

# DIAMOND DEVOS

## 31

31 DAYS IN PROVERBS 31



LAURA THOMAS

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Edited by Jameson Thomas.

## INTRODUCTION

Why a diamond? Well let's see—a diamond can be a girl's best friend, a promise of love and commitment, something precious to be cherished, and the ultimate king of bling. But apparently there's something—someone—worth far more than diamonds. Know who she is? “A good woman”. “Good” as in wise and strong and fearless and capable.

### HOW DO WE GET TO BE WISE AND STRONG AND FEARLESS AND CAPABLE?

In this little book, we're going to unearth some gems from which we can glean truth—that we might radiate God's love and light into our unique spheres of influence. Thirty-one gems in all—a diamond a day for a whole month. It's my hope and prayer that each one will reassure you of your precious worth and help you to shine, maybe even sparkle a little, as you live out your purpose and passion.

Whether you are single, married, divorced, retired, a mother, grandmother, student or anything in between—this little book is for you. If you are familiar with Proverbs 31, you've most likely guessed that we're going to be honing in on a certain good woman. Yep, it's the wife of noble character. The Superwoman...

Buckle up. We're keeping it real but we're digging for diamonds!

Blessings & Joy!

Laura



“A good woman is hard to find, and worth far more than diamonds.”

(Proverbs 31:10 The Message)

**PROVERBS 31:10-31**

“A wife of noble character who can find?  
She is worth far more than rubies.  
Her husband has full confidence in her  
and lacks nothing of value.  
She brings him good, not harm,  
all the days of her life.  
She selects wool and flax  
and works with eager hands.  
She is like the merchant ships,  
bringing her food from afar.  
She gets up while it is still night;  
she provides food for her family  
and portions for her female servants.  
She considers a field and buys it;  
out of her earnings she plants a vineyard.  
She sets about her work vigorously;  
her arms are strong for her tasks.  
She sees that her trading is profitable,  
and her lamp does not go out at night.  
In her hand she holds the distaff  
and grasps the spindle with her fingers.  
She opens her arms to the poor  
and extends her hands to the needy.  
When it snows, she has no fear for her household;  
for all of them are clothed in scarlet.  
She makes coverings for her bed;  
she is clothed in fine linen and purple.  
Her husband is respected at the city gate,  
where he takes his seat among the elders of the land.  
She makes linen garments and sells them,  
and supplies the merchants with sashes.  
She is clothed with strength and dignity;  
she can laugh at the days to come.  
She speaks with wisdom,

and faithful instruction is on her tongue.  
She watches over the affairs of her household  
and does not eat the bread of idleness.  
Her children arise and call her blessed;  
her husband also, and he praises her:  
“Many women do noble things,  
but you surpass them all.”  
Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting;  
but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.  
Honour her for all that her hands have done,  
and let her works bring her praise at the city gate.”



## DAY 1: LOVE OR LOATHE

### “A wife of noble character who can find?” Proverbs 31:10a

Love her or loathe her, allow me to present “The Proverbs Lady”. Some women see her as an unrealistic example, a Wonder Woman of yesteryear penned to shine a light on our inadequacies. Others may write off the whole thing because they aren’t married and think it’s *so* not for today’s woman. But I challenge you to hang in there and dig in alongside me. I figure if God wanted these words to be read and reread throughout generations, we might do well to sit up and take note. So who is this mythical creature anyway?

For starters, she is not named. (I like to think of her as Penelope just for kicks, but I promise not to mention that again!) Also, she is not exactly a real person, or at least we don’t think so. Hello, perfection? It’s believed that this final little chunk in the book of Proverbs was probably written by the mother of young King Lemuel, advising him as to the kind of woman he should pursue. There’s nothing like setting the bar high for your boy...

But that doesn’t mean it’s merely a long list of make-believe, unrealistic attributes no woman could ever live up to. I like to think of it more as a summary of something to strive for in our Christian walk—just as we have the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5. We don’t get our knickers in a knot about the fruit, do we? And I have never, ever gone an entire day oozing all those amazing fruity characteristics, my friend. Ever.

So—what are we going to learn about here? Our lady was not a weak, wishy-washy, peel-the-potatoes-all-day kind of gal. She was *awesome*. We are going to learn from a woman who was

respected, intelligent, compassionate, energetic, industrious, confident, well-dressed, an entrepreneur, a businesswoman, a mother, and a wife.

This woman was strong. Not an obnoxious strong, but a godly strong.

Do you love her yet or do you loathe her? Either you are fist pumping and wanting to be her bestie at this point, or you've thrown your hands in the air saying, "Why bother? My life is too hard. I'm not that strong." Our lady's strength didn't come from pumping iron at the gym or reading through a stack of self-help books. She was made strong by *wisdom*. The entire book of Proverbs is about wisdom, and ultimately that's something we all need.

"For wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul." (Proverbs 2:10)

Or as The Message puts it, "Lady Wisdom will be your close friend". If you will let her.

**DIG FOR DIAMONDS:** Take a minute to read Proverbs 31:10-31. Don't be overwhelmed—be encouraged. Pray for wisdom and strength in your journey today, whatever that may look like.





## DAY 2: UPRIGHT OR UPTIGHT?

**“A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies.” Proverbs**

**31:10**

Before we take a stroll down Proverbs 31 lane, what on earth is a “virtuous” or “noble” woman? Probably not adjectives we throw around on a daily basis to describe our gal pals, and certainly not ourselves. When *I* think of someone being noble, I picture a knight of old wielding a sword and riding a white horse (with perfectly flowing mane). But more accurately, it can be described as someone being wellborn, titled, honourable, and upright. So what does that look like for today’s woman?

In my head I have this fantastic image of a Noble Me: I am strong, smart, and spirited... ready for anything—defending my faith, protecting my family, standing against injustice, the whole enchilada. Not only that, but Noble Me is also gentle, gracious, and generous to a fault. Totally upright in every area of my life. Hmm.

In reality, many of us tend to be more uptight than upright.

We are consumed with anxiety and worry about everything, even though we know we should trust God and find our strength in Him. We are on the defensive because we presume others look at us in a critical way—how we are raising our kids, what profession we have chosen, books we read, and brand of jeans we wear. We are narrow-minded and legalistic in the non-issues and forget about the really important aspects like loving one another. Uptight sure ain’t pretty.

You know *how* we can seek to be upright rather than uptight?

“Choose my instruction instead of silver, knowledge rather than choice gold, for wisdom is more precious than rubies, and nothing you desire can compare with her.” (Proverbs 8:10-11)

Wisdom. The goal of growing in wisdom is to grow closer to God, know Him on a deeper level, walk in His ways, and love others as He does. Doesn't that sound like the makings of a noble, virtuous, upright you? Starting each day in the Word, digging into the Truth, putting it into practice, and resting in Him.

“The highway of the upright avoids evil; those who guard their ways preserve their lives.” (Proverbs 16:17) Yes, I want to drive on the upright highway, please! The Bible and all its wisdom is there for us to follow and learn from—for our own good as well as to bring glory to God. It's a constant reminder of His love and that He wants the very best for us, His children.

That'll take some wisdom. To seek wisdom is to seek God...

“If you don't know what you're doing, pray to the Father. He loves to help. You'll get his help, and won't be condescended to when you ask for it. Ask boldly, believingly, without a second thought.” (James 1:5-6, The Message)

**DIG FOR DIAMONDS:** Read Proverbs 4 and see how vital it is to “Get Wisdom at Any Cost”.



### DAY 3: RUBY GIRL

**“A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies.” Proverbs**

**31:10**

Are you a ruby girl? Diamonds are a no-brainer for most of us, but I have to admit to having a soft spot for red rubies. So much so that my engagement ring is an oval ruby encircled by tiny diamonds (think late 80's in the UK when most of us mimicked anything the royal family were doing!) There's something warm and a bit different about a ruby. Maybe even a little daring. Reminds me of one of my all-time favourite Bible girls...

“‘Leave her alone,’ said Jesus, ‘Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me.’” (Mark 14:6)

The intoxicating aroma instantly permeated the entire house, and “a woman”, probably Mary, was able to bask in Jesus' presence, knowing she had given Him her very best. She had made the seemingly reckless decision to break a jar of exceedingly expensive perfume and poured the contents on Jesus' head, much to the disgust of others in the room. While onlookers scoffed at such an irresponsible antic, her extravagant act of worship was highly esteemed by Jesus Himself, and then recorded in the Scriptures for all future generations to see.

Isn't this exquisite? The woman didn't realize that Jesus was mere days away from his crucifixion, but Jesus knew. She only considered her greatest gift, that alabaster jar of perfume, and she wanted nothing more than to give it all to her Lord. Daring. She chose to live in the moment and offered Jesus what would be a preparation for his burial. Nobody else did this for

the Son of God. What an inspiring example of worshipping with total abandon! She didn't just dab a little perfume behind Jesus' ears, or even present Him with the whole jarful to take away. She worshipped. With every fiber of her being, she lavished adoration on her precious Saviour.

What a stark contrast to the organized, business-minded “wife of noble character” we read about in Proverbs 31! This worshipping woman was rash, extravagant, and seemingly oblivious to those around her. She recklessly gave her prized possession, worth a full year's wages and possibly her entire future savings, all to honour her Lord. What she did for Jesus in that instant was the most selfless, noble, priceless act imaginable. That perfume was her “ruby” offering, the best she had to give. She gave Jesus her treasure, and He calls this “a beautiful thing”; beautiful because there were no distractions, no ulterior motives, nothing mattered to this humble, vulnerable woman at that moment—just Jesus.

The Proverbs Lady and the extravagant worshipper were polar opposites in many ways, yet Jesus' righteousness covers all, and they are both loved and treasured equally. One for her upstanding, admirable, exemplary life as wife, mother, businesswoman, and respected pillar of the community—“worth far more than rubies”. The other as a “ruby girl”—warm, emotional, and daring. A “ruby in the rough” perhaps—until she was washed as white as snow and deemed a daughter of the King.

**DIG FOR DIAMONDS:** Who do you relate to more? The “worth far more than rubies” lady or the “ruby girl”? I would like to be both! Read Mark 14:3-9 and consider how you can worship with total abandon.



## DAY 4: THE CONFIDANTE

**“Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value.” Proverbs 31:11**

Or as The Message puts it, “Her husband trusts her without reserve, and never has reason to regret it.” Trust. That’s a biggie, isn’t it? Obviously, it’s a major issue in marriage, and a breakdown in trust between husband and wife is incredibly difficult to repair. Our woman here gives her man no reason to ever question her trustworthiness, and as a result he has full confidence and faith in her. But being a confidante, a trusted friend, doesn’t only apply to the married among us.

We need our friends. Good friends. And they need us to be their confidante.

What exactly is a “confidante”? She’s someone to whom you can tell your deepest secrets, knowing that she will never, ever use it against you. She’s the friend you can discuss private matters with, and not fear that it will become fodder for the rumour mill. She’s a woman of her word who will never fail to pray for you after promising to do so.

Is that you? Are you a confidante to your husband/ sister/ friend? Are you trustworthy?

“Carry each other’s burdens and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.” (Galatians 6:2)

We are not designed to live life in solitude. We need our people; it’s how we are wired. When good things happen, we celebrate together. Food is always involved, of course! And when tragedy strikes, devastation sets in, pain is rife—that’s when we are called to “carry one another’s burdens” and be the listening ear.

Have you seen the Matt Damon movie, *The Martian*? An astronaut is accidentally left behind

on Mars... not an ideal situation, the only person on a planet and all that. No community, no conversation, no support, no nothing. Can you imagine?

Back down to earth, we are called to love one another and sometimes that means carrying each other's worries and fears and pain. It's no picnic and it can be heartbreaking business. But we stand firm, hands clasped, praying fervently, believing, simply being there—where they can see we care deeply. It doesn't take a degree or specialized training, friends; it merely requires LOVE to be a trustworthy confidante.

A willing heart, an attitude of humility, our time and attention—we can do this! This is how we love. This is how we care. This is how we carry one another's burdens. It's a beautiful thing. And when we are the ones who need a confidante to bear our burdens along with us, we truly appreciate that trustworthy friend.

Ultimately, Jesus walks with us through every situation with His perfect love casting out fear. “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” (Matthew 11:28) But He also calls us to love one another. To carry each other's burdens. To be that trustworthy confidante.

**DIG FOR DIAMONDS:** Listening, avoiding gossip, praying, making yourself available... being a confidante takes effort. Pray that you will be a good, trustworthy friend to someone who needs a confidante right now. Let them know that you are praying for them.



## DAY 5: DESERT LIFE

**“She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life.” Proverbs 31:12**

Wow. All the days of her life? That’s a pretty high bar the Proverbs Lady set for us there, sisters. But if you are married, surely that’s a healthy goal to have in your relationship? If I looked at my man every morning and decided to only say and do good toward him, and then made a conscious effort to not roll my eyes, be sarcastic, or mention the toilet seat being up again—I would actually *be* more joyful, thus more joyful to live with!

**“Better to live in a desert than with a quarrelsome and nagging wife.” Proverbs 21:19**

Oh my. A desert? I have to say, I’ve always snickered slightly at the earlier verse 9, with its “better to live on the corner of a roof” version, but I’ve never actually noticed this little gem. A desert? Really? Barren terrain, scorching sun, dying of thirst, bleak, deathly dry—this is preferable to living with a woman in a battle-axe mood? Seriously disturbing. But the author makes his point loud and clear (although not quite as obnoxiously loud and crystal clear as a nagging woman might....) that living with a “quarrelsome and ill-tempered wife”, also known as a nagger, arguer, nit-picker, or discourager, is not a happy place to be.

The home is meant to be a refuge for every family member—inviting, attractive, welcoming, and cozy—a place that feels comfortable and safe and cheery. Who doesn’t love to put out a scented candle now and then? But that is futile if the fragrant air could be cut with a knife, it’s so thick with verbal barbs and jabs—shattering any hope of marital bliss. Scary thought: we ALL have the potential to be that battle-axe who drives their man to the Sahara!



Whether we are married or not, none of us would ever *choose* to be a nagger, right? I cringe when I hear other women doing it, so I definitely don't think it's a particularly gorgeous look on me. Who here can honestly say nagging and quarrelling makes them feel great and oh-so-light-and-airy? It's not the best way to make friends and it's a joy-sucker in marriage.

We know that marriage, or any other relationship, requires effort from both parties. But sometimes a quick verbal lashing is just plain easier. Nevertheless, “Ears that hear and eyes that see—the Lord has made them both” (Proverbs 20:12) reminds us that we need to use all our God-given senses when it comes to our relationships. Patience from both sides is essential—we have to make that effort to communicate, pick our battles, not sweat the small stuff, and basically love like Jesus loves. Tall order perhaps, but it's all right here: “My command is this: ‘Love each other as I have loved you.’” John 15:12

Best to keep the sand for a romantic destination vacation than a stint in the desolate desert!

**DIG FOR DIAMONDS:** Married or not, I'm guessing you have been a “nagger” or “naggee”. Pray for God's help in always bringing good rather than harm, and to act and speak in love.



## DAY 6: BEING MARTHY

**“She selects wool and flax and works with eager hands.” Proverbs 31:13**

Yes, you read the heading correctly: “Marthy”. It’s my word that describes that combination of Martha and Mary, the yin-yang sisters from Jesus’ day. In case you aren’t familiar with them, here’s their dilemma in a nutshell: “‘Martha, Martha, the Lord answered, ‘you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.’” (Luke 10:41-42)

Poor Martha was a “do-er”, constantly on the go, fussing and prepping and baking and cleaning, all good things and all to make her people feel comfortable and loved. And then there was Mary the “be-er”, the friend who was always there with a listening ear, the letter-writer, the encourager, the contemplator. Both sisters loved Jesus but had very different ways of expressing it:

MARY: “sat before the Master, hanging on every word he said.” (Luke 10:39 The Message)

MARTHA: “you’re fussing far too much and getting yourself worked up over nothing.” (Luke 10:41 The Message)

The question is, when Jesus left after spending a lovely evening with the sisters, would the taste of Martha’s scrumptious cheesecake overpower the memory of Mary’s longing to listen and learn and love? Probably not. Cheesecake, shmeesecake. This is JESUS. He delights far more in our attention and adoration than in our works and service.

Surely, our Proverbs Lady has the balance of being “Marthy” mastered. We feel exhausted

merely reading how much she does physically, yet there are no complaints of her not being present for her people, or of being a raging workaholic. I don't think her family would "bless" her if she was worn ragged from being a Martha and didn't spend time investing in her faith and family, doing the Mary thing.

So what are we to do?

I hate to generalize, but I will anyway—most of us tend to be more on the Martha side. Am I right? We multitask like pros, and pride creeps in big time when we least expect it, even when we're serving others. I would die on the floor if company came unexpectedly and I had no homemade baking on hand to offer. I'm weird like that. But I'm pretty sure my time would be better spent fully engaging with my visitors rather than excusing myself to go rustle up a batch of brownies in the kitchen.

I need to let my inner Mary increase and my outer Martha decrease. How about you?

I want to soak in my Jesus time, be consumed by His love, and not worry about the dust bunnies peeking out from under the couch. These wise words were uttered by John the Baptist regarding the Lord Jesus, and should be the echo of our hearts: "He must increase, but I must decrease." John 3:30

Less of me, more of Him. Less of stress, more of love.

In a perfect world, I would serve Jesus with a flawless cheesecake and then sit at His feet forever.

**DIG FOR DIAMONDS:** Are you a Martha or a Mary, or both? Pray for opportunities to be intentional about spending time with Jesus this week, uninterrupted and without distractions.



## DAY 7: SHOP 'TIL YOU DROP

**“She is like the merchant ships, bringing her food from afar.” Proverbs 31:14**

What are your thoughts on shopping? Do you salivate at the thought of hitting the mall or would you rather gouge your eyes out with a hot poker? Personally, I enjoy a saunter around the mall, especially if clothes, shoes, books, make-up, or home furnishings are on the agenda. Oh, and I am now a huge fan of online shopping—mainly because I love receiving parcels in the mail! But grocery shopping? Pass me the hot poker.

I used to think my loathing of buying food was connected to the unenviable “shopping with kids” experience. But actually my kids were angels in the shopping cart. I *may* have played up the expedition as we were home schooling—field trip to the supermarket, woo-hoo! It turns out that I simply don’t enjoy the aisles upon aisles of produce and cans and toilet paper. Maybe you are more like our Proverbs Lady...

This woman was enterprising, resourceful, and enthusiastic. I’ll bet she cut out coupons. We know she was a smart woman with a head for business, so we can safely assume she had the household budget under control and was not afraid to haggle for the very best prices. If she had to make five stops instead of one because she did her homework and knew where the deals were and whose fish was the freshest—she would do it. Without grumbling.

Philippians 2:14 says to “Do everything without grumbling or arguing”. This is not a reference to grocery shopping, but a general guideline on how to live a godly life and what our attitude should be. And then there’s the Colossians 3:23 verse: “Whatever you do, work at it with all your

heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters”. I guess that includes lining up to buy milk.

Yeah, nobody would ever call me a merchant ship as I heave my cart out of Costco for my one-stop shop. We all have our pet peeve, the bane of our existence, that thing we simply detest doing. What’s yours? Shopping aside, mine used to be cleaning toilets until I did a mission trip in Mexico and vowed never to complain about a real toilet again. Of course, this is all rather tongue-in-cheek whining, for in reality we have SO MUCH to be grateful for. Food. Toilets. The simple things, but sadly there are too many people in this world who have neither. Shame on me. Shame on us when we whine and grumble...

Perhaps now is a good time for us to take stock and simply be grateful for what we have. I know I don’t do this enough. Let’s learn from the wisdom of the Proverbs Lady and be resourceful with what God has given us. It’s the least we can do.

**DIG FOR DIAMONDS:** What’s your nightmare household chore? Bring it before the Lord and pray for JOY in that area, and think of a way you can be resourceful with what God has given you.



## DAY 8: SPICE GIRL

**“She is like the merchant ships, bringing her food from afar.” Proverbs 31:14**

I know we read this verse yesterday with the whole frugal shopping thing, but I want to look at it this time from a different angle. With a little spice...

“She’s like a trading ship that sails to faraway places and brings back exotic surprises.”

I love the way The Message interprets this verse! Oh my word—I want to be like the Proverbs Lady and bring back exotic surprises from my shopping trips, don’t you? How excited would your family be if they knew you were going to add some spice to the same-old-same-old? I don’t mean blow the year’s grocery budget in one outing, but perhaps try engaging your imagination and take a few risks with the weekly menu. This can apply to you whatever your status, dear one:

If you are single, why not liven up a mundane Monday and invite someone to share in your delicious new spicy curry? If you are in survival-of-the-kiddos mode and dinnertime is a living nightmare most nights, why not throw together their favourite din-dins, say night-night to the littles, and then have a special late-night Italian meal with a brand new recipe you and your hubby will love? If you are an empty nester, the world is your oyster, but how about a seafood extravaganza with ingredients you’ve never used before?

I’m pretty sure I regurgitated the same five meal options to my lucky family for at least ten years—back when I had picky eaters who hated “bits” in anything. But now I invest in an occasional new cookbook and subject my family to all sorts of “exotic surprises”. The beauty of it? If they haven’t had it before, they don’t actually know what it’s supposed to taste like, so it’s a

win-win! For a freebie option, try not to get lost in the abyss that is Pinterest, but it really is great for sourcing meal options for any palette. I have made multiple amazing recipes from this free resource. I know I'm probably preaching to the choir here, but variety is the spice of life, and anything we can do to make it more attractive and exciting for us, it will certainly rub off on our families.

“Then God said, ‘Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds. And it was so.’” (Genesis 1:11) Have you looked at a peach up close recently? Felt its fuzziness and inhaled its sweet aroma? Yum. God is the master of beautiful details, and He created so many marvellous, colourful, and delicious ingredients for us to use—we don't have to have potatoes every single night. Throw some exotic surprises into the mix and spice up your kitchen life!

**DIG FOR DIAMONDS:** Time to get practical. What exotic surprise can you conjure up this week? A new recipe, a different vegetable, a seasonal fruit you've never had before, a cake “just because”? (Okay, if you have a kitchen phobia, how about trying a brand new “spicy” take-out?) Maybe even flex your hospitality muscle and pray for wisdom to choose someone you can invite to share the spice!





## DAY 9: NO PLACE LIKE HOME

**“She gets up while it is still night; she provides food for her family and portions for her female servants.” Proverbs 31:15**

This woman is a MACHINE. And let’s face it; “a woman’s work is never done” is pretty much the truth! There’s always something or someone that needs our attention. But somehow, the Proverbs Lady manages to balance it all to perfection, and I’ll bet her house was not only super-organized, it was warm and welcoming, and full of love.

“The wise woman builds her house, but with her own hands the foolish one tears hers down.” (Proverbs 14:1).

This verse is a doozy. It’s not implying that the woman literally gets out her handy-dandy bricks and mortar to start the construction project—it’s talking about the moral fabric of the house. The heart of the home. The relationships that will either thrive within those walls or come to ruin.

As women, especially if we are mothers, we have the opportunity and ability to encourage our families in their pursuits. We can offer timely advice, be the listening ear, encourage and support all who need it. We can make family times special and create memories our loved ones will look back on fondly and even repeat in their own families one day. We have the ability to do all that with God’s wisdom and guidance and grace. Or there’s the alternative...

With our own bare hands, we have the capacity to tear down our homes. We can make it a place of dread, a judgmental, hostile environment where nagging is the norm and criticism reigns

supreme. Our children will follow our example and before we know it, the home will be torn apart. How utterly foolish. Who in their right mind would want that?

We only have one shot at this life. We can build up our home, edifying its members and pouring love into every square inch, or we can spend our time tearing it down. Ever walked into a house and simply known with every fiber of your being that there is something bad going down? There is no love, no joy, no peace. The heart of the home has been sucked right out. Conversely, have you stepped into the entrance of a home and been enveloped with a sense of welcome and love immediately? I want that, don't you?

It doesn't come down to the best counter tops or the finest leather couches. It's all about the wisdom. Whether you are single, living with your parents, married, a mom, a grandmother, living with roomies, or whatever—you can make your house a home filled with love. God's love. Whether the rest of the people under your roof are believers or not, you can infuse Jesus' love into the essence of that home and make it a place of refuge, a joyful space, somewhere others feel special. Let's build our houses wisely, asking God for guidance as we make decisions based on His Word that will bring Him glory.

There's no place like home.

**DIG FOR DIAMONDS:** Whatever your home is like, pray that God would give you wisdom to make it into a special place where you can make precious memories and serve Him well.





## **DAY 10: A GIRL'S BEST FRIEND**

**“She gets up while it is still night; she provides food for her family and portions for her female servants.” Proverbs 31:15**

“Diamonds are a girl’s best friend!” Ah yes, that much-loved song, which fits in so beautifully with the theme of this book! But sparkles and diamonds aside, we need our GIRL FRIENDS, our buddies, our partners-in-crime, our criers, our gigglers, our cheerleaders, our ladies who keep us accountable and aren’t afraid to be brutally honest with us! They are better treasure than any diamond.

“A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for a time of adversity.” Proverbs 17:17 (Yes, and we can totally read that as “sister”!) Our Proverbs Lady looked out for her girls, the maids of the house, and ensured they started each day nourished. I like to think she even had a little pep talk or motherly advice session with them, too, imparting her God-given wisdom. Girl time.

Sometimes, I forget how much I need my friends around me. Life is busy, family takes precedence, commitments claw us to bits, and hanging out with friends is demoted to the bottom of the proverbial barrel. But I’ll never forget one particularly special evening when I was reminded in spades how much I need my girls, and how much of a blessing they are in my life.

It was two weeks before my daughter’s wedding on the other side of the country, and life had become somewhat manic. That particular week, apart from long distance wedding prep, I had

major writing deadlines to meet, DVD voice-overs for six different sea creatures, two full days to spend selling my books at a home school convention, worship to lead at church, and an appointment at my local police station to get my fingerprints checked. For the second time. Don't ask. (It was worth it—I am now a bona fide Canadian citizen.) My son asked me to drop him at a friend's house, and to my astonishment, there was a “mother of the bride” party waiting for me! Who knew there was such a thing? Yeah, I didn't think so either, but who cares? I was completely blindsided by my angels with an evening of girly food, delicious wine, wedding-y flowers, scattered faux diamonds, and a chance for me to catch my breath and enjoy their amazing company. Plus, a spa voucher. Oh my word.

It doesn't matter if you're in high school or the seniors home or a country manor, we all need our “people” around us to do life with. It's not being needy, it's being human. You don't need to throw a party (although I do recommend that once in a while...) just be available. And I'm preaching to myself here.

Friends are gifts. God brings people into our lives for a reason—we can be a blessing to them and they can be a huge blessing to us. Don't be insular. Don't be a martyr and think you have to be on this journey without your trusty cheerleaders. And don't be afraid to open up and forge new friendships.

**DIG FOR DIAMONDS:** Take some time today to pray for your friends, and thank God for each one of them by name.



## DAY 11: SAVVY SMARTS

**“She considers a field and buys it; out of her earnings she plants a vineyard.” Proverbs**

**31:16**

This woman was smart. When it came to investing wisely, she put serious thought into purchasing land (with the profit she made from her successful business, by the way) and planted a vineyard. She didn’t sink her money into a brand new Mercedes to ride around in and she didn’t hide her cash stash under her mattress—she was business savvy and made a sound investment, benefitting her family. For the record, I think she prayed about all her decisions, too!

In Matthew 25 we read about “The Parable of the Talents”, also known as “The Parable of the Bags of Gold.” To give some context, a talent is believed to be worth the equivalent of more than a million dollars today, so we are talking mega bucks. Jesus tells the story of a master who went away on a journey. Before he left, he entrusted his three servants with the gold—the first guy had five bags, the second guy had two bags, and the last guy just had one. Interestingly, they were divided up “each according to his ability”. The master was well aware of their capabilities—just as Jesus, our Master, is well aware of our gifts and what makes us tick.

When the master returns, he quickly discovers that the first two servants had invested their gold wisely, doubling the wealth entrusted to them. They get the ““Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!”” speech (Matthew 21:25). But the last servant with a measly single bag had some not-so-good news to report. He claimed that out of fear he had buried the

gold in the ground—a “nothing ventured, nothing gained” kinda attitude. Oh dude, what were you thinking?

The master is thoroughly unimpressed. That servant was not savvy and he was not smart. Wisdom didn’t even come into the equation. He chose to be ignorant, and even though he was given an opportunity to make a difference, he blew it. The money could have at least been collecting interest in the bank! Lazy servant. Foolish servant. His consequences were pretty rough: “And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” (Matthew 21:30) Makes my mouth go dry.

How are we doing with the things entrusted to us by Jesus? Our “gold”, whatever that looks like: abilities, finances, gifts, family, brains, platform, business, ministry... He’s given us opportunity to make a difference in this world. Are we seeking His wisdom to make the very best choices? That we may multiply the blessings to have that beautiful ripple effect to those around us—not for our own glorification, but for His? I forget sometimes that we are created to bring glory to God. He’s given us “savvy smarts” and ample opportunity to ultimately glorify Him with our very lives. Wow.

**DIG FOR DIAMONDS:** How are you doing with the decision-making in your life? Read the whole story here: Matthew 25:14-30 and pray for courageous wisdom and savvy smarts!





## DAY 12: STRONG FOR THE TASK

**“She sets about her work vigorously; her arms are strong for her tasks.” Proverbs 31:17**

Our lady wasn't halfhearted in her efforts—she was all in, whatever the chore happened to be. She put every ounce of energy and focus into her housework, fashion designing, creating, baking, business dealings, and caring for her people. She wasn't intimidated or afraid of the tasks at hand.

Do you ever wonder why you are doing what you're doing, or maybe how you ever ended up in the role of “mom”? Why you live on this street, or why you rub shoulders with these particular people or have these responsibilities? Why you are right here, right now?

“And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?”  
Esther 4:14b

Okay so your position might not feel particularly “royal” but bear with me here. I love the story of Esther—the obnoxious King, the crazy beauty contest, the plot, the intrigue, and the irony. This verse in particular is my favourite. It's pivotal in the life of Esther, and seems to incite a real “aha” moment for her.

There she was, living a surreal existence in the lap of luxury in a palace, having won the approval of King Xerxes and becoming his wife. Doesn't sound like a particularly gruelling task, does it? Maybe not physically (other than the pressure to look drop-dead gorgeous 24/7), but emotionally and spiritually she was under unimaginable stress. Esther had been raised by her guardian Mordecai as a Jew, a secret she had kept to this point. But after learning of a wicked

plan to annihilate all Jews in the area, she was fearful and anxious for her people, and to a large degree she held their fate in her hands.

But the words in verse 14 changed her life. Imagine her repeating them over and over in her mind, suddenly coming to the realization that just maybe God had a plan to use her...

From this point on, we see Esther as decisive and confident, putting a plan into action with precision and patience. She rolled up her queenly sleeves and took the responsibility of her people's safety personally, despite the risk to her own life; such was her conviction and faith in what she believed she had to do. "And if I perish, I perish." (Esther 4:16b)

Esther was obedient and God used her mightily. She was strong for the task.

Sometimes we question why we are in a particular situation—for the life of us, we can't see what good can come of it. We're out of our comfort zone, nervous, anxious, frustrated, scared, or even bored. But God makes no mistakes and He promises to never leave or forsake us. We are part of a plan so much bigger than we can ever imagine.

If we are obedient, God WILL give us strength for the task and will use us mightily in our situation, whatever that looks like.

**DIG FOR DIAMONDS:** Do you feel strong enough for the task at hand in your life? Read the book of Esther (it's so worth taking the time to read the whole 10 chapters!) and be encouraged today.





## DAY 13: DARK OF NIGHT

**“She sees that her trading is profitable, and her lamp does not go out at night.” Proverbs**

**31: 18**

Are you a night owl? I’m *so* not. I dream of being one of those writers who burn the midnight oil scribbling sheer brilliance into the wee hours, gaining inspiration from the solitude of night. Alas, my brain turns to mush by nine o’clock, and I hate to think of the ramblings I would spew out thereafter. My husband, on the other hand, can work well into the night with enviable mental agility, probably much like the Proverbs Lady. But not everything that happens in the dark of night is so desirable...

“Nothing good happens after midnight” is a phrase you may or may not concur with, but I think it’s prudent for us to dig in a little and see what wisdom we can glean about the subject of nighttime.

In Proverbs 7:9, Solomon introduces us to a poor, senseless young man who finds himself in deep, dark trouble “at twilight, as the day was fading, as the dark of night set in.” The vulnerable lad is in the wrong place at the wrong time, and he’s about to fall into the deepest pit. Adultery is his temptation, but our “dark of night” can be a myriad of different poisons. For the alcoholic the dark of night could be going to a cocktail party, for the drug abuser it may be a friend’s medicine cabinet, for the shopaholic the dark of night can actually be broad daylight, in a mall with a credit card, and for the depressed one it might be the time alone with her thoughts. The dark of night can be an illuminated stage with a captive audience or a private basement with a secret

laptop.

Whatever the weakness, the illness, or the potential demise, Satan can hone in on it with a laser beam and lead us right into that dark of night. Proverbs 7:2 says “Keep my commands and you will live; guard my teachings as the apple of your eye.” How desperately we need God’s wisdom to get us through our journey! For parents, the nights can be worrisome as our kids get older. I distinctly recall an evening when my three children were all under the age of ten, a moment I seized and savoured, appreciating the fact that they were all safely tucked up in bed. I knew it wouldn’t last forever. And even though I couldn’t have asked for better teenagers, their driving out late at night causes the “mommy-worry thing” to set in. Darkness seems to add a layer of danger.

“When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, ‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.’” (John 8:12) Ah yes, the Light! Light always illuminates the darkness. It shines truth onto our “dark of night” and there’s nothing better. It’s life-saving.

Choose light.

**DIG FOR DIAMONDS:** Do you know someone who is struggling with their “dark of night” at the moment? Fear, addiction, illness, temptation, whatever it might be, pray for him or her, that they might choose the Light of the World.





## DAY 14: NO SLEEPING BEAUTY

**“In her hand she holds the distaff and grasps the spindle with her fingers.” Proverbs 31:19**

Be honest, how many of you read this verse and picture the spinning wheel scene in *Sleeping Beauty*, and kind of gloss over the “distaff”? Please say it’s not just me! In my romantic imagination, I envision our Proverbs Lady sitting daintily at said spinning wheel, smiling as she hums a tune along with chirping bluebirds overhead. Yeah... on closer inspection it seems I have it all wrong and have read one too many fairy tales.

Apparently, the “spindle” is pre-spinning wheel era. It’s a rather boring slender rod, whose tapered ends were used to twist and wind a bunch of flax or wool. The equally uninspiring “distaff” is the thingamajig which held the flax/wool. Two ordinary items requiring great skill and an industrious worker to create the end product—thread. Seriously, the sleeping part of *Sleeping Beauty* is kicking in about now...

Did our lady *have* to take part in this laborious activity? Was the family penny-pinching? Umm, no. Remember they were well-respected, she was the owner of a very successful business, and employed servants in the house to boot. Then why, oh why would she do the “grunt work”, if you will?

She was a hands-on kind of girl. She wanted to be involved in every area of her enterprise—to see what went on and how everyone was treated and what could be improved. She was a mentor to the younger girls, and a prime example of what it means to be an industrious leader.

What do you suppose the servants thought of her? This was *so* not *Downton Abbey*, where the

lady of the manor sips tea from a bone china cup while the servants scurry around at her beck and call. No, our woman was classy and humble—I imagine she saw this spinning time as a teaching opportunity for the servant girls. She would show them the importance of doing a decent job, giving her very best, being a part of the big picture. Thread was just thread, but without it there would be no finished garment to sell.

In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul talks about the church being made up of many different parts, just as a body is made up of many different parts. We can't all be preachers and we can't all cuddle babies in the nursery. Whether we teach Sunday School, direct cars in the parking lot, write the weekly bulletin, or sing on worship team, we are all needed and are of equal value. We are all loved by the same Heavenly Father.

Our lady didn't balk at spinning with the servants, just as we shouldn't balk at going to church early to put out chairs. Do you have mentors in your life who shine Jesus, no matter what they are doing, mundane or marvellous? Are YOU a mentor to someone who needs some encouragement and a friend to come alongside and spin for a while?

**DIG FOR DIAMONDS:** The Proverbs Lady was no Sleeping Beauty. She looked for opportunities to serve others, come alongside, and spin. Pray to be shown who needs a spinning buddy right now, and for wisdom to share the knowledge and gifts God has blessed you with.





## DAY 15: OPEN ARMS

**“She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy.” Proverbs 31:20**

Imagine being known for your charitable work. Imagine being known as a disciple of Jesus. Imagine being recorded as both in the Scriptures for all time. Allow me to introduce you to this lovely lady: “In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (in Greek her name is Dorcas); she was always doing good and helping the poor.” (Acts 9:36)

This woman was a Christ follower, a disciple who lived out her faith and was bighearted to all, especially those who needed her help the most. She was known for her deeds—not only for her generous giving but also for the real work of her hands for the poor and needy. Her specialty was with a needle and thread, so she clothed the poor with robes and other garments. I would hazard a guess that each item was created with love and prayed over diligently.

Tabitha clearly lived out a life of obedience to Jesus—loving and serving and reaching out to the forgotten people. Her name means “gazelle” or “full of grace”, and it was obvious that her inward grace flowed out from her in the form of practical love.

Our Proverbs 31 Lady was incredibly busy, we’ve already established that fact: she was wife, mother, ran a successful business and a thriving household, but on top of that she was a bit of a Tabitha. Yes, she burned the midnight oil and oozed success in her business dealings, but she still made time for the poor and needy. Too busy? Never. Something she could delegate? Not on her watch. She didn’t merely write a cheque or throw some coinage at the poor, she “opens her arms”. Welcoming, humble, friendly, inviting. The fact that she “extends her hands to the needy”

implies that she not only looks after her immediate circle, but reaches beyond to those further away. There is always a need. Always someone we can help. Ways we can be a Tabitha.

We can be guilty of not even noticing the need right on our doorsteps with the fast-paced, me-first culture we live in today, can't we? But there are needs everywhere, all over the world, all over our street. Whether we follow a passion and use it to bless others (like Tabitha and her cool dressmaking skills) or let God use us in other ways with our time, finances, abilities, and big love (like in Proverbs 31), our little efforts can make a big difference, and bring God glory. Tabitha was respected and loved to such an extent that when she died, Peter was called from a nearby town to come and bring her back to life. Which he did. Now I don't expect anyone to raise us back to life when our time is up, but how wonderful it would be to leave a legacy of serving the Lord with our open arms!

**DIG FOR DIAMONDS:** What practical way can you (and maybe your family or church group) open your arms to those who are in need in your community?



## DAY 16: RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS

**“She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy.” Proverbs 31:20**

Let’s take another look at this verse. If ever there was a woman with a good excuse to say “no”, this was probably the one. We are all exhausted merely reading about her. I’m not saying that we should always say “yes” to everything that comes our way—absolutely not. No, no, no. Many of us have tried that and still have the scars to show for it. I’m simply wondering how *we* can be generous with our time, and ultimately with our love for others.

Have you ever been overwhelmed by a simple act of kindness? When I was a self-absorbed young teen, my dad was in Bible School and we had zero income. This meant we had to do the “living by faith” thing. Of course, I was blissfully oblivious to the stressful circumstances my mum endured as she kept all the plates spinning trying to feed a family of six. As long as I had my cherry lipgloss, I was good. But I know that on numerous occasions anonymous “gifts” were literally left at the front door. Sometimes food, sometimes money, but always by someone who had been obedient to God’s prompting them to generosity.

Going the extra mile or going beyond the call of duty are phrases we often hear in reference to someone who has done more than is required of them just for the heck of it—they surprise us with their generosity.

“If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles.” Matthew 5:41

Generosity doesn’t merely refer to money—it’s also in the giving of time, attention, and love. Jesus is speaking here of behaving differently, going against the norm, being counter-cultural. It’s

especially effective when it's unexpected kindness.

Going the extra mile, no matter how seemingly insignificant, can speak volumes. And to people who are observing our “Christianity”, actions speak way louder than words. In a “me-first” world, it's always startling when someone is generous with no ulterior motive—hence why the “random acts of kindness” thing is such a hit. Who doesn't love a dose of kindness?

And of course, we can't look at this topic without going to the most obvious example of selfless generosity—the sacrifice God made by sending His Son to the cross to take our punishment. What did we do to deserve that particular act of kindness? Absolutely nothing. It's pure grace. Something we will spend a lifetime trying to wrap our heads around.

Our Proverbs Lady had no problem going the extra mile. She was busy. She could have left the showing kindness to the poor and needy to someone else—someone retired or single or without kids. But she chose obedience and she blessed others with her kindness.

**DIG FOR DIAMONDS:** All cheesiness aside, what random act of kindness can you come up with this week for someone? A note of encouragement, an unexpected compliment, a batch of cookies, the offer of babysitting, a stint at the homeless shelter? Pray that it will be a blessing and speak love and encouragement to the recipient.



## DAY 17: CONSTANT

**“When it snows, she has no fear for her household; for all of them are clothed in scarlet.”**

**Proverbs 31:21**

“When it rains, it pours.” Less than comforting “Eeyore” words we say when something goes from bad to worse. I wonder if anyone ever said that to the Proverbs 31 Lady, and if so, what would her reaction have been?

“Ma’am there’s an unexpected snowstorm happening out there.”

“Thank you for telling me, sir, I’ll just layer up my little ones in their awesome scarlet snowsuits and we’ll be just fine.”

No worries, no fear. Just a quiet confidence that God is in control and all is well. Hmm, how does that sit with you today?

Life is ever changing, isn’t it? It’s always evolving, maneuvering around us and within us. It stirs up renewed enthusiasm, fear of the future, uncertainty, and excitement. No two days are ever the same—no moment ever perfectly repeated. Like an unpredictably flowing river, it’s smooth as silk in one stretch, and then churning and spewing relentlessly in the next.

Just when we think all is fine and dandy—our faith, family, job, relationships, church—everything is plain sailing and we can sit back and relax.... BOOM! A gigantic boulder materializes right before our eyes and stands in the path of our peaceful flow. We are forced to swerve around it and watch the rippling effect touch every area of our life. Chaos threatens to overwhelm us and we grasp for something solid, something to keep us grounded and true.

We crave a constant.

“By day the Lord directs His love, at night his song is with me—a prayer to the God of my life.” Psalm 42:8

Oh yes, there’s our Constant. One who is from everlasting to everlasting, Alpha and Omega. He never changes, will never leave us, never fail us. A definition of “constant” is “marked by firm resolution or faithfulness”. That’s our God. During the day, He “directs His love” our way, sometimes through blessings via other people, other times by giving us a fresh appreciation of His goodness and grace. Maybe He astounds us with the majesty of His creation, or shows His love simply by infusing us with an overwhelming sense of the Holy Spirit. He’s full of surprises!

During the night, when all except our inner doubts and fears are silent, we can say, “His song is with me”. How completely beautiful. Take a moment. A simple prayer to the Almighty, sealed with the assurance that He is listening. For God does not sleep or slumber, His arms are ever open, His ears listening for our voice. He is always there. Our constant. Yes, friend, when the frantic unknown threatens to pull us under, we can find rest and peace and comfort in Him.

Even when it snows. Seasons change—God does not.

**DIG FOR DIAMONDS:** Are you (or someone you know) in an unpredictable, changing season right now? Pray for peace and guidance, that you will not be overwhelmed. Cling to your Constant.



## DAY 18: RUNNING ON EMPTY

**“She makes coverings for her bed; she is clothed in fine linen and purple.” Proverbs 31:22**

Every once in a while, I find myself running on empty.

It’s my husband’s pet peeve and I honestly don’t do it on purpose, but I forget to fill my car with gas. Regularly. To the point where the vehicle is telling me I have zero kilometres until empty. I think that means I’m running pretty much on fresh air...

I make excuses like, “It’s not on my radar” because it’s actually not. I simply get in my car and go. I never consider the inner workings of a car—until my husband points out (again) that running on empty is actually damaging. Who knew? Apparently, it can cause sediment to clog the fuel filter, the fuel pump to become exposed and overheat, and even effect the brakes and power steering. And yes, I definitely Googled all that!

Do you have areas in your life where you run on empty? The Proverbs Lady was going full steam ahead most of the time, but she took care of herself. Sometimes it’s the little things that go a long way—like creating a beautiful quilt for her bed, and dressing herself in clothes that made her feel classy and confident. Where do you need to top up the tank?

Physically? I know that if I don’t eat for four hours I tend to get light-headed and feel nauseous—my fuel gauge right there. If I choose to ignore it, I faint, as proved in a shoe store when I had completely neglected my empty gauge... “shop ‘til you drop” took on a whole new meaning that day!

Emotionally? I’m not a crier, but it seems that if I don’t have at least a little sniffle once in a

while, the tear ducts will burst at inopportune moments. Like when I laugh myself into an ugly cry—it's just awkward. My gauge? When I start tearing up watching *Dancing With the Stars*. It's a sure sign I need to have a good sob over something worthwhile. And there's plenty to cry about in this world.

Spiritually? Ah. This one's interesting. How often have I found myself running on empty in my spiritual life? Quite often. And whose fault is that? All mine. Why isn't it on my radar constantly? Because I'm busy driving my life around instead of giving complete control to the Lord. I've allowed my tank to run dry and I'm running on fresh air—my own strength. Thankfully the pump to draw from is so incredibly deep. It is Living Water that will never run dry:

“If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Rivers of living water will brim and spill out of the depths of anyone who believes in me...” (John 7:37b-38 The Message)

Digging into God's Word, spending time in His presence, drawing strength from the Lord—that'll keep us running and feeling our very best. No matter how crazy-busy life gets, we can't neglect a regular top-up from Him.

**DIG FOR DIAMONDS:** Endeavour to keep yourself “filled”. Pray for wisdom to keep your spiritual life well-fed and watered.





## DAY 19: PURPLE LADIES

**“She makes coverings for her bed; she is clothed in fine linen and purple.” Proverbs 31:22**

Our Proverbs Lady certainly knew how to dress herself—purple was THE colour of the day. Probably silk fabric and I’m guessing, very stylish. It was certainly not the norm to be primped in purple—it screamed social standing and was the ultimate statement piece. But when I think of “purple” in the Bible, my mind automatically goes to another savvy businesswoman—Lydia.

I love Lydia’s story in the New Testament. It draws us in and invites us to befriend her because in spite of her phenomenal success as a businesswoman, she’s so... normal! Let’s be honest, there are plenty of quirky characters woven throughout the pages of Scripture, and I feel like we need a Plain Jane once in a while. Not that there was anything plain about this woman—she was an absolute diamond in the business world. Here’s what happened to her in a nutshell: “One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshipper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul’s message.” (Acts 16: 14) Boom. Simple and straightforward. Normal.

As a “dealer in purple cloth” Lydia was highly respected and would schmooze frequently with the high-fliers and even royalty-types. She was more than capable of holding her own in a heated business negotiation. But she was also known as being “a worshipper of God”, even before encountering Jesus. Her crazy work schedule took her out of town sometimes, but worship was a priority to her, and even when there was no church building to be found, she made an effort to gather with others to praise God. No excuses of “too tired, too busy, too awkward” for our Lydia!

And that’s exactly how she met the Apostle Paul, and ultimately how she met Jesus—she simply gathered with a group of women by the riverside to pray. Isn’t that a beautiful picture?

God takes us, His “regular” daughters and works a breathtaking miracle in each of our lives. Businesswoman, married, single, widow, student, mommy, entrepreneur, retired, whether we wear purple or we sell purple—we are all created to worship something. Someone. We are all “purple ladies” really, aren’t we? Daughters of the King, adopted into royalty. Once we encounter Jesus, we know instinctively to give Him praise and adoration—it’s that unignorable bubble that wells up within. Our worship may be in song, in word, in meditation, or in deed. Lydia’s worship translated immediately into hospitality—she invited Paul and his posse back to her place for dinner and to stay as long as they needed. I’m pretty sure from that day on, her worship amped up and spilled over into her work life, community, and her family... like the purple dye running through the cloth, creating something rich and gorgeous for Jesus.

**DIG FOR DIAMONDS:** How do you worship? Is it a priority for you, like it was for Lydia? How can you make it a natural part of your day?



## DAY 20: R-E-S-P-E-C-T

**“Her husband is respected at the city gate, where he takes his seat among the elders of the land.” Proverbs 31:23**

Whether you are married or not, I can safely assume you have some males in your life. Our Proverbs Lady undoubtedly dealt with many guys on a daily basis—in her business dealings, running her home, in the community, in her family, and of course, her marriage. I realize we are living in a very different day, but God’s Word is eternal and we should take a moment to consider how we can glorify Him by showing respect to others. Guys, specifically. (Don’t go skipping to the next page—this is meaty stuff!)

Why should we even be concerned with respecting guys? Hmmm, let’s start with the fact that God created them, and yes, they are very different from the ladies, but that’s how it’s supposed to be. Can you imagine what a nightmare we’d be in if they were just like us? There would be a world shortage of chocolate.

But hear this: we should *not* be jumping on the bandwagon in berating the male portion of the population. You know what I mean—every family TV sitcom seems to have a moronic male father-figure who is afflicted with an utter cluelessness that borders on absurdity. As women, it’s easy for us to roll our eyes as we shoot sarcastic spears into the heart of any dude happening to breathe the wrong way. Especially our husbands...

I’ll hold my hands up here and confess that I was disastrous in the early years of our marriage. My poor husband was the first real dose of “man” I had yet encountered (think houseful of

oestrogen and very busy pastor-dad) and I didn't know what to do with all the "weirdness" that was masculinity. Eye-rolling and sarcasm was my weapon of choice, until I noticed how truly ugly it looked on OTHER women! I was mortified to think I could possibly (errr definitely) be acting the same way. I'm not saying I have this area of my life mastered now, but the revelation was a wake-up call for sure.

Put that on a larger scale and we see how women can treat men in the church or the workplace or the community—it's plain old ugly! And definitely not God-honouring. In my Bible, this is what God says about respect: "Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honour the emperor." (1 Peter 2:17) This verse comes under the heading: "Living Godly Lives in a Pagan Society". Oh my. If showing "proper respect" is a sign of godly living in our pagan society, we should be all over it like a dirty shirt. In the case of our Proverbs Lady, the respect she gave to her man was then reciprocated by everyone else. Wow.

Remember that others watch how you treat the guys in your life. Respect shows maturity, humility, and love. We want it, so let's show *him* a little R-E-S-P-E-C-T!

**DIG FOR DIAMONDS:** How can you go out of your way to show respect to a guy in your life this week? (Will he *ever* be surprised!)



## DAY 21: WHAT'S YOUR NICHE?

**“She makes linen garments and sells them, and supplies the merchants with sashes.”**

**Proverbs 31:24**

You know what I really like about the Proverbs Lady? She's a woman of great taste—she knows how to dress herself and her family, and now she gets to create some really high-quality products. I'll bet those merchants were clamouring to buy her stuff.

We might not fully appreciate the “linen garments and sashes”, so let's look at how The Message puts verse 24: “She designs gowns and sells them, brings the sweaters she knits to the dress shops.” Ah yes, she was also a designer—her creative side really comes out here. Those “garments” she made were probably your everyday, somewhat shapeless and unflattering dresses worn as undergarments by both genders, but the fact that they were worn next to the skin tells us they would need to be super-soft and made with the very finest linen. The expert touch. All those long nights spinning must have paid off.

She might not have had opportunity to show much artistic expression in the plain undergarments, but I'm sure the sashes were breathtakingly ornate. She was selling to merchants—probably influential businessmen from bustling cities overseas. She was trading abroad, thinking outside the box, and using her God-given skills to bless her family, her household, her staff, her community, and ultimately she brought glory to God.

Now before the pressure seeps in and we start wondering what on earth we can go knit and sell to foreign lands, let's relax for a second. Remember that this whole chapter with its list of

“she did this and she did that” is not to make us feel inadequate. It’s there to encourage us. We can choose to scourge our backs with forty-minus-one lashes for not burning the midnight oil at our looms, or we can stop and ask God how we can apply this in our own lives. I plumb for the latter.

Those sashes? They were a necessary belt in her culture. I don’t even want to imagine what would have happened in a hefty gust of wind if sashes were not invented! Our lady saw the opportunity, believed she could derive a decent income, and ultimately found her place. Her niche.

What’s your niche? Are you a numbers girl, musical, artistic, wordy, social, organized, fun-loving, or something else entirely? God made you with unique gifts and characteristics—there’s absolutely nobody else in this world like you: “I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made”. (Psalm 139:14a)

You have a niche, regardless of whether you know what that is yet. Our niches can morph over the years, but if we see the need and find our place, find our “sash area”—whether it be personally, in our church life, or even globally, we can live with a sense of purpose, peace, and fulfillment. Who doesn’t want that?

**DIG FOR DIAMONDS:** Spend some time praying for your niche. If you already know what it is, press in and ask for wisdom to be effective and a blessing in that area. If you are still searching for it—pray for patience, clarity, and ears to hear what the Lord has in store for you!



## DAY 22: WHAT TO WEAR

**“She makes coverings for her bed; she is clothed in fine linen and purple.” Proverbs 31:22**

It’s no secret—I enjoy clothes! I’m a girly-girl and I like to shop, dress myself as well as possible, and make sure my family is presentable (most of the time. Teen boys y’all.) Clothing can tell you a lot about a person—not always, but usually it can at least hint of their confidence, occupation, style, self-worth, and even social standing. But clothing can also exude a totally opposite vibe to the reality—disguising, misleading, and even confusing the truth. People can use their clothing to cry out for help, or manufacture a facade of success by their threads.

Like it or not, clothes are one of the first things we notice about a person when we meet them. (Please don’t say it’s just superficial me who thinks that!) It’s their “wrapping”, if you will, giving off certain vibes, varying from goth to sporty-spice to effortless chic. But as Christians, how we dress is far more important, as we are to clothe ourselves with CHRIST: “for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.” Galatians 3:27.

What does that mean? It certainly has nothing to do with fine silks and high fashion. The Message puts it like this: “It also involved dressing you in an adult faith wardrobe—Christ’s life, the fulfillment of God’s original promise.” Adult faith wardrobe—don’t you just love that? Putting on Christ, clothing ourselves with him like a garment tells everyone we are serious about our faith. We’re putting on our permanent Jesus T-shirt. We want Christ to be evident to all, to be the first thing people notice about us. He’s more than our style, Jesus is in the very fabric of our being, and when we clothe ourselves with Him, He shines through us—our words, attitudes, and



actions ooze Jesus.

Clothing ourselves with Christ adds quite a bit of responsibility. Imagine seeing someone with one of those “I ❤️ Jesus” bumper stickers having a severe case of road rage. You’d probably question how much they actually ❤️ Jesus! Colossians 3:12 gives us some practical hints as to how we can clothe ourselves as God’s people—with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Easier said than done, but thankfully we are not relying on our own strength here!

I’m pretty sure our Proverbs Lady wore all the right clothes. We are told that she dressed up in “fine linen and purple”—the best of the best and very fitting for a woman of her position. I kind of love that she’s a fashionista of O.T. times. As she looked into her closet each morning, rather than exclaiming, “I have nothing to wear!” I would venture to say she clothed herself well in compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience—just re-read Proverbs 31:10-31 if you need a reminder. Very Christlike. Now *that’s* a style to emulate.

**DIG FOR DIAMONDS:** When you get dressed each day this week, pray that you are putting on the most important item—Christ!



## DAY 23: HYSTERICAL

**“She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come.” Proverbs**

**31:25**

Are you a worrier? Do you stress out easily? Do you worry that there’s nothing to worry about? Would “laughing at the days to come” look more like unstable hysterics on you? I’m actually not a worrier per se, but I have plenty of experience living among a bunch of them! In saying that, I did have a moment recently...

My husband and I visited our daughter in Montreal, and were on the underground Metro headed into the city for a spot of shopping (I may have been giddy with excitement.) One minute we were hurtling along the tracks toward the next station, the next moment we came to an emergency stop, lights went out, and there was clearly something very wrong. After several uncomfortable minutes, they announced that we had been stopped due to an emergency (a horrible incident actually) and the lines would not be running for the next couple of hours.

So maybe my wild, fiction-writing imagination began to run away with me a little, but I spent the next thirty minutes subtly eying each character in the carriage, wondering about their mental stability, physical ailments, which one would perform emergency surgery if necessary, who would read the last rites, that kind of thing. And then to top it all off, the haunting sound of a harmonica started to play behind us, slow and death-march-like. I turned around and discovered Harmonica Guy had the wildest eyes I ever did see. For real.

We were eventually rescued, but our time in the carriage was both surreal and unnerving. So

many scenarios ran through my mind, my heart was definitely beating to a faster rhythm than usual, and I was truly worried. It wasn't until after the event that I realized I HAD NOT EVEN THOUGHT TO PRAY! Duh! I was too busy working out who was an axe murderer to think to cry out to my Heavenly Father...

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” John 14:27

Oh yes, that's what I needed! Isn't that what we all crave every single day? It's a gift from Jesus to us. It's perfect and unconditional and everlasting, bigger than any of our headaches or heartaches, and it's ours for the taking. Tapping into that comforting, strengthening peace is enough to get us through the worst of days. Better still, when others see the “fruit”, the peace that radiates from our lives as believers, it's other-worldliness points to an Almighty bigger than our worries.

When we are faced with conflict, anger, fear, or worries, and even when everything is tickety-boo, the peace Jesus gives us will carry us through it all into eternity. I don't know about you, but that makes me exhale. Maybe even “laugh at the days to come” Not hysterically. Perhaps just with a giggle.

**DIG FOR DIAMONDS:** Pray God's peace over yourself and your loved ones, that you might tap into that beautiful gift and live in His freedom, even laughing (or at least smiling slightly?) at the days to come.



## DAY 24: TONGUE LASHING

**“She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue.” Proverbs 31:26**

Yikes. I’m pretty sure these words will not be inscribed on my tombstone! But how lovely would that be? To be known as a woman who spoke words of encouragement, spiritual insight, and oodles of knowledge ALL THE TIME. No criticizing, never a word of sarcasm (who, me?), zero spiteful remarks, and all loveliness and light. Is it too lofty a goal to speak nicely at all times?

Sometimes I have issues with my pen. They call it “writer’s block”. Sometimes I have issues with my tongue. They call that “malice”! The pen and the tongue have much in common. They both produce words, both are at the behest of the owner, and both are... powerful. But most of the time, I really wish my tongue was more pen-like.

“My heart is stirred by a noble theme as I recite my verses for the king; my tongue is the pen of a skillful writer.” (Psalm 45:1)

Oh, the luxury of the written word! The writer is able to use words that are measured, deliberate, and exact. She has the opportunity to edit, re-write, erase, even eliminate completely with the snap of a wrist or the press of a button. She doesn’t scribble nonsense or utter meaningless gibberish for others to receive—the pen’s every word can be purposeful.

Oh, the woes of the tongue! It is too quick to fill up the beauty of silence, firing off poisonous words like a wild machine gun, hitting everyone in sight. The tongue can try to back-peddle after the fact, but malicious words are impossible to take back, even if they are forgiven. Speed is one

of the tongue's greatest downfalls—it takes a nanosecond to mortally wound with this small but deadly weapon.

Would you like your tongue to be like a skillful writer's pen? Purposeful and poised rather than a gangly gossip machine.

We would do away with harsh criticism if we considered our blurted words. We would be slow to anger if our conversation were recorded for others to see. We would spend more time edifying and less time destroying if we could re-read and re-think our tongue-lashing outbursts.

What to do, what to do...

Taming the tongue is an ongoing battle for most of us. We all know the sheer power of words, negative or positive, written or spoken, and they all spew from our minds, the overflow from our *hearts*.

The Message puts Psalm 45:1 like this: "My heart bursts its banks, spilling beauty and goodness. I pour it out in a poem to the king, shaping the river into words".

If our hearts are filled with praise to the King, our minds full of His goodness and grace, then our words will be filled with love and truth, emulating the graceful flow of ink from the most learned writer's quill.

Just like the Proverbs Lady, wielding wisdom and faithful instruction. With words fit for The King...

**DIG FOR DIAMONDS:** What is your tongue's biggest issue? Gossiping, criticizing, tearing down, lying, swearing...? Pray specifically that God's love and goodness will flow from your heart and through your words, that glory may go to Him.



## DAY 25: EYES WIDE OPEN

**“She watches over the affairs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness.”**

**Proverbs 31:27**

Do you ever feel like you need eyes in the back of your head? If you are a mom, teacher, or have ever looked after anyone needing care or attention (including animals!), you must have felt the need to be vigilant. You know what it’s like to be on full alert, eyes and ears open, observant and watchful at all times. The Proverbs Lady had this nailed—let’s face it, with her schedule she had to be ever watchful. Now let’s look at an unfortunate guy who was, let’s say, less vigilant...

“Seated in a window was a young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep as Paul talked on and on. When he was sound asleep, he fell to the ground from the third story and was picked up dead.” (Acts 20:9)

Ever unintentionally fallen into a blissful state of slumber whilst in public? You subtly wipe the drool from the side of your mouth, pray you weren’t audibly snoring, and attempt to seamlessly catch up and reintegrate. The worst—when it happens in church. The absolute worst—when you accidentally fall through a window and die. True story.

Poor Eutychus. A young guy, just trying to catch some z’s. Paul was in the midst of a lengthy preach (we’ve all been there) and Eutychus stayed awake as long as he could, but by midnight his drowsiness had caught up with him. Unfortunate consequences.

Why is it so hard to stay awake sometimes? When we try to pray, or attempt to keep our focus during a sermon, when we are at home and have the best intentions to follow a Bible devotion



plan, or journal our thoughts, or get through a challenging book? Why is it so much easier to just take a nap?

Spiritually sleeping is a dangerous pastime, and we do it well. In the comfy western world, we Christians are in dire need of some shaking. It's a scary thing to even write, due to our attachment to our non-confrontational, apathetic, easy-going faith. But while we are sleeping... WE ARE MISSING OUT ON SO MUCH.

Matthew Henry's commentary suggests we should do "what we can to prevent our being sleepy, not compose ourselves to sleep, but get our hearts affected with the word we hear to such a degree as may drive sleep far enough."

"...get our hearts affected with the word..."

To be affected by the Word of God, we need to be physically and spiritually awake. Eyes wide open. The Bible isn't an optional extra for our faith-walk—it's our daily bread. Our sustenance. And when we are truly engaged in the Word, we won't be caught napping on a windowsill.

Our story with young Eutychus comes to a happy ending when Paul "fell on the dead body and embraced it" (verse 10), bringing the boy back to life. Ever feel like you need to be brought back to life? I do. Let's not miss out on the blessings of being who He wants us to be simply because our eyes are not wide open.

**DIG FOR DIAMONDS:** Read Psalm 121 and see how God watches over us—it's beautiful!





## DAY 26: SPIRITUAL SLUG

**“She watches over the affairs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness.”**

**Proverbs 31:27**

Let’s be real here, we probably don’t actually need a verse to tell us that our Proverbs Lady is no slouch. We’ve already read about her crazy day-to-day schedule and how diligently she seems to do EVERYTHING. It’s exhausting just to read about. Yet we also know that every single word in Scripture is there for a purpose, and so the fact that she “does not eat the bread of idleness” is something to take a good, hard look at.

How do you feel about ants? Personally, I’m not a fan. They always seem to find their way into the house during the summer, and invariably invade any picnicking opportunity in droves. Also, they are always moving. Ever see an ant taking a nap? They are the most industrious little creatures imaginable—just watch one! No really, we should seriously all go find an ant and check it out: “Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise!” Proverbs 6:6, or as the *The Message* so pointedly puts it: “You lazy fool, look at an ant. Watch it closely; let it teach you a thing or two.”

Laziness, or behaving like a sluggard (I love that word, it needs no definition!) will end in ruin. Laziness, be it physical, emotional, or spiritual, is not an attractive quality—who really wants to hang out with someone who can’t be bothered and doesn’t care? It’s frustrating when someone refuses to pull their weight, causing others to take up the slack. A physical or even emotional sluggard is usually pretty easy to spot in a crowd! They’ve checked out. But a spiritual

sluggard—she’s a little harder to identify, but probably demonstrates the easiest form of laziness for any of us to slip into. You don’t put on weight, become a hermit, or lose friends. In fact, you can comfortably continue attending church, riding on the spiritual coattails of your Christian friends, enjoying all the churchy benefits. This brand of laziness can come on very gradually, too. So subtly that you might not even realize it’s happening.

You see, spiritual growth takes EFFORT. There’s no stagnant status for the Christian. Either we’re moving forward or slipping backward. We are to be like the ant, in constant motion, looking out for others, working together for God’s glory, preparing for every circumstance, eagerly making the most of every single day.

How? By reading God’s Word, studying it deeper and deeper, spending meaningful time in prayer, getting plugged into a ministry where you can serve wholeheartedly, and enjoying fellowship with fellow “ants”. Proverbs 27:17 says, “As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.” I’m fairly certain “sharp” is not a term we associate with sluggards!

**DIG FOR DIAMONDS:** How are you doing on the spiritual slug scale? Most of us have seasons of soaring and days of drooping, but let’s not fall into the lap of laziness. Pray for spiritual energy and urgency, because that will pour over into every area of your life, and then there will be no eating of “the bread of idleness” for you!



## DAY 27: SUPERMOM

**“Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her:” Proverbs**

**31: 28**

"Mommy, if you were a monkey, you would be the Colobus monkey." Just the words every woman wants to hear! But my youngest son was an expert on all things animal, so I bravely ploughed ahead for more flattery.

"Why, sweetie?" I asked, dreading the innocently honest reply.

"Well, of course," he said, "the Colobus monkey is the most beautiful monkey in the whole wide world!"

Have you SEEN a Colobus monkey? Yes, it has cool long hair with white highlights, but it's not pretty. It's a monkey for goodness' sake. But in my boy's six-year-old, animal-loving mind, this was the biggest compliment he could ever give. He wanted to express his love for me in a way that was meaningful to him. And in turn, it became meaningful to me, too. After a decade, I still remember it.

Whether you are a mom or not, you certainly *know* a mother. Perhaps your role is to encourage a mom who is struggling, pray for a friend who just had a baby, or be a spare pair of hands to a mom who needs practical help. We can all learn something from our Proverbs Lady, and we have to wonder why her kids called her "blessed".

When we glance through the previous verses, we see that she was super-practical. She made sure the littles were well-fed, dressed them in the very best outfits, and kept the house warm and

cozy in winter. But she was also a stellar role model to her children, whether they were girls or boys. She showed them what it looked like to run a business as well as a family. She treated her staff with kindness, and was involved in the social justice issues of the day. She chose to be careful with her words and was a strong, confident woman. She loved their father and they had a solid, healthy marriage. Little eyes and ears miss *nothing*. No wonder they called her “blessed”!

They were truly thankful to God for their mommy.

Now before we start poaching our kids for compliments, let’s take a moment. Those of us who are mothers certainly don’t do the mommy thing just to get accolades from our offspring (please don’t hold your breath for that to happen!) In reality, we can’t be the Supermom of Proverbs 31, mainly because we are human. These words are there for us to drink in, to aspire to, to model ourselves after. We do not parent in order to be praised! The one thing we can press into as mothers (or aunts or grandmas or neighbours or friends) is teaching kids about God’s love for them, making it personal, keeping it real, answering questions, discussing the Lord and life. They won’t remember if you dressed them in the finest scarlet, but the Word will be in their hearts always. “Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.” (Proverbs 22:6)

**DIG FOR DIAMONDS:** If you’re a mom, pray for your children, and for your role as godly-mom, not supermom. If you don’t have kids, think of a family you know and pray earnestly for them. Especially the mommy!



## DAY 28: STUNNING SWINE

**“Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all.” Proverbs 31:29**

These words of adoration are coming from a besotted husband to his Proverbs 31 wife. What a sweetie! He sees what she does, the way she behaves, the words she speaks, and how she loves the Lord, and he is impressed. Big time. According to him, she’s beyond noble, so we can safely assume that she is *not* like this stunning swine:

“Like a gold ring in a pig’s snout is a beautiful woman who shows no discretion.” (Proverbs 11:22)

There is nothing more bizarre than the notion of a pretty pig, a beautiful beast, or a stunning swine. A pig is a pig, and it really doesn’t matter how “sty-lishly” you dress it, how much perfume it is bathed in, or how bedazzled it is, it will remain a pig. It’s a pudgy creature with unfortunate features, looks like its insides are on the outside, makes unbecoming noises, and rolls in mud. Strangely adorable and cute? Maybe. Beautiful? No. So why does Solomon compare this blinged-out creature with a beautiful woman lacking DISCRETION? It’s so incredibly outlandish; it’s worth sitting a little straighter in your chair and taking note.

What is discretion? It’s having good judgment, being cautious, behaving and speaking in a way that doesn’t cause offence or reveal private information. Being discreet. Our lady was the poster child of discretion.

Proverbs 11 is all about comparisons—it states what the Lord detests, and what he loves. Some of the positive characteristics are: integrity, humility, kind-heartedness, righteousness,



generosity, understanding, and trustworthiness. I'm pretty sure discretion covers all these admirable qualities. So what's with the gold ring in the pig's snout? I think the point being made is that no matter how beautiful a woman is in appearance, if she lacks discretion, she is no more gorgeous than a bejewelled pig! The ring might be exquisite, but it's not enough to gain any gasps of admiration, because it's on a stinky, dirty pig. It's comparable to the ugliness of a woman's ungodly behaviour. Even in an outwardly beautiful woman.

The Message puts it like this: "Like a gold ring in a pig's snout is a beautiful face on an empty head." We don't want to have the empty head, right? We don't want people to say, "You can dress her up, but you can't take her out!" We really don't want to be like a stunning swine.

Don't you long to be the woman that people trust with their deepest secrets, who will not judge or be unkind, who will love and pray for them, who will be the soul of discretion at all times? Beyond noble. It's that inner beauty that shines through, both attractive and appealing.

**DIG FOR DIAMONDS:** Pray that you won't get distracted by the shiny things—pursue discretion. Start by reading Proverbs 11.



## DAY 29: SKIN DEEP

**“Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.” Proverbs 31:30**

“Beauty is fleeting”... and don’t we know it! We desperately try to smooth and raise and tighten and tuck everything we can to prevent the ravages of time taking its toll. It can easily become an obsession, especially in our appearance-driven culture. Our Proverbs Lady probably didn’t have much time to worry about her looks (have you been following her Wonder Woman abilities?) but maybe she pondered it occasionally. We all do. And then we come across verses like these:

“Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair, and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God’s sight.” (1 Peter 3:3-4)

Yes, yes, we know. “Beauty comes from within.” Many a female feather has been ruffled through the ages at the thought of this ideal yet thoroughly plain, unadorned, unbraided woman, humbly submitting to her man! Most of us love our “fine clothes”. And what girl doesn’t like a diamond? And our hair... we may not braid it per se, but we certainly enjoy having a good hair day!

Before we get hyper-defensive, it doesn’t actually say, “Thou shalt not wear nice clothes and accessorize with a little bling”. It merely states our beauty should not come from these added extras. True beauty comes from much deeper.

We are enticed into trying all manner of beauty preservation—from regular exercise, dental work, and healthy eating, to spa treatments, hair stylists, flattering clothing, and even drastic plastic surgery! But what about ways to improve our “inner self”? How can we make the inside so beautiful that it shines through no matter what the shell looks like?

Our western world finally seems to be acknowledging humanity’s need for taking time from our crazy rat-race pace and nurturing the inside as well as the outside. It comes in various forms of “finding ourselves” and looking within, but the reality is, navel-gazing and dwelling on our own shortcomings and imperfections will never give us that “gentle and quiet spirit” which translates into beauty.

We will only find unfading beauty in Jesus.

I happen to believe that the Creator of every stunning sunset knows a thing or two about beauty, and this gentle and quiet spirit we read about is “of great worth in God’s sight” and is readily available to us. If it’s worth a lot to God, it should be worth a lot to us, too, friends.

Carving out precious moments to be in God’s presence, soaking up His Word, basking in His love as we commune with Him—that is the beauty regime we need. We have potential to let the beauty of Jesus shine through us from the inside out. Take a moment and think about that little miracle right there. Skin deep? I think not.

**DIG FOR DIAMONDS:** I’m going to invite you to try some “listening prayer”. Grab a notebook, find some quiet time, and ask God what it is that He sees in you, His beloved. Write down the things that come to your mind and pray through each one. You are beautiful!



## DAY 30: GOD-FEAR

**“Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.” Proverbs 31:30**

What’s the big deal about being a “God-fearing woman”? It overshadows both charm and beauty and is the hallmark of a woman worthy of praise; someone to look up to and emulate. Clearly, it’s of major importance and worth digging this gem up and giving it a good shining. But isn’t fear a negative thing?

What do you think of when you imagine being fearful of something? For me, it’s slowly and painfully drowning inside my car (the joys of living by a lake)—unable to break through the windows and unable to remember the instructions my husband has drilled into me a hundred times. Too specific? Maybe yours is the fear of the dark, being followed, spiders, elevators, or even death. Most times we think of fear, we are just plain petrified.

So when it comes to fearing God, should we be sweating bullets and scared witless to even be in His presence, let alone talk with Him? I don’t think so. However the “Jesus is my boyfriend” conundrum is equally as disturbing. I do believe there is a balance, and there’s a danger of being a little too casual about God-fear. We need to be mindful of the fact that God is God! He is Alpha, Omega, Creator, all-powerful, mighty, awesome, holy, perfect, pure—this SHOULD cause our breath to catch in our throats. Especially when we remember that this Great One created us in His image, loves us with an everlasting love, forgives, is gracious, merciful, incredibly patient, and gave His own Son as a sacrifice for us. Wow.

Yes, He is accessible through Christ and He loves when we speak with Him and praise Him and listen to Him. He is an intimate, loving Heavenly Father. But dare we forget WHO HE IS?

I remember when I was twelve years-old and my dad was newly converted. He was transformed from alcoholism to being the most enthusiastic new Christian you can imagine, and was desperate to learn about this amazing God he had encountered. I also remember his disappointment when he came back from one Bible School he had visited, where at the lunch table, the guy saying grace simply said, “Ta, Pa.” Not even a “Thank-you, Heavenly Father.” Where was the fear of the Lord, the respect, the reverence, the acknowledgement of God’s utter holiness? My dad, the newbie Christian, was beyond saddened and shocked that such lack of reverence was given to the God who had so shaken his life. Needless to say, he ended up attending a different Bible School...

It’s not wise to be flippant with the Father. Psalm 111:10a says, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom”, and we all need wisdom. Alternatively, not fearing God is just plain foolish. We are told not to be wise in our own eyes, but to fear the Lord—He is wisdom, after all, and He actually delights in us: “The Lord delights in those who fear him, who put their hope in his unfailing love.” (Psalm 147:11)

**DIG FOR DIAMONDS:** Thank the Lord for those “God-fearing women” in your life, and strive to emulate them.



## DAY 31: DIAMONDS IN THE DARK

**“Honour her for all that her hands have done, and let her works bring her praise at the city gate.” Proverbs 31:31**

*“When I was preaching to a group of women in India...”* Okay, so I really just wanted to say that because it sounds like I’m some international speaker, and friends, *I AM SO NOT!* But I guess I was for this one particular day and this one particular group of ladies. Ha! Anyway, there I was on a whirlwind mission trip to India, and the pastor’s wife decided I should “share” with the women. *So* out of my comfort zone. I would have happily written to them, or even sung them a solo, but *speak*? As it happens, God had something He wanted to whisper to me as I spoke to the women...

“You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden... In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.” (Matthew 5:14 &16)

I had been in India for a week and seen a multitude of churches—some with vibrant, large congregations, and some with only a handful of faithful believers. Some perched on hills, other in the middle of village fields. But it was so incredibly evident to me that each one was a light shining Jesus in an area of darkness. Like the sparkling stars in the night sky, they shone like diamonds in the dark. It spoke to the depths of my soul and my heart was stirred like never before. Sometimes that happens.

My message was simple to these dear sisters: You shine like diamonds in the dark. You are

precious to the Lord. You are loved with an everlasting love. You have a treasure, a diamond of all diamonds to share with the world! You get to shine Jesus in and through your lives—to your families, communities, and workplaces. And when your neighbours and friends and family members see how you live—putting others first, serving the Lord wholeheartedly, loving others the way Christ loves—they will know you are different, you have light, and it will ultimately bring glory to God.

Friend, let's bring it home. Out of India and into your very own neighbourhood. Our Proverbs Lady was one heck of a diamond, wasn't she? She shone so brightly in her selflessness and diligence and love for others (and in a hundred other ways!) that everyone noticed. They saw that light. How about you? Are you shining Jesus in your sphere of life?

We have a message full of light and love for those living in darkness. May we become beacons of light, unashamed of the Gospel, eager to share the gift of light and love. For we have a promise as daughters of the King, that we “will never walk in darkness”.

You, dear sister, are a diamond in the dark. Shine.

**DIG FOR DIAMONDS:** Pray for boldness and courage to be light in the darkness. Pray for God's wisdom and love, that you might emulate our Proverbs 31 Lady on this crazy adventure called life!





## About the Author...



Truth-Teller. Soul-Stirrer.

Laura is a published Christian author with a heart for inspiring and encouraging readers of all ages. She is married to her high school sweetheart, has three wonderful children, and an adorable English bulldog. Born and raised in England and Wales, she immigrated to Canada in her mid-twenties, and now lives in Kelowna, British Columbia, where her authoring dream has become a reality.

Laura has five books published by Dancing With Bear Publishing: a Christian teen fiction trilogy: *Tears to Dancing*, *Tears of a Princess*, and *Tears, Fears, and Fame*, a non-fiction marriage book, *Pearls for the Bride*, and a middle grade novel, *The Candle Maker*. Laura also has numerous children's short stories, articles, and devotionals published, writes Bible devotionals for Union Gospel Press, and shares her musings on the blog. Laura's agent, Steve Hutson at WordWise Media, is representing her latest book—a Christian romantic suspense novel.

Laura's website includes a full bio, book details, and her blog: [http://  
www.laurathomasauthor.com](http://www.laurathomasauthor.com)

