

PURPOSE

OF THE HOME

DATE

June 20 & 21

WEEK

3 of 10

OVERVIEW

Proverbs 24, 31

KEY VERSES

Proverbs 24:3-4

SETTING THE STAGE

Have you ever had the opportunity to build your own home? It can be one of the most exciting, but also stressful, times of your life. The notion of building your own house initially sounds amazing. After all, who would not want a house that is custom-tailored to fit your personal preferences? However, the journey to completion can be daunting. Yes, you get to make all the decisions, but the problem is the number of decisions you will have to make. From the layout of the house, to the floors, to the cabinets and fixtures, to the moldings and closets, plugs and switches, a decision has to be made on every single item in the house. And to make matters more difficult, there are hundreds of options to choose from for each decision. Uncertainty begins to settle in, and stress quickly follows. You want to build the perfect home, but how do you get there?

While not all of us get an opportunity to choose our own brick and mortar, the Bible explains that all of us do get the opportunity to build our own homes. However, this type of building goes far beyond raw materials. Warren Wiersbe explains,

According to Scripture, God established three human institutions in the world: marriage and the home (*Genesis 2:18-25*), human government (*Genesis 9:1-6; Romans 13*), and the local church (*Acts 2*); of the three, the basic institution is the home. As goes the home, so go the church and the nation. ¹

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LESSON OUTLINE

1. Wise Men
2. Wise Women
3. Wise Parents

THINGS TO KNOW

- Proverbs 31 speaks to both men and women.
- God designed the home as the centerpiece of civilization.

PURPOSE

OF THE HOME

Setting the Stage, continued >

God designed the home to serve as the centerpiece of civilization. The home is the primary instrument that God uses to build and shape every individual's character and faith. And as adults, we are given the humbling responsibility to choose how we want to build our own homes. But unlike physical home-building, our decisions are not focused on the carpet color or type of countertops. Instead, spiritual home-building is focused on the values and principles that we choose to use as our foundation. And these decisions are far more critical than paint colors, as they shape the hearts of everyone that lives under our roof.

This massive task can leave us feeling like a confused buyer working with a home builder on a construction site. We too want to spiritually build a "perfect" home, but most of us are uncertain of how to do so. Fortunately, our God never leaves us guessing in the dark. Instead, His Word lights our path and guides our decisions (*Psalms 119:105*). Proverbs 24:3-4 explains,

PROVERBS 24:3-4 *By wisdom, a house is built. And by understanding it is established. And by knowledge the rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant riches.*

God tells us that if we want our homes to be filled with the riches of His grace, we must first make sure we are building it with the right material: **wisdom**.

Two weeks ago, we kicked off this summer series, *The Story of Purpose* by looking at wisdom as foundational to our spiritual and practical lives. Today, we are going to look at the book of Proverbs for instruction on how we can **build** healthy homes. It all starts with becoming wise individuals. For purposes of our discussion, home constitutes a family unit whether it be a single person never married, a single parent, a divorced or widowed individual, a married couple without children, a married couple with children, grandparents raising their grandchildren or a multi-generational family all living together. Regardless of what your 'home' looks like, God has a purpose for your home, and it begins with wisdom from above.

Teacher's Note: This lesson will utilize a married couple with children as examples, though each element can be adapted with a single man, single woman, single parent, etc. Please make sure you are all-inclusive in your teaching as you know your audience best. This topic can be especially sensitive to those who are single.

1. WISE MEN

If you have ever studied the book of Proverbs, you know that one of the most famous passages in the book is the 31st chapter. The chapter is primarily focused on the characteristics of God-fearing women that walk in wisdom. And while that is the primary focus of the text, the chapter often



¹ Warren Wiersbe, *Be Skillfull, God's Guidebook to Wise Living*, David C. Cook, 2009, p. 117-118.

gets overlooked for its practical application to husbands. So, before we turn to the chapter to help us define a wise wife, let us first look at how it defines a wise husband.

A. He CHERISHES her.

PROVERBS 31:10 *An excellent wife, who can find? For her worth is far above jewels.*

A wise husband understands how good he has it. In Genesis 2, God saw that it was not good for man to be alone, so he provided a “suitable helper” (*Genesis 2:18*). God presented the first bride to the first groom, and Adam was so thrilled that he began singing (*Genesis 2:23*). Unfortunately, many men fail to see their wives as the God-given gift that they are. Proverbs 18:22 tells us that,

PROVERBS 18:22 *He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the Lord.*

This is why a wife’s worth is far above any jewels. Wise husbands not only understand this truth in their minds, but they demonstrate it through their actions. They value their wives more than their man-cave or football game. They cherish wives more than their favorite hobbies or friends. They do not demean their spouse or make them the butt of jokes. Why? They are wise enough to understand their wives’ sacred value. There is nothing wrong with a man placing value in his work, hobbies, or friends, but wise husbands make sure their wives know that they cherish them above everything else.

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B. He TRUSTS her.

PROVERBS 31:11 *The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain.*

Wise husbands do not put up walls between themselves and their spouses. They do not keep secrets or selfishly set aside personal resources. They do not micromanage their wives or control them. Why? Because wise husbands trust their wives. They understand that God gave them a divine teammate, not an adversary. Wise husbands trust the heart and character of their spouse, and they forgive when their spouse needs forgiveness. They do not lead their wives in an over-bearing way. Instead, they lead them like Christ. Husbands are called to love their wives like Christ loves the church (*Ephesians 5:25*). And just as Christ entrusted the church with the most valuable of resources, the Gospel (*Acts 1:8, 2 Corinthians 5:18*), wise husbands entrust their wives with all that they have and all that they are.

C. He ENCOURAGES her.

PROVERBS 31:28-29 *Her children rise up and bless her; her husband also, and he praises her, saying: ²⁹“Many daughters have done nobly, but you excel them all.”*

Far too often men focus on giving the wrong kinds of gifts. Husbands are quick to open their wallets and purchase flowers, clothes, or jewelry. And while wives appreciate all of these things, the ironic thing is the most valuable gift a man could give actually costs him nothing! Most women would tell you that the thing they want most from their husbands are his words of affirmation. Wives want to connect and hear from the heart of their husbands, but unfortunately, communication is often one of the greatest weaknesses for men! And when men do communicate, it can often turn negative or critical. This is why wise husbands intentionally find ways to encourage their wives.

Most women would tell you that the thing they want most from their husbands are his words of affirmation.

Husbands, do you praise your wife? Do you regularly thank her for her grace and kindness and celebrate her contributions to your home? Wise husbands know the value of their words, so they use them to encourage and build up their spouse.

2. WISE WOMEN

A. She **BUILDS** him up.

PROVERBS 31:12 *She does him good and not evil all the days of her life.*

A wise wife understands the immense power that God has given her. Proverbs 14:1 explains that a wife can build up her house or tear it down with her own two hands. This is because God has given wives an incredible amount of influence through their words. A wife's words can speak life into her husband and give him the boldness and courage to accomplish more than he ever dreamed. But likewise, her words can also paralyze her husband, and embed insecurity and shame that cannot be easily shaken. Wise wives understand this truth, so they wield their power well. They "do good" to their husbands. They aim to be the crown of their husband, not cancer in his bones (*Proverbs 12:4*).

B. She **PARTNERS** with him.

PROVERBS 31:13 *She looks for wool and flax and works with her hands in delight.*

The Proverbs 31 woman is depicted as a hard worker! The chapter explains that this kind of woman wakes up early (v. 15), conducts business (v. 16), is a great planner (v. 21), and does excellent work with her hands (v. 22). She is an amazing contributor to the home and serves as the perfect partner to her husband. God recognized deficiencies in Adam so He provided a suitable helper for him (*Genesis 2:18*). Eve was created to partner with Adam, and collectively, work together as one to accomplish God's purposes for their lives. Wise wives understand this calling and pro-actively look for ways to help. Instead of criticizing their husband's weaknesses, wise wives look for opportunities to come alongside him and fill those gaps.

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C. She **TACTFULLY** counsels him.

PROVERBS 31:26 *She opens her mouth in wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.*

No one knows a man better than his wife. Wives can see their husband's strengths, but they can also best identify their weaknesses. As mentioned above, God created wives to help their husbands, and yes, part of that help includes offering him counsel. The key is the counsel has to be tactful in order to become impactful. A Proverbs 31 wife opens her mouth with wisdom and kindness comes off her tongue. Many wives speak wisdom to their husbands, but many also forget to include kindness. As Dr. Emerson Eggerichs says, "Unfortunately, a wife's usual approach is to complain and criticize in order to motivate her husband to become more loving. This usually proves to be as successful as trying to sell brass knuckles to Mother Teresa."² Indeed, no man has ever changed due to contentious nagging. In fact, the Bible says *contentious words are like an annoying dripping faucet to a man* (*Proverbs 19:13*). However, wise wives that communicate with respect and kindness can become a husband's greatest advisor, and bring peace to their home.

3. WISE PARENTS

Wise parents understand the sacred responsibility they have for the children in their homes. They do not let a child's 18+ years in their home go by frivolously. Instead, they are intentional with that

² Emerson Eggerichs, *Love & Respect: The Love She Desires; The Respect He Desperately Needs*, Integrity Publishers, 2004.

time and steward it well. Wise parents understand this truth noted by Dr. James Dobson, “Children are not casual guests in our home. They have been loaned to us temporarily for the purpose of loving them and instilling a foundation of values on which their future lives will be built.”³

A. They lead by EXAMPLE.

PROVERBS 20:7 *A righteous man who walks in his integrity—how blessed are his sons after him.*

Wise parents understand the importance of their actions. In Scripture, James explains that *faith without works is dead* (James 2:17). This principle could not be any more evident than in the home. For a watching child, a parent’s faith without works is dead. Children are watching our every move and looking for evidence of the faith that we profess. As many pastors have said for years, godliness is often more “caught” than “taught” by our kids. Children are always watching, so wise parents walk righteously and with integrity in their homes. When our children are little, they do what we say. When our children get older, they do what we do.

B. They lead through WORDS.

PROVERBS 1:8 *Hear, my son, your father’s instruction and do not forsake your mother’s teaching;*

While a parent’s example is instrumental in a child’s spiritual development, we cannot overlook the necessity of their words. Throughout the Bible, God commands parents to teach in their homes (Deuteronomy 6) and serve as the primary source for their children’s discipleship. Wise parents embrace this high calling and instruct their kids. They do not outsource biblical teaching to the church or other ministries. Instead, they are intentional with their kids and talk about the goodness of God in their homes.

C. They lead through DISCIPLINE.

PROVERBS 22:15 *Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of discipline will remove it far from him.*

The book of Proverbs constantly reminds parents of the importance of discipline in the home. Solomon explains that discipline will help correct and shape the mind of a child so he or she can go on to flourish in this world. Unfortunately, this is not how many people view discipline in the home. Warren Wiersbe explains,

Many modern educators and parents revolt against the biblical teaching of discipline. They tell us that ‘Spare the rod and spoil the child’ is nothing but brutal prehistoric pedagogy that cripples the child for life. But nowhere does the Bible teach blind brutality when it comes to disciplining children. The emphasis is on love, because this is the way God disciplines His own children.⁴

Wise parents understand they demonstrate their love to their kids by correcting them. They know that their primary goal is not to always be their kids’ best friends. Their primary goal is to help shape their hearts to love and honor God, live godly lives, and to one day establish their own godly homes. Wise parents keep their eyes on the long-term goal and persevere through the short-term pain that comes with disciplining a child.

³ James C. Dobson, *How to Raise Children that Love the Lord*, Chariot Family Publishing, 1991.

⁴ Warren Wiersbe, *Be Skillfull, God’s Guidebook to Wise Living*, David C. Cook, 2009, p. 124-125.

God designed the home, and He desires for it to be a place filled with love, joy, and peace for all who live in it. If we commit to building our homes with His wisdom, He will transform our lives as husbands, wives, and parents.

HOW HIS PLAN SHAPES OUR PURPOSE

God has given each of us an amazing opportunity to build a home. God even gave us the tools and blueprint to do this incredibly challenging building project. It takes time. It takes energy. It takes the willingness to put forth the effort. The question is what kind of home are you going to build?

In Matthew 7:24-27, Jesus speaks of how different homes are built. He concludes by stating that it all comes down to the foundation that is laid. If the foundation is shaky and constantly moving like sand, the house will not withstand any sort of proverbial wind or rain. However, if the house is built on a solid foundation such as God's Word it can withstand the storms of life.

MATTHEW 7:25 *And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock.*

It all comes down to the choices you make when you build the house making it into a home. By choosing the wise ways of God, you will be laying a rock-solid foundation. That does not mean that challenges will not arise, or that the changing winds of culture will not tempt your family. The reality is 'life' happens in such a way that we experience challenges and obstacles beyond our control. Yet, if we rely on the wisdom of God we have more than a fighting chance, we have hope and purpose that comes from walking in a relationship with Jesus Christ. It will be a home where His plan becomes our family purpose.