

引言 INTRODUCTION

We conclude our studies on the Proverbs by looking at the last chapter. At least two questions come to my mind when I read this passage. First, how many wives does this man actually have? She is more than a multi-talented wife. She is a Wonder Woman with infinite energy. That reminds me of a conversation between a father and his son. The old man said: “Son, you know, every man wants a girl who is beautiful, smart and can cook. But the fact is, the law only allows you to marriage one lady.” Of course, that is only a joke. Many sisters among us have those three and many good qualities. The second question I have is: does her husband work at all? She takes care of everything! The Chinese says men who do nothing but rely on their wives are “eating soft rice.” They have an easy life! The passage does talk about his work. What is God’s intent in this passage? Is it a blueprint for women to follow? Some ladies may protest that it is mission impossible. But we can surely learn something from this noble wife. The word “noble” describes a person of strength and abilities. Think of the time you are inspired by a movie. Certain characters motivate you to be a better person. You face a different life circumstance than those people. But you can imitate their kindness, courage, perseverance, etc. The chapter also serves as a summary for the book of Proverbs. The author repeats some themes that are brought up earlier. Therefore, this lady demonstrates what a wise person will look like in real life. She is a role-model for our sisters. Husbands should pray that their wife will become a godly woman like her. Single guys can use this chapter as a guideline of what to look for in a future wife. Overall, the author tells us that a woman is blessed when she fulfills the roles God assigns to her.

解釋 EXPLANATION

1. 她的關注 Her Attentions

First, we will look at the attentions of this noble woman. In other words, how she spends her time. She lives in a bigger household with servants and fields. It would be considered wealthy in those days. However, she does not leave everything to her workers and goes shopping or sipping coffee with her friends all day. She is more than a manager at home. She works with her own hands too. Look at verse 13: **She selects wool and flax and works with eager hands.** Also in verse 19: **In her hand she holds the distaff and grasps the spindle with her fingers.** She picks raw materials for clothing from her farm or the market. She then spins the wool and flax into threads, and from the threads she weaves them into cloth. A distaff is a wooden rod and a spindle is a wheel. Both items are parts of the weaving tool. It takes a lot of work to make clothes. One of my sisters-in-law loves to make quilts. She invests quite some money into buying all the accessories. She cuts fabrics into certain patterns. She then uses a sewing machine to sew the bigger pieces together. But she has to stitch the smaller parts by hand. That was her weekend hobby before she retired. I admire her skills and her patience. The outcome is beautiful artworks. In the Biblical world, everything was done by hand. This noble wife does not only make clothes, she also cooks. Read verses 14-15: **14 She is like the merchant ships, bringing her food from afar. 15 She gets up while it is still dark; she provides food for her family and portions for her servant girls.** She makes sure that everyone at home eats well. Feeding so many mouths needs a lot of

preparation. It is likely that some maids help her in the kitchen. Nowadays, few moms will make clothes for their family, but many still cook. It is understandable for busy working-moms to buy ready-made food from restaurants or grocery stores. I often check the labels on the food packages. It wonder if some unknown ingredients are grown on trees or mixed in a lab! Other moms insist to make everything from scratch. That way, they know exactly what their family is eating. Nothing compares to home-cooked meals. When kids grow up, they will remember their moms when they think of food. You may not be a five-star chef. But you can borrow others' recipes or look up YouTube to improve your skills. This noble wife does not only work at home, she also earns profit outside of her house. Verse 16 says: **She considers a field and buys it; out of her earnings she plants a vineyard.** Also in verse 24: **She makes linen garments and sells them, and supplies the merchants with sashes.** This woman has her own business. She sells the products she makes in the market. She may also sell the extra produce she grows. She looks for ways to increase the income for her family. Today, some stay-home moms sell things they make, or they trade items online. Ladies with specialized expertise also do consulting work from their computers. But other sisters are unable to work because their kids are still small. There is a saying: a penny saved is a penny earned. Spending less money is like making extra money. For example, smart consumers buy items in-bulk when they are on sale. The saving is substantial in the long-run. Wives can also compare prices when buying a new fridge or booking a hotel room for vacation. Besides, there are tons of "life hacks" that offer creative solutions for various matters. Baking soda and vinegar are cheaper and natural alternative cleaning agents. Your husband will thank you when you stay frugal. In sum, a noble wife makes her home a cozy place for the family. She can assign those tasks to others. But there is simply no substitute for her love. Nowadays, many wives juggle between housework and kids' activities, not to mention that they may have careers too. You spend an hour to prepare a dinner, then everything is gobbled up in 20 minutes by a swarm of locusts. Do not underestimate your contributions. You will feel burdensome if you see those routine work as obligations. There will be joy when you consider them as opportunities to serve your family. God will surely remember your hard work too.

2. 她的態度 Her Attitudes

The noble wife puts her attentions at home. Evidently, her attitudes are all about serving others. She is a committed helper to her husband. Read verses 11-12: **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.** The Hebrew word for "value" can mean "plunder." The picture describes soldiers eagerly collect spoils after winning a battle. You may have seen aggressive ladies grabbing deals in stores on the Black Friday. But the focus here is about her dedication to reap benefits for her husband. He fully trusts that she will do a good job. The good versus harm comparison in verse 12 can be more than economic values. We mentioned earlier that the noble woman trades commodities. She maintains integrity in her business transactions. She will not resort to cheating just to make additional profit. Today, husbands of single-income families also put their trust in their wives after they leave for work. You may have heard of the story about a man who was shocked to see his house in total chaos when he came home. He had to jump over toys on the floor when he walked in. Dirty dishes and unfinished food spread all over the dining table and in the kitchen. His kids soon came down the stairs to greet him. They had messy hair and food residues on their faces and clothes. They were in fact still wearing pajamas. Finally, his wife appeared. He asked her what was going on. She replied calmly: "Well, you always ask me what

I've done every time you come home. Today, I didn't do all those things." Here is a reminder to our fellow brothers: do not take things for granted. Your wife may not earn a full salary like you do. She deserves credit for keeping your home from becoming a war zone, and assuring you a hot dinner every evening. Verse 21 talks about another contribution of this wise lady: **When it snows, she has no fear for her household; for all of them are clothed in scarlet.** It may not often snow in Israel. But it does occur occasionally in the mountain regions. This woman plans for unusual conditions. "Scarlet" refers to a red color. The passage also says that she wears fine linen and purple clothing. All those descriptions reflect that she is in a wealthy family. A wise mom will always prepare for the what-ifs. She arranges everything at home in an orderly way. She is the right person to consult if you cannot find something. She stays cool when an unexpected situation arises. She may even carry an additional bag when going on vacation. She is like a Swiss army-knife that can cover any need. She has bandages and spare changes, and extra shirts and facial tissue. Therefore, men, do not complain about hauling an extra luggage. Your wife can save you from various troubles when accidents happen. Not only does this wise lady care for her family members, she also extends compassion to unknown strangers. Look at verse 20: **She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy.** Caring for underprivileged people in the society is a recurring theme in the Proverbs and throughout the Old Testament. This woman does not only accumulate money for her family. She also shares her resources generously with people in need. After managing all the affairs in and outside of the home, she feels confident about the future. Verse 25 tells us: **She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come.** Clothing here is a metaphor to describe her characters. People can notice what you wear from a distance. Similarly, people interact with this wise woman will admire her personality. They know she is a capable person. She is hard-working, and she cares for her family and less-fortunate people. She is well-respected in her town because of those qualities. Since she makes good plans about the future for her family, she can smile with confidence. Her goal is not to hoard wealth for herself with pride. Because of her good management on finance and resources, she is ready to face any uncertainty.

3. 她的品格 Her Attributes

We have talked about the attentions and the attitudes of this wise woman. The author then looks deeper into her attributes. In other words, what kind of person she proves to be through what she does. First, people in the town recognize that she is a woman of honor. In fact, verse 23 tells us people respect her husband as a result of her: **Her husband is respected at the city gate, where he takes his seat among the elders of the land.** We can combine that with verse 31: **Give her the reward she has earned, and let her works bring her praise at the city gate.** This is a reputable couple in town. Because of her effort at home, it frees him up to serve in the community. He does not have to worry about the family business and the welfare of the kids. Both verses mention the city gate. At that time, the town-square was like a city hall where elders would meet for important decisions. Elders were mature people with good moral characters. People believed in their judgment. This husband is also an elder in the city. Therefore, the work of both spouses are recognized. In a community where everyone knows everyone else, news good and bad will spread quickly. People understand how this lady enables her man to become a civic leader. There is a saying that behind every successful man is a capable wife. Once I thanked some sisters for taking care of their families so that their husbands can serve as major church coworkers. There were times when we had long and frequent ministry meetings. Those brothers were busy in their

careers. It was reasonable for their wives to grumble when the men spent less time at home. Without their support, those men could not devote time to church ministries. Another area that stand out is the wisdom of this woman. Look at verse 26: **She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue.** She proves to be a wise person not only through her work, but also through her words. The Hebrew word for “instruction” here is the word for the Biblical Law. The idea is that this wise woman will not say nice things to please others while compromising God’s truth. She displays wisdom in her words when she applies God’s principles in dealing with people. She does not only get recognition from the community. She also receives compliments from her family members. Let us read verses 28-29: **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.”** Outsiders can only see a small facet of our life. But family members know us deeper because we live together. There is nowhere to hide! You should ask your family members if you need a fair judgment about yourself. Here, even her children can see that God’s blessing on her. They receive benefits because God blesses them through her. Besides, her husband also praises her. He is the closest person in her life. Even if she can fool others, she cannot deceive her husband. He calls her the noblest person he knows. Ladies: don’t you want to hear that praise from your husband? A man knows that he is blessed when he sees the godly attributes in you. The author wraps everything up in verse 30 by saying: **Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.** Do not envy the appearance of movie stars and singing artists. Who knows how many layers of makeup they put on, not to mention there is a trick called plastic surgery? What you see can be superficial, if not artificial! We will only get old. Therefore, do not just preserve your look, but cultivate your heart too. The author echoes chapter 1 when he highlights fear toward the Lord as the most important value. This lady becomes a godly person because of her close relationship with God. When ladies see each other, they naturally comment about their hair or clothes. But a wise woman will give sincere praise about others’ attributes. You have to pay close attention before you can notice qualities like kindness, patience, compassion and the rest. Those are the traits that attract people to you and make them your close friends.

結論 CONCLUSION

A woman is blessed when she fulfills the roles God assigns to her. God’s requirements for women have never changed several thousand years since the Bible was written. Many ladies now receive higher education and they are ambitious in their careers. In some case, wives have to work to subsidize the income for their family. Regardless, no one can replace the roles of a wife and a mom at home. Families are the building blocks for a society. Home is a place where godly values are taught and passed down. God’s plan for most people is to get married and have children. What keep a home intact and what makes family members feel secure are not four walls and a roof. It is when we honor God as the head of the household, and when we obey Him wholeheartedly.

引言 INTRODUCTION

我們今天會查考箴言的最後一章來總結我們對這卷書的學習。當我讀到這段經文時，我至少想到兩個問題。第一，這個人到底有幾個老婆？這位姐妹不僅是一個多才多藝的妻子，她是一個擁有無限能力的神奇女俠。這讓我想起了一對父子的對話。爸爸說：「兒子，你知道嗎，每個男人都想要一個漂亮、聰明、會做飯的老婆。但事實是，法律只允許你娶一個女孩。」當然，這只是個笑話。我們當中很多姐妹都擁有這三方面和許多其他優點。我的第二個問題是：她丈夫工作嗎？她的太太打點了一切事情！難道他在家吃軟飯嗎？他的生活實在太輕鬆了！這段經文的確談到那位先生的工作。神在這段信息中有何用意？它是女士們的人生藍圖嗎？有些姐妹可能會抗議說這是不可能辦到的事情。但我們肯定可以從這位才德的婦人身上學到一些東西。「才德」這個詞形容一個有能力和才幹的人。這段經文就像每次你看電影時受到劇情的啟發一樣。某些角色激勵你成為一個更好的人。你面對的生活環境與那些人物不同。但你可以效法他們的善良、勇氣、毅力等。這一章也是箴言書的總結。作者重複了之前提出的一些主題。因此，這位女士展示了一個有智慧的人在現實生活中的表現。她是我們姐妹們的榜樣。丈夫們應該為他們的妻子禱告，使她們成為敬虔的女人。單身男士可以使用本章作為尋找未來妻子的指引。總個來說，作者告訴我們，當一個女人完成神分配給她的角色時，她是個有福的人。

解釋 EXPLANATION

1. 她的關注 Her Attentions

首先，我們來看看這位有智慧的賢妻關注的事情。換句話說，她如何運用她的時間。她住在一個有僕人和田地的大家庭裡。在那個年代，這是富有的象徵。然而，她並沒有把一切事務交給她的工人，自己一整天和朋友去購物或喝咖啡。她不只是家裡的總經理。她也親手做工。請看第 13 節：**他尋找羊羶和麻，甘心用手做工。**同樣在第 19 節：**她手拿撚線竿，手把紡線車。**她從農場或市場挑選原料。然後她將羊毛和麻紡成線，再將線編織成布。撚線竿是一根棍子，而紡線車是一個輪子。兩個東西都是編織工具的不同部分。做衣服需要很多工夫。我太太的一個姐姐喜歡做被子。她投資了不少錢買所有的配備。她將布剪成特定的圖案。然後她用裁縫機將大片的布縫起來。但小的部分她必須用針線來縫。那是她退休前的周末休閒活動。我欣賞她的技巧和耐心。製成品是美麗的藝術

品。在聖經世界裡，所有東西一般都是手工造的。這位賢慧的妻子不僅做衣服，她還會做飯。請看第 14-15 節：**14 她好像商船從遠方運糧來，15 未到黎明她就起來，把食物分給家中的人，將當做的工分派婢女。**她確保家裡的每個人都吃得飽。要準備那麼多人的飯菜需要很多工夫。很可能有傭人在廚房幫她的忙。如今，很少媽媽會為家人做衣服，但大部份人仍然會做飯。忙碌的職業婦女從餐館或超市買現成食品是可以理解的。我經常檢查食品包裝上的標籤。我懷疑一些不知名的成分是長在樹上還是在實驗室中混合的！有些媽媽堅持從原料開始做食物。這樣，她們便能保證家人到底吃了些什麼。沒有什麼能比得上家裡的菜。孩子長大後，一想到食物，就會想起媽媽。妳可能不是五星級廚師。但是妳可以參考別人的食譜或 YouTube 來提高妳的煮菜技術。這位賢慧的妻子不僅在家工作，她還到外面賺錢。第 16 節說：**她想得田地就買來；用手所得之利栽種葡萄園。**24 節說：**她做細麻布衣裳出賣，又將腰帶賣與商家。**這位女士有自己的事業。她在市場上銷售她製造的東西。她還可能賣她種的農產品。她設法增加家庭的收入。今天，一些留在家裡的媽媽也賣他們造的產品，或者在網上買賣東西。具有專業知識的女士們也可以通過電腦在家裡上班。但其他姐妹因為孩子還小而無法工作。有句話說得好：省一分錢就是賺一分錢。花更少的錢就像賺更多的錢。例如，聰明的消費者會在打折時大量購買商品。從長遠來看，省下來的錢是可觀的。妻子們還可以在購買新冰箱或預訂度假酒店房間時比較價格。此外，還有很多的生活竅門提供有創意的做事方式。蘇打粉和醋是便宜又天然的清潔劑。當妳保持節儉時，妳的丈夫會感謝妳的。總而言之，賢慧的妻子讓她的家成為一個溫暖的地方。她可以將這些任務交給別人。但是沒有人可以代替她的愛。如今，許多妻子忙著家務和孩子的活動，更不用說她們可能也有自己的職業。妳花一個小時準備一頓晚餐，然後所有東西在 20 分鐘內被一群蝗蟲吃光。不要低估妳的貢獻。如果妳將這些日常事務看為責任，那麼妳會感到擔子很重。但是如果妳把這些事情視為服事家人的機會時，妳會感到喜樂。神也一定會記念妳辛勞的付出。

2. 她的態度 Her Attitudes

這位賢妻把她的注意力放在家裡。很顯然，她的態度都是為了服務別人。她是丈夫可靠的幫手。請看第 11-12 節：**11 她丈夫心裏倚靠她，必不缺少利益；12 她一生使丈夫有益無損。**「利益」這個字在希伯來文的意思是「掠物」。這是指士兵打勝仗後收集戰利品。你可能看過一些積極的女士在黑色星期五於商店內搶購貨品。但這裡的重點是她致力於為丈夫賺取利益。他完全相信太太會把事情辦得好。第 12 節中的有益無損可能不僅僅是指經濟價值。前面我們提到賢妻買賣東西。她在商業交易中保持誠實。她不會為了多賺一點的利潤而使用不法的手段。今天，丈夫在上班時會把家裡的事情交給妻子。你可能聽說過這樣

一個故事，一位男士回家後看到房子內一片混亂。他進門時必須跨過地上的玩具。髒盤子和吃剩的食物遍佈餐桌和廚房。然後孩子們下樓迎接他。他們的頭髮凌亂，而衣服上也有食物的殘渣。事實上，他們還穿著睡衣。終於，他的妻子出現了。他問她發生了什麼事。她很平靜地回答：「你每次回家都問我做了什麼。今天，我沒有做那些事情。」在此提醒弟兄們：不要把事情看為理所當然。你的妻子可能不像你在外面賺錢。起碼她讓你的家免於成為戰場，並在每天晚上為你準備熱騰騰的晚餐，這都值得稱讚。第 21 節講到這位賢妻的另一項貢獻：**她不因下雪為家裏的人擔心，因為全家都穿着朱紅衣服。**以色列不會經常下雪。但偶爾在山區是會下雪的。這個女士為不尋常的狀況作好準備。除了紅色的衣服，這段經文還說她穿著細麻和紫色的衣服。這些描述都反映她是在一個富裕的家庭。一個聰明的媽媽總是會作周詳的打算。她把家裡的一切安排得井井有條。如果你找不到任何東西，你可以去問她。當遇到緊急狀況時，她也能保持冷靜。她甚至可能會在渡假時多帶一個行李箱。她就像一把瑞士軍刀，可以應付任何情況。她有消毒膠布和零錢，還有額外的衣服和紙巾。因此，男士們，不要抱怨要多拿一個行李。當面對特別情形時，你的妻子可以為你避免不少麻煩。這位有智慧的女士不僅關心她的家人，她還憐憫陌生人。請看第 20 節：**她張手賙濟困苦人，伸手幫補窮乏人。**關心社會中軟弱的群體是箴言和整本舊約中反復出現的主題。這位婦人不僅為家人增加財富，她還慷慨地與有需要的人分享她的資源。當她把家內外的事務都處理好之後，她對未來充滿信心。第 25 節告訴我們：**能力和威儀是她的衣服；她想到日後的景況就喜笑。**這裡的衣服是比喻她的品格。人們可以從遠處注意到你的穿著。同樣，人們與這位女士交流時也會欣賞她的個性。他們了解她是一個能幹的人。她勤奮、照顧家人和不幸的人。由於這些素質，她在城鎮裡受人尊敬。因為她為家人的未來有很好的計劃，所以她可以自信地微笑。她的目標不是驕傲地為自己囤積財富。由於她妥善地管理財務和資源，她有信心面對任何未知的因素。

3. 她的品格 Her Attributes

我們已經談到了這位智慧女士的關注和態度。然後作者更深入地分析她的品格。換句話說，通過她的行為證明她是一個什麼樣的人。首先，鎮上的人都公認她是一位尊貴的婦人。事實上，第 23 節告訴我們因為她，人們尊重她的丈夫：**她丈夫在城門口與本地的長老同坐，為眾人所認識。**我們可以把第 31 節合起來看：**願她享受操作所得的；願她的工作在城門口榮耀她。**他們是鎮上有好名聲的夫婦。由於太太在家裡的勤勞，讓先生有時間在社區服務。他不必擔心家族生意和孩子們的福利。這兩節經文都提到了城門。那個時候，市鎮的廣場就像一個會議廳，長老們在那裡做重要的決定。長老是成熟的人，具有良好的品格。人們相信他們的判斷。這個丈夫也是城裡的長老之一。因此，配偶雙方的工作都

得到肯定。在一個小地方裡，大家都互相認識，好消息和壞消息會迅速傳播。人們明白是這位女士的幫助，使她的先生能夠做領袖。有句話說，每個成功男人的背後都有一個能幹的妻子。有一次，我感謝一些姐妹照顧她們的家庭，讓她們的丈夫成為教會的主要同工。有時我們會有頻繁和長時間的事工會議。那些弟兄們也忙於他們的事業。當男人在家的時間減少時，妻子抱怨是可以理解的。沒有她們的支持，這些弟兄就無法投入在教會的事工中。另一個明顯的優點是這個婦人的智慧。請看第 26 節：**她開口就發智慧；她舌上有仁慈的法則。**她不僅通過她的工作，而且也通過她的言語證明她是一個有智慧的人。這裡「法則」這個字的希伯來文是指聖經律法。這裡的意思是，這位的婦女不會為了說好話討好別人而妥協神的真理。她將神的原則應用在待人處事之中，她的言語表現出智慧。她不僅得到鄰舍的認可，她也得到家人的稱讚。讓我們讀 28-29 節：**28 她的兒女起來稱她有福；她的丈夫也稱讚她，29 說：才德的女子很多，惟獨你超過一切。**外人只能看到我們生活的一小部分。但家人更了解我們，因為我們住在一起。無處可躲！如果你需要一些公正的評語，你應該詢問你的家人。在這裡，即使是她的孩子們也能看到神在她身上的祝福。他們得到好處是因為神通過媽媽祝福他們。此外，她的丈夫也稱讚她。他是她生命中最親近的人。就算她能騙到別人，也騙不了老公。他稱她為最有才德的婦人。姐妹們：妳希望聽到丈夫這樣讚賞妳嗎？當一個男人看到妳身上敬虔的品格時，他就知道他是有福的。作者在第 30 節作總結：**艷麗是虛假的，美容是虛浮的；惟敬畏耶和華的婦女必得稱讚。**不要羨慕電影明星和歌星的外表。誰知道他們塗了多少層的粉，更何況還有一個叫整容的把戲？你所看到的外表可能是表面的，甚至是人造的！我們只會變老。因此，不要只保持容貌，更要保守自己的心。作者強調敬畏神是最高的價值，這便與第一章相呼應。這位女士因與神的密切關係而成為一個敬虔的人。當女士們見面時，她們很自然會評論她們的頭髮或衣服。但有智慧的女人會真誠地稱讚別人的品格。你必須細心留意，才會注意到別人的善良、有耐心、憐憫等品格。這些美德能吸引別人靠近你，並使他們成為你真正的朋友。

結論 CONCLUSION

當一個女人完成神分配給她的角色時，她是個有福的人。自聖經寫成幾千年以來，神對女人的要求從未改變。許多女士現在接受高等教育，她們在事業上雄心勃勃。在某些情況下，妻子必須工作來補貼家庭的收入。無論如何，沒有人可以代替妻子和媽媽的角色。家庭是組成社會的單元。家是教導和傳承敬虔價值觀的地方。神對大多數人的計劃是結婚生子。使家保持完整並讓家人感到安全的不是四面牆和一個屋頂。當我們尊崇神為一家之主，並且全心全意地順服祂的時候，家庭才能穩固。