This acrostic, describing the qualities of the ideal woman, has shown her to be faithful, hardworking, productive, and dedicated to providing the best for her family. She is depicted as both strong and wise, creating a powerful influence for good in her community. Of course, many sections in the Bible describe God’s church as just such a woman! In this section we have some repetition of these key characteristics—particularly industriousness and productivity—in addition to some new information. We’ve already discussed the complicated processing required to supply a household with soft goods. Here we see that the mistress of the house is producing so much in the way of fine linen and embroidered girdles that she can actually sell some or trade them with merchants, thus supplying herself with beautiful purple clothing without extravagant expense. Much time and effort is spent on clothing in this acrostic, but remember that in the Bible, clothing is often representative of character. (Consider the pure white robes of the redeemed!) We see this also in verse 25, where this ideal woman is “clothed” with “strength and honor.” Note also the parallelism here. Her future is assured, because her character truly reflects Christ. This isn’t any ordinary bit of clothing. The clothing here is “strength and honor,” and it takes a lifetime to develop! She is shown here as both wise and kind. Verse 27 emphasized once again that her household is well-ordered and that it has been well provided for. Idleness has no place in the church or in the ideal woman’s life! We must continue to strive to perfect our characters so that we might also be wise, kind, and productive for Christ.

**Proverbs 31:24-27**

**She maketh fine linen, and selleth it; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant.**

**Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come.**

**She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness.**

**She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.**

**Sickle Bill and Twelve-Wired Birds of Paradise**

The black sickle bill and twelve-wired birds of paradise are astounding birds native to New Guinea. And God has given both of them rather astonishing feathers! The black sickle bill has glossy black feathers streaked with iridescent blue. He also has elaborate feather plumes on each shoulder, apparently so that he can form this peculiar shape: Plumes up, folded overhead, leaning sideways and bouncing very gently upside down. He’s rather… unearthly when he gets going, but there’s no denying he has a fine set of feathers. His remarkable display is intended to find a mate. Female birds of paradise, however, are notoriously particular! The twelve-wired bird of paradise also has a display, dancing up, around, and nearby a specially cleared post. He lifts his blue/black feathers, which normally serve to cover his brilliant yellow. Then he uses his brilliant color contrast and signature dance moves to attract a female over to his post.

Both birds have extraordinarily fine feathers, but those were given to them by their kind Creator! Both birds still have to learn how to use them, incorporating their feather-flashes at the right moment during their dancing displays, in order to attract that female. Our character-clothing is a bit like that! Wisdom, kindness, gentleness, purity, and the like all come from God. None of it originates with ourselves. But it is certainly the work of a lifetime to know how to flash those fine feathers so that it may be truly said of us that we are clothed with “strength and honor!”

Netflix

Dancing with the Birds

Start: 5:11 (46:24 from End)

End: 9:24 (42:11 from End)