

Mothers Who Make A Difference

Introduction. Anna Maria Reeves-Jarvis of Grafton, West Virginia, organized a club of women to nurse wounded soldiers from the North and South during the Civil War. After the war, Reeves-Jarvis started “Mothers’ Friendship Days” to reconcile families that had been divided by the conflict. Throughout her life, Reeves-Jarvis modeled the ideals of Victorian motherhood. She gave up her dreams of college to care for an older husband and four children. She bore the loss of seven other children with grace. She taught Bible class in the local Methodist church for 20 years and stayed active in benevolent work. Her death in 1905 devastated her daughter Anna. She honored her mother’s memory by initiating a holiday honoring all mothers. Mother’s Day was first celebrated in 1908 in Grafton (where Anna grew up) and Philadelphia (where she lived as an adult). Later, in a resolution passed May 8, 1914, the U.S. Congress officially established the second Sunday in May as Mother’s Day.

Because the Scriptures exist to teach us, this lesson examines four examples of mothers who made a difference in the lives of their children, and how mothers today can do the same.

I. The Protective Mother

- A. Moses’ mother made sure that Moses was protected, even when Moses was in great danger (Exodus 2:1-4).
- B. Godly mothers protect their children physically, morally, emotionally, and spiritually. She is going to do everything in her power to make sure he or she is taken care of.
- C. Northwest Airlines flight 255 crashed just after takeoff from Detroit on August 16, 1987, killing 155 people. Only one person survived: Cecilia, four, of Tempe, Arizona. When rescuers found Cecilia, they did not believe she had been on the plane. They thought she had been a passenger in one of the cars on the highway onto which the airliner crashed. But when the passenger list was checked, there was Cecilia’s name. Cecilia survived because, as the plane was falling, Cecilia’s mother, Paula Chican, unbuckled her own seat belt, got down on her knees in front of her daughter, wrapped her arms and body around Cecilia, and would not let her go. Nothing could separate that child from her mother’s love — neither tragedy nor fall nor the flames that followed. Such is the love of our Savior for us. He left Heaven, lowered Himself to us, and sacrificed Himself to save us (cp. John 10:11; 15:13; 1 John 3:16).

II. The Supportive Mother

- A. Hannah had promised God that if she had a male child, she would give him to the Lord (1 Samuel 1:24-28).
- B. Samuel was born and at an early age taken to the Lord’s house to be a servant. Hannah continued to support the boy by providing for his needs (1 Samuel 2:19).
- C. Hannah is a model for all parents of children. Our children should be given over to the Lord for the purpose He has for them (Ephesians 1:11, 3:11). And whatever the Lord chooses to do with that child, we, as parents, should be supportive.

1. God's purpose is for me to be in His spiritual family (Ephesians 1:19).
2. God's purpose is for me to praise Him (Psalm 34:3).
3. God's purpose is for me to become like Christ (1 Peter 2:21).

III. The Instructive Mother

- A. Timothy's mother and grandmother set the example of faith (2 Timothy 1:5; 3:15; cp. Proverbs 1:8), and taught him the Scriptures at a very early age.
- B. There are several great topics that that children can learn from their mothers:
 1. Fear God (Psalm 103:17-18).
 2. Have confidence in God (Psalm 78:5-7).
 3. Respect authority (Romans 13:1-5).
 4. Be generous (Proverbs 3:27-28).
 5. Work hard (1 Thessalonians 4:11-12).
 6. Serve others (1 Peter 4:10).
- C. Daughters can learn about purity and modest apparel from mothers. They can teach their sons how to respect women and not be abusers or mean to others, including his wife and children. All of these are necessary for healthy relationships in the future.

IV. The Loyal Mother

- A. Mary was loyal to her son to the point of death (John 19:25) and beyond as one of His disciples (Acts 1:14). She had always been with Him, even at the beginning of His ministry (John 2:1-5).
- B. A mother must be loyal to her children to the end, and that loyalty begins with her loyalty to the Lord.
 1. Paul said in Romans 16:13, "Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine." Do you not wonder what ties, or what events, caused Paul to say of Rufus' mother that he considered her as his mother, too? Whatever it was, the bond was strong and true. I have no doubt that it was a very personal, precious, tender, and affectionate relationship in the Lord.
 2. What a godly, wonderful woman she must have been for the great apostle to refer to her as his mother also! As sorry and unfortunate as were the evil affects of a woman like Jezebel, so much greater is the glory of women like Rufus' dear mother who was loyal in her fidelity to Christ.
- C. This does not mean we should approve of our children's sin. A Christian's and a parent's responsibility is always to rebuke sin (1 Timothy 5:20; Titus 2:15; Revelation 3:19). This way, mothers can build their children's loyalty to Christ.

Conclusion. "The Hand That Rocks the Cradle Is the Hand That Rules the World" is a poem by William Ross Wallace published in 1865 that praises motherhood as the preeminent force for change in the world. God bless our mothers and we all pray that their work continues unabated throughout their lifetime.