



That they may teach the  
young women ...

## *Dear Mother (and Future Mother)*

*Marcia Zimmerman*

I am a middle-aged mama of three. I've experienced the wonder of pregnancy, the pains of giving birth, the joy of opening my home to the homeless child, sleepless nights walking fussy babies, the 24-hour round-the-clock care of newborns, the busy life of toddlers exploring and getting into many things, the first graders with their missing front teeth, the scholars with their eager (and sometimes not-so-eager) faces, the face-down-on-the-floor moments (often in the night watches) before God with a heart cry for making me a woman of God with an eternal vision for my children.

I have known the busy days when it seems that all that I had planned has gone awry. I've known the distractions that come to mothers whose desire is to keep the home, as God has designed us to do. I have walked through the valley of loneliness as I've cared for little ones while my husband was busy working to provide for us. I have wept myriads of times on the shoulder of my Daddy God who makes all things beautiful in His time, as I have grappled with questions like, "What is the purpose of my life? Why am I a mother when I don't even know how to be one?"

I have lived through seasons of fear that I would mess up the mothering of my children and create stumbling

blocks for them to walk through when they should be spending their adult years more profitably than to make sense of life because I pulled them back. I have searched the heart of God and sought Him prayerfully in tears that He would show me how to be that mother He designed me to be.

And do you know what? God has answered ... faithfully, quietly, lovingly, and with much enlightenment over the years! He gently answered each heart cry as it came, sometimes through my reading His Word, sometimes through my seeking counsel from mature sisters in the faith, sometimes by observing the successes and failures of others, and sometimes by experience as I've stumbled and even fallen. He has faithfully shown me His plan and as I look back over the years, I see His hand, always guiding me.

Here are some things I share with you, as I look over what I have learned, by experience, by observation, and by obedience to His leading.

### **Created for keeping the home**

Keeping the home requires carefulness. It requires dedication. It requires a heart that has been changed by the hand of God through salvation from sin by Jesus' blood. Keeping the home requires constant alertness, continual laying down your life for your family, and an eternal vision that recognizes the far-reaching effects of your influence in your home.

Motherhood is a noble task. It is not some demeaning place behind the scenes with much drudgery and thankless toil. It can be that, if our perspective is geared that way; but any other job can be that way, too. Motherhood is a job that soon is noticed if it is absent. Homes cannot prosper well if mothers are failing in their jobs.

Oh, mother, do you know this? Do you love your place in the home? Do you grasp the magnitude of the task His wisdom has assigned you? Do you love to serve your family, a humble servant of the Lord in the place He has called you to fill?

### **Practically speaking ...**

Love your husband. He is your head, your provider, your leader. Reverence him, being careful to honor him in your words and deeds, whether you are talking to him, or about him to others. Look out for him. Learn to love, caring for the little things that seem so insignificant, but that indeed do help him and show him that your heart is towards him ... things like getting up in the morning and serving him a nice breakfast, or making sure his socks are folded and in the drawer (this one seems to be a continual battle in my home!), or his Sunday clothes are laid out for

him (if he likes this sort of thing). Serve him a cup of hot chocolate, instead of just telling him that it's on the stove if he wants any. Thank him for the many things he does for you each day. Tell him that you love him ... in word and in deed.

Keep the home simple and clean. Don't let yourself get distracted by all the glitter and glam that money can buy; it will only heap upon you work to dust it or to keep it organized (besides unwisely spending your husband's hard-earned wages). Simple beauty does not need to cost a lot, nor will it cause continual burden upon the heart to take care of it.

Love your children. Notice them when they talk to you. Manage your time and duties so as to provide a habitually calm atmosphere in your home. There are days when things do seem extra busy, but be purposeful in your living. You are here as a mother, a tender of hearts, a teacher of future ministers, homemakers, and parents of generations that you will not be here long enough to see. Be very aware that there are myriads of distractions that would lure you away from this holy calling. Be the joyful mother of children as God created you to be. Work with your children. Teach them how to be responsible and purposeful as well. Seek to know their hearts and to teach them the things they need to know.

Teach your children. Do you have daughters? Teach them to love being homemakers, joyfully serving the family God gave them. Teach them to prepare simple meals, and to reach out in hospitality to both those in the household of faith and the community around them. Teach them to care for the needs in their family and others. Teach them to care about and work towards having an orderly home. Teach them that to love Jesus and to know Him is the most important thing in all the world. Help them to walk with Him by helping them to establish a regular time of personal worship each day. Show them that He lives by letting Him change you from glory to glory, yielding your life to being conformed more and more into His image. Tell them what His plan is for their life, based on the Holy Word. Help them to value the things God values and to

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forsake the things He does not consider holy or important. Teach them to guard their hearts from premature or inappropriate relationships with young men. Teach them how to take their hopes and dreams to their Father in heaven who will perfect that which concerns each of His children.

Do you have sons? Teach them that Jesus is the Way to eternal life. Teach them that they are here to bring glory to God. Teach them to be respectful of women and to honor their authority. Give them responsibilities to sharpen their leadership skills. Show them how to value what God values and to depart from what He does not value. Teach them how to care for and provide for the family. Show them how to treat the young women as sisters and the older women as mothers.

Learn to speak blessing into your children's lives. Thank them often for duties well done. Let them know of your thankfulness to God for bringing them into your life. Tell them that your heart rejoices when they walk in truth. Bless them for godly desires they have. When you must admonish and correct them, oh, do not speak harshly and selfishly! Those words you say when your heart is not right can give Satan much fuel for years to come in pushing them down into discouragement and bitterness. Protect them with blessing and admonish them in a Christlike manner.

Read Bible stories to your children, and help them to memorize Scripture. Get them to write Christ-centered compositions for school projects and help them to search the Scriptures to understand the heart of God.

Dear friends, these things I have learned—and am still learning—by the faithful answer of my Father God when I cried out to Him for help in being a wife and a mother. I bless the Lord for His mercy in helping me to begin anew early in my marriage when I had very small children and realized I had certainly been blind and undiscerning. With deep reverence I remember those women whom God has graciously brought to me to show me how to be the godly wife He designed me to be and (often imperfectly but with a steadfast heart) I have yielded my heart to His service. With fear and trembling I desire to fill this place of motherhood which I entered so many years (but so short a time!) ago. And as I learn, I desire to share with you, my fellow sisters. Together, we can know the path we are to take and can encourage one another to fill it joyfully, purposefully, and with reverence to the Lord.

### **And most importantly ...**

The last thing I want to share with you is the most important one of all. Take the time for daily fellowship with the Father. Learn to be “instant in season and out of season,” praying and singing and teaching as you go through the

days. But make time to “refuel” daily. It might mean that you need to retire early in the night so that you can rise early in the morning while the household still sleeps in order to get that time of worshipping the Father and learning at Jesus’ feet. But do not discredit the power that comes from sitting at those precious, nail-scarred feet. We need it so very much.

God bless you in your mothering (or future mothering). His design is perfect. It is beautiful. And it is much under attack in this generation, as it was in the generations before us. Oh, may we walk with Him in the light of His word. He will shed a glory on our way that we cannot know unless we walk with Him. ~