



## **Be A Godly Mother/Woman Various Texts Westport Christian Church May 9, 2010**

To one who bears the sweetest name and adds luster to the same. Long life to her for there is no other who takes the place of my dear mother.

### **Mothers Day Origin In The United Kingdom (England)**

The modern way of celebrating the holy Mother's Day has its roots back into the seventeenth century England culture. Today the mother's day is celebrated with families. This is the day when people bring flowers and gifts to their moms. But originally all this began with the "Mothering Sunday", which was the fourth Sunday in Lent. The Mothering Sunday was the day in earlier times when all the children who were away from their homes were allowed to return their homes. However they were away from their homes either for learning a trade or to work as servants to earn livelihood. Gradually it became a tradition that on this day the family used to gather for a mid-Lenten feast in which the Mother was treated as the 'Special Guest'. As the children visited their moms on this day in order to spend entire day with their mothers they used to give treats of cakes to their mothers. They also used to get wildflower bouquets and other such things for their mothers. The same '**Mothering Sunday**' is today celebrated as and popularly known as the **Mother's Day**.

## **Mother's Day Origin In the United States Of America**

In the United States Of America (USA) the situation was quite different. There the early English settlers often disapproved of more secular holidays and this is why the Mothering Sunday tradition never really took hold in the USA. Even some early attempts made there in this regard were mixed with women's suffrage and other peace movements.

In the USA it was Julia Ward Howe, the author of the words to the Battle Hymn of the Republic, who came with the idea of an International Mother's day in 1872. It is noticeable here that her objective behind this was not exactly to honor mothers but to celebrate the peace.

Another important name associated with present form of Mother's Day celebrations is of Anna Jarvis. Anna Jarvis was the person who made lots of efforts for establishing Mother's Day, as a national celebration. Jarvis held an annual gathering "Mother's Friendship Day", with an objective to heal the pain of the victims and those affected of the Civil War. After the death of her mother in 1905, Anna began a campaign for the establishment of an official Mother's Day in order to commemorate and pay tribute to her mother.

It could be said that Anna Jarvis devoted her entire life making efforts to have Mother's Day declared as a national holiday. She began her struggle in the spring of 1908. As her first step made in this direction she wrote to the Superintendent of Andrew's Methodist Church in Grafton, West Virginia. This was the place where her mother had taught Sunday School classes for over 20 years. In her letter to the Superintendent she urged that a Mother's Day service should be held in honor of her mother.

### **First Mother's Day Celebration Service**

As a result of her efforts the first official Mother's Day was celebrated on May 10, 1908 at Andrew's Methodist Church, where her mother had taught. 407 persons attended this celebration. For this function held at the church in Grafton Anna Jarvis sent 500 white carnations. One carnation was to be worn by each son and daughter and two by each mother in attendance.

### **Another Mother's Day Celebration Service**

Another Mother's Day celebration service was held in Philadelphia. Philadelphia was the place where Anna resided with her brother. She celebrated Mother's Day there later that afternoon.

### **Official Mother's Day**

Finally, in 1914 President Woodrow Wilson declared that Mother's Day should be celebrated as a national holiday on the second Sunday in May.

Today is set aside for mothers and as a result, we need to look at what constitutes a Godly mother. Characteristics of a Godly mother can be applied as characteristics of the type of woman God wants women to be also. So what are these characteristics?

The Bible gives us much instruction on how we are to live our lives. We should note that there are many examples of various mothers and women in the Bible. In Deuteronomy 6:5 we read that we are to <sup>5</sup>"You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might." Jesus restated this commandment and instructed us that this is the foremost commandment with promise. As a result of these passages we can see the first attribute of a Godly woman. That is, a Godly woman is one who:

### **Places God above all else**

In Luke 14:25-26 Jesus said ;<sup>25</sup>"Now large crowds were going along with Him; and He turned and said to them, <sup>26</sup>"If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Jesus was saying that if they didn't love him foremost and first, but loved others and themselves more they may as well hate him. Wow!! What a comparison??

In Luke 10 we read the story of two sisters, Mary and Martha. Martha is devoted to God, but is more concerned about her role as a woman. While Martha is correct, Mary has her priorities in better check as she sits and listens at the feet of Jesus. She has clearly put Jesus first in her life and is willing to fore go everything for Jesus.

In today's society we put many things in front of our lives. We become so busy and bogged down by the world and its' worries and cares that we do not take time to honor God first in our lives. So in today's society how can we put God first? Quite simply, we need to just be about doing it. If you are caught in situations where you have allowed the world to keep you busy, you have lost your focus. So what are some ways we can begin to restore ourselves back to putting God first in our lives? Putting God first means we are devoted to Prayer.

Prayer: 1 Thessalonians 5:17 says "Pray without Ceasing". This means that we are to be a person who is constantly taking our worries and cares and giving them to God. In Matthew chapter six we are informed by Jesus that we are not to worry about tomorrow for today will take care of itself. We are to place our faith and trust in God. In James 5:16 we see that we are to pray for one another. In Luke Chapter 18 Jesus told his Disciples a parable informing them that they needed to pray so they would not lose heart and be of faith. Paul said in Colossians chapter 4:2 "Devote

yourselves to prayer keeping an attitude of Thanksgiving". In Acts Chapter 1, the early church was devoted to prayer.

How about the story in 1 Samuel of Hannah, who was barren. She was devoted so deeply to prayer daily that God listened to her voice and answered her prayers to have a son. This son was given obediently to God.

As women of faith, you should be willing to place God first in your life above all else. Putting God first also means that we are devoted to God's word.

Devoted to God's word: 2 Timothy 3:16 says that <sup>16</sup>"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness." We are instructed to <sup>15</sup>"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth". 2 Timothy 2:15. We are to follow God's teaching and instructions. In Proverbs 13:13 we read <sup>13</sup>"The one who despises the word will be in debt to it, But the one who fears the commandment will be rewarded". In Proverbs 28:9 we read: <sup>9</sup>"He who turns away his ear from listening to the law, Even his prayer is an abomination. There are many different women who could be listed as fitting the description of being devoted to God's word. Priscilla and Phoebe are two women that the Apostle Paul mentions specifically in Romans chapter 16 as being fully devoted to the sake of the Gospel and would also follow into the next category of a person who is putting God first and that is a women devoted to serving God.

### **Devoted to Serving God**

In Deuteronomy 10:12 God says to His people: <sup>12</sup>"Now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require from you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul,

In Matthew 12:26 Jesus says to us that: <sup>26</sup>"If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him".

If you are to be a woman who puts God first, you need to serve Him with all your heart, soul and mind. You are to be devoted to serving Him with everything that you are. God doesn't want your second best, he wants your ultimate best. He wants the first fruits of your labor. He wants you to be devoted to prayer, devoted to His word and devoted to serving him fully.

God wants the women in this world to put Him first in their lives, but God also want a woman to put her family above herself.

### **Places Family above herself**

If we look at the Old Testament we can see the best example of this in Proverbs 31:10-31 where we see the words of King Lemuel's mother explaining to the King what a worthy woman looks like. <sup>0</sup>An excellent wife, who can find?

For her worth is far above jewels. <sup>11</sup>The heart of her husband trusts in her, And he will have no lack of gain. <sup>12</sup>She does him good and not evil All the days of her life. <sup>13</sup>She looks for wool and flax And works with her hands in delight. <sup>14</sup>She is like merchant ships; She brings her food from afar. <sup>15</sup>She rises also while it is still night And gives food to her household And portions to her maidens. <sup>16</sup>She considers a field and buys it; From her earnings she plants a vineyard. <sup>17</sup>She girds herself with strength And makes her arms strong. <sup>18</sup>She senses that her gain is good; Her lamp does not go out at night. <sup>19</sup>She stretches out her hands to the distaff, And her hands grasp the spindle. <sup>20</sup>She extends her hand to the poor, And she stretches out her hands to the needy. <sup>21</sup>She is not afraid of the snow for her household, For all her household are clothed with scarlet. <sup>22</sup>She makes coverings for herself; Her clothing is linen and purple. <sup>23</sup>Her husband is known in the gates, When he sits among the elders of the land. <sup>24</sup>She makes linen garments and sells them, And supplies belts to the tradesmen. <sup>25</sup>Strength and dignity are her clothing, And she smiles at the future. <sup>26</sup>She opens her mouth in wisdom, And the teaching of kindness is on her tongue. <sup>27</sup>She looks well to the ways of her household, And does not eat the bread of idleness. <sup>28</sup>Her children rise up and bless her; Her husband also, and he praises her, saying: <sup>29</sup>"Many daughters have done nobly, But you excel them all." <sup>30</sup>Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, But a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised. <sup>31</sup>Give her the product of her hands, And let her works praise her in the gates.

Matthew 7:12 says <sup>42</sup>"In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

All these qualities may seem to unrealistic for a woman putting her family first, but God doesn't expect perfection, he expects us to give us Him our best. God expects women to put their families above themselves.

The most classic example of putting a family first could be Ruth. She was a foreigner in a foreign land and her husband died. She remained faithful to her new family even when she lost her husband. She showed the ultimate example of putting family before herself. Through her faithfulness to God and her family, she was blessed abundantly and was given a new husband. She was also in the Messianic lineage. Ruth put her family above herself and her own desires. Can we follow this example? What does putting your family first today look like?

In today's day and age, the mother may have to work outside the home in order to make ends meet whether she wants to or not. This would be an example of putting her family first. Putting your family is doing whatever it takes to assure that our family is a Godly family. This will involve teaching her children in all ways of the Lord also as the husband should do. Putting her family first is what God wants women to

do after putting him first, but God also wants mothers/women to take care of themselves. This is next thing that God wants a mother to do.

### **A Godly Mother Takes Care of herself- God wants mothers to take care of themselves. Our bodies are the temple of God.**

We read in 1 Corinthians Chapter six: “<sup>15</sup>Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take away the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? May it never be! <sup>16</sup>Or do you not know that the one who joins himself to a prostitute is one body with her? For He says, "THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH." <sup>17</sup>But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him. <sup>18</sup>Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. <sup>19</sup>Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? <sup>20</sup>For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

Our bodies are not ours, but being one with Christ, our bodies belong to him. As a result, we need to do whatever we can to take care of ourselves. God wants our best. It is so easy to let yourself, go I certainly struggle with this myself, yet being a Godly mother/woman means to take care of yourself in order that we might live to reach others for Jesus. To raise children, to influence people for Christ.

These characteristics are instructions for being a Godly woman, but also for being a Godly man. These qualities are for everyone, not just woman or mothers. As Christians we need to Put God first, other second and then also take care of ourselves. We need to above all else place God top priority in our lives.

### **The Profile of a Godly Mother**

John MacArthur

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.

Be true to God today because he is true to you.

AMEN