Crossroads International Church Singapore Dr. Rick Griffith

Title

10 May 2020 (Mothers Day) Message 8 of 10

NLT 30 Minutes

**Supermom**

***Proverbs 31:10-31***

**Topic:** Mother

**Subject:** How should we treat a capable wife?

**Complement:** Praise a capable wife and mother for her priceless selflessness.

**Purpose:** The listeners will

**Meditation:** Proverbs 31:30-31

**Reading:** Proverbs 31:10-31

**Songs:** He Knows My Name, The Perfect Wisdom of our God (Getty), Closing: A Christian Home (to tune of Be Still my Soul)

# Introduction

### Interest: Mothers are priceless [video of job interview].

### Need: How much would you have to pay a wife and mother to do what she does?

#### My wife taught our sons from 1987 to 2011. She helped begin their school, homeschooled them for a few years, and tutored them for their homework thousands of times. Her teacher pay should be about $50k a year, so those 25 years would total $1.25 million.

#### But she also was their chief cook. Cooks for three meals a day would also make at least $50k annually too, so let’s add another $1.25 million.

#### Counselors are not cheap, though. At $100 a session and the fact that her childrearing lasted 9,125 days, I would say she counseling them at least once a day. That would add another $912,500.

#### But wait—what about cleaning the house? That’s not cheap either. The going rate for a full-time maid is maybe $25k. It looks like I owe you $900,000 for the past 36 years.

#### But wait—you have also been chauffer *par excellence* for thousands of trips to school, to our son’s plays, to our son’s sports events, and numerous other activities. The going rate for a safe, caring chauffer must be at least $30k annually, so over 25 years of parenting, I would owe you $750,000. Wow, I must be rich!

### Background: Proverbs 31:10 says that a capable wife is both rare and priceless.

#### Must every wife be Supermom—able to leap tall buildings at a single bound?

#### What does it mean to have “noble character” (10a)? How is this different from being nobility? Or does this mean she acts like a godly queen?

##### The translations vary on this word, also in verse 29:

###### “Noble” (NIV)

###### “Excellent” (NAU)

###### “Virtuous and capable” (NLT)

##### “31:10. The **wife of noble character** (lˆyAj) is also mentioned in 12:4 (cf. “noble” in 31:29). Ruth was called “a woman of noble character” (Ruth 3:11). The word for noble character is translated “capable” in Exodus 18:21” (BKC).

##### “But select from all the people some **capable**, honest men who fear God and hate bribes. Appoint them as leaders over groups of one thousand, one hundred, fifty, and ten” (Exod 18:21 NLT).

##### The same word is used in Prov. 12:4—

###### “An **excellent** wife is the crown of her husband, but she who shames him is like rottenness in his bones” (NAU).

###### “A **worthy** wife is a crown for her husband, but a disgraceful woman is like cancer in his bones” (NLT).

#### Is the implied question “who can find?” negative—that no man actually can find a wife like this (10b)?

##### “The question **who can find?** (cf. Prov. 20:6) does not suggest that such women are nonexistent but that they should be admired because they, like noble men, are rare” (BKC).

##### “Also they are **more** valuable **than rubies** (cf. a similar statement about wisdom in 8:11)” (BKC).

### Intro to MPs: But *how is a capable wife rare and priceless?* This passage describes a competent, exceptional woman of great value.

### Warning: I once gave my girlfriend my list of the ideal wife—4 pages long! Big mistake!

#### It even required that she enjoy snow skiing—a skill that I later imposed on Susan during our honeymoon.

##### This dream of mine ended when the ski instructor on the bunny slope told Susan that he wouldn’t recommend even the bunny slope for her!

##### I look back at this now and thank God that I have learned a few things in 36 years of marriage. For one like me who likes to make lists, here is one list that I regret.

##### Besides that, little did I realize that God’s plan for me was to live three decades in the tropics!

##### Susan has forgiven me for my foolishness and still hasn’t learned to snow ski, but she really enjoys the hot tea at the lodge when our three sons and I hit the slopes once every few years or so when we are back in the USA.

#### Do ladies have to do everything in this chapter?

##### It is not a litmus test where every single trait must be imitated to the letter.

##### The focus is on a wife but the description is of her also as a mother.

##### Yet it gives ways that people can become capable—despite the many Bible studies ladies can find on “being a Proverbs 31 woman.”

#### Is this chapter specifically talking about women so that it doesn’t relate to men?

##### The immediate subject is the married woman who is a mother.

##### But the qualities here are traits that every believer should seek.

##### The Book of Proverbs constantly contrasts foolishness under the image of the ”woman of folly” with wisdom personified by “lady wisdom.” The climax of the Book of Proverbs is this last section to illustrate that wisdom leads to a capable life—one that is selfless as it looks out for others and is virtuous or godly. This is what we should praise!

### Preview: Let’s see how wisdom under the image of a capable wife is priceless—and then how to respond. And let’s also apply this to our lives, whoever we are!

### Text: Proverbs 31:11-27 help us identify such a rare and priceless woman—and anyone like this, for that matter.

(Verses 11-27 tell us how a capable wife is priceless...)

# I. A capable wife has godly selfless deeds (11-27).

[The godly wife and mother helps other people instead of herself.]

## She works hard for others (11-24).

### She is an asset to her husband (11-12).

#### Theologian Donald Bloesch (1928-2010) wrote, "The model of women in tribal patriarchalism is a brood mare; in hedonistic naturalism, she is the bunny or plaything; in feminist ideology, she is the self-sufficient career woman; in romanticism, she is the fairy princess or maiden in distress waiting to be rescued; in biblical faith, she is the partner in ministry."

#### Susan’s thoughtfulness and “bringing good to her husband” has been shown thousands of time. One of the latest is her leaving the last yoghurt while shopping. Only two were left and she could have bought both, but she considered the disappointment of the next person to see an empty shelf.

#### Being married to me hasn’t been easy. I felt that we should sell our home 30 years ago to come to Singapore so we could serve unencumbered. She agreed.

#### Our challenges raising three boys here without house help or family nearby amazed my students over the years.

#### But it started when we brought our firstborn son Kurt home from the hospital in a freezing January in Texas. We had no idea how to wash him in the cold—so we cranked up the heat all the way, but he was still cold. We switched to wash him in the kitchen sink with the blazing oven opposite to keep him warm, but that didn’t work either. Finally, we figured that if she handed him to me while I took a shower, he could enjoy it and still get clean while remaining warm.

#### Susan has been my greatest asset for 36 years now.

### She cares for her family (13-22).

#### She works with her hands (13).

#### She feeds her family well (14).

#### She rises early to care for her family (15)

#### She supplies her family from afar (16-18).

##### Sarah is our youngest mother but also one who exemplifies this truth of living in many worlds.

##### Some of us have followed the journey of Sarah leaving her comfortable small community in UK to marry Noah and commit to serve by his side among his small people group in India.

##### Her challenges are many as she supplies her family from afar—trying to get a passport for little Keziah, visa issues, separation from Noah for a time. But she does it with a capable and trusting spirit.

#### She clothes her family and the poor (19-22).

##### One of the outstanding traits of my mother is her industry—“eager hands” (13), hard worker (17), not “eating the bread of idleness” (27b). As far back as I can remember, she was always doing something useful.

##### Mom earned her master’s degree from Cal Berkley as a new divorcee with four children ages 1-6. To this day, I do not know how she did it with four kids only 5 years and 2 months apart.

##### Mom also never just watched TV, but she always knitted in front of the TV to multiply her time—and still does that today as she turns 90 this year!

##### Yet she never missed a band concert. Honestly, attended an elementary school band concert has to be one of the greatest tests of parental patience. The various district bands droned on for two hours, each playing about three songs—all out of key. I remember one concert sitting there in the trombone section and the trombonist next to me said, “Hey, look up in the bleachers—go to the center bleacher, count three rows down from the top. Now count four people to the left. What do you see?” Out of the hundreds of tired parents in the crowd, my friend was pointing directly at my Mom! “Can you believe that?” he said, “That lady brought her knitting to the band concert!” I did not have the heart to tell him that the industrious woman that he identified carried me for the first nine months of my life!

#### So what did my mother do to support us as a single mother?

##### She did what verse 20 says: “She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy.”

##### Mom earned her master’s degree to become a social worker. All day long she opened her arms to the poor—in child protective services for many years in order to protect kids from domestic abuse, and for other years in placing them in loving adoptive homes.

### She helps her husband lead (23).

#### People often ask how I have managed full-time ministry for 40 years now.

#### The answer is simply two words—God and Susan!

### She is productive (24).

#### Does the ideal woman have to be a business woman—a buyer (13) and land purchaser (16a) and farmer (16b) and trader (18) and linen worker (24)?

#### No. But she must have a good work ethic.

#### The idea here is that God disproves of laziness.

## She is optimistic about the future (25).

### Mae’s industry is amazing to me. Though challenged to keep life in order as a single Mom, she is the most joyful member of our church.

### Six-year-old Jacob is proof of her positive outlook about the future. He is a joy and leader among our young kids.

## She speaks with wisdom (26).

## She manages her home diligently (27).

(So how should we respond to this teaching? The passage actually addresses how we should treat a capable wife. How is this? Well, typically Christians say that we should praise God. But God is not the only one we should praise…)

# II. We should publicly praise a capable wife (28-31).

[Let’s be generous with compliments to the virtuous wife and mother.]

## Her children praise her (28a).

### Wong kids should praise Tracy

## Her husband praises her (28b-29).

## Everyone praises her (30-31).

### At least, everyone *should* praise her, according to verse 30b!

### What is the significance praise at the city gate since this was where the men sat (31)?

#### She did not sit there at the gate where her husband sat (cf. 31:23).

#### Yet her reputation was known throughout the community.

(So how should we treat a capable wife?)

# Conclusion

### Praise a capable wife and mother for her priceless selflessness (Main Idea). Tell her that you appreciate her always thinking of others and working hard for them (restated).

### No other passage in the Bible better praises mothers.

#### After hundreds of verses about wisdom in the Proverbs, the book concludes in what might seem to be a surprising way—a depiction of the ideal wife and mother. People claim that the Bible favors men, but far from it.

#### Perhaps Proverbs ends with an ideal woman is because the most influential people in society are actually the women—as the proverb goes, “the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world.”

#### So if we can help women—especially wives and mothers—become all that God wants, we invest in those with the strongest impact on our world!

#### Even evil people understand this—which is why godless persons seek to take children away from their mother’s influence so the State can mold them as they wish.

#### Yet mothers have the greatest impact on our world—more than any other demographic. The writers of Proverbs knew this then, and it is still true today.

### So what have we seen today? Here are the Main Points:

#### A capable wife is both rare and priceless (10-11).

#### A capable wife shows her godliness in selfless deeds (12-27).

#### We should publicly praise a capable wife (28-31).

### Exhortation: How can you better praise people?

#### How should you praise your wife? “Give her the reward she has earned” (31:31a NIV).

#### How should you praise your mother (31:15)? How can you follow verse 28? “Her children arise and call her blessed.”

#### How should you praise those who have cared for you?

#### How can you better care for others like this capable wife?

### Maybe you have done a great job praising your mother—but God is speaking to you to praise someone else. This is what God did in my life the past three days. When the word came to me that my step-father Bob would only live another day or so, I realized that this was my last chance to speak to him. Not being able to be with him, I wrote this text:

Bob (alias “Pops”), I asked my brother to read this to you since I am prevented from being able to see you at this time. Please know that I would be with you if I could, but United had to cancel all Singapore to San Francisco flights so I could not return to see you in March as I had planned for your 90th birthday celebration.

It’s impossible to sum up our relationship briefly, but I will try. I placed my faith in Jesus on 17 December 1971 at age 13, and then 4 months later you married Mom on 8 April 1972. Those four months were the most significant months in my life because they began two new relationships—with Jesus and with you.

This is why I wanted to share about Jesus with you one more time when I last saw you on 26 February. The message was simple then and it is simple now. Jesus said, “For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

Let me repeat that last part: “Everyone who believes in him [Jesus] will not perish but have eternal life.” My heart thrilled to see you on 26 February place your trust in him as you prayed with me before I took my flight back here to Singapore.

Bob, please know once again that God will be faithful to his promise to you. *You believe in Jesus, so you have eternal life!* I told you that you are not in the land of the living and going to the land of the dying. Quite the contrary. You are in the land of the dying and going to the land of the living. We will all join you, sooner or later.

Please be assured that we will take care of Mom until we see you again. We will seek to love her as you modeled love for her.

And greet our precious Lord Jesus for me, please. Tell him that I will seek to love him until my last breath.

Love, your son, Rick

### Prayer

# Preliminary Questions

**Verses Questions**

# Context: What did the author record just prior to this passage?

### The mother of King Lemuel taught her son to care for the poor rather than live for his own pleasure.

### This same selfless attitude continues through the rest of the chapter in the depiction of the noble wife and mother.

# Purpose: Why is this passage in the Bible?

### After hundreds of verses about wisdom in the Proverbs, the book concludes in what might seem to be a surprising way—a depiction of the ideal wife and mother. People claim that the Bible favors men, but far from it.

### Perhaps Proverbs ends with an ideal woman is because the most influential people in society are actually the women—as the proverb goes, “the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world.”

### So if we can help women—especially wives and mothers—become all that God wants, we invest in those with the strongest impact on our world!

### Even evil people understand this—which is why godless persons seek to take children away from their mother’s influence so the State can mold them as they wish.

### Yet mothers have the greatest impact on our world—more than any other demographic. The writers of Proverbs knew this then, and it is still true today.

# Background: What historical context helps us understand this passage?

### Ancient Israel was a patriarchal society—but that does not mean that women were slaves of their husbands. It simply meant that God’s design was for men to lead their families.

### The OT gives many responsibilities to women in a variety of passages:

#### Women were to teach their children

#### Children were to honor both their father and mother in the 10 commandments.

# Questions

### Is this chapter specifically talking about women so that it doesn’t relate to men?

#### The immediate subject is the married woman who is a mother.

#### But the qualities here are traits that every believer should seek.

### Do ladies have to do everything in this chapter?

#### It is not a litmus test where every single trait must be imitated to the letter.

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#### Yet it gives ways that people can become capable.

### What does it mean to have “noble character” (10a)? How is this different from being nobility? Or does this mean she acts like a godly queen?

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#### “Also they are **more** valuable **than rubies** (cf. a similar statement about wisdom in 8:11)” (BKC).

### Does the ideal woman have to be a business woman—a buyer (13) and land purchaser (16a) and farmer (16b) and trader (18) and linen worker (24)?

#### No. But she must have a good work ethic.

#### The idea here is that God disproves of laziness.

### What is the significance being praised at the city gate since this was where the men sat (31)?

#### She did not sit there at the gate where her husband sat (cf. 31:23).

#### Yet her reputation was known throughout the community.

# Tentative Subject/Complement Statements

The characteristics of the noble wife

The characteristics of the godly wife

The characteristics of the capable wife

# Possible Illustrations

### I once gave my girlfriend my list of the ideal wife. It was four pages long! It even required that she enjoy snow skiing—a skill that I later imposed on Susan during our honeymoon.

#### This dream of mine ended when the ski instructor on the bunny slope told Susan that he wouldn’t recommend even the bunny slope for her!

#### I look back at this now and thank God that I have learned a few things in 36 years of marriage. For one like me who likes to make lists, here is one list that I regret.

#### Besides that, little did I realize that God’s plan for me was to live three decades in the tropics!

#### Susan has forgiven me for my foolishness and still hasn’t learned to snow ski, but she really enjoys the hot tea at the lodge when our three sons and I hit the slopes once every few years or so when we are back in the USA.

### One of the outstanding traits of my mother is her industry—“eager hands” (13), hard worker (17), not “eating the bread of idleness” (27b). As far back as I can remember, she was always doing something useful.

#### Mom earned her master’s degree from Cal Berkley as a new divorcee with four children ages 1-6. To this day, I do not know how she did it with four kids only 5 years and 2 months apart.

#### Mom also never just watched TV, but she always knitted in front of the TV to multiply her time—and still does that today as she turns 90 this year!

#### Yet she never missed a band concert. Honestly, attended an elementary school band concert has to be one of the greatest tests of parental patience. The various district bands droned on for two hours, each playing about three songs—all out of key. I remember one concert sitting there in the trombone section and the trombonist next to me said, “Hey, look up in the bleachers—go to the center bleacher, count three rows down from the top. Now count four people to the left. What do you see?” Out of the hundreds of tired parents in the crowd, my friend was pointing directly at my Mom! “Can you believe that?” he said, “That lady brought her knitting to the band concert!” I did not have the heart to tell him that the industrious woman that he identified carried me for the first nine months of my life!

### So what did my mother do to support us as a single mother?

#### She did what verse 20 says: “She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy.”

#### Mom earned her master’s degree to become a social worker. All day long she opened her arms to the poor—in child protective services for many years in order to protect kids from domestic abuse, and for other years in placing them in loving adoptive homes.

### A godly husband once posted in the kitchen the list of chores for his maid.

#### Sometime later this man’s wife died—but his affection for the maid grew to the point that he asked her to marry him.

#### She did and after their honeymoon they went back to the all-familiar house.

#### Upon entering, the new wife went straight to the kitchen, pulled the chore list off the wall and tore it up.

#### The husband was shocked: “What are you doing?” he asked, bewildered.

#### “As your maid,” his former maid-but-now-wife responded, “This was the list of what I *had* to do. But now I do not need it anymore, for it is now what I *want* to do!”

### Supermom—able to leap tall buildings

### Difficulty washing Kurt with oven open

### Susan’s thoughtfulness leaving the last yoghurt

### Mae’s generosity

### Eunice’s industry

### Sarah’s optimism

### Wong kids should praise Tracy

# Possible Applications

### Make your list of godly traits for yourself rather than making a list for someone else.

### Be a person of industry rather than idleness.

**Supermom**

***Proverbs 31:10--31***

**Exegetical Outline (Steps 2-3)**

# *Exegetical Idea*: The way we should treat the capable wife is by public praise for her priceless selflessness.

# I. The value of a capable wife is priceless (10-11).

## A godly wife is rare (10a).

## Her rarity makes her valuable (10b).

## Her husband trusts her (11).

# II. The way the capable wife is pricelessness is by her godliness in selfless deeds (12-27).

## She works hard for others (12-24).

### She is an asset to her husband (12).

### She cares for her family (13-22).

#### She works with her hands (13).

#### She feeds her family well (14).

#### She rises early to care for her family (15)

#### She supplies her family from afar (16-18).

#### She clothes her family and the poor (19-22).

### She helps her husband lead (23).

### She succeeds in business (24).

## She is optimistic about the future (25).

## She speaks with wisdom (26).

## She manages her home diligently (27).

# III. The way we should treat the capable wife is by public praise (28-31).

## Her children praise her (28a).

## Her husband praises her (28b-29).

## Everyone praises her (30-31).

**Purpose or Desired Listener Response (Step 4)**

The listeners will praise their mother or wife for her strengths.

**Homiletical Outline** (Cyclical inductive form)

# Introduction

### Interest: Mothers are priceless [video of job interview].

### Need: How much would you have to pay a wife and mother to do what she does?

### Background: No wonder Proverbs 31:10 says that a capable wife is both rare and priceless (explain).

### Intro to MPs: But *how is a capable wife rare and priceless?* This chapter gives an amazing description of such a woman.

### Warning: I once gave my girlfriend my list of the ideal wife. It was four pages long!

### Preview: Let’s see how a capable wife is priceless—and then how to respond. And let’s also apply this to our lives, whoever we are!

### Text: Proverbs 31:12-27 help us identify such a rare and priceless woman—and anyone like this, for that matter.

(Verses 12-27 tell us how a capable wife is priceless...)

# I. A capable wife has godly selfless deeds (11-27).

## She works hard for others (11-24).

### She is an asset to her husband (11-12).

### She cares for her family (13-22).

#### She works with her hands (13).

#### She feeds her family well (14).

#### She rises early to care for her family (15)

#### She supplies her family from afar (16-18).

#### She clothes her family and the poor (19-22).

### She helps her husband lead (23).

### She is productive (24).

## She is optimistic about the future (25).

## She speaks with wisdom (26).

## She manages her home diligently (27).

(So how should we respond to this teaching? The passage actually addresses how we should treat a capable wife. How is this? Well, typically Christians say that we should praise God. But God is not the only one we should praise…)

# II. We should publicly praise a capable wife (28-31).

## Her children praise her (28a).

## Her husband praises her (28b-29).

## Everyone praises her (30-31).

(So how should we treat a capable wife?)

# Conclusion

### Praise a capable wife and mother for her priceless selflessness (MI).

### Main Points

#### A capable wife is both rare and priceless (10-11).

#### A capable wife shows her godliness in selfless deeds (12-27).

#### We should publicly praise a capable wife (28-31).

### Exhortation: How can you praise people?

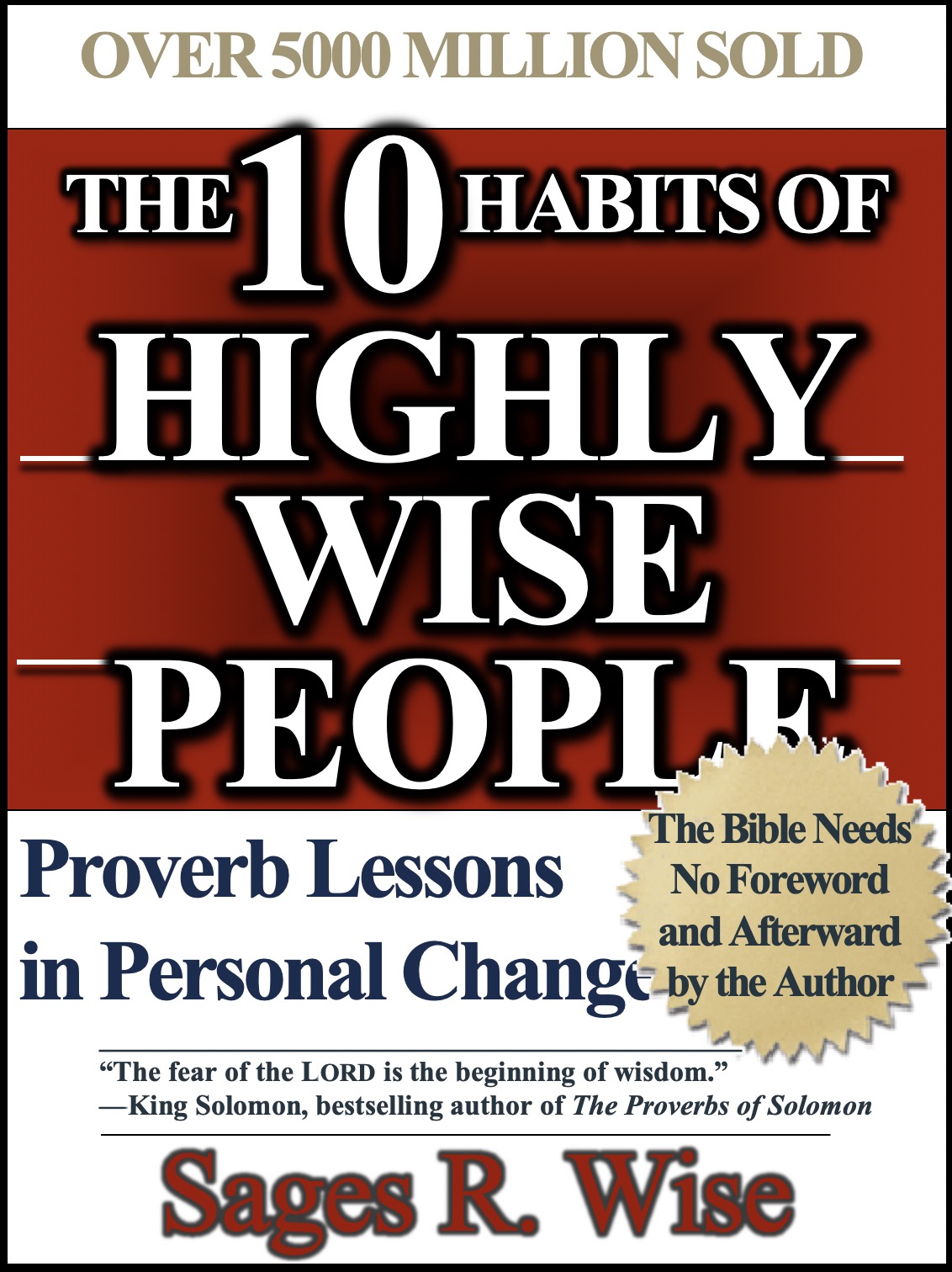
#### How should you praise your wife?

#### How should you praise your mother?

#### How should you praise those who have cared for you?

#### How can you better care for others like this capable wife?

### Prayer

****



**Rick Griffith**

2020

Message of 10

**Title**

***Passage***

# Introduction

Subject with a blank for the key word \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ blank answer in hidden text

# I. MP has a blank for the key word \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ answer (verses).

## SP has a blank for the key word \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ answer (verses).

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# Conclusion

### Main Idea has a blank for the key word \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ answer (verses).

### Application question

**Thought Questions**

1. Read the passage aloud. Contrast:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Issue** | **Contrast** |
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| Text | Text |
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| Text | Text |
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1. Text-based question

Text

Text

Text

Text

1. Application to your own Christian experience

Text

Text

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