

Characteristics Of A Godly Mother
Next Steps Devotional Guide
Sunday, May 14, 2023
Mother's Day
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1. Take a moment and ask yourself this question: what do I believe was the hardest or most challenging for my mother to parent me? Why do you think that?
2. Mothers only: What would you say is the biggest challenge to being a mother today? Why?
3. The first characteristic of a godly mother is she must have a good sense of humor. It has been said, "That laughter is the best medicine." When it comes to this characteristic — we looked at Abraham and Sarah.
 - a. Take your sermon outline and read Genesis 12:4. God told Abraham to leave Ur (modern Iran/Iraq) today and travel to Palestine. This is no easy task. Abraham was 75-years-old and his wife Sarah, was 65-years-old. Abraham and Sarah do this without question. This is around 1,150 mile journey by foot. The average person can walk around 3 miles per hour. This would take about a year to do this. This was no easy task due to weather, terrain, robbers, thieves and wildlife. Why do you think this was "easier" for Abraham and Sarah to do than believe God was going to give them a son?
 - b. Read Psalms 127:3-5 in your sermon outline. In those days, people believed that if a married couple was childless, it must mean they had sinned against God and this was God's punishment on them. People would whisper, "There goes that childless couple. I wonder what sin they committed against God for God to do this to them?" Many women dream of having children and yet many cannot. What impact do you think this has on a woman? Why?
4. Read Genesis 15:5-6 in your sermon outline. Ten years have gone by. Abraham is now 85 and Sarah is now 75 and Sarah decides to take matters into her own hands to get a son.
 - a. Read Genesis 15:5 (ESV) in your sermon outline. Abraham does what Sarah requests. He had sexual relations with Sarah's slave named Hagar. Hagar is a "fertile Myrtle" and immediately gets pregnant. We are told that Hagar's attitude towards Sarah after getting pregnant was she had contempt for her. Read in your sermon outline the explanation for the Hebrew word translated as "contempt." Maybe Hagar had contempt because she knew she was only property to them, not a person. She was just something to use, abuse and then discard. It seems that when Hagar saw Sarah, she rubbed her bulging stomach to say, "I am blessed by God while you are still cursed by God." Hagar is a surrogate who will have to give her son to Sarah at birth. Put yourself in each woman's shoes (i.e., guys we can do this too). It almost sounds like a modern reality TV show such as the Kardashians. Do you think Sarah was hopeful to eventually get Ishmael (Hagar's son) or do you think she might have resented it now?
 - b. Read Genesis 16:6 in your sermon outline. Sarah complains to Abraham and he wimps out. He tells us to do whatever she wants to Hagar because Hagar is property, not a person. Sarah's response is to treat Hagar harshly. Read the explanation in your sermon notes for the Hebrew word translated "harshly." Why do you think God put this part of the story in the Bible for us?
5. Read Genesis 17:16-17 in your sermon outline. The clock has been ticking and more years have gone by — 13 more years in fact. Abraham is now 99 and Sarah is now 89 and Ishmael is now 13. Abraham has decided that Ishmael should be the son God promised.
 - a. This is understandable in some way. Abraham has been parenting Ishmael for 13 years. They have hunted and fished together. They have bonded over 13 years. In verse 17, Abraham laughed in disbelief that at God that Sarah and him are going to have a biological son. And God told him what the name will be for this biological son — [יִצְחָק, yitzchaq] and it is pronounced in English as "Isaac." "Isaac" means "laughter." Now compare this reaction to Abraham's reaction in Genesis 16:6. Why do you think there is such a 180 reaction?
 - b. Read Genesis 17:18-22 in your sermon outline. When Abraham is 99 and Sarah is 89, God reaffirms His promise that in one year, a biological son will be born to them. This means that when Isaac is born, 25 years will have gone by from God's initial promise to Abraham and Sarah. Are there any promises from God that you personally either question or feel they will never happen to you? Why?
 - c. Would those around you say you have a good sense of humor? Why or why not?
 - d. Can you and do you laugh at yourself? Explain.
6. A second characteristic of a godly mother is she must trust God in hopeless situations. For all you who are mothers and those who are not (men included), has there ever been a time in your life where you quit trusting God? What happened and why did you quit trusting God?
 - a. Read Genesis 18:9 in your sermon notes. God asked Abraham a strange question — "Where is Sarah?" Sarah was in the "kitchen" cooking for the messengers God sent to them. These messengers from God already know this. Read Genesis 3:9 and Genesis 4:9 in your sermon notes. The question is not about a physical location, but a spiritual and relational location. God knows where we are with Him in trust. So, if God were to ask you, "Where is our relationship?", it is not because God does not know. He knows. So, how would you answer that question to God? Why did you give that answer?
 - b. Read Genesis 18:10-11 in your sermon notes. Both Abraham and Sarah are not only old, Sarah is past menopause. Most of her life she has to watch other women have children while she couldn't. All her life she

has wondered what sin she committed against God that deserves this kind of punishment. Some have suggested her “laugh” was more sarcasm than disbelief. Have you ever used sarcasm to God? Why?

7. Read Genesis 18:12 and Genesis 18:14a in your sermon in your outline. Hopelessness is a cancer that will take your life, your joy and destroy your relationship to God. Thinking and believing that God is impotent or does not care about our needs, takes you down a very dark path.
 - a. Read Genesis 18:14-15 in your sermon outline. Is there anything in your life you have prayed to God about and it has not happened? Are there times in your life where you either think, feel or act as if there are some things just too hard for God to do? If so, why?
 - b. How does this impact your life personally? Your other relationships?
8. A third characteristic of a godly mother is that she has courage to do what is right and for this, we are looking at another Old Testament woman — Ruth.
 - a. Read Genesis 19:31-38 in your sermon outline. Nearly 1,000 years later we are given the story of Ruth. Why do you think God put Genesis 19:31-38 in the Bible. What do you think the point of this story is and why?
 - b. Incest makes us sick. We want to throw-up. We put people in prison for it, especially when a parent forces their child to do this. In this case, it was reversed. Two unnamed and unmarried daughters who have no husband and children, develop a plot to get a child. Get their father, Lot, drunk and then have sex with him. The older daughter goes first and gets pregnant. She names this son Moab, which in Hebrew means “from my father.” He becomes the father of the nation of Moab or the Moabites. The next night the second daughter does it and she gets pregnant and names her son Ben-ammi, which means “son of my people.” He becomes the father of the nation of Ammon or the Ammonites. Lot is at the same time as Abraham (i.e., 1950 BC). Everyone has “skeleton” in their closet. Are there things you hope people or certain people never learn about you from your past? Why?
 - c. Read Ruth 1:11-15 in your sermon outline. The story of Ruth in some ways parallels the story about Lot. Naomi, the matriarch has two daughter-in laws whose husbands have died leaving them no children. Naomi decides to leave Moab, which was next to Judah, to live in Bethlehem. Both of Naomi’s sons married Moabite women. Ruth insists on going with her mother-in-law Naomi to live with her in Bethlehem. Naomi at first tries to stop this for 3 reasons. Read those in your sermon notes. Naomi tries to do what she believes is the right thing. When was a time you tried to stop someone from doing something because you believed you were right? What happened? When was a time someone tried to stop you from doing something because they believed they were right? What happened?
 - d. Read Ruth 1:16-18 and Matthew 1:5b-6 in your sermon outline. Since King David is a descendant of Ruth, that meant he had some Moabite DNA in him. Since Jesus was a descendant of King David, that meant he had some Moabite DNA in him. What does this tell you about God? About you?
 - e. Read Proverbs 29:15 in your sermon notes. Disciplining a child is never easy. When parents say to their child, “This is going to hurt me more than it’s going to hurt you,” that is true. No godly and loving parent gets pleasure from disciplining their child. If you are a mother, and/or a parent (fathers included here), have you ever struggled with disciplining your children? Why do you think this is so difficult to do?
 - f. How do you think God feels when He has to discipline us, His children, and why?
9. A fourth characteristic of a godly mother is she faithfully and passionately prays for her children. This brings us to another Old Testament character — a woman by the name of Hannah. If you are a mother and/or a parent (fathers included here), how often and how much time do you spend praying for your children?
 - a. Read 1 Samuel 1:10-11, 17, 19b-20 in your sermon notes. In those days, if a woman did not produce a child, her husband could divorce her for it. Also, don’t reforge that childless parents were seen as having a curse from God on them for some sin. In her desperation, Hannah bargains with God. Have you ever tried to bargain with God? Why did you do this? What was it and what were the results?
 - b. God answered Hannah’s prayer and gave her a son she named Samuel — one of the most used and powerful prophets for God in the Old Testament. Take your Bible and read 1 Samuel 1:24-28. Do you think this was hard for her to do? Why or why not? Since God had kept His end of the bargain, Hannah kept hers. When it was time to wean the young child Samuel from nursing, she gave him to God. This is unbelievable. Why and how do you think she was willing and did this?
 - c. If you have ever bargained with God, have you always kept your end of the bargain? Why or why not?
 - d. Read James 5:16 in your sermon notes. What does this passage say to you about praying for your children — whether they are very young such as preschoolers, or teens or even adults?
 - e. If you do pray for your children, what do you typically pray about and why?
 - f. Is there anything you think God would want you to either add or change about what you pray for when you pray for your children? Why or why not?
 - g. No matter how young or how old your children are, would you be willing right now to pray to faithfully, passionately and sincerely to God this: “God, I give You my children for You to do as You know is best and I will accept the results no matter what.” Why or why not?