

The Greatest Lessons Taught by Mothers

1999 Mark Beard

Text: Proverbs 1:8-9 (NIV)

⁸Listen, my son, to your father's instruction
and do not forsake your mother's teaching.

⁹They are a garland to grace your head
and a chain to adorn your neck.

Introduction

The role a mother plays in a family, be it a single parent home or traditional two parent home, is multi-faceted and hard to define. The Mom of today has to constantly adapt. She must change to fit the situation while still remaining true to herself.

A mother must be a teacher, cook, maid, doctor, accountant, and the list goes on. She must be an expert on everything from fashion to biology. In short, she must be all things to all people. It's a full-time job!

Christian writer Tony Campolo writes in The Power Delusion, "Too many times women are made to feel that they should apologize for being mothers and housewives. In reality, such roles can be noble callings. When 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 my wife with the question, 'And what is it that you do, my dear?'

"My wife, who is one of the most brilliantly articulate individuals I know, 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?' they would often blurt out, 'I'm a doctor,' or, 'I'm a lawyer,' and then wander off with a dazed look in their eyes."

Mothers do the most important job in the world. Their work is the most valuable imaginable. The same tribute also should extend to ladies who never may have had a child of their own, but have devoted hours and years helping care for and teach the young born by others. Caring for a family and raising children and grandchildren is the noblest calling in the world.

The job description may seem overwhelming, but it never should be underappreciated.

Of course, children are not as easily razzel-dazzled by Mom's qualification and exploits. They see them differently.

- A teacher had just given her second-grade class a lesson on magnets. Now came the question session, and she asked a little boy, "My name starts with an and I pick up things. What am I?" The boy replied instantly, "A MOTHER."

- Another little girl made this observation...A little girl was shown pictures of her mom and dad on their wedding day. She asked her father, "Daddy, is that the day you got Mom to come work for us?"

Whatever moms end up doing, there is **ONE** thing they are always doing—teaching. Look with me at some of the greatest *lessons* mothers ever teach their children.

I. THEY TEACH THEIR CHILDREN ABOUT LOVE.

Ronald E. Wall wrote, "A mother's heart is her child's classroom."

A. Mothers show love in different ways.

Sometimes mothers have to be firm and sometimes they get to be soft, but a good mother always does what she thinks is best for the child. There is a Spanish proverb that says, "An ounce of Mother is worth a ton of priest."

Some may feel like the unknown author of this article entitled, **The Meanest Mother in the World**

We had the meanest mother in the whole world! While other kids ate candy for breakfast, we had to have cereal, eggs, and toast. When others had a Pepsi and a Twinkie for lunch, we had to eat sandwiches. And you can guess our mother fixed us a dinner that was different from other kids had, too.

Mother insisted on knowing where we were at all times. You'd think we were convicts in a prison. She had to know who our friends were, and what we were doing with them. She insisted that if we said we would be gone for an hour, we would be gone for an hour or less.

We were ashamed to admit it, but she had the nerve to break the Child Labor Laws by making us work. We had to wash the dishes, make the beds, learn to cook, vacuum the floor, do laundry, and all sorts of cruel jobs. I think she would lie awake at night thinking of more things for us to do. She always insisted on us telling the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

By the time we were teenagers, she could read our minds. Then, life was really tough! Mother wouldn't let our friends just honk the horn when they drove up. They had to come up to the door so she could meet them. While everyone else could date when they were 12 or 13, we had to wait until we were 16.

Because of our mother, we missed out on lots of things other kids experienced. None of us have ever been caught shoplifting, vandalizing other's property, or ever arrested for any crime. It was all her fault. We never got drunk, took up smoking, stayed out all night, or a million other things, other kids did. Sundays were reserved for church, and we never missed once. We knew better than to ask to spend the night with a friend on Saturdays.

Now that we have left home, we are all God-fearing, educated, honest adults. We are doing our best to be mean parents just like Mom was. I think that's what is wrong with the world today. It just doesn't have enough mean moms anymore.

B. A mother's love is never forgotten.

Christian Nestell Bovee said, "A mother's love is indeed the golden link that binds youth to age; and he is still but a child, however time may have furrowed his cheek, or silvered his brow, who can yet recall, with a softened heart, the fond devotion, or the gentle chidings, of the best friend that God ever gives us." (Mead)

II. THEY TEACH THROUGH WHAT THEY DO.

A. A mother that prays is a mother that can lead by example.

The preacher G. Campbell Morgan had four sons, all of whom were preachers. The youngest son, Howard, considered a fine preacher, once took his father's place on this side of the Atlantic while Dr. Morgan preached in London. Someone came into the drawing room when the family was there and, thinking to find out what Howard was made of, asked this question: "Howard, who is the greatest preacher in your family?" Without a moment's hesitation he answered, "My mother." Sometimes men and women who never stand in a pulpit preach the greatest sermons through living out the word in their daily lives. (Hewett)

B. A mother who leads by example is one of the greatest witnesses.

When Robert Ingersoll, the notorious skeptic, was in his heyday, two college students went to hear him lecture. As they walked down the street after the lecture, one said to the other, "Well, I guess he knocked the props out from under Christianity, didn't he?" The other said, "No, I don't think he did. Ingersoll did not explain my mother's life, and until he can explain my mother's life I will stand by my mother's God." (Hewett)

III. A MOTHER TEACHES THROUGH SACRIFICE AND COMPASSION.

A. She puts her family first.

A teacher was giving a lesson in fractions. "Johnny, suppose there were seven in your family--five children and mother and father--a total of seven. Suppose there was pie for dessert. What fraction of the pie would you get?" Johnny answered, "One-sixth." "What do you mean?" asked the teacher. "Don't you know about fractions?" Johnny replied, "I know about fractions and I know about my mother, too. Mother would say she didn't want any." (Hewett)

B. She is always ready to "make it all better."

Someone said, "I finally found a Mother's Day card that expressed my feelings for my mother in real terms. It said, 'Now that we have a mature, adult relationship, there's something I'd like to tell you. You're still the first person I think of when I fall down and go boom!'" (Hewett)

CONCLUSION

In short, a mother teaches some of life's greatest lessons because of her heart--it's a mother's heart. It's not her relation to us, it's not that she knows all or can do all. It's not anything exterior or temporal that makes her Mom--it is that she cares! That makes her "Mama."

Margaret H. Cobb writes, My thirteen-year-old daughter is perhaps having more trouble than some teens "discovering who she is" because she is adopted from South Korea and we have no idea who her birth mother might be. Recently Amy received braces on her teeth and she was more and more uncomfortable as the day wore on. By bedtime she was miserable. I gave her some medication and invited her to snuggle up with me for a while. Soon she became more comfortable and drowsy. In a small voice that gradually tapered off to sleep she said, "Mom, I know who my real mom is, it is the one who takes away hurting." (Hewett)

References

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