

Honor Your Mother

Joe Slater

God's will for people in every age has included their high esteem for mothers. Long before the Law of Moses was given, godly people were honoring mothers, while disdain toward mothers brought forth rebuke. For example, when Abraham's servant wanted to take Rebekah back to Canaan to be Isaac's wife, he honored Rebekah's mother with gifts of "*precious things*" (Genesis 24:53).

Many years later, Jacob sternly rebuked his young son, Joseph, for what he perceived to be an insult toward his mother (as well as his father and brothers, Genesis 37:10). God had revealed Joseph's future in a dream in which the sun, moon, and eleven stars bowed to him. Jacob correctly inferred that this meant Joseph's parents and brothers would bow in submission to him. We have the advantage of knowing the rest of the story – they did, indeed, bow to Joseph when he had become the Governor of Egypt. Nevertheless, at the time of the dream, Jacob thought Joseph was being disrespectful. Based on that perception, whether accurate or not, he rebuked Joseph, showing that even at that early time, mothers were to be respected. [NOTE: Joseph's mother, Rachel, was deceased at that time; Jacob was most likely referring to Rachel's maid, Bilhah, as a sort of step-mother.]

God Himself legislated from Mt. Sinai, "*Honor your father and your mother*" (Exodus 20:12). The very next chapter prescribed capital punishment in extreme cases of disrespect (striking or cursing a parent, 21:15, 17).

Ephesians 6:2 completes the picture as Paul affirms the validity of the Fifth Commandment in the Christian era. While we do not live under the Patriarchy or the Law of Moses, honoring mothers is a timeless obligation. Let us do so not only on Mother's Day, but every day of every year!

The Best Way To Learn And Remember

"Only take care, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things that your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. Make them known to your children and your children's children" (Deuteronomy 4:9, ESV)....

It has often been said that the teacher learns more than the student. Put another way, the best way to learn something, or remember something, is to teach it to others. Deuteronomy 4:9 seems to support that theory. The people of Israel are to make known the deeds of the Lord to their children. In the act of teaching these things to their children, they themselves will be constantly reminded. The one who teaches others is far less likely to forget than the one who keeps his knowledge to himself.

The other reliable way for remembering is to put our knowledge to use. The person who uses his mechanical, mathematical, or biblical knowledge on a daily basis is unlikely to forget that knowledge. The person who merely tucks knowledge away in a corner of the brain is, on the other hand, likely to find that knowledge difficult to locate. Again, this is confirmed in scripture.

"What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you" (Philippians 4:9, ESV). There is no promise of God's presence to those who merely hear and see, but to those who also "practice."

If you are one of those people who feels that not much of what has been heard has been retained, maybe it is time to try a more active approach. Instead of merely listening, put what you hear into practice. Instead of merely learning, teach someone.

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Putting Things In Perspective

As all parents know, every child's favorite question is "why": "Why is the sky blue?" "Why are there wars?" "Why do I have to eat my vegetables?"

The questions are endless. And, if we're honest with ourselves, the "why" questions never leave us: "Why is this happening to me?" "Why did they have to die now?" "Why do others prosper when I have to struggle so?" Etc.

Apparently "why" was Job's favorite question, too: "Why did I not die at birth?" (3:11) "Why have You set me as your target?" (7:20) "Why then do I labor in vain?" (9:29) "Why do the wicked live and become old?" (21:7) On and on he went.

But if you read the book of Job, you see that God never answers the "why" question. Instead, He shows Job that understanding "Who" is far more important than knowing "why." If you get to know the "Who," the "why" will not matter.

In the latter part of the book, God set Job on a course of knowing Him through His creative activity and the realization that He is in control (chapters 38-41). Once Job understood the "Who," the "why" was inconsequential. As a result of this, Job repented of his thought process and God blessed Him (chapter 42).

The German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche once wrote: "He who knows the why can bear with any how." While there is definitely some truth to that, those who are in a relationship with God can take it one step further. You see, the "what," "when," "where," "why," and even "how" won't matter as long as we remember the "Who!"

Let us get as close to God as possible and fully trust in Him, remembering that He is always in control. Let us live as the anonymous poet has written:

When mystery clouds my darkened path,
I'll check my dread, my doubts reprove;
In this my soul sweet comfort has,
That God is love, God is love.
And though I cannot trace his way,
I am resolved to always say
That God is love, God is love.

- Edd Sterchi (Campbellsville, KY)