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ENGL 115

11 May 2020

9. Is woman favored or ridiculed? Varying images of wisdom in the Book of Proverbs.

Claim: Whether or not a woman is favored or ridiculed is dependent on if they choose to live a life of wisdom, fearing God. It is through wisdom that women are shown prestige and favor.

3:13-18 (Wisdom is personified as a woman)

13. Happy are those who find wisdom, and those who get understanding, 14. For her income is better than silver, and her revenue better than gold. 15. She is more precious than jewels, and nothing you desire can compare with her. 16. Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor. 17. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. 18. She is a tree of life to those lay hold of her; those who hold her fast are called happy.

Analysis of quote: Wisdom is identified as a woman whose value is more than any gem or selfish desire. Wisdom leads to peace and happiness. Solomon choosing a woman to portray wisdom reinforces the idea that a woman is favored in the Book of Proverbs.

8:24-27

24. When there were no depths I was brought forth, when there were no springs abounding with water. 25. Before the mountains had been shaped, before the hills, I was brought forth 26. when he had not yet made earth and fields, or the first bits of soil. 27. When he established the heavens, I was there

Analysis: Wisdom, who is a woman, existed well before God created anything else.

12:4

4. A good wife is the crown of her husband, but she who brings shame is like rottenness in his bones.

Analysis: A good wife who leads a life of wisdom, as well as fears God, is seen as the most valuable in a man’s life. When a woman does not, she is seen as a thorn on a man’s side. It is worth noting that although a “good” woman is seen as prestigious and valuable, they can be identified as a sort of possession to enhance the being of a man. But overall, women are seen as favored because they enhance the life of their partner, whether it is good or bad.

19:13-14

13. A stupid child is ruin to a father, and a wife’s quarreling is a continual dripping of rain. 14. House and wealth are inherited from parents, but a prudent wife is from the Lord.

Analysis: Again, women who are forward thinking and fear God are considered to be gifts from God himself, whereas material riches are just inherited from family.

31:28-31

28. Her children rise up and call her happy; her husband too, and he praises her: 29. “Many women have done excellently, but you surpass them all.” 30. Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised. 31. Give her a share in the fruit of her hands, and let her works praise her in the city gates.

Analysis: Wise women are known to be great mothers and wives. It is not their charm or beauty that earns them praise, but instead, it is their fear of the Lord.

Conclusion: If a woman lives a life of wisdom, fearing God, they are favored in his world. They become happy and are represented as happy mothers and wives.