

MOTHERHOOD

- I. Representative Biblical references to "motherhood"
 - Exod. 20:12 - "honor your father and mother"
 - Lev. 19:3 - "everyone of you shall reverence his mother and his father"
 - Deut. 27:16 - "cursed is he who dishonors his father or mother"
 - Ps. 113:9 - "He makes the barren woman...as a joyful mother of children"
 - Prov. 6:20 - "do not forsake the teaching of your mother"
 - Prov. 10:1 - "a foolish son is a grief to his mother"
 - Prov. 23:25 - "let your mother be glad; let her rejoice who gave birth to you"
 - Prov. 29:15 - "a child who gets his own way brings shame to his mother"
 - Prov. 31:28 - "her children rise up and bless her"
 - Ezek. 16:44 - "like mother, like daughter"
 - I Tim. 2:15 - "women shall be preserved through the bearing of children..."
 - I Tim. 5:2 - "treat older women as mothers"

- II. Three particular examples of motherhood in the Bible.
 - A. Jochebed - Exod. 2:1-10
 1. Mother of Moses
 2. Protected her son from evil
 3. Entrusted him to God.
 - B. Hannah - I Sam 1:1-18
 1. Mother of Samuel
 2. Dedicated her son to God.
 3. Danger of projected parental expectations?
 - C. Eunice - II Tim. 1:3-5; 3:14,15
 1. Mother of Timothy
 2. Instructed son in knowledge of Scriptures.

- III. Changing cultural expectations of mothers
 - A. Biblical times
 1. Male-oriented society
 2. Mother's role to bear and nurture children
 3. Barrenness was a curse
 - B. Contemporary times
 1. Radical feminism - repudiation of motherhood
 2. Devaluation of motherhood - lesser calling; quest for greater meaning, identity, success
 3. Vocational opportunities - careers
 4. Economic necessities - working moms, second income
 5. "Super-mom" expectations - work, homemaking, marriage, etc.

- IV. Stages of "motherhood"
 - A. Child-bearing
 1. Ability to bear children - barrenness, fertility procedures
 - Ps. 127:3 - "children are a gift of the Lord; the fruit of the womb is a reward"
 - Ps. 113:9 - "God makes the barren woman abide in the house as a joyful mother"
 2. Benefit of bearing children
 - I Tim. 2:15 - "women shall be saved through bearing of children"
 - a. "made safe" from selfish dysfunction
 - b. available to love, nurture, give, protect, be patient, etc.

- B. Child-rearing
 - 1. Available to meet needs of children; servant-heart, caretaker
 - a. love - Titus 2:4
 - b. instruct - Prov. 1:8; 6:20. Not just talk, but walk.
 - c. nurture
 - (1) more than just feed, clothe, transport
 - (2) emotional support and relationship; talk, confide
Ex. "Hi Mom!" (athletes); Mother's Day
 - (3) not "smother," overprotect
 - 2. Aberrations of motherhood
 - a. resentment, bitterness
 - b. rejection, neglect, abandonment, abuse - Ps. 27:10
 - C. Child-departure
 - 1. Objective of parenting is to prepare child for independent adulthood
Quote: "The mother-child relationship is paradoxical and, in a sense, tragic. it requires the most intense love on the mother's side, yet this very love must help the child grow away from the mother, and to become fully independent." Erich Fromm
 - a. Child prepared to leave - Gen. 2:24; Eph. 5:31
(physically, geographically, emotionally)
 - b. Not dependent - "mommy's boy," "tied to apron strings"
 - 2. Letting go can be difficult
 - a. "Empty nest syndrome"
 - b. Finding new identity other than "mommy"
 - c. Sometimes exacerbated by menopausal symptoms
(Conway) - "Menno Mama"
 - D. Mothering adult and married children
 - 1. Respect their choices, mate, privacy, independence
 - 2. Encourage; don't meddle
 - 3. Listen; advise when requested
 - E. Grandmothering
 - 1. Unique opportunity for spiritual instruction - II Tim. 1:5
 - 2. Opportunity to instill values, invest in lives of children and grandchildren by building traditions and heritage.
- V. Attitudes and actions toward mothers.
- A. Proper attitudes and actions
 - 1. Honor and reverence - Exod. 20:12; Lev. 19:3; Deut. 5:16
 - 2. Bless - Prov. 31:28
 - B. Improper attitudes
 - 1. Dishonor - Deut. 27:16
 - 2. Cause grief - Prov. 10:1
 - 3. Despise - Prov. 15:20; 23:22
 - 4. Reject - Prov. 19:26
 - 5. Steal from - Prov. 28:24
 - 6. Shame - Prov. 29:15
 - 7. Scorn - Prov. 30:17
 - 8. Rise up against - Micah 7:6; Matt. 10:35
 - 9. Kill - I Tim. 1:9
- VI. A mother as God intends...
- A. Requires the presence of God by His Spirit in the mother
 - B. Can only be accomplished by the Grace of God
 - C. Requires faithful receptivity of His activity
 - D. Involves instruction and modeling of the character of God