

“7 WAYS TO LOVE YOUR MOTHER”

John 19:25-27 Mother’s Day May 11th, 2014

In the end, Jesus was not absolutely alone. At his cross, there were these four women who loved him. They were at risk being there! It was always a dangerous thing to be an associate of a man whom the Roman government believed to be so dangerous that he deserved a cross. It is always a dangerous thing to demonstrate one’s love for someone whom the orthodox regard as a heretic. The presence of these women at the cross was not due to the fact that they were so unimportant that no one would notice them; their presence was due to the fact that perfect love casts out fear.

In William Barclay’s commentary on this text, he discusses Mary’s presence at the cross. She was Jesus’ mother. Maybe she could not understand, but she could love. Her presence there was the most natural thing in this world for a mother. Jesus might be a criminal in the eyes of the law, but he was her son. As Rudyard Kipling’s poem ‘Mother of Mine’ has it:

“If I were hanged on the highest hill,
Mother o’ mine, O mother of mine!
I know whose love would follow me still,
Mother o’ mine, O mother o’ mine!
If I were drowned in the deepest sea,
Mother o’ mine, O mother of mine!
I know whose tears would come down to me,
Mother o’ mine, O mother o’ mine!
If I were damned of body and soul,
I know whose prayers would make me whole,
Mother o’ mine, O mother o’ mine!”

The eternal love of motherhood is in Mary at the cross.

Mary witnessed the crucifixion from the foot of the cross. Can you even imagine how she must’ve felt? Jesus turns to John and says, take care of her, and

he looks at his mother and says, let him stand in my place as your son. John lived a very long life, and we believe he took very good care of Mary until she went to heaven.

Jesus is on the cross, bearing the weight of the sins of the whole world on His shoulders, yet He makes sure that His mother is taken care of after He is gone! As God, Jesus is dealing with eternal matters, but as a man, He's showing all of us today how important it is to take care of and love our mothers!

You cannot be willfully wrong with your mother and be right with God. If your mother is still alive, regardless of how old you are and how old she is, you can love her in these 7 ways:

1. **Love her verbally.** Both men and women can have the philosophy—I don't have to say I love you, you already know it. I have told you before; if I change my mind I'll let you know! Or, I SHOW love, not just say it...and that may be true, but a woman and a mother needs to hear those words, "I LOVE YOU!"

Children need to hear it, too...and saying those words to the people we care about makes a difference to them whether we are saying "I love you" as a husband, wife, mother or father, daughter or son!

DEAR ABBY: I enlisted shortly after Pearl Harbor. Thirty-six days later, I was on my way to the Philippines. En route, the Philippines fell to the Japanese, and we were routed to Australia. Eleven days after we landed, I met the most beautiful girl in the world. On our first date, I told her I was going to marry her. I did, 18 months later, while on a 10-day leave from New Guinea.

After more than 57 years of marriage and two children, my beloved "Mary" died five days before Christmas. Although we agreed that our ashes were to be scattered over the mountains, I found I could not part with hers.

While Mary was alive, she would frequently say, "You don't know how much I love you." I'd reply, "Likewise." I never said, "I love you." Now her ashes are on my dresser, where I tell her several times a day how much I love her, but it's too late. Although I wrote poetry to her, I could not bring myself to say the three words I knew she wanted most to hear.

As my dearest was dying and we thought she was comatose, I told her, "There aren't enough words to tell you how much I love you." A few hours later, she whispered, "Not enough words" and died.

The reason I'm writing is to urge men to express their feelings while their loved ones are alive. I don't know why, but many men are reluctant to express the depth of their feelings-- It was signed MISSING MARY IN COLORADO.

Our spouses need to hear it, our children. Our mothers also! Some of us might say, I'm just not comfortable saying it"... then work on it until you are comfortable!

Verbally...

2. **Love her physically.** When's the last time you gave her a big hug without her asking for it...or a kiss on the cheek, or a neck rub, or just sat on the couch with her and held her for a change? She's the first person who ever touched you...she wrapped you up in her womb for months, and you came and her first priority was to hold you, and she cuddled you, stroked your head, rubbed your feet, held you little cheeks against her, gave you a finger to grasp...in love she did all these things, including getting the spot of lunch off your cheek with a little spit on her finger.

When you were little she could say, "Give me sugar", and you'd pucker up and she'd accept your wet, sloppy kiss and even say thank you! You gave her bear hugs so tight she didn't have to hold on to you—you'd just cling to her as she walked around! She changed your diapers, potty trained you, and held the Kleenex for you to blow your nose! She wiped off your face years longer than she should have had to!

She constantly touched you! And she may have had to hand you off to another, and her life may endure some heavy changes, but she deserves your touch. She should never have to give that up completely. It would mean more to her than flowers or candy, or eating out, or a diamond necklace [well, let's not go too far!]

Physically, verbally...

3. **Love her patiently.**

Mothers have an incredible job with no pay. No position in business compares to the physical, emotional, and spiritual commitment she has in motherhood.

No Occupation

She rises up at the break of day and through her tasks, she races.
She cooks the meals as best she may and scrubs the children's faces
While schoolbooks, lunches, homework too, all need consideration.
And yet the census man insists
She has –"no Occupation"

When breakfast dishes all are done
She bakes a pudding, maybe.
She cleans the rooms up, one by one,
With one eye watching the baby.
The mending pile she then attacks
by way of variation.
And yet the census man insists
She has—"No occupation."
She irons for a little while, then presses pants for Daddy.
She welcomes with a cheery smile returning lass and laddie.
A hearty dinner next she cooks (no time for relaxation),
And yet the census man insists
She has—"No Occupation."

Don't ever make the mistake of asking a lady, Do you work, or stay at home? The only thing worse you can ask is when she'd due if you're not 100% sure she's expecting! And many ladies today have to work on top of the full time job they already have.

Here's the point, in spite of all she does for us, we often become impatient with her...we get so used to her taking care of things we come to expect it and are outraged that "those clothes are still dirty?"/ that's not ironed?/ you're out of my favorite cookies?/ you know I like that over rice, where is it? She's picking you up at school because you don't like to ride the bus, but she's scolded for being 5 minutes late!

Love her patiently. Because she's tender to your needs is no reason to take advantage of her, it's reason to be patient and to love her all the more!

For us adults with living mothers: Love her patiently. Dobson read on Focus on Family Radio a letter from an 80 yr. old woman on her birthday.

To all my children:

I suppose my upcoming birthday started my thoughts along these lines...This is a good time to tell you that what I truly want are things I can never get enough of, yet they are free. I want the intangibles. I would like for you to come and sit with me, and for you to be relaxed. We can talk, or we can be silent. I would just like for us to be together. I need your patience when I don't hear what you say the first time. I know how tiresome it is to always be repeating, but sometimes I must ask you to repeat. I need your patience when

I think too much about the past, with my slowness and my set ways. I want you to be tolerant with what the years have done to me physically.

Please be understanding about my personal care habits. I spill things I lose things. I get unduly excited when I try to figure out my bank statements. I can't remember what time to take my medication, of *if* I took it already. I take too many naps. Sometimes sleep helps to pass the day. Well, there you have it: Time, Patience, and Understanding. These are the priceless gifts that I want. Finally, in his letter, the Apostle Paul wrote, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." I know I can, too! It's a wonderful feeling to know His eye is on the sparrow and I know He cares for me. I guess being old isn't so bad after all! Love, Mom

Patiently...

4. Love her attentively.

Mothers listen as you pour out your heart...she has a sympathetic ear, and always has...and even as an adult you've gone to her when you want someone who will really listen and understand...and she'll always be on your side. In a documentary last year of men going to execution for capital crimes, they interviewed the men and their mothers, too. Invariably the moms would say, He's such a good boy! Interviewer: Yes, but he slaughtered 37 people with an axe..."I know, but he has a good heart!"

It's no wonder we like to talk to mom...she listens. But now she has issues, and now it's your turn to be her "rock"...and take time to listen. It's payback time! "But, she's always complaining"...yes, just like you did! Talks about herself/ asks the same question over and over...In their older days, our parents have many fears and anxieties...may we treat them as we'd hope to be treated when we **are** in their shoes!

Attentively, patiently.

5. Love her gratefully.

An elementary science class had been studying magnets, and how metal objects are attracted to them. At the end of the semester, the teacher put on an exam this question; 6 letters, starts with "M", picks up things, what am I? Over half the children wrote {say it together...} "Mother"! She needs a sincere thank you, and not just today, but from a genuinely thankful heart when it's least expected! Some of you are living the best days of your life right now, because you have your children and your parents. This brings us to realize 2 truths: one about our parents; and how we won't always have

them. And another about our children...let's be the kind of parents we ought to be!

6. Love her generously.

There's nothing too good for her, we could never repay her, but we ought to die trying before she does! She didn't spend on herself unless all your needs were met...she could easily do without, and now it's time for her to have something she wants! She clears her schedule so she can run you around...she gave up opportunities so you can have more opportunities! Here's a math question. State your answer as a fraction. If there's 10 at the table and one apple pie, how much does each one get? One child answers: "One ninth!" Where upon the other child responds: "Don't you know your fractions?" And the first child asks: "Do you know my mother? If there's that many at the table and only one pie, she will say she doesn't want any!"

Love her generously...

7. Love her honorably.

Exodus 20:12 Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. This is binding as long as your mother lives. Another command says children, obey...non-binding when you leave home, but "honor" is different! Many times we hear the saying that the mother is the heart of the home...don't break her heart! "Yeah, but my mother wasn't honorable!" Well, the Bible says nothing about that qualification...it only asks, is she your mother?!?! By the way, it's the *only one* of the 10 commandments which includes a built-in promise of blessing! Remember? "Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you."(NRSV)

Please pray with me...

Lord, help us never to be too busy for Mom...if you could take the time and great effort for her on the cross in your death, help us to love her while we have her in our life! Amen and amen.

(Adapted from sermon by Jerry Shirley and *Grace Note Ministries*)