

GODLY MOTHERS

There was an article in National Geographic several years ago provided a of God's love for his children. After a forest fire in Yellowstone National Park, forest rangers began their trek up a mountain to assess the fire's damage. One ranger found a bird literally cooked solid in ashes yet perched gracefully on the ground at the base of a tree. Somewhat sickened by the eerie sight, he knocked over the bird with a stick. When he moved it, three tiny chicks scurried from under their dead mother's wings. The loving mother, aware of the impending disaster, had carried her babies to the base of the tree and had gathered them under her wings, instinctively knowing that the toxic smoke would rise. She could have flown to safety but refused to abandon her babies. When the blaze had arrived and the heat had scorched her small body, the mother had remained steadfast. She had been willing to die so that those under the cover of her wings would live.

Psalm 91:1 He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. 2 I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust." 3 Surely he will save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence. 4 He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge

The commonest fallacy among women is that simply having children makes one a mother - which is as absurd as believing that having a piano makes one a musician. -- Sydney J. Harris

Today is a day we remember mothers. We honor those who over the years have sought to ensure our safety under their wings of love, protection and guidance. Today I want to talk about women who are GODLY mothers – either naturally or by spiritual adoption. This means mothers who:

G uides their children in God's way
O rphans their own desires
D elights in their children
L oves them unconditionally
Y earns for their salvation.

1. Guides their children in God's way

One of the things good parents do is train their children to know the Bible and to fall in love with Jesus. Children grow in their understanding of God through the example of their earthly parents. This is why it is extremely important to provide a good example to children. They need to see that their parents love God with their whole heart, that they know God's Word, and that they are anxious to share it with them.

The mother's heart is the child's schoolroom. -- Henry Ward Beecher

Deut 6:5 Love GOD, your God, with your whole heart: love him with all that's in you, love him with all you've got! 6 Write these commandments that I've given you today on your hearts. Get them inside of you 7 and then get them inside your children. Talk about them wherever you are, sitting at home or walking in the street; talk about them from the time you get up in the morning to when you fall into bed at night. 8 Tie them on your hands and foreheads as a reminder; 9 inscribe them on the doorposts of your homes and on your city gates.

The greatest teacher I ever had was my mother. -- George Washington

Someone once asked Dwight D. Eisenhower when he was President, "Mr. President, you have met so many great men in your time. Who is the greatest man you ever met?" Without an instant's hesitation he said, "The greatest person I ever met wasn't a man. It was a woman. It was my mother. She never had much schooling but she was wise in God's wisdom. She went to school in the greatest of all books, the Bible. And she acquired real wisdom." He said, "Once when I was a boy, my brothers and I were playing a game with my mother. The game was with cards -- not regular playing cards because she was too straight-laced for that -- but a hand of cards was dealt and I remember this night Mother dealt me an utterly impossible hand. And I began to complain about it. "She said, 'Boys, put your cards down. I want to tell you something, especially you, Dwight. You are playing a game in your home with your mother under loving circumstances. We all love each other here and I have dealt you a bad hand. Now,' she said, 'when you get out in life where they don't love you so much, you are going to be dealt many a bad hand. What are you to do? You are to pray to God. You are to trust Him and like a man you are to play out the hand that is dealt you.' "And that," said Dwight Eisenhower, "is one of the wisest things I learned in my youth."

The Bible reminds us that training our children in biblical truth reaps great rewards.

2. Orphans their own desires

A teacher asked her students: Suppose your mother baked a pie and there were seven of you --your parents and five children. What part of the pie would you get? A sixth, replied one boy. I'm afraid you don't know your fractions, said the teacher, Remember, there are seven of you. Yes, teacher, said the boy, but you don't know my mother. She would say she didn't want any pie so we could have more.

GODLY Mothers love their children sacrificially which often means laying aside their own wants and desires in order to serve their children. Like the story of the bird I began with, sometimes mothers sacrifice their lives physically for their children.

John 15:13 Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.

While there may be times a mother may be faced with death – the even greater challenge is the daily dying to self that comes through sacrificial love. In many ways it is easier to give your life in an act of bravery than to face the daily dying to self involved in true service.

A teacher was having a lesson on magnets for her second graders. She demonstrated various kinds of magnets and told them all the ways that a magnet could be used. Each student was given a chance to hold a magnet and try it for themselves. The next day she gave them a quiz, and the last question was: "My name has six letters. The first one is 'M.' I pick up things. What am I?" The teacher was surprised to see that over half the students had written the word "Mother."

Having children means that your entire world changes. Have you ever watched a mother go through a room with a small baby – it is like no one even notices her. Everything changes.

A four-year-old and a six-year-old presented their Mom with a house plant one Mothers Day. They had used their own money and she was thrilled. The older of them said with a sad face, There was a bouquet that we wanted to give you at the flower shop. It was real pretty, but it was too expensive. It had a ribbon on it that said, 'Rest In Peace', and we thought it would be just perfect since you are always asking for a little peace so that you can rest.

One of the sacrifices many woman make is to give up their career so that they can stay at home with their children. Of course this is not possible for everyone. Often those who do make this choice feel that doing this somehow makes them second rate. Too many times women are made to feel that they should apologize for being mothers and housewives. In reality, such roles are a high and noble calling.

When Tony Campolo I was on the faculty of the University of Pennsylvania, there were gatherings from time to time to which faculty members brought their spouses. Inevitably, some woman lawyer or sociologist would confront his wife with the question, " And what is it that you do, my dear?" His wife, who was the mother of 2 boys and one of the most brilliantly articulate individuals he knew, had a great response: "I am socializing two homo sapiens in the dominant values of the Judeo-Christian tradition in order that they might be instruments for the transformation of the social order into the teleologically prescribed utopia inherent in the eschaton." When she followed that with, "And what is it that you do?" the other person's "A lawyer" just wasn't that overpowering.

The most important occupation on earth for a woman is to be a real mother to her children. It does not have much glory to it; there is a lot of grit and grime. But there is no greater place of ministry, position, or power than that of a mother. -- Phil Whisenhunt

3. Delights in their children

In the eyes of its mother every beetle is a gazelle -- African Proverb

Good parents delight in their children. They take joy in them. We see this modeled for us by our heavenly Father:

Psalm 147:11 the LORD delights in those who fear him, who put their hope in his unfailing love.

Isn't that an amazing thought. God delights in you! You bring joy to heart of God. The creator of heaven and earth smiles as He looks down on you. God in eternity past created the universe – the stars and planets and this entire world with one thing in mind – you. It was all created to sustain life. Out of the greatness of His love He created us and even though we have fallen and grieve Him from time to time God still delights in us.

G. Campbell Morgan, a profound British preacher whose four sons all became pastors, influenced millions with his preaching, teaching and writing. One day, when his young son Howard finished preached, a reporter asked him, "Since you have five Pastors in your family who is the greatest preacher? Expecting the son to give the honor to his father, Howard surprised the reporter by saying, "My Mother!" Often people do not realize that a mother's love, concern and teaching are often far more influential on people than anything else.

Delighting in your children does not mean that you try to live your life through them. I know parents that have driven their children to compete and succeed in areas which they wished they had succeeded. Delighting in your children means that you love them for who they are and seek to find out how God made them so you can get behind them.

4. Loves them unconditionally

GODLY mothers love their children unconditionally. They always see the best in them. We live in a society where we are so often judged for what we do or how we look.

God sees us, not for what we have done, but for who we are. God looks to our hearts. He loves us despite our actions. We have worth and value not because of what we do but because of who we are – who we were born to be.

God loves us because He made us and we have infinite worth and value in His eyes. He loved us while we were still His enemies.

Rom 5:8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

God loved us even when we were very far from Him. Today as we celebrate communion we are celebrating God's unconditional love for each one of us.

5. Yearns for their salvation

Lastly, GODLY mothers want their children to be saved. They want to see their children receive Christ as savior and walking in a right relationship with Him. We see this same thing in our heavenly father:

2 Pet 3:9 The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

No mother wants their child to perish. The greatest joy for any parent is to see their child receive Christ and walk with Him.

When the will of Henry J. Heinz, wealthy distributor of the famous "57 Varieties" line, was read, it was found to contain the following confession: "Looking forward to the time when my earthly career will end, I desire to set forth at the very beginning of this will, as the most important item in it, a confession of my faith in Jesus Christ as my Savior. I also desire to bear witness to the fact that throughout my life, in which there were unusual joys and sorrows, I have been wonderfully sustained by my faith in God through Jesus Christ. This legacy was left me by my consecrated mother, a woman of strong faith, and to it I attribute any success I have attained."

A little boy was talking with the girl next door. "I wonder what my mom would like for Mother's Day." The girl answered, "Well, you could promise to keep your room clean and orderly. You could go to bed as soon as you're told. You could brush your teeth before bed and you could quit fighting with your little sister, especially at the dinner table." The boy looked at her puzzled and said, "No, I mean something practical!"

Let me get practical with you. Young people, when was the last time you said thank you to your moms. Thanks for protecting me. Thanks for supporting me. Thanks for teaching me. Thank you to all you moms and adopted moms out there today. May God richly bless each one of you!

Solomon Rosenberg, his wife and their 2 sons were arrested, together with Rosenberg's mother and father for the crime of being Jews. They were placed in a Nazi concentration camp. In that labor camp, and the rules were simple. "As long as you can do your work, you are permitted to live. When you become too weak to do your work, then you will be exterminated." Rosenberg watched as his mother and father were marched off to their deaths. He knew that the next would be his youngest son, David - because David had always been a frail child.

Every evening, Rosenberg came back into the barracks after each day of hard labor and searched for the faces of his family. When he found them they would huddle together, embrace one another and thank God for another day of life. One day Rosenberg came back and didn't see those familiar faces. He finally discovered his oldest son, Joshua, in a corner, huddled, weeping and praying. He said, "Josh, tell me it's not true." Joshua turned and said, "It is true, Dad. Today David was not strong enough to do his work. So they came for him."

"But where is your mother?" asked Mr. Rosenberg. "Oh Dad," he said, "When they came for David, he was afraid and he cried. So Mum said, 'There is nothing to be afraid of, David,' and she took his hand and went with him." That illustrates a mother's love -- a love so strong that it chooses to give up life so her child can be comforted.