

# Proverbs 31:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff.

## Analysis

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**She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff**—The *tsade* line uses the imagery of textile production, fundamental to ancient economies. The *kishor* (spindle) was held in one hand to twist fibers, while the *pelek* (distaff) held the unspun material. This verse emphasizes practical skill—competent hands (*yadeha*, repeated twice) that master complex crafts.

Spinning was painstaking work requiring dexterity and patience. By highlighting this specific craft, Proverbs dignifies women's traditional work as requiring genuine expertise. The *eshet chayil* is not abstractly 'capable' but concretely skilled in particular trades. Excellence manifests in mastery of real tasks, not vague moral qualities divorced from material competence.

## Historical Context

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Textile production was central to ancient household economies and typically women's domain. The process of transforming raw wool or flax into thread, then thread into cloth, required learned skills passed from mother to daughter. Quality textiles were valuable trade goods, making textile expertise economically significant.

## Related Passages

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**James 2:17** — Faith and works

**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

## Study Questions

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1. What practical skills have you developed to the point of genuine mastery rather than mere adequacy?
2. How does Proverbs' celebration of specific crafts challenge modern tendencies to devalue manual or domestic labor?
3. In what ways might you recover the biblical dignity of ordinary work performed with excellence?

## Interlinear Text

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יָדֶיהָ	שָׁלַחַהּ	בְּכִישׁ	וְיָדֶיהָ	תִּמְכּוּ	פָּלָךְ:
her hands	She layeth	to the spindle	and her hands	hold	the distaff
H3027	H7971	H3601	H3709	H8551	H6418

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