

# WEEK 4 SCRIPTURE READING

5778 / 2017-18



**SHEMA** שמע  
(shem-ah)

A Hebrew word for “To listen intently with willing anticipation and readiness to do what is heard.”

Shema O Israel

*by Roly Buys*

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# Parashah Vayeira | הוא הופיע | “He appeared”

## Week 4

This weeks readings cover the portion Genesis 18:1-22.24, 2 Kings 4:1-37, Luke 17:26-37, Romans 9:6-9, Galatians 4:21-31, Hebrew 6:13-20 and 2 Peter 2:4-10.

## SERVANT-LEADERSHIP

This series intends to look at the concept of Godly<sup>1</sup> leadership to identify the good, wise and wonderful attributes that we would do well to emulate.

*I will “repeat” the description of what I believe Godly leadership ... “servant-leader” is all about, I that way you can benchmark the attributes of the character that I have selected to analyze for this week.*

I submit that our actions, if they are restricted to only Bible study, or spirit worship, will not please the FATHER.

YHVH wants us to reveal His Kingdom to the world and make an impact ... our failure to be obedient to this task, means that YHVH's Glory is limited and the opportunity to present a meaningful alternative to the world model is lost.

## OUR GOAL

*1 Peter 4:10-11 “As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of GOD’s varied Grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of GOD; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that GOD supplies—in order that in everything GOD may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To Him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

## Background

We read the Bible every week and study the story and the content with a passion to get to know YHVH better.

Paul tells us that the Bible has lessons for our every day life.

As priests in the **Living Stone Tabernacle**, we are to reveal the Glory of YHVH by the everyday actions that we model in the community.



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<sup>1</sup> We use the Name **YHVH** instead of GOD, except where it appears in Scriptures.

This calls for Sons / Daughters of Abraham to:

- ❖ Have a clear vision of our purpose
- ❖ Have a clear understanding of our place in the Body of Messiah
- ❖ Have a sound value system that causes us to strive for JUSTICE, COMPASSION AND HUMILITY



Paul tells us that we must study the lives of the fathers of our faith so that we can follow those role-models where they reveal Godly leadership.

## **THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A GODLY FATHER-LEADER**

The seminal verses that describe a father's role speak to the fact that it is at 24 hour /365 day job ... there is no "off" time, there is no holiday from the commitment.

This fact, therefore, implies that fathers will ROLE-MODEL the various behaviours / attitudes / values that are acceptable over an extended period of time.

When the child is very small, these examples must be presented as simply as possible.

Over time the same lesson will take on far more complicated scenarios and interplay with others.

Taking this forward in Biblical time means that the basic lessons must be in place, for all possible events, by the age of 13, when other peer groups will begin to implant THEIR VIEWS OF LIFE. When this happens, we need to have the Biblical BENCHMARK set firmly into our character.

### (a) A father's role-model of Justice / healing

One of the fundamental building blocks of any human-being value system, is a sound understanding of the concept of **justice**.

Justice is not only the action to be fair in time of dispute, **but rather the principle never to do anything (business / sport / politics) that would give you an unfair advantage over others.**

This includes concepts such as:

- ◆ Paying a fair wage
- ◆ Opposing slavery
- ◆ Opposing abuse

Since many people have suffered abuse at the hands of others, and now carry wounds and hurts that preclude them from a normal healthy life, one of the leadership roles is to identify those hurt, **and to facilitate a process of healing.**



Once people have been made whole ... the servant-leader should go about the process of **identifying their YHVH-given gifts / talents.**

He should take steps to train people in their specific gifts, empower them to cover the weaknesses of those gifts and then ...

**Release them into the appropriate position** within the Body of Messiah where they can grow / flourish AND make a difference in other people's lives.

We will know that we cannot do things on our own. Even more surely, we are made for a very specific part of the Body of Messiah.

This implies that we can really only function in that place that we were made for.

Healing / satisfaction comes when I take responsibility for that work / action that is required of that part of the Body of Messiah.

### (b) A father's role-model of Compassion / empathy

In a world where the best receive the glory and those last in line are all but forgotten, Biblical leaders should have the wherewithal to see the individual value and special abilities in a person.

Not only should he see these, but he should be focused on further development and training in these areas, and then he should be concerned with finding the right position for that individual to thrive

Such a leader will **value diverse opinion** ... he will **seek to hear alternative views, and he will not be putting people into stereotype boxes** - based on the fact that these people come from a different culture.

Not only will he be able to understand diverse views, but also he will be able to work in a community made up of strangers and still be able to reveal how YHWH expects us to love our neighbour.

**(c) A father's role-model of Humility / trust / listening**

- i) The first thing that you will realise of a leader, who is humble, is that books, articles and electronic media surround them. They are always searching for the truth and openly express the opinion that they welcome investigation into their thinking in order to test its credibility.

**This principle of continuous learning** is not only a wonderful means to remain humble; it's a prerequisite from YHWH (*Deuteronomy 17:19 / Joshua 1:8*).

- ii) The second attribute of a servant-leader who is humble, is the ability to create a **culture of TRUST**.

The modern world, with its performance-orientated goal creates a web of deceit and mistrust. Simple said, *how can I trust you with a secret or a better plan when both of us want to be recognised as the best in the team?*

Servant-leaders reject all forms of gossip, create opportunities for people with opposing views to face one another and debate the matter, and actively work to ensure transparency and sharing of all information.

- iii) A third attribute of servant leaders is that they are **good listeners**. They will seek clarity on what is said and felt.

They will be able to understand the fears/hopes and dreams of all concerned so that not one of the family / tribe is left behind (this does not mean that we agree with everything being said).

**(d) A father's role-model of emotional connectedness**

One of the realities of this fast paced world, is that we have all become so very busy. Not only do we have the opportunity to do many and diverse things / activities, we are also faced with the communication era of computers / smart phones / and software that connects people such as Facebook.

In this fast paced world, its very easy not to be aware of the emotional status of some of your family and friends.

In one sense, it's wonderful not be see / be aware of any problems - simply because you don't have to worry about it.

But if you are a parent who is determined to follow their calling, **then you will want to be very tuned in to their fears / concerns / expectations and so on, so that you can react timeously and can offer the support needed.**



Once you are aware that a problem exists, then you can set in motion the action which can work towards a healing.

Importantly, these problems will manifest on many different levels ... it is not only spiritual .. it can also be physical and emotional...

For example:

- ◆ It can be a perceived weight problem for girls,
- ◆ It can be a poor muscle structure for a boy,
- ◆ It can be a lack of ball sense ...

In other words, it can be any thing that the world will use to judge and benchmark someone against as ***unacceptable***.

One of the features of a great parent is the **ability to encourage** despite the circumstances – and note the words are: → “*let us ...*” ...and not “*you go and try on your own*”.

Fathers, who are emotionally connected, will strive to **delegate responsibility** to others in order to challenge them to grow.

Such Fathers will never be afraid to give up power, because they know that seeing others take up the challenge and succeed is far more significant than being successful at something yourself ... simply because you know that the feat can be multiplied dozens of times even when you are absent.

A Biblical example is Jethro telling Moses what you are doing trying to keep the entire leadership role for your self → is NOT GOOD (***Exodus 18:14-17***).

### **(e) A father's role-model of revealing Godly influence**

The world system speaks of a system of "command" and obey ... these days the world system tries to modify this by implying that consultation before decision making is an inclusive system.

In fact, this façade creates more unhappiness as people soon realise that there is a hidden agenda at play; the people can then become either:

- ◆ a group that is happy to be disengaged,
- ◆ or a group who is actively seeking to move on.

Influence is the ability to convince others of a need to change - either a burning platform or a common better goal.

Both David and Joshua best display this ability by getting TWELVE tribes of different thinking people to work together.

An influencer thinks of "**you**" ... not "**me**"

- ◆ This can only be true if you **truly believe in the people whom you lead**
- ◆ They may make mistakes that you have to correct
- ◆ They may disappoint you sometimes,
- ◆ BUT you know that they are mainly giving of their best.

### **(f) A father's role-model of releasing creativity**

Innovation has become the name of the game.

People have dreams that are based on the exploits of others that have gone before them.

There was a time when – to run the mile in under 4 minutes was a huge feat. Today, new records get set at regular intervals.

Fathers are empowered to discern exactly what talents and gifts have been implanted in each child.

To develop those talents requires a concerted effort to plan, not only in the **timing** - how do we expose people to challenges, but also the **pace** at which we do so ... in this case its important to set stiff enough goals without discouraging the individual.

And YHVH knows what the best time is ... listen carefully to the Holy Spirit!! (**Numbers 27:16-17**)

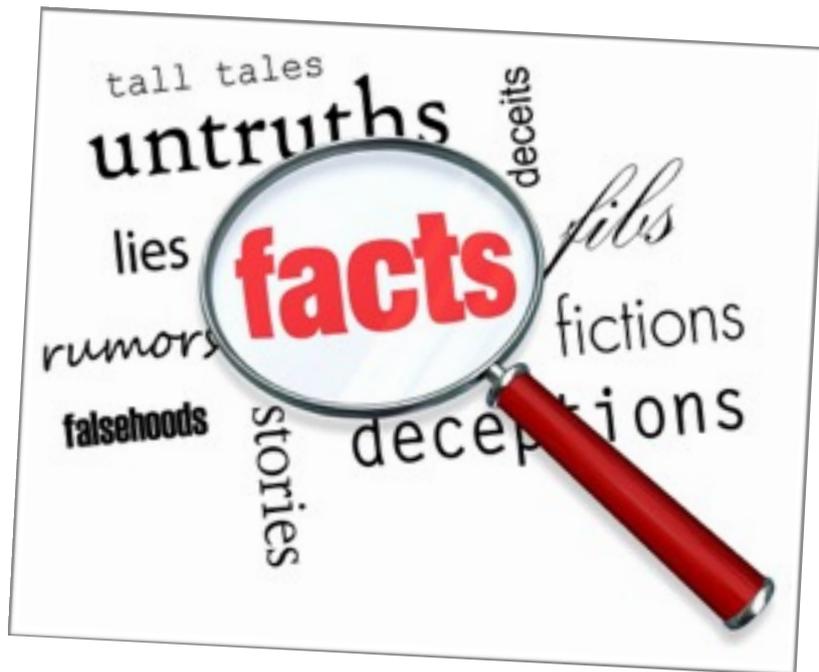
### **(g) A father's role-model the art of Strategic planning**

We live in a world that is constantly changing. Consider the fact that 100 years ago most people still used the horse or the donkey / camel, while today any trip of some distance can only be done in an airplane. Think about the concept of the old landline telephone and the new portable cell phone.

But more critically, is the change in the distribution and control of information.

Shops that sold books are now obsolete as people purchase these over the Internet.

You must be **prepared to investigate** strange things!!! (*Exodus 3:2-3*)



It's this type of change that can radically make or break a fantastic plan.

For this reason, fathers must teach children the art of scenario planning.

The ability to take note of changes in the environment, of new developments, of new evolving trends, and then commit this to a scenario plan to identify possible alternatives to be investigated.

A father who puts his child on a single track destination without this kind of training, is failing dismally in his leadership role as the likelihood of a dead-end, or a cliff without a bridge.

#### **What do we want to do?**

We need to empower the next generation to have the foresight to see various outcomes from a difficult situation and to be able to plan various alternative solutions so that they are not stuck.

What we need is to repeat the lessons of old - every single mistake or Biblical forefathers made, we need to help them identify the current realities for what they are – we need to take the Land (and not what we would want them to be), and we need to build an appreciation for estimating the cost / consequence of any action taken (as for me and my house we will serve the LORD).

We need to teach others to look up and around, while at the same time looking down at the job at hand (**Joshua 2:1**).

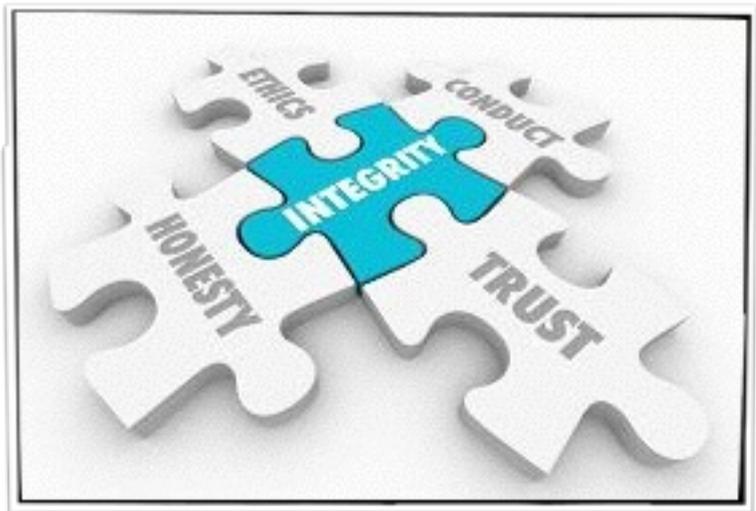
### **(h) A father's role-model of function of Stewardship**

The Book of Genesis describes clearly ... we have been given a mandate – to **keep and guard** the Garden; to have dominion over the earth and all that is on it (but not on fellow humans), and we have to be accountable to YHVH for what we accomplish with this calling (**Genesis 1:28**).

Stewardship speaks to an understanding that we have a responsibility ... to leave the Garden in a better state than how we found it, that we have to build more than we utilise.

To this end, the perpetual use of farm land without rest is contrary to YHVH's Principles and the use of water without a care in the world reflects a belief that we can call on YHVH anytime that we like bring more rain ... that a undesirable level of arrogance **and** shows that we do not value the gift of the Garden. Nor the Giver of the gift!!!

It is within this domain that many of our most precious values are to be discovered.



### **Integrity**

How many of us remember the day when, if two people shook hands on a deal, then it was irrevocable , and everybody understood that.

This concept is a fundamental building block of the principle of Covenant.

The bond of my word was enough to live or die by.

A similar thought is contained in the **salt covenant** idea, Once we had broken bread, together with salt , you as my guest are completely safe from all harm.

You simply cannot be a good steward if you do not have integrity.

### **Honesty**

Honesty, as a value follows closely on that of integrity.

However, honesty includes the understanding that you will make right all possible damage / harm caused under your roof, even if no claim is laid.

Honesty includes the application of fairness, diligence, and justice.

***A wonderful quote by RL Stevenson ...***

***“Don’t judge each day by the harvest that you reap, but by the seeds that you plant,”***

### **(i) A father’s role-model of Community building / citizenship**

The world has created large corporations / huge companies that own a great deal of resource or governmental organisations that attempt to control mankind via their influence in the media and the minds of the masses.

The best structure from the Bible is the family; in a clan, in a tribe, and in a community.

Community come together for common purpose i.e. religion / welfare / celebrations; and sometimes to go to war when the group is under attack.

Within this context, the community either grows together or suffers together, and we do not get the huge differentials of wealth, health, etc, that we do today!

While leadership can be stressful and demanding ... **(Numbers 11:11-15)**

... the rewards are great when you see a community respond and start to function for themselves!

### **(j) A father’s role-model of how to be leaving a legacy**

The moment that you accept that:

- ◆ every individual is “equal and unique”,
- ◆ that people should never be oppressed by anyone,
- ◆ that you realise that you are called to be accountable for your stewardship of the Garden,

... then you will believe in and work towards leaving a legacy.

- ◆ Legacy empowers OTHERS in your lifetime – legacy does not equal inheritance.
- ◆ Legacy is described in these strange words ‘It’s better to teach a man to fish than to feed him everyday’

But then you will understand that legacy equals hard work and sometimes, for a neighbour that does not even think or believe as you do ... we call that loving your neighbour.

## LEADERSHIP IS NOT EASY

We see many examples of Biblical men who thought that they did not have what it takes:

- ◆ **Moses** → who am I?
- ◆ **Isaiah** → I am not a man of words!
- ◆ **Jeremiah** → I am a man of unclean lips!
- ◆ **Jonah** → I cannot speak!

The highest accolade → Moses is a servant ... **he is called YHVH's Servant.**

## THE WAY FORWARD

The point of this short description is not to do an in depth study of Biblical leadership, but to define some of the Godly characteristics of such a role.

We will look at various individuals during this Torah cycle study.

I do not intend to discuss their shortcomings, but to focus on their Godly leadership qualities so that we can learn from these and start to emulate these attributes.

As such, I also do not intend to allocate their attributes under each of the heading described above, merely to reflect on their revealed lifestyle.

### ***LET US RETURN TO THIS WEEK'S PORTION...***

It's not easy to decide which character one should choose.

Obviously, one is drawn to the character of Lot, and so much has been said of him.

However, I feel that it is important to take a look at the minor characters that we often find in the Haftarah portions.

They are equally important to the overall story, or else that particular story would have been omitted from the Bible.

Consequently, I have chosen to look at the leadership attributes of the **unnamed Shunamite woman.**

### **Let us look how she impacts the world...**

Let us start off by noting that she is living in a community who DO NOT accept the prophet Elisha ... they ignore him flat.



(a) The Shunamite woman reveals the **same level of compassion that we see in the life of Abraham.**

- ◆ She “sees” a stranger come into town.
- ◆ She “presses” him to stop and eat ... we understand that she kept on asking him, until he realized that she was truly serious about extending the invitation.

Later on we read about her husband - but clearly their relationship was of such a nature that he gave his blessing for the invitation.

**2 Kings 4:8** *“One day Elisha went on to Shunem, where a wealthy woman lived, who urged him to eat some food. So whenever he passed that way, he would turn in there to eat food.”*

**Proverbs 31:20** *“She reaches out to embrace the poor and opens her arms to the needy.”*

There is something about the extension of the hospitality and the manner in which it was done, that Elisha felt quite comfortable to stop off for a meal every time that he past through this town.

This speaks volumes of her character ... it makes us believe that she had the attributes that Paul demands of servant-leadership.

**1 Timothy 3:1-7** *“Here is a statement you can trust: anyone aspiring to be a congregation leader is seeking worthwhile work. A congregation leader must be above reproach, he must be faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, orderly, **hospitable** and able to teach. He must not drink excessively or get into fights; rather, he must be kind and gentle. He must not be a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, having children who obey him with all proper respect; for if a man can’t manage his own household, how will he be able to care for GOD’s Messianic Community? He must not be a new believer, because he might become puffed up with pride and thus fall under the same judgment as did the Adversary. Furthermore, he must be well regarded by outsiders, so that he won’t fall into disgrace and into the Adversary’s trap.”*

(b) The Shunamite woman reflects the **attribute of Stewardship**.

We are informed that this is a well-to-do family. Notwithstanding that fact, this lady is able to ask her husband, and because they are walking in unity, he builds an extra room onto the house, just for Elisha to stay over whenever he was in town.

Many people collect wealth - but hoard it for some or other reason, or alternatively waste it on all sorts of frivolous spending.

This family is accountable with their wealth ... they want to have an impact on others.

**2 Kings 4:9-10** *“And she said to her husband, “Behold now, I know that this is a holy man of GOD who is continually passing our way. **Let us make a small room on the roof with walls and put there for him a bed, a table, a chair, and a lamp, so that whenever he comes to us, he can go in there.**”*

Not only is this act a reflection of stewardship, but also a reflection of their views on the **community**.

By allowing the prophet and man of YHVH to stop over, to sleep in their community, they are allowing him to speak the WORD of YHVH into the atmosphere about their town.

**Matthew 10:40-42** *“Whoever receives you is receiving Me, and whoever receives Me is receiving the ONE who sent Me. Anyone who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive the reward a prophet gets, and anyone who receives a tzaddik because he is a tzaddik will receive the reward a tzaddik gets. Indeed, if someone gives just a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my talmid — yes! — I tell you, he will certainly not lose his reward!”*

(c) The Shunamite woman is **HUMBLE**.

She has material needs - she has a husband that clearly loves and supports her.

Yet, she has major lack ... she is barren.

When the prophet asks *“what can I do for you?”*

She says; ***“I am happy living as I do amongst my people”***.

**2 Kings 4:11-13** *“One day Elisha came to visit there, and he went into the upper room to lie down. He said to Geichazi his servant, “Call this Shunamit.” He called her; and when she arrived, he said to him, “Tell her this: ‘**You have shown us so much hospitality!** What can I do to show my appreciation? Do you want me to say anything to the king for you? or to the commander of the army?’” She answered, “I’m happy living as I do, among my own people.”*

### **The Promise**

**2 Kings 4:14** *“He said, “What, then, is to be done for her?” Geichazi answered, “There’s one thing — she doesn’t have a son; and her husband is old. 15 Elisha said, “Call her.” After he called her, she stood in the doorway. 16 He said, “Next year, when the season comes around, you will be holding a son.” “No, my lord,” she answered. **“Man of God, don’t lie to your servant!”** 17 But the woman conceived and gave birth to a son the following year when the season came around, just as Elisha had said to her.”*

When she hears the news of the promise, her words are → **‘Man of YHVH, do not lie to your servant’**.

(d) The Shunamite woman reveals an appreciation for **YHVH’s Strategic plan**.

Two people, Elisha and Gehazi (the prophet servant) will stay in her house from time to time.

Yet, when her tribulation arrives (the death of her son), she knows which man to trust.

She will tell Geichazi that ‘everything is all right’, BUT she will grab at Elisha’s feet when she wants to petition for her case.

**2 Kings 4:25-27** *“So she set out and came to the man of GOD at Mount Carmel. When the man of GOD saw her coming, he said to Gehazi his servant, “Look, there is the Shunammite. Run at once to meet her and say to her, ‘Is all well with you? Is all well with your husband? Is all well with the child?’” And she answered, “All is well.” And when she came to the mountain to the man of GOD, she caught hold of his feet. And Gehazi came to push her away. But the man of GOD said, “Leave her alone, for she is in bitter distress, and the LORD has hidden it from me and has not told me.”*

She will wait for and walk with Elisha, even though Gehazi goes ahead to lay his staff on the boy in an attempt to resurrect him, she knew which **man** was really connected to YHVH.

**2 Kings 4:30** *“Then the mother of the child said, “As the LORD lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” So he arose and followed her.”*

(e) The Shunamite woman believed **in legacy**.

Without her petitioning, YHVH gave her a son - so she has faith that there is a calling on his life.

When he dies, she takes action to preserve that legacy.

The part that really stands out for me, is the fact that she travels on the Shabbat.

Here is an example of a woman that fully understand the Commandments.



It is true, we must keep the Shabbat, but there are weightier Commandments ... namely that we should do everything that we can to save lives, and she grasps this.

This action tells us that her relationship with YHVH:

- ◆ is not religion,
- ◆ is not legalism,
- ◆ is not ritual.

**2 Kings 4:22-24** *“Then she called to her husband and said, “Send me one of the servants and one of the donkeys, that I may quickly go to the man of God and come back again.” And he said, “Why will you go to him today? It is neither new moon nor Sabbath.” She said, “All is well.” Then she saddled the donkey, and she said to her servant, “Urge the animal on; do not slacken the pace for me unless I tell you.”*”



The story does not give us any later detail ... as to what happened to this family.

There is one sentence that gives us an indication that he was destined for great things.

Have you ever noticed - it says that after Elisha lay on him, he sneezed SEVEN times!!

**2 Kings 4:35** *“Then he got up again and walked once back and forth in the house, and went up and stretched himself upon him. The **child sneezed seven times**, and the child opened his eyes.”*

Sneezing is connected to repentance ... I suggest that this boy repented for and dealt with the generational matters that had accumulated in this family's history.

Let us make a quick study of these words.

The word “**sneezed**” in Hebrew is Strong’s 2237 / 2114 and conveys the meaning of:

- ◆ to diffuse,
- ◆ to scatter

The word “**Times**” used here is the Hebrew word Strong’s 6471 and conveys the meaning of:

- ◆ hoof-beat,
- ◆ occurrence,
- ◆ and anvil.

***Proverbs 6:16-19** “There six things ADONAI hates, seven which he detests: a haughty look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that plots wicked schemes, feet swift in running to do evil, a false witness who lies with every breath, and him who sows strife among brothers.*

**\*\*NUGGET\*\***

**REPENTANCE IS THE ACT OF PLACING ALL PAST SINS / GENERATIONAL SINS ON THE ANVIL TO DESTROY THE FOUNDATION OF THESE AND BE RESURRECTED AS THE ONE NEW MAN.**

## **A FINAL THOUGHT**

The woman’s action to heal her son, heals their family, and these characteristics in Proverbs describe such a woman ... read these words and note the connection that I make.

We see in this story that the woman is rewarded with the “fruit of her hands / womb” ... her son lives.



Elisha heals the Shunamite woman's child.

Proverbs tells us that that **kind of blessing** (the resurrection of a son) is **CONNECTED to a specific kind of servant-leader**.

**Proverbs 31:25-31** *“Clothed with strength and dignity, she can laugh at the days to come. When she opens her mouth, she speaks wisely; on her tongue is loving instruction. She watches how things go in her house, not eating the bread of idleness.”*

**Proverbs 31:28-29** *“Her children arise; they make her happy; her husband too, as he praises her: “Many women have done wonderful things, but you surpass them all!”*

**Proverbs 31:30-31** *“Charm can lie, beauty can vanish, but a woman who fears ADONAI should be praised. Give her a share in what she produces; let her works speak her praises at the city gates.”*

## **PRIESTLY BLESSING**

*“Y’varekh’kha YHVH v’yishmerekha.*  
**May YHVH bless you and keep you.**

*Ya’er YHVH panav eleikha vichunekka.*  
**May YHVH make His Face shine on you and show you His favour.**

*Yissa YHVH panav eleikha v’yasem l’kha shalom.*  
**May YHVH lift up His Face toward you and give you peace.**

In this way they are to put My Name on the people of Israel, so that I will bless them.”

