

MOTHERLY ADVICE

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We have already quoted from the Proverbs about the beauties of the godly woman. But hear one more passage of wisdom about the legacy of motherhood:

Proverbs 6:20-23

²⁰ *My son, keep your father's command, and do not forsake the law of your mother.*

²¹ *Bind them continually upon your heart; Tie them around your neck.*

²² *When you roam, they will lead you; when you sleep, they will keep you; and when you awake, they will speak with you.*

²³ *For the commandment is a lamp, and the law a light; reproofs of instruction are the way of life.*

A mother's rules for righteous living are not to be forgotten or forsaken. They are part of God's plan to lead you to a fruitful life.

Jesus taught us to regard Almighty God as our Heavenly Father, and to recognize many of His loving and providential ways toward us as fatherly ways. But God also demonstrates motherly ways of nurture and care.

Open a Bible to Ephesians 5. Here is a passage that speaks to me as motherly advice. I hope it will be meaningful to you today.

Paul, the author of this passage, also wrote to the church in Thessalonica, to whom he made reference of his own efforts to nurture their faith in Christ:

1Thessalonians 2:7-8

⁷ *But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children.*

⁸ *So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us.*

If there is a single characteristic of motherhood that rises above all others, it is self-sacrifice. Even if your mother was notably NOT self-sacrificing, the reason you miss it so is because it is part of the way God ordered the world.

One son (Henry Makow) reminisced, "My mother's credo was to serve her husband first, children second, Canada third, and Israel fourth. She wasn't (even) on the list. She never demanded anything in return and as result we took her for granted. We all exploited her. She

was so selfless that I remember noticing when she *once* took a choice cut of meat for herself at dinner.

A Pleasant Aroma

Here, now, is some of God's best "motherly advice." The whole passage is founded on verses one and two, in which we are urged to imitate the example of Christ—like parent, like child.

Ephesians 5:1-2

¹ Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children. ² Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered himself as a sacrifice for us, a pleasing aroma to God.

The premier example of love is set before us—the love of self-sacrifice. So, also, the Apostle John coached us: *"We know what real love is because Jesus gave up his life for us. So we also ought to give up our lives for our brothers and sisters"* (1 John 3:16).

This willingness to lay down one's life, to prefer another person's need, or simply to honor another person above yourself, Paul has told us is a "pleasant fragrance" to God. To see one of His children behaving in such a manner pleases Him, just as the fragrance of orange blossoms or roses pleases me.

On Mother's Day, many people think of presenting flowers to their moms. Could we, every day, think of presenting our Savior God with such a fragrance?

Thankfulness to God

On this foundations stone, Paul frames a life of godly behaviors, which we might think of as walls that define rooms of fellowship, service, and rest; and windows that emit God's light from our lives; and doors through which we may welcome visitors. Take a look at the plan:

Ephesians 5:3-5

³ Let there be no sexual immorality, impurity, or greed among you. Such sins have no place among God's people. ⁴ Obscene stories, foolish talk, and coarse jokes—these are not for you. Instead, let there be thankfulness to God. ⁵ You can be sure that no immoral, impure, or greedy person will inherit the Kingdom of Christ and of God. For a greedy person is an idolater, worshipping the things of this world.

American history is rough and rugged—the wild, wild west. But that is not the culture of the Kingdom of God. Your citizenship is now in Heaven, but are you adjusting to heavenly culture, as well? Western culture is over-sexualized and materialistic—greedy for temporary pleasures. It is time to focus our worship on things above, not things on the earth.

People of Light

Of course, many are so steeped in the old ways of thinking that they make excuses for such behaviors, and call Christ-followers prudish and old-fashioned.

Ephesians 5:6-9

⁶ Don't be fooled by those who try to excuse these sins, for the anger of God will fall on all who disobey him. ⁷ Don't participate in the things these people do. ⁸ For once you were full of darkness, but now you have light from the Lord. So live as people of light! ⁹ For this light within you produces only what is good and right and true.

Actually, we are not OLD-fashioned; we are eternal-fashioned—living beyond the temporal fashions of this world. We are adapting ourselves for Heaven, and bringing heavenly culture to this world.

Light does not just reflect; it also reveals. The light of Christ which is in you reveals Christ to others—through your attitude, your outlook, your words, and your deeds. How you speak to others, and how you speak about others is more telling than you realize, releasing fragrance or stench.

Thoughtfulness

Ephesians 5:10-14

*¹⁰ Carefully determine what pleases the Lord. ¹¹ Take no part in the worthless deeds of evil and darkness; instead, expose them. ¹² It is shameful even to talk about the things that ungodly people do in secret. ¹³ But their evil intentions will be exposed when the light shines on them, ¹⁴ for the light makes everything visible. This is why it is said,
"Awake, O sleeper,
rise up from the dead,
and Christ will give you light."*

"Carefully determine what pleases the Lord." Give it considerable thought. Make it your determined interest to know what pleases Him. You cannot live the Christian life thoughtlessly. If you rely on the thoughts of the moment, you will come up short. This thoughtfulness is "behind the scenes"—in prayer and contemplation.

Do not think that prayer is simply about asking and receiving. How can that be—when God knows what you need BEFORE you ask?

Prayer is primarily about communion with God—getting to know Him, and getting to know yourself from His perspective. It is in prayer that God gently corrects and abundantly forgives

our foolishness. If we will not receive it there (on our knees), it will seem less gentle in the outside world.

Spirit-Fullness

Ephesians 5:15-20

¹⁵ So be careful how you live. Don't live like fools, but like those who are wise. ¹⁶ Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days. ¹⁷ Don't act thoughtlessly, but understand what the Lord wants you to do. ¹⁸ Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit, ¹⁹ singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, and making music to the Lord in your hearts. ²⁰ And give thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

A life of spiritual fullness is what God has made you for and called you to. You may have to empty yourself of some things, in order to make room for the fullness of the Spirit.

Whatever you are full of inside is what will overflow your life. When you are full of the Spirit of Christ, worship, encouragement, joy, and thanksgiving overflow. Rivers of life-giving water pour out. Overflow! Ebullience!

Worship, encouragement, joy, and thanksgiving. On the inside, flowing out.

Don't be distracted by the outward container—it may be old or young, quiet or loud, introvert or extrovert, emotional or intellectual. Those are just the window frames. Personalities are like paint and window dressings. It's what's on the inside—something more interior than your personality—that reveals Jesus to the world. Your personality is just one of the languages through which He speaks.

Take this “motherly advice” today: *be filled with the Holy Spirit.*

Make a break with old worldly ways and speech. Invite the Holy Spirit to fill your mouth with words of grace.

Make a break with ways of darkness. Invite the Holy Spirit to shine His light through your deeds.

Make a break with spiritual thoughtlessness. Invite the Holy Spirit to invigorate your prayer life with genuine communion and increasing awareness.

Start today. Start here. Come to this altar of prayer and make a pact with God.