

Honoring Mothers

Today, May 12, 2019, across the nation is being celebrated as “Mother’s Day.”

Of course, of even greater significance, today is also “*the first day of the week;*” it is the day upon which Jesus rose from the dead (Mark 16:9), and which, for good reason, is biblically referred to as “*the Lord’s day,*” Rev. 1:10. No holiday, or special day originated by man, should ever be allowed by Christians to take priority over “*the Lord’s day,*” and the scriptural worship of God on each first day of the week.

But aside from what we have just stated, it is fitting that mothers and motherhood be honored. “*Mother*” and the cognates of that word is said to appear some 220 times in the Old Testament. It first appeared in Genesis 2:25 which reads thusly: “*Therefore a man shall leave his father and **mother** and be joined to his wife, and they shall be one flesh.*” After the fall, God said to the serpent: “*And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His feet,*” Gen. 3:15. Bible students in general recognize this as being the “first promise of a Redeemer.” And in Gal. 4:4 we read that “*when the fulness of the time had come, God sent forth His son, born of a woman, born under the law.*” Thus Jesus, as prophesied, was born of a virgin (Mary) who was conceived “*of the Holy Spirit,*” Matt. 1:20; Isa. 7:14. Jesus, Who was “*Immanuel,*” meaning “*God with us,*” Matt. 1:23, when growing up was “*subject*” to His earthly parents, Luke 2:51, and even while dying made provision for the care of His “*mother,*” John 19:25-27. We can think of great mothers in the Bible who, through their offspring, had such a tremendous impact for good upon society. We think of Hannah, the mother of Samuel, who before he was born made a vow that if the Lord would give her a male child she would “*give him to the Lord all the days of his life,*” I Sam. 1:11. Samuel became a prophet and a judge; he had tremendous impact upon his nation for good, but before there was a Samuel there was first a **Hannah**. We think of Timothy of whom Paul wrote, saying, “*I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state,*” Phil. 2:20. But before there was a Timothy there was first his **mother** Eunice and his **grandmother** Lois, 2 Tim. 1:5, to whom credit may be given for his learning “*the Holy Scriptures*” even “*from childhood,*” 2 Tim. 3:15.

Successful men have long credited their mothers for their success. Abraham Lincoln said “all that I am or hope to be I owe to my angel mother.” Napoleon, upon being asked regarding how best to improve France, said “give us better mothers.” He was so right! “Better mothers” will invariably produce a better society. Hence, it is not surprising that the Bible has so much to say about mothers, motherhood, and their impact upon society. The virtuous wife and mother described in Prov. 31:10-31 — her character, wisdom, industriousness, sacrificial nature, watchfulness, benevolent spirit, watchfulness, etc., is so vividly set forth. No wonder her children “*rise up and call her blessed;*” no wonder her husband “*praises her,*” Prov. 31:28.

Sadly, however, we are living in a time when Motherhood, and the idea of young women being “*discreet, chaste, home-makers,*” etc. (Tit. 2:5) is more and more being ridiculed. Women who obey such instruction as set forth in Titus 2:2-5, are highly

criticized for being intellectually deficient, lazy, and irresponsible. The women who are most admired seemingly are those who are taking a leading role in industry, community affairs, politics, etc., while sending their children to Day Care and other places to provide the needed training for their children. Biblically speaking, it takes a father and a mother to raise a child, but many in modern society would have us believe that “it takes a village” to raise a child. And if a “successful” career-minded, young lady gets pregnant, so many advise her to abort (murder!) the child so as to avoid the “inconvenience” of helping to rear her offspring!

In our modern, so-called intellectual age, many are ignoring what the Bible has to say about the influence and importance of motherhood. With that in mind, we now want to note what others have had to say about motherhood, and also set forth the results of numerous “studies” dealing with this very issue. This information is depicted in the following italicized paragraphs:

“As Ann Crittenden wrote in 2001, ‘The very definition of a mother is selfless service to another.’ Numerous international studies have shown that maternal deprivation at an early age can affect the mother-child bonding process, and can impair a child’s emotional, social and psychological development. For example, a major 1990 American report found that a higher proportion of children under age one in day care ‘show anxious-avoidance attachment to their mothers than do home-reared infants.’ More recent research has found that maternal separation can profoundly affect the brain’s bio-chemistry, with lifelong consequences for growth and mental ability. Commenting on the new research, Mary Carlson of the Harvard Medical School said, ‘Our findings support clinical research showing that infants cared for in institutions grow slowly and have behavioral retardation.’”

“Not only is the important role of instilling values, purposes and responsibility best met by a child’s biological parent at an early age, but so too is the cultivation of a sense of security and well-being. Indeed, as one expert put it, the attachment relationship that a young child forges with his mother ‘forms the foundation stone of personality.’ Regular and prolonged detachment from the mother can demonstrably impair a child’s intellectual and emotional development, and affect a child throughout his or her life.”

“Children deprived of parental care in early childhood are likely to be withdrawn, disruptive, insecure, or even intellectually stunted. New research (even suggests) that the depression resulting from separation anxiety in early childhood can cause a permanent impairment of the immune system making these children prone to physical illness through their lives. Or as family expert Steve Biddulph writes, ‘It now appears that mother-baby interaction, in the first year especially, is the very foundation of human emotions and intelligence. In the most essential terms, love grows the brain. The capacities for what makes us most human—empathy, co-operation, intimacy, the fine timing and sensitivity that makes a human being charismatic, loving, and self-assured — are passed from mother to baby, especially if that mother is herself possessed of these qualities, and supported and cared for, so that she can bring herself to enjoy and focus on the task.”

“One study from Norway, for example, found that children experiencing less maternal care than others had higher levels of behavior problems. Learning can also be impaired. Ernest Foyer, former U.S. commissioner of Education and president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, has said that children in the day care suffer in terms of language skills development. A recent American study of 4000 children found that mothers who return to work soon after giving birth may harm their child’s school performance. The study showed that children of mums who work full-time struggled academically compared with those whose mums stayed at home. Other studies have even found that children who spend a lot of time in child care are more likely to join gangs as surrogate families.”

“As Connie Marshner sums up, ‘The quality of love and care that a child receives in the first three to five years of life is the main factor in whether that child will be able to think, to learn, to love, to care, to cooperate with other people—in short, whether that child will merely exist or will thrive and flourish and add to human society.’ As mentioned, it may sound strange to actually have to defend motherhood, but we live in strange times. As George Orwell once remarked, ‘We have now sunk to a depth at which the restatement of the obvious is the first duty of intelligent men.’”

Conclusion: There is no way to put a price tag on the value of good wives and good mothers. It is interesting that modern “studies” have statistically documented their value, thereby confirming what the **Bible** has taught from the beginning. But we should not wait for “Mother’s Day” to honor those who are a 24/7, around-the-clock, 365-days-a year blessing! —Bobby Witherington
