

# Proverbs 31:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night.

## Analysis

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**She perceiveth that her merchandise is good** (ta'amah ki-tov sachra)—The verb 'perceiveth' (ta'am) means to taste, discern, or have good judgment. This is the ș (pe) line of the acrostic. The eshet chayil is not merely industrious but discerning—she evaluates quality, understands market value, and takes satisfaction in excellent work. Sachar (merchandise/profit) appears throughout Proverbs to describe wisdom's value (3:14, 31:18).

**Her candle goeth not out by night** (lo-yichbeh balailah nerah)—The lamp burning through darkness symbolizes vigilance, provision, and prosperity (Job 18:6, 21:17). This is not workaholism but faithful stewardship—her household never lacks because she maintains productive rhythms. The lamp also suggests hospitality and security, marking a home of blessing.

## Historical Context

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In ancient times, olive oil lamps required regular attention and adequate oil supply. A continuously burning lamp indicated both prosperity (sufficient oil) and vigilant household management. Night work, particularly textile production, extended productive hours and demonstrated commitment to family welfare.

## Related Passages

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

**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

## Study Questions

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1. How do you cultivate discernment to distinguish between good and mediocre work in your own labor?
2. What does it mean for your 'lamp' to burn continually—not through anxious striving but through faithful stewardship?
3. In what ways might you take legitimate satisfaction in work well done without falling into pride or self-sufficiency?

## Interlinear Text

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בְּלִילְךָ	וְלֹא	סְחַרְתָּ	טֹב	כִּי	בְּ	עַמָּה	
goeth not out	לֹא	that her merchandise	טֹב	כִּי	בְּ	עַמָּה	
She perceiveth	H3588	is good	H2896	H5504	H3808	H3518	H3915

בְּלִילְךָ  
goeth not out  
her candle  
H5216

## Additional Cross-References

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**1 Thessalonians 2:9** (Parallel theme): For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God.

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