

# *Mother's Day*

## *May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020*

### PREPARATION

- Familiarize yourself with this Study Guide.
- If you missed it, watch the sermon online [HERE](#).
- Spend some time in prayer before your group gathers.
- You **always** have the option to use some or all the questions and/or prepare your own questions.
- Review the learning objective to focus the conversation, read the primary scriptures as a group, summarize the main points, ask the questions, and use supporting texts to enhance the concepts.

### DISCUSSION

**Opening Prayer:** (1-2 minutes)

*In light of what God is saying through this week's message, here's a suggestion of how your group can invite God into your time together.*

Thank the Lord for the women in your life this Mother's Day! Praise God for creating the combination of men and women in order to reveal the fullness of your image as our triune God! Thank you for creating men and women equal in status as human beings and created in your image. Additionally, praise God for instilling differences between men and women so that each of our unique roles might be expressed in our daily lives! As we shelter in place, pray that we would continue to aspire towards the one true example of holiness found in the life of your son Jesus! Finally, pray that the good news of Jesus would reach those who are suffering from the Coronavirus by sending both men and women to uniquely represent your love!

**Discussion:** (45-60 minutes)

#### What's Going on This Week

This Sunday, Pastor Danny spends his sermon appreciating all of the women around us on Mother's Day! He points us to Proverbs 31 which is a very familiar passage describing a "superstar" woman. With this passage, Pastor Danny challenges us to approach the text not to uphold an unattainable standard that can only result in unhealthy comparison, but to allow Jesus, the one true model of perfection, to work inside of us as we seek to honor the Lord within God's appointed context for our lives!

**"If you focus on your context, you will be constantly crippled by comparison. If you can focus on your content, you will finally find contentment." Pastor Danny Strange**

## Suggested Questions

**Check-In: Icebreaker** – What are some of your fondest experiences with your mother (or any other influential women in your life)?

**Study Tip:** Proverbs 30 and 31 move away from the wise sayings of Solomon and introduce us to two relatively unknown characters. In Proverbs 30, we meet Agur who is struggling to find wisdom and does not have knowledge of the Holy One. It is not until he confronts certain scriptures (vv. 30:5-6 see Ps. 18:30; Deut. 4:2) and begins to observe the world around him that his eyes begin to see the cause and effect pattern of the universe advocated by Solomon in his Proverbs. ***Scripture reading and observation led Agur one step closer to wisdom!*** Proverbs 31:1-9 tells us about King Lemuel who had a mother who was heartbroken over his indulgent actions towards women and alcohol. Whether Lemuel’s mom wrote Proverbs 31:10-31 or not, we must note that the author could only dream of a wife of noble character. The reader of the Proverbs, however, would have already been introduced to Lady Wisdom (Pr. 1:20-33, 3:13-20, 8—9) who is worthy of pursuit and claims to be with God from the beginning (Pr. 3:19, 8:22-31)! Therefore, Proverbs 31 tells us that ***dreaming of the ideal woman led the author one step closer to Lady Wisdom.*** As you walk through the study guide, ask yourself why imagining the ideal human leads to the true wisdom of God and why Ruth (as Pastor Danny mentions) fits the Proverbs 31 mold?

- **Objective #1: Identify inspirational character traits of influential women in your life.**

*Primary Texts: Proverbs 31* – Pastor Danny points out that the wife of noble character described in Proverbs 31 is (1) not a real woman (2) rarely found in the scriptures (3) the royal unattainable picture of perfection to admire and aspire to. Considering these three points, who are some amazing women that you have come to know and that you believe could fit the Proverbs 31 mold? What is inspirational about the way they live / lived?

*Supporting Texts: (Mothers) Is. 49:15-18, 66:12-13; Matt. 12:46-50; Jn. 19:25-27; (Lady Wisdom) Pr. 1:20-33, 3:13-20, 8—9; Jn. 1:1-3; 1 Cor. 1:22-24*

- **Objective #2: Uncover the negative effects of comparison in your life.**

*Primary Texts: Psalm 73* – Pastor Danny points out that pictures of perfection, like the woman in Proverbs 31, often elicit feelings of comparison when we believe we don’t meet our preconceived image of the standard. Do you ever struggle with comparison? What does that look like for you? What effect does it have on your life?

*Supporting Texts: (Comparison) Ex. 20:17; Matt. 20:1-16; Lk. 18:9-14; Gal. 6:3-4; Phil. 2:3*

- **Objective #3: Examine your own role of spiritual growth in the context you are in.**

*Primary Texts: Ruth 1:1-18; 3:1-13* – Finally, Pastor Danny points to the story of Ruth (who is described as a woman of noble character in v. 11) in order to show that Proverbs 31 has nothing to do with what is around you and everything to do with what’s inside of you. What would it look like for you to, “*devote yourself to your content and trust God with your context?*” How can you grow your character in the midst of this current context that God has appointed for you?

*Supporting Texts: (Content vs. Context) Esther 4:14; Jn. 15:1-17; Rom. 8:28-30; 1 Cor. 7:12-16, 25-35; Eph. 2:8-10, 5:21-33; 1 Pt. 3:1-6; Titus 2:1-15; Phil. 2:1-11;*

## **Closing Prayer: (5-10 minutes)**

*In light of what God is saying through this week's message, here's some suggestions of what your group could talk about with God in prayer.*

Thank Jesus for being the one true example of human perfection! Ask that the Holy Spirit would give us the mindset to seek the holiness of God as he continues to transform us into the likeness of his son! Finally, pray that the Holy Spirit would guard our minds from unhealthy comparisons. Instead, ask that the Holy Spirit would use Jesus' example to inspire us towards a deeper relationship with Him during this COVID-19 season.

## **THROUGHOUT THE WEEK**

**-Further Reading and Exploration:** *Compare Proverbs 1-9 with Proverbs 31* It is no coincidence that Proverbs begins with a reference to a woman and ends with a reference to a woman. In Proverbs 1-9, you will find 4 separate poems from Lady Wisdom woven into 10 different dialogues between a Father and his son that plead for him to stop chasing the things of this world and cling to Wisdom. As you read these sections, meditate on why the author of Proverbs portrays wisdom as a woman.

**-Stay up to date with Coronavirus Ministry Opportunities:** Help us out by pointing the people in your Community Group to [3Crosses.org/coronavirus](https://3Crosses.org/coronavirus). If you or anyone in your group is looking to serve food in our pantry, access spiritual care, or seek financial assistance, you can find all you need at [3Crosses.org/neighborhood](https://3Crosses.org/neighborhood)

**-Extend an invite to Alpha:** Are you, or is anyone around you, craving community and seeking answers to life's most difficult questions during this time? Check out our new 3Crosses Alpha course designed to welcome the voices of anyone with questions or doubts about the Christian faith. Learn more at [3Crosses.org/alpha](https://3Crosses.org/alpha) and feel free to invite the skeptic in your life along with you starting *Wednesday Nights at 7:30 pm*

**- Find out how to pray for two people in your group this week:** Pray that the members of your group would learn how to focus on their content and trust God in their context!