

## Proverbs and Marriage

### Proverbs 31:10-31

This week we see what Proverbs has to say about marriage: an area where we really need divine wisdom.

**God's gift:** In Proverbs 2:16-17 Solomon describes marriage as a covenant. It's a life-long covenant between a man and a woman in the sight of God. And that's one of the reasons why divorce can be so devastating to those who go through it. And within that covenant Proverbs tells men in particular, that your wife is God's gift to you. Proverbs 19:14 says 'a prudent wife is *from the Lord*.' That may not sound sexy but she's wise with common sense understanding and she is heaven sent into your life. Proverbs 5:18-19 says 'Rejoice in the wife of your youth', as she ages your love and delight in her just grows and matures with her.

But it's not all one way. Proverbs 12:4 says 'An excellent wife is the crown of her husband, but she who brings shame is like rottenness in his bones.' So not every wife brings joy to her husband. There is a wife who eats away at her husband like a cancer eating away at his body. But the other sort of wife is called excellent and she is like a crown on her husband's head. She treats him like a king and she gets to bask in his glow as he treats her like his queen.

#### **Your Worst Nightmare – when it goes wrong**

Marriage is not always so great and Proverbs is really honest about the destructive power of bickering within a marriage (Proverbs 19:13; 21:9; 21:19). Quarreling can make a marriage feel like a prison and an emotional desert. As wives you can make a choice whether you are going to be a wife like that or not. But husbands need to examine themselves and ask, why is she quarreling? Proverbs 27:8 suggests one reason: a husband and father who strays from home like a bird strays from its nest.

But there is hope for all our marriages and for those who have experienced divorce in the forgiveness and grace of the cross and of new life in the resurrection.

#### **An Excellent Marriage**

Proverbs 31:10-31 gives us 6 characteristics of an excellent marriage:

1. The wife's orientation is homeward.
2. Her husband trusts her.
3. Her husband values her.
4. She's not bad-mouthing him.
5. The feeling's mutual.
6. Their marriage is built on the firmest foundation: the fear of the Lord.