

Good and Bad Mothers in the Bible

by Zac Poonen

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Scripture: Luke 1:38, 2 Timothy 1:5, John 8:41, Acts 16:1, Job 2:9, Proverbs 14:1

Topics: "Godly Motherhood", "Faith and Sacrifice"

Description

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Transcript

To begin with the memory verse that you had for this week. This is the verse that turned the direction of my life 60 years ago in July 1959. Although I was born and brought up in a Christian family, my father was born again before I was born.

And we had a lot of godly men come and stay with us in our home and preach. So I heard the gospel from a very young age, you know, I used to go to a Brethren Assembly Sunday School. And there are many times when I would say, Lord Jesus, come into my heart, but nothing happened.

I never saw any, I never experienced anything in my body or saw anything or heard anything. In fact, I've never seen or heard anything all these years. It's been a life of faith all along.

But I never was sure. I said, how do I know whether Christ came or not? And so then the next time a meeting came along, I asked the Lord to come to my heart again. And I don't think it will be an exaggeration to say I probably said that 100 times over a period of six years.

That's often the experience of many people who from childhood are in Christian families, and the parents encourage them to receive Christ at a young age. I believe a child can be born again, even when it's three years old, because I've heard a testimony of godly people who were really converted when they were

three. I heard of a godly lady who got a missionary call at the age of five and fulfilled that missionary call later on when she grew up.

So God can reach a child. So I don't know exactly when I was born again, I would have drifted like that on and on. And I found one thing, as long as I was not sure of my salvation, I would go up and down, backslide, go forward, repent, come back.

But God had mercy on me, that's all I can say. Fortunately, I had the habit of reading the Bible, not regularly, but off and on. And in the year in which I was commissioned as a naval officer, I was sitting in the naval base and reading my Bible.

And I would read chapter by chapter, and that particular day was John chapter six. And I hit upon this verse, if anyone comes to me, I will certainly not cast him out. This is the second part of that verse.

And I said, Lord, I've come to you many times. The Lord said, I've never cast you out. And I said, Lord, I believe it was that simple.

That particular day was not any different from all the other days when I pray. All I can say was faith was born in my heart. And it's an amazing thing that when real faith comes into your heart, certain things happen.

From that day till today, 60 years, I have never doubted once that I was a child of God. Even though I have backslidden in between, I knew that I was a child of God, I would come back to him. But it is not like the earlier years when I was not even sure.

So I date my conversion to the day I was sure that Jesus Christ was my Savior. Now, I say this because if there's anybody sitting here, sometimes the young children who are not sure their salvation, this is a great verse for you to lay hold of. And I proved the reality of it for 60 years.

And if you are not sure whether that's God's word, take it from me, it is because it's been like an anchor for my life for 60 years. But it's possible for a person if he doesn't come in sincerity that nothing happens. But when faith is born in the heart, it holds you forever.

And I discovered also that it's not because I suddenly became a good person. There was a growth. But one thing happened, I know from that day.

I had a desire to read God's word. That's one of the clearest evidences of being born again, just like a little child. As soon as it's born, it cries for milk.

And the Bible says the milk is the word of God. And the other thing a little child does is breathe as soon as it's born. If it doesn't breathe, it'll die.

So that's the second thing I began to do. I began to pray to God. I don't mean long hours of prayer or anything, but just to talk to God, like if I had a problem, I just tell him, Lord, help me, things like that.

So there are two things that happen when you're really born again. One is you begin to know God is your father, and you can talk to him just like you talk to your dad. And second, you can hear God speak to you through the Bible.

So I want to encourage you to believe that. And if your life is not firmly established on the fact that God has accepted you, not because you're a good person, not even because you will be a good person, but because you have sincerely come to Jesus Christ and acknowledge that you're a sinner and deserving hell, I had no problem acknowledging that, and that Christ died to take all your punishment, and you receive that free gift. Thank you, Lord, for forgiving me.

So I want to encourage you to believe that assurance is very, very important as a foundation. And as long as I didn't have that, I couldn't grow. I can see all my growth started from that point, but it was step by step that the Lord led me thereafter.

So all of America celebrates Mother's Day today, and I read somewhere that only the three most important celebrations in most American churches are Christmas, Easter, and Mother's Day. So since I don't believe in Christmas or Easter, I never celebrate them. Believing they are heathen festivals, that's my personal conviction.

But Mother's Day is okay, I'm not against that. That's not a heathen thing, because I've really learned to value Mother's Day. And I can say a few things from my own experience.

I'm not going to speak about my wife first, as a wife, because that's Wife's Day, and there's no such day, so we'll have to forget about that. But as a mother, she became a mother nearly 50 years ago. And one of the first things that happened, which I want to mention, that my wife did, was she resigned from her job.

She'd been working for one year as a doctor, with the great prospect of making a lot of money as doctors do. She was in the absolute best medical college and hospital in India. But the day the child was born, she decided, my child is more important than money, and we didn't have much.

I mean, if this was some wealthy person's wife giving up her job, that would be another thing. But I didn't have any income, I was trusting the Lord. But she decided that my son is more important than any money I can make.

And today, Sanjay, my eldest son, is nearly 50 years old. And our other sons, I can say without any doubt, that all the millions that she could have earned as a doctor, is like trash, is like trash, compared to four sons who are following the Lord. That's the importance of a mother.

And every mother has to make that choice. The Bible says there are only two masters in the world, Jesus said that, God and money. And I want to tell you, my brothers, sisters, you are going to make a choice, whether it's God or money that you're going to serve.

You can sit in NCCF all your life and serve money, I'll tell you that. You can fool everybody here, but you can't fool God, and you can't fool the devil. The devil knows what you live for, what you serve for, and you will reap what you sow.

That's another law, you can't change it. Whatever you sow, that's what you reap. Maybe you reap millions and lose your children, or you'll have wonderful wholehearted children and live a little more simply and have not so much money.

But that choice is something you have to make when you're sowing the seed, not at harvest time. There are many parents who've come to me through the years and said, Brother Zak, please pray for my children. And what shall I say? I don't tell them, well, 25 years ago, you should have made a right choice,

even though that's the reason.

Because that's tormenting them. How does it help if I tell them, hey, 25 years ago, you made a wrong choice, that's why you're like this today? No, I won't torment them like that. I'll say, okay, let's make the best of the situation now and let's pray that God will be merciful.

So, I always give hope to people, even if they've messed up their life. Even if they're like the thief on the cross, I believe he can go to paradise. But if the thief was a married man, his children were probably wayward.

He couldn't do anything about that. My point is that we can do the best of, even if we've made a mess of our life, but it's much better if we come to a church like this, where we understand spiritual values at a very young age. And I tell you, one of the best things that happened to me was that our children could grow up in a church, which was like a family.

CFC was born in my home 44 years ago in August 1975, when Sandeep was just about eight months old. And our Sunil was not even born, and the other two, the oldest was six or so. And so, our children grew up in a church, it was like a home, like a family.

It's the best place for children to grow up. And as a mother, you must value your children, their spiritual life more than anything else, more than providing all the wonderful things in the world to them, more than anything else. You see, you live in a country where you can provide so many things, earthly things for your children, but make sure that it doesn't deprive them of spiritual values.

And my wife could teach my children about self-denial. I mean, in our case, it was sort of essential because we didn't have much, so we had to teach them to deny themselves. We mustn't think that it's through poverty that you become spiritual.

That's a wrong impression. If poverty could make a person spiritual, India would have the most spiritual people in the world, because we have a lot more poor people in India than you have over here. But all the beggars in India are not spiritual.

Poverty does not make anybody spiritual, and riches don't make people spiritual either. So, it's not poverty or riches that make people spiritual. There are people who preach the health wealth gospel, that if you obey the Lord, you'll become rich.

The opposite of that is what some people believe, that if you follow Jesus, you'll be poor. To me, both are absolute nonsense. Spirituality comes not through wealth or through poverty.

It comes through denying yourself. And a rich person can do that, and a poor person can do that. Denying yourself and choosing Jesus Christ.

So, you don't have to envy the rich. You don't have to envy the poor. Anybody can deny themselves and choose Christ.

And I believe that's what a mother should do herself. I mean, every mother has to deny themselves and lots and lots of things if they have children. And they must teach their children from a very early age to deny themselves.

That is the most important thing. So that, you know, even if you can afford to buy something for them and they don't need it, why get it? I mean, particularly if they have an abundance or something, why get something more when it's not needed? I mean, now, sometimes it fulfills a purpose. You know, like, I'm not saying you shouldn't get them a birthday gift or something like that, by all means.

So, don't make a law of this. But in some way, it may not be in purchasing things, it may be in other ways that you teach them to deny themselves and ask yourself, mothers, are you denying yourself for the sake of your family? I don't mean the essential things like you have to deny yourself if your baby is crying or you've got to change the diapers and all. I don't mean that.

That's the heathen do. Which mother in the world doesn't change the diapers and pick up the baby when it's crying? Ask yourself as a Christian, as a born-again Christian, and more than that, you claim to be a new covenant Christian, ask yourself a couple of questions. In what way am I, as a mother, in what way am I denying myself as a mother in a way that non-Christian mothers are not denying themselves? Number one.

In what way am I denying myself as a mother in which other Christians who don't understand the new covenant are not denying themselves? And if you sincerely seek God, God may show you some things. See, the more self-denial there is, not mere self-denial, I mean, Hinduism has got self-denial, yoga has got self-denial, Buddhism has got self-denial, but here it's a denying self in order to follow Christ. It's, there are two sides to it and if the other side of the coin is blank, it's fake.

Self-denial with nothing on the other side is a fake. It's Hinduism, Buddhism, yoga, self-denial in order to follow Jesus in his life. That's the purpose of self-denial.

In other words, I get rid of self from my throne and put Jesus on the throne. A lot of worldly self-denial by these other religions is mostly that I don't eat certain food or sleep less or these external things, whereas for a Christian, self-denial is an inward thing where I refuse to react if somebody insults me and I die and I refuse to respond in the way he treats me, etc. So, ask yourself that question and in relation to children, we have to teach them that the most important thing is to deny themselves and also children going to school nowadays, they can pick up so many bad habits from children, even if they go to play games with someone or go to school.

Even homeschool children when they mingle with other children, it takes a very short time to pick up a bad habit or to pick up one bad word. You just have to have an encounter with another boy or a girl for five minutes and you picked up a bad word. So, I remember my wife would, whenever the children came home, she was always there.

Whenever the children came home from school, she never traveled with me all the years that the children were at home and going to school and I would always travel alone for right from 1968 to 1996, 97, about 29 years. She never traveled with me, she's always at home because the children were important and as long as one, even one son was at home, she stayed there. She wasn't like other mothers who would go gallivanting here and there.

The children were number one and that's a form of self-denial too when you can't enjoy all the other things that maybe your husband can go here and there. But I don't regret it today. But whenever the children came home from school, she would always talk to them and find out, what did you do in school today? What did you learn? I mean, mostly in relation to interactions and as they grow to a certain age and to talk

to them very frankly, are you getting interested in girls or interested in someone or the others like that and to be very frank with them and if this, if one son told my wife that, yeah, there's a pretty girl there, she wouldn't say, don't tell me you're interested in girls.

She would never react like that and that would make them clam up for the rest of their life. She'd say, oh really? Show me that girl when you come to school next time and you know, that's not a horrible thing. Sometimes parents act as if they never got interested when they were 13 or 14 in the opposite sex.

Don't be a hypocrite. It's perfectly normal when children come to the age of 13 or 14 that they begin to get interested in the opposite sex. It's true.

I confess that I did. Some of you spiritual people may think you didn't and if you're not interested, there's something wrong with you medically. You need to go and get a checkup.

That's all I say but otherwise, it's perfectly normal. So, we must be normal with our children and tell them but the thing is to keep these interests and desires under control. Otherwise, you may allow them to go in wrong paths and if you didn't, if they're not honest with you, they will never tell you the truth.

I believe one of the most important things for a mother is to get the children to be absolutely honest with them so that they'll tell them everything, even if they did some stupid things or interest in something etc. Mother is the one they should be more frank with. They may not be so frank with the father because the father is the disciplinarian.

You know, have you noticed in the Bible, if you turn to Ephesians in chapter 6, Ephesians chapter 6, it says the different relationships in the home. First of all, husbands and wives, wives and husbands in chapter 5, 22 onwards and then children and parents, chapter 6, verses 1 to 4 and then servants and masters, which in those days every home had servants. So, but when it comes to parents and children in chapter 6, verse 1 to 4, it tells that children must obey the father and the mother and that's something we must insist on.

It's not only the father, they must obey the mother as well and the mother must ensure that obedience is there and disobedience must be taken very seriously and not only obedience, but it says honour your father and mother. Children must be taught to speak respectfully always to their parents. So, if they don't speak respectfully, they must be corrected lovingly and if the father is around, then he should insist.

I mean, if I'm around and I see the child speak disrespectfully to the mother, I would say, now you got to stop everything you do and go and apologise to mummy and then continue. It's very, very serious, even if you speak disrespectfully once. So, it says here in verse 4, it's the fathers who do the discipline.

Now, the reason why we want children to obey the parents and honour their father and mother is so that verse 3, it may go well with them. Do you want it to go well with your children? I want it to go well with my children and I say, if I want it to go well with my children, then I must teach them to obey their parents. It's not because I like obedience, it's because God's commanded it and it's going to go well with them and they must honour their mother.

I mean, they may be a little afraid of their father and honour him, but sometimes the tendency is to disrespect the mother, must be very strict on that. But then when it comes to discipline, it says in verse 4, it's not the mother. It's very interesting.

Honouring, obedience is mother and father, they must honour father and father, but discipline is done by the father. The father does the disciplining of the children and that's God's order. I'm not saying the mother shouldn't, if the father's not strict in disciplining, the mother has to do it.

The father is not only disciplined, but bring them up in the instruction of the Lord. Very, very important and if the father doesn't do it, then the mother must do it. So, it's very important for mothers to teach their children scripture.

The fathers must do that too. But since mothers are most of the time with the children, it's a very good thing and that's something that my wife did with the children whenever she was at home. And of course, to help them with their schoolwork and homework is all also necessary, which she used to do and then numerous other things that a mother does, which all mothers do.

I'm trying to think of those things which non-Christian mothers don't do. Providing food, clothing, shelter and all that non-Christian mothers do, we don't... there's nothing special about a Christian mother doing that. When I'm specifically thinking of Christian mothers, we must take any act of disobedience seriously.

In the world, they don't do that. So, having said that, I want to encourage all of you mothers to take your responsibility seriously because finally, when your children have grown up and established themselves, you'll have great satisfaction when you see that they have absorbed your values and will want to bring up their children one day in the same way that you brought them up. That's the greatest compliment any child can pay to his mother to say, mom, I want to bring up my children the way you brought us up.

So, I hope all of you mothers will be like that to your children that one day when your children are grown up, they'll be able to say that to you. So, I want to say a few things about mothers from scripture. First of all, let's turn to Genesis in chapter 1. In Genesis chapter 1, notice it says here in verse 27, twice it says, God created man in his own image, repeated in the image of God he created him.

Do you see that? No, nothing is repeated in scripture without a purpose. There are four Gospels giving four accounts of the life of Jesus because we need to know more about the life of Jesus. That's why it's written four times.

So, when it says God created man in his own image and is repeated again in the image of God he created him, what is that image? It says in verse 27, male and female. So, there is something in the female that is the image of God which is not in the male. And there's something in the male that is the image of God which is not in the female.

So, Adam alone could not reflect the image of God. And when the Lord says later on in chapter 2, it's not good for man to be alone, Genesis 2.18, I'll make him a helper that will, corresponding to him, it says in the margin of my that means you should complete him. I see a wife like that which completes a man.

I mean, if you were to have a picture of a human being with a divided into two, that's the man and the woman fitted together like a jigsaw puzzle, put the two pieces together fits exactly. That's the meaning of that one that corresponds exactly to him. That means all the missing parts can fit in here.

You know, when new couples are getting married, come to me for advice. I take a piece of paper and draw a picture of an eggshell. And I say, I'm going to break this eggshell now.

And then I draw the broken eggshell with all the, I don't mean neatly cut with a knife, but just broken with your hand. And all these jagged edges in the eggshell this side and all the jagged edges on the other side. You know that both of you are like that, you can poke each other and hurt each other.

That's how you are. But if you notice carefully, wherever there's a projection in this side, there's a depression in this side. And wherever there's a projection in this side, there's a depression in here.

So, when you put it together, you see the perfect eggshell again, there's no gap, nothing. And I said, that's how God, if you really chosen the girl or the boy whom God has chosen for you, it'll be a perfect fit like that, where you compliment one another and together you can reflect the image of God to your children. God made male and female, He was made to reflect His image.

And who are the first people to see that image? Your children. Your children must see the image of God in both of you together, in your relationship together. And that's where a mother's got such an important task to fulfill, to fit in with her husband and together with her husband to reflect the image of God to the children.

So many mothers in the world don't think of that. You know, if you're rude and unkind in your speech to your children, you're not really reflecting the image of God there. And you need to repent of it every time you do that and go back to God and say, Lord, I'm sorry, I didn't represent you correctly to my little boy or little girl right now.

That's very, very important. Don't just slide it over and say, oh, well, let's slip up. Everybody does it.

Everybody does it in the world. But new covenant Christians are not supposed to do it. And our speech is so important.

Children pick up so many things from the way mothers and fathers talk to each other. And the mother's responsibility is very great. And it says here in Proverbs, I want to show you a verse in Proverbs, where it says, Proverbs 14.

Who builds the home? Is it the father or the mother or both? Or does one have a more important role in it than the other? Proverbs 14, one says, a wise woman builds her home. It's the woman. Why is that? Because the most important thing that children must see in a home is the spirit of Jesus Christ.

And do you know that the most important thing that Jesus manifested on earth before his love for humanity was a submission to his heavenly father? He said, I came to earth, John 6:38, to do the will of my father, never to do my own will. So his entire life, he manifested submission to his father. That was the most wonderful thing he manifested.

And who can manifest the spirit of submission in a home? The husband or the wife? You tell me. It's the wife. Because the Bible says that the wife submits to the husband as the church is to Christ.

And in that humble submission to her husband, she's manifesting the spirit of Christ. And thereby, she builds her home. And where a woman doesn't do that, and follows this modern trend of saying, who said I got to submit to you? I'm equal to you.

Okay, just see how your children will turn out. 10 years from now, it'll be too late to regret it then. Now is the time.

A wise woman builds her house, but the foolish woman tears it down with her own hands. And I've seen a lot of so called Christian women. I've seen a local so called born again Christian women who tear down their house by their behavior and their conduct.

I'm not saying the man cannot do it. The father can also destroy the house. But the Bible says it's the woman who has, because she's the one whom the children see most of the time.

And I believe her house means her family, her family, a lot depends on the mother, a tremendous amount depends on the mother. There's an old Jewish proverb, the rabbis used to say, I mean, there's not much truth in it. But anyway, this is an element of truth in it.

The rabbi said that since God could not be physically present everywhere, he made mothers. Isn't that something to think about? Since God could not be physically present everywhere, he made mothers, so that those children could see God in the mother who was always there. Because the father's all most of the time working at home.

I know in Bangalore, a lot of fathers are including the commute time and all that in 11 hours away from the home during the day. And mothers are the ones who do the job. I want to give you the example of some good mothers in the Bible and some bad ones.

The first one is, of course, Eve. I'm not talking about her as a wife, as she failed in Genesis 3, but as a mother, she became a mother in Genesis 4. And you see something interesting in Genesis 4, when Eve became a mother. It says here that she got a child, gave birth to Cain.

And you know what she said? In the margin of my Bible, it says, I have gotten a man, the Lord. You know, she had heard God say, the seed of this woman will crush the head of the devil, the serpent. And we know that's referring to Christ.

And that would come 4,000 years later, but she thought, ah, this is it. With the help of the Lord, I produced a child who's going to crush Satan's head. Do you see an arrogant spirit there? In fact, the devil crushed that child's head.

Cain may have broken Abel's head, but the devil crushed Cain's head. And I have a feeling that when she said, with the help of the Lord, I got this child who's going to accomplish something, crush the devil. And I feel that she must have conveyed that to that.

You know how most parents, they make their eldest children their favorite, one of the most foolish things any parent can do. A good parent will never make a distinguishing with any child. A good mother will treat all children equally.

There'll be no favorites. The boy will not be a favorite. The girl will not be a favorite.

Some backward child will not be a favorite. The intelligent child will not be a favorite. No, there'll be no favorites.

All will be exactly the same, because that's how God is. But here was the one she thought, I've got a child with the help of the Lord, and this one's going to be a great person. I'm going to crush the serpent's head.

And that spirit, she must have conveyed to Cain, which made him the evil man he became. That one day he killed his own brother. Yeah, I don't doubt that.

The mother conveyed something into Cain, because she thought she had accomplished something. And this son of mine is going to accomplish something. Be careful that you don't convey such ideas to your children as a mother, that'll make them think they're going to be somebody great.

And when she got, when Abel died, she learned a lesson. I believe she learned a lesson when, and she must have realized, I hope she realized that she did a lot of foolish things in propping up Cain like that, and Cain was cursed. Do you know that Cain was the first human being that God cursed? God never cursed Adam.

When Adam sinned, he cursed the ground. But when Cain sinned, he cursed Cain. And the mother saw that.

Can you imagine seeing your own son being cursed by God, and you had a part in it by boosting him up to make him think he was somebody great? Be very careful with your eldest child. Be very careful when you, that you don't boost them up because they've got some abilities or qualities. Maybe they do well in school or in some way.

By all means, congratulate them, encourage them. We must encourage, but we must not compare our children with one another. Never, never, never.

I never did that. I believe it's ungodly. They've got different gifts, different temperaments, different abilities, but a good mother would never put one above the other.

We'll encourage one. Okay, he's got that, but you got this. So what? There are different colors in the rainbow.

Think of a mother who's got seven children with seven colors in the rainbow. Which one is the important one? You take one of them out, it will not become white. White is the combination of all those seven colors.

So when she got a second son, she had learned a lesson. She got a second son, verse 25, and named him Seth. This time she didn't say, with God's help, I got a child.

She says, God has appointed me an offspring in place of Abel. Cain killed him. She had learned a lesson.

God has been gracious to me and given me someone in place of Abel. And that was a humble attitude to take, and I believe that's one reason why, you know, in his days, it says in verse 26, people began to call upon the name of the Lord. Very different from the result of Cain.

So that's one lesson we can learn of one of those mothers who, because of her attitude to her son Cain, and she, he became evil. As we go through Scripture, you come across another mother in Exodus, and that's the mother of Moses, when, you know, there was a law that all the children must be killed. And this mother her name was Jochebed, and when she had a child, Exodus 2, verse 2, she saw that he was a beautiful child.

That's lovely. I like that. I believe that every mother should look at every child she has and say, that's a beautiful child.

Why? It's not a question of features. The world has got a different opinion of beauty, good looks, and intelligence, and all those things. No.

Your child is a beautiful child because it's a gift from God. That's the only reason. Your child is a beautiful child, and she hid him for three months.

And you know the story how she kept him, she wouldn't kill him. After three months, he couldn't hide anymore. The child would cry, and the Egyptians would come and kill it.

So she put him in a basket. And so with a lot of prayer, she must have been an extremely prayerful woman. Good to have a prayerful mother who will not obey ungodly laws made by the government that'll kill your child or make your child learn bad habits.

Whatever ungodly law a government makes, a good mother will say, I'm sorry, I'm not going to obey that. I'm going to obey God. I fear God.

That's a good attitude for all Christian mothers to have. And she prayed and said, Lord, somehow protect this child. And God did a miracle.

You know, it says here in the book of Hebrews, chapter 11, the great heroes of faith. There are many wonderful heroes of faith, you know, people who overcame armies and destroyed lions and pulled down the walls of Jericho and split the Red Sea. And in the midst of all that, you read about this mother.

How did her name come over here? Jacobet. He's there in Hebrews 11, verse 23. It says Moses, by faith, whose faith? Moses is a little baby.

He didn't have faith. This is the mother. When he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, by the mother, really.

Because they, again, it's mentioned, they saw he was a beautiful child. What do you think that means? You think that means that Moses is a very handsome person? Well, every kid looks beautiful that way. I think what it means is that the mother saw this child is special, and I hope you will see all your children as special.

Whether they're intelligent or not intelligent, they're good-looking or not intelligent, they're fair or dark, doesn't make any difference. It's like children are the gift of God. And I believe they should look at every one of our children as beautiful children.

And I believe all of us who are in the church must also remember that when we look at the different children in the church, if you're a godly man or a godly woman, you will look at every child in this church as a beautiful child who's got the potential to grow up to be a fantastic witness for Christ. And I have to do everything to make sure that I don't stumble them by my behavior or conduct or do anything that will stumble them. As much as you want it for your own child, you must want that for every child in this church.

Otherwise, you're not a godly father or mother. So, she was not afraid of the king's edict. So, that's another great example of a mother who feared God and how wonderfully God provided, I mean, answered that prayer and protected the child from being killed or being eaten by crocodiles in the river and finally fulfilled God's purpose.

What a wonderful thing it is that she could bring up that child that way. We go to another example and that is in 1 Samuel and chapter 1. Or maybe before that, before we get to Samuel, I'll go to the book of Ruth. In Ruth, you read about a mother who was also a mother-in-law and that's Naomi.

She had tremendous sorrow in her life. Her husband had died. I don't want to go to the whole story.

You read it. And her two sons had died and they both had married Moabite women. They were not supposed to.

According to God's law, Israeli must marry an Israeli. But there was a famine in Israel. They went to another country and these children disobeyed God and married Moabite women.

And so, Naomi said, when the husband had died and the two sons had died, near chapter 1 verse 11, daughters, please go back to your... I'm not going to have any more children to be your husbands. Go back to your country and you can find another husband. And Orpah, one of the girls said, okay, I'll go back.

But Ruth said no. And there's something here she said in verse Ruth 1.16. Ruth said, please don't ask me to leave you. Can you imagine what a fantastic mother-in-law Naomi was? The daughter-in-law wanted to be with her.

The very few daughters-in-law in the world would want to be with their mothers-in-law. It's a truth, even among Christians. She must have been an amazing woman.

A loving, kind mother is also a loving, kind mother-in-law. That a daughter-in-law says, no, I want to be with you, my dear mother-in-law. I want to go wherever you go, I'll go.

You're old, I'll look after you. There's a lot of things involved in that. I will stay where you stay and your people will be my people.

And if you die, I'll die there and I'll be buried there. And nothing but death, verse 17, will part you and me. Boy, you think that tells you a lot about Ruth.

I'll tell you, it tells you a lot about Naomi. That's why it tells me a lot about that mother. She was a fantastic mother.

And in the midst of sorrow, she was an excellent mother-in-law. Great example for all of us to follow. And she was an old covenant.

We are, what's the name of this church? New Covenant. There's an old covenant person here who acted like this. And God blessed her that Naomi became the ancestor of King David and ultimately of Jesus Christ.

See how God blessed her through Ruth, through the one who was a Moabite. So it's amazing what God can do where a person is God-fearing. You come to 1 Samuel, you read of another wonderful mother here.

And here was a man who had two wives. Halkena, you read, he had two wives and one wife had children. And Hannah was the second wife who didn't have children.

And it says here, the older wife would keep on irritating Hannah, verse 6, bitterly, would provoke her bitterly to irritate her and say, hey, you see how many children I have. You don't have any children. You know, that spirit can come into a mother as well.

Here's an example of a really bad mother. I don't know what her name is, but the other wife of Halkena, you know, where you can provoke somebody, not necessarily in the rude way. Christians provoke others in more decent ways, not in the rude way that this person does, to compare yourself with that other mother.

Ah, you're like this. Look at my child and look at yours. Beware of that.

You'll be like this evil mother. If your child is good and you're being blessed by God, bow down before him and thank him. But never compare your child with somebody else's child and say, oh, look at this.

You know, it comes out of our mouth if we secretly think like that in our minds. If God has been good to your children in ways, please give God the glory for that in humility and say, Lord, it's because of you. It's not got nothing to do with me.

It's your goodness. But she provoked him, provoked her, provoked her. And then it says here that the other mother provoked her and when they were going to the temple, where seven, every year they'd go up to the house of the Lord and even on the way to the temple where seven, she would provoke her.

So this poor woman wouldn't even eat. She would just keep weeping. You know, God cares for people like that who are having gone through some misfortune.

And so what did she do? She didn't fight back with this woman. She was a wonderful woman, Hannah. She didn't fight back with him.

She took her problem to the Lord. So, Lord, I don't have a child. Will you please provide for me? And when she went to the temple and she was praying silently, even the priest thought she was drunk because she was praying silently.

We read that in verse 12, she was watching her mouth and she was speaking silently. Eli said, how long are you going to be drunk, you woman? Misunderstood, provoked at home, misunderstood by church leaders, misunderstood by church leaders. She never got offended.

She said, okay, no, my Lord, she respects, she speaks so respectfully to this godless high priest. We know he was a godless high priest from later actions. You know, I'm sure everybody knew that Eli's sons were molesting the women in the temple and Hannah knew that.

It's okay. She wouldn't disrespect him. She said, my Lord, I'm a woman oppressed and I'm not drunk.

I'm praying. Please remember me. You're the leader here.

And she prayed and it says here in due time, verse 20, Hannah conceived and called her name Samuel because I've asked to the Lord and I got this child. And she had promised that if I get a child, it'll be yours, Lord. And she kept that promise.

And when the child was weaned, she took the child back and presented him to the Lord. I don't know at what age he was weaned and taken there. I got no idea.

Was he five or six? But whatever it is, in those five or six years, Hannah did such a fantastic job of being a mother to little Samuel that he grew up from a child to be devoted to the Lord. It's wonderful to see a six-year-old who's been so well brought up by the mother that he's devoted to Jesus at the age of six. That

God can, God could speak to him.

The old priest, he couldn't hear God, but Samuel could. You know, you can train and he grew up to be one of Israel's greatest prophets. Think that that little boy or girl whom you have in your home, mothers, if you do a good job as a mother, can grow up to be a servant of the Lord, man or a woman, who can make a difference for God on this earth.

One more bad example that I missed out is in Genesis and Jets, Rebekah. It says about Rebekah, she had two children and it was a mistake of both Isaac and Rebekah that when they were, when the children were born, it says in Genesis 25-28, Isaac loved Esau because he loved the food Esau could bring, but Rebekah loved Jacob. And there was a division in the home because the mother loved one son and the father loved the other.

And you know what happened? One son almost killed the other one in that situation also. Another lesson for mothers, don't be partial for fathers too. Mothers, don't choose one over the other.

You may think that Jacob was the quiet, simple type of person at home and Esau was a rough type of person who went out in the field. That's that temperament. Don't value one over the other.

Don't choose one because that's the type of personality you like. That's the temperament you like. Very dangerous.

There's a lesson for there. And you know what happened? Jacob and Esau were separated and their children are separated even till today. Children of Esau, 4,000 years later.

And that can, a lot of things can happen if your mother is careless like that. Another example is Job's wife. She had 10 children and she sort of submitted to her, Job was a godly man there who brought up his children all in the fear of God.

But when Job went through all this suffering, the mother couldn't stand, the wife couldn't stand it. The wife told Job, why don't you go and commit suicide? It's the first example of a mad woman telling her husband to commit suicide in Job chapter 2 verse 9. Look at all this happening. You lost your children, you lost your property, you lost your health.

There's only one thing you can do, go and curse God and commit suicide. But I have a feeling that she repented. Because Job stood, you know, it's a wonderful thing if a man can stand true to God and say, no, I'm not going to do that.

I mean, he spoke to her very strongly. Verse 10, you speak like the foolish women. I mean, he was out of the old covenant, you don't know how to speak like that to your wife.

But he was firm. But he was firm. Don't take that as an example.

He was under the old covenant. Anything you read in the Old Testament, remember, they didn't have the Holy Spirit. But he was firm for the Lord.

And when finally we read in Job chapter 42, how God blessed Job at the end with double of everything. God blessed him in amazing ways because he repented. Job 42.10, the Lord restored the fortunes of Job.

I think then his wife must have repented. Because it says she bore him another 10 children. The first 10 had died and she bore 10 more, we read in verse 13.

And I believe that she turned around. All right. Okay, now we come to, we got to go through quickly to the New Testament.

In the New Testament, you read about the first mother in the Old Testament was Eve. And you saw the bad example there. And the first mother in the New Testament is Mary.

What a contrast. And Mary was a mother who was willing to bear shame and ridicule for the sake of Jesus. It's an amazing testimony.

Sometimes we can read through these things and not see what she went through. It was a tremendous stigma in Israel to be pregnant when you're not married. That means you're an adulterer.

And all the people would have thought she just went out with some Roman soldier and got a kid. And there are people say that even today, 2000 years later. There's a stigma on Mary from people who didn't know.

And she knew that when the Holy Spirit came and told her, when the angel came and told her that you're going to have a, the Holy Spirit is going to come upon you and you're going to have a child, she immediately knew. I mean, what does a young girl think when she knows she's going to be pregnant? Immediately, oh, think of the stigma. What do people say? And you know what Mary said? Beautiful words in Luke chapter one.

Amazing words which all mothers can think seriously about. Verse 38, Luke 1, 38. Behold, the bond slave of the lawyer will lord.

Let it be done to me according to your word. Do I have to bear a stigma and a shame? Because of Jesus Christ, I'm willing. Wonderful mother.

You can be like that. Willing to bear shame and ridicule. Not as much as Mary, what she's bearing will be much less.

But through the years, many women have been willing to bear the stigma of being disciple of Jesus Christ. And I've often thought, why did God choose a young girl? She was probably only 18 or 19 years old when young Joseph married her. I've often asked young girls, 18, 19 years old, do you think Jesus would have chosen you if you were in Israel in those days? Every young girl wanted to be the mother of the Messiah.

Why did God pick on Mary? I think there was certain qualities she saw in her. And I see some of those qualities coming up later. You know, like when she arrived in Bethlehem, and that's the place of Joseph's relatives.

That's why they had to go there for the census. And there's no room there. I can imagine the average wife would get so upset with her husband.

You knew long ago that the census is going to come up. You've got so many relatives here. How come you didn't plan for me to at least have a room to have my delivery? And here I am in the midst of these cows and donkeys and all to deliver a baby.

I don't think God would have chosen a girl who would complain like that. I don't think she did. There's the same spirit in Luke 1 that we read, Behold the handmaid of the Lord.

Let it be to me according to your word. If I have to give birth in a stable, so be it. What an example of a mother who's willing because her husband is very poor, can't afford a fancy place for delivery.

Okay, I'll accept it. Amazing example. You know, because the Roman Catholics have glorified Mary so much, sometimes Protestants shy away from that and never talk about her.

But I think she's an amazing example of a mother who was willing to suffer shame for Christ and what she went through and what she went through all the way to finally see her own son being killed and crucified and accepting everything all through her life. Her attitude was what we read in Luke 138. Behold the bond slave of the Lord.

Made me done to me according to your word. You know, the word bond slave is something we don't understand. Those days there were servants and there were slaves.

Servants got paid, you know, like those hired laborers. Jesus spoke about laborers who were hired for one denarius a day. That's a servant.

A slave is not hired. A slave is bought in the market. Slaves were sold in the market just like furniture and other things are sold in the market.

You go to a slave market and you buy a slave and you don't have to pay anything. That slave is yours for life. You can kill him just like you can break your furniture if you want.

You bought it. It's yours. They had no rights, no salary, no payment and they were lifelong slaves.

So when Mary says, behold, not a servant to expect something from the master, slave of the Lord. You can do with me whatever you like. You know, the master could slap his slave, kick his slave, kill him and slave had no rights.

So when a person says, I'm the bond slave of the Lord, I'm saying, Lord, I have no rights. If you want me to suffer shame as though I'm some prostitute, even though it's you who came upon me and produced the child, I'll accept it and whatever. And, you know, I believe she had to face that stigma all through life.

Do you know there was a time when one of the things that the Jews told Jesus, if you turn to, I think it's in John chapter 8. John chapter 8. I don't know whether you see what they mean. You know, there's a thing called hitting below the belt. In boxing, you're not supposed to hit below the belt or you poke someone in a way which is not right.

And in John 8, 41, one of the things they said to him in Jesus was, we were not born of fornication. You know what's implied there? Do you get it? Jesus, I know how you were born. Some Roman soldier is your father.

You know who your mother is. We don't know who your father is. We were not born of fornication like you.

That's when he's 30 years old. Mary bore that stigma all through her life. And her attitude was, Lord, if that's what you want me to do, I accept it.

What a wonderful example of a mother who was willing to accept shame and ridicule if that was her calling to be the mother of Jesus Christ. A wonderful attitude. There are very few godly women like that, I'll tell you.

But you can be like that because we are supposed to be New Covenant Christians, right? Mary did not have the Holy Spirit until Acts 2, when the Holy Spirit came upon all. But with the little fear of God that she had, I've discovered that some of these godly men like John the Baptist and Mary, the fear of God and their respect for God and their gratitude for all that God had done made them so submissive that I find they are so far superior to many who claim to be filled with the Spirit, speaking in tongues, a New Covenant and all that. They don't have the spirit of these godly mothers.

Okay, I'll give you one last example from 2nd Timothy, chapter 1, verse 5. Timothy, I'm mindful of the sincere faith which first dwelt in your grandmother and loisoned your mother, Eunice. I believe that's how that word is pronounced, Eunice. You see, Eunice's husband, Acts 16, verse 1, was a Greek.

Timothy was the son of a Jewish woman. His father was a Greek, probably a businessman who had no time for God or for scripture teaching. So, here's an example of almost a single mother who brought up her son without any help from her father.

Sometimes there are mothers like that. The fathers are sort of wayward. But she brought up her son.

This was a young man, probably about 20 years old. But by the time he was 20, he had become such a godly young man that Paul, the apostle, who had such discernment, picked him out. Say, I want him to be my co-worker.

Dear mothers, imagine if the apostle Paul picked up your 20-year-old son, saying, I want him to be my co-worker. Boy, you would have done a good job, I must say, in those 20 years. It's a challenge.

And later on, he says, I have nobody like Timothy. He never seeks his own. Where did he learn it? From his mother.

Train up a child in the way he should go. When he's old, he will not depart from it. And when Timothy's old, he learned from his mother that true Christianity is to deny yourself and never seek your own, but the things of Christ.

I want to ask you, mothers, is that the way you want to bring up your children? Or do you just want them to be very well educated and great? And there's nothing wrong in that. They need to be educated to be employed and have a job in the world or whatever it is. But what is the main thing that your child will be known for, son or daughter? Is it for their beauty, which is what some people are proud of? My children are good looking.

Or their education, they are so clever, they come first in the class. Or they love Jesus Christ, they're devoted to him. Along with, good, okay, they're good looking, they come first in the class, fine.

But more than everything else, they're devoted to Jesus Christ, the spirit of humility in them. I believe that Mary manifested humility. I believe Timothy was a humble person because his mother was a humble person.

Every godly person in scripture is humble. And I see children in so many churches now. And I can see some who are brought up, they are humble, self-effacing, and there are others who are proud and arrogant.

Because they've been taught that money is the great thing. Good looks is the great thing. Education is the great thing.

And you must also have Christ, of course. It's also necessary, but it is sort of a number four in the list or something like that. And I see that, I can see the tragedy of it.

Sometimes you may not realize how much your children lost till you get to stand at the judgment seat of Christ. So there are wonderful examples and warnings in the Bible of good mothers and bad mothers. Let's think of all that.

And today, when the rest of America thinks of Mother's Day, look at these examples from scripture and say, Lord, I want to be a God-fearing, humble mother who does not put money above God, does not put education above God, but want my children, even if they have nothing else in the world, to be God-fearing and humble and to be disciples of Jesus Christ. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, I thank you for these wonderful sisters here who come here, some on their own and some because their husbands came here.

I pray that every one of these mothers will really be challenged to be the type of mother you want them to be and that they will cry out to you desperately to be filled with the Holy Spirit, because that's the only way they can be the mother. They can be. All the determination and discipline will not make them.

I pray you'll give them a hunger and thirst to be filled with the Holy Spirit so that they can be spirit-filled mothers to their children, everyone here, so that a generation can grow up here, Lord, that will be a testimony for you in this land. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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