

What My Mother Taught Me

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WHAT MY MOTHER TAUGHT ME

By
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The Los Angeles Times carried an article in 1995 with the title, "Things My Mother Told Me" that suggested:

1. Mind your manners and always write "thank you" notes.
2. Brush your hair.
3. Appearance matters.
4. Never marry a man in order to change him.
5. Stand up straight and clean your fingernails.
6. Eat everything on your plate and remember the starving children in the world.
7. Speak up.
8. If you ask for something, you may get it.
9. If you don't ask, you may not get it.
10. Keep your mouth shut and your legs crossed.
11. Don't ever do anything you wouldn't want me to do.

I remember overhearing a godly mother tell her daughter, "Dress modestly; don't advertise what is not for sale."

The greatest thing about motherhood, is pouring your life into your child. How many times has a middle-aged mother disciplined her daughter, and then realized, "I've become my mother?" The truth is that we often become what our mothers have taught us. You can never deny the fact that you are what your mother has made you, you are your mother's child.

When a child falls, bruises something, makes a mistake or is lost, what is the first thing they cry?

"Mommy, I need you!"

SOMEONE MUST BE YOUR PATH

We all know that our path to God is Jesus Christ. "I am the way, the truth, the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). A missionary told a story of being lost in an African jungle, and finally he came across a primitive village. He found a lady who could speak English, and volunteered to take him back to the missionaries' compound. As they hacked their way through the jungle, the missionary asked, "Are you sure this is the right way home?" The native said, "Sir, in this jungle there is no pathway, I am the path . . . you must follow."

While Jesus is our pathway to the Father, our mothers are our pathways into adulthood. When you get lost in the "jungle of this life," it's our mothers who lead us into maturity.

A. MOTHERS GIVE UP IDENTITY, REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE.

In the book, *The Christian Family*, by Larry Christiansen, he wrote about the "meanest mother in the world."

"I had the meanest mother in the world.
While other kids ate candy for breakfast, I had to have cereal, eggs or toast.
When other had Cokes and candy for lunch, I had to eat a sandwich.
As you can guess, my supper was different than other kids' also.
But at least I wasn't alone in my sufferings.
My sister and two brothers had the same mean mother I did.

My mother insisted upon knowing where we were at all times.
You'd think we were on a chain-gang.
She had to know who our friends were and what we were doing.
She insisted if we said we'd be gone an hour –
That we be gone one hour or less – not one hour and one minute.

I am nearly ashamed to admit it, but she actually struck us.
Not once, but each time we had a mind of our own and did as we pleased.
That poor belt was used more on our seats than it was to hold up Daddy's pants.

Can you imagine someone actually hitting a child just because he disobeyed?

Now you can see how mean she really was.

We had to wear clean clothes and take a bath.
The other kids always wore their clothes for days.
We reached the height of insults because she made our clothes herself –Just to save money.
Why, oh why, did we have to have a mother
who made us feel different from our friends?

The worst is yet to come.
We had to be in bed by nine each night and up at eight the next morning.
We couldn't sleep till noon like our friends.
So while they slept – my mother actually had the nerve
to break the child-labor law.

She made us work.
We had to wash dishes, make beds, and learn to cook and all sorts of cruel things.
I believe she lay awake at night thinking up mean things to do to us.

She always insisted upon our telling the truth
and nothing but the truth, even if it killed us – and it nearly did.

By the time we were teenagers, she was much wiser,
And our life became even more unbearable.

None of this, tooting the horn of a car, for us to come running.
She embarrassed us to no end by making our dates and friends come to the door to get us.
If I spent the night with a girl friend,
can you imagine she checked on me to see if I were really there?

I never had the chance to elope to Mexico –
that is, if I'd had a boyfriend to elope with.

I forgot to mention, while my friends were dating at the mature age of 12 and my old-fashioned mother refused to
let me date until the age of 15 and 16.

Fifteen, that is, if you dated only to go to a school function.
And that was maybe twice a year.

Through the years, things didn't improve a bit.
We could not lie in bed, 'sick,' like our friends did, and miss school.
If our friends had a toe-ache, a hangnail or other serious ailment, they could stay home from school.

Our marks in school had to be up to par.
Our friends' report cards had beautiful colors on them, black for passing, red for failing.
My mother, being as different as she was, would settle for nothing else than ugly black marks.

As the years rolled by, first one and then the other of us were put to shame.

We were graduated from high school.

With our mother behind us, talking, hitting, demanding respect, none of us were allowed the pleasure of being a dropout.

My mother was a complete failure as a mother.

Out of four children, a couple of us attained some higher education.

None of us had ever been arrested, divorced, or has beaten his mate . . .

And whom, do we blame for the terrible way we turned out?

You're right – our mean mother . . .

She forced us to grow up into God-fearing, educated, honest adults.

Using this background, I am trying to raise my three children.

I stand a little taller and I am filled with pride, when my children call me, “mean.”

Because, you see, I thank God, He gave me the meanest mother in the world.

G. Campbell Morgan had four sons, and all became ministers of the Gospel. At a family reunion, he was asked, “Which of the four Morgans was the greatest preacher? The father looked at each of his four sons in their face, and then he looked into their hearts and replied, “Mother!”

Henry Ward Beecher said, “Nothing can compare in beauty, and wonder, when admirableness and divinity of self, put the silent work in obscure dwellings of faithful women to bring their children up to honor, virtue and piety.”

Jochebed was a godly mother who gave birth to Moses during a difficult time. The Egyptians had commanded that all Hebrews babies be thrown into the Nile. What mother can kill her child? Jochebed took care of baby Moses until she couldn't do it anymore. Then by faith, she wove a basket, made it waterproof, and put little Moses in the basket and set it afloat on the Nile River. It was then that the daughter of Pharaoh came to the Nile, and saw the basket. When the cover was removed, the Bible says, “The baby wept.” In the greatness of women, they cannot ignore a crying baby.

You remember the story, older sister Miriam came up and said that she could find a mother to nurse the little baby in the basket. And of course, Miriam got Jochebed to care for little Moses. But she did more than caring for the child. Jochebed taught the child faith, she taught the child hope, and she taught the child love. Notice what Pharaoh's daughter promised Jochebed for taking care of Moses. “And I will give thee thy wages” (Exodus 2:9).

THE WAGES OF A MOTHER

- Children who are obedient.
- Children who are morally clean.
- Children who make a contribution to society.
- Children who stand on the side of right throughout life.
- Children who are born-again and obey Christ.
- Children who are active concerning Christ.

FAITH TO EARN YOUR WAGES

1. A godly mother must have faith.

a. Jochebed had great faith in her child, because she risked her life to preserve Moses. For three months she kept a “crying baby” while Pharaoh's guards were nearby.

(1) She had faith to preserve her baby's life. It took ingenuity, planning and a will to carry out the plan. She put

faith in a basket, it was always some tangible expression of faith.

(2) She had faith in God, rather than in believing the that edict of Pharaoh would eliminate the Jewish people.

(3) She had faith in the Lord to control the future, more than she had faith in Pharaoh's control of the future.

Jochebed had faith to give her child Moses a better day and a future. It takes faith on the part of a mother to train her child to do right in a world that is heading in the wrong direction.

2. A godly mother must have hope.

a. One of the greatest medicines in life is "hope." Many a woman has meager friends and an abusive husband; she lives in poor facilities and she doesn't have enough money for food and clothing. But, HOPE is the greatest thing in life. She knows that the future will be better.

b. Jochebed had HOPE that her son Moses would be saved from death in the Nile and that her son would be useful to God.

c. Some people have vain HOPE because they put their trust in politics, money, a job, and many things in this life. But HOPE in God is never vain.

d. When you have HOPE, you have a reason to live, a reason to work, and a reason to go on living.

e. Jochebed had HOPE that her son could serve the God of Israel, rather than the gods of Egypt. We have to believe that Jochebed carefully instilled the hope of Israel in the heart of her young son, as she brought him about to maturity. A third that we see is a mother must have love, and it's a message to the will of God.

I appreciate Mother's Day cards and flowers, and Sunday meal; all of these are necessary. But what is the greatest "gift" you can give to Mother on Mother's Day? You can give her the "Mother's Day" wages

1. What you submit to is what you love the most.

Jochebed submitted to God by saving her child. She didn't submit to Pharaoh, she didn't submit to death, i.e., throwing her baby into the Nile.

2. Jochebed's love helped her through a difficult situation. Can you imagine how "heart rendering" it was for her on the riverbank to put her baby in a basket and set him floating in the Nile River? The love of a human mother for her baby is something that we men do not understand. However, it is reflected in the love of God for us who sent His Son into this world, and let Him die for our sins.

3. Love has a way of changing lives.

The love of Jochebed changed Moses, and through Moses she changed history.

4. Pharaoh had decreed that all babies be cast into the Nile. On that riverbank, Jochebed expressed real love. "Perfect love casteth out fear" (1 John 4:18). When she put her baby into the Nile and pushed him out into the river, she had to love that baby more than at any other time in her life.

5. Jochebed's pushing the baby out into the Nile is likened unto:

- Mothers sending their children into the backyard without supervision.
- Mothers sending her child to Kindergarten.
- Mothers sending her child out on the first date.
- Mothers sending a child off to college.
- A mother seeing her child married at the church altar.

6. How mothers express their love.

Here is a list of what mothers may have to do to in a single day to tell their children they love them:

Baby feeder, diaper changer, bather, rocker, burper, hugger
Listener to crying and fussing and thousands of questions
Picker upper of food and debris cast on the floor

Problem solver, determiner of action,
and the one who gives those talks to whoever needs them

Phone messenger, reminder of responsibilities
Comforter, encourager, counselor
Hygienist
Linguistic expert for two-year-old dialects
Trainer of baby-sitters

Listener-- for the husband as well as the children
about their day, their needs, their concerns, their aspirations
Teacher of everything from how to chew food to how to drive a car
Assist on school projects (collecting bugs, building paper volcanoes, etc.)
Questioner, prober to promote thinking
Censor of TV, movies, books
Homework helper
Reader of thousands of children's books (over and over and over)
Planner and hostess of children's birthday parties
Planner and hostess of adult dinner parties (for friends, relatives, travelers, and strangers)

Grocery shopper
Cook and washer of dishes
Short-order cook for those meals after the family's dinner that growing children must have
Dispatcher to see that the appliance is fixed or the carpet shampooed
Executioner of ants, roaches, wasps and other pests
Resident historian in charge of photo albums, baby books, and school record books
Resident source of information for all those hard questions that arise
Officer of the day, on call for any emergency at home or away
Defroster of refrigerator and freezer
Food preservation expert
Family secretary, confirming dinner reservations, travel, accommodations
Corresponder to the sick, the celebrating, or the generous

Archivist for everything that "must" be kept
Keeper and locator of birth certificates and other valuable documents
Washer and ironer of clothes
Keeper and copier of tax forms
Calendar keeper for the family's visit to the doctor, the dentist, the orthodontist, the barber, and the mechanic
Fitness expert
Keeper of each family member's daily itinerary
Cleaner of the oven, the drawers, the closets, the garage,
the curtains, the bedding, the windows, even the walls
Washer and waxer of cars
Refinisher of furniture
Emergency medical technician and "ambulance" driver
Are you tired, yet?
And what else does a mother do?
Well, among many other things, she does these:
Clip ten fingernails and ten toenails for each young child regularly
Return library books and videos
Get film developed
Choose gifts, purchase gifts, wrap gifts for birthdays, Christmas,
Father's Day, Mother's Day, wedding showers, baby showers, anniversaries, etc,
Mail packages, buy stamps
Drop off the dry cleaning; pick up the dry cleaning
Have pictures framed
Haul everything that need repair
Attend recitals and sporting events
Attend every school event imaginable
Chauffeur everyone everywhere
Cover for my sick kid on his 4:00 am paper route

Comb little girl hairdos and little boys
Replace every battery in everything that ticks, whirls, or beeps
Help in the classroom
Become a mandatory volunteer for every fundraising drive
Participate in most school committees and boards
Attend school PTA meetings and conferences
Act as a room mother, making things and organizing parties
Chaperone field trips and special events
Coordinate carpools
Serve as a Scout leader, a Blue Bird leader, an AWANA leader, a Sunday School teacher
Purchase most everything for the family and the home
Keep relationships healthy with friends and every member on both sides of the family
Deliver forgotten lunches, forgotten homework, forgotten athletic gear
Attend church, Bible studies, committee meetings, showers, weddings, choir practices, board meetings, potlucks, and neighborhood gatherings just to "stay active and informed"
Return everything everyone buys
Save lives-- sometimes figuratively... sometimes literally
I don't know about you, but I'm exhausted.
Think about this – there are working moms who do all these things.
And I imagine that there are mothers here who can add to that list.
And remember, we didn't add all that she does for her husband, parents, grandparents, and friends.

If you have never really accepted Jesus as your personal Savior, would you do it right now? Do not delay or put it off. If you would like to receive Christ by faith, pray this simple prayer in your heart:

Dear Lord, I acknowledge that I am a sinner. I believe Jesus died for my sins on the cross, and rose again the third day. I repent of my sins. By faith I receive the Lord Jesus as my Savior. You promised to save me, and I believe You, because You are God and cannot lie. I believe right now that the Lord Jesus is my personal Savior, and that all my sins are forgiven through His precious blood. I thank You, dear Lord, for saving me. In Jesus' name, Amen.

If you prayed that prayer, God heard you and saved you. I personally want to welcome you to the family of God. Contact us and ask for a copy of The How To Book or use The How To Book Online (Falwell.com). It is a booklet that will answer many of the questions you are sure to have about living the Christian life. And when you contact us, tell us about your salvation experience so that we can rejoice with you.