

# Proverbs 31:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms.

## Analysis

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**She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms** (חֲגַדְתָּה בְּעֵינֶךָ) — This verse begins with the *y* (ayin) line of the acrostic poem. To 'gird the loins' (chagar motneha) is warrior language (Judges 18:16, 1 Samuel 25:13), picturing tucking robes into the belt for vigorous action. The eshet chayil (valiant woman) approaches domestic labor with the vigor of a soldier preparing for battle.

The parallel **strengtheneth her arms** (te'ammetz zero'oteha) emphasizes deliberate cultivation of capability—this is not natural ease but disciplined strength. Ancient Near Eastern women performed physically demanding tasks (grinding grain, carrying water, textile work), and this woman trains herself for excellence. Proverbs celebrates competence as a moral virtue, not mere pragmatism.

## Historical Context

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In ancient Israelite households, women's work was essential to family survival and economic well-being. Textile production, food preparation, and household management required significant physical strength and stamina. The metaphor of 'girding loins' would resonate with an audience familiar with both agricultural labor and military preparedness.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

**Psalm 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

## Study Questions

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1. How does viewing ordinary work as requiring 'warrior-like' discipline transform your approach to daily responsibilities?
2. What areas of your life require you to deliberately 'strengthen your arms' through disciplined practice rather than relying on natural ability?
3. How does Proverbs' elevation of competence challenge modern tendencies toward mediocrity or the glorification of ease?

## Interlinear Text

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|               |                   |             |               |         |     |
|---------------|-------------------|-------------|---------------|---------|-----|
| זְרוּעָתֶיהָ: | וְתִאֵמֶץ         | מִתְנַצֵּעַ | בְּעֵזֶר      | חִגְרֵה | הִ  |
| her arms      | and strengtheneth | her loins   | with strength | girdeth | She |
| H2220         | H553              | H4975       | H5797         | H2296   |     |

## Additional Cross-References

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**Job 38:3** (Parallel theme): Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me.

**Ephesians 6:10** (Parallel theme): Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

**1 Peter 1:13** (Parallel theme): Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

**Ephesians 6:14** (Parallel theme): Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

**Luke 12:35** (Parallel theme): Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning;

**1 Kings 18:46** (Parallel theme): And the hand of the LORD was on Elijah; and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.