



For Women Only!

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Another Kind of Mother

by Mary Nixon

“Her children rise up and call her blessed”

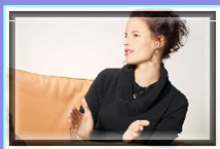
Proverbs 31:28

Earlier this month we took a day to honor our mothers. On arguably the restaurant industry’s busiest day, many Moms enjoyed being served for a change, and received flowers and cards as gestures of appreciation. Although inadequate to match the blood, sweat and tears of motherhood, such heartfelt gestures are nonetheless fitting. However, out from the shadows of these praiseworthy women emerges another kind of mother deserving of honor.

One such lady impacted the life of another over twenty years ago. A young coed traveled to Southern California to attend college. Although lured by the university’s academic programs, she didn’t realize at the time that God had other plans for her. She settled into the home of a mature woman who provided a warm-and-homey environment, but more importantly, spiritual wisdom. She didn’t preach to or chastise the young woman but instead showed her the way leading to spiritual life. Through this wise woman’s kindness and example, the young woman embraced God’s Word. Over time they bonded out of mutual love for God, and the grateful young woman became like a daughter to the older woman who hadn’t any natural-borne daughters. Decades later this bond still exists between my spiritual mother, Maggie, and me.

My life’s course had changed dramatically, although previously it hadn’t been blatantly self-destructive. However in the World’s mind it was good: the pursuit of success, prestige and worldly riches. But without God, these goals were idols, and my wise friend showed me a better way. Her life exuded peace, hope and wisdom, and I wanted these immaterial riches too. She knew how to get them, by knowing God and His Word. Since then I’ve never looked back with regret, only with gratitude that God used this wonderful woman to open my eyes.

Such spiritual mothers and daughters also occur in Scripture—Ruth and Naomi, for instance. Although first bound legally as in-laws, the spiritual bond between these women sparkles as a diamond in a sea of depravity characterizing the Old Testament times of the Judges. Naomi was an Israelite, one of God’s chosen people while Ruth was a pagan Moabitess. But Ruth’s loyal heart was gold; she refused to leave Naomi and resolved, “Your God shall be my God.” In turn Naomi’s wisdom as a spiritual mother unlocked spiritual treasures for Ruth, including marriage to Boaz and a place in the genealogy of our Lord Jesus Christ.



Naomi and Ruth’s story encourages women to heed the New Testament exhortation that older women teach the younger (Titus 2:4-5); likewise, younger women are wise to hearken the voice of wisdom and experience. Mature ladies can certainly offer time-tested wisdom about marriage and childrearing but more, about the right attitude and conduct (to be discreet and chaste, Titus 2:5). Godliness is vital to successful marriages and motherhood, but its impact can extend beyond a woman’s immediate family. Whether wife, mother, coworker, boss or friend, a wise woman’s sphere of influence can include spiritual offspring who will love her forever. Jesus said that those doing God’s Will are His true mother and sister and brother (Mark 3:35) and towards this end human relationships are instrumental. For example, God used Maggie like a mother to draw me to Him. But instilled in this legacy is the hope that I’ll in turn draw others to God as a faithful spiritual family member.



Spiritual mothers illustrate the mystery and irony of God’s plan, revealed only to those who love Him. Just as the first shall be last and the last first, His way confounds the World’s understanding. A spiritual mother needn’t be physically fit, but spiritually strong; she needs not a fertile body, but a fertile heart to implant God’s Word; she needn’t be married to a man, but committed to God. And unlike physical childbearing, spiritual childbearing isn’t limited by a biological clock. Rather, its ability is perfected with maturity.

Of course natural mothers ought to be spiritual mothers to their own children, but in an imperfect world this doesn’t always happen. Nonetheless, a mother rightly receives gratitude from her family but it’s the spiritual mother whose praise comes from both heaven and earth, and so endures forever.

