

My Home, God's Calm or My Chaos

by Faith Cosby

A successful marriage requires love, submission, flexibility, forgiveness, and loyalty, along with a willingness to follow God's principles and let Him work in our lives.

Duration: 58:36

Scripture: Proverbs 17:9, Proverbs 22:6, Malachi 4:6, Ephesians 5:21-22, Ephesians 5:25, James 5:16

Topics: "Home Life"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares personal anecdotes and experiences to encourage wives in difficult marriage situations. She emphasizes the importance of having a willing heart and faith in God's ability to work miracles in their husbands' lives. The speaker also advises wives to listen to their husbands and help them face their faults and failures without making excuses for them. She highlights the significance of the family unit and warns against the destructive influence of Satan on families. Overall, the sermon aims to provide hope and guidance to wives facing challenges in their marriages.

Transcript

I might say before I start sharing with you, please forgive the personal illustrations I might use. They're closest to my heart and I guess seeing God work in my own family and also being able to share in some of the ways that I have failed as a wife and as a mother. I'm really just speaking from my heart and I just hope that you will take it that way.

I'm really convinced that we live in a day when Satan is trying to make the greatest inroads he can on the family. If he can destroy the family, what else do we have to say to anybody? You read God's Word and you'll find that the very last book of the Old Testament speaks of God's curse being on the family breakdown. And as I think of just the homes on my court alone that have suffered breakdown, the children are wavered, the husbands and wives, many are separated, some are living common law, and some are just living together because there's no other option as far as they're concerned.

And I realize when I speak to a group this size that you represent so many different kinds of marriages. Some of you are perfectly happy and content and God is working in your lives and your homes. We rejoice with you this afternoon.

Some of you are, you're not sad, but you're not really happy either. You're not really evidencing the working of God. You love each other and there's that respect, but down deep you know there's something

missing.

Some of you feel that as a wife you're aggressive spiritually and you just wish your husband would catch up. And there's a lot of women in that category. As I travel all across Canada, a lot of women share that with me.

I seem so hungry for spiritual things and my husband just doesn't seem to be that interested. Some of you are putting on a real nice front to your friends and your church, but then in your homes it's a different story. The interesting thing is, this afternoon, is God can meet us wherever we are.

And I'm convinced of that. You know, I have a very strong personality. I'm sure it's not hard for you to see that.

And so does my husband. And you with two people together like that, there's a lot of sparks can fly. And if God can really do something for us, I know he can do something for you.

The first thing I want to say, just as a very foundation this afternoon, has to do with this whole business of loving. I'm so glad that a dear little pastor's wife who's become quite world-known now because of her book, Open Heart, Open Home, was honest enough to say there were times when I felt like I didn't love my husband. And when she wrote that and I read that, I thought, God, you know, there have been times when I felt that way.

I might not have just said, oh, I hate him, but I sure didn't have a lot of love flowing like we sing, flowing like a river. Maybe he wasn't doing just what I wanted him to do. Maybe I didn't like the way he responded.

And this is what she said, I can remember that moment of terror when I realized I felt no love in my heart for my husband. It became very real to me at those times how easily love flees. I learned early in my marriage that human love is a vessel, the human heart, pardon me, is a vessel not large enough to sustain love.

Kneeling is the proper position for discovering love again. How often I came to my Heavenly Father and pleaded, Lord, I just don't feel any love for David today. Fill me, please, with your supernatural grace for him.

I have learned to dip my bucket deep into that well and from its refreshing drops breathe a loving atmosphere into our home. You see, ladies, I don't love my husband if he's tall, dark, and handsome. I don't love him if I can manipulate him to do what I want.

That's not true love. Jesus said, love your enemies. You see, love is not necessarily a feeling.

Yes, there are many times when our feelings are really high and we just want to love them and squeeze them. But sometimes when that's not there, does that mean I do not love? No. You see, Paul described it this way.

He says, love is absolute and it is selfless. Really what I do is I bring my empty heart in my empty hands and I ask God to fill it with His love. This love becomes the motive for my actions.

And this is how he says it. For the love which Christ has for me presses on me from all sides, holding me in tenderness. Isn't that beautiful? Holding me in tenderness, giving me an impelling motive, having brought me to this conclusion from this time onward, not one individual, my husband, my children, do we

know as judged upon the basis of human standards.

What a beautiful attitude. One thing stops this flow of love, and you're going to be hearing all about it all weekend. Already this morning it was mentioned so many times.

It's self. It's the self-life. Ephesians 5 says, love? Feel like loving? No.

It says, walk in love. You walk in love. You do that loving deed.

You say that loving word. It's a command. It's reasonable.

It's intentionable. It's far more a subject of our will than we care to admit. We're not helpless pawns on a board of love.

We train love to be a willing servant. In obedient determination, someone has said, we turn the valve and let it flow. I was reading one day.

I was getting ready for three conference speaking the following week, and I was upstairs one Sunday afternoon in my bedroom having a great time with the Lord. I found a beautiful verse that said, whatever you do, do to up-build the faith of that other person. And I thought, oh boy, wouldn't that be great to apply to marriages? It says, whatever I do, I do to up-build your faith, my husband's faith.

I thought, Lord, I'm going to take that, and I'm going to really preach it to ladies. Whatever you do, do it to up-build the faith of your husband. Start right in your home.

The phone was ringing downstairs, and I heard my husband answer it, and I knew that he had heard somebody that must have been a long-lost friend, and he called up to me. These missionaries have just arrived. Do you mind if I bring them home for supper? Well, I didn't mind.

I was glad to have them for supper. And I went back to my studying, and I heard them come in the door, so I shut my books and I went downstairs, and there they were, all six of them, suitcases, hanging bags, four kids, and my husband said to me, They're staying the week. I was not in love all of a sudden.

I was mad. But you see, with six missionaries standing looking at you, I put on a nice smile, and I said, It's so great to have you. We're going to have a wonderful week.

We had supper, and we stacked the dishes. We went to church. We came home.

We had tea, and we stacked the dishes a little further. I took my four kids out of bed, put them in sleeping bags, put their four kids in, gave them our bedroom, and at midnight, I went downstairs to do the dishes. Now, they were upstairs in bed, so my husband could see that I was not happy.

Now, when you can't talk too loud, there's a second plan you put into action, and that's what I call the cold freeze. You just freeze, and do the dishes faster than usual. You know, just flop them over there.

And he quietly came into the kitchen and picked up the tea towel, and nothing was said because the bedroom was right above him. And finally, he said quietly, Honey, I bet if you had it to do all over again, you wouldn't marry me, would you? Oh, ladies, you know what I wanted to say? It was on the tip of my tongue. No, I would not.

And I can make my eyes spark when I want to get a point across. And just then, God reminded me of a beautiful verse I had read this afternoon. Dearly beloved, whatever I do, I will do to up-build your faith.

And you know, ladies, to make my point about this whole business of love, even at that very moment in time, I didn't feel like loving. I was mad. But as an act of obedient determination, I took my hands out of the dishwasher, and I looked up at those big blue eyes, and I put my arms around them, and I said, Honey, I would.

I would do it all over again tonight. And you know, in that moment, God melted this hard, smart-ass wife's heart, and God gave us a wonderful week. They were wonderful missionaries to have in our home.

And on top of that, their kids, two of their kids got really sick. I never missed one speaking appointment. My house never really got that out of order.

Everything was just fine. All God wanted was a willing heart. He wanted faith just to turn the valve of love and let it flow.

Now, let me say this. I know there may be some wives here this afternoon that are maybe in very, very difficult marriage situations. And maybe you feel that there's no hope.

You've lost heart. Your husband seems so far from God and so uninterested. Oh, ladies, don't lose hope.

God is a God of miracles. We heard that this morning. And probably the more difficult your husband is, according to Otto Koenig, the greater challenge he thinks it is.

Right? That's the message I got. He's looking down there saying, Oh, boy, he's getting more miserable by the day. This is a wonderful challenge.

But your part is toilsome, but it's sure. Get this. It is the pure behavior of a loving, hoping, silent, trusting, faithful wife.

God will be faithful. Take heart this afternoon. If you're sitting there hurting and saying, How can I relate to this? He never does anything to make me feel like loving him.

If that's your case, take heart. There is a way to him. And God will be faithful.

Really what I want to share with you this afternoon, and I entitled it, My Home, God's Calm, or My Chaos, I want to share some principles with you that will help in making your home God's calm. I've always found that if I run the home the way I want it to go, it's not very long before it is chaos. But if I seek God and say, God, give me the principles of your word relating to my husband and my children that will make my home a little bit of glory on earth.

Oh, God, won't you do that for me? And these are some of the principles that I think are probably some of your more important. Number one, and I know you're going to say, Oh, brother, I knew she'd come up with this one. But ladies, it has to do with this business of resisting his will.

This whole business of submission. I've read more books on it, and I have been so confused by people pulling me this way and pulling me that way and saying, You remember, Faith? It says we are to submit to our husbands, but two verses or a verse before that says that we're to submit to each other, and then the verse before that says he's to submit to God. But ladies, this afternoon, all I'm concerned about is what?

What is Faith Crosby's responsibility? Not Grover Crosby's responsibility.

Not somebody else's responsibility. What is my responsibility? And God says to me, to be in subjection to my husband. I can't get away from it.

Yes, I know we're to submit to each other, and I think that that means that to have that mutual esteem for each other, that respect for each other. And if you lose respect in your marriage for one another, you are working at a tremendous disadvantage. Remember, God knew who you would choose for a husband.

We heard that this morning. God had it all planned about auto-coning in the car. God knew who I was going to choose as a husband.

He knew all the problems that I would face in my marriage. And somehow that puts him in a different perspective. God, if you really knew I would choose him, then somehow you're going to give me the grace to meet every responsibility, every problem that might bring into my life.

But my responsibility is to be in subjection to him. Now, sometimes this is like waving a red flag in front of a bull when we don't submit to him. I don't know, it's the way God has made that creature.

And I found that he's going to react in one of two ways if I don't. Number one, he'll use force to break my will. And I've seen that.

My husband, he has a special day for counseling at the church, and sometimes I sneak over there because I just want to see what's going on. You know, you call it the nosy pastor's wife. But one day, this day, I missed the good fight, the very day I should have gone over.

This husband and wife arrive, and the wife is literally all black and blue. She's got one black eye, a bruise on her cheek, scratches all on her arm. But the funny thing was you should have seen her husband.

He was in worse. Boy, she didn't go down easy, I can tell you that. But she is one of the strongest-willed women I have ever met.

And what he was trying to do, literally, was he was just using force to break her will. But more often our husbands do this. They just back off.

They just back off and let you and I assume the responsibility and probably hope that we'll fail. Now what happens? It generally breaks the spirit of our marriage. It doesn't break our will.

It doesn't break anything but the spirit of the marriage and leads to resentment. I've never, someone said, I've never known a happy henpecked husband, but I've never known a happy henpecker either. Sort of fun sometimes, though.

I found that God would never ask me to do something that wasn't really important for me to do and wasn't for my good. It's a biblical principle, ladies. As I humble myself before my husband, God says, in the right time I will exalt you.

Now don't get me wrong, I'm not talking about being a doormat this afternoon. I'm not talking about being spineless and never saying, well, I think this way or I think that way. No, that's being a robot.

I'm saying when the final decision is being made, let your husband make it. Stay in subjection. God has made him to work well under pressure.

Often as women, we don't. He does. Submission does not stifle me.

It is not servility, but it really brings freedom. It brings me a safety in freedom. It's a hard attitude.

It's not a veiled head. It's a veiled heart, someone has said. Submission.

Number two, I've found that if I want to see success in my marriage, I need to learn to be flexible to his priorities. And we see this all the time. My priorities are so different than growth.

It's just like night and day. What's important to me is not really important to him. It's the way God has made it.

He sees from a very broad perspective. I see my house and my children and those immediate needs that are right there. Someone has said, the wife sees the crack in the wall and the husband doesn't notice it until the ceiling falls in.

You know something, ladies, that literally happened at our house. That really did. We had a drip, not my husband, mind you.

We had a drip in the bathroom upstairs and I could hear this drip, drip, drip, but I couldn't see where is that drip going? And I thought, well, the bathroom is over the living room. All I need is it to come through all that stucco, you know. And I looked up there one day and it looked a little soggy.

And I said to my husband, there's a drip upstairs and I have a feeling it's going to come through. Oh, he said, I don't think, I think it's the pipes expanding. That was his famous line.

It was the pipes expanding all right. The drip came through. The whole portion of the ceiling fell right through.

I have to learn to be flexible to his priorities. It cost him \$250 to get it fixed. If he hadn't listened to me when I heard the drip, it wouldn't have cost him very much.

But I'm not going to make trouble over that, ladies. I'm more interested in having a home that's successful and children that see the love of God and a mother and father, not a mother that's saying, no, no, no, no, if you hadn't listened to me, we wouldn't have paid the \$250. I shared with some of the ladies this week the story of Richard Wurmbandt's wife, Sabrina Wurmbandt, a lady that learned very early in her marriage the importance of her husband's priorities.

He was a prisoner of war for 15 years. After nine years, he was released and said that if he did not speak of Christ, they would leave him alone. He was free one month in a little attic room and he said, I cannot but speak the things that I have seen and heard.

And after one month, they came for him. And Sabrina writes how she chased the van down the icy streets calling out, oh, don't take my Richard. Oh, Richard, don't go.

And then she says, coming back to the attic, the door stood open and weeping, I fell on the floor. I cried out, Lord, I give my husband into your hands. I can do nothing, but you can pass through locked doors.

You can put angels around him. Oh, God, you can bring him back to me. Oh, they've taken my Richard.

Ladies, that's a little person that's no different than you and I. Her feelings are the same as you and I. You put yourself in her place. I know what I would have been saying. Honey, you know, I know God's been great to you in prison, but I've missed you so much, I didn't know whether you were living or dying.

You know, could you just sort of be quiet for a while? But what was his priorities? To preach Jesus Christ if it cost him his very life. And she was a woman wise enough to know how important those priorities were, even though she didn't see him again for another six years. Be flexible to his priorities.

Number three, when I hold resentment for past failures, ladies, if you want to build a successful home, don't hold resentment. And, oh boy, how we can sure do this. I can go way back.

I can go back 23 years sometimes when I get myself really excited and want to remember. We store them up, and our husband is aware that we haven't forgiven him. And sometimes we use those past failures as a way of convincing him to listen to us today and obey us, eh? Look how it happened.

Look at this whole ceiling came down. Now I hear a drip down in the next stairs. That's happening in my home right now.

You must wonder what I live in, but there's another drip down the basement now. Or sometimes we use them to justify our wrong response. Just plain grouchy, if you like it, as Joyce Landorf calls her DRA.

You know, going around the house with a DRA. You know? Dirty rotten attitude. I love what Corrie Ten Boone says.

Forgive him, and then put up a no fishing sign. Isn't that right? Forgive, and then put up the no fishing sign. Leave it at that.

Jesus said it this way. If you forgive, you'll be forgiven. If you do not forgive, you will not be forgiven.

Ladies, I ask you this afternoon, some of you haven't forgiven him, and you're not being forgiven yourself. Number four, to build a successful home, to make my home God's come, I want to build loyalty into my children. Have you noticed how quickly our children pick up our attitudes, our complaints? Sometimes I notice if I get up grouchy, the four kids are grouchy, the dog growls, everything, I burn the toast, everything goes wrong.

They pick up our attitudes. And if we dare laugh at his weaknesses and pick apart his faults in front of our children, ladies, we're going to reap a bitter harvest. I remember as a little girl, now I don't know whether you can fathom this in your mind or not, but I have one of the dearest moms and dads that God ever gave anybody.

And I'm 41 years old, and I have never heard my mother and father in a fight. I've never even heard them in a good argument. That's why I wonder where I get all this Irish blood in me.

Maybe it's what I didn't see when I was a child. I've heard them disagree quietly, but I've never heard them raise their voices at each other. And so as a little girl, I remember my parents taking me to an aunt and uncle's house.

And this aunt and uncle didn't get on too well. They had eight children. Gee, they must have got along at some point.

Hey, come to think of it. But I remember my uncle was in the living room and when my aunt was in the kitchen, she was mad about something that night. And her children, she had six girls and two boys.

All the girls were in the kitchen. And she went at that uncle and stripped him in front of her children. She was calling him a no-good, a bum.

And I was, my eyes, I couldn't, I never heard anything like this, you know. I was so interested. And this terrible uncle in the other room, oh, brother, you know something? This is over 30 years later.

That whole family suffered. There's not one of those eight children that will even associate with either of them. Not with the father or with the mother.

Naturally, the marriage is broken up by this time. Failing to build loyalty into the children. Ladies, our husbands cannot teach our children this.

But I can teach my child that. And I don't hesitate to do it. I often say to my daughter, Ruthie, I hope when you pick a husband, you pick one just like your daddy.

By the way, she just got engaged a month ago. And I can see she's picked one just like her daddy. A super Christian, committed Christian boy.

And I said that often to her. And I would say to Paul, Paul, if you want to follow somebody, dear, that's our oldest boy, you watch your dad real close and walk in his footsteps. You know, a few months ago, my husband was very ill with, you know, sort of a high fever and a flu for a day.

And he came in and to see their dad in bed, they're just not used to it, you know. And he was laying in bed and his fever was all burning up. And our oldest son came in.

It was just a little bit before he was married. And I came upstairs to check on my husband. He had fallen in sort of a fevered sleep.

And our oldest boy was just standing at the bedroom door, looking in at his father. And I felt like picking his brains, you know. What's he thinking? And I didn't say anything.

I just thought, well, he's just, I'm just going to clear out. He doesn't need his mother here right now. And when I came up to the bedroom later, my husband was still sleeping.

But on the pillow beside him, Paul had left a little note. And all he said on the note was, Dear Dad, I just want you to know you're my 100% example of what a Christian ought to be. Teach loyalty to your children, ladies.

You'll not regret it. God will use it for His glory. Then another key, key number five.

If I want to bring God's calm into my home, I've got to deal with this whole attitude of having a grateful spirit. And I don't know too much what this seems like in America, but I'm sure it's not all that different than Canada. We have a pack of greedy people that are never satisfied.

And it's not just the world outside the church. It's inside the church. Wives that are never satisfied.

They want more and more. Living above their husband's income. Going into all kinds of debt that brings more frustration into the marriage.

Ladies, God says to get the attitude of a contented spirit. Jesus promises us our needs. Why are we always grabbing for more and more? We have a couple on our court.

He's a police constable. So in Canada, they make a fairly good salary. And we had, we call it, the summer of the swimming pools on Leader Court.

It started with our next-door neighbor. They got a lovely above ground with a great big, you know, place you could lay and sun yourself. And I'd look out my kitchen window at this beautiful swimming pool, and think, oh, isn't that nice? Then two doors down the other way, they got one the same, only just a little bit bigger, mind you.

And then another person got one, and it wasn't so fancy. But then this police constable's wife decided that she was going to outdo everybody. And hers went, this beautiful kidney pool, in ground.

And, well, that was great. I thought, wow, I guess they got lots of money, you know? And at the time, we were getting what we called the Dominion pickup. The Dominion stores were giving my husband all their leftover goodies, and we gave it to needy families.

Why my husband ever went to their house with a bag of groceries, I don't know. Because they sure didn't look needy. But when she saw him standing there with this food, she started to cry.

And she said, oh, Pastor Crosby, you don't know how badly I need this. You know I only have \$30. In fact, it wasn't even \$30.

It was \$28 to buy my groceries this week. Now, ladies, we can't live on \$28 groceries in Canada. They've got five in their family.

And when my husband came home and told me that, and I could see this beautiful swimming pool, I thought, Lord, there's something a little bit ungrateful here. Ladies, let's not be guilty of that in our homes. I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

Don't be after your husband all the time for more. And they sound like they are. And my husband has this weird idea that you spank them until they cry softly.

Then you know you sort of broke that rebellious spirit. Brother, there's some terrible screams before they get themselves crying softly. And sometimes I've literally stood holding my ears because my heart wants to cry with them.

But God says the blueness of the wound cleanses from evil. And ladies, I've lived just long enough to realize that principle is true and my husband is right. And I am going to be consistent in discipline.

Three of them are all teenagers and past now and every one of them following Jesus Christ. Now, I don't know what my husband's going to do with that little caboose because he is a challenge. Your children need to learn a healthy attitude toward authority and it is first learned toward you and your husband.

Someone has said love without discipline is sentiment. Discipline without love is tyranny. Both will produce a rebellious child.

Have you not seen it? I've seen some lovely little children that are never disciplined. They don't even know what the rod is all about. And they are what you call in Canada B-R-A-T-S.

And I've seen the other children that have been so severely disciplined that they're rebellious too. Balance it with love and overshadow it with prayer. Number seven related to my husband and bringing God's calm into my home.

Don't attempt to correct them in public. Don't attempt to put them down unless it's an understood fact between you. Someone has said, I like the little joke where the husband said to the wife, how can someone so beautiful be so stupid? And the wife said, well, God made me beautiful so you would love me and he made me stupid so I would love you.

That's the kind of jokes I'm talking about. Don't talk about your husband to others, ladies. I go out to all kinds of these showers and tupperware and copper craft and all this and sometimes it amazes me the stories I hear going around those rooms about husbands.

And do you know what God's word says? The heart of her husband does safely trust in her so that he shall have no need of spoil. There's not one of your husbands sitting here today that don't have little idiosyncrasies and things that probably bother you. Same with my husband.

But I'll tell you, you're not going to find out what they are. And I hope you feel the same way so that your husband can safely trust you. Be loyal here, ladies.

We had a friend, in fact, they're in the ministry today, but it started out by, it started out simply, very wrongly, but simply, he was always comparing her to other women. And comparisons are cruel. Whether it be with children or with your husband with somebody else's husband or his wife with somebody, comparisons are ugly and wrong.

God's word says we are unwise to compare ourselves among ourselves. It started with a comparison. And then he'd start to jest about it in public.

Until there wasn't any time you could be with this couple, but he wasn't joking about the wrong things in her life. Always laughing about her weight or the way she wore her hair. And he was funny.

You know, you just split your sides, but it was always at little Joanne's expense. You know, the last time I saw her, she said, Faith, there is nothing left of our marriage. We're in the ministry, but there's nothing left between us.

Talk about people needing revival. Don't do it, ladies. Be true to him.

Now, I'm not saying there are some that are seeking out counseling, and obviously you're going to have to share. That's a different story. But some of us just glibly get together and we're destroying our husbands.

I was speaking to a missionary's wife, and she was just this summer, just on that occasion, and she was saying, Faith, I have this lady that contacts me and several ladies in the church, and she tells us all this stuff about her husband, their private lives, their lives in the bedroom, and she says, I'm finding it really rather nauseating. And you know, I share with her, why don't you just tell her, share this principle with her. Can the heart of her husband safely trust in her? And she went back to that lady, and as she shared with that lady about what she was doing, that God broke the lady's heart who was doing it.

And she said, I realize that no wonder my husband's not interested in the church. Everybody there knows all about him. The heart of her husband does safely trust in him.

Let me talk to you a minute about God's calm in the lives of our children. I've got 20 minutes to go through this. I want to say firstly, you know, I used to have this idea that when God would send children into my home, these lovely little babies, I could cuddle, and I could pull strings all their life, and they would just jump to attention.

I had a great time for the first few years, but then when they got to be teenagers, I was pulling strings, and they were jumping, but not the way I wanted them to jump anymore. And I realized, oh God, I don't really have the answers to raising teenagers, let alone little people. I need your wisdom.

Wasn't that what we were talking about this morning? God's wisdom. And I found that sometimes there were times when the children would come to me, and I really didn't know how to answer them that would produce character in their lives for the future. And I would pray, oh God, you said if any men lack wisdom, let them ask of you, and you'll give to him liberally.

Oh God, there's nothing I want more in this world than for my children to walk with you. Help them not to stumble over their mother. Give me wisdom.

Ladies, begin there with your children. Ask God for wisdom often. Number two, take time to teach your children.

God's Word says, teach your children diligently. Talk of it when you sit, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. Every moment of the day, be teaching your children.

Instruct them in the menial tasks, in the tasks that are larger and more important, in the manners. Insist on courtesy, but be courteous to your child. I was at a wedding just last summer, and a girl was there who hadn't seen me for many years.

We knew each other very well. And I had never seen her children, though I had seen her. And she had a boy, he was 15 then, just the nicest boy.

And she was talking to me, telling me all of these exciting things that had happened in her life. And this boy came up to her, and so sweetly and so nicely, he said, excuse me mom. She just ignored him.

She went on and on. And he waited, like I mean, he didn't wait just 30 seconds and say excuse me again. And I was sort of looking at him, but she was paying no attention, so I tried to look at her again.

A couple minutes later, he said, excuse me mom. Obviously, the child wanted to ask her something that was important. The third time he did that, she grabbed him.

I could hardly believe my eyes. She grabbed him by the shoulder, turned him around, gave him a shove away, and she said, I've told you never to interrupt me. And I looked at that situation, and I thought, lady, do you have problems? And you're going to regret that kind of teaching.

A year later, I hear the story. She's regretting that kind of teaching. That's not even teaching.

That's just being rude. We wouldn't treat strangers like that. Don't be afraid of rules with your children.

It's when we make many of them. You remember, Jesus made only two. There were many others that geared on those two.

Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself. And don't be afraid to set standards. Now you're going to find out how old-fashioned I am.

Do you know that we wouldn't allow our children to date until they were 16? Brother, I tell you, ladies, I didn't have any of the heartaches that some of these ladies had. They were telling me, my daughter's 13. She's doing this, and she's doing that.

She's not coming home. I never even had to think about those heartaches. My daughter was home and in bed, and there wasn't any boys even on the scene.

Now I have to admit, one week after she turned 16, she had her first date. She's probably just hanging in there. But still, she just was really good.

So was my son. And you know, I never had to explain that to my son. Once my daughter came to me, and she said, Mommy, why is it that you won't let me date until I'm 16? Because she is a mature girl.

And I said, Honey, you know what it really is? It's not that I don't trust you. I suppose it's that I love you too much. But I know out there in that world of dating, you get in pressures.

Boys want to be kissing you, and you are really kissable, you know. I sort of joke with them. You are really kissable.

And honey, you're going to find yourself in situations that you can't handle. So I'm just protecting you from it because I love you too much. She never asked again.

And she never rebelled. Teach them. And ladies, I'm convinced that a lot of our teaching, if we would only do it in the right spirit, our children will respond positively to us.

Number three, discipline. The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself will bring his mother shame. Isn't it interesting what the Scripture says? It doesn't mention the father there.

The mother's heart is always aching and breaking. And when we see our kids going the wrong way, it brings our hearts shame. Discipline.

I remember as a real sweet daughter saying to my mother one time, you are the meanest mother in the whole world. You know what she was doing? She was making me come in at nine o'clock to go to bed. You've got to know my mother to know how sweet she is and to know I must have really hurt her.

I found this, and I'm going to take the time to read it to you because it so touched my heart. And it proves the point I'm trying to make. I had the meanest mother in the world, writes a housewife who is now raising her own family.

Well, the other kids ate candy for breakfast and had cereal, eggs and toast. Well, the other kids ate candy for breakfast. I had to eat cereal, eggs and toast.

When others had Cokes and candy for lunch, I had to eat a sandwich. As you can guess, my supper was different than the other kids' too. But at least I wasn't alone in my sufferings.

My sister and my two brothers had the same mean mother I did. My mother insisted upon knowing where we were at all times. She'd think we were on the chain gang.

She had to know who our friends were and what we were doing. She insisted if we said we'd be home in an hour, that we'd be one hour or less, not one minute longer. I am nearly ashamed to admit it, but she actually struck us.

Not once, but each time we had a mind to do 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 his 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 worst is yet to come. We had to be in bed by nine o'clock 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, learn to cook and all sorts of cruel things.

I believe she lay awake at night thinking of mean things for us to do. She always insisted upon our telling the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth if it killed us, and it nearly did. As teenagers, she became much wiser and our life became more unbearable.

None of this tooting the horn of a car and us to go running. She embarrassed us to no end by making our dates and friends come to the door to get us. If I spent a night with a girlfriend, can you imagine she even checked on me? 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, too.

Our friends' report cards had beautiful colors on them, black for passing and red for failing. My mother, being as different as she was, would settle for nothing less than those ugly black marks. As the years rolled by, first one and then the other of us was put to shame.

We were graduated from high school with our mother behind us talking, hitting, and demanding respect. None of us was 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 higher education. None of us has ever been arrested. Each of my brothers has served his country.

And whom do we have to blame for the terrible way we turned out? You're right, our mean mother. Look at all the things we missed. We never got to march in protest parades nor take part in riots or burn draft cards in a million and one.

Other things our friends did. She forced us to grow up into God-fearing, educated, honest adults. Using this as a background, I am trying to raise my children.

I stand a little taller and I'm filled with pride when my children call me mean. Because, you see, I thank God He gave me the meanest mother in the world. Isn't that beautiful? Yes, discipline them.

A new point that I've just put in, laugh with them. Ladies, if there's one thing I would do more, is laugh more with my children. You know, sometimes when we get in our homes and in the four walls and we're so concentrating on raising these children, sometimes things get a little too serious.

You know what God's Word says? He says a merry heart doeth good like a medicine. Laugh with them more. My son, the night that he was married, I couldn't believe it.

A whole bunch of people came back to our house and at 11 o'clock in comes this groom sifting through the house and we thought he was on his way to Florida, you know? And I was shocked. I said, did you forget something, Paul? He said, oh yeah, Mom. He said, I forgot my alarm clock.

Can you believe it? I was stupid enough to believe him. He went upstairs. I didn't think a thing about it.

And after everybody went that morning around 2.30, my husband and I went upstairs to bed. And laying on our pillow were two of the most beautiful, most cherished letters I have. A letter to his father and a letter to me.

And in that letter, one of the things he said is, oh Mom, thank you for your laugh. So many times it just made wrong things right. And as I read that, I said, oh God, I didn't laugh enough.

Laugh with them. Number four, or five, I don't know what I'm at here. Listen to them.

Listen to them, ladies. The things that are important to them are often not important to us. And there's one thing I learned, particularly with teenagers, is I better listen when they're willing to talk.

Not when I want to listen. You see, I would prefer to do it this way. Let's sit down, Paul and Ruth.

It's about 9 o'clock at night and I'm not too tired. I'd like to know all about your problems. But that is not how it works.

You know how it worked with my Paul? His curfew was 11.15. About 11.30, after he had washed and shaved and everything, he got very chatty. By this time, I'm dead tired. I don't want to really talk about all the problems of marriage and thinking about getting married and teenage problems.

But he'd sit on that bed and the longer he talked, the more excited he got and the longer he would go on. And there was many times I felt like saying, oh Paul, honey, really. But I thought, Lord, I'd rather be awake now listening than awake a few years down the line weeping and crying on my knees because he's not walking with you.

Give me the sense to be quiet and listen, and listen to hear what his heart's saying, not what his mouth is saying. Ladies, listen. And then number five, help them face their faults and failures.

Don't make excuses for them. Don't make excuses for what they do wrong. We have a Christian school at our church, and last year, like, we test the children before they come, and there was a family that wanted their little boy to come, and really, he did not pass our testing, to be honest with you, but because of a difficult, we thought, a difficult home situation, particularly a difficult mother, we thought we would take him into the school.

The first day, we realized we were in problem because there was the mother holding forth with the principal and the school teacher about how she thought they should run the school regarding her child.

You know, within a week, that little boy was in the principal's office for something that he was doing wrong. In fact, he was causing havoc in the school, and you know, that mother came in, and after she had heard what he had done, which was really bad and really wrong, do you know what she said? She said, you know why Jimmy did that? He's got poor eyesight, and he probably had a headache.

I felt like saying, oh boy, poor eyesight had nothing to do with eyesight. Just making excuses for his failures, and that poor child is growing up at a tremendous disadvantage because she will not help him face his faults and failures. I've already alluded to number six, but oh ladies, infuse your homes with love.

Love for your children. It takes time. It's not just saying, I love you, but love works itself out.

Your children catch love. They watch love work. My husband started something.

You know, I found it's really easy to have a little baby and say, or a little child, and say, oh I love you. In fact, I was going to do a conference in Sault Ste. Marie, which involved quite a little time being away from home last year, and I came over to the church to say goodbye to my husband, and it was recess time.

And my little boy saw me there with my suitcase. This is his little caboose I was telling you about. And he was way down the hallway from me.

And of course, he was with his class, so he wasn't allowed to come to his mother. And I wasn't going to break rules, so I wasn't going to go to him either. But he called down the hall, Mommy, Mom.

And when he got my attention, he said, I love you. And it was so easy for me to yell back, I love you too, Davie. But it's another story when I stand looking at a 6'2", 21-year-old son, and I'm trying to say, I love you, Paul.

I don't know, it's sort of like you've got an apple in there. What's wrong with this sentimental old mother, you know? But ladies, I've found, if I'll just make it come out, he throws his arms around me as he says, love you lots, Mom. Those are the happiest words in the world to me.

Love them. Don't be afraid to tell them so. I saw little notes by my telephone, you know we have all these little notes of stuff you're supposed to do.

All it said was, October 31st, 1981. Mom, I love you. As I love them, they're going to love me back.

Number seven, if I want to bring God's calm into my home, I've got to be wise enough to admit when I'm wrong. Now ladies, you'll never live your life without doing something wrong. You'll be a wise mother and a wise wife if you'll admit quickly and ask forgiveness.

I learned this lesson with my sweet Ruthie. You know, you've seen me for a little bit, but I love frilly things. I love feminine things.

I like bows and buttons and frills. Well, my daughter went through a stage where she liked jeans. I never wore jeans in my life, let alone like them.

And, you know, I would never let her wear them to school. And then she said, Mom, I'm the only girl in 2,000 girls over there that never wears jeans. Well, I can't help it, dear.

You're just not going to go over there looking like you fell out of the rag bag. That was my statement. You know, one day at supper time, she had her jeans on.

She wasn't going to school. I don't know why. Just miserable mother, I guess.

And she had these jeans on and I walked in and I said, Ruthie, you look like a complete wreck. And you do. You look like you just fell out of a rag bag.

You know, she looks so much like her daddy. She's got these big blue eyes and they're just sort of filled with tears. She never said a word.

She just looked at me. She finished setting the table and she went up to her room quietly and shut the door. And the Lord said to Faith, Wasn't that wonderful? What a beautiful Christian mother you were.

Always bringing out the best in people. And I was smart enough once to say, Oh God, I'm so sorry. And I ran upstairs and I could tell she had been crying.

And I said, Oh Ruthie, honey, I'm so sorry about this jean bit. I'm just making a great big mountain out of a molehill. I'm majoring over a minor.

And I just have come to ask you to please forgive me. Tell me, teach me something about jeans. Oh, I learned all kinds of things.

If they don't have the Levi thing on the back, you don't even bother wearing them. And there's skinny stove legs and this and that and the other thing. Learned all kinds of things.

But that's not the point I'm trying to make. That night at devotions time, it was Ruthie's turn to pray. And this is the prayer that she prayed.

I wrote it down because I thought, Oh God, you can out of wrong restore right and make positive. She said, Oh God. She said a few other things.

This is how she finished. Oh God, thank you for such a wonderful mom and dad. Help them to be a good witness to us so that we might grow up to be like them.

Oh, I bring God's calm into my home when I willingly admit when I'm wrong. And lastly and quickly, I have one minute. Pray.

Pray for that husband and pray for those children and grandmothers that might be here this afternoon. Oh, grandmothers, pray for your grandchildren. Do you know it was my mother, my very precious mother, that led my oldest son to Jesus Christ.

Tremendous prayer burden. And today that boy is in his third year studying for the ministry of the prayers of a grandmother. Pray for those children.

God does answer prayer. You know, my dad has never been to college. He's sort of self-taught in a lot of things.

But I tell you, ladies, he's been spiritually to Calvary. And that's where he made sure his children got. He prayed us to Calvary.

You know, my fondest memories are of an old iron bed. You know, those scrawny poles. Not much money.

And every night at 10 o'clock at night, my mom and daddy would go into that bedroom and they would get down by that old iron bed and I can hear our names being prayed. Oh, God, keep David. Keep Faith and Hope and Don.

God, use them. It was just something I heard every night in that poor little home. Yes, tonight I could take you to a different home.

It's a beautiful home today. And there are nice thick rugs. And it's a beautiful oak bedroom suite.

But I can take you into that bedroom and tonight at 10 o'clock you'll see a grandma and a grandpa. Yes, my mom and dad. Still on their knees.

Still praying for their children. Oh, God, make them a blessing. Keep them from evil.

Keep them true to you. And God answers prayer, ladies. Do you believe it? Are you willing to trust God for your marriage and for your children and see God touch it by His miracle working power? That's what I'm interested in this afternoon.

And that's the hope I hold out to you. What God wants is a woman that is thoroughly cleansed and just willing to say, Lord Jesus, take my home, take my marriage, take my husband, and take those wonderful children that I'm responsible for and make them an instrument of your glory. Let's pray together.

Father, thank you this afternoon for your message to our hearts. So practical. And, oh God, as we leave here as wives and as mothers, you know our hearts.

You know the secret thoughts. You know the heartbreaks. You know the brokenness that some of us are feeling.

Oh, God, we look to you and we see that door of hope this afternoon. And we know that you're looking for a woman that will stand in the gap for you in her home and in the land. And, Lord Jesus, this afternoon we ask that during this week of meetings you will so break us so that you can remake us again a new vessel, that we will go home and be those wives and those mothers and those women that you want us to be.

In Jesus' wonderful name I ask it. Amen.

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