P31 Midrash: Abraham wrote it about Sarah
19 Jewish Matriarchs outline the verses
Ashkenazi/kabbalistic 16th century tradition to read on erev Shabbat
Reformed tradition added reading Ps.112 to the husband
A mystical metaphor for the Shekinah =
(not in the Tanakh, refers to God when He is present in certain place)

I. Proverbs 31:1-9

What Not to wear:
Find a woman who’ll be your ezer.

II. Ezer Kinegdo Gen. 2:18
Not good that man is alone (lone ranger) - Adam was created complete -
left by himself He would be self sufficient, w/o need
God separated Adam making him insufficient by himself
Adam would need Chava to be whole, missing attributes come back together

Ezer= help; from
azar = surround, protect, aid, help, assist and support in times of hardship and distress (succor)

YHVH is Israel's ezer (17 references in Tanach, more than half refer to YHVH as)

III. Eshet: Strength, Valor, Capable, Virtuous, Substance, Excellent
Chayil: dance, whirl around

Jeremiah 31:22 - “The Lord has created a new thing on the earth; a woman encircles (shelter, surround, border on every side) a man.”

IV. SUBSTANCE (below the surface)
Proverbs 31:10-12,17, 23, 27

Substance: the ultimate reality that underlies all outward manifestations and change; the essential (permanent) or real nature of something; the primary or most significant part or property of
(syn) **property:** the quality or trait peculiar to an individual or thing: Virtue (righteousness or conduct pertaining to a moral standard)

**31:10** A wife of substance who can find?
Her value is far beyond that of **pearls =** *pinnim =* face

Layers upon layers of the same material that an oyster excretes to deal with an invader or an irritant. **Through & through**
When found in an oyster the pearl is complete.
It needs no polish or cutting or refinement

**Matthew 13:45-46:**
“Again, the kingdom of God is like a merchant on the lookout for fine pearls. On finding one very valuable pearl he went away, sold everything he owned and bought it.”

**31:11** The heart of her husband safely trusts in her
**Batach =** takes refuge
*As ribs protect the heart
*As Israel was surrounded by YHVH in the desert
*As Levites guarded the Tabernacle keeping the strangers/ “adulterers” away from the Holy place

**Trust:** A reliance or a resting of the mind on the integrity, veracity, justice, friendship or other sound principle”

R. Hirsch: **Echad** can only happen if they become one in heart, mind, soul, and mutually submit all of their strength to God.

**31:12** She works to bring him good, not harm, all the days of her life

**31:17-18a** She gathers her strength around her and throws herself into her work. She see that her business affairs go well;...

**Matthew 24:42-51** (look up)
1 Timothy 5:10 (older widows) Prerequisites:
Faithful to husband, known for good deeds, reared children well, showed hospitality, washed the feet of God’s people, helped those in trouble, and engaged in all kinds of good work.

Tziphorah Heller “Our Bodies Our Souls”
Most Men develop through emet/truth, from the outside through Torah study and observing the world.
Women develop through emunah/trust and a complete attachment to God from deep within the soul. Women are what men are not.

Seven Shepherds, Seven Attributes, Seven prophetesses

Chochma/Male: gathers facts - Binah/Female: deduces facts

Abraham =Lovingkindness        Sarah = Wisdom
Isaac = Justice                Miriam = Edification
Jacob = Beauty/completeness   Devorah = Motivation
Moshe = Humility              Chanah = Prayer
Aaron = Splendor/ Peacemaker  Avigail = Insight (alternative perspective)
Joseph = Foundations          Hulda = Mercy
David = Sovereignty           Esther = Silence (knowing when to speak)

Men want to HAVE (the pearl)
Women want to BE (the pearl)

31:23 Her husband is known at the city gates when he sits with the leaders of the land

His reputation is paramount and she is his testimony.

Quote of the week:
“A woman’s sense of self and power should come not from the number of heads she can turn, but rather from the minds and the hearts she can turn.” ~Tziphorah Heller~