

A Woman of God's Design

May 11, 2008 | Prestonwood North | Prosper, TX

Favorite TV Moms:

- June Cleaver
- Claire Huxtable
- Carol Brady
- Marion Cunningham
- Donna Stone (*Donna Reed Show*)

Unfavorable TV Moms:

- Roseanne
- Marge Simpson
- Marie Baron (*Everybody Loves Raymond*, Ray's mom, Debra's mother-in-law)

Someone once said, "I'd like to be an ideal mother, but I am too busy raising my kids."

To those of you who are mothers, I know all too well motherhood is a demanding, challenging and sometimes an overwhelming responsibility.

"The hand that rocks the cradle usually is attached to someone who isn't getting enough sleep."
—John Fiebig

Many mothers live on the edge of exhaustion and are under-appreciated. Today, I want to share a word of encouragement to you. You may feel taken for granted by others, but not by God!

There are women here today who are not mothers (single, childless, etc.), but you have a heart for God and desire to be a godly woman.

For seven years, Mother's Day was hard for my wife and me. We had open hearts, but empty arms.

Proverbs is a book of wisdom for women, men, everyone. The book begins and ends with the vital and

essential word on the importance of mothers.

Prov. 1:8-9 = Listen to your mother

Prov. 31:28-29 = Bless/praise your mother

So this day is important biblically, culturally, and personally.

So much of what we learn in life we do not learn in classrooms, but in relationships. There is no relationship that can compare with that of mother and child.

Our opinions, attitudes, values, concerns, tastes, and responses are in large part influenced by our mothers. There's not a more powerful, influential role in all the world than that of a mother.

You are Really a Mom When...

- *You count the number of sprinkles on each kid's cupcake to make sure they are equal.*
- *You hide in the bathroom to be alone.*
- *Your child throws up and you catch it.*
- *Someone else's kid throws up at a party and you keep eating.*
- *You mastered the art of placing food on a plate without anything touching.*
- *You hope ketchup is a vegetable because it's the only one your child eats.*
- *You fast-forward through the scene when the hunter shoots Bambi's mother.*
- *You read that the average-five-year old asks 437 questions a day and feel proud that your kid is "above average."*

<http://www.dayformothers.com/mothers-day-humour>

While moms live in a world of little things, they influence big outcomes! Proverbs 31 bunches things together in the life of a wife and mother to depict the value and importance of her role in her home, community and society.

While there are many competing voices today, I want us to hear God's voice on His design.

Proverbs 31

A Challenge

The first word is not to the woman, but to men, husbands and fathers.

I love the fact that from the start, this woman is depicted in relationship with someone who values and esteems her highly. She is the **jewel** of the home.

She is not a perfect woman, but she is a prize to honor, esteem and bless.

Prov. 31:11-12

This woman is vital and valuable to the well-being of life. What you invest in your wife after marriage has everything to do with the return you receive in your marriage. Many of us fail to make ongoing investments. She is more like a partner in the firm of parenting, has her own office next to yours—now quite as big as yours—but she's on the clock, doing her job and you take her for granted.

High 5 for Wives/Mothers:

1. She needs your confidence—believe in her
2. She needs your compliments—value her
3. She needs your compassion—care for her
4. She needs your cooperation—help her
5. She needs your companionship—be with her

Even if the man in your life fails to honor or esteem you, God does! You are valuable to God and He has written a permanent record of your value: “far more precious than jewels” (Proverbs 31:10 ESV).

A Charge

Her attention is on her home and those influenced by her life. This is a summary of all preceding verses—concentrated energy and focused attention on home.

This passage provides an incredible profile of a godly woman. The lists provided here are not often seen in magazines, news reports and cultural studies done on women today. Yet, everything listed here is provided as a contrast to the strange, untrustworthy and foolish woman who is otherwise presented in the book of Proverbs.

Focus is difficult in our world because demands are endless. I loved the article in the *Woman of Design* written by Deb Graham recently. It is provided for you as a gift of encouragement today.

We live in a day where children and families are small portions on the larger plate of life for a truly “fulfilled woman”. But God says these are worthy of your greatest attention and devotion.

Oh, you don’t think mothers should be working? To the contrary, everything I read here depicts a working mother. Nothing about this description reflects this lady as non-working. It shows her as high priority!

There is intentional focus on the family, though. She is seen as meeting needs for her family, and never overlooking the importance of her family.

Now let me quickly affirm, children need the attentiveness of both parents. Too many men take pride in fathering, and fail to take part in parenting. Staying with your kids while your wife is out, shifting and changing while she is working, and balancing personal time for each child should not be categorized as baby-sitting; it is parenting!

The goal of Christian motherhood is to produce disciples! Listen to her teaching. How? “Her words are sensible, and her advice is thoughtful” (Proverbs 31:26).

D-I-S-C-I-P-L-E

Direction

Children need clear direction, including boundaries in life. The greatest directional signal is a personal example. Be intentional in teaching your children because if you are not, others will be.

Inspiration

Every child needs a cheerleader, someone who helps them to see themselves as gifts from God. No one can increase or reduce the value of a child’s life like that of a mom. Everyday you wear a uniform to cheer them on.

Separation

The greatest crisis of your life is birthing and the greatest challenge of your life is weaning—not just you doing it for them, but equipping them to take responsibility for their emotions, actions and adjustments in life.

Correction

Proverbs 22:15; 23:13

Confrontation + Consequence + Consistency = Good Character

Some people never want to make their children unhappy, so they spend their time trying to appease them. The Bible never tells us to focus on making kids happy, but to teach them respect for God and others.

Our focus with children is not to produce happy children, but to raise responsible adults.

Intercession

Pray for your children and with your children. Teach them to pray and let them learn to pray through you. Prayer is the unseen power of parenting. I am here as an answer to a mother’s prayers.

Proclamation

Teach the Word!

“Train up a child” (Proverbs 22:6)

You are teaching steps like a dance instructor. Teach your child to count and see the outcome in life. Be intentional in your teaching because if you are not, others will be. The Word of God penetrates!

Limitations

Kids need limits. Without limits, we all go astray. Why do we have lanes in roadways, guards on mountain drives, lines in parking lots? We are all prone to wander and we need a means of measure.

Expectations

Talk to your children in terms of your expectations, not in terms of their deficiencies. Note the final words of Jesus (His expectations): "Go...and I am with you always" (Matthew 28:19-20).

The expectation is this: Even though you may do this and the outcome is not what you prayed or desired, remember God holds you accountable for things you can do, not for what others do or fail to do.

This verse is not just for mothers and parents, but all who would make disciples.

A Cheer

Her children respected and blessed her and her husband joins in with words of praise:

"'Many women have done wonderful things, but you've outclassed them all!' Charm can mislead and beauty soon fades. The woman to be admired and praised is the woman who lives in the Fear-of-God. Give her everything she deserves! Festoon her life with praises!" (Proverbs 31:28-31 MSG).

God wants you—students, children—to honor, applaud, appreciate and bless your mom. You can and do create a beauty and joy in the life of your mother that no one and nothing else can. God says to give her a standing ovation!

My mom died in 2004—last time I called her or sent a Mother's Day card. I spoke at her funeral using this passage. Later that year, I was privileged to write

my first book with the following acknowledgment:

*To my mom,
Jeanne McKinley—*

*her eyes never read these words
and her hands never turned these
pages, but her heart helped shape
every thought, her prayers for me
have been realized through this
work, her smile encouraged my
faith, and her example assured
me of the satisfaction found in
knowing and following Jesus
Christ.*

I am a disciple of a godly mother who pointed to and followed Jesus Christ. There is a world to reach "out there," but it must begin with reaching those of us "in here" with the reality of the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ—Christ in our hearts and our homes. He must be our hope for all our tomorrows.

Have you received Him into your heart? Is Jesus Christ your Savior and Lord? Jesus endured the "labor pains" of the cross that you may know life, hope and peace through His blood.

*In a day of broken homes,
seductive images, and
dysfunctional families, restore us
to the duty, beauty, and glory of
your plan for our lives. May we
let Your word be our mirror and
Your standards be our satisfaction.
Amen.*