

THE HIGH CALLING OF MOTHERHOOD

Geoffrey R. Kirkland
Christ Fellowship Bible Church

No calling exists, in all the universe, for a mother than the God-given responsibility of being a worker at home and caring for her own children. No prestige, money, fame, social status, or honor that the world gives could ever remotely come close to the supremely high calling of motherhood. Indeed, no calling in all the world is more difficult than that of the full-time task of motherhood. The Bible clearly presents motherhood as a supremely high responsibility for all women with children. To abdicate this role is to lose everything. A most pitiful woman would be one with the highest accolades in the corporate world, an untouchable reputation, comfortable paychecks, an ever-growing social network, and honorable achievements in her workforce but at the same time her home life is a wreck. God's design for women with children is to be workers at home and to be busy doing what He has perfectly called and designed them to do.

The high calling of motherhood includes the following seven responsibilities.

1) Teaching

Solomon exhorts his son not to forsake the teaching of his mother (Prov 6:20). Clearly his mother played a crucial part of teaching the children. The father is absent much of the day because he is at work. But the one who spends most of the time with the children is the mother. She is there in the morning, at play time, during room time, for discipline, and for meals around the table. There are endless opportunities for teaching that exist in the home from day to day. As the mother observes sin, disciplines her children, instructs them on safety, exhorts them to respect authority, and pleads with them to love others more than themselves, abundant opportunities exist for the teaching of the children. But most of all, the mother is one who takes the Word of God and teaches her children the sacred writings which are able to give salvation through faith in Jesus Christ (2 Tim 3:15).

2) Modeling

Young Timothy had a godly grandmother, Lois, as well as a godly mother, Eunice. These women had a sincere faith and modeled it for young Timothy (2 Tim 1:5). As he grew up, Timothy was able to observe his mother walk with God, live for Christ, study the Word, and teach him the truth of Scripture relentlessly. Mothers must model godliness for the children. Much can be taught, but much more is caught. Children must observe their mother confess her sin when she has sinned against God (and others). They must hear her repent of sin. They must see her committed to holiness, fervent in prayer, and regular in studying Scripture. Children must see their mother endeavor to live quietly in the home as she submits to her own husband in everything. They must see purity on TV, hear purity from the music, observe holiness in her conversations, and watch piety in her conduct. A godly mother must model Christ for her children.

3) Evangelizing

The preeminent responsibility of every parent is to regularly give the gospel of salvation to the children so that they may be saved from divine wrath. The mother takes the Word and brings it to bear daily as the children sin. When the mother is in the room giving discipline to small children for their sin, she opens the Word, shows them where they sinned against God, and after the discipline occurs, she lovingly embraces the child and presents the grace of God in Christ. A godly mother has one preeminent ambition in her calling as a mother and that is to see her children be born again by God to a living hope. Yet, the mother fully recognizes her absolute inability to save her children from divine wrath. She knows her children's hearts are wildly sinful (Jer 17:9) and raging against God (Prov 19:3). She believes that God alone saves sinners by grace (Eph 2:8-9). She pleads with her children to be reconciled to God (2 Cor 5:20) and to be justified by faith alone (Rom 3:24). Her life and her mothering could be summed up in this one phrase: the relentless pursuit of winning her children's souls to Christ, a glorious Savior.

4) Discipling

God calls all Christians to go and make disciples of all nations (Matt 28:19-20). This discipling includes the instructing and teaching of all that Christ commanded. Motherhood entails discipleship. A godly mother leads her children to the cross but she also instructs them in how to walk in the shadow of the cross. Children need to be instructed in biblical truth (Deut 6:7). God entrusts the unspeakable responsibility and important duty of showing the children what it looks like for a young Daniel to walk with God, for a teenage Joseph to obey His God, for a young King Joash to honor his God, and for the young King Josiah to lead with humility and godliness. Parents must disciple with intentionality and with regularity. Motherhood provides no breaks, no rests, no days off, and allows for no slacking off. The high calling that God gives to all mothers is to disciple the souls of her children toward Christ and in Christlikeness.

5) Praying

Hannah fervently prayed to God for a son since she was barren (1 Sam 1:15, 19-20). God heard the pouring out of her soul in prayer and he remembered her and answered her by allowing her to conceive and bear a son (1 Sam 1:27). She prayed fervently and with earnestness for a son and then when God granted that request, she gave her boy back to God (1 Sam 1:28). Then she prayed and exalted her God (1 Sam 2:1ff). Hannah prayed with zeal, she poured out her soul, she prayed *in her praying*, she took hold of God, and she gave God no rest until He heard and until He answered her requests. The power of motherhood comes on the knees. In the weak moments and in the sleepless nights, unspeakable power comes to those who cry out in prayer and seek God's face in heartfelt prayer on behalf of her children. A woman who prays for the souls of her children truly loves them and a woman who labors long for their souls is a woman who longs to be with her children far beyond the years in this world. A mother must humbly come to God and regularly bring her children to God so that he would bring the fire of salvation to the wood of her teaching. Godly mothers labor for their children, not for physical needs merely, but for their souls preeminently.

6) Trusting

A godly mother trusts in the Lord with all her heart (Prov 3:5). She knows that it is better to trust in the Lord than to trust in man (Ps 118:8). She confidently believes in her God and knows that He is ever faithful. She affirms the Word of God that her children are holy through the influence of a godly parent (1 Cor 7:15). She trusts that God will bless her labors and that he will save her children through the relentless and ongoing instruction in the gospel. She does not presume in the salvation of her children but she prays in faith and believes that God will bless the dwelling of the righteous (Prov 3:33). A mother has the unspeakable privilege of trusting in her God not only in the affairs of everyday life but also for the eternal welfare of her children.

7) Persevering

Mothering in tiring. To care for little, helpless infants at all hours of the day quickly drains a mother's energy. Going back into that room for corporal punishment after that (same) child has sinned (again) by thundering out verbal anger can sap a mother's strength. Ministering the gospel to teenage children wrestling with rejection from friends, a bad grade on that test, and feeling rejected by a coach can be time-consuming. Yet the high calling of motherhood demands that she persevere even through tiring times. She knows that she must seek the Lord and His strength (Ps 105:4). She waits on the Lord and affirms that in doing so she will gain new strength and that she will run and not grow tired (Isa 40:31). She believes that she must not grow weary in doing good (2 Thess 3:13). She knows that in her mothering, she must be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might (Eph 6:10). So she perseveres through all the dirty diapers, she endures through all the discipline situations each day, she continues to give grace and gospel truth to her children even when they are selfish, unloving, and rude. And she reminds herself that after she has suffered even for a little while that the God of all grace, who called her to His eternal glory in Christ, will perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish her (1 Peter 5:10). And so, she perseveres. When she is weak, she is strong. When she feels broken, she is healed through Christ's gospel. And when she feels like all is hopeless, she hopes in God's unchanging power and in His matchless faithfulness. And so, the high calling of motherhood entails a mom who perseveres.

“But whatever else you neglect, do not neglect to follow your children with your daily prayers. Very often, this is the only thing which is left to mothers. Their children are either removed far from them, or, if near, they have lost their influence over them. But there is One, who is near to them, and who can influence them. O mothers! plead for your dear offspring at the throne of grace; travail in birth for them a second time--may they be born again. God is gracious. God will regard the fervent, persistent cry of Christian mothers.”

— Archibald Alexander

Never could it be possible for any man to estimate what he owes to a godly mother. Certainly I have not the powers of speech with which to set forth my valuation of the choice blessing which the Lord bestowed on me in making me the son of one who prayed for me, and prayed with me. How can I ever forget her tearful eye when she warned me to escape from the wrath to come?... How can I ever forget when she bowed her knee, and with her arms about my neck, prayed, "Oh, that my son might live before Thee!"

— Charles Spurgeon

A mother's power always lies in the fact that she prays for her child!

— Abraham Kuyper