

SEVEN WAYS TO LOVE OUR MOTHERS

John 19:25-27; Ephesians 6:1-3

John 19:25-27: "Standing by the cross of Jesus were His mother, His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶ When Jesus saw His mother and the disciple He loved standing there, He said to His mother, 'Woman, here is your son.' ²⁷ Then He said to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his home."

Ephesians 6:1-3: "Children, obey your parents as you would the Lord, because this is right. ² Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with a promise, ³ so that it may go well with you and that you may have a long life in the land."

INTRODUCTION

We have two Divine responsibilities this morning. First and foremost: to honor the Lord **Jesus Christ** with our devotion and worship. Secondly: to honor our mothers, our grandmothers, and the mothers of our children. Their priceless value is beyond estimation. Mothers are like gems with too many facets to view and appreciate them fully at any given moment. One mom says, "The joy of motherhood is what a woman experiences when all the children are finally in bed." A mom told an old college friend, "Remember how before I was married I had 3 theories about raising children? Well, now I have 3 children and no theories." Someone noticed a mother has the fascinating ability to be almost everywhere at once and she alone can somehow squeeze an enormous amount of living into just a 24-hour day. A man walked along a remote California beach and stumbled across an old lamp. He picked it up, rubbed it, and out popped a genie. The genie said: "Listen, four others have already released me from the lamp this month. I'm getting a little tired of granting so many wishes, so you can forget about three. You only get one wish." The man thought about it for awhile and said, "I have always wanted to go to Hawaii, but I am afraid to fly and I get very seasick. Could you build me a bridge to Hawaii so I can drive over there to vacation?" The genie laughed. "That is impossible. Think of the logistics of that feat! How would the supports ever reach the bottom of the Pacific Ocean? You need to think of another wish." The man thought some more and said, "I've been dating for years and the women I date always say I don't understand them and that I'm insensitive. So, I wish that I could fully understand women; to know exactly how they feel and know exactly what they are thinking." After a long pause, the genie replied, "You want that bridge to Hawaii with 2 lanes or 4 lanes?"

Ephesians 6:1-3 is built around the Fifth Commandment God Almighty proclaimed from Mt. Sinai (as recorded in **Exodus 20:1-17**): "Children, obey your parents as you would the Lord, because this is right. ² Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with a promise, ³ so that it may go well with you and that you may have a long life in the land." Do you think **Jesus** honored this commandment?

Mary, the woman chosen by God to be our Savior's earthly mother (**Luke 1:26-38**), witnessed His crucifixion from the foot of the Cross. Can you even begin to imagine how she must have felt? Scripture gives us some idea of how **Jesus** felt toward her. Even at His hour of most desperate need, while He is on the Cross bearing the weight of the sins of "the whole world" on His shoulders (**I John 2:2**), **Jesus** makes sure His mother will be taken care of after He is gone! As God, **Jesus** is dealing with crucial eternal matters, but as a man, He shows all of us today how important it is to take care of and love our mothers! **Jesus** looks at Mary and says to her, let John stand in My place as your son. This may seem strange. Didn't **Jesus** have four brothers (**Matthew 13:55**)? Yes, but you may recall it was not until after His resurrection that His own siblings embraced **Jesus** as the Christ, God's Son and Messiah, and our Savior. At this point in their lives, they thought, "He is out of His mind" (**Mark 3:21; John 7:5**). Knowing Mary needed the support and understanding of one who would be both a son to her and a believer in Him as the Christ, **Jesus** turns to John, "the disciple He loved" with a special closeness, and says to him, take care of My mother after I'm gone. John lived a very long life. Quite possibly, he took care of Mary until she went to Heaven.

SEVEN WAYS TO LOVE OUR MOTHERS

Jesus' example testifies that we cannot willfully wrong or neglect our mother and be right with God. If our mother is still alive, regardless of our age or hers, we can love her in these 7 ways:

1. Love Her Verbally

Men often seem to have the philosophy, "I don't have to say I love you, you already know it. I have told you before; if I change my mind I'll let you know!" Or men say, "I show love, even if I don't say it." That may be true, but a woman needs to hear these words, "I Love You!" This letter appeared in Dear Abby: "I enlisted shortly after Pearl Harbor. Thirty-six days later, I was on my way to the Philippines. En route, the Philippines fell to the Japanese, and we were routed to Australia. Eleven days after we landed, I met the most beautiful girl in the world. On our first date, I told her I was going to marry her. I did, 18 months later, while on a 10-day R & R leave from New Guinea. After more than 57 years of marriage and two children, my beloved 'Mary' died five days before Christmas. Although we agreed that our ashes were to be scattered over the mountains, I found I could not part with hers. While Mary was alive, she would frequently say, 'You don't know how much I love you.' I'd reply, 'Likewise.' I never said, 'I love you.' Now her ashes are on my dresser, where I tell her several times a day how much I love her, but it's too late. Although I wrote poetry to her, I could not bring myself to say the three words I knew she wanted most to hear. As my dearest was dying and we thought she was comatose, I told her, 'There aren't enough words to tell you how much I love you.'" A few hours later, she whispered, "Not enough words" and died. The reason I'm writing is to urge men to express their feelings while their loved ones are alive. I don't know why, but many men are reluctant to express the depth of their feelings"—MISSING MARY IN COLORADO. Men, our spouses need to hear us say, "I love you," as do our children, and our mothers. Some men say, "I'm just not turned that way." Then ask **Jesus** to turn you around; to fill your mouth with words of love!

2. Love Her Physically

When was the last time you gave your mom a big hug without her asking for it, or a kiss on the cheek, or just sat on the couch and held her for a change? She's the first person who ever touched you. She held you inside her body for months. When you came out, her first priority was to hold you, cuddle you, stroke your head, or give you a finger to grasp. She constantly touched you! She deserves your touch and you should never give that up completely. A pastor recently told his wife about several ladies who could not resist pawing at him. When he visits a nursing home, there's not a single instance in which some of those precious elderly ladies don't try to reach out and touch his hand or his arm—a total stranger! They are starved for the simple, innocent, physical affirmation of loving someone and being loved.

3. Love Her Patiently

Full-time Moms have an incredibly important job without monetary pay. No position in the business world compares to the physical, emotional, and spiritual commitment she has in motherhood. The poem, *No Occupation*, captures some of this. "She rises up at break of day and through her tasks she races. She cooks the meals as best she may and scrubs the children's faces. Schoolbooks, lunches, homework, too, all need consideration, and yet the census man insists she has— "No Occupation." When breakfast dishes all are done she bakes a pudding, maybe. She cleans the rooms up one by one, with one eye watching baby. The mending pile she then attacks by way of variation. A hearty dinner next she cooks (no time for relaxation), and yet the census man insists she has— "No Occupation." Don't ever make the mistake of asking a woman, "Do you work, or stay at home?" The only thing worse is to ask when she's due if you're not 100% sure she's expecting! And many mothers today have to work on top of the full time job they already have.

Here's the point: In spite of all she does for us, we often become impatient with her. We get so used to her taking care of things that we come to expect it and are upset if we find, "those clothes are still dirty? / that's not ironed? / you're out of my favorite cookies? / you know I like that over rice; where is it?" Or if she picks you up at school, is she scolded for being a few minutes late?

We need to love mothers patiently. Because she's tender to our needs is no reason to take advantage of her. This is the reason for us to be patient and to love her all the more! Teens and kids, it's unfair to be more kind, considerate, or patient with your friends and your friend's mothers than your own mother! If you treated your friends like you treat your mom you wouldn't have friends. If you treated their mom like you do yours, their mom wouldn't let their kid have anything to do with you! Your mom deserves better!

For adults with living mothers the message is the same: "Love her patiently." On a Focus on the Family radio program, James Dobson read this letter from an 80-year-old woman: "To all my children: I suppose my upcoming birthday started my thoughts along these lines. This is a good time to tell you that what I truly want are things I can never get enough of, yet they are free. I want the intangibles. I would like for you to come and sit with me, and for you to be relaxed. We can talk, or we can be silent. I would just like for us to be together. I need your patience when I don't hear what you say the first time. I know how tiresome it is to always be repeating, but sometimes I must ask you to repeat. I need your patience when I think too much about the past; with my slowness and my set ways. I want you to be tolerant with what the years have done to me physically. Please be understanding about my personal care habits. I spill things. I lose things. I get unduly excited when I try to figure out my bank statements. I can't remember what time to take my medication, or if I took it already. I take too many naps. Sometimes sleep helps to pass the day. Well, there you have it: Time, Patience, and Understanding. Those are priceless gifts that I want. Finally, in his letter, the Apostle Paul wrote, 'I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me' [**Philippians 4:13**]. Now I can, too! It's a wonderful feeling to know His eye is on the sparrow and I know He cares for me. I guess being old isn't so bad after all! Love, Mom."

4. Love Her Attentively

Mothers are ready to listen as you pour out your heart. She has a sympathetic ear, and always has. Even as an adult you've gone to her when you want someone who will really listen and understand. A mother will always be on your side. A documentary aired last year of men who were to be executed for capital crimes. Their mothers were interviewed along with their sons. Invariably their moms would say, "He's such a good boy!" Even if the interviewer objected by pointing out something like, "Yes, but he slaughtered seven people with an axe!" their moms would insist, "I know, but he has a good heart!"

Third-graders came up with an essay, *What is a Grandmother?* "A grandmother is a lady who has no children of her own. She likes other peoples' little girls and boys. Grandmothers don't have to do anything except be there. They're old, so they shouldn't play too hard, and they should never run. It is enough if they drive us to the market where the pretend horse is, and have a lot of quarters ready. If they take us for a walk, they should slow down past things like pretty leaves and caterpillars. They should never say, 'Hurry up!' Usually grandmothers are fat, but not too fat to tie your shoes. They can take their teeth and gums out. Grandmothers don't talk baby talk like other visitors do, because it is hard to understand. When they read to us they don't skip parts of the story or mind if it is the same story over again. Everybody should try to have a grandmother, especially if you don't have television. They are the only grown-ups who have time." It's no wonder we like to talk to our mothers and our grandmothers. They listen. If they now have issues it's our turn to be their "rock" and take time to listen. It's payback time! "But, she's always complaining." Yes, just like we often did! She talks about herself and asks the same question over and over, just like we often did. In their older days, our parents may have many fears or anxieties. May we be as attentive to them as we hope others will be to us when we are in their shoes!

5. Love Her Gratefully

An elementary science class studied magnets and how metal objects are attracted to them. At the end of the term the teacher put this question on an exam: "Six letters, starts w/ 'M', picks up things, what am I?" Over half the children wrote not "magnet" but (say it together), "Mother"! Mothers deserve a sincere thank you, and not just today, for all the ways they have "picked up" and made better the messes of our lives!

6. Love Her Generously

There's nothing too good for our mothers. We could never repay her, but we ought to die trying before she does! She didn't spend on herself unless all our needs were met. She often did without and now it's time for her to have something she wants! A teacher once gave her elementary school math class this oral word problem: "State your answer as a fraction. If there are 10 at the table and one apple pie, how much does each one get?" A boy quickly said, "One-ninth!" "Don't you know your fractions?" the teacher asked. "The correct answer is, 'One-tenth.'" "Do you know my mother?" asked the boy. "If there's that many at the table and only one pie, she don't want none!"

7. Love Her Honorably

"Children, obey your parents as you would the Lord, because this is right. Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with a promise, so that it may go well with you and that you may have a long life in the land." When we marry and/or leave home and take responsibility for ourselves as adults, God's command to "obey your parents" is no longer binding on us. But "honor your father and mother" is different! This obligation endures as long as our parents live. God places such a premium upon honoring our parents that His Word stipulates, this "is the first commandment with a promise,"³ so that it may go well with you and that you may have a long life in the land." God adds or withholds blessings from our lives to the extent we properly honor and cherish our parents, including our mothers, by loving them verbally, physically, patiently, attentively, gratefully, and generously.

CONCLUSION

Lord, help us never to be too busy for our moms and grandmothers. If You could take the time and make the effort for Your mother even on the Cross at Your death, help us to love them while we have them in life!