**Proverbs 14:1-4**

**Every wise woman buildeth her house: but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands.**

**He that walketh in his uprightness feareth the Lord: but he that is perverse in his ways despiseth him.**

**In the mouth of the foolish is a rod of pride: but the lips of the wise shall preserve them.**

**Where no oxen are, the crib is clean: but much increase is by the strength of the ox.**

Here we have some very practical advice for living! A wise, diligent, woman “buildeth her house.” That is, a wise woman works hard to see that her home and family are well managed and carefully maintained. When the woman of the house is foolish, not only will she neglect to properly order the household, but her foolish behavior will create tension within the home and, potentially, issues outside of the household. A wise woman creates peace and prosperity both inside and outside the home. The next verses offer some detail on how these conditions may be achieved. And naturally the first thing is to respect the Lord. Pure, devoted faith brings peace and unity to the family like nothing else possibly could. People must first be obedient to God before they can be called wise. And a wise person knows how destructive pride can become, especially within the family. Humility creates a peaceful and loving home, while pride puts walls between family members. People seldom respond well to arrogance. Verse 4 points out that the wise, Christian householder is also a hard worker. A full barn is a huge amount of work for the farmer: there are twice-daily chores to feed and care for the animals, not to mention the effort involved in cleaning the barn! But having all those animals (and the work that goes with them) allows the farmer to plow the field and thresh the grain. An empty barn may be clean, but it doesn’t allow for the owner’s future well-being. In more modern terms, this verse tells us not to be afraid of hard work, because hard work brings prosperity.

**Crib:** A stall or pen for cattle.

**Beavers**

Beavers are large rodents with webbed hind-feet, and a broad, scaly tail. They have poor eyesight, but keen senses of hearing, smell, and touch. A beaver's teeth grow continuously so that they will not be worn down by chewing on wood. They actually have iron in their front teeth, causing them to appear orange! Beavers are known for building dams on rivers and streams, and they build their homes (known as "lodges") in the resulting pond. Beavers also build canals to float building materials that are difficult to haul over land. These canals create habitats for many animals, and they help keep the landscape healthy in times of drought. Beavers are monogamous, and both parents care for the young. The babies spend their first month in the lodge and their mother is the primary caretaker while their father maintains the territory. When they get older, the kids work with their parents in maintaining the lodge and the dam(s), as well as helping collect food. The youngsters stay with their parents for two or three years, helping and learning, before they leave to set up their own families. In the winter, beavers do not hibernate, but store sticks and logs in a food pile in their ponds. Beavers eat aquatic vegetation, leaves, and the inner bark of trees like aspen and poplar. The ponds that beavers create provide safe fishing grounds for otters, heron, and other animals. Many other creatures also use beaver lodges as homes during the winter. Mice, muskrats, frogs, insects, and many other animals take refuge from the snow and ice in beaver lodges. The beavers don’t seem to object to these boarders, living peacefully with them in the lodge. These animals are a wonderful examples of wise householders. They work extremely hard to create a pleasant environment for their families as well as their neighbors. The whole family works peacefully together for the good of everyone. And they don’t seem to object to helping the less fortunate in hard times!

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