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BEYOND RICHES AND RUBIES: A STUDY OF PROVERBS 31:10-31 AND SERVANT LEADERSHIP

Elizabeth Graves

This paper determines enhancements to servant leadership theory by comparing it to the Old Testament poem about a noble woman (Prov. 31:10). Through intertexture analysis, an exegesis of Proverbs 31:10-31 revealed a very simple approach to servant leadership, whereby one's character and actions for others, out of their fear of the Lord resulted in spiritual riches. When compared with scholarly research on servant leadership, the Proverbs 31 example of servant leadership enhances the theory by adding two components: an emphasis on action as behavior and servant leader growth as an outcome.

I. INTRODUCTION

As more organizations experience issues of corruption and low morality, business leaders and organizational scholars turn their interest to the practice of servant leadership (Peterson, Galvin, & Lange, 2012, p. 566; Sendjaya & Sarros, 2008, p. 402). While the theory lacks consensus in definition, one model, argued by Liden et al., provides a foundation for study (Northouse, 2018, p. 232). This model entails antecedent conditions, behaviors, and outcomes of servant leadership (Northouse, 2018, p. 232). While evidence shows servant leadership's positive influence on followers, organizations, and society, the example of the woman described in Proverbs 31:10-31 provides an opportunity to improve it. Therefore, this paper seeks to enhance servant leadership theory by examining the description of the noble woman in the pericope (Prov. 31:10). Intertexture analysis uncovered oral-scribal, social, and cultural intertexture support for interpretation. The historical intertexture analysis did not provide sufficient reinforcement; however, the remaining elements were used in detail.

II. INTERTEXTURE ANALYSIS AND PROVERBS 31:10-31

As interpreters hunt for understanding, intertexture analysis provides enlightening answers, whereby examination of a text outside the pericope brings insight to the text itself (Robbins, 1996, p. 40). Intertexture analysis helps provide a deep understanding of the text and its multiple dimensions (Robbins, 1996, p. 3). Through an analysis of Proverbs 31:10-31 and its interaction with oral-scribal, cultural, and social intertexture, the poem brought life to a female embodiment of wisdom, one who served others with the fear of the Lord and received the ultimate reward.

Oral-Scribal Intertexture

Interpreters uncover oral-scribal intertexture by analyzing text outside the pericope, where reference to the text may or may not be explicit (Robbins, 1996, p. 40). There has been much debate about who authored Proverbs 31:10-31. Although scholars believed Solomon might have written portions of Proverbs, they do not believe he could have written this poem about a noble wife, because he himself had many wives (Pfeiffer & Harrison, 1962, pp. 554-555). It is safe to say, however, the author of the pericope remains unknown (Pfeiffer & Harrison, p. 555). Through oral-scribal analysis, one uncovers several references to wisdom: who it is for, what it is not, what it looks like, the challenge of finding it, how it is obtained, and ultimately, its reward.

Wisdom for All. Proverbs 31:10-31 is an artistic and acrostic poem about a wise and virtuous woman (Labahn, 2014, p. 2; Pfeiffer & Harrison, 1962, p. 582). The acrostic uses each of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet to begin each of the twenty-two verses of the poem (MacArthur, 2005, p. 729). In parallel, Psalm 112, also an acrostic poem, described a moral man who experienced many strikingly similar topics. (McCreesh, 1985, p. 25; Wolters, 1988, p. 448). In both texts, their actions related to their “fear of the Lord” (Wolters, 1988, p. 448). Psalms 111, also an acrostic poem and nearly identical to Psalms 112, is called a “wisdom psalm” (Wolters, p. 448). It is different from Psalms 112 and Proverbs 31:10-31 because it described God, instead of a man or a woman (Wolters, p. 448). Hawkins (1996) claimed wisdom is not limited to a specific gender (p. 19). He stated, “the character traits...serve as examples to both men and women” (Hawkins, 1996, p. 19).

The Contrasting Folly. While wisdom is available to all, so too is its opposite: folly, which likely represents sin (Hawkins, 1996, p. 19; Pfeiffer & Harrison, 1962, p. 553). Pfeiffer and Harrison (1996) asserted the book of Proverbs primarily taught a life of higher ground through contrast (p. 553). The virtuous actions described in Proverbs 31:10-31 implied the existence of an opposite, which was acknowledged at the beginning of the chapter in Proverbs 31:3, “do not spend your strength on women, your vigor on those who ruin kings” (NIV). Proverbs 31:31 talked about charm and beauty as deceptive and fleeting. This echoes Proverbs 6:24, as folly talked with a skillfully deceptive tongue. Folly was noisy and boisterous (Prov. 9:13), as opposed to the virtuous woman who spoke wise and truthful words (Prov. 31:26; McCreesh, 1985, pp. 45-46).

An Image of Strength and Dignity. Proverbs 31:25 described a figurative armor, “she is clothed in strength and dignity.” This echoed Psalms 93:1 where the Lord had a similar armor - “the Lord is robed in majesty and is armed with strength” (Wolters 1988,

p. 451). Both passages mention being covered in strength; however, MacArthur (2005) argued the Proverbs 31:25 passage described her inward clothing (p. 730). In Psalms 35:26, one finds contrary words, “clothed in shame and disgrace,” which described the result of sinful acts. Isaiah 52:1 called Zion to dress themselves in strength. Here, they were being asked to turn from their drunken ways and clothe themselves with the Lord’s attributes (MacArthur, 2005, p. 823). This armor of strength and dignity represented both “physical strength and strength of character” (Hawkins, 1996, p. 14).

An Image of Noble Character. The passage began with a description of a noble woman (Prov. 31:10). This level of character was aspirational, and described a mature woman, having lived a life full of wise choices (Hawkins, 1996, p. 21). She was later described in Proverbs 31:29 as a woman who “in the eyes of her husband” surpassed other women who did noble things. MacArthur (2005) asserted Proverbs 31:25-27 emphasized her character (p. 730). A competent and intelligent woman, Crook (1954) noted she is called “Woman of Worth” in Hebrew (p. 137). Proverbs 12:4 said, “the wife of noble character is her husband’s crown.” Wives of this caliber are held in high esteem (Pfeiffer & Harrison, 1962, p. 582). In Ruth 2:1, Boaz was described as “a man of standing,” which implied a similar nobility. One uncovers mentions of this type of character in Ruth 3:11, which stated “All my fellow townsmen know that you are a woman of noble character.” Ruth was a strong woman and efficient in her feats (Hawkins, 1996, p. 14). Both Ruth and the woman of noble character showed strong similarities (Hawkins, 1996, p. 14).

Wisdom’s Elusiveness. The text warned the seeker that finding this personification of wisdom would not be an easy task (MacArthur, 2005, p. 729; Proverbs 31:10). In Job 28:12, the question about where to find wisdom echoed this challenge. McCreech (1985) argued, it can only be found with God (p. 37). He contended, although finding the elusive woman seems nearly impossible to attain, it is still a worthy pursuit (McCreech, 1985, p. 37). In Proverbs 8:35, one learns if they do find her, they will also find life and the Lord’s approval. This approval or “favor” is echoed in Proverbs 18:22.

Fear of the Lord. Proverbs 31:30 spoke about “the fear of the Lord” or a reverence for God (MacArthur, 2005, p. 698). As discussed in Proverbs 1:7, it described wisdom as the “beginning of knowledge.” This phenomenon was a significant concept that both introduced and concluded the book of Proverbs (McCreech, 1985, p. 25; Pfeiffer & Harrison, 1962, p. 583). These exact words are written in Psalms 111:10, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” Job 28 described the search for wisdom and ended with similar words in Job 28:28, “the fear of the Lord - that is wisdom” (Pfeiffer & Harrison, 1962, p. 480). Pfeiffer and Harrison (1962) asserted, the attainment of wisdom begins when one ceases to rely on their own knowledge. To submit to or to fear the Lord lays the groundwork for wisdom (MacArthur, p. 698).

Wisdom’s Reward. A virtuous life results in a promised reward. Proverbs 31:31 ended the pericope with an earned promise of “praise at the city gate.” Proverbs 12:14 described how wise words and actions are rewarding. Proverbs 22:4 also spoke of this life-giving reward which brought a different sort of wealth. As the woman in the pericope served her “family and community,” she earned their praise (MacArthur, 2005, p. 730). However, most significant was the praise she received in death, after a life of service, as MacArthur (2005) contended, “the result of her efforts comprise her best eulogy” (p. 730).

Cultural Intertexture

To obtain insight into the culture of the time, one uses cultural intertexture analysis (Robbins, 1996, p. 58). It is a sort of inside intelligence, only the people of the time understand (Robbins, 1996, p. 58). Through the examination of Proverbs 31:10-31, three key cultural elements emerged in themes of wealth, worth, and work.

Wealth and Worth. The poem used language that was clear enough for the reader to understand, but without examination, one would miss key cultural elements. In the pericope, material items determined wealth and worth, such as fine linen, rubies, scarlet, and purple.

Fine Linen. While the woman worked to make bed coverings with fine linen, she was also clothed in it (Prov. 31:22). Reference to fine linen in other Old Testament passages provides insight. Isaiah 19:9 said, “those who work with combed flax will despair, the weavers of fine linen will lose hope.” Proverbs 7:16 stated, “I have covered my bed with colored linens from Egypt.” Ezekiel 27:7 stated, “Fine embroidered linen from Egypt was your sail and served as your banner.” Each outside verse told a story about the culture of the time. One learns Egypt was a known exporter of fine linen. The people derived worth from this material. Not only did the woman in the pericope make and sell these items, but she also wore them (Prov. 31:24). In wearing these expensive items, her family’s physical wealth was displayed and she was placed in the upper cusp of society (MacArthur, 2005, p. 730; Wolters, 1988, p. 455).

Rubies, Scarlet, and Purple. The text used jewels and color to describe worth. Proverbs 31:10 stated “she is worth far more than rubies.” One hears similar reference to rubies earlier in Proverbs 3:15; 8:11. Here, the author talked not about material wealth, but spiritual wealth. If wisdom is far greater than rubies, which was a valuable item in the culture of the time, then it is worth the pursuit (Hawkins, 1996, p. 16). The color red, purple, and scarlet also meant quality and was known for its value (Pfeiffer & Harrison, 1962, p. 582). In ancient times, the color scarlet was used to make the fabric red; however, it was a very expensive color (Labahn, 2014, p. 3). Because of this expense, the color was associated with wealth (Labahn, 2014, p. 3). Within the text, one sees few mentions of scarlet and purple. Proverbs 31:22 stated, “She is clothed in fine linen and purple.” Judges 8:26 mentioned the purple garments which were worn by a king. Song of Songs 3:10 talked about a seat that was upholstered in purple. Luke 16:19 talked about a rich man who wore these colors and lived a lavish life. Revelation 18:10 talked about the city that wore purple and scarlet material. In each of these passages, the specific mention of color was not just a description of the scene. Instead, it was meant to bring value to the item it described.

These references to wealth afforded a certain fearlessness. The woman did not fear the future; instead, she dismissed it with a laugh (Prov. 31:25b). While her physical clothing depicted her physical wealth, she was also clothed in spiritual wealth or “clothed in strength and dignity” (Prov. 31:25; Hawkins, 1996, p. 15). These character traits, which provided a different sort of wealth, are accessible to all people, regardless of their financial status (Hawkins, 1996, p. 15).

Work. The language concerning work derived meaning from key elements of the passage, including field and idleness. Proverbs 31:16 spoke of how she discerned the purchase of a field, bought it, and worked it. Proverbs 24:30-31 showed a contrast of her field to the fields of lazy owners, which were covered in weeds and thorns. The

slothful field owners were described as lacking judgement. This association of judgement and work, or lack thereof shows the importance of wisdom and action. Pfeiffer and Harrison (1962) suggested, buying a field would not have been part of a woman's duties at the time (p. 583). However, the intent was to show her resourcefulness in action (MacArthur, 2005, p. 729). She was not one to sit idle. In fact, idleness was looked down upon. Proverbs 31:15 spoke of how she woke early in the night to start her work. In contrast, Proverbs 6:9-10 accused the "sluggard" of sleeping too long. Proverbs 20:13 instructed one to learn not to enjoy sleep or they will become poor. These insights around work provide understanding which goes beyond the mere act of daily chores. Her work implied action (Wolters, 1988, p. 454). To deduce her to be an "exceptional housewife" would be an "oversimplification" (Szlos, 2000, p. 99). The passage was meant to show action on a much deeper level.

Social Intertexture

Social status of the time, in roles, institutions, codes, and relationships provide important social intertexture elements (Robbins, 1996, p. 62). In Proverbs 31:10-31, social intertexture analysis revealed insights into the social institution of family through her role as a wife, mother, and entrepreneur.

Role as a Mother. The most basic social institution of the biblical period was the family, consisting of a mother, father, and children. (Powell, 2011, p. 281). Slaves were occasionally present in the household, and as Powell (2011) suggested, were also considered part of the family. Through their families, children learned about how God dealt with Israel, along with the beliefs and customs of their people (Powell, 2011, p. 282). Children also learned honor and obedience to their parents (Powell, 2011, p. 282). Her role as a mother was that of a teacher. Proverbs 31:26 said, "she speaks with wisdom and faithful instruction is on her tongue." In Proverbs 1:8, children were told to keep their mother's instruction. In exact words, Proverbs 6:20, again instructed the children not to turn away from their mother's teachings. It was through her teaching and her example, she taught her children and others to live a higher life of morality (Labahn, 2014, p. 4).

Role as a Wife. A husband's reputation depended largely upon his wife's actions (MacArthur, 2005, p. 730). In Proverbs 31:23, the respect her husband received in court was attributed to how well his wife supported him in the home (MacArthur, 2005, p. 730). The benefits of finding a wife are referenced in Proverbs 18:22. A husband's success resulted from how well he was taken care of at home (MacArthur, 2005, p. 730). Because of her leadership in the home, her husband was able to lead in the community and gained the respect of others. (Hawkins, 1996, p. 20)

Role as an Entrepreneur. In ancient biblical times, families sustained themselves by growing their own food and making their own clothes (Powell, 2011, p. 282). The pericope described an enterprising woman, who not only provided clothes and food for her family, but traded with the Phoenician maritime traders (Classens, 2016, p. 12). Her ability to manufacture and trade these items increased her family's socioeconomic status (Classens, 2016, p. 12). The passage's emphasis on her entrepreneurial activities implied the importance of her role in supporting and elevating her family's position.

III. THE ATTRIBUTES OF LEADERSHIP AND PROVERBS 31:10-31

Without deep investigation, one might interpret Proverbs 31:10-31 as an aspirational construct for wives and mothers. However, that sort of application would fall short of its purpose. Many key attributes of leadership are derived from the passage, describing her character and her actions. In Proverbs 31:12, she focused on bringing good to those she served. Her strong work ethic was represented by her hands (Prov. 31:13). She was an enterprising woman, buying fields and trading good (Prov. 31:16-19). She supported those who needed a little extra help (Prov. 31:20). She was confident and elevated others (Prov. 31:21-23). She was a woman of strong character, a wise teacher and protector (Prov. 31:25-27). Because of her acts, she was praised and admired (Prov. 31:28). Proverbs 31:10-31 is a passage full of leadership, with striking similarities to a relatively new theory of leadership.

IV. SERVANT LEADERSHIP

The theory of servant leadership was founded by Greenleaf in the 1970's (Mittal & Dorfman, 2012, p. 555; Northouse, 2018, p. 225). Early on, there was not much research on the servant leader's behavior (Northouse, 2018, p. 225). Today, the most notable research on servant leadership behavior comes from Spears, Laub, Russell and Stone, Patterson, and Liden et al. (Van Dierendonck, 2011, p. 1231). Spears uncovered 10 characteristics of servant leaders (Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002, p. 57). Laub's construct included six key characteristics (Parris & Peachey, 2013, p. 19). Russell and Stone's work included nine functional characteristics and 11 additional characteristics (Van Dierendonck, 2011, p. 1232). Patterson uncovered seven characteristics based upon virtues and added compassionate love to the mixture (Van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015, p. 122). Liden et al.'s model pronounced certain preceding conditions, behaviors, and outcomes (Northouse, 2018, p. 232). As one can see, there is not much agreement between the scholars on a single behavioral model (Mittal & Dorfman, 2012, p. 556).

Servant leadership is best defined as one's primary desire to serve others, which evolves into an "aspiration to lead" (Northouse, 2018, p. 226). Crippen (2006) contended, because of one's service, they become known as a leader (p. 11). Their main reason for leadership is not leadership itself, but their desire to serve (Russell, 2001, p. 78). Reinke (2004) claimed, leadership is less than a bunch of attributes and more of a positive interaction between individuals (p. 34) resulting in future servant leaders (Stone, Russell, & Patterson, 2004, p. 358).

Although a relatively new leadership theory, it has been practiced throughout history, from biblical times to modern day inaugurations (Sendjaya & Sarros, 2008, p. 58). According to Sendjaya and Sarros (2008), Jesus was the first person to demonstrate and teach the concept of servant leadership. It was just as much of an anomaly then as it is now (Northouse, 2018, p. 225; Sendjaya & Sarros, 2008, p. 59). Although servant leadership is not gender specific, Sims and Morris (2018) asserted, women may gain great benefits from servant leadership because of its "communal aspects" (p. 409). The emerging desire for servant leadership within organizations today results from instances of low moral and ethical behavior seen in today's leadership (Peterson, Galvin, & Lang, 2012, p. 565). With an emphasis on service, leaders elevate to higher levels of morality (Parolini, Patterson, & Winston, 2009, p. 276) Liden et al.

(2014) contend servant leadership will continue to gain momentum globally (p. 1447). Although, servant leadership is not necessarily accepted in all countries. Depending on a person's cultural values, they may or may not identify with the practice (Mittal, 2012, p. 555). One thing is clear, however; servant leadership is growing in interest and will only become more and more visible in practice in the future (Sendjaya, Sarros, & Santora, 2008, p. 405).

V. DISCUSSION: SERVANT LEADERSHIP AND PROVERBS 31:10-31

Liden, Wayne, Zhao, and Henderson and Liden, Panaccio, Hu, and Meuser developed a servant leadership model with three parts: antecedent conditions, behaviors, and outcomes (Northouse, 2018, p. 231). Since there is little consensus on a true model of servant leadership, this discussion intends to focus on parts of this model and will be referred to as Liden's model hence forth. Furthermore, the example of servant leadership within Proverbs 31:10-31 appeared to be much simpler than the scholarly research implies. It is through one's character and behavior, whereby actions performed for others because of the fear of the Lord, one receives spiritual wealth of honor, life, and favor.

Antecedent Conditions: Leader Attributes (Character)

The antecedent conditions consist of context and culture, leader attributes, and follower receptivity (Northouse, 2018, p. p. 232). It is the intent of this discussion to focus on leader attributes as it relates to Proverbs 31:10-31. A leader's attributes describe a leader's "qualities and disposition" (Northouse, 2018, p. 232). The way leaders serve others is modeled by their "behavior, attitudes, and values" (Dennis & Bocarnea, 2005, p. 604). Because businesses are shifting away from the self-centered style of leadership, the topic of a leader's focus is important (Peterson et al., 2012, p.566). The topic of self emerges as a central part in the service of others. Hannay (2009) asserted, strong servant leaders focus on others (p. 3). This is not to say they lack self-esteem; instead, they have a strong focus outside of themselves (Hannay, 2009; Peterson et al., 2012, p. 586). Narcissistic leaders, whose focus is on themselves, will identify and engage less with servant leadership (Peterson et al., 2012, p. 572). In contrast, the servant leader focuses on service and on others (Koshal, 2005, p. 2). The pericope described a woman who focused on others: her husband, her children, her household, her servants, and the needy (Prov. 31:10-31). There is a parallel between focusing on others and wisdom. In Proverbs 31:30, the woman was described to have the "fear of the Lord." The oral-scribal intertexture revealed how to obtain wisdom, beginning with reverence for the Lord (Prov. 1:7). This type of high regard for the Lord described a person who relied not on themselves, but on the Lord. When servant leaders abandon the esteem of themselves, they are enabled to focus on others.

Behaviors: Proverbs 31 Woman as Servant Leader

The second component of the Liden's model is servant leader behaviors (Northouse, 2018, p. 233). The list of these behaviors includes conceptualizing, emotional healing, putting followers first, helping followers grow and succeed, behaving

ethically, empowering, and creating value for the community (Northouse, 2018, pp. 233-235). Conceptualizing is a leader's ability to understand and think through organizational problems (Northouse, 2018, p. 233). In Proverbs 31:16, the woman demonstrated this behavior by considering a field and buying it. Emotional healing demonstrates one's concern for the well-being of others (Northouse, 2018, p. 233). While there is little doubt about the woman's inclination for emotional healing through service to her family, she extends this concern to those in need by serving the poor (Prov. 31:20a). Putting followers first is the cornerstone of servant leadership (Northouse, 2018, p.234). This is evident in the woman's behavior toward her family. In Proverbs 31:11, she brought her husband good. In Proverbs 31:15, she put her own rest aside and woke up very early to complete her familial duties. She taught her children (Prov. 31:26b) and managed her household (Prov. 31:27). Helping followers grow and succeed shows a servant leader's ability to know what their followers desire and help them get there (Northouse, 2018, p. 234). A parallel exists in the results of her service to her husband. In Proverbs 31:23, her husband was respected, held high esteem, and was elevated because of her service (MacArthur, 2005, p. 730). McCreesh (1985) conferred, the husband's gain was because of the confidence he had in her activities (p. 27). Behaving ethically is a servant leader's high moral standards (Northouse, 2018, p. 235). The poem's title, *The Wife of Noble Character* implied her high standard. Not only was she clothed in spiritual wealth, but she spoke with wise words (Prov. 31:25-26). In Proverbs 31:30 it talked about folly, who was deceptive and then contrasted to the woman in the pericope who found wisdom. Empowering describes the servant leader's ability to make others feel confident to act on their own (Northouse, 2018, p. 235). In the passage, her husband and children stood up and praised her (Prov., 31:28). Those lacking empowerment would not have the confidence to stand on their own. Creating value for the community shows the servant leader's influence over their followers to get them to also serve others (Northouse, 2018, p. 235). The woman in the passage earned the respect and praise of her husband and her children, although it did not explicitly state they served others because of her example (Prov. 31:11; Proverbs 31:28). While the passage did not clearly describe all the servant leader behaviors, it did represent an overwhelming majority.

Outcomes

The third part of the Liden's model examines outcomes: follower performance and growth, organizational performance, and societal impact (Northouse, 2018, p. 232). Follower performance and growth focuses on the follower's realization of their full potential (Liden, Wayne, Zhao, & Henderson, 2008, p. 162; Northouse, 2018, p. 236). A parallel exists in Proverbs 31:23, when it talked about her husband's earned respect with his peers. This verse is located between many verses of action. There are eleven verses describing her actions before this verse and 4 verses of action after. This implies an association between her actions and her husband's success. There is much debate about the effectiveness of servant leadership on outcomes, specifically a servant leader's effect on organizational performance. While the organization implied in the passage was her household, one might determine whether it succeeded by asking the question, was the household better off because of her service to it? Because she brought her husband good (Prov. 31:12), her family and her servants were fed (Prov.

31:15) and clothed in winter (Prov. 31:21), and she took care of the household (Prov. 31:27), this evidence derives an agreement. Yes, the household was better off. Societal impact deems servant leadership as a vehicle to impact society (Northouse, 2018, p. 237). While the text talked about her taking care of the poor, there is little explicit evidence that her service caused her followers to serve and impact society (Prov. 31:20). However, the passage created a desire for emulation. If it created a desire for others to emulate her service, then her service did in fact impact society.

An Enhancement to Servant Leadership

While Proverbs 31:10-31 and Liden's servant leadership model share many common characteristics, it is enhanced by adding two key points: an emphasis on action as behavior and servant leader growth.

Hands, Arms, and Action. Many of the seven behaviors imply action, however, they do not emphasize it. The example of servant leadership in Proverbs 31:10-31 was full of basic actions. The passage described her actions throughout the text. Of the twenty-two verses, fifteen described her in action. It is important to note that her hands or arms were mentioned six times. Vermeulen (2017) contended, "scholars have identified lists of body parts as a compositional device in Biblical Hebrew poetry and as a way to highlight key themes in the biblical text" (p. 801). Her hands and arms represented action. "She worked with eager hands" (Prov. 31:13). "Her arms are strong" (Prov. 31:17b). "In her hand she holds a distaff," as she spun clothes (Prov. 31:19). "She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy" (Prov. 31:20). These first four verses described her actions toward others; however, in the final verse, she received honor because of what she did with her hands (Prov. 31:31; McCreesh, 1985, p. 31). It is beyond doubt, the passage intended to show a woman who served through action. Therefore, servant leadership is enhanced by adding an emphasis on action as a behavior.

Servant Leader Growth. Liden's servant leader model includes three outcomes affecting the follower, the organization, and society. However, servant leader growth is an outcome which was also described in the text but has not been addressed in the model. Proverbs 31:31 stated, "honor her for all that her hands have done, and let her works bring praise at the city gate." Greenleaf and Spears (2002) questioned, "do those served grow as persons; do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous..." (p. 27). Is there a similar effect on the leader themselves? After a life of service, the woman is called blessed and is praised by her family (Prov. 31:28). She is not only rewarded with the fruits of her labor, as she is clothed in physical wealth (Prov. 31:22), but she is also clothed in spiritual wealth, as well (Prov. 31:25). The pursuit of the elusive wife goes beyond a husband's search. Instead, it is a call to all people, as they pursue wisdom. As they fear the Lord, they abandoned service to themselves and serve others. In it, they find riches which exceed the value of rubies (Prov. 31:10). They find spiritual wealth, resulting in favor, life, and honor (Prov. 31:31).

VI. CONCLUSION

In summary, the Proverbs 31 woman stands as a strong witness for aspiring servant leaders and interested scholars. Its pursuit will take genuine work, but its result

holds value far greater than anything money can buy. Through the pericope, the theory of servant leadership is enhanced by adding an emphasis on action as behavior and by adding servant leader growth as an outcome. Future study is necessary to determine whether there is a correlation between placing an emphasis on the servant leader's actions and whether it leads to enhanced follower growth. Additional study is also required to understand the growth of the servant leader, as this should be considered an additional benefit to organizations and individuals considering its practical implementation.

About the Author

Elizabeth Graves is currently pursuing a Doctorate of Strategic Leadership at Regent University with a concentration in servant leadership. She received her M.B.A. in 2012 and her B.S. Business in 2003 from Wright State University with concentrations in marketing and management. She is the President of manufacturing and design firm Prime Controls, Inc. located in Dayton, Ohio and is the founder of White Stone Leadership, a leadership consulting firm which focuses on organizational culture diagnostics and remediation and leadership style development. She resides in Dayton, Ohio as a wife and mother of three beautiful children.

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