

# Wives and Mothers

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13 May 2012

*Where would you be without your mother?*

## Part 1

This week we are honoring women by looking at what the Bible says about wives and mothers. Specifically, we are going to talk about Eve, Mary, Moses' mother, Samuel's mother, and the advice given to King Lemuel by his mother.

No doubt you have heard how Eve succumbed to temptation, so we don't need belabor that point. Instead, let's focus on what happened after that.

**Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?"**

**The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."**

**So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this,**

**"Cursed are you above all the livestock  
and all the wild animals!**

**You will crawl on your belly  
and you will eat dust  
all the days of your life.**

**And I will put enmity  
between you and the woman,  
and between your offspring and hers;  
he will crush your head,  
and you will strike his heel."**

...

**Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living.**

**The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. (Genesis 3:13-15, 20-21)**

Genesis 3, verse 15, is the first Messianic prophecy. It says that a descendant of Eve will crush Satan's head. Then, in verse 21, God gives them both clothing made of animal skins. The Bible doesn't say, "And God said, 'Let there be polyester,' and there was clothing!" The clear implication is that God sacrificed an animal to get those skins, and that God explained the ultimate sacrifice of Christ to pay the penalty for their transgression. This is born out by the fact that when Abel sacrificed an animal, God was pleased, but when Cain sacrificed something that he had grown himself instead, God did not accept the sacrifice. "Without the shedding of blood, there can be no forgiveness." (Hebrews 9:22)

We often get so wrapped up in the importance of the prophecy about Jesus' sacrifice, as well we should, that we sometimes miss what verse 20 said about Eve's part in the plan. "Adam named his wife Eve,

because she would become the mother of all the living.” It was God’s plan that the savior should be born of a woman. God’s plan of salvation depends upon motherhood. This is the main difference between Jesus and Melchizedek. Here’s what the first three verses of Hebrews, chapter 7, says.

**This Melchizedek was king of Salem and priest of God Most High. He met Abraham returning from the defeat of the kings and blessed him, and Abraham gave him a tenth of everything. ... Without father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life, like the Son of God he remains a priest forever. (Hebrews 7:1-3)**

Jesus could have come down miraculously from heaven, fully grown, without father or mother. Instead, Jesus chose to be born of an ordinary woman. There was nothing divine about Mary. She wasn’t sinless. She simply found favor in the eyes of God. God knew Mary would be up to the task, so He gave her the responsibility of raising Jesus. Did she fully understand her responsibility? Let’s ponder that as Mike Miller sings.

[Music – Mike Miller, “Mary, Did You Know?”]

## **Part 2**

Did Mary really know? That’s open to question. She could have known. Gabriel certainly told her at least part of the plan before she became pregnant.

**In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.”**

**Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end.”**

...

**And Mary said:**

**“My soul glorifies the Lord  
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,  
for he has been mindful  
of the humble state of his servant.  
From now on all generations will call me blessed,  
for the Mighty One has done great things for me—  
holy is his name.  
His mercy extends to those who fear him,  
from generation to generation.  
He has performed mighty deeds with his arm;  
he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.  
He has brought down rulers from their thrones  
but has lifted up the humble.  
He has filled the hungry with good things  
but has sent the rich away empty.**

**He has helped his servant Israel,  
remembering to be merciful  
to Abraham and his descendants forever,  
even as he said to our fathers.” (Luke 1:26-33, 46-55)**

At that moment, Mary realized that God was using her to implement the plan of salvation that had been foretold in the scriptures. So, the answer to the musical question, “Mary Did You Know?” is, “Yes, She did know; but apparently she forgot.” Consider what happened a dozen years later when Mary and Joseph took Jesus on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to participate in the Passover.

**Every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. When he was twelve years old, they went up to the Feast, according to the custom. After the Feast was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, “Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you.”**

**“Why were you searching for me?” he asked. “Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house?” But they did not understand what he was saying to them. (Luke 2:41-50)**

So, the Bible says, she didn’t fully understand her part in the plan of salvation; but that did not prevent her from fulfilling her role of raising Jesus. God has given children to all mothers for a divine purpose, whether their mothers realize it or not.

Moses’ mother is another good example of how mothers are given a special responsibility by God. It fell to her to give Moses the upbringing he would need to lead God’s people out of captivity and prepare them for entry into the promised land. Ellen White wrote these comments about her in Chapter 22 of her book, Patriarchs and Prophets.

The people of Egypt, in order to supply themselves with food during the famine, had sold to the crown their cattle and lands, and had finally bound themselves to perpetual serfdom. Joseph wisely provided for their release; he permitted them to become royal tenants ... paying an annual tribute of one fifth of the products of their labor.

...

But as time rolled on, the great man to whom Egypt owed so much, and the generation blessed by his labors, passed to the grave. And "there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph." Not that he was ignorant of Joseph's services to the nation, but he wished to make no recognition of them, and, so far as possible, to bury them in oblivion. "And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we: come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land."

...

The king and his counselors had hoped to subdue the Israelites with hard labor, and thus decrease their numbers and crush out their independent spirit. Failing to accomplish their purpose, they proceeded to more cruel measures. Orders were issued to the women whose employment gave them opportunity for executing the command, to destroy the Hebrew male children at their birth. Satan was the mover in this matter. He knew that a deliverer was to be raised up among the Israelites; and by leading the king to destroy their children he hoped to defeat the divine purpose. But the women feared God, and dared not execute the cruel mandate. The Lord approved their course, and prospered them. The king, angry at the failure of his design, made the command more urgent and extensive. The whole nation was called upon to hunt out and slaughter his helpless victims. "And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive."

While this decree was in full force a son was born to Amram and Jochebed, devout Israelites of the tribe of Levi. The babe was "a goodly child;" and the parents, believing that the time of Israel's release was drawing near, and that God would raise up a deliverer for His people, determined that their little one should not be sacrificed. Faith in God strengthened their hearts, "and they were not afraid of the king's commandment." Hebrews 11:23.

The mother succeeded in concealing the child for three months. Then, finding that she could no longer keep him safely, she prepared a little ark of rushes, making it watertight by means of slime and pitch; and laying the babe therein, she placed it among the flags at the river's brink. She dared not remain to guard it, lest the child's life and her own should be forfeited; but his sister, Miriam, lingered near, apparently indifferent, but anxiously watching to see what would become of her little brother. And there were other watchers. The mother's earnest prayers had committed her child to the care of God; and angels, unseen, hovered above his lowly resting place. Angels directed Pharaoh's daughter thither. Her curiosity was excited by the little basket, and as she looked upon the beautiful child within, she read the story at a glance. The tears of the babe awakened her compassion, and her sympathies went out to the unknown mother who had resorted to this means to preserve the life of her precious little one. She determined that he should be saved; she would adopt him as her own.

Miriam had been secretly noting every movement; perceiving that the child was tenderly regarded, she ventured nearer, and at last said, "Shall I go and call thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee?" And permission was given.

The sister hastened to her mother with the happy news, and without delay returned with her to the presence of Pharaoh's daughter. "Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages," said the princess.

God had heard the mother's prayers; her faith had been rewarded. It was with deep gratitude that she entered upon her now safe and happy task. She faithfully improved her opportunity to educate her child for God. She felt confident that he had been preserved for some great work, and she knew that he must soon be given up to his royal mother, to be surrounded with influences that would tend to lead him away from God. All this rendered her more diligent and careful in his instruction than in that of her other children. She endeavored to imbue his mind with the fear of God and the love of truth and justice, and earnestly prayed that he might be preserved from every corrupting influence. She showed him the folly and sin of idolatry, and early taught him to bow down and pray to the living God, who alone could hear him and help him in every emergency.

She kept the boy as long as she could, but was obliged to give him up when he was about twelve years old. From his humble cabin home he was taken to the royal palace, to the daughter of Pharaoh, "and he became her son." Yet even here he did not lose the impressions received in childhood. The lessons learned at his mother's side could not be forgotten. They were a shield from the pride, the infidelity, and the vice that flourished amid the splendor of the court.

How far-reaching in its results was the influence of that one Hebrew woman, and she an exile and a slave! The whole future life of Moses, the great mission which he fulfilled as the leader of Israel, testifies to the importance of the work of the Christian mother. There is no other work that can equal this. To a very great extent the mother holds in her own hands the destiny of her children. She is dealing with developing minds and characters ... for eternity. She is sowing seed that will spring up and bear fruit, either for good or for evil. She has not to paint a form of beauty upon canvas or to chisel it from marble, but to impress upon a human soul the image of the divine. Especially during their early years the responsibility rests upon her of forming the character of her children. The impressions now made upon their developing minds will remain with them all through life. Parents should direct the instruction and training of their children while very young, to the end that they may be Christians. They are placed in our care to be trained, not as heirs to the throne of an earthly empire, but as kings unto God, to reign through unending ages.

Let every mother feel that her moments are priceless; her work will be tested in the solemn day of accounts. Then it will be found that many of the failures and crimes of men and women have resulted from the ignorance and neglect of those whose duty it was to guide their childish feet in the right way. Then it will be found that many who have blessed the world with the light of genius and truth and holiness, owe the principles that were the mainspring of their influence and success to a praying, Christian mother.<sup>1</sup>

Yes, mothers have a great responsibility; but with that responsibility comes blessing.

[Music—Judy Harper, "Like a Circle"]

### **Part 3**

Children truly are a blessing from the Lord, as Judy Harper just sang. Perhaps no mother knew this more than Samuel's mother, Hannah.

**There was a certain man ... whose name was Elkanah ... . He had two wives; one was called Hannah and the other Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah had none.**

**Year after year this man went up from his town to worship and sacrifice to the LORD Almighty at Shiloh, ... Whenever the day came for Elkanah to sacrifice, he would give portions of the meat to his wife Peninnah and to all her sons and daughters. But to Hannah he gave a double portion because he loved her, and the LORD had closed her womb. And because the LORD had closed her womb, her rival kept provoking her in order to irritate her. This went on year after year. Whenever Hannah went up to the house of the LORD, her rival provoked her till she wept and would not eat. Elkanah her husband would say to her, "Hannah, why are you weeping? Why don't you eat? Why are you downhearted? Don't I mean more to you than ten sons?"**

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<sup>1</sup> Ellen White, Patriarchs and Prophets, Chapter 22, "Moses", <http://www.whiteestate.org/books/pp/pp22.html>

Once when they had finished eating and drinking in Shiloh, Hannah stood up. Now Eli the priest was sitting on a chair by the doorpost of the LORD's temple. In bitterness of soul Hannah wept much and prayed to the LORD. And she made a vow, saying, "O LORD Almighty, if you will only look upon your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the LORD for all the days of his life, and no razor will ever be used on his head."

As she kept on praying to the LORD, Eli observed her mouth. Hannah was praying in her heart, and her lips were moving but her voice was not heard. Eli thought she was drunk and said to her, "How long will you keep on getting drunk? Get rid of your wine."

"Not so, my lord," Hannah replied, "I am a woman who is deeply troubled. I have not been drinking wine or beer; I was pouring out my soul to the LORD. Do not take your servant for a wicked woman; I have been praying here out of my great anguish and grief."

Eli answered, "Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of him."

She said, "May your servant find favor in your eyes." Then she went her way and ate something, and her face was no longer downcast.

Early the next morning they arose and worshiped before the LORD and then went back to their home at Ramah. Elkanah lay with Hannah his wife, and the LORD remembered her. So in the course of time Hannah conceived and gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel, saying, "Because I asked the LORD for him."

When the man Elkanah went up with all his family to offer the annual sacrifice to the LORD and to fulfill his vow, Hannah did not go. She said to her husband, "After the boy is weaned, I will take him and present him before the LORD, and he will live there always."

"Do what seems best to you," Elkanah her husband told her. "Stay here until you have weaned him; only may the LORD make good his word." So the woman stayed at home and nursed her son until she had weaned him.

After he was weaned, she took the boy with her, young as he was, along with a three-year-old bull, an ephah of flour and a skin of wine, and brought him to the house of the LORD at Shiloh. When they had slaughtered the bull, they brought the boy to Eli, and she said to him, "As surely as you live, my lord, I am the woman who stood here beside you praying to the LORD. I prayed for this child, and the LORD has granted me what I asked of him. So now I give him to the LORD. For his whole life he will be given over to the LORD." And he worshiped the LORD there.

...

Then Elkanah went home to Ramah, but the boy ministered before the LORD under Eli the priest.

... Each year his mother made him a little robe and took it to him when she went up with her husband to offer the annual sacrifice. Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, saying, "May the LORD give you children by this woman to take the place of the one she prayed for and gave to the LORD." Then they would go home. And the LORD was gracious to Hannah; she conceived and gave birth to three sons and two daughters. Meanwhile, the boy Samuel grew up in the presence of the LORD.

...

**And the boy Samuel continued to grow in stature and in favor with the LORD and with men.**

**(1 Samuel 1:1-28, 2:11, 19-21, 26)**

Hannah knew that children are a gift from the Lord. She wanted a child more than anything else. She was so grateful to have a child that she dedicated him to the Lord's service. God rewarded her by giving her three more sons and two daughters.

Unfortunately, there is a segment of our society that doesn't value children as much as they should. They consider pregnancy to be a disease that should be cured by abortions paid for by the government, or prevented by government-provided contraception. Somehow children have come to be viewed by some as an inconvenience rather than a blessing. Fortunately, your mother didn't decide to have an abortion when she became pregnant with you.

We have one more segment coming up, right after Susan Pogge plays this medley of songs about children.

[Music—Susan Pogge, "Jesus Loves the Little Children"]

## **Part 4**

We conclude this broadcast with a saying of King Lemuel, an oracle his mother taught him, recorded in Proverbs 31.

**A wife of noble character who can find?**

**She is worth far more than rubies.**

**Her husband has full confidence in her  
and lacks nothing of value.**

**She brings him good, not harm,  
all the days of her life.**

**She selects wool and flax  
and works with eager hands.**

**She is like the merchant ships,  
bringing her food from afar.**

**She gets up while it is still dark;  
she provides food for her family  
and portions for her servant girls.**

**She considers a field and buys it;  
out of her earnings she plants a vineyard.**

**She sets about her work vigorously;  
her arms are strong for her tasks.**

**She sees that her trading is profitable,  
and her lamp does not go out at night.**

**In her hand she holds the distaff  
and grasps the spindle with her fingers.**

**She opens her arms to the poor  
and extends her hands to the needy.**

**When it snows, she has no fear for her household;  
for all of them are clothed in scarlet.**

**She makes coverings for her bed;  
she is clothed in fine linen and purple.  
Her husband is respected at the city gate,  
where he takes his seat among the elders of the land.  
She makes linen garments and sells them,  
and supplies the merchants with sashes.  
She is clothed with strength and dignity;  
she can laugh at the days to come.  
She speaks with wisdom,  
and faithful instruction is on her tongue.  
She watches over the affairs of her household  
and does not eat the bread of idleness.  
Her children arise and call her blessed;  
her husband also, and he praises her:  
“Many women do noble things,  
but you surpass them all.”  
Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting;  
but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.  
Give her the reward she has earned,  
and let her works bring her praise at the city gate. (Proverbs 31:10-31)**

Godly mothers are the foundation of our society. They create a safe, loving environment for their children at home.

[Music—“Love at Home”]