifts Honor Respect from other nations Power
2 Chr 19:7	Jehoshaphat appoints judges	Consider carefully, judge for the Lord	No injustice, partiality, nor bribery	Fairness Equality Justice
2 Chr 19:9	Jehoshaphat appoints administration	Serve faithfully and wholeheartedly	N/A	Obedience to God-given servant

2 Chr 20:29	Kingdoms surrounding Judah	Heard how God had fought against the enemies of Israel	N/A	Peace on all sides, God-given rest
2 Chr 26:5	King Uzziah	N/A	Did what was right in the eyes of God; sought God during days of Zechariah	Teachable Learnable Success Fame Power Righteousness
Job 1:8	Job	Blameless and upright; shuns evil	N/A	Righteousness
Job 2:3	Job	Does not charge God with wrongdoing even after his children are killed; blameless, upright, shuns evil; maintains integrity	Maintains integrity	Righteousness
Job 28:28	God's command to man	Shun evil	Follow God's commands	Wisdom Understanding
Ps 2:11	Command	Serve God	Rejoicing with trembling, serve the Lord	Righteousness
Ps 15:4	One who dwells in God's sanctuary	Dwells in God's sanctuary; walk is blameless, does what is righteous, speaks the truth, no slander on his tongue, does neighbor no wrong, casts	N/A	Never shaken Just Righteousness

		no slur on fellowman, despises a vile man, honors those who fear the Lord, keeps his oath when it hurts, lends money, does not accept bribe against innocent		
Ps 19:9	Man	N/A	N/A	Pure Endures forever
Ps 22:23	Man	N/A	Praises God, Honors God, Reveres God	Praiseworthy Honorable Respectable
Ps 25:12-14	Man	N/A	N/A	Prosperity Wealth Trustworthy Instructed by God
Ps 33:8	(Command); all people of world	Reverence	Revere God	Respect
Ps 33:18	Those who have their eyes on God and those who hope in Him	Those are who hope in his unfaithing love	Their eyes are on God, hope in His unfaithing love	Protection Safety Deliverance
Ps 34:7	N/A	N/A	N/A	Angel of the Lord encamps around them, deliverance
Ps 34:9	Holy people	N/A	N/A	Lack nothing Provided
Ps 34:11	Man	N/A	N/A	Teachable
Ps 40:3	David	Trust in God, Sings praise to God	N/A	Noticeable by others
Ps 76:11	Command	Make vows to God and fulfill them	N/A	N/A

Ps 96:4	By all	Acknowledge God to be great and worthy of praise	To be feared above all gods	Praiseworthy
Ps 102:15	Nations; kings of earth	Revere God's glory	Reverence; to God	Respect
Ps 103:13	Man	Receives compassion from God	N/A	Compassion
Ps 103:17, 18	Man	Obey precepts and keep His covenant	Obey; to God	God's love is with them; His righteousness is with them and their children; Obedience (keeping covenant)
Ps 111:5	Man	N/A	N/A	Provided Covenant fulfilled
Ps 111:10	Man	Follow/obey precepts	Obey; to God	Wisdom Good understanding
Ps 112:1	Man	Finds delight in God's commands	N/A	Blessed
Ps 115:11	Man	Trust in God	N/A	Help Shield Protection
Ps 115:13	Man	N/A	N/A	Blessings
Ps 118:4	Man	N/A	Say "His love endures forever"; Give thanks	N/A
Ps 128:1	Man	Walk in God's ways	N/A	Blessed
Ps 128:4	Man	N/A	N/A	Blessed
Ps 135:20	Man	Praise God	N/A	N/A
Ps 147:11	Man	Put their hope in God's unfailing love	N/A	God delights in them
Isa 8:13	God's command to Isaiah	Do not fear what others	N/A	Safety Peace

		fear; Regard God as holy		
Isa 11:2	Root of Jesse	Delights in fear of God; Spirit of the Lord rests on him as well as Spirit of wisdom and understanding, counsel, power, knowledge, and fear of the Lord	N/A	Peace Wisdom Understanding Counsel Power Knowledge
Isa 33:6	Command	N/A	N/A	God as sure foundation Rich store of salvation Wisdom Knowledge
Isa 50:10	Man	Obedience word of God's servant; trust in name of God and rely on God	N/A	Trust Reliance on God Obedience
Isa 59:19	Man	Revere God's glory	N/A	Reverence
Jer 5:22	God's question to His people	Trembling in presence of God	N/A	Duty of man
Jer 5:24	These people do not fear God	Not fearing God = stubborn and rebellious hearts; turned aside and gone astray; wrongdoings keep harvest away, sins deprive them of good	N/A	Righteousness Justice
Jer 26:19	Hezekiah	Sought God's favor	N/A	God relented from bringing

				disaster pronounced against them
Jonah 1:16	Sailors	Offered sacrifice and made vows to God; Pray to God	N/A	Peace Protection
Hag 1:12, 14	Command	Listen to God's calling to the city	N/A	Wisdom
Malachi 1:14	Nations	Tremble and be afraid of God	N/A	N/A
Mal 3:5	People of Judah	Obedience to voice of God and God-sent prophet Haggai	N/A	God's presence
Mal 3:16	Man	Honor God's name	N/A	God listens and hears God promises "They will be mine" God will have compassion Life Salvation

APPENDIX D

Proverbs 1 and 31 connections

Verses in Proverbs 1	Verses in Proverbs 31	Connection
2	14, 16, 26 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 22, 25, 27 16, 18	Wisdom Discipline Understanding
3	13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28, 31 12, 15, 18, 20, 24, 25	Prudent life Just/Fair
4	13, 24, 27 16, 18, 25	Knowledge Discretion
7	30	Fear of the Lord

Proverbs 3 and 31 connections

Verses in Proverbs 3	Verses in Proverbs 31	Connection
2-Remember teaching, keep commands in heart	11, 25, 31	Long life Prosperity
3-always have love and faithfulness, write them on heart	11, 28, 29, 31	Win favor/reputation
5,6-Trust in God with all heart, in all ways acknowledge Him	12, 21	Health Nourishment
9-Honor God with wealth, first fruits	11, 12, 16, 18, 21, 22, 23, 24, 27, 31	Wealth, needs abundantly provided
11,12-Does not despise God's discipline	N/A	N/A
13,14,15,17-Find wisdom, gain understanding "She is more precious than rubies; nothing you desire can compare with her"	12, 21 11, 12, 16, 18, 21, 22, 23, 24, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31 11, 18, 21, 25 12, 15, 18, 20, 21, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 31	Long life Riches Honors Pleasant ways Peace Life-giving to those around Those around her are blessed
21,22,23,24,25,26-Preserve sound judgement, discernment	11, 25, 31 11, 18, 21, 25	Life Safety Not stumble in life Peace No fear of future

		Confidence in God
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Proverbs 4 and 31 connections

Verses in Proverbs 4	Verses in Proverbs 31	Connection
4-keep commands	11, 25, 31	Life
5,6-remember words, get wisdom, understanding	12, 21	Protection Safety
7,8,9-get wisdom, get understanding	11, 12, 16, 18, 21, 22, 23, 24, 27, 31 10, 11, 23, 25, 28, 29, 30, 31	Exaltation Honor
10,11,12-listen and accept what is said	11, 25, 31 11, 18, 21, 25	Prolonged life Straight paths Not stumble in life
13-hold onto instruction	11, 25, 31	Life
14-19-Do not set foot on path of wicked	15, 18	Light in darkness

Connections between the "Fear of the Lord" in the Old Testament and Proverbs 31

Verse	Connections to the woman in Proverbs 31
Exod 9:20, 30	Noble Obedience
Lev 19:14	She opens her arms to the poor, extends her hands to the needy; caring, just
Lev 25:17	She opens her arms to the poor, extends her hands to the needy; caring, just
Deut 6:2	Does only good, not evil
Deut 6:24	Does only good, not evil
Deut 10:12	Does only good Seeks only good
Deut 31:12, 13	Hard-working does only good, not evil
Josh 4:24	Knowledgeable
1 Sam 12:14	At peace Does only good
2 Chr 17:10	At peace Wealthy

	Honored Respected/Praised by others Strength Deserving of reward
2 Chr 19:7	Opens her arms to poor Extend her hands to needy
2 Chr 19:9	Thorough Faithful
2 Chr 20:29	At peace Does not fear the future
2 Chr 26:5	Successful Strength Power
Job 1:8	Does only good, not evil
Job 2:3	Faithful Does only good, not evil Has dignity
Job 28:28	Does only good, not evil
Ps 2:11	Rejoices Service
Ps 33:18	Safety Help & shield Protection
Ps 34:7	Do not fear the future At peace Safety Protection
Ps 34:9	Lacks nothing Excellent Noble Capable
Ps 111:5	Provision Covenant remembered forever
Ps 111:10	Wisdom Knowledgeable
Ps 112:1	Rejoices Her children call her blessed
Ps 115:13	Blessed Praised Loved Excels

	Fruitful
Ps 128:1	Blessed Praised Loved Excels Fruitful Prosperity
Ps 128:4	Blessed Praised Loved Excels Fruitful
Isa 8:13	Do not fear the future At peace
Isa 11:2	At peace Wisdom Knowledge Power/Status Strength
Isa 33:6	Wisdom Knowledge
Jer 26:19	At peace
Jonah 1:16	At peace
Hag 1:12, 14	Wisdom