

Fact Sheet for **“Advice from a Mother’s Heart”**
Proverbs 31:1-9

Pastor Bob Singer
05/11/2014

See Wikipedia for the history of Mother’s Day

ESV ¹ **The words of King Lemuel.**
An oracle that his mother taught him:

Nothing is known about King Lemuel.

1st Warning (31:2-3)

² **What are you doing, my son?**
What are you doing, son of my womb?
What are you doing, son of my vows?

NAU **Proverbs 31:2** What, O my son? And what, O son of my womb? And what, O son of my vows?

The threefold repetition of “son” here shows the seriousness of this warning. The twofold motivation adds to the impact of the warning (“of my womb” = “own son” and “of my vows”).

See Hannah’s vow in 1 Samuel 1:11

³ **Do not give your strength to women,**
your ways to those who destroy kings.

“strength” – This may refer to sexuality, or in general to the heart’s affection and attention. Notice that “women” is plural. While it would be easy for a king to spend his time and energy enjoying women, that would be unwise.

NAU **Ecclesiastes 9:9** ¶ Enjoy life with the woman whom you love all the days of your fleeting life which He has given to you under the sun; for this is your reward in life and in your toil in which you have labored under the sun.

“ways”

NAU **Proverbs 30:19** The way of an eagle in the sky, The way of a serpent on a rock, The way of a ship in the middle of the sea, And the way of a man with a maid.

“to those” – a reference back to “women”

2nd Warning (31:4-7)

**⁴ It is not for kings, O Lemuel,
it is not for kings to drink wine,
or for rulers to take strong drink,**

The excessive use of alcohol or the troubling need for it (reflecting deeper problems) is what is meant.

**⁵ lest they drink and forget what has been decreed
and pervert the rights of all the afflicted.**

Alcohol can cloud both memory and judgment, resulting in injustice to the afflicted.

**⁶ Give strong drink to the one who is perishing,
and wine to those in bitter distress;**

Lemuel's mother has just warned him against drinking. Now she spoke of those who were "perishing" or in "bitter distress."

**⁷ let them drink and forget their poverty
and remember their misery no more.**

See Psalm 104:14-15

Remember that we also have another warning from God found in two passages (Romans 14:21; 1 Corinthians 8:12-13).

Sound Advice (31:8-9)

**⁸ Open your mouth for the mute,
for the rights of all who are destitute.**

**⁹ Open your mouth, judge righteously,
defend the rights of the poor and needy.**

It is the responsibility of the king to champion the cause of the poor and needy, those who are left desolate by the cruelties of life (see 1 Kings 3:16-28; Psalm 72:1-4).

There is a real difference between those who are truly needy and those who are irresponsible (see 2 Thessalonians 3:6-12). Where is the dividing line? How is the Lord leading you?

The advice of this mother given thousands of years ago still is valuable for us today.

- 1 – To keep your mind clear and your judgment sound, avoid strong drink.
- 2 – Value your marriage and enjoy your spouse.
- 3 – Help those who are truly needy.

Great advice from a mother's heart!