

Sermon: “The Value of a Godly Mother”

Text: I Samuel 1:1ff

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Introduction: Jesus honored and respected his earthly mother, Mary. One of his last earthly thoughts concerned her welfare.

Probably no other person in our growing up years has a larger impact on us than our mothers. A Jewish proverb reads: “God could not be everywhere, so he made mothers.” Our story today about Hannah seems a little odd in our ears, but serves to teach us some very important lessons about the value of a godly mother.

I Samuel 1:3-11 (ESV) ³ Now this man used to go up year by year from his city to worship and to sacrifice to the Lord of hosts at Shiloh, where the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were priests of the Lord. ⁴ On the day when Elkanah sacrificed, he would give portions to Peninnah his wife and to all her sons and daughters. ⁵ But to Hannah he gave a double portion, because he loved her, though the Lord had closed her womb. ⁶ And her rival used to provoke her grievously to irritate her, because the Lord had closed her womb. ⁷ So it went on year by year. As often as she went up to the house of the Lord, she used to provoke her. Therefore Hannah wept and would not eat. ⁸ And Elkanah, her husband, said to her, “Hannah, why do you weep? And why do you not eat? And why is your heart sad? Am I not more to you than ten sons?” ⁹ After they had eaten and drunk in Shiloh, Hannah rose. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat beside the doorpost of the temple of the Lord. ¹⁰ She was deeply distressed and prayed to the Lord and wept bitterly. ¹¹ And she vowed a vow and said, “O Lord of hosts, if you will indeed look on the affliction of your servant and remember me and not forget your servant, but will give to your servant a son, then I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life, and no razor shall touch his head.”

Godly mothers will:

I. Pray (1:10, 11)

A. How long do you pray for something?

Hannah prayed year after year for God to remember her request (1:3). Hannah wanted a son:

1. to show worth to God
2. to show worth to her husband (Elkanah)
3. to get even with the other wife (Penninah, 1:6)

There were others in the Bible who had difficulty bearing children not the least of which was ABRAHAM and SARAH (OT) and ZECHARIAH and ELIZABETH (NT). My daughter and her husband had to undergo the pain of infertility (show pic). An acquaintance of Jen's had had 4 miscarriages and then became pregnant with quads. For everyone there may be a different experience. But, for those who are able to give birth, there are responsibilities.

I Samuel 1:20 (ESV) ²⁰ And in due time Hannah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Samuel, for she said, "I have asked for him from the Lord."

There is a timing to everything God does (**v. 20**). Many times our prayers aren't answered for our own good, but also it may be because the timing is off. God may want to develop trust, faith, patience, and a stronger commitment from us.

Illus. A newborn baby cries frequently when he or she has needs, and the mother generally comes immediately day or night, to fill those needs. Thus children learn to cry when they want Mother's presence. Later, Mother comes by but does not pick up the child; she only softly says, "Hush, child, go back to sleep." Later she may not even come every time the baby cries. Of course, the baby does not like this one bit, but the feelings of "abandonment" lessen as he or she learns that mother will always come in the morning. In the process, all babies learn that they cannot manipulate a mother, especially one who distinguishes between her baby's needs and wants.

So it is with prayer, when we are young believers, God often answers our prayers quickly. Later, as we mature, he uses unanswered prayer as a means of teaching us to rely on Him, but also to be patient.

God knows our *real* needs, and He is always faithful.

B. Do negative situations affect your ability to worship?

Hannah had been barren (unable to have children because of God). She was unaware of the reason why. She more than likely blamed herself because after all her husband had been able to father other children with his other wife. This may have been an arrangement similar to that of Abraham and Hagar (**Gen. 16**).

Hannah not only often wept and refused to eat, but also became "resentful" (**I Sam. 1:8**; literally, she had a "bad/angry heart"). Have you ever noticed that many times negative situations and crises bring people to God?

BUT, have you also noticed how many times that death, divorce, financial problems, family difficulties with children cause people to walk away from God and His Church? (**Job**, often recognized as a man of patience in the O.T., continued in his worship of God)

Where Hannah is a model for us, is that year after year she remains faithful to God in spite of an apparent lack of positive results. God was preparing Hannah for a special gift - her first child, a son, **BUT** first she had to learn the lesson:

II. Deny Self (1:27, 28)

I Samuel 1:27-28 (ESV) ²⁷ For this child I prayed, and the Lord has granted me my petition that I made to him. ²⁸ Therefore I have lent him to the Lord. As long as he lives, he is lent to the Lord.” And he worshiped the Lord there.

A. Could you give up your child for God’s purposes? Some days, right?

That seems like an absurd question, but Abraham was asked to give up his child, Isaac, the child of the promise - even if it meant Isaac’s death.

If you look closely, Jesus always asks us to give up what we love the most, what drives and motivates us. He wants followers who will give up anything to please him at His command.

Mark 8:34-35 (ESV) ³⁴ And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. ³⁵ For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it.

B. What would you give up for God?

Jesus encountered a Rich Young Man (**Mark 10:17-31**) who said he had kept the law since he was a boy. **Mark 10:21 (ESV)** ²¹ And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, “You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” yet he was not willing...

Value is found in God/Jesus, not in what we have, or think we have. It is what we cling to most desperately that God may require from us. In fact we must lose our lives to find them, Jesus says.

Illus. My mother, in her own way, dedicated me to the Lord after bargaining with God when she thought she could never have children.

In reading about the times when Hannah had Samuel which means “his name is God” or possibly “heard of God;” it was not until Samuel was weaned that he was delivered to Eli the priest. In those days mothers breast-fed their babies sometimes in excess of three years. Oh, the good old days! That alone might have made it easier initially to give Samuel up to Eli.

What is it that you would not give up - even for God? Your family, friends? Money, convenience? Time and Energy? Your whole heart? Your life?

Jesus was required to give up everything for *us*. God requires self-sacrifice from all His children, as well. People who give their lives to God — holding nothing back are sometimes thought of as crazy just like Hannah who was thought to be drunk (1:14). Sometimes even the religious leaders miss it. Eli did. Remember Pentecost? Peter and the other disciples were thought to be intoxicated as well, but it was the Holy Spirit.

If we deny ourselves and follow Jesus fully, people will think we also are impaired in some way.

Godly mothers will:

III. Love Their Children (2:19)

A. Do you know what is best for your children in the long run?

The following appeared in *Home Living*, May 1980: “My child, what can I give you?

I should like to give you everything so that you lack for nothing, not even one single desire, but I know that for want of many things I have come to be satisfied with what I have and to think of others and *their* needs.

I should like to give you a life full of fun and games, but I know that because of many “chores” and responsibilities of my youth, I have learned to be responsible.

I should like to protect you from all the errors of your youth, but I know that because of my failures, I have learned to make better decisions.

I should like to give you a profession of wealth or importance, but I realize that man is truly happy only when he fulfills the purpose for which God has created him. What then, my child, can I give you that would be of real value?

I give you my love, which means I accept you, without reservations, just as you are and will be.

I give you my personal presence in order that you will have the security you need during your childhood.

I give you my ears, in the sense that I will never be too busy to listen to you—sometimes never uttering even one word.

I give you opportunities to work so that you might learn to do it without shame and come to enjoy the satisfaction of work well done.

I give you my counsel only when it is necessary or you ask for it so that you might avoid some of the mistakes I have made.

I give you my consolation when you have failed or feel discouraged, but I will not always protect you from the consequences of your sins.

I give you instructions in the way of the Lord so that when you are old, you will never depart from it.

I give you my daily prayers that the Lord will keep you and guide you in such a way that you, my child, will be a man or woman who will serve and glorify our Heavenly Father.

This I give you with all my love. Your Mother, Lydia Lightner

Many times in our enlightened culture the children dictate to their parents what they are going to do. Hannah kept her word to God, and Samuel grew up in the presence of the Lord (2:21). Because of this “the boy Samuel continued to grow in stature and in favor with the Lord and with men (2:26).” Rearing a child even in the Temple, though, is no guarantee that everything will turn out fine which one can readily see in the two immoral sons of Eli, the priest. Even Eli suffered his own death because he refused to correct and discipline his sons!

But, there is no substitute for early exposure to God and the Church. If your son or daughter doesn't know Jesus, they really don't know anyone. Wisdom from the Bible ([Proverbs 22:6 ESV](#)) says that if you "train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it."

B. Is love more than a feeling?

Is it love or feelings that get you up at 3:00 a.m. for a feeding, or to change that diaper? Neither God's love nor his wrath is driven by emotion but by His perfect will. God loves us because of a covenant, a promise, He made with us. He never stops loving us. Unlike emotion that changes with the weather, God's love never changes and never fails. We can depend on God to always do what is best for his children.

Conclusion: I hope you will do something nice for your mother today if you are able. If you are not able, encourage another mother.

Illus. There were "Two children who ordered their mother to stay in bed one Mother's Day morning. As she lay there looking forward to breakfast in bed, the smell of bacon floated up from the kitchen.

After a good long wait, she finally went downstairs to investigate. She found them both sitting at the table eating bacon and eggs.

"It's a surprise for Mother's Day," one explained, "we decided to cook our own breakfast."

"No man is poor who has had a Godly mother" so said Abraham Lincoln. Today is a day to honor mothers. Even if they have not always measured up to God's standards, children can help make their mother look good by obeying and honoring them.

[Ephesians 6:1-3 \(ESV\)](#) ¹ Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ² "Honor your father and mother" (this is the first commandment with a promise), ³ "that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land."

Honor and obey are such important words when it comes to our relationship with God and our parents, and especially this day as we honor and show respect to moms!

Craddock Stories, pp. 137-138

Marriage and vows...

Once, I met someone coming out of an antique shop in Blue Ridge, North Georgia. The town has become just *full* of antique stores. That's all they have. A minister came out. I knew he was a minister; he had a clerical collar, and he had an old box under his arm. I said, "You bought something in there?"

He said, "Yeah."

I said, "What'd you get?"

He said, "I found in there, right at the end of an old washbasin and a churn, this box. And I got the box and the contents for a dollar."

I said, "What's in it?" He opened it up, and it was full of old words. A box full of words, burned or notched in wood. He pulled out one, and it said, "Til death do us part." He pulled out another one, it said, "I give you my word," all that kind of stuff.

I said, "what are you going to do with that?"

He said, "The reason the man let me have it for a dollar is, he said, nobody talks that way anymore. They're useless." This minister thought they were great, but then you know how ministers can be. What do you think?

Friends, the beginning of being a good mom or dad is a Christ-centered marriage. Put God first and He will help you be a good parent. And if you have children, they will bless you.