**The Profile of a Godly Mother**
Code: A301

I once came across an interesting article on motherhood by a man named W. L. Caldwell written back in 1928. Here's what he said:

Well may we pause to pay honor to her who after Jesus Christ is God's best gift to men, mother. It was she who shared her life with us when as yet our members were unformed, into the valley of the shadow of death she walked that we might have the light of life. In her arms was the garner of our food and the soft couch for our repose. There we nestled in the hour of pain; there was the playground of our infant glee.

Those same arms later became our refuge and stronghold. It was she who taught our baby feet to go and lifted us up over the rough places. Her blessed hands plied the needle by day and by night to make our clothes. She put the book under our arm and started us off for school. But best of all, she taught our baby lips to lisp the name of Jesus and told us first the wondrous story of a Savior's love.

Caldwell went on to say, "The pride of America is its mothers. There are wicked mothers like Jezebel of old. There are unnatural mothers who sell their children into sin. There are sin cursed rum soaked and abandoned mothers to whom their motherhood is the exposure of their shame. I am glad to believe, however, that there are comparatively few in this class."

Is that true? Are there merely a few unfaithful mothers? Maybe that was the case in 1928, but it's sadly not so today. High rates of illegitimacy and divorce reveal the contemporary abandonment of marriage--motherhood's foundation. Annual abortions number in the millions, which shows the heart of many mothers has grown cold.

Millions of children whose mothers allow them to see the light of day cower in fear under angry abuse. And countless are the mothers who ignore, neglect, or abandon their children in pursuit of self-centered "fulfillment"--motherhood is an inconvenient interruption to their lifestyle.

For better or worse, mothers are the makers of men; they are the architects of the next generation. That's why the goal of becoming a *godly* mother is the highest and most noble pursuit of womanhood. God has specially equipped women for that very purpose, and in Christ, women can experience profound satisfaction in that divinely ordained pursuit. They can be who God created them to be.

Ladies, please pay attention. There are so many who would capture your interests today, to tear you away from God's high calling on your life. "Focus on your career," "Buy more stuff," "Pamper

yourself"--you've heard it all, I'm sure. Don't buy what they're selling--it's all a lie.

With that in mind, I want to encourage you this Mother's Day to consider one biblical example of motherhood. It's Hannah, the mother of the prophet Samuel, an emblem of the grace of womanhood. You can read all about her in 1 Samuel 1 and 2.

Hannah became a mother by faith. In the opening verses of 1 Samuel, she is introduced as a childless woman. But God granted her a precious gift and she became the mother of one of the greatest men who ever walked the earth. As you follow this account, you'll see the profile of a godly mother.

**Devoted to Her Husband**

Contrary to popular opinion, the most important characteristic of a godly mother is her relationship, not with her children, but with her husband. What you communicate to your children through your marital relationship will stay with them for the rest of their lives. By watching you and your husband, they are learning the most fundamental lessons of life--love, self-sacrifice, integrity, virtue, sin, sympathy, compassion, understanding, and forgiveness. Whatever you teach them about those things, right or wrong, is planted deep within their hearts.

That emphasis on marriage was very evident between Elkanah and Hannah. They were dedicated to the faithful worship of God (1:3), and they were dedicated to loving one another (1:4-8). Their situation--being unable to have children together--was like an open wound. But it was an experience that drew out of Elkanah tender expressions of love for his wife.

At a particularly low point in Hannah's discouragement, Elkanah comforted his wife with these words: "Hannah, why do you weep and why do you not eat and why is your heart sad? Am I not better to you than ten sons?" (1:8). That may not seem like a tremendous comfort to you, but he was appealing to the satisfaction they enjoyed in their marriage. Notice the effect: Hannah was encouraged--she started to eat and drink again (1:9), and she went to the temple to seek the Lord (1:9-11).

That's the kind of marriage to which a godly mother is devoted--dedication to loving God, dedication to loving one another. That's the soil where godly mothers grow and flourish.

**Devoted to Her God**

Hannah struggled through acute pain and adversity. She was barren, she had to share her husband with another woman--one who *could* produce children, and she had to endure the pain of that

woman's cruelty (1:6-7). And though Hannah was tempted to despair (1:8), she received the encouragement of her husband, turned to the Lord, and poured out her heart to Him in humble devotion (1:9-18).

Like many women today, Hannah struggled with the pain of infertility. She wanted God's best, to be a mother. In her sadness, Hannah didn't complain to her husband--there was nothing he could do about it--and she didn't fight back when Peninnah tormented her. Instead, Hannah trusted God through prayer.

That's a beautiful characteristic. She understood that God was the source of children, that God alone could alter her sterility. Her distinctive virtue was her constant faith. First Samuel 1:12 says, "It came about as she continued praying before the Lord". Her prayers were constant. She stayed there praying with a broken heart, pouring out tearful prayers. Hannah knew where to go with her problems.

Hannah was quite different from many today who long for children; she wasn't seeking a child for her own fulfillment. Childless parents today spend millions on infertility treatments--medications, special diets, egg-harvesting, even in-vitro fertilization. They worry and fret and sin in their continued anxiety.

Not Hannah. Hannah was willing from the start to give the child back to God, for life (1:11). It wasn't about her. It wasn't about getting what she wanted. It was about self-sacrifice, giving herself to that little life to give him back to the Lord. After coming to that place in her heart, after expressing her desires to the Lord in prayer, she experienced the peace of humble devotion to God. She "went her way and ate, and her face was no longer sad" (1:18).

**Devoted to Her Home**

According to His perfect will, God gave Hannah a son--Samuel.

And Elkanah had relations with Hannah his wife, and the Lord remembered her. It came about in due time, after Hannah had conceived, that she gave birth to a son; and she named him Samuel, saying, "Because I have asked him of the Lord." (1:19-20)

Hannah named her son in remembrance of God's goodness, and she devoted herself to her motherly responsibilities--she was fully committed to her home. The time came for one of the annual trips to Shiloh, and Elkanah came to Hannah to prepare her for the trip.

Then the man Elkanah went up with all his household to offer to the Lord the yearly sacrifice and pay his vow. But Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, "I will not go up until the child is weaned; then I will bring him, that he may appear before the Lord and stay there forever."

When God gave the child, Hannah dedicated herself to raising him. She would be devoted to that task for several years, knowing her time with him was short. That's so different from what you see today, isn't it? Women have babies, and a couple of months later they slam the baby in some day care center and take off for the job.

Not Hannah. She was totally committed to stay in the home until that little life was trained. She had important work to do--nursing, loving cherishing, instructing. Hannah understood how vital those early years are, when 90 percent of personality is formed. She prepared him in those formative years for a lifetime of service to God--such a high calling.

Don't mistake her devotion to raising Samuel for the modern tendency to make the child the center of the universe. Hannah discharged her responsibility as a steward--one day she had to give Samuel back. It wasn't about fulfilling her deepest needs through her child. It was about fulfilling her oath to God. It was about being faithful to her calling to be a godly mother.

For those of you who are mothers, think about Hannah this Mother's Day. Be devoted to your husband; be devoted to your God; and be devoted to your home in the fear of the Lord. That's your high calling and your greatest joy.

For those of you whose mothers are still living, recognize your mother this Mother's Day for the things she did well. Look in love beyond any of her shortcomings and honor the one who introduced you to life.

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