**Blessings from a Godly Mother**

***The Power of a Godly Mom***

My mother died just weeks before her 96th birthday. She lived a long life that was both difficult and good. God always brought good out of her difficulties just as He promises in Romans 8:28, a verse I heard her quote many times! Mom was born in 1909, saved at a tent meeting in the Missouri boot heel when she was ten, the same night her mother made a commitment to Christ. Growth was hard when the only church came once every three months as the itinerate preacher passed through town. So Mom married my dad, a charming unbeliever who became an abusive alcoholic. Life was hard, but God was good!

When their first child was born, Mom promised the Lord to raise her right. She started going regularly to church for the first time in her life, but my Dad wanted no part of “religion.” Another daughter…many hard years with an unfaithful husband…separation, then reconciliation…and two more children. Mom was 38 when I was born, just as Dad moved the family to Mississippi to sell cleaning supplies from his pickup truck. Yes, he sold cleaning supplies, but he really bootlegged liquor from TN into MS, illegally. He drank more and more until he could no longer function on any level. I loved and hated my parents! I begged Mom to put him into a mental hospital. She did the best she could with what she knew, and finally by the grace of God my Dad was no longer around. I put a big X over him. My Mom just prayed.

She consistently pointed me to trust in the Lord just as she was doing during those tough days, though I didn’t always respond as quickly as I should have. Bitter roots had produced their fruit, but the seeds she planted in those early years took root and produced fruit, too. As an adult, I had to choose which fruit I would cultivate. Mom never became bitter and she never stopped praying or loving. How thankful I now am for that model in my Mom!

My dad died the year after Ron and I married. I had not seen him in 5 years; Ron saw him for the first and only time in a casket. At the funeral I learned he had gotten saved 3 months before he died and that he had changed radically, telling all his former drinking buddies that God had saved him and wanted to save them, too! Mom was planning to tell me at Thanksgiving that he was home; he died the week before. I was glad he was saved, but still wanted to be on one side of Heaven and him on the other side. I had a lot of forgiving to do; it took me another couple of years to work through my own issues and choose forgiveness. Mom’s heart had modeled God’s forgiving heart!

I look back on the difficulties of my childhood and now realize God used them to make me stronger, to teach me forgiveness just as He has forgiven me. I no longer dread seeing my father in Heaven but now understand that He, too is forgiven, and that he is now the man God designed him to be, complete in Christ, just as I will be (Php 1:6). I look forward to knowing the real Dad that I didn’t know on earth. God has used many of the trials I experienced as a child to give me a platform of ministry, truly using for my good and His glory the difficult things in my life (Jas 1:2-4). I’m grateful Mom continued to pray and point me to my Heavenly Father when my earthly father failed.

***The Picture of a Godly Mom***

I think of Timothy’s mother Eunice and also his grandmother Lois who taught him the ways of the Lord (2Tim 1:5), and how that made a great difference for his ministry. He knew the Word. He had a strong heritage, even though his father was an unbeliever.

Jochebed’s faith saved Moses from Pharoah’s sword. Her early training gave Moses a sense of his true identity, not as Pharoah’s grandson, but as a child of the true and living God. Her influence was profound and long term!

When I think of good mothers, I always think of Mary who mothered Jesus. What humility she displayed in submitting to God’s plan for her to bear the Messiah and bear the shame of an unplanned pregnancy that provoked whispers! What humility it must have taken to parent a child who didn’t choose to sin when she must have failed him many times! What heartbreak she endured to see the Son of God, her son, beaten and bruised for our iniquity, not His! She stayed with Him to the end. And in the end His brother James believed and wrote a powerful book of the Bible to show us that faith always has appropriate action. I can’t help but wonder how many discussions about Jesus went on in that household as Jesus carried out His earthly ministry, but even more after the Resurrection! Mary pointed her family to Truth, to Jesus.

The mom we all love and hate is found in Proverbs 31. She’s the ideal, the virtuous woman, wife, and mother. I’m intimidated by all that she accomplishes. I’d love to be her; I am not. That’s my hate factor…I’m jealous! But I also love the ideal she gave for us to live up to. As a woman she is gentle and kind. She values and respects others, even her servants. She cares for her family and home, providing what they need, and her children appreciate and bless her in time. She is a businesswoman, an administrator, a helper to her husband who also praises her as she builds up his reputation in the community. She seems to do it all right all the time…I wish I were more like her!

***The Pattern of a Godly Mom***

Principles of Proverbs help Moms to do it right. Good mothers teach their children Truth and help them to develop character. No, they don’t have perfect kids and you won’t either, nor did I. But Godly moms bring up their children in the fear of the Lord and show them where to find wisdom for life. Our hearts rejoice when our children make good choices and do right, and we grieve if they do not (Pro 23:22-25).

When children disobey, good mothers apply the board of education to the seat of understanding! That is the beginning of wisdom…sin hurts! (Pro 23:12-18; Heb 12:5-10). Just as fear of God matures into an awesome reverence for God, fear of discipline matures into obedience motivated by love and respect. Good discipline is not just punitive, but is intentionally corrective, expecting and requiring wise changes. Good parenting is like good coaching, more showing out of love for the game than just telling.

Wisdom continues to grow as parents balance nurture and admonition in training (Eph 6:4). The ideal is two parents working together to train children, though in today’s culture many single Moms are rearing kids alone. So how should they parent? Roles don’t change just because a woman is single or married…women are to be godly, virtuous, fearing the Lord (Pro 31:10-31), gentle and quiet (1 Pe 3:4), submitting to authorities established by God (Eph 5:21, 6:5-8, Rom 13:1), loving and humbly serving others before self (Php 2:3-4).

Granted, the job will be harder alone, but the model will be effective if Mom is continuously pointing her child to the Heavenly Father who is perfect in every way! She will not be perfect, as my Mom was not, nor was I, nor do my grandchildren have perfect parents! God the Father is the only perfect model to which we direct our children. We as earthly Moms do the best we can by praying, modeling, training. Then we trust HIM to make up the difference and produce what we cannot – heart change in the other person!

Godly moms have always had a profound influence on their children, even if dads are absent or uninvolved. We as counselors must encourage all moms to grow in their parenting skills as best they can, to train their children in the fear of the Lord, and every chance they get to point to the model of their Heavenly Father. This begins with a woman who fears the Lord and loves Him enough to tell her children about him all day, every day (Dt 6:4-9). The blessing of a godly mother will make an eternal difference for the next generation!

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