

Today is a day our nation has set aside to honor our mother's; we call it Mother's Day. We as Christian are commanded to honor our fathers and mother's and this should be true every day and not just once a year. However, today it's good to give special honor and care toward our mothers and grandmothers. In light of today, I think it fitting to consider a mother in the Bible in hopes that it might help us to appreciate what a godly mother should be. Today we will consider Mary the mother of Jesus. I want to begin with some historical and/or traditions about Mary and then look at what we know about her from scripture.

What was she like as a person? While we are not told anything about her physical appearance in scripture, we can draw a few conclusions from the custom of the day. We know that Mary was a Jewish girl that lived in Nazareth. According to research and DNA testing, the closest descendants of the Jews from that area are modern-day people of Lebanon and Iraq. This tells us that she most probably had brown or olive skin, as well as dark hair and eyes. We also know that at that time people were generally shorter than the average human height today. This means that Mary was likely around five-feet in height.

It is commonly accepted that Mary was an early teenager when she conceived and gave birth to Jesus, her first born of several. While we are not told her exact age, she was old enough to be engaged (or espoused) to a man named Joseph. Engagements during that time was generally between the ages of twelve and fifteen. The age given to her when Jesus was born was around fourteen or fifteen.

She accepted the fact that she will conceive the Savior of mankind miraculously. When she heard the news, she was probably very confused and even scared. *Luke 1:28-29 And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. (29) And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.* She did not know how God could make her conceive if she was a virgin. *Luke 1:34 Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?* Don't you know that Mary was unsure of her abilities?

After the birth of Jesus, Mary was probably like most mothers' who prepared meals for Jesus and his siblings. Mary had other children after Jesus. Matthew 13:55 tells us that there were four other boys and at least two or more

girls. She probably tended to the wounds and scrapes; removed splinters from working in the wood shop, and a peace maker. Mary was like any parent who wanted the best for her child(ren) Now Jesus was an ordinary boy growing up in an ordinary family.

Now let's consider the character of Mary. Mary is somebody that we can really learn from because of the many good qualities and characteristics she exhibited.

FIRST she was completely committed to God. While not grasping all that the angel told her regarding the miraculous birth of Jesus, she was committed to obeying God. *Luke 1:38 And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word.* She had tremendous faith and trust. Culturally, she would have been around 13 to 14 years old when archangel Gabriel came and told her that she would be the one to give birth to the Son of the Highest, to which she answered: *“Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” (Luke 1:38 ESV)* Only a person of great faith could trust God so much to say that.

Secondly, she was brave, even to the point that she accepted God's will when it seemed completely contrary to everything around her. She accepted the fact that she would conceive the Savior of mankind miraculously.

When she heard the news, she was probably very confused and even scared. She did not know how God could make her conceive if she was a virgin. She knew that people would notice that she was pregnant and would ask her questions. There were likely rumors floating around that she was expecting a baby outside of marriage. It may be that her character was in question. She knew that she would probably have to explain what had happened to Joseph, her soon-to-be husband. But she was courageous enough to say yes anyway. *“Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” (Luke 1:38 ESV)*

Thirdly, she was committed to God's will. She knew the Scripture and the Law of Moses and after the birth of Jesus she knew what the law taught about purification and committing the child to the Lord. So we have these events recorded for us in Luke 2, One of the biggest lessons that we can learn from

Mary's story, is that God took an ordinary girl from the city of Nazareth and called her to do an extraordinary thing.

The same is true for us. God takes us, ordinary people, and invites us to become extraordinary by doing extraordinary things. Sometimes there are things that we may not have wished on ourselves, but, by doing them and going through changes, we become better.

A godly mother submits completely to God's will. She does not have to be perfect, but submissive. Despite the fact that she was the mother of Jesus, Mary wasn't perfect! When Jesus performed his first miracle of the water-turned-into-wine, Mary's conversation is the most unusual. *John 2:3-4 And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. (4) Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.* Jesus said to Mary, "Woman, why do you involve me?" It's not my time! Mary's request and conversation with Jesus appears to be out of line with what Jesus was ready to do. Though Jesus performed the miracle, there's a feeling that he did so in part because his mother put him on the spot.

On another occasion, Jesus was talking to the crowd, his mother and brothers stood outside, wanting to speak to him. *Matthew 12:46-48 While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him. (47) Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. (48) But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?* Mary was out of place trying to tamper the task of Jesus. Maybe she was influenced by the unbelieving brothers of Jesus but regardless, it was a mistake trying to interrupt the ministry of Jesus, even for a little while.

Mothers made mistakes. Sometimes those mistakes are not noticed until years later and you look back and realize that you should have done things differently. But through it all, be like Mary and keep your commitment to the Lord.

A GODLY MOTHER MAINTAINS MOTHERLY LOVE. After the birth of Jesus, Mary and Joseph were visited by the shepherds. They shared what they told where to find the birth of a savior which was Christ the Lord (Luke 2:11). *Luke 2:19 But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.* Up until this time Mary didn't know that Jesus was going to be the Savior, the Christ, and the Messiah. The angel simply said that she was to have a son; his name would

be Jesus, and that he shall be called the Son of the Highest. From that time forward she pondered them in her heart. She mediated on spiritual matters.

A few days after the birth of Jesus, Mary had a conversation with man named Simeon. Simeon took baby Jesus in his arms and told Mary and Joseph that Jesus was to be the Christ and would bring salvation to the people. This reinforces what the shepherds had said. **(33) *And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him. (34) And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; (35) (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.*** Simeon ended his conversation by foretelling that Mary's soul would be pierced.

Mary loved Jesus enough to instill spiritual values in his young heart. While in Luke 2 we see that age twelve Jesus traveled to Jerusalem during the feast of the Passover. This was lengthy in both travel and time for Joseph and Mary, but Jesus was seeing a good example of godly commitment and devotion. Mothers and fathers should set a good example before their children regarding warship and commitment. A question that should never be heard in your household is, "*Are we going to church today?*"

As Jesus grew and started his ministry, we learn that he continued to worship. **(35) *(Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.*** The expression "as his custom was" implies this was a regular thing that he did. Where did he receive this value? Let me suggest, at least in part, from a loving, godly mother.

Nazareth was a small town. There was talk and criticism about Jesus. This had to make its way back to the ears of Mary. ***Luke 4:28-30 And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, (29) And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong. (30) But he passing through the midst of them went his way.*** Hearing the insults of the community people where she lived about Jesus, her first born child, had to have been miserable for Mary. She likely heard much of the same within her the closed doors of her home by the other unbelieving children. I expect Mary wished she could move to another place where she was unknown. Her soul was certainly being pierced as Simeon had foretold. But her love as a mother never diminished.

You see, Godly mothers love their children through the good times and the bad.

Then there was the crucifixion. Mary was there seeing the pain inflicted on her boy and not able to do anything about it. He heard the insults hurled, she saw the sport in gambling for the garments of Jesus. She heard the screaming of pain as the nails were hammered through the hands and feet of Jesus. Her soul too was being pierced. Emotionally she was hurting also. Oh the love of a mother. *John 19:25-28 Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. (26) When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! (27) Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.*

The cross cut deeply into Mary's heart. Despite the pain, however, Mary was there. She was a mother from the beginning, and a mother at the end. A mother called by God never relinquishes their love.

You'll find mothers like that in the halls of children's hospitals, in funeral homes and in the counselors' offices. Mothers never relinquish the love, even if the child is rebellious, harsh, or cruel. Her heart just will not allow it. Not when she is called by God. There is nothing like a mother's love.

Mary had a chance to see God's entire plan played out. She suffered through the crucifixion, celebrated the resurrection, and even was part of the small group that witnessed the powerful presentation of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 1:14)

What a gift from God, to live long enough for parenting to make sense! Some parents live long enough to see God's plan for their children. Some see God working in the lives of their grandchildren. Some only see God's plan from the halls of heaven.

Children were once discussing where babies came from. One of the young experts announced: "Storks don't bring babies. They come by UPS." Some of the other children had different ideas, but one child said it best: "Babies, are connected to their mothers by a biblical cord." And that true of a godly mother. These certainly is, or should be, a biblical link between that mother and her child(ren).