

How To Treat Your Mom (Mother's Day 5/12/19)

I love the number and heart of those in our church who are foster parents. It's a labor of love and a daunting task, but reflective of God's heart and God's design.

Especially the mothering part.

And to see it, I'd like for you to turn with me to Prov 31. (Intro)

- Mothers reflect God's heart and God's design. And fulfill a role with more headache and heartache than seems fair sometimes; or possible to endure. And yet, more often than not, we take them for *granted*.

I know I did. For years. Until I went to college and found out just how much my mom *did*. Washing, cooking, cleaning; encouraging, supporting, guiding; teaching, loving, caring. All unnoticed, and taken for granted.

And the same is true of their gifting. How God has wired them. We take that for granted as well. Which is not only a slight to them, but God.

I'm quite certain that our girls wouldn't be *half* the young women they are, if it weren't for Becky and the way God has designed her.

She knew what they needed and when; from a firm word to a soft touch.

All of which, from what they do to how they're wired, makes moms special.

And God calls us to *treat* them special – foster moms, step moms, biological moms, adoptive moms, all moms.

God calls us to elevate them and esteem them; on Mother's Day and *every* day.

And I want to do an overview of Scripture, to see how. 3 ways and 3 reasons for *How To Treat Your Mom*.

And if your mom is no longer with us, or you have no contact with her, then by all means, pass these principles on to others.

To the *next* generation. To those whose moms *are* around.

And if you failed miserably at these things, submit yourself to the mercy of God. Confess your sins and shortcomings to him. Because there's grace upon grace for such things. It's under the blood. God forgives.

- 3 ways to treat your mom. Starting with **Lev 19:3** – *Every one of you shall revere his mother and his father*. Every one of you shall hold them in the highest regard. Every one of you shall respect them. It's a command.

Respect your mom because God commands it (Lev 19:3)

That's the first way to treat her. Respect her because God says so. Hold her in high regard because God requires it. Treat her with distinction and dignity because he commands it.

- John Wooden was a legendary basketball coach from 1946-1975, mostly at UCLA. And during one stretch, he led them to 10 championships in 12 years. Including four *perfect* seasons, and an 88-game win streak. Obviously a great recruiter of great talent.

And yet, in his book *Wooden on Leadership*, published in 2005 at the *age* of 95, he explains that to *him*, a recruit's *character* was as important as his athletic ability.

And how a player treated his *mother* revealed volumes in that respect. Listen to what he says.

I once interviewed a very talented young man [he wrote] who wanted to attend UCLA on a basketball scholarship. I was even prepared to offer him one during our meeting. Until his mother, sitting next to him, politely asked me a question. At which point the young man looked at her and snapped, "How can you be so ignorant? Just keep your mouth shut and listen to what the coach says."

I assured her, Wooden said, that her question was fine; and I answered it. The young man, however, had revealed an aspect of himself that wasn't fine. In fact, it was unacceptable to me: disrespect for his mother. If he couldn't respect her, how could he possibly respect me? Especially when things got tough? So I politely ended the meeting and excused myself. The scholarship was never offered.

I have to believe that young man went on to a less than stellar career. And probably life. Because you don't disobey a command of God, and get away with it. Not for long. Not apart from Christ. Sooner or later it catches up with you. God calls us to revere our mom. Respect her.

- Which is not only revealed in our speech, but our obedience. To respect your mom is to obey your mom. At least for those who are still under her *authority*. Children obey your parents the Bible says. (Eph 6:1) For kids, obedience is respect. "Doing exactly what mom says, the first time, with a good attitude."

Unfortunately, my brothers and I did everything we *could* to avoid such obedience. Especially on Saturdays.

Every Saturday morning, Mom would give us a list of house chores we had to accomplish before we joined Dad in the garage. And *oh* how we wanted to be with Dad in the garage. Working on cars, building a cabinet, fixing the mowers, taking things apart and putting them back together again. And then, at the *end* of the day, we'd stand around washing the grease off our hands, *admiring* our handiwork. Admiring our accomplishments. Heaven for a little boy.

But that wasn't even a possibility until we finished the chores in the *house*. The worst of which, was dusting Avon bottles. Which was no small thing, because my Mom was an Avon *lady*. And had accumulated so many . . . That they lined every window sill in our house. Bottles in the shapes of cars, boats, airplanes, seashells, and who knows what else. I couldn't even figure some of them out. And whoever drew *that* lucky straw each Saturday, got to take them down one by one, and wipe them off; every last nook and cranny. Spot checked by Mom.

God forgive me for all the things I wanted to do with those bottles. And for all the ways we tried to get *out* of that chore. And all the *fights* that ensued because of our disobedience.

All the ways we *disrespected* her by arguing, whining, and debating every Saturday. No wonder I break into a sweat when somebody says “Avon.”

- You want to know how to treat your mom? Respect her with your words, and respect her with your obedience. And if you’re all grown up and *out* of the house, you can . . . Respect her by apologizing. For all those years you *didn’t* obey. *Didn’t* respect her.

Second . . .

Praise your mom because she deserves it (Prov 31:10-31)

Prov 31:10-31. This passage is speaking first and foremost about wives. Like in v10 – *An excellent wife who can find?* Followed by a description. 20 verses.

But *in* the description, are several allusions to a *household*. Indicating that *that* particular woman, is a mom; in *addition* to being a wife.

Like in v15 – *She rises while it is yet night and provides food for her household and portions for her maidens* [her unmarried daughters].

She provides for them. All of them. Serves them. And does so while it’s still night. Indicating, that she works hard. Worthy of praise for sure.

And look at v21 – *She is not afraid of snow for her household* [her family], *for all her household are clothed in scarlet* [layers, warmth]. Indicating she’s prepared; confident.

And in v26-27 it says – *She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue. [27] She looks well to the ways of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness.*

She’s wise, kind, instructive, attentive, and busy.

And then, v28-31 speak to what she *deserves*; *because* of all those qualities.

[28] Her children rise up and call her blessed [they praise her]; *her husband also, and he praises her: [29] “Many women have done excellently, but you surpass them all.”*

Husbands, you set the example. If your *kids* are going to praise their mom, *you* need to praise their mom.

[30] Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised. If your mom loves Jesus, praise her.

[31] Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her works praise her in the gates.

She deserves it. Moms deserve our praise.

Not just on Mother’s Day, but every day. Not just when she dies, and you tell everyone at the funeral; but now. Today. Rise up and praise her.

- And just in case you’re thinking, “I don’t have much to praise her *for*; or I can’t *remember* anything praiseworthy.” Consider this short list.

10 reasons to praise your mom:

1. **She gave you life.** She conceived you, bore you, and birthed you. Full stop.

If you’re alive, she deserves your praise.

If you’re adopted, your *birth* mother deserves your praise for *giving* you life, and your adopted mother for *preserving* it.

2. **She cared for you.** Changing over 6400 diapers alone.

Not to mention the number of times she wiped your nose. Or your bottom. Which all by itself is worthy of praise.

Or how about the number of times she drove you to soccer games, music lessons, and school? Or washed and folded your clothes. Or cooked you meals.

Your mom deserves your praise because she cared for you.

3. **She comforted you.** Sometimes crying *with* you, and other times *for* you. And just *being* with you. Comforting you in the middle of thunderstorms or “friend-storms.”

4. **She nursed you back to health.** Sometimes with a kiss and a hug, other times with a Band-Aid, and a few times with a slight delay and *mis*-diagnosis.

Like when your arm didn’t look that bad, until it turned black and blue because it was broken. She took you to the doctor eventually.

5. **She served you.** So much so that you expected it. Like one little girl whose mom wrote this:

When my daughter was about four years old, she had a hard time grasping the concept of marriage. So I got out our wedding album, thinking visual images would help, and explained the entire service to her. When I finished, I asked if she had any questions, and she replied, “Oh. I see. Is that when Mommy came to work for us?”

When *our* girls were growing up, they would yell halfway across the house and down two levels for *Becky*, expecting her to come to them.

When I was *literally* standing right next to them. Literally.

She served them so much, everyone else was chopped liver.

6. **She disciplined you.** Corrected you. Warned you time and time again.

Told you not to touch with your hand, and then slapped it so you wouldn’t burn it.

Spanked you with an ache in her heart. Put you in a time out to make you *think* about what you did; so you wouldn’t do worse *later* in life and serve *real* time.

7. **She taught you.** Serving as your personal tutor until *your* knowledge exceeded *hers*. And taught you the *faith* if you were fortunate.

And don’t forget the lessons you learned by *negative* example. The things you swore *you’d* never do. That too is valuable.

8. **She sacrificed for you.** How many times did your mom give up an extra portion at the dinner table because she “didn’t really want it anyway?” It almost makes me cry.

And that doesn’t include all the ways my mom sacrificed financially. Like altering and re-altering her dresses over the years, because we needed jeans.

9. **She cheered for you.** No matter what. Good or bad, win or lose, you were great. And she never gave up on you. Smiling at band concerts and clapping at games.

And last but not least, your mom deserves your praise because . . .

10. **She loves you.** She may not have shown it very well. She may have *expressed* it poorly. It might have been unseen or gone unnoticed. But it was there.

And because of it, she deserves your praise. 10 reasons.

- So how about you *rise up and call her blessed?* (Prov 31:28)

How about you praise her in public and praise her in private this weekend?
And if she's no longer with you, how about praising God *for* her. And encouraging those who come behind, to do what you can't.
Praise your mom because she deserves it.

And last . . .

Honor your mom because God blesses it (Eph 6:2-3)

Something God makes clear in the *Old* Testament, like in Ex 20:12 – *Honor your father and your mother*; and something he reiterates in the New.

Like in **Eph 6:2-3** – “*Honor your father and mother*” ([Paul quotes Exodus; saying *this is the first commandment with a promise*) [a blessing].

Commandment, referring to the 10 Commandments.

“*Honor your father and mother*” . . . [3] “*that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.*”

The command is to honor, and the promise is blessing – the blessing of *goodness* in life, and the blessing of a *long* life.

The opposite of which is Prov 20:20 – *If one curses his father or his mother, his lamp will be put out in utter darkness.*

Better to honor. Hands down.

- And keep in mind that the Apostle Paul is speaking to *believers* here; followers of *Christ*; disciples. People who already *have* life to the full.
Already *live* a life of goodness. Already *have* a long life – *eternal* life.

But God is saying, “I’ll give you even more. Even *more* life, even *better* life. All you have to do is honor your *mom*.”

“All you have to do is *exalt* her. Esteem her. Hold her in high regard.”

God extends blessing when we extend honor.*****

- And one of the best ways you can do that is write her a “thank you” note. Something I did for the first time, 15 years ago this week. I wrote my mom a letter.
Thanking her for loving me, and teaching me, and sacrificing for me over the years.
I wrote it, printed it, stuck it in an envelope and sent it off. Thinking it would bless her and that would be it.

Until I found it framed, literally framed, and hanging all by itself on a long wall in her kitchen. And that wasn't normal. Most of her walls were *covered* in stuff . . .

Pictures, word art, needlepoint, you name it.

But not this one. This frame had a wall all to itself.

You'd have thought it was the Mona Lisa.

And then, several years later, she transferred it to their *new* house and *new* kitchen when they moved. Where it remained until I had a *moment* last year . . .

As we cleared the house out to move her into a memory care facility.

- It's not the *only* way to honor your mom, but it's a good one.
And I can't tell you *how* God has blessed me as a result of that, but I sure can tell you he has. (Summary)

Respect your mom because God commands it, praise your mom because she deserves it, and honor your mom because God blesses it.

On Mother's Day, and *every* day.

Pray – God, thank you for our moms. Thank you for wiring them to love us, and care for us, and cheer us on. Find us faithful, today and every day, in respecting, praising, and honoring them. For your glory, and their joy.