

The American Mother. It is not a walk in the park... By the time a child reaches 18, a mother has had to handle some extra 18,000 hours of child-generated work. In fact, women who never have children enjoy the equivalent of an extra three months a year in leisure time! A Junior High science teacher lectured on the properties of magnets for an entire class. The next day he gave his students a quiz. The first question read like this: "My name begins with an "M," has six letters, and I pick things up. What am I?" Half the kids in the class wrote, "Mother."

That reminds me of the father who was trying to explain the concept of marriage to his 4-year-old daughter. He got out their wedding album, thinking visual images would help, and explained the entire wedding service to her. When he was finished, he asked if she had any questions. She pointed to a picture of the wedding party and asked, "Daddy, is that when mommy came to work for us?"

I still remember the slogan many of us have heard again and again, "If daddy ain't happy, who cares? If momma ain't happy, ain't nobody happy!"

Ralph Waldo Emerson has said, "Men are what their mothers make them" and an old Spanish proverb says, "An ounce of mother is worth a pound of clergy." Even Scripture speaks about motherhood. There are some great portraits of motherhood in Scripture.

I love the picture of the mother of Moses who cared so much for her son that she broke the law in order to protect him from certain death. She then made sure that he had a good family when she put him in that basket so that Pharaoh's daughter would find him. Later, she had the opportunity to be his nanny and teach him the faith of his people. We see the sacrificial love of the mother who appeared before King Solomon and told him that she was willing to have her son taken away by another woman rather than see any harm come to him. Or, the mother of James and John who loved her boys so much that she wanted them to sit by the Lord's side in the heavenly kingdom. And, the mother of King Lemuel, who gave some advice to her son about godly living and how to pick a good wife, in Proverbs 31. These are all mothers who put their children first, ahead of their own safety and convenience.

I want you to know that I am aware that today is a difficult day for many of you. It may be difficult, because you didn't have the best mom in the world. It may be difficult, because as a mom you lost a child. It may be difficult because your mom died a number of years ago, and you wish you could talk with her again. It may be a difficult day, because you've raised your children, and all of them, or maybe just one of them, have turned their backs on a close relationship with Jesus. But let's take a look at a couple of godly moms, who will inspire us all to be all we can be for Jesus whether we are grandparents, parents, or just living a single life on this earth. May I encourage all of you: Leave A Lasting Legacy!

As the Apostle Paul begins his letter to his good friend and fellow-pastor named Timothy. Paul writes to Timothy, "I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also". As Paul thought of Timothy, he couldn't help but remember the two women who were extremely influential in Timothy's life – his mother and grandmother. When and where did Paul first meet them? Around the year 50 AD Paul began his second missionary journey by returning to a number of cities he had been to on his first missionary journey. The Bible tells us in Acts 16, "Paul came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where a disciple named Timothy lived, whose mother was Jewish and a believer but whose father was a Greek. The believers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him. Paul wanted to take him along on the journey"

There are two things that I want you to take note of about Timothy. First is Timothy's hometown of Lystra. Paul had been to Lystra three years earlier on his first missionary journey. Things started off well and then got really ugly really fast when a group of jealous Jews showed up. In Acts 14 we read, "Then some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium and won the crowd over. They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city, thinking he was dead. But after the disciples had gathered around him, he got up and went back into the city" (Acts 14:19,20). That was in Timothy's hometown of Lystra. Were his mother and grandmother some of those disciples who helped Paul? We don't know. But we can be sure that Timothy's family was well aware of what had happened to Paul.

The second thing you may have noticed is that it does not seem that Timothy's father was a Christian. He is called "a Greek" in the Bible. Certainly, there were heated discussion, even arguments, over the topic of religion. "You have your religion. I have mine. Don't force it on our son, let him decide for himself". Such arguments echo throughout kitchens and living rooms today. Not every parent, not every mother, is concerned with spiritual growth. Too many parents just focus on the outcome. They want children to grow up to be honorable children or the world; someone who is successful, popular, and even famous.

However, the lack of support from her husband did not deter Timothy's mother from making sure that as Paul puts it, "from infancy you have known the holy scriptures which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith in Jesus Christ". Timothy was taught the truths of God's Word. Timothy's mother and grandmother made sure that Timothy knew God's promise to send a Savior to rescue him and all people from the eternal condemnation of sin. Together they looked forward to the day when the promised Savior would arrive and through his perfect life, sacrificial death and glorious resurrection would secure salvation. When the Apostle Paul arrived in Lystra, he announced that what they were looking forward to had happened. Jesus had come and fulfilled the Scriptures which Timothy had learned from infancy. Jesus had come and now it was time for them to go, to go and tell of the salvation Jesus had won for all.

The Christians living in Lystra could not think of a better prepared person to accompany Paul in his mission work than young Timothy. He knew the Scriptures and believed that Jesus was the promised Savior. And so his mother sent off her son, confident that he was ready because as Paul reminded Timothy years later, "Continue in what you have learned and become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it" For the next nearly 15 years, Paul and Timothy travelled with one another throughout the Roman Empire, proclaiming the message of Christ Jesus as Savior to people of every nationality, social status, race and gender, teaching and training Christians, and preparing people to teach and train still others.

Timothy started off his ministry a bit timid. He wasn't super confident. He was young. Before he began his ministry, Paul laid his hands on him to give him a blessing. He was receiving special gifts to better equip him as a pastor. However, what really empowered and gave Timothy confidence was the Gospel, the good news of what God has done for us in Jesus Christ. Paul once said, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation for everyone who believes." The Greek word here for power, is dynamis, or dynamite. Paul gave Timothy explosives, that could have a dramatic effect on his life and the lives of people around him. When a mom or grandmom shares Jesus and his work, they are actually giving their child explosives, but the right kind of explosives. The Gospel is so powerful because it reveals God's love to us; the faithful, determined love which caused Jesus to save us. The power of God's love is what molds and shapes a person to live a disciplined, thankful life to God.

What legacy are you leaving? People debate the legacies of presidents, CEOs, athletes, coaches, actors. How or for what that person will be remembered? But each of us in one way or another is creating a legacy. What will you be remembered for? Diehard Packer or Vikings fan? Hard working? Making it to every one of your child's games or recitals? Kindness or generosity? Those can all be good things, but when it comes down to it, are they eternally impactful? Are we leaving a legacy that truly prepares children for the world in which they live now and more importantly, for what happens after this life?

While we may not live in a country where an emperor is torturing Christians, Christian faith is under attack especially among our teens and young adults. Go to a secular college campus for orientation day and see the different clubs and organizations that are vying for their membership. There's the atheist society that boasts freedom without god, and the humanists society that claims that mankind is god. There is the encouragement to explore your sexuality, to question your gender, to rebel against authority. College professors target Christians, attempting to embarrass and belittle them until they break, calling Christianity out-of-date, repressive and dangerous. The deception and danger is clearly present and is not only contained to college campuses, but spills over into high schools and grade schools, is pumped into our homes through TVs, computers and phones. Like Paul concerned for Timothy, we might wonder about our kids how are they ever going to make it, hold onto their Christian faith?

One word – Scripture. The Scriptures reveal the truth of who we are and who our God is. The Scriptures do not paint an unrealistic picture of humanity, but recognizes the depth of our sin and its effects on us and our world. Scripture provides answers to the pain, suffering, disappointment and death that we see in the world around us. Scripture acknowledges the guilt that we feel when we do something that is not God's will for us. The Scriptures show us a God who provides a real solution to the guilt of our sin – a God who is personally interested in your peace. The Scriptures show us Christ Jesus who came to earth for no other reason than for you – to live perfectly in your place – to take sin's punishment in your place. Jesus has risen from the dead for you to demonstrate that the God we trust in for our salvation can absolutely deliver on what he has promised to us. These are the timeless truths of God's Word that do not shift according to the latest fads or trends. God has chosen to have these truths written down so that we could clearly know what is right and wrong, good and dangerous. The Scriptures show us a God who has made us wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

The legacy of a godly mother is not found in the mountains of dirty diapers, the convoys to the kitchen for midnight feedings, or the myriad of messes picked up. And the child who becomes CEO of a successful business or a famous artist does not measure a mother's greatness. Those are things the world would claim to be great and worthy to be printed on Hallmark stationary.

The true greatness of motherhood is measured by the hours one mom spends at the foot of her Savior's cross, the patient discipline she administers in his Name, the fervent prayers she offers in faith, the devotion to God's Word displayed. In short, the greatness of motherhood is found in the Savior who gives moms the certainty of something truly worth sharing with their children – eternal joys in Christ. Leave Behind a Lasting Legacy. May it be said of all of you. They pointed me to Christ. Amen.