

A Mother's Influence
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I want to begin by personally honoring every mother here today and those watching on social media. Your job couldn't be more important. It's a job that never ends, it's 24-7, it's all encompassing, it's challenging, and sometimes overwhelming. So, I honor you today for the tremendous influence you have in the lives of your children.

That goes for biological moms, adoptive moms, single moms, working moms, and spiritual moms. Your job description is as endless as the sky. Here's a practical example of what I'm talking about.

A Mom and Dad were watching TV when Mom said, "I'm tired. I think I'll go to bed." First, she went to the kitchen to make sandwiches for the next day's lunches, rinsed out the dessert bowls, took meat out of the freezer for supper the following evening, checked to see if there was cereal for breakfast, put spoons and bowls on the table and set the coffee pot for brewing the next morning.

She then put some wet clothes in the dryer, put a load of clothes into the wash, ironed a shirt and sewed on a loose button. She picked up the game pieces and a computer left on the table and put them away. She watered the plants, emptied a wastepaper basket, and hung up a towel to dry. She yawned, stretched and headed for the bedroom. She stopped by the desk, wrote a note to the teacher, counted out some cash for the school outing, and pulled a textbook out from under the chair.

She signed a birthday card for a friend, addressed and stamped the envelope and wrote a quick list for the supermarket. Mom then straightened the messy sink area. Hubby called, "I thought you were going to bed." "I'm on my way," she said. She put some water into the dog's bowl, then made sure the doors were locked. She looked in on each of the children, turned out a bedside lamp, hung up a shirt and threw some dirty socks in the laundry basket. In her own room, she set the alarm and added 3 things to her list of things to do for the next day. About that time, her hubby turned off the TV and said "I'm going to bed." And he did.

I love this story. Mainly because in most instances, not all, but most, it's true.

Listen, as important as fathers are...and dad's... I'm not minimizing your value... but no one can give a child what a mother can. A mother influences her children like no other.

Listen to these excerpts from Proverbs 31 about a wife and mother. Verse 15 says:

She gets up while it is still dark; she provides food for her family.

Verse 17 says:

She sets about her work vigorously; her arms are strong for her tasks.

Verses 27-29 say:

She watches over the affairs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness. Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all.

I'm speaking today on A Mother's Influence. Even though I'm speaking about mothers – this message applies to all of us – male or female – married or single. We all can learn these biblical principles and be people of influence.

Influence is persuading or convincing someone to do something, especially if it's something they don't want to do. It's the power of producing an effect without force.

Mary, the mother of Jesus is a great example of this. Her influence in Jesus' life was second only to God the Father. In John chapter 2 Jesus and Mary are attending a wedding. The host runs out of wine. So, Mary goes to Jesus and tells Him they are out of wine. But look at Jesus' response in verse 4

Dear woman, why do you involve me?... My time has not yet come.

Jesus had not yet performed a miracle and He's basically saying "No, it's not time for me to do a miracle." But Mary was a woman of faith and influence who didn't give up easily. She somehow knew he would do it for her because verse 5 says.

His mother said to the servants, Do whatever He tells you.

Mary was expecting Jesus to do what she asked Him to do. She was confident of her influence on her son. Even though Jesus pretty much refused to act, Mary's faith didn't waver.

And in the end Jesus performs His first miracle and turns the water into wine. Even though His time had not yet come, Mary influenced Him to do it anyway. This is such a profound example of a mother's influence.

However, as influential as mom's are... they're not perfect. There are no perfect moms. God gave you your children and even though you're not perfect - you're the perfect mom for your children.

And your job description includes being a:

Coach, counselor, mentor, leader, teacher, disciplinarian, cook, housekeeper, laundry maid, chauffeur, encourager, cheerleader, confidant, arbitrator, and role model just to name a few.

With a job description like this it's easy to feel inadequate sometimes.

But remember this: Most of us are doing the best we can. That is all we can do...and God will do the rest.

So, If you're a parent and you want to raise strong healthy children, you must know how to influence them in a positive way.

So, let's look at four ways a mother influences her children.

I. THE INFLUENCE OF A GODLY MOTHER

The most important characteristic of a mother is godliness. You can be a perfect housekeeper, a gourmet cook, have birthday parties for your children, do homework with them, take them on vacations, but if you're not a godly example you have failed at the #1 most important part of being a mother and influencing your children.

I remember when I was an impressionable kid my father would always say... "Don't do as I do, do as I say." Well, I didn't do as he said, I did what he did.

Children need a mother that is a role model of Christian character in the good times and in the bad times. Our children are exposed every day to worldly role models and if we don't show them a godly role model, they will find an ungodly role model.

It's like this...one way or another you are influencing your children. You can either be a godly influence or an ungodly one. That's why children need a mother who lives a Christian life. They need a mother that believes the word of God and kneels before the throne of God.

In 1 Samuel: 1 we see that Hannah is a great example of a praying mother. Hannah was barren and wanted a child very badly. So, she prayed and asked God to give her one. Verse 12 says not only did she pray, ...*she kept on praying to the Lord*. This was a repeated request. And God answered her prayer by giving her Samuel.

But praying doesn't stop after God gives us children... because mothers, you are the most influential person on the earth when it comes to praying for your children.

A mother's prayer is one of the most powerful forces on earth. Children need a mother that prays, reads God's word, has a personal relationship with Jesus and teaches her children to do the same. That is what Godly mothers do.

In Paul's letter to Timothy, he acknowledges the importance of a godly mother. 2 Timothy 1:3-5 says:

I thank God, whom I serve, as my forefathers did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers. Recalling your tears,

long to see you, so that I may be filled with joy. I have been 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.

WOW! Timothy was a man of sincere faith because He saw sincere faith in his grandmother and his mother.

Moms, you have the responsibility to live a life of sincere faith before your children. Single moms – notice there is no father mentioned here. That means you can still raise godly children on your own!

In 2 Timothy 3:14-15 we see the importance of a mother teaching her young children the scripture.

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

Knowing the scriptures from infancy has a great influence on our children's salvation. What could be more important? Listen, it's great if our children are successful in life but the most important thing is that they know Christ as their Lord and Savior. And that they impact others for Christ.

Moms, you never know...you could be raising the next prophet of God, the next Martin Luther or Martin Luther King or Billy Graham or the next Joyce Meyer or Beth Moore. Deuteronomy 6:4-9 says:

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up... Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

II. THE INFLUENCE OF BOUNDARIES

Children need to learn to submit to boundaries at home. If they don't – it will impact the rest of their life.

-If you begin with infancy giving a child everything he wants. This will perpetuate the belief that the world owes them a living. They will grow up believing they are entitled.

-Give your children everything they cry for, especially in the store when they start screaming for a toy or candy because if you don't give in, they are going to really

make a scene. This will show them they can get their way by throwing a fit.

-Pick up after them and never enforce consequences.

This will teach them to be irresponsible and to expect others to rescue them.

-Always take their side against neighbors, teachers, policemen and other authority figures. This will teach them to be a victim and to resist authority.

-Let them decide if they want to go to church.

This will teach them that God is not a priority and obeying His word is optional.

Proverbs 22:6 says:

Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not turn from it.

Obviously the most important application here is spiritual, however teaching boundaries is another way to train a child in the way they should go.

A child who grows up with boundaries and guidelines will feel secure and protected. Children want boundaries and have a great need to know where the limits are, and they need parents who have the courage to enforce them.

Boundaries define expectations and tell us what is acceptable and what isn't. Boundaries are like fences that indicate limits and keep us safe.

A study was done where chain-link fences were removed from a school yard. The thought was the children would feel more freedom of movement without a visible barrier surrounding them. When the fence was removed, however, the boys and girls huddled near the center of the play yard. Not only did they not wander away, they also didn't even venture to the edge of the grounds. Clearly, there is a security in defined boundaries.

Boundaries are not meant to make people miserable, rather boundaries result in freedom - if we stay inside of the fence of God's Word.

There is tremendous safety and protection when parents define and enforce boundaries like:

Children obey your parents.

This family shows respect for others.

We do not lie, steal, or cheat, and we keep God's Commandments to the best of our ability.

We go to church.

We believe in marriage between a man and a woman.

We believe we abstain from sex until marriage.

We don't believe in abortion or racism or adultery or swearing or drug abuse.

Children need to learn the importance of boundaries at home!

III. THE INFLUENCE OF PROTECTION.

Exodus chapter 2 tells us the story of Moses and his mother Jochebed. Moses' mother teaches us that a mother's love protects. Pharaoh came up with a plan to kill all the Hebrew male babies. Exodus 2 tells us that Moses' mother hid him for 3 months.

She took great risks to protect her son.
 She put him in a basket and hid him in the bulrushes to protect him.
 She watched him from a distance.
 She schemed his rescue.
 She later became his nanny.

A mother's love does whatever it takes to protect her child. You've heard the phrase "If you hurt me that's one thing, but don't hurt my children."

A mother's love is one of the most powerful forces on the earth. It has the power to change evil to good, sadness to joy, and hopelessness to hopefulness.

I Corinthians 13:7 says... *Love always protects.*

Protect means literally - to roof over, to cover. A mother's inborn instinct is to protect her child.

Ephesians 6:12 says:

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

There is an unseen battle going on for the souls of our children and protecting our children can positively influence their entire lives.

IV. THE INFLUENCE OF JUST BEING THERE

Moms - we all know that you are usually the ones that make sure the family is there when your children need them. Birthday parties, sports events, school events, graduations, weddings and on it goes. It's usually you mom that makes it happen.

Earlier we talked about the wedding in Cana. John 2:1 says:

On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there.

Sometimes we just need to be there for our children. In the good times and the bad... Especially the bad. I think it is deep in the heart of a mother to be there no matter what. And trust me...our children know it.

Last Mother's day my son gave me a card that I will always treasure. It was after a very difficult season when he was struggling with addiction. I turned my life upside down to get him into re-hab. It was a very long and painful process, but I did whatever I had to do to help him. Just like I always have and always will.

I'd like to read his card today...on Mother's Day a year later.
It was the best Mother's Day gift ever.
(READ CARD)

Proverb 31:31 says:

Give her the reward she has earned, and let her works bring her praise at the city gate.

Speaking of rewards...I asked three fathers at Grace to have their children write a message to their mom about how she has influenced their lives. I'd like to read those now.

This is to Jade Clark from her children Preston, Callen, Josie and Brennan: They said that they love their mommy because she told them about Jesus dying on the cross and coming back to life so that we don't have to die. And she takes them to church.

This one is to Michelle Davidson from Kennedy:
I'm grateful for my Mom because she teaches me how to be a lady, how to love Jesus and makes me feel better when I'm not feeling good.

This one is to Roshunda Darrett from Jorden, Jalen and Gabriel:
Our mother has influenced us by teaching us to be independent and fight through adversity, teaching us to smile in tough situations, and by teaching us how to grow and organize our life for the future.

Moms – when you are a godly influence on your children – they will do what Proverbs 31:28 says: *Her children arise and bless her.*

- They probably won't appreciate you disciplining them now – but the time will come when they will thank you for it!
- They might see your protection as overprotection right now – but the time will come when they will bless you for it
- They might not receive your advice right now – but the time will come when they will seek out your wisdom!
- They might not see your influence as a blessing right now – but the time will come when they will rise up and call you blessed!

So, keep being a godly influence and you will reap what you sow!