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Becoming a Godly Mother Selected Scriptures

What is a Mother?

Happy Mother's Day to all of our moms. The special recognition you receive today is due to the work of Anna M. Jarvis of West Virginia. Even though she was childless herself, in 1908 she began to persuade local churches to give thanks and honor to mothers for their too often "*taken-for-granted*" roles in the family and society. Over the years the idea spread from one church to another and then into society in general. Tragically, Anna Jarvis became embittered as commercial interests began to encroach on the special day of recognition of mothers. What began as an encouragement to express sincere thanks and honor to our mothers in their vital role in raising godly offspring was turned by commercial interests into an obligation for everyone to buy something to give to mom. This became worse by the end of the twentieth century because of the increasing confusion about who is a mother and what that is supposed to mean.

The biological definition of a mother is one who has given birth to a child. Regardless of any other involvement that particular woman may or may not have had in the life of the child, each of us should be grateful for the one that God used to nurture us in her womb and bring us to birth.

Another definition of a mother is the female parent of a child. While this is also usually the same woman that gave birth to the child, it also includes the many women that have adopted children into their family. A woman that takes on the parental responsibility for a child becomes the mother of that child in a proper sense regardless of whether she has any genetic lineage to the child.

A third relevant definition of a mother is a woman who exercises care and tenderness toward another, or gives parental advice. This definition not only includes all those women who have been involved in foster care, but also the great many more that behave as a mother to those who do not live in their home. They extend themselves to give care and nurture to whatever extent they can to others who are part of other families. Many if not most people have grown up in homes in which the care given by their biological or adoptive mother was supplemented by some other woman outside the home. We sometimes refer to such a woman as our "second mom" without meaning anything detrimental to our biological or adoptive mother. For some this "second mom" was even more important because the biological or adoptive mother was deficient or even negligent, and the Lord provided another woman or other women to provide the care and nurture needed.

I think it is also important to note that being a mother does not end when the child becomes an adult though the relationship and the manner in which she carries out her care, concerns and nurture will change. The mother to child relationship changes into an adult to adult relationship which necessitates that the apron strings of control are cut, but the love will remain. She will still be available for motherly advice and give motherly care when needed.

Exodus 20:12 and Ephesians 6:2 both simply command us to honor our father and mother without any elaboration on exactly whom that will be. Certainly it encompasses both the biological mother and the parental mother, and since as Christians we are to "*give preference to one another in honor*" (Romans 12:10), it is appropriate to honor other women that have been like a mother to you. So today, we give thanks to God for you and honor each of you whichever role of a mother you may be fulfilling.

This morning I want to address the topic of becoming a godly mother and by that I am specifically referring to fulfilling the role of providing care and nurture to others in a godly manner and attitude. You do not have to be godly to bear a child, but you do have to become godly in order to be a godly mother. I

will present what the Scriptures state about being godly in your relationship with God, your husband, your children and others, and I will also address the influence you are to have in the world and then give some practical ways in which to grow in each of these areas. No woman becomes a godly mother automatically. It takes diligence to develop and grow spiritually to become a godly mother. In addition, no mother will have everything all together this side of heaven. You are all on the same path on which some are farther ahead and more mature and some are farther behind and less mature. The goal is to continue on the path of maturity to become all Christ wants you to be as a person, a woman and a mother.

Walking with God

The starting point in becoming a godly mother is becoming a godly person and that starts with walking with God Himself. I am optimistic enough to believe that the vast majority of women do want to be good mothers to their children and that it grieves them when they fail to be so. (I am also realistic enough to know that there are exceptions with some being characterized by cruelty and evil). The failure to be a good mother will always eventually trace back to that woman's understanding of God and her personal relationship with Him. However, no one can have a personal relationship with God until the problem of sin is resolved. Not only were we born as sinners by nature, our actions from an early age demonstrate our rebellion against God and His will. We want everything to be done in our way in our time to our satisfaction. Even as an infant our cry was not a polite request for help, but a demand for immediate action. (I am hungry and I want to be fed now! I am uncomfortable, and I want to be made comfortable now!) As we get older, we may learn proper manners in making our demands and perhaps even some patience in waiting for them to be fulfilled, but the heart of selfishness still resides in seeking out our own will instead of God's will.

Our failure to obey all of God's precepts and commandments separates us from God and places us under His just and holy wrath. The failure to be a perfect mother is just one area in which sin shows up. Sin is the reason we are not good and until the problem of sin is resolved we cannot be good. Even our best efforts at righteousness will fall short of God's perfect standard (Isaiah 64:6; Romans 3:23).

How is the problem of sin overcome so that you can walk with the God who created you? Without getting into all the theological details of it, it is the simple message of the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ. It is by belief and faith in what God has done for us in Jesus Christ and trust in His promises. Our creator became a creature in the man Jesus Christ, born of a virgin, who lived a sinless life fulfilling all of God's law. He then willingly yielded His life as the sacrificial payment for sin and broke the power of sin and death by His resurrection from the grave. He is now ascended to heaven where He is preparing a dwelling place for all that belong to Him, and one day in the future He will return to take us to be with Him forever. Those are the facts of the gospel and they require repentance on our part. Repentance is a change of mind that necessarily results in a change of behavior. Ed gave an excellent sermon on that topic last week. You change your mind and turn from your sin and self-righteousness and cast yourself completely upon His grace and mercy, for it is by God's grace that we are saved from sin (Ephesians 2:1-10). The result is turning away from the old masters of sin and the devil, and yielding yourself to your new masters, the Lord Jesus Christ and righteousness (Romans 6).

Jesus Himself promised, *"He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him"* (John 3:36) and *"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life"* (John 5:24). We hold fast to the promises of John 1:12-13, *"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, [even] to those who believe in His name,¹³ who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."* Those promises are secure for Jesus also said in John 10:27-30, *"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one*

shall snatch them out of My hand. "My Father, who has given [them] to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch [them] out of the Father's hand. "I and the Father are one."

Faith in God and trust in His promises result in the new birth of the spirit so that what was once dead in trespasses and sin is made alive together with Christ by the Spirit of God (Ephesians 2:1-10) and you are adopted into God's family (Romans 8:15-17). What was impossible now becomes possible. You can live in such a way as to please God because the Spirit of God now indwells you to teach, guide, direct and even intercede for you. The child of God can begin to understand the nature, character and will of God because they now have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16). The believer can also begin to walk with God in righteousness by the power of the Spirit.

Each of us who profess to be a Christian is called upon to walk in a manner worthy of our calling (Ephesians 4:1). We are to walk in humility, gentleness, patience, forbearance and love (Ephesians 4:2). We are to fulfill our part in the body of Christ using our spiritual gifts for the good of the rest of the body so that we can all mature and stand firm against the lies and deceit that are around us (Ephesians 4:12-16; 1 Corinthians 12). We no longer walk in the futility of a darkened mind that is conforming to the image of this world, but we are transformed by a renewed mind, putting on the new self which reflects the image of God in righteousness, truth and holiness (Romans 12:1-2; Ephesians 4:17-24). This new self is increasingly marked by attributes such as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23) and less characterized by unrighteous anger, enmity, wrath, malice, bitterness, immorality, impurity, filthiness, sensuality, and other aspects of hedonism, materialism and general selfishness (Galatians 5; Ephesians 4:25-5:14).

The question arises of how a mother is supposed to walk with God and become characterized by these attributes, especially if she is chasing young children around all day. It is done the same way for her as it is for anyone else. She must make walking with God a priority so that she is finding ways to know God's word, understand it and follow it. This will involve hearing, reading, studying, memorizing and meditating on the Scriptures. She must learn to take advantage of time throughout the day to pray not only for the immediate things she is facing, but also to intercede on behalf of others. She must also find ways in which she can be used of God in serving others.

Let me give you some practical tips on these things that I have seen in Diane as we raised our sons and that I have heard from other ladies over the years in how they were able to develop in their walk with God in the midst of very busy schedules including trying to care for multiple young children. I will list these in three categories without any particular order to the points within those categories. Men, you can use these same ideas or adapt them for yourself.

1). Learning of God

- * Make reading the Bible a habit. Take advantage of times when young children are asleep or not with you, or include them by reading aloud.

- * Make reading the Bible a priority over other materials you may read - magazines, books, novels, etc. - or your entertainment activities such as watching TV, the internet or social media.

- * Listen to Bible audio recordings or sermons while doing chores or driving.

- * Encourage family devotions and lead young children in their devotions. Set a time for older children to have their devotions perhaps while you are having yours and then discuss it with them.

- * Participate in opportunities at church - Sunday School, Worship Services, Bible studies, etc. Then discuss what you have learned with your family or friends. Have them discuss what they have learned with you. Take advantage of the Sermon "*Think About It*" section in the Sermon Notes in the bulletin each week.

- * Keep a journal of what you are learning and how you have seen the character and attributes of God displayed and how He is working in your life and the lives of those around you.

2). Talking with God - Prayer becomes a way of life by practice

*Pray throughout the day even if just for a minute or two here and there instead of waiting until you have a larger block of time.

* Include prayer as part of both your family and private devotions. Pray with the children at meals and when you put them to bed.

* Give God thanks as soon as you notice what He has done, and petition Him as soon as you receive a request.

* Participate in corporate prayer with family members and friends.

* Keep a prayer journal. Write down praises and thanksgivings as well as requests and petitions. Use it to keep track of what God is doing as well as what you should be praying about.

* Strive to set aside a block of time in which you can concentrate on prayer. This is usually best done with your devotional reading, but it can also be at other times whenever you can be relatively undistracted. Common opportunities for this are before the kids are up, when they take a nap or are doing school work, or after they go to bed.

3) Serving God.

* Find at least one ministry to participate in and become committed to it. It may take several attempts at different ministries to discover your spiritual gifts and the best ministry for you to participate in.

* Participate in other ministries as your time allows.

* Take advantage of those ministries in which multiple members of your family can participate - Sunday School, Kids4Truth, VBS, etc. It is a lot easier to fulfill commitments when there is already something for the kids and others share in that commitment.

* Be open to ministry opportunities that come to you individually and not just those that are organized by the church. This can range from taking your kids to the park and talking with other moms there, to visiting others (orphans, widows, shut-ins, nursing homes, etc.), to preparing meals or helping those in need.

Your relationship with God must be set as the priority. These are just some practical ways in which to help keep it as the priority. If you allow other things to supplant it, then your walk with God will falter and everything else I talk about this morning will also suffer. Life will be going through the motions without significant purpose or without purpose at all instead of being lived to its fullest with eternal purposes that influence everyone around you.

Walking with Her Husband

The second area I want to address this morning is your relationship with your husband. I know that some of you are not married, but since the principles here concern the development of your character more than specifics about dealing with a man, all of you ladies need to pay attention.

We begin with the simple premise that God has created all people for a purpose, and that purpose is about God and not yourself or any other human. This includes marriage. God has given men and women different but complementary roles. Today I will focus on the specific roles of the woman and address the specific roles of the man on Father's day.

Our understanding of the woman's role begins in Genesis 2 when God makes Eve from one of Adam's ribs and then gives her to him to be his helpmeet. She would be someone that corresponded to him to assist him through life. Paul commented on this briefly in 1 Corinthians 11:8-9 saying, "*For man does not originate from woman, but woman from man; for indeed man was not created for the woman's sake, but woman for the man's sake.*" While that is contrary to modern feminist thought, it is God's design and purpose which explain the feminine role in the family.

Paul addresses the role of the wife in Ephesians 5:21-33. In the context of all believers being in submission to one another in the fear of Christ, the wife takes on a primary role in being in submission

and showing respect to her husband as her head, and he takes on the primary role of leading his wife into sanctification and sacrificially loving her as Christ does the church and as he loves his own body. 1 Peter 3:1-6 addresses the same issue but expands on the manner of submission and the character the wife is to display. *“In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any [of them] are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, ² as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior. ³ And let not your adornment be [merely] external--braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; ⁴ but [let it be] the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God.”* Sarah is then given as an example of such submission and respectful behavior.

A godly wife is to be an asset to her husband (Proverbs 31:10-31). A strong willed, selfish and nagging wife is an ungodly detriment to any man. The righteous and gentle behavior of a godly wife serves as a blessing to a good husband and a correction to one that is disobedient to the word. Let me quickly add here that 1 Peter 3 should not be emphasized to the point that it over rules all other Scriptures that direct the behavior of a Christian woman. Some have done that resulting in an ungodly oppression of women and requiring them to disobey the Lord’s commands in order to be *“submissive without a word.”* A Christian woman’s first allegiance is to the Lord Himself and she must resist any effort to get her to disobey any of God’s commands. That would include the “one another” commands which includes admonishment that could even lead to church discipline as I have talked about in previous sermons. (See: The Difficult One Another). The emphasis in Peter is her chaste and respectful behavior demonstrating her inner qualities of a gentle and quiet spirit. That is a character that develops only in the context of finding Christ sufficient even when your husband is not obedient to fulfill his God given role in your life.

Why is this important for a mom? Because you cannot be a better mother than you are a wife. That is of critical importance, so I will repeat it. You cannot be a better mother than you are a wife. You are modeling for your children what it means to walk in godliness by everything you do. If you are an ungodly wife, you will teach your children to follow your ungodly example. If you are a godly wife, you will teach your children godliness by your example.

What are some practical ways to walk with a husband in godliness?

- * Keep your priorities in proper order. God first, your husband second, your kids third, yourself last.
- * Develop your character and practice so that you are a blessing from God to your husband. Consider the character and practice of the Proverbs 31 woman and seek to emulate her.
- * Be your husband’s private prayer warrior. Never discount what God can do in and through him by your prayers on his behalf.
- * Be your husband’s greatest encourager. For all his bravado, a man needs to know his wife supports him in his endeavors. You may not respect everything about him, but find the things you do respect and build him up from there. There is truth to the adage that behind every great man is a great woman.
- * Remember that your marriage is to be a reflection of Christ and the church (Ephesians 5:32). Be sure that is true so far as it depends upon you.

Walking before Others

The third area of importance in becoming a godly mother is your walk before other people. I mention this only briefly because the point is simple. You must not only be a good example to your children by how you treat your husband, but also in how you treat other people. Your example in daily life will speak much louder than any instruction you give your children. If you steal, cheat and lie, don’t be surprised if your children do the same. And since you will not be perfect in this life, be humble enough to make sure your children are aware of how to properly deal with sin through confession, apologies, asking forgiveness and making restitution for any damage you have caused. Your godliness should be self-evident to other people, if it is not, then you are not as godly as you think.

Walking with Her Children

The fourth area of being a godly mom is her walk with her children. We live in a day and age where parenting philosophies and practice oppose what the Scriptures teach. You must be willing and able to stand against the norms of our society to raise your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4). If you want to be a good mother, you must parent according to God's instructions.

The Scriptures are clear that the responsibility for raising the children falls upon the father for he will be held accountable for what occurs in his home. However, the practical side of it is that the majority of the child rearing tasks will be taken on by the mother since she is the one that will spend the most time with the children. We find this dual responsibility revealed in passages such as Proverbs 6:20-22, "*My son, observe the commandment of your father, And do not forsake the teaching of your mother; ²¹ Bind them continually on your heart; Tie them around your neck. ²² When you walk about, they will guide you; When you sleep, they will watch over you; And when you awake, they will talk to you.*" Passages such as Proverbs 10:1 give weight to this idea because the way in which a child turns out has a direct effect on both parents, "*A wise son makes a father glad, But a foolish son is a grief to his mother.*" Proverbs 17:25 adds, "*A foolish son is a grief to his father, And bitterness to her who bore him.*" If you raise your children in foolishness, then both they and you will reap the tragic consequences that will result. If you raise your children in godliness, then both they and you will reap the blessings.

What are the basics of walking in godliness with your children? It begins by loving the Lord and with teaching them about the Lord and His commandments in all the daily situations of life. Deuteronomy 6:4-9 is a direct command to Israel, but also expresses what every godly parent should do. "*Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one! ⁵ And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. ⁶ And these words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart; ⁷ and you shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. ⁸ And you shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. ⁹ And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.*" Teaching children about God begins with your own love for God and therefore extends to pointing out His will and hand at work in every situation of life.

Teaching your children then extends into teaching them wisdom which begins with the proper fear of the Lord and then extends into the proper application of knowledge in life. The purpose of the book of Proverbs is to know wisdom and instruction (Proverbs 1:2) and so it is filled with pithy sayings to accomplish those goals. The wise will hear and increase in learning while fools will despise it. The wise and godly mother will teach her children wisdom.

We live in a society that places high value on knowledge, but little value on godly wisdom. Parents, remember that you are responsible for training your children's character and teaching them wisdom regardless of the manner in which they receive their academic education - public, private or home. Knowledge and skills are important, but always secondary to the development of a godly character in your children. While you cannot control whether they will be genuine Christians, you can make sure they know the truth of the gospel, and you can train them to be honest, respectful, courteous and diligent workers even if they reject the gospel.

What are some practical ways to walk with your children in godliness?

* Your first priority is loving God yourself, for only out of that can you teach them properly about God and His will for their lives. Your children need to be able to see your love for God in everyday life. That is why your walk with God is the starting point of becoming a godly mother.

* Your second priority is training their character as just mentioned. Your example is a big part of that, which is why your walk with your husband and how you walk before others are crucial in becoming a godly mother.

* Be a diligent prayer warrior on behalf of your children.

* Be actively involved in the lives of your children, but do not allow them to become the center of your life. Include them in the things you are interested in, especially ministry if possible.

* Direct and encourage your children to do hard things that will improve their character, skills and dependence upon the Lord. Do not cater to their wants and desires.

* Keep the goal in mind that you are training them to become an independent adult that will be a blessing to others.

* For those with adult children, be sure the apron strings are cut. Be available. Be an encourager. Be a resource for them. Be willing to help and aide, but do not take upon yourself their responsibilities. Do not allow them to become dependent upon you. Be available to give advice, but do not interfere. They may still be your son or daughter, but show them respect as another adult.

Influencing the World

Let me leave you with this thought. In your role as a mother, you will have a major influence upon your children and those you care for and nurture as a substitute or secondary mother. What influence will that be? It is interesting to note that in 1 & 2 Kings there is a common formula used to sum up the life of each of the kings of Judah. Their name is given, how old they were when they began to reign, the length of their reign, the name of their mother and then a summary statement about whether they were a good or evil king in the sight of the Lord. The inference is direct and purposeful. The mother had direct influence upon the character of her son and therefore the manner in which he ruled either good or evil. Be serious about your role as a mother. You have more influence and consequence than you may think. Your legacy will follow in the character and deeds of the lives you have touched.

Sermon Notes - 5/10/2009
Becoming a Godly Mother - Selected Scriptures

What is a Mother?

One who has given _____ to a child.

The _____ parent of a child

A woman who exercises care and tenderness toward another, or gives _____ advice

Motherhood _____, but does not end when the child becomes an adult

No woman is _____ and becomes a godly mother automatically.

The goal is to continue to _____ to become all Christ wants you to be as a person, a woman and a mother

Walking with God is the starting point in becoming a godly mother

The failure to be a good mother will always trace back to her understanding of _____ and walk with Him

_____ is the reason we are not good and until the problem of sin is resolved we cannot be good

The problem of sin is overcome with the _____ - salvation by faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ

We rest on Jesus' _____ to us - John 1:12-13; 3:36; 5:24; 10:27-30, etc.

The new birth brings spiritual _____ - Ephesians 2:1-10

Christians are to walk in a manner _____ of their calling (Eph. 4:1)

Christians are to walk with a renewed _____, not a darkened one (Eph. 4:17-24; Rom, 12:1-2)

We are to walk in the _____ of the Spirit, not the deeds of the flesh (Galatians 4; Eph. 4:25-5:14)

The godly mother must make walking with God the _____.

1) Learning of God - Make reading the _____ a priority over other materials and entertainment

* _____ to Bible audio recordings or sermons while doing chores or driving.

* Encourage family _____ and lead young children in their devotions

* Participate in opportunities at _____ to learn about God and His will

* Keep a _____ of what you are learning and observations of God's attributes being displayed

2). **Talking with God** - Prayer becomes a way of life by practice

* Pray _____ the day

* Include prayer as part of both your family and private _____

* Give God _____ when you notice what He has done, and petition Him when you receive a request

* _____ in corporate prayer

* Keep a prayer _____

* Strive to set aside a block of time in which you can _____ on prayer

3) **Serving God** - Find at least _____ ministry to participate in and become committed to it.

* Participate in other ministries as your time _____

* Take advantage of those ministries in which multiple members of your _____ can participate

* Be open to ministry opportunities that come to you _____

Walking with Her Husband

God has created all people with a purpose, and He has given specific but different _____ for men & women

The _____ of the creation of women - Genesis 2:18-25; 1 Corinthians 11:8-9

The role of the _____ to her husband - Ephesians 5:21-33; 1 Peter 3:1-6

A godly wife is an asset, a _____ to her husband - Proverbs 31:10-31

The Christian woman's first allegiance & submission is to the _____ and must obey all His commands

You cannot be a better mother than you are a _____ - the modeling of godliness you set in daily life.

* Keep your priorities in proper _____. God first, your husband second, yourself third.

* Develop your character and practice so that you are a _____ from God to your husband

* Be your husband's private _____ warrior

* Be your husband's greatest _____

* Remember that your marriage is to be a reflection of _____ and the church

Walking before Others

Your _____ in daily life will speak much louder than any instruction you give your children

Walking with Her Children

If you want to be a good mother, you must parent according to _____ instructions

The father will be held accountable, but the responsibility lies on _____ parents - Prov. 6:20-22; 10:1; 17:25

Teach your children about God and His will and loving Him in all the _____ situations of life - Deut. 6:4-9

Teach your children _____, the proper application of knowledge in life. It begins with the fear of God

Knowledge and skills are important, but always secondary to the development of a godly _____

* Your first priority is loving _____ yourself

* Your second priority is training the _____ of your children

* Be a diligent _____ warrior on behalf of your children

* Be actively involved in their lives, but do not allow them to become the _____ of your life

* Direct your children to do _____ that will improve their character, skills and dependence upon God

* Your goal is to train your children to be _____ adults that will be a blessing to others

* Cut the apron strings. Be a resource, but show _____ and don't let them become dependent on you

Influencing the World

You will have a major _____ upon your children and those you care for and nurture

1 & 2 Kings notes the name of each king's mother, marking _____ influence on them being good or evil

You have more influence than you may realize, your legacy will be in the lives you have _____.

KIDS CORNER

Parents, you are responsible to apply God's Word to your children's lives. Here is some help. **Young Children** - draw a picture about something you hear during the sermon. Explain your picture(s) to your parents at lunch. **Older Children** - 1) Count how many times the words "mother" is mentioned. 2) Talk with your parents about the influence each of their mother's had upon them.

THINK ABOUT IT!

Questions to consider in discussing the sermon with others. Consider the women who have been a positive influence your life and thank God for them. How is man's sin problem overcome? Consider the practical ideas above about walking with God and develop a plan to implement several of them. Consider how you could be a better wife and develop a plan to make the needed changes. Men, consider how you can encourage your wife in becoming a godly woman and do it. Develop specific ways in which you can be a more godly mother to your children and carry out your plans.