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Internet Class for
May 15, 2002

The Virtuous Woman—Blueprint for the Kingdom Class 2

IV. A Blueprint for Talents

Pro. 31:11-13 "The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. She will do him good not evil all the days of her life. She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands."

A. (In depth) When we built our house, there were many different blueprints. It seemed we had a blueprint for everything. Blueprints for plumbing, heating, support walls etc. etc. These blueprints, if followed properly, would assist us in achieving the final goal, a completed house, with the proper support walls, heating, plumbing, electrical wiring, etc. etc. all in their proper places.

Here we find a part of the blueprint that tells us, to reach the final goal of eternal life, we need to be faithful in the development of our talents. We need to be so faithful in this area, that the very heart of God can trust in us. We need to be so faithful that He can trust us to use all the talents He has given us—trust us to not let even one spoil or go unused, but all will be used to build up His Kingdom on this earth and glorify Him.

B. In Matt. 25:1-12 We compared the wise virgins, to the virtuous woman of Proverbs. Directly following that parable in Matt. is another parable about the talents. Mat.25:13-33 Here we see those who waste their talents cannot dwell in the Kingdom of Heaven. Like the unwise virgins they will not be able to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, when the Lord comes. Directly following the opening statement about the virtuous woman, and her price being above rubies, we find the statement that her husband, Who we now know is Christ, can trust in her because there is no spoil. So it is that we find that the two parables in Mat. 25 correspond with the 2 opening verses of Proverbs.

1. Please note that both of these parables in essence refer to the fact that there should be no waste, or spoil.
2. In the Doctrine and Covenants we find that development of our talents is also connected with being one of God's jewels.

Sec. 60:1-2b ". . . I am not well pleased, for they will not open their mouths, but hide the talent which I have given unto them, because of the fear of man. Woe unto such, for mine anger is kindled against them. . .and in the day when I shall make up my jewels, all men shall know what it is that bespeaketh the power of God."

C. In Pro.31:13 "She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands." The wool and flax are raw materials that need to be made into something useful. We must seek out our raw talents and cultivate them to be used for the Kingdom.

The wool and flax are symbolic of our undeveloped talents.

Sec.46:4-7f gives us an excellent discourse on talents and gifts. In part it says ". . .seek ye earnestly the best gifts, always remembering for what they are given; for verily I say unto you, They are given for the benefit of those who love me and keep all my commandments. . .and verily I say unto you, I would that ye should always remember, and always retain in your minds what those gifts are, that are given unto the church, for all have not every gift given unto them; for there are many gifts, and to every man is given a gift by the Spirit of God: to some it is given one, and to some is given another, that all may be profited thereby. . .and all these gifts come from God, for the benefit of the children of God."

We see here that everyone has at least one gift. In the Parable in Matthew those who developed their talents acquired even more talents. The Lord upon His return said to them "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." (25:21& 23) The virtuous woman searches out her talents and develops them. The heart of God can trust in her because she is true and faithful and diligently develops her talents and uses them to bless others in the household of God.

- D. Verse 12 Tells us that she will, ". . .do him good and not evil all the days of her life." It is true that we must do good all the days of our lives. That is not to say that we will not sin upon occasion, but when we fall into transgression, we will not choose to remain there, but will quickly repent. We want to be accounted as faithful when we meet our Lord face to face. We want to be able to hear the words "well done my good and faithful servant enter into the joy of the Lord." To endure unto the end and always be counted among the faithful is a important part of the blueprint.

II Nephi 13:29-32 says it this way "Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life." (verse 30)

- E. (To sum it up) The virtuous woman is faithful and the very heart of God can trust in her. She develops her talents for the good of His Kingdom. She does good all the days of her life and endures to the end.
- F. (On the surface, verses 11-13)

1. The virtuous woman works willingly to meet the needs of her family, and lets nothing spoil. It is important for every woman to be a good manager of her household. If we are not careful, we can waste food, and other resources faster than money can buy them. The virtuous woman must plan carefully and manage the affairs of her home in such a way that there is no spoil. There are many good Christian based books available on this subject. It is important that we gain what knowledge we can in this area so that we can become good stewards over our households. We need to be stewards over all the gifts God has given us, both the physical and the spiritual. Talents, time, and our physical resources must be used in a manner designed by God. To do so we

must stay in tune with Him.

2. Her earthly husband can place his trust in her, he can trust her to manage the affairs of the home. We find a good example of this in Bertha Madison Smith, the wife of Joseph Smith the III. Joseph Smith the III wrote of his wife Bertha "I found my second wife to be a most capable woman, one in whom I could place my implicit confidence, and in whose care I always felt it safe to leave my home affairs without question, when I entered into the ministry of my work which required me to go upon distant trips. I felt an assurance that she would not only do the best she could but that she possessed the natural ability to discharge the duties of her position honorably and acceptably."
3. Emma Smith wife of the prophet Joseph Smith also set a example for us to follow. Truly Joseph's heart could trust in her, in all things. During the winter of 1838-39 mobs drove the saints from their homes in Missouri. Emma escaped with her small children and walked across the frozen Mississippi river. In her arms she carried baby Alexander. Little Fredrick, Joseph the III and Julia clung to her skirts. Concealed beneath her skirts she carried the manuscript of the Inspired Version. Yes, Joseph's heart could trust in Emma. He once said of Emma "My beloved Emma-she that was my wife, even the wife of my youth, and the choice of my heart." Her mother-in law, Lucy Mack Smith, said of her, "I have never seen a woman in my life who would endure every species of fatigue and hardship, from month to month, and from year to year, with the unflinching courage, zeal and patience, which she has ever done."

How were Emma and Bertha able to set such examples for us to follow? I believe it was because they were in tune with the Spirit of God which assists us in every avenue in our lives. We will shortly see that the virtuous woman in Proverbs is indeed surrounded by the Holy Spirit.

4. To keep our home running smoothly and to avoid waste of resources we must call upon God and ask His Spirit to guide and direct us in the daily affairs of our homes.
 - a. Testimony: I remember my cousin telling how poor they were when her children were little. She had just enough money to buy some fabric to make her son a couple of new shirts for school. When she started to lay the pattern out, she prayed that she might do it properly so as not to waste any of the fabric. First she laid it out the way it showed on the pattern package. Then, she said, it was as if her mind was enlightened and she saw a better way to lay the patterns on the material. She quickly laid it out the new way and realized that she could get two shirts out of each piece of material. What a blessing, instead of two new shirts, her son now had four new shirts.
5. If we are managing the affairs of our home in the proper way, the way designed by God, indeed our earthly husbands can trust in us also. To do this we must stay in tune with God. Over and over again in this parable of the virtuous woman we are given the in depth blueprints that show us how to stay in tune

with our God. When we follow the blueprints all the rest will begin to fall into place.

6. Also on the surface level the statement "The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil" brings us to the concept of the deep and abiding friendship that should develop between a husband and wife. James Dobson in his book "Life on the Edge" comments that very few marriages become truly bonded marriages. A bonded marriage is when the husband and wife become best friends on a deep level where they can share their innermost thoughts and desires. They share a bond of intimacy that is not only physical, but emotional and spiritual as well. The virtuous woman strives to develop this type of bonded relationship with her husband—a relationship where the heart of her husband can safely trust in her on every level. There are many good books available to us today on the subject of developing a good marriage relationship. This is an area that is very important and should not be ignored. Here again, when we pray and are led by the Holy Spirit, we can be led to the right books and information, we can be led to do and say those things that will build the marriage relationship in a positive way.

V. A Blueprint for Inviting the Holy Spirit into your Life

Pro31:14-15 "She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar."

- A. (In Depth) In Strongs Concordance it says that *merchant ship*, in the Hebrew (#5503=5507) when used in the feminine means "something surrounding the person as a shield or buckler."

It is the Holy Spirit that surrounds the virtuous woman as a shield and buckler. She does not stand alone. It is with the assistance of the Holy Spirit that she is able to become the virtuous woman that God has called her to be. Without the help of the Holy Spirit it would be impossible to become like the virtuous woman described in Proverbs. It is only as we invite the Holy Spirit to come and surround us and dwell in us and function as a partner in our daily lives that we can become like her.

- B. In verse 15 we see the virtuous woman riseth while it is yet night. In sec. 63:16 we see the importance of prayer. It says "Ye receive the Spirit through prayer." Thus we see the importance of an early morning prayer time—if need be to arise before dawn. Jesus set the example for He spent time in prayer in those early morning hours. We all know how busy our lives are once the day begins. It is hard to fit in that prayer time once the business of the day is upon us. We must discipline ourselves and get in the habit of having a morning prayer time, if we want the Holy Spirit functioning in our lives.
- C. In verse 14 we see that she brings food from afar. This does not mean that she drives to the Price Chopper across town instead of the one down the block. The scriptures do come to us from afar. The words of the holy prophets and apostles and those afar off come down through time as recorded in the scriptures.
II Peter 3:1-2 ". . .in which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance;

That ye may be mindful of the words. . .spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandments of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior.”

We are to stir our minds up and read those words spoken before by the holy prophets and the apostles.

In verse 15 she ariseth early to get meat for her household, and even a portion to her maidens. This coincides with a morning prayer time. It is also to be a time of study. The very bread of life is found in the scriptures, and we must study the word so that we may be able to impart of it to those around us. Also that we may walk correctly obeying the word and be a living example to those around us. How can we do this if we do not know the words of life that have been given to us.

II Nephi 14:4 ". . .Feast upon the words of Christ; for behold the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do."

John 6:27 "Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man hath power to give. . ."

1. Testimony: The words of Christ do tell us all things that we should do.

I am reminded of when my children were very little and some psychologists were saying that it was healthy to let children fight and argue with their siblings. I wondered if this could be true. The next morning in my quiet time I was reading the Book Of Mormon and I read these words in Mosiah 2:25-27 "And ye will not suffer you children, that they go hungry, or naked; Neither will ye suffer that they transgress the laws of God, and fight and quarrel one with another. . .ye will teach them to love one another, and to serve one another;"

My heart burned within me and I knew that I should never let my children fight and quarrel. I always made my girls get along with each other and work out any difficulties in a calm and peaceful way. They are in their 30's now and remain the best of friends.

D. She applies God's word in her daily life, and walks in the Spirit and brings ministry to others as she goes about her daily activities.

1. Often our family members may have needs that we are not even aware of, but God is aware, and by the power of His Holy Spirit our minds can be enlightened thus enabling us to meet their needs.

a. Testimony: Our daughter Sandy was in a terrible accident with her husband's truck several years ago. The week before her accident, we went to visit her in Iowa, where she lives. I knew that the driver's side seat belt in her truck was jammed, but had forgotten all about it, until we were leaving Independence. Just as I started to get into our car, a strong impression came into my mind. It said "Tell Hal to take his tool box. He must fix the seat belt while you are there!" I told my husband to go get his tool box, and he did.

While we were visiting, he fixed the seat belt. Six days later our daughter was driving the truck and had a terrible accident. She swerved to

miss something, her wheels went off the paved road and hit the gravel. She skidded for 45 feet, then left the road and was airborne for 54 feet, and crashed upside down in a deep ravine. The men at the scene of the accident said without her seat belt, she would have died. Her seat belt was stretched and shredded, but it held. She was blessed in many ways that day and her life was spared. How thankful we are for the quiet yet strong voice of the Holy Spirit that reminded me of the jammed seat belt. The gift of the Holy Spirit is a wonderful thing. We always need to have him functioning in our lives and be listening for his quiet but strong voice.

2. In verse 15 note that she gives to her maidens. These maidens were those who serve her. In our day and age they are the grocery store clerk, the waitress, etc.—all those we come in contact with during our daily activities. We need to be ready to meet the needs of those we come in contact with every day. We need to be in tune with God so that we can meet their needs and give them that meat which comes from above.
 - a. Testimony: I cannot help but recall a hairdresser I used to go to. She was a good Christian woman. I had experienced a horrible week. There had been a truly earth shattering crisis enter our lives. I did not want to discuss it with anyone outside of the family. I was in extreme distress and pain over the events of the week. I went to get my hair done, and my hairdresser asked me an innocent question, a question she had asked me many times before. This week the question caught me off guard. She asked me "how is your week going?" I sat in silence. I did not know what to say. My mind went blank, and all I could think of was the current crisis facing our family. Tears welled up and ran down my cheeks and I just sat and cried. I was so embarrassed, and thought I would get up and leave, but my hair was half set. It was just a terrible moment. This good woman, I believe functioned under the guidance and direction of the Spirit. She said, "all the women in here today are Christian women. Why don't we have prayer together." She went to the other 3 women and asked them if they would come and pray for me. There in that beauty shop a little circle formed. It was a strange group really. We were all of different denominations. My hair was half set, one woman was having her hair frosted and had on a cap with just pieces of her hair sticking out, another was in curlers, and the other in perm rods. I have never before or since been in such a strange little prayer group. We formed a circle and held each other's hands and the women took turns praying for me. During those prayers, the Spirit of God filled that beauty shop and by the end of the prayers we were all deeply touched. I was comforted and peace flooded my soul. It was a truly beautiful experience. You see this day I was one of my hairdresser's hand maidens, and she provided me with the opportunity to receive that which was needful in my life. This is our responsibility as virtuous women to provide the bread of life to our family and those we come in contact with.
3. The functions of the Holy Spirit are varied and many. To discuss all of them

would be another whole class by itself. Let me just say the Holy Spirit functioning in your life is something to be greatly desired. The Holy Spirit will comfort you, strengthen you, enlighten, guide and direct you, reveal the mysteries of the Kingdom to you, bear witness to you of the living Christ. He can compel you to action, warn you away from danger and temptation. He can also help you to develop all the fruits of the Spirit. He can lift your prayer life to a higher level and enable you pray in accordance with the will of God. In times of fear He can calm you. The Holy Spirit can bring joy to your heart, and peace to your soul. He is like the American Express card you just don't want to leave home without him.

- E. The virtuous woman realizes that her body is a temple for the Holy Spirit and she keeps it fit with diet and exercise. God is concerned with the physical side of our nature and has given us many instructions concerning our bodies. Sec.86 'the Word of Wisdom' is a good example of such instruction. We should study these words and try to follow them. We need to also keep our temples free from those things in the world that will pollute our minds and hearts. When we partake of movies that take the name of the Lord in vain, can the Holy Spirit abide with us while we are listening to such things? We need to think carefully about those things that will make our temples unfit for the Holy Spirit to dwell in.
- F. (To sum it up) When we put these verses together we see that the virtuous woman keeps an early morning quiet time of prayer and study. This is where she invites the Holy Spirit into her daily life and obtains the spiritual food for her household and for those she comes in contact with, as she goes about her daily activities. She brings all areas of her life under the direction of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit surrounds her as a shield and a buckler, he also guides and directs her. This enables her to live a balanced life. A life where her relationship with Jesus Christ, her earthly husband, her children and others are always in proper balance. She knows her body is a temple for the Holy Spirit and keeps herself spiritually pure and physically fit.
 - 1. In closing this subject, I might add that if you work, it is harder to fit in that prayer and study time. Be creative. Turn your drive to work into a prayer time. Buy tapes of the scriptures and play them in your car on the drive home. Listen to the scriptures while you exercise, do house work, etc. Whatever you do, fit prayer and study into your daily schedule.
- G. (On the surface) The virtuous woman is not afraid of hard physical labor, and when it is needed, she will arise early so that she may meet the needs of her household.