

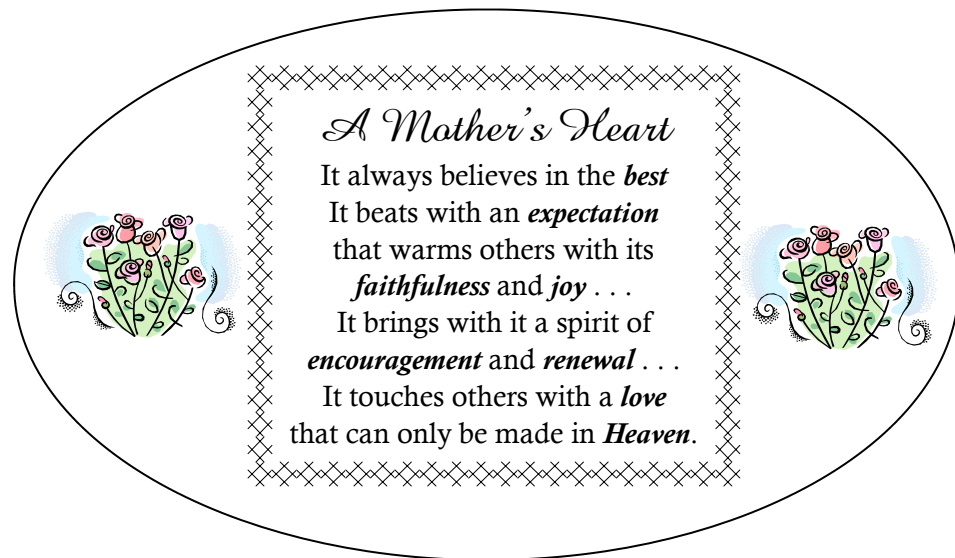


Ladies of Grace
Bible Studies for Women
The Ministry of Womanhood Series

Every woman has been born into the ministry of God. It is spelled out for her in Scripture, lived out before others in her home, church, and community, and recorded by God in the pages of eternity.

Mothering From A Heart Filled with Devotion

Last year I received a card for Mother's Day that said the following:



The card was given to me by a young man that we adopted as a part of our family many years ago. Each time I look at this card, I think about how much a mother's devoted heart means to those that are loved by her. For some, it means that they know there is someone that believes in them and prays for them. For others, it means that they know there is someone that will be there to love them, listen to them, and encourage them. For everyone it means that they know that someone special to them cares about them.

Today we are going to learn about what it means to mother our children from a heart filled with devotion. We are going to look at a testimony of a woman named Hannah in the Bible, who is a perfect example of a devoted mother, and then we are going to talk about the two specific things that she did that made her devotion to motherhood so unique.





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Please turn with me to the book of I Samuel and let's read about her in chapters one and two.

As Hannah's story unfolds in I Samuel 1, we don't find anything particularly impressive about Hannah and the issue of devoted motherhood. She is a woman struggling with the issue of barrenness, she is bitter because the Lord had closed up her womb, and she makes everyone around her miserable because of it by crying, complaining, and then by drawing attention to herself by not eating. Hannah is not a very happy woman, and at this point, the only thing that we can learn from her life is 'how to make everyone around you suffer while you are feeling miserable'. And fortunately, that is a lesson that God doesn't want any of us to learn.

But then one day while her family is visiting the temple of God, something interesting happens. Hannah decides to take her burdens to the Lord. I Samuel 1:9-11 tells us that after her family had eaten, she rose up from the table, packed up her bitterness and tears, and took them to the temple to give them to the Lord. While she was there, the Bible tells us that she poured out her whole heart to the Lord. Not only was she willing to offer up her bitter disappointments as an offering to the Lord, but she was willing to offer up to Him the desires of her heart as well. She told God about how much she wanted to be a mother, and she also told God that if He would give her a son, that she would be willing to give him up to serve Him all the days of her life.

As she does this, we see God begin to prepare her heart to be a devoted mother, by shaping it with the pattern of gratefulness.

Well, as we read in the scriptures, God did answer her prayer by giving her a son. The Bible tells us that she "*called his name Samuel, saying, Because I have asked him of the Lord,*" thereby testifying to the whole world how good God is and how much she appreciated Him for answering her prayer.

Then we read that she took care of her young boy until he was weaned, and then how she kept her promise to the Lord by taking him to the temple to be raised as a servant of the Lord. As a matter of fact, when she brought the boy to the temple and presented him to the priest Eli, the Bible says that she said to him, "*For this child I prayed; and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him: Therefore also I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord.*" Once again we see her testifying of the goodness of the Lord as she shares how grateful that she is that He answered her prayers.

After she left her little boy Samuel with the priest at the temple, the Bible tells us that she prayed and praised God with a song, because, once again, she wanted the whole world to know how grateful she was to God for the opportunity He had given her to bring life into this world and become a devoted mother.

You know what dear friends? **We need a revival of women who are grateful for the opportunity to be mothers, and who are willing to devote themselves to the godly welfare of their own children.** Too many of us are only happy to devote ourselves to motherhood when it is easy and everything is going right, but if our kids are going to grow up and make it for the Lord, they are going to need a mother that is willing to be devoted to loving them and raising them right no matter what.

How can a woman who wants to be devoted become a mother like this? By committing herself to doing two things for her children ~ praying for them and caring for them.

PRAY FOR YOUR CHILDREN

What does it mean to pray for your children? It means to ask God to help them and guide them and to help you meet their needs.

"I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart." Psalm 40:8



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Why is it so important? Because the Bible tells us in Ephesians 6:12 that our children “*wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*” The battles that your kids will face as they grow up are often bigger than them and even bigger than YOU, and the only way that they will ever be able to handle them is with the help of God.

What should you pray for them?

1. You should pray that your child will accept Jesus as his Saviour early in life.
2. You should pray that your child will accept the way God made him.
3. You should pray that your child will accept God’s Will for his life, at every stage of his life.
4. You should pray that your child will submit to the authorities that God has placed over his life.
5. You should pray that your child will avoid that which is evil and cling to that which is good.
6. You should pray that your child will be a good friend and live for others.
7. You should pray that your child will grow up and serve God full-time with his life.

If you will ask God to help your child with these seven things, you will find that so many other concerns will be covered as well.

CARE FOR YOUR CHILDREN

What does it mean to care for your children? It means to provide for their daily needs. Have you ever stopped to think about the real needs that your children have that need to be met? Here is a list of some of them:

1. Physical Needs ~ to be clean, fed right, hugged, kissed, played with, taught, helped, to be comfortable, to be healthy, to get enough exercise, to be protected from harm
2. Emotional Needs ~ to be praised, encouraged, loved, accepted, comforted, to be protected from evil
3. Social Needs ~ to get along with others, to have friends, to learn how to work hard, to develop good character, to be taught not to do evil
4. Spiritual Needs ~ to know God, to develop faith, to pray, to go to church, to believe, to trust, to hope

There are so many things that our children need from us that will only come from a heart filled with devotion. Why do I say this? Because if your heart is not devoted to mothering your children, the daily grind of life will pull you down and draw your heart away from doing what is best for your kids and draw it into doing what is easiest for you to do for them.

If you think about it, that is the philosophy of the modern mother’s heart today. Rather than being devoted to God’s way of mothering by prayer and care, she is often led by the humanistic philosophy of live and give ~ *live for herself, and give the kids whatever they want.*

As we close this study, I believe that God would want to encourage all of us to recommit ourselves to becoming devoted mothers for the children’s sake. Motherhood is a wonderful opportunity to love a little life, shape a little life, and prepare a little mind to live for God and make a difference for eternity. When we do it with the right heart, the Lord is blessed, the children are encouraged, and our world will become a more wonderful place because the Lord is honored.

The Ladies of Grace Bible Study is written and taught by Mrs. Julie Fink and is a ministry of the Grace Baptist Church, 501 N. State St., Lockport, IL 60441; David M. Fink, Pastor. Mrs. Fink can be reached by writing to her at the church or by e-mailing her at: ladiesofgrace@cleaninter.net

The Blessings of Motherhood

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hen my daughter Sabrina was a first grader, I used to walk her to and from school. One day, as we were walking home from school, she said to me, “Mom, how come I never get chosen for a Care Award?”

A Care Award was something that the teachers gave to the best behaved student each month.

“I don’t know honey, I’m not sure why you haven’t been chosen to receive the Care Award.”

“Kina got it because her teacher noticed that she behaves so well in class. I’m good in class too Mom, why don’t you think my teacher notices when I am good in class?”

“I’m not really sure why your teacher doesn’t notice when you are good in class honey.”

“You notice when I behave good at home, don’t you Mom?”

“Yes, I do honey. I try to notice whenever you behave good at home.”

“And you always tell me nice things about myself when I do.”

“Yes, dear, I do try to tell you nice things about yourself when you do.”

“You know what Mom?”

“What Sabrina?”

“I wish you were my teacher, because if you were, I am sure that I would be chosen for a Care Award.”

And you know what? She is right. If I would have been her teacher, I would have gladly given her a Care Award.

One of the highlights of my being a mother has been the opportunity that I have to minister to the emotional needs of my children.

A few years after this, I did become my daughter’s teacher after a decision that our family made to home school our children. While we were in the middle of our lessons one day, my Sabrina said to me, “Come here Mom, I need a hug!”

“I’ll be right there, dear, I’m right in the middle of folding the laundry.”

“But I want you to come here right now so that I can give you a hug!”

“I know you do, and I will be there as soon as I finish the laundry.”

“MOM!” Sabrina then shouted from the next room, “IF YOU LOVE ME, YOU’LL OBEY MY COMMANDMENTS!”

We all giggled when she said that, and when I was finished with my laundry I went and gave her a hug, and thanked God for the blessing of having children at home that I could love and teach to do things like obey HIS commandments.

As Sabrina grew older, she experienced times in her life when it was a struggle for her to obey God’s commandments, and as she struggled, I prayed for her, watched over her, and tried to help her the best I could. Although I was always quick to correct her for the things that she did wrong, I was always just



as quick to praise her for the things that she did right as well. At the end of her senior year in high school, she wrote me the following poem, and as you read it, I pray that you will be reminded of what a wonderful opportunity that God has given you as a mother as you love your children and encourage them to live their lives in light of eternity.

To My Mom

*You had a lot of hopes
and together we had dreams
We’ve been through trials and heartaches
But we’ve always been a team*

*You and me, we’ve laughed a lot
And shared our “not so funny” jokes
But I always knew deep inside
Your love was never just spoke*

*The memories we have made I could never forget
And all the time we’ve shared I won’t ever forget*

*You’ve prayed for me night and day
As I’ve traveled my shaky road
While I was having fun,
You were carrying the heavy load*

*How could I possibly thank
Someone as great as you?*

*Inside I know you love me
And I always know you care
But is there a way to show my love
For the burdens that you bear?*

*You’ve been my rock through hard times
You’ve never let me down
I think you’re a queen in disguise
And you deserve a beautiful crown!*

*For everything you’ve been
Has meant the world to me
How you’ve stuck with me to the end
Has made me what I should be*

*I want to make you proud
I wish I could make your day
I love you with all my heart
Thank you for showing me the right way!*