

MOTHER'S DAY EVERY DAY

It was on a Sunday evening, partway through the church service, when the little girl in front of me managed to dislodge her ponytail holder. I watched as the young daddy tried, and tried, and retried to replace the uncooperative hairballs onto the braid of his patient, understanding daughter. I knew all too well the feeling of exasperation and panic that can accompany that simple, motherly task when done by a daddy's hand, especially when he can feel an audience of eyes watching. I whispered a prayer to God to grant patience to accomplish the "big job" without the embarrassment of walking out with a little girl with the little girl's hair dangling loose on one side.

It never ceases to amaze me how mothers can control the unruly, slippery member called hair, blow the hurt away from a little scuffed knee by simply leaning out the attic window, and bring back a smile with just a word of consolation. It seems Mother can do the same task as Daddy, but do it so much better in a child's eyes.

It is no wonder these "natural" inclinations have led to so many things being named after Mother. We often hear the term "mother nature," that universal ability of nature to take care of its own. Mother is also associated with things of origin. "Motherland" or "mother country" is the well-understood term for the place of one's birth, still revered in the memory of exiles. It is "mother" that is attached to the ability of the soil. "Mother Earth" is that soft dirt that takes in the blessings of heaven and contains them to offer new life. The native tongue is sometimes referred to as the "mother tongue" – the language that our mother taught us. Interestingly, these complex organisms, such as nature, the soil, etc., are named after the feminine gender. Why not call nature "father nature"? Why not call the soil "father earth"? It is primarily man that toils and sweats to make the ground productive. It is man that attempts to manipulate nature to use it to the best of his advantage and earn a livelihood for his family. It is man that invents the machinery to keep "mother earth" productive. Why credit the title to women?

I'm not sure I have the complete answer, but one thing I know: the intuitions of mothers bear a striking resemblance to the abilities of nature. With no high school diploma, no college education, and no degrees after her name, mother takes on the complexity of childrearing. While mothers do search out and need advice at times, it often comes from the lips of other mothers or grandmothers who "just happened" to find a solution when their own children were young.

Through the hand of God, it is mother that provides the right environment to reproduce life, nurturing, cherishing, and raising each child to adulthood. Should we attempt to place a "Help Wanted" ad for a mother, the list of anticipated duties would probably need to read as follows: Help Wanted - A Mother, duties to include the following: dietician, disciplinarian, psychologist, seamstress, cook, interior decorator, custodian, nurse, health-care coordinator, basic skills-craft-character teacher, evangelist, housekeeper, etc. With a list of duties like that and no formal education, it is no wonder

that President Woodrow Wilson, on May 9, 1914, signed a joint resolution of Congress recommending a special day of observance for these God-gifted heroes. It is a day set aside to ponder the awesome task mother is doing or has done. Since 1907, many people across our land have pinned a carnation to their blouses or topcoats in honor of their mothers on the second Sunday of May. They use a colored carnation if mother is living and a white one if she has died. Since Julia Word Howe made the first known suggestion for a Mother's Day in the U.S. in 1872, many special days reflecting on and encouraging the role of motherhood have come and gone.

Mother's Day takes our minds in two directions - to both our parental mothers and our children's mother. On Mother's Day, many people take time out, at least for a moment, to think about their mother, the good times together, and all her efforts to mold their lives. For some, reflections of Mother reveal a godly person of choice, discreet character. They remember the many hours spent toiling together, laughing, hearing stories beside the kitchen cookstove, and singing heartily together above the tinkle of glass dishes being washed after a well-balanced, hearty meal.

I have to wonder what the memories of this generation's children will be. Sadly, so many mothers seem to feel the list mentioned above is not sufficient. There is even a stigma attached to the boring job of household duties and child-rearing. The everyday duties mothers used to share with their children are now replaced with so-called "Quality Time," a crammed evening of activities at a time when Mother is tired after a stressful day on the job.

Do we appreciate the mothers of our day who are willing to get out of step with society, willing to lay down their opportunity for worldly advancement, and willing to take on the routine duties of housekeeping? Do we realize the potential that lies in the bosom of our mothers - they who have been taught the Proverbs 31 virtues? If there is anyone who could make it in the workforce, it is our mothers, who, because of their good work ethics and the present-day opportunities, could advance rapidly in careers of this world. But, we are the beneficiaries of a group of women who were and are willing to lay all that aside and pour their energies into the children they hold on their laps. Mothers are molding arrows will fly long after their own hands have ceased to labor, arrows that will reach where mother never could. Our mothers are exchanging so-called "quality time" for true quality time. They take time to listen to their children and answer questions when asked. They take time to blow the hurt knee and kiss away the tears. Instead of only telling them how, they take time to show their children how to do things. They take time to cook well-balanced meals instead of writing notes about what to put in the microwave. They take time to help others instead of hoarding for themselves.

Mothers like these are a crown to their husbands and children. Mothers like these deserve a gift, a visit, or a word of appreciation from husband, son, and daughter. Mothers like these not only deserve a little recognition one day out of a year, but they should receive heartfelt praise throughout the year. Men go about society getting words of appreciation from employers, employees, clients, and suppliers, etc. Men appreciate when people notice hard work, especially the little, insignificant things. When do mothers get their credit? Do we notice the good meals, the clean bed, the polished shoes, the button that was sewed back on without a reminder, the clean house, the packed lunch, the consistent discipline of the little ones, the mended trousers, the hems that were left down on the growing girls' dresses, and the well-stocked shelves and freezer? Do we share appreciation one day in May, or do we show appreciation year-round? Men can lock the doors to their business, punch out at 5:00, and walk away, but

mother's work is from sun up to sundown and then some. Are we doing our part of sharing in the mother's workload 365 days out of the year?

A helpful husband can do so much to lift a mother's load. Are we doing our part in disciplining the children? Do we listen to the children's chatter, or are we buried in a news magazine, forcing them to return to Mother because Daddy doesn't listen? Are we doing our part in watching after the family on Sunday afternoons at other homes, or does mother have to keep tabs on the children while trying to visit? Do we sometimes get up at night, especially when we know that mother is fatigued? Are we doing our part in sharing the household duties? Mothers appreciate our help in house cleaning, picking peas, hoeing the garden, mowing the lawn, etc. Do we do our part in taking the initiative and being the leader that we are supposed to be, or is mother overloaded because of our neglect? Is that equipment or cow auction, that business seminar or sales meeting really important, or would a "Mother's Day" be more beneficial to the family?

We do well to keep a day in May as day of special reflections. Mother's Day to us should not be a time of carnations or festivity. Mother's Day should be a time of pondering the deep-rooted effects our godly mothers had on us and should build in us a renewed determination to be godly sons and daughters. Should our mother have been removed from us through the call of death, may we still honor her for her unselfish, sacrificial labors and the ideals for which she stood, for she being dead yet speaketh (Heb 11:4). My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother: For they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck (Pro 1:8-9). May we never forget the admonition of our Godly mothers. For those of us who still have our mothers with us, let us do our part in supporting, loving, and visiting her every month of the year, not only in May. I truly believe if we "give mother the best, the best will come back to us." Our children are observing how we treat our mothers. Would we want them to treat us the same?

~Howard Horst