

FAMILY MATTERS 5

“THE MOTHER’S ROLE”

Last week we visited about the Father’s Role in the family, and noted that many of the qualities of Godly Father’s could also be seen emerging from our understanding of our Heavenly Father. Many of the Father’s Roles and responsibilities are a direct reflection of God’s relationship and interaction with us human beings.

This week I want to visit with you about the Mother’s Role within the family...and hang on...many of the characteristics necessary to be a Godly Mother...also emerge from the nature and character of God as well. It is a little known and often forgotten truth that God is not a man! Yes, we most commonly address God as Father, but God is actually a-sexual...meaning God occupies neither a male nor female anatomy. God exists having no sexual identity, in spite of the paternalistic writings and renderings of God as a male.

This truth shocks some who have grown up entirely immersed in language and culture of a male dominated world, then and now; and unfortunately limits our understanding of who God is. We’ll never get all of who or what God is; but we are better off recognizing and understanding that God is not a man, God has no sex, God is completely beyond any of our human comprehensions. Therefore, as we come to look at what it takes to be a Godly Mother; don’t overlook that these motherly, matronly, qualities also flow from God...most accurately described as our Parent. Oh, you want a biblical basis for this ‘heretical’ theory? Try this one:

“For the people of Israel belong to the Lord...He found them in a desert land, in an empty, howling wasteland. He surrounded them and watched over them; He guarded them as He would guard His own eyes. Like an eagle that rouses her chicks and hovers over her young, so he spread his wings to take them up and carried them safely on his pinions. Deut. 32:9-11

There is no other way to interpret this passage than to acknowledge that its author is picturing God as a brooding mother eagle, protecting her frightened chicks and carrying her children safely on her wings. That is a description of God, interacting, protecting, providing and nurturing God's children...the Israelites, us! Interesting.

Here is another passage, not specifically mentioning God as a Mother, but describing activities and commands that remind me of my mom, and other mothers I know: Give a listen:

"Listen, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today. Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up. Tie them to your hands and wear them on your forehead as reminders. Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates." Deuteronomy 6: 4-9

Whether directed to mothers or fathers, this command to pass these commands on to our children belongs to both moms and dads. As Gary Chapman reminds us in his book: The Family You've Always Wanted:

"What remains true in all societies is that parents have the primary responsibility for teaching and training their own children. In spite of the fact that in Western contemporary culture the school has become a major player; in my opinion parents must not abdicate this responsibility. Who will interpret the messages the child hears at school, on TV, online, at church, and in the neighborhood? I believe that is the parent's responsibility." AMEN to that.

This morning I want to introduce you to my mom...oh she's not here, but I want to share with you the characteristics that I have observed in my mom that have in many ways made me who I am. I don't think I'm all that exciting, but my mom, though not a saint; has been a good mother, and these are the qualities of a Godly Mom, I've learned from her. Godly Mothers:

1. PRACITE THE ART OF CREATIVE COMFORTING

Last week we began by noting that a dad's primary job is to express unconditional love to his children, (and wife). Moms have the same job description, but most often express that unconditional love in the ways she comforts her children. Moms are naturally more comforting than dads...don't know why that's true, and I'm sure there are exceptions, but most moms act as the comforters in the family system. From applying Mickey Mouse band aids, to consoling the loss of a pre-teen daughters first "true love", moms are uniquely wired to comfort her children (and sometimes her husband).

Dad's can be comforting, don't get me wrong, but it just seems more natural coming from a mom. My mom was not a particularly touchy-feely kind of mom, some might even consider her tough; but I appreciated her comforting especially one day as I recklessly rolled the family motorcycle while showing off on a gravel road. Our dad had worked extra hours one summer to buy this little motorbike all 5 of us kids were to share. I felt so bad being the one to wreck it, but my mom's first concern was of my health and injuries. I of course was way more worried about the dumb motorcycle, and what I expected would be my dad's displeasure upon his return from combining in Oklahoma. She assured me, after making sure I was ok, that though dad would be disappointed, he'd be glad I was ok, and glad to help fix up the cycle.

Remember the number of times in the Old Testament where God instructs the prophets to Comfort my people, Comfort my people? God inspires moms to be creatively comforting. Godly Mothers:

2. PRACITE THE ART OF CREATIVE TEACHING

Again, it is not the sole job of the mom, to be Jr.'s teacher; but teaching is one of Mom's essential roles. It is a mistake to think that the school's; public or private, are responsible for all the teaching our children require; mom's and dad's still have a vital role to play in this regard.

I refer to this as an art of creative teaching, because the best teaching happens when parents and children tap into the natural desires for knowledge that all kids have. Mom's are more naturally suited to foster an atmosphere where the child's desire to learn and the parents' desire to teach flow in a normal rhythm; largely because mom's spend more time with kids than dads. I know there are exceptions.

The scripture we read discussed how the transmissions of teachable values were to be done during the regular course of our regular days. While preparing for the day in the early morning, or at night before bed, or while walking to the park, or school, creative moms try not to miss the teachable moments along the way.

My mom was a master of this. She spent the better part of her career in the school system in Iroquois, my home town. She was an aide, and became as the years went by; the school disciplinarian. Susan even had her as a study hall monitor! She should tell her own stories, but my mom was a master at making 'teachable moments' out of what ever was happening for her students...and her kids! Godly mothers:

3. PRACITE THE ART OF CREATIVE CORRECTION

A mother's gentle touch seems to better enable them to provide the necessary correction all children need at times; in ways that are more developmental for the children. Oh, my mom never lacked for skill in getting the point across; but she was able to do so in loving ways, that made us feel like disappointing her, or dad or others, was the worst crime we could commit. We came to understand that actions have consequences, and she was not afraid to follow through. Table manners and courtesies were practiced in our family, even with 4 hungry boys; and if one of us complained or acted out; she knew sending us to bed without food or dessert wouldn't kill us! (You can tell I didn't act out much huh?)

God's correction of us must be seen in this light. We don't give enough consideration for the ways that God corrects, disciplines, even punishes us. We tend to think that when bad things happen, bad news arrives, or bad times come; God must be punishing us. I'm not so sure. Sometimes I think that God's ways are so much more mysterious than ours, that we have to look hard to see God's hand in all the circumstances of life; sometimes teaching us, sometimes correcting us, and sometimes encouraging us. Let us not discount or overlook the refining process God wants to complete in us. It looks often like motherly correction. Godly Mothers:

4. PRACITE THE ART OF CREATIVE AFFIRMATION

My mom was not a believer in giving false praise. She was of the school that said you must earn recognition. I prefer to think that we must more carefully define the words encouragement and affirmation, they are different. Encourage your children for their effort, not for the results. Mom's, if your kids give appropriate effort, even when the results are less than perfect, it won't spoil them or lead them to mediocrity to encourage them.

Mom's and dads need to understand that affirmation is not based on performance at all, but is instead aimed directly at the child or person individually. We as parents need to affirm our children in order to instill proper self-image and esteem. Reminding our kids that they belong to God, that they are unconditionally loved, that their chosen behaviors have consequences; all can be affirming. When our children are little, affirm some healthy or positive characteristic you see in them. One mom asked her 8 yr old what he liked best that she did for him. He replied..."when you tell me how strong I am." That's good affirmation. I used to love hearing my mom tell me how proud she was when I did something she enjoyed or appreciated.

You know, I've spent a great deal of time telling you about the qualities of my Godly mother, I feel like calling her right now. Let's see...

Connect with my Mom. Questions:

We've been discussing some of the characteristics of being a good Godly mom, and I've used you as an example more than once today, so I thought I should give you a chance to defend yourself! I'd like to ask you a couple questions about being a mom.

What was the hardest thing about being a mom?

What about being a mom gave you the greatest joy?

(not that you ever had to with me, but) how did you discipline or correct your children?

How did you encourage and affirm your children?

What's the best thing about being a Grandma and Great grandma?

What would you like to say to the members of FUMC?

At conclusion of conversation:

God wants you moms to be successful, and have a satisfying relationship with your children. Being a mom isn't for wimps, and requires great stamina, patience, wisdom, discernment, fortitude...and that's all just for your husbands...taking care of kids is even harder! Just kidding. God will help you, because God is the model parent for all of us. It's a family matter.

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GODLY MOTHERS:

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