

The Grand Contributions of a Mother

May 11, 2014

If you could use some humor, check out this short video:

<http://www.faithit.com/these-moms-laying-down-law-hip-hop-style-its-hysterical/>

The week's devotions in a nutshell: A mother has the unique privilege of reflecting the wondrous and delightful love of God for her children. There is a cost!

DAY 1: Sacrificial love.

1. A mother's is sacrificial in both small and big ways.

a. *Daily* "small" things—getting up early to dry a favorite shirt, making breakfasts and lunches, helping out in the classrooms at school and church, extricating splinters from tiny fingers, daily pick up, daily hunts for missing items, runs to Target for a missing school supply. The list is endless.

b. *Heavier* sacrifices: Staying up all night with a sick kid but still making breakfast in the morning for the well ones, never ending piles of laundry, baking 3 dozen Smiley cupcakes at midnight, relearning math so you can check their homework, setting boundaries and saying "no" even though your children insist everyone else is doing it (whatever "it" is that particular day), acting as interpreter between your children and your husband.

2. Moses' mother was an extraordinary woman. Pharaoh had issued an edict that all Hebrew male babies were to be killed by the Egyptian mid-wives! Some did not go along with the edict. (Ex. 1:15-22)

Exodus 2:2-3 ...she became pregnant and gave birth to a son. When she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him for three months. But when she could hide him no longer, she got a papyrus basket for him and coated it with tar and pitch. Then she placed the child in it and put it among the reeds along the bank of the Nile.

3. Try to imagine what this would be like! If you're caught, your baby is going in the Nile River. What would it be like for you to live with this threat every day?

4. In the meantime, *Pharaoh's daughter* finds baby Moses. (Ex. 2:4-6). Moses' sister just "happened" to be hanging around and offered a solution. Now, look what God opens up for this wonderful mother...

Exodus 2:7 Then his sister asked Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and get one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?"

⁸ *"Yes, go," she answered. And the girl went and got the baby's mother.*

⁹ *Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this baby and nurse him for me, and I will pay you." So the woman took the baby and nursed him.*

5. The story begins with sacrificial love of Moses' mother, rewarded by God! What strikes you from today's story?

DAY 2: Sacrificial love, continued

1. Moses' mother hid him in the bulrushes along the Nile River. Not only did Moses' mother have her son back for a time, but Pharaoh's daughter picked up some of the living expenses! However, a greater sacrificial love was going to be called for...

Exodus 2:10 When the child grew older, she took him to Pharaoh's daughter and he became her son. She named him Moses, saying, "I drew him out of the water."

2. Pharaoh's daughter had no idea that the woman nursing the young baby was the baby's mother! What sacrifice is Moses' mother now called to make?

3. Time of nursing Moses ended. What will happen to the boy? There is only one course available for his survival—an Egyptian woman must adopt Moses as her own. Now you see the biting sacrifice of a mother once again, as this dear lady gives her beloved Moses back to God and into the hands of Pharaoh's daughter! This is heart and gut-wrenching.

4. What stirs in you as you consider this mother's plight and sacrifice? What things strike you most about this kind of love?

5. Consider these possibilities:

- She might never see Moses ever again.
- His survival is far more important than her motherly attachment.
- She gave her son back to God first.
- Other: _____

6. What kind of sacrificial love have you been called upon to make, whether as a parent or any other role in life?

7. In the following list, underline the sacrifices you've been called to make:

Helping your child deal with rejection from their first love (and their second and third, etc.); worrying when they're out past curfew; walking the walk; teaching your child values and developing character—even when it hurts; being rebuffed as you keep reaching out to your child who is addicted to drugs or alcohol; talking to an adult child who is 2,000 miles away, alone and scared, that you want to hold and comfort and can't; accepting that your child is growing up and will make mistakes and you can't always protect them no matter how much their pain hurts you; loving your child regardless of what they have done to themselves, others or you.

DAY 3: Influential love.

1. A mother must do more than "love" her child. Love also requires godly influence.

2 Timothy 1:5 For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois, and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that it is in you as well.

2. What things does Paul remind Timothy about his mother and grandmother?

3. Paul continues...

2 Timothy 3:15 and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

4. Paul indicates that Timothy's mother provided a particular kind of influence. What was it?

5. Both mothers and fathers are given specific instruction as to giving influence to their children.

Deuteronomy 6:4-10 These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

a. In order to give effective influence, what is the starting point?

b. Moses tells four times during the day when you have opportunity for influencing your children. What are they?

c. What examples does Moses give of how you can keep God's word in front of your children?

d. From the last three questions, how would you like to do to bring more influence to your kids, or to the people around you?

6. For three days, we've labored at the emotional cost and "work" a mother is called to do. Amazingly, mothers *want* to love their kids regardless of the cost. She reflects something of God's love for you! How has your understanding of the love God has for *you* deepened?

DAY 4: A tenacious love

1. Mothers need thick skin! We know this from experience, but the scriptures also picture this.

2. God reminds His people...

Ezekiel 19:2 and say, "What was your mother? A lioness among lions! She lay down among young lions, she reared her cubs.

³ She brought up one of her cubs, and he became a strong lion. He learned to tear the prey and he devoured men.

3. The "cubs" are Israel's young princes. What picture is painted about their mother? We often use the phrase, "she's a momma bear" to describe the same thing. What is it?

4. Ezekiel then adds another imagery of motherhood.

Ezekiel 19:10 "Your mother was like a vine in your vineyard, planted by the waters; it was fruitful and full of branches because of abundant waters."

a. What comes to mind about this mother?

b. What made her fruitful?

c. What are the "abundant waters?"

5. Isaiah uses the committed love of a mother to illustrate the tenacity of His love for His people.

Isaiah 49:15 Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? ...I will not forget you!

a. God asks two rhetorical questions. The first has to do with the nursing mother. How likely is it that a nursing mother *forgets* her baby? What is the point God is making about His love for His people?

b. The second rhetorical question: Can a mother have no compassion for the child she gave birth to? What point is God making about His love for His people?

6. "Tenacious" love continues when it is doubted or questioned by your kids. It has thick skin when meanness is used. How is your tenacious love doing?

DAY 5: Reflecting the delightful love of God for you

1. Paul was a church planter. His small team moved to a new city, shared the Lord with people and a new church was born. He stayed long enough to get them on their feet, then moved on to the next city. He later wrote back to some of these churches. Here is an excerpt from his letter to the church in Thessalonica.

1Thessalonians 2:7 But we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children.

2. What words does he use to describe what he thinks of them? How he feels for them?

3. What image/illustration does he use to picture that love?

4. A mom's unique gifting is to demonstrate the joyous and delighted love that God has for us! She is supposed to be an audio-visual of God's love for you!

Zephaniah 3:17 The Lord your God is with you, He is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing.

a. Where is God present?

b. Which phrase most closely approximates a "momma grizzly bear" love?

c. Which phrase most closely approximates God's "enchantment" for you?

d. Which phrase most closely approximates His desire to comfort you when life hits you hard?

e. Which phrase most closely approximates God's glee for you?

5. You hear Christians say that we are "the hands and feet of God" as we serve. True. But we are also the "*face*," the *expressions* of God to people.

a. Today, what strikes you most about God's love for you in Zephaniah 3:17?

b. Is there someone who needs to see God's love through your face?