

A Mother's Work Is Never Done

Titus 2:3-5 (NIV1984)

“3 Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. 4 Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, 5 to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.”

I don't know what it is about people, but we're always looking for the time in our lives when things are going to get easier. The same is true with mothers. **First, you think**, if I ever get through with this pregnancy, it'll be a lot easier. Then come night feedings and colic and croup. **Then you think**, “Well, when the baby can walk and gets potty trained, things will be easier.” **Yeah, right. It'll be easier when they can start fending for themselves a little bit and learn to do some things on their own.**

Maybe it'll be easier when they get their license and can haul themselves around. Maybe when they go off to college things will be easier. What about when they are married with kids of their own. Surely then it will be easier. Any of us who have gone through those cycles know that it never gets any easier. **The fact is that a mother's work is never really done.**

The passage that we just read is taken from a letter that Paul wrote to a young church planter in Crete by the name of Titus.

The letter is full of instructions about how he should go about planting churches throughout that island. Paul doesn't go into a whole lot of specific detail about church life and Christian living like he does in his other letters. What he does is focus on two things.

First, he focuses Titus on the importance of right doctrine. In other words, he makes sure that Titus doesn't get sidetracked as to the centrality and sufficiency of Scripture in the church. That's the foundation. But how does the truth of Scripture get taught? **That's the second main focus of this letter.**

Paul talks about the importance of Titus selecting the right kind of pastors and elders and how they are to stand firm on the Word of God. That makes sense. Even today, when we plant churches, **we tend to concentrate on the pastor and church leadership.**

But what we don't tend to focus on is the next point of emphasis in this letter. **Paul moves straight from talking about pastors and elders to talking about women in the church.** And in the passage that we just read, he tells Titus that women have a very important role in the church.

As a matter of fact, you can look at it like this: the most important thing that Paul told Titus to focus on in the church is the faithful teaching of Scripture. And then he told him that three groups of people are responsible for doing that faithful teaching.

Pastors, elders, and the older women.

Does that surprise you? It shouldn't. **You've heard the old saying that the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world, right?** Although as men, we are called to be the spiritual head of our household, we know that nothing will ever surpass a mother's teaching to her children.

From the time she first sings to her children in the womb, a mother is teaching them. **But then the children grow up.** They get to the age when they won't listen to anyone. **Does the teaching stop then?**

What about when they move out and get married and have kids of their own. **Does the teaching stop then?** No, the fact is that a mother's work is never done.

Now the approach is certainly different. The relationship is certainly different. But the teaching is the same. **How is the teaching done? In your behavior.**

The word translated "to be reverent in the way they live" or as it states in the KJV "as becometh holiness" is an interesting one. It's a compound word. He combined the word for "temple" and the word for "appropriate".

In other words, Paul was saying that a woman's behavior was to be the kind of behavior expected of priests in the temple. **Clean, upright, godly, pure.** And out of that behavior, they would teach younger women.

Now, I'm smart enough not to ask for a show of hands who would consider themselves to be the older women here. But the fact is, that every adult woman here is more mature than somebody. And every woman in here has another more mature lady that you can look to as an example.

Ladies, can you teach younger women what the Bible says about having self-control? Can you teach the younger women about being faithful to their husbands and building them up and encouraging them? Can you teach them what the Bible says about how to deal with their children? Can you teach them?

Now, notice that I didn't say that you have to teach them **by the perfect example you've set.** **You teach them by what the Bible says.** That can include your successes with the biblical standard and it can include your failures with living out the biblical standard. **You see, even when your children are grown and gone, as a mother, your work is never done. Your experience and wisdom is to be used to teach others.**

I can think of few positions in life that have worse consequences if they aren't done.

When you hear stories of what happens to children who are abandoned by their mothers, it affects them for a lifetime. It can even have an effect for generations.

The same thing happens if mothers abandon their teaching role in the church.

The words that Paul uses in verse 5 are shocking. He says that older women are to teach the younger women why? "So that no one will malign the word of God."

The consequences are very serious. As a matter of fact, the consequences are eternally serious. **But the problem is not always with the ones who are supposed to be doing the teaching, is it?**

Many times older ladies are setting the example. Many times they are willing to teach and mentor. **But a teacher has to have a willing student.**

Ladies, do you seek out someone who is older and wiser than you? Do you humble yourself under the teaching of another godly woman? Paul tells you what kind of older lady to look for. If she doesn't have self-control, you don't need to take her advice. If she can't control her tongue, you don't need to take her instruction. If she wants to talk it over with you at the bar, you don't need to take her up on it. Moms, seek out the right woman. Seek out a woman whose behavior is "reverent in the way they live."

Seek her out and grow in Christ with her. And you know what? We're all going to do that this morning. This morning, I'm going to place before us an "aged woman who is in behavior was "reverent in the way they live."

The rest of this sermon is going to be an illustration of that kind of woman. An example of the kind of mother whose work was never done and it still isn't today. Because as we look at her example this morning, she will still be doing what Paul commanded to Titus. She will still be teaching women younger than she is "to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God will not be maligned" **I am safe in saying that she will be teaching younger women here today, because she was born in the year 331.**

You may have never heard of Augustine of Hippo before today. Some people call him St. Augustine. I just call him Augustine. Augustine is widely regarded as one of the most influential Christians of all time. Outside of the Apostles, he has probably had more impact on Christianity than anyone else.

From the age of 32 until he died at the age of 75, he wrote over 5 million words. That measures up to a 350 word essay every day of his life for 43 years—by hand.

He was undoubtedly one of the most brilliantly gifted, godly men in all of history. But it wasn't always that way. He was naturally brilliant. But he was a terrible person growing up.

Augustine was born in 354 to a man named Patricius and a woman named Monica. Monica had been raised in a Christian home. Apparently she took her faith more seriously than her parents did, because they arranged for her to marry Patricius who was a pagan. Not only was he a pagan, he was a kind of a dirtbag.

He didn't physically abuse her, but he was known for flying into fits of rage. He also cheated on her every opportunity he got. A few years after they were married, she gave birth to Augustine. **Like many women who find themselves in that kind of awful situation, she invested all of her hopes and dreams in her baby boy.**

But as he grew into adolescence, he broke her heart. He broke her heart by stealing. He broke her heart by lying. But he broke her heart most of all by his lust. He was a skirt chaser. But not only was he a skirt chaser, he caught a lot of them too. It broke Monica's heart. She wanted nothing more for her son than that he would be saved. But instead, he was growing up to be just like his father. She could have pitched a fit. She could have become violent with her husband and son. She could have yelled at them and cursed them and nagged them. But she didn't. She was "reverent in the way she lived." She was sober. **She loved her husband—even though he didn't deserve it. She loved her son—even though he rejected her and broke her heart.**

This is how Augustine remembered it in one of his books:

"Woe is me! Do I dare affirm that thou didst hold thy peace, O my God, while I wandered farther away from thee? Didst thou really then hold thy peace? Then whose words were they but thine which by my mother, thy faithful handmaid, thou didst pour into my ears? None of them, however, sank into my heart to make me do anything. She deplored and, as I remember, warned me privately with great solicitude, 'not to commit fornication; but above all things never to defile another man's wife.' These appeared to me but womanish counsels, which I would have blushed to obey. Yet they were from thee, and I knew it not. I thought that thou wast silent and that it was only she who spoke. Yet it was through her that thou didst not keep silence toward me; and in rejecting her counsel I was rejecting thee."

Augustine later recognized that God was speaking to him through the teaching of Monica, his mother. But even as God spoke to him through her, he continued to turn away and break her heart. **Nothing breaks a mother's heart like a rebellious child.** Learn from the aged woman today. Keep on teaching. Keep on loving. Don't give up. Fight through the broken heart and keep on in behavior that is reverent."

It is important to realize that Monica didn't enter the battle for her son alone. You think about her situation. **It was only a few years before Monica was born that Christianity was even legal to be practiced.** Paganism was widely practiced throughout the Roman Empire. **Women didn't have much of a voice in the home, much less society.** Her husband was a pagan. He had a violent temper. Her son ignored her. The whole deck was stacked against her. Everything around her told her that the things that her son was doing was "only natural." Boys will be boys." "He's only sowing his wild oats." "Everybody's doing it." **But she didn't care if everybody was doing it or not. She knew that Augustine was lost and she wasn't going to let him go to hell without a fight.**

But what weapons could she fight with? She fought with the most effective weapon she had. Which is also the most effective weapon any of us have. She prayed for her son. Here's what Augustine wrote about his mother's prayers:

"And now thou didst "stretch forth thy hand from above" (Ps. 144:7) and didst draw up my soul out of that profound darkness because my mother, thy faithful one, wept to thee on my behalf more than mothers are accustomed to weep for the bodily deaths of their children. For by the light of the faith and spirit which she received from thee, she saw that I was dead. And thou didst hear her, O Lord, thou didst hear her and despised not her tears when, pouring down, they watered the earth under her eyes in every place where she prayed. Thou didst truly hear her."

Learn from this aged woman. Keep on praying. Keep on fighting for your children and your husbands and your family on your knees. Don't give up. Keep on in behavior "That is reverent."

It didn't happen overnight. **As a matter of fact, it took 32 years for the Lord to answer her prayer before Augustine was saved.** 32 years of heartbreak. 32 years of worry and doubt. 32 years of faithfulness and longsuffering. She chased him all over the country. She sent him off to live with a preacher. The preacher sent him home. One time she tried to force the situation by running off one of Augustine's long-time live-in lovers. Monica ran her off and even arranged a marriage to a respectable Christian woman. All Augustine did was go out and get himself another live-in—plus some girls on the side. All that did was give him an excuse to not have to be responsible for the child he fathered with the first woman. But through all that, **Monica faithfully prayed. She faithfully prayed and she patiently waited.** Faithfulness, Longsuffering and after 32 years her prayers were answered. Listen to how Augustine remembered her words:

Then my mother said: "Son, for myself I have no longer any pleasure in anything in this life. Now that my hopes in this world are satisfied, I do not know what more I want here or why I am here. There was indeed one thing for which I wished to tarry a little in this life, and that was that I might see you a Christian before I died. My God hath

answered this more than abundantly, so that I see you now made his servant and spurning all earthly happiness. What more am I to do here?"

Moms, how long have you been praying for your children? How long have you been waiting for the Lord to answer? **Don't give up.** Learn from this aged woman. Learn from her faithfulness. Learn from her longsuffering. The Lord heard her prayers and He answered her prayers. He'll hear yours too and He will answer.

All of those years, Monica prayed for Augustine. The Lord answered her prayer and because of her patient, peaceful, loving testimony, He gave her so much more. Just a few years before he died, the Lord used Monica's faithful and obedient quiet witness to change the heart of her husband. Jesus changed him from an abusive, hateful man to a child of God. On top of that, her legacy lives on as she continues to teach the younger women.

Augustine prayed about that legacy. After she died, he wrote:

"Therefore, let her rest in peace with her husband, before and after whom she was married to no other man; whom she obeyed with patience, bringing fruit to thee that she might also win him for thee. And inspire, O my Lord my God, inspire thy servants, my brothers; thy sons, my masters, who with voice and heart and writings I serve, that as many of them as shall read these confessions may also at thy altar remember Monica, thy handmaid, together with Patricius, once her husband; by whose flesh thou didst bring me into this life, in a manner I know not."

You see, a mother's work is truly never done. It continues through a mother's heartache, to a mother's prayer, to a mother's joy. And it ends with a mother's memory. Where are you this morning? Are you teaching others with your godly example? Are you seeking others who will teach you how to live biblically? Do you have children that you need to pray for? Do you have a husband that you need to pray for? Maybe you're the one that needs Christ in your life? Because without Christ in your own life, you have no way to deal with the heartaches when they come. If you do, then today can be your day of salvation.

Men, I've been talking mostly to the women, **but I hope you've been listening.** You might be sitting here this morning like Augustine or Patricius. You might not be as bold in your rebellion and abusiveness as they were, **but you know that your wife or mother is praying for your soul.**

Today is the day to allow the Lord to answer her prayer.

Today is the day to make the angels in heaven and the angels in our homes rejoice.

Will you be saved today? Will you rededicate your life to God?