

# MARRIAGE THROUGH THE AGES

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## Mom's Words to Her Son

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

Our passage comes from that wonderful description of a worthy woman. This setting is often read at the funeral of a godly woman and is used as a powerful reminder of the goodness and kindness that one person can have upon another. Great stuff here. What is often forgotten is the setting for these words. The entire chapter are the words of a mom to her son. Her son, now the king, reflects upon these things. The setting also tells us that mom knew her son would be a king some day. **Verse four** reads, *"It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine..."* Mom must have known that someday her little boy would grow and lead the nation. These are her words to help him be a great king.

The woman that the king married would naturally become the queen. She would join him in banquets and attending state functions. Mom has someone special in mind. It was not a specific person, but a specific type of person. The worthy woman that she describes is thoughtful, caring, industrious, generous and hard working. She is not pampered, idle, nor only into what she wants. Most queens wouldn't fit the mold that mom here describes. Too many queens just sat around looking pretty. Some were wicked and behind the scenes ran the country, like Jezebel. The future queen that mom has in mind will be an asset to the king. He will be proud of her and praise her. She will set the tone for serving others.

This is the kind of woman that mom wanted her future king to marry. Nothing is said about her coming from the home of a king. Nothing said about her having royal blood, being rich, or beautiful. What mattered the most to mom was what was on the insides. The insides have a way of making the outsides beautiful. Without insides, nothing on the outsides really matter.

Good textual study. But there's much more to this. Don't leave your thoughts there. Put on the shoes of this mom. Have you given any thought about who you would want your children to marry? Not a specific person, but what kind of person. Not a generic answer like we'd give in a Bible class, "A Christian," but detailed about her inner makeup and thinking. I tend to see a shift that has taken place in the past few generations regarding finding a mate. There was a time when parents were very involved in the actual selection of a specific person. Then the shift has gone the other way to parents have zero involvement. By the time your son or daughter is of age to get married, these thoughts and advice are a bit too late. The instructions to the king came much earlier in his life. He is reflecting and remembering what mom taught him.

What kind of wife for your son and what kind of husband for your daughter? If you could order one from the catalog, what would you be looking for? Do we fall for the externals only? Do we think, "Oh, he's cute," or, "She's good looking," and thereby impress upon our children that the outside of the package is all that matters. When you have a five-year-old, it's

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hard to imagine their marriage. It's hard to see them leaving the house. It will happen. It will happen more quickly than you expect. School, sports, activities and a whirlwind of events and before you know it, they are making plans to go off to college somewhere. Your children need your "oracle" about life and especially marriage, just as King Lemuel's mother gave him one.

Treasuring the godly qualities of compassion, kindness, thoughtfulness and serving others should be the hallmark characteristics for a husband or a wife. Spending habits, spiritual interests, involved in helping others, hardworking, well respected—those are the characteristics that will help in a marriage. Not someone who is so selfish that they are blind to the needs of others around them. Not someone who doesn't care about others. Not someone who only cares about self. That's the making of a miserable marriage that will be plagued with sorrow and pain. No, King Lemuel's mom had something better in mind for her boy. She spoke. She taught him. He remembered.

Now is the time to start thinking about these things. Do it while they are young. Do it while they are still at home. Do it while you can.

In all this, it helps when a parent models the type of person that they want their child to marry. If you want them to marry someone who is kind, you be kind. If you want them to marry a spiritual leader, you be a spiritual leader. If you want them to marry someone who is a servant at heart, you be a servant at heart. Our words are shallow and empty when we tell them to do what we haven't done. So, not only is a parent instructing their child about a future mate, they are modeling that image before their eyes. They see the type of person that they need to be and that they need to have for a lifelong companion.

In a couple of weeks we have another wedding in our family. It's the last one. Our youngest is getting married. He's found someone who is beautiful on the inside and out. They are a lot alike and they are very good with each other. Together they are pushing each other to higher levels. It's great to see all of this.

Too many folks are falling for the glitz of marketing the outside of a package while there isn't much on the inside. Hollywood has been doing that for generations. Shallow and selfish people spend fortunes too look glamorous while they are ugly on the inside. The Pharisees were like that. Jesus compared them to a dish that was washed on the outside but not the inside. He said that they were like a tomb in a cemetery. Beautiful white washed stones on top of the ground and rotten under the soil. It's the insides that matter to God. What we think, our faith, our attitudes, our thoughtfulness—how we are around others. That's what matters. Those are the very things that ought to shine the most.

Mom's words to her son. Mom's advice about the future queen. Good thoughts for us. Get busy with those kids and help them be what they should be. Only in fairy tales does kissing a frog turn one into a prince. In life, kissing a frog gives you warts on your lips! – **Roger Shouse**