

QUIET TIME GUIDE
FOR Thursday 8/14/08
FROM JACK MILLWOOD

Greeting:

I have been using the book of Psalms as our guide through our daily quiet times. With your permission, and I guess even without your permission since you can not stop me while I am typing (ha ha), I am going to step outside the book of Psalms today and share with you a portion of Proverbs 31. That is what is on my heart today and it is after all my quiet time guide. Prov. 31: 10-31 is a very well known passage about the excellence and worth of a wife. As you read it you will obviously notice that the terminology and analogies are from a very different culture than most of us live in. It was written in a time when most of the women worked, and I might add worked tirelessly, at home. They did not have any modern conveniences and had to make most of what they had. Yet even with the differences in the cultures of this passage and today you see vividly the picture of the kind of wife Proverbs is describing.

Scripture for today:

Proverbs 31: *“A good wife is hard to find, and worth far more than diamonds. Her husband trusts her without reserve, and never has reason to regret it. Never spiteful, she treats him generously all her life long. She shops around for the best yarns and cottons, and enjoys knitting and sewing. She's like a trading ship that sails to faraway places and brings back exotic surprises. She's up before dawn, preparing breakfast for her family and organizing her day. She looks over a field and buys it, then, with money she's put aside, plants a garden. First thing in the morning, she dresses for work, rolls up her sleeves, eager to get started. She senses the worth of her work, is in no hurry to call it quits for the day. She's skilled in the crafts of home and hearth, diligent in homemaking. She's quick to assist anyone in need, reaches out to help the poor. She doesn't worry about her family when it snows; their winter clothes are all mended and ready to wear. She makes her own clothing, and dresses in colorful linens and silks. Her husband is greatly respected when he deliberates with the city fathers. She designs gowns and sells them, brings the sweaters she knits to the dress shops. Her clothes are well-made and elegant, and she always faces tomorrow with a smile. When she speaks she has something worthwhile to say, and she always says it kindly. She keeps an eye on everyone in her household, and keeps them all busy and productive. Her children respect and bless her; her husband joins in with words of praise: "Many women have done wonderful things, but you've outclassed them all!" Charm can mislead and beauty soon fades. The woman to be admired and praised is the woman who lives in the Fear-of-GOD. Give her everything she deserves! Festoon her life with praises!”*

Life Application:

This passage teaches that to find a life long companion is a *great discovery*. Finding that person that you can share your life with, in all of its intimacies and intricacies, is one of the most valuable discoveries a person can make in life. It describes a person who has an attitude that makes the home a pleasant place to live. It describes a person who cares about her home and the people in that home. It describes a person who is willing to make

personal sacrifices for the benefit of those she loves. It talks about a woman who uses her skills not so much for personal privileges as for shared growth among her family. It talks about a person who has a heart of compassion and diligence. This Proverbial wife is a woman who cares about her family and every detail they need. The writer of this beautiful proverb says that when a man finds a woman with these characters he has uncovered a **diamond** in a field of stones. He is a man who is blessed by the gift of having this person in their life.

I am taking a personal privilege in this quiet time today but at the end I hope there is a spiritual word for us all that we can carry with us through out the day to make our lives better. Nine years ago today I was given a gift by God that has enriched my life beyond my own ability to describe. It was on that day that I had the privilege to become the husband of my wonderful wife, Ann. As I was thinking last night and today about my life and my walk with God I was drawn to this passage of scripture because I could not agree more with the writer of this passage. I have been given a gift more precious than gold or diamonds. God has been so gracious and good to me to allow me to share my life with this woman I call my wife. Today I want to do what the writer of Proverbs says is done by a man who has such a gift. I want to **“bless”** her and **“give her praise.”** In every aspect she is a Proverbs 31 kind of woman.

To my wife I say today that I love you with all my heart! My life is complete because you are in it. You have all the attributes describes in Proverbs 31. I **“trust you without reserve.”** There is not a moment in my life when I have to worry if you are there or if you love me. I find strength and confidence to face life because of the security that comes in our relationship. You have never given me a **“reason to regret”** being your husband. You have **“treated me generously.”** When I have acted unloving and unkind you have been so forgiving and loving and patient. When I read about the Proverbs 31 woman and her shopping I broke out laughing because I see you going from store to store, searching through every possible isle to find just the right items for every member of our house. (*I just thank God you don't make me go with you.*) I think about how you have tried to teach our kids to be stewards of what they have and not to waste but to use what they have to the best of their potential. I actually hear our kids talk about finding deals and saving money and saying, *“I feel like Ann/Mom.”* Yes, you **“rise every day with energy”** and often I cannot get you to stop or to sit down because you can not rest until everything is done for our home. No one has ever come into our home without feeling like they were welcome. When we met you had no idea that one day you would be married to a Pastor. You sure got more than you bargained for but you have never complained about that call and that new ministry God and I have thrust you into. You have made our home a home for more people than I can count now. You have prayed, I heard you, and given our house to God as his home to use for interns, church guests, staff, extended family, kids who have gone and have returned. There is utterly no selfishness in your life when it comes to sharing who you are and what you have. When I read about this woman **“being quick to assist those in need”** I could not help but think of the phone calls and e mails from you pestering me to make sure I call so and so and write so and so and visit so and so to let them know we are praying for them and care. You have never complained when I had to stop everything and go help someone. This chapter says that **“when she speaks she has something worthwhile to say.”** I am amazed by your wisdom. I value your opinion. You are, in a very real sense, a partner to me in life and in ministry. I can not imagine making

major decisions in life without you. But at the same time you have a way of making me feel confident in my own decisions and giving me strength to do what I know to do. This Proverbs wife is ***“respected”*** by her children. I can not tell you how much more I love you because of the kind of woman you are to our kids. They do not always like what you have to say, or me either. They are after all people with opinions and make their own decisions but every kid we have knows you love and care for them and want nothing but the best for them. I constantly stand amazed at how you love each of them in their own way and for who they are as individuals. I watch you beam with pride when they do it right. I watch you ache inside when you see them make decisions you think will hurt them. What I never see is ambivalence and unconcern in your heart. As a father who loves and worships his kids, I love you more than ever because of how you love our kids. They live in our house, move out of our house, move back into our house and bring extras with them yet you stand there welcoming them with open arms. To watch our two grand kids (*By the way, you are the “hottest” grandma I have ever seen in my life! Sorry about that folks.*) crawl into your life and see their total adoration of their “Nann” is mind-boggling to me. You can fool a lot of people but you cannot fool those little children. They know when they are loved and when they are not. Ann, you make my life complete. I would not want to live my life one day with out. You put up with 70-80 hour work weeks, the stress of my life, the pace of my life, my preoccupation with “saving the world” and are always there. You are the greatest miracle I have ever seen. Only you and I really know what all God has done in your life. God has taken you and turned you into a godly woman. Hey, we all know you are not perfect. You are after all a “Yankee from Boston.” However, the last part of Proverbs 31 says it better than I can. I wish these were my words. They are in my heart. ***“Many women have done wonderful things, but you've outclassed them all!” Charm can mislead and beauty soon fades. The woman to be admired and praised is the woman who lives in the Fear-of-GOD. Give her everything she deserves! Festoon her life with praises!”***

Spiritual exercise:

Thank you for letting me use this space to convey something so personal. I know many of you are married to a man or a woman who is very special in your life as well. Use today as a day to bless them and to honor them. Let them know today that God has blessed your life with their presence. Don't wait for a special day to let a special person know their value in your life. Relationships are a key to life. Many of you do not have a spouse, some of you are grateful for that fact and many of you are pained by that fact. Remember that Paul, a single man himself, said that he had learned to be satisfied and content in whatever state he was in. Let God build healthy relationships in your life. Let him determine if he brings that special person along and when. Know that there is no perfect mate out there but yet look for a person that you know you can honor nine years later because of their character.

Thought for the day.

The special people in your life need to be treated special.