

A reading from the Book of Proverbs

When one finds a worthy wife,
her value is far beyond pearls.
Her husband, entrusting his heart to her,
has an unfailing prize.
She brings him good, and not evil,
all the days of her life.
She obtains wool and flax
and makes cloth with skillful hands.
She puts her hands to the distaff,
and her fingers ply the spindle.
She reaches out her hands to the poor,
and extends her arms to the needy.
Charm is deceptive and beauty fleeting;
the woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.
Give her a reward of her labors,
and let her works praise her at the city gates.

The Word of the Lord. *R. Thanks be to God*

Commentary

The book of Proverbs is a collection of mostly two-line sayings from sages who studied God, creation, and human nature. These insights of wisdom tend to focus on covenant and redemption. This passage appears at the end of the book and is unusually longer than the shorter sayings that preceded it.

Many couples will find this passage distasteful as it addresses the wife with only a brief mention of the husband. It emphasizes the importance of a grounding faith in the Lord which will be stronger than fleeting beauty or passing charm. Fearing the Lord means awe, obedience, and right relationship with God as the foundation for living wisely. The good husband trusts his wife because she trusts in the Lord. The passage supports the idea that an important aspect of marriage is for couples to walk with each other on their spiritual journey until they reach the gates of God’s eternal love.