

# Ministry From Proverbs 31

by William MacDonald

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of mothers in the world, the significance of Proverbs 31, and the need to show appreciation and gratitude to mothers on Mother's Day.*

**Duration:** 32:07

**Scripture:** Proverbs 31:10-31, Luke 1:47, Luke 11:27-28, Romans 10:9

**Topics:** "Ministry"

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## Description

In this sermon transcript, the speaker expresses gratitude for mothers who believe in discipline and the impact it has on their children's lives. The speaker mentions a specific example of a mother named Suzanne Wreckley, whose son John learned more about God from her discipline than from any other source. The speaker also acknowledges the influence of various teachers and preachers in their lives, including Dr. Ironside and George McKenzie. The transcript concludes by highlighting the many roles and responsibilities that mothers are expected to fulfill, and the appreciation and recognition they deserve for their love, care, guidance, and support.

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## Transcript

Proverbs, chapter 31, which I think is the most complete description of a mother and a wife in the Bible. And I'll begin reading in verse 10. Proverbs, chapter 31, and verse 10.

Who can find a virtuous wife? For her worth is far above rubies. The heart of her husband faithfully trusts her, so he will have no lack of gain. She does him good and not evil all the days of her life.

She seeks wool and slack, and willingly works with her hands. She is like the merchant ship. She brings her food from afar.

She also rises while it is yet night, and provides food for her household and a portion for her maid servants. She considers a field and buys it. From her profits she plants a vineyard.

She girds herself with strength and strengthens her arms. She perceives that her merchandise is good, and her lamp does not go out by night. She stretches out her hands to the dipstaff, and her hand holds the cinder.

She extends her hand to the poor. Yes, she reaches out her hand to the needy. She's not afraid of snow for her household, for all her household is clothed with scarlet.

She makes tapestry for herself. Her clothing is fine linen and purple. Her husband is known in the gates when he sits among the elders of the land.

She makes linen garments and sells them, and supplies stashes for the merchants. Strength and honor are her clothing. She shall rejoice in time to come.

She opens her mouth with wisdom, and on her tongue is the law of kindness. She watches over the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness. Her children rise up and call her blessed.

Her husband also, and he praises her. Many daughters have done well, but you excel them all. Harm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised.

Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her own work praise her in the gates. I'd like to talk about mothers today. Actually, every day should be a Mother's Day, shouldn't it? Every day, when you think of the influence of mothers in the world, a mother can control the destiny of a child.

She can control the destiny of a family. She can control the destiny of a country, and of the world. Whenever God has a great work to be done in the world, a mother brings forth a baby.

Nobody can overestimate the honor that should go to mothers. But this day, in a special way, we do it. This day is our opportunity to say, Thank you, Mother, for all you are, for all you have done, for your love, care, guidance, and support.

Now, sometimes I wonder if this chapter was written today, if there'd be a few extra things added to it. Because today, a mother is expected to be a walking encyclopedia. She's supposed to know everything.

She's supposed to know the latest baseball scores, what the principal exports of Thailand are, where baby kittens come from, and where the sun goes when it goes down at night. This is not original with me, but I like it very much. She has to be a master mechanic who can get a trouser leg out of the chain on a bicycle, and fix anything with some tape and a hairpin.

She's supposed to be a practical nurse who can put a splint on a bird's wing that is broken, and she can remove splinters and loose teeth painlessly. She's supposed to be able to stop an earache in the middle of the night, and secure a treat of measles before the picnic comes. Mothers can find the missing mate to every thought, and she can locate lost items quickly.

She often has to make a beautiful halo for her little daughter, and a pair of wings, so that when the daughter performs at the school play, nobody will notice that she has teeth missing at the front. And mothers today, she can tell when her son reaches the age when he'd rather die than be kissed in public. She has to know how to sew on soap badges, make patches on jeans, adjust hems, and replace lost buttons, dozens of them.

And as she watches her little girl put the doll to bed at night, she hopes that child will grow up to know the happiness of being a mother. I'd like to talk to you about several mothers this morning. First of all, I'd like to say a few words about the mother of our Lord, Mary, the Virgin Mary.

I'd like to talk to you about John Wesley's mother, and about the mother of a man named W.T. McKay. I'd like to talk to you about my own mother, and I'd like to talk to you about your mother. First of all, the mother of our Lord.

There's no question in the world that Mary was a godly, young, Jewish maiden. And she had the marvelous privilege of bringing that child into the world. God manifests in the flesh.

It must have been an interesting house. It must have been an unusual family to have a child there who instantly obeyed his mother and his stepfather, whatever they said. Mary pondered those things in her heart.

I know she did. And yet life went on there in Nazareth and elsewhere quite easily. But, you know, if Mary can look down from heaven today, her spirit is in heaven, her body isn't, but her spirit is in heaven.

If she can look down today, she would be aghast at some of the things that are taught about her. And so, in tribute to Mary, the mother of Jesus, I'd like to straighten out some misconceptions about this godly young woman. She was not blessed above demons.

She was blessed among women, you see. It's interesting how people use words to share what's right. The Bible doesn't say she was the greatest woman who ever lived.

The Bible doesn't say that. She was not blessed among other women, above other women. She was blessed among them.

Back in the book of Judges, there was a woman named Jael, J-A-E-L, and she was blessed among women. But there's no thought in the world that she was divine. No thought that she had divine characteristics.

I think this is really pulling to the net. Mary was more blessed in believing on Jesus than she was in being his mother. Turn, please, in your Bible to Luke chapter 11, verses 27 and 28.

And this is really marvelous, because you mothers here today can share this with Mary. Luke chapter 11, 27, 28. Worth remembering.

It says, it happened, verse 27, It happened as he spoke these things that a certain woman from the crowd raised her voice and said to him, Blessed is the womb that bare you, and the breast which nursed you. Notice how he answered that. He said, More than that, blessed are those who hear the word of God.

That's quite shocking, isn't it? That's a picture that's happening, and there's a woman looking in a crowd, and she's watching the Lord Jesus, and she hears his words, and she saw the deeds that he did, and she said, What a wonderful man Jesus is. What a wonderful man he is. How fortunate your mother was in bringing you into the world.

Jesus said, There can't be more fortunate than that. That's a marvelous picture, isn't it? Isn't that remarkable? Look at it, verse 28. He said, More than that, blessed are those who hear the word of God.

And, Jesus. So that's why I say that Mary was more blessed in believing on the Lord Jesus than she was in being his mother. Tremendous.

Mary was not born sinless. That's taught so much today. It's known as the Immaculate Conception, and it teaches that he was sinless, but Mary wasn't sinless.

And a lot of indications in the Bible, if you want to see, teach that my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. What kind of people need a Savior? Sinners need a Savior. They need to be saved from the penalty of

their sin.

It says that he brought a blood offering for her purification. Dear friends, if he was sinless, he wouldn't have needed any purification. I'll tell you that.

Mary was not a perpetual virgin. This is commonly taught today. Mary had other children, boys and girls, after the Lord Jesus was born.

I can't go over all the verses. There are many, many verses that help us in the Scriptures. Mary was not a co-beginner.

In that expression of Jesus today, he was a mediator between God and man. No, no. The Bible says there's one God and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.

When Jesus was on the cross, he did not commit John to Mary. He committed Mary to John. You know, the Bible's a wonderful book to share with, to take these things.

Jesus did not commit John to Mary. He committed Mary to John. We should not touch our souls to Mary.

You know, the Pope gives all the credit to Mary for his victory when he was shot by a Turk in Rome, I think it was. He had figured that Ray and Vicky were saved through Mary. And I talked to a young priest not too long ago, and he said that he had dedicated his life to Mary.

I said, you have? He said, yes, he did. He said, I have. I said, you realize that one time Mary and Joseph were traveling with Jesus, and Jesus, they lost him for three days, and she didn't know where they were.

Should I trust my soul to a mother whose child was away from her for three days? She didn't know where he went. And he said, no, you should trust your soul to Jesus. I said, thank you very much.

He had already turned his life over to Mary. We should not pray to Mary, except the one who finds the disciples and Mary praying together. They weren't praying to her.

They were praying to the Lord, because he was there with them. I say, Mary is a great mother. We'll meet her someday, those of us who are believers.

And I just feel that he should be dependent on the grounds of all the false teaching that goes about Christianity. When I think of mothers, I can't help thinking of John Reckley's mother. John and Charles Reckley.

She only had 19 children. And among those children were John and Charles. And historians tell you today that John Reckley, the famous Reckleyan revival, came to Britain from the horrors of the French Revolution.

If John had not been raised up at that time, what happened in France would have been repeated in London and in England. But God was working in a mighty environment. I tell you, when a mother brings a child into the world, she never knows the potential of that child or God.

And then Charles Reckley. We know a few of Charles Reckley's hymns that he wrote of a thousand. And we've got to admit that some of his hymns are the greatest hymns that were ever written by anybody.

And can it be that I should lay and confess in the Saviour's blood? Guide thee from me who caused this pain, from me who sinned against my God, and lay in His blood? How can it be that thou, my God, didst die for me? He loved us, and I'll say this. Susanna Reckley spent time with one of his children every night, reading the Word of God, praying this thing. She believed in disciplining them, too.

Thank God for mothers who believe in discipline. She did, and the results are evident in the lives of her children. John Reckley said he learned more about God at his mother's knees than he did from all the theologians of Europe.

I love that. John Reckley's mother said, that John said he learned more about God at his mother's knees than he did from all the theologians of Europe. It's a wonderful opportunity mothers have to discipline their children, to teach them the Word of God, to go over the Bible story with them, and just reverse their lives in the Word of God.

Mary, Susanna Reckley. Then there was another mother I often think about. She's the mother of a man named W.E. McCabe.

Got it? She raised this lad, and he became wild, and he decided he was going to leave home, so he practiced his faith. Before he closed it, he put a Bible in there, and on the Bible he wrote his name, and he wrote a verse of Scripture. W.E. McCabe went out, he trained in medicine, but his life went from bad to worse.

He became a bruiser, a womanizer, a fornicator, and all of that. In spite of the wickedness of his ways, he rose to be the head of a hospital in Edinburgh, Scotland. One day, while he was there as the head of the hospital, they brought in a man who had been horribly injured in an accident.

McCabe went and stood by the man's bed. He knew very well what was going to happen, and he said to the man, Don't worry, we'll get you out of here in a very short time. The man asked him how long did he have to live, and that was McCabe's answer.

We'll get you out of here in a short time. The man said to him, Would you please have somebody go to where I am living, in Edinburgh, and take this money and pay my landlady, and get the book for me. The book by my bed.

And have somebody bring that book to me. So, McCabe, Dr. McCabe did that. He got somebody to go and carry the money for the landlady, and he got the book.

And then he went on his rounds around the hospital, and sometime later he came back to the floor, and he said, Here's where the man was, and he asked the nurse how the man was doing. He said he died a few minutes ago. And he said, What's about that book that he asked for? And she said, It's under his pillow.

And Dr. McCabe went, fell down to the pillow and brought out the book. It was the Bible. He opened it, it was the Bible his mother had given him.

It had his name on it, Dr. W. G. McCabe. It had a verse of scripture on it. Amazing.

He had torn that Bible to dry booze at one time in his life. And now he finds it under the pillow of this man that has just died. He hastens back to his private office and sits down on his knees and submitted his life to the Lord Jesus Christ.

He became a sinner saved by grace. And subsequently, he wrote a book that's been kind of a classic in Christian books called *Grace and Truth*, W. G. McCabe. Just think of that dear mother, huh? I don't know where she lived after all of this.

But there she put that Bible in his suitcase before he closed it. And the Bible refused to be killed by sin. Naturally, on a day like this, you think about your own mother, and so I'd like to think about my mother.

And I'd like to leave a little tribute that I wrote for her some years ago. It says, On this day, set aside to honor mothers in a special way, I should like to express to you something of the thanks I feel for all you have meant in my life. It was you who brought me into the world, and I understand today that it meant anxiety, sorrow, and pain to you.

But you quickly and unselfishly forgot about all that for the joy that a second son was born to you. As I have grown older, I realize better the days, the months, and years you devoted to my upbringing. I often think of the times when my brother and I were sick or in accidents, and all it cost you by way of sleepless nights and anxious waiting.

I don't think I could ever thank you enough for your lonely vigil when it seemed that death would snatch one of your little boys. You didn't have a lot of outside interest. You spent most of the time in the home washing, sewing, mending, cooking.

You weren't looking for a reward from anyone. You just did it out of love. Love.

I remember how we used to grieve you and disobey you, and how you would punish us. I still remember the strap you used. I guess that's against the law now, isn't it? It wasn't in those days.

How glad I am. I still remember the strap you used. At the time it hurt, and we thought we would never recover, but deep down inside of us, we knew that we deserved the punishment.

Today I'm glad you did not let me have my way. I will always be glad that you didn't let us go to all the places we wanted to, or do the things that some of the other kids were doing. At the time we thought you were unfair, but now we know you were right.

You made us work around the house, tending the furnace, scrubbing floors, cleaning our rooms. We thought at the time that it was terrible. Now we know it was supreme.

I remember how you made us both take music lessons, how we hated to practice when we heard the neighborhood gang playing baseball outside. If you had given us a choice, we would have dropped the lesson. It's a good thing you didn't.

It's been good to know a little music down through the years, especially in the service of the Lord. The depression was still on when we got through high school. You were determined that we should get further education, so you sacrificed and gripped and saved and put in work to pay our rent.

People congratulated us when we got our diplomas, and you stood quietly in the background to me. They didn't know how much of those diplomas was earned by you. Yet when I think of the debt I owe to you, there are things that come to my mind even more important than the ones I have mentioned.

The thing for which I am thankful more than anything else is that you were a Christian mother. You knew and loved the Lord Jesus Christ, and your greatest desire was that your children should know and love

Him too. I'm thankful that from my earliest days I heard Bible stories that drew me.

Though we were not wealthy in material things, yet we had the security and love of a Christian house that no amount of money can buy. I must always be thankful for your prayers. I know what the hymn writer meant when he said, My mother's prayers have followed me.

One of my lasting memories will be how I would find you on your knees in the bedroom when I went in to say a final goodnight. Do you remember how you used to give us a dime for memorizing verses of Scripture? Some of them are still with me. And remember the Scripture text you hung on the wall over our beds? Mine was, Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

I remember how much you used to entertain the servants of the Lord. It was Dr. Ironside who taught us a chorus about Romans 10 and 9. And I remember George McKenzie and John Bluer and James McKendrick and many other teachers that have benedicted their presence had on our lives. No doubt you prayed for those men visited us that your sons would one day be priests of the gospel soon.

Well, there's a lot more I could say, but I think this will let you know how much I appreciate all you have done for me. I've heard a great deal of Bible teaching since I left home, but your life has been the greatest demonstration of Christianity I have known. And it brings us to your mother.

And of course, I don't know all of your mothers, do I? What can you do to show your love and affection for your mother? Well, many today will do it with a box of chocolate. Hopefully, cheese chocolate. That's good.

Many of you will do it with a card, a greeting card. That's good, too. In fact, you do it.

Not all the greeting cards will exactly say what you want it to say. Many of you will maybe buy perfume or a bouquet of flowers for your mother. Those things are all good.

But I would recommend this to any younger person, boys and girls and younger persons. I don't know anything that mother would appreciate more than a letter that she writes to us in which you sit down, take the time to tell her all the things in her life for which you are grateful. I just had an idea that you would take that letter and tie it up with some other keepsakes that she has.

Tie it with a ribbon around some other things that you celebrate. And keep it as long as you may. I recommend that highly to you on this Mother's Day.

One other thing I mustn't forget, and I'm prone to do that, it occurs to me that there's a mother's year and the greatest desire of her heart is to see her son or daughter pray. Are we getting kids in here? That would be true. Maybe there are mothers here who have worn out their knees praying for you, grieved to see the way that you're going, grieved to see your love for the world and the things of the world, and she wants to see you going on with the Lord.

It is the greatest gift that you could ever give your mother that you would bow at the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ and accept Him as your Lord, as your Savior, and then tell her. That would be a wonderful thing. The first person you tell, as Christ is Christ, is your own mother.

Don't be surprised if she breaks out crying. It isn't sorrow. It's joy.

It's answered prayer for her. I mentioned that hymn before, My Mother's Prayers Have Followed Me. It says, I grieved the Lord from day to day, and I sworn His love so full and free.

And though I wandered far away, My Mother's Prayers Have Followed Me. Or a desert wild or a mountain high, A wanderer I chose to be, A wretched soul condemned to die, Still Mother's Prayers Have Followed Me. He turned my darkness into light, This blessed Christ of Calvary.

I'll praise His name both day and night, That Mother's Prayers Have Followed Me. I'm coming home. I'm coming home to live my wasted life anew.

For Mother's Prayers Have Followed Me. Have Followed Me the whole world still. Come with us.

Father, we thank you today for our mothers, the gift that you have given to all of us. And we thank you especially for Christian mothers who've nurtured us to the things of God and taught us the word of God, and who by their example have shown Christ to us. The evidence of a Christ-lived life.

Let me just pray that on this special day we might be able, those of us who have a living mother, to just express to her something of the love and appreciation that is in our hearts. And should there be some here who have never touched their mother's pager, we say how marvelous it would be if today, on Mother's Day, we say yes to the Christ of Calvary and then openly confess Him before their mothers. We ask it in Jesus' name, in the glory of His name.

Amen.

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