

## A Mother's Influence

Erma Louise Bombeck was a mother of three children. She was also an American humorist, a popular newspaper columnist, and a best selling author. She wrote over 4,000 newspaper columns in 900 newspapers about the ordinary lives of suburban housewives and mothers. By the 1970s, her columns were read by thirty million readers. Bombeck published 15 books, most of which became a best-seller. For example, she wrote, *If Life is a Bowl of Cherries; Why Am I in the Pits* and *The Grass is Greener Over the Septic Tank*.

Here are some of her quotes:

"Insanity is hereditary. You can catch it from your kids."

"My second favorite household chore is ironing. My first one being hitting my head on the top bunk bed until I faint."

"There's nothing sadder in this world than to awake Christmas morning and not be a child."

In one of her columns, she wrote of God in the act of creating mothers.

She says that on the day God created mothers He had already worked long overtime. And an angel said to Him, "Lord, you sure are spending a lot of time on this one."

The Lord turned and said, "Have you read the specs on this model? She is supposed to be completely washable, but not plastic. She is to have 180 moving parts, all of them replaceable. She is to have a kiss that will heal everything from a broken leg to a broken heart. She is to have a lap that will disappear whenever she stands up. She is to be able to function on black coffee & leftovers. And she is supposed to have six pairs of hands."

"Six pairs of hands," said the angel, "that's impossible." "It's not the six pairs of hands that bother Me." said the Lord, "It's the three pairs of eyes. She is supposed to have one pair that sees through closed doors so that whenever she says, 'What are you kids doing in there?' she already knows what they're doing in there."

"She has another pair in the back of her head to see all the things she is not supposed to see but must see. And then she has one pair right in front that can look at a child that just goofed and communicate love and understanding without saying a word."

"That's too much." said the angel, "You can't put that much in one model. Why don't you rest for a while and resume your creating tomorrow?"

"No, I can't," said the Lord. "I'm close to creating someone very much like myself. I've already come up with a model who can heal herself when she is sick - who can feed a family of six with one pound of hamburger and who can persuade a nine year old to take a shower."

Then the angel looked at the model of motherhood a little more closely and said, "She's too soft." "Oh, but she is tough," said the Lord. "You'd be surprised at how much this mother can do."

"Can she think?" asked the angel. "Not only can she think," said the Lord, "but she can reason and compromise and persuade."

Then the angel reached over and touched her cheek. "This one has a leak," he said. "I told you that you couldn't put that much in one model." "That's not a leak," said the Lord. "That's a tear."

"What's a tear for?" asked the angel. "Well it's for joy, for sadness, for sorrow, for disappointment, for pride."

Today on Mother's Day let's join Erma Bombeck and practice Proverbs 31:28-31 and praise our mothers. If your mother is living you can praise her verbally or if she has deceased you can bless her memory. In Proverbs 31:28-31, the children praise their mother, the husband praises his wife, and the public praises the mothers.

Paul praises Timothy's mother and grandmother in 2 Timothy. He gets specific; he names them. Lois is the grandmother and Eunice is the mother.

2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy is Paul's last letter before his martyrdom for preaching the gospel. He writes and warns Timothy of the coming persecution. Just as Paul is facing danger so is the church. For example, in 3:12, Paul forecasts: "All that live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." Paul instructs Timothy how to live in days of apostasy.

So what is Paul's point in mentioning mothers? Mothers can help us face the hard times.

**First, Paul states that he is proud to be Timothy's Father in 1:2.**

Paul was, of course, Timothy's spiritual father who must have been very proud of Timothy because he refers to him as his son over and over again (1 Timothy 1:2, 18; 6:20; 2 Timothy 1:2; 2:1; 1 Corinthians 4:17; Philippians 2:21). At some time in the past, Paul had led Timothy to Christ.

**Next, Paul informs us that Eunice is Timothy's Mother and that Lois is his Grandmother in 1:5.** Apparently both of these ladies had somehow contributed significantly to Timothy's conversion.

A. My grandmother Bare protected me physically when I was growing up.

She had TB and all I can remember was her walking on crutches or wheeling around in a wheeling chair. She reminded me of Moses' mother who protected him from physical harm by placing him in a little ark and hiding him in the Nile.

My grandmother at least on one occasion saved my life. I was playing in my grandfather's barn and got hot and sweaty. I saw a half empty coke bottle on a shelf and took a drink. I found out latter that it was paint thinner. It immediately took away my breath. I ran to the house and my grandmother saw I was not breathing and smelled my breath. She said, "You've been drinking again, haven't you?" Not really, she moved into her EMT mode and wheeled around in the kitchen and pulled out a can of Crisco Shortening. Pulled the lid off. Ran two fingers down into the white lard and got a gob of Crisco Shortening and poked it in my mouth. Pinched my nose and held my mouth closed so that I had to swallow the lard. I vomited up the paint thinner and started breathing. God used my country grandmother who raised eleven children in the Depression to spare my life so later I could get saved. She also saved my younger brother's life when he swallowed a marble. She turned him upside down, held him by the ankles, and popped him on the back and the marble shot out across the living room floor.

1) Our mothers gave us physical life at great risk of their own lives through the child-birth process. They first of all carried us nine months with much discomforts and dangers such as high blood pressure. They stayed up with us all night when we were sick and cooled our fevered brow. They rushed us to emergency rooms. They have made great physical sacrifices for us.

2) Our mothers, also, have made great emotional sacrifices for us. When we hurt they hurt. Our disappointments are their disappointments. When children do wrong and hurt because of their wrong, their godly mothers hurt worse.

3) Our mothers have made great financial sacrifices for us. They supported us when we were home and still helped after we left until we got feet on the ground.

B. My mother protected me spiritually.

Paul commends the saving faith that was in Timothy but also says that saving faith was first in his mother Lois. Paul adds that the way Timothy's mother influenced him to have saving faith in Christ was through exposing him to the Word (2 Timothy 3).

1. In chapter 3, Paul is describing the dangerous last days in which you and I are living (3:1-13). Paul lists 19 characteristics of the spiritually dangerous last days in which we live for God.

2. The remedy for living in the spiritually dangerous last days is the Word of God. Timothy's mom exposed Timothy to the Word from his childhood (3:14-17).

My Mom exposed me to the Word of God when I was growing up. When I was younger I did not appreciate it. I even resented it at times. I had to go to Sunday school, youth meetings, and all of the services. On top of all that, she persisted in reading God's Word to us boys at night. I will never forget her reading the story of Oliver B. Greene's conversion. All that exposure prepared me for my conversion.

C. Timothy's grandmother and mother prepared him for the gospel that Paul would preach to him.

In Acts 14, Paul on his first missionary journey went to a small town called Lystra where Timothy lived and most likely was very bored as a teenager. There were not the required ten Jewish families to establish a synagogue. Paul healed a man who had been unable to walk since birth. That miracle must have gotten the attention of the entire town including Timothy. Then later the fickle crowd dragged Paul outside of town, stoned him and left him for dead. Timothy saw Paul get back up and go back into town and fearlessly preach the gospel again to his would be murders. This is most likely when Timothy got saved and became Paul's son in the faith. Two chapters and five years later Paul goes back to Lystra in Acts 16 on his second missionary journey. Timothy has grown so much that Paul added him to their missionary team.

Timothy got saved, later joined a missionary team, and even later pastored churches having come from a less than ideal home less. His dad was most likely unsaved according to Acts 16:1-3. The unsaved dad would not allow his son to be circumcised. Our backgrounds do not have to hinder us from being saved or serving the Lord with all of our hearts. When we stand before God, we will not give an account of our less than perfect parents but of personal responsibility to God.

Because Mom exposed me to the Word, when my pastor preached, God used His Word in my life. And then when we had revival services with evangelist Bill Stafford, I got saved. Most of the credit should go to Mom who faithfully exposed me to God's Word. She planted the seed of God's Word, others watered but God gave the increase.

Isaiah 66:13 says that God created mothers like himself: "As one whom his mother comforts, so will I comfort you."

1. Just like God our mothers gave us life. Our mothers gave us physical life; God gave us spiritual life when we trusted Christ as our Savior.
2. Just like God our mothers love us. Our mothers loved when we were unlovable and unlovely. When we were disobedient and disrespectful. God loved us unconditionally when we were His enemy.
3. Just like God our mothers sacrificed for us. Our mothers have made physical, emotional and financial sacrifices for us. God has made the ultimate sacrifice for us when He sacrificed His sinless Son for us on the cross. When He made him sin who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God.
4. Just like God our mothers deserve our praise. Today we praise God for our mothers who have been used by God to bring us to Him self.