

Proverbs 31:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands.

Analysis

She seeketh wool, and flax—The Hebrew darash (דָּרַשׁ, to seek/inquire) implies diligent searching, not passive acquisition. Tzemer (צֶמֶר, wool) and pishtim (פִּשְׁתִּים, flax/linen) were primary textile materials—wool for warmth, linen for coolness and priestly garments. **Worketh willingly with her hands** combines chefetz (חֶפֶץ, delight/pleasure) with kapayim (כַּפַּיִם, palms/hands)—she works with joyful eagerness, not grudging necessity.

This rebukes both idleness (condemned in 2 Thessalonians 3:10) and joyless toil (the curse of Genesis 3:17-19 redeemed). The virtuous woman images the Creator who worked to fashion the world and 'saw that it was good' (Genesis 1:31). Redeemed labor is worship—skillful work done with 'hands' that honor God through excellence and diligence.

Historical Context

In ancient Israel, textile production was central to household economy. Women spun, wove, and dyed fabrics for family use and trade. Quality raw materials (fine wool, Egyptian flax) required knowledge and effort to source. This was skilled economic activity, not mere domestic drudgery.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. What is the difference between working 'willingly with hands' (joyful diligence) and both laziness and joyless workaholism?
2. How can your daily work—whatever your vocation—be offered as worship that images the Creator's delight in His work?
3. In what areas might you be seeking 'wool and flax'—pursuing excellence in raw materials and preparation—rather than settling for mediocrity?

Interlinear Text

שֶׁהִיא שׁוֹמֵרָה	צֶמֶד	וּפְשָׁתִּים	לַעֲשׂוֹת	בְּרָצוֹן	בְּיָדֶיהָ:
She seeketh	wool	and flax	and worketh	willingly	with her hands
H1875	H6785	H6593	H6213	H2656	H3709

Additional Cross-References

1 Timothy 5:10 (Parallel theme): Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work.

Titus 2:5 (Parallel theme): To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.