

Proverbs 31:25-30

*Strength and dignity are her clothing,
and she laughs at the time to come.*

*She opens her mouth with wisdom,
and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.*

*She looks well to the ways of her household,
and does not eat the bread of idleness.*

*Her children rise up and call her blessed;
her husband also, and he praises her:*

*"Many women have done excellently,
but you surpass them all."*

*Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain,
but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.*

Exodus 20:12 reads, “*Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the LORD your God gives you.*” Moses received this commandment directly from God. What does it mean to honor your father and mother? In the original language the word “honor” literally means “to make heavy.” In other words, we are not to take our parents lightly. God calls us to actively give them respect and reverence. We should not, even though we often do, take our parents for granted.

This commandment is tough for us because we live in an age which preaches disrespect. Youth is glorified and old age is seen as something to avoid at all costs. On television and in the movies children and young people are most often portrayed as the witty heroes. Parents, on the other hand tend to be seen as pathetic, overbearing simpletons. Anybody remember Archie Bunker and his wife Edith from All in the Family, or Al Bundy and wife Peggy from Married with Children? Would anyone respect these individuals?

The older generations are most often viewed as senile and should be avoided at all costs if you want to have a good time. In this case it seems that the media is reflecting the attitude of the culture, an attitude of disrespect towards parents and/or grandparents.

Why should we insist on respect? The honor you give is the honor you receive. How can anyone find it difficult to love and respect the woman who gave life to you? The one that loved you while you were still in her womb. The one who was able to kiss away the most painful of pains. The one who with a mere loving look brought relief of most of our aches and pains. The one that would see to you ahead of herself.

But a minute not all women who give birth are loving mothers. This is true; and remember it takes more than just giving birth to be a mother. More to the point, it takes more than childbirth to be a mommy. There are many women who have never given birth but are referred by many as mama. Mrs. Nolan mother of 6 and not my birth mother, but I still refer to her as Mama Nolan. She would make potato chip dip for me, has made tollhouse cookies for me even as an adult, and even chastised me when I did wrong, and I thank her for all she

ever did for me. She did what any mother would and yet was not my birth mother. And I could name a few others in my life that I see as a mama.

Mother's are indeed a special creation of God, a four and six-year-old presented their mom with a house plant on Mother's Day morning. They had used their own money to purchase the plant and their mom was thrilled. The older of child said with a sad face, "There was a real big bouquet that we wanted to give you at the flower shop. It was real pretty, but it was too expensive. It had a big ribbon and bow and a sign on it that said, 'Rest In Peace', and we thought it would be just perfect since you are always asking for a little peace so that you can rest."

On this day that we set to honor mothers, it's good for us to think about how much we are blessed by them. Being a mother is not a walk in the park. By the time a child reaches 18, a mother has had to handle some extra 18,000 hours of child-generated work. Moses mother was the strongest human influence in the life of Moses. He was able to fulfill his call because he had a mother that didn't give up on him. She turned him over to God and God rewarded her for her faithfulness with

the opportunity to raise him up in the way he should go. Susannah Wesley set time aside each day just for prayer for her 17 children.

In addition, she took each child aside for a full hour every week to instruct and discuss spiritual matters. No wonder two of her sons, Charles and John, were used of God to bring blessing to all of England and America.

A young father was trying to explain the concept of marriage to his 5-year-old daughter. He got out their wedding album, thinking visual images would help, and explained the entire wedding service to her. When he was finished, he asked if she had any questions. She pointed to a picture of the entire wedding party and asked, “Daddy, is that when mommy came to work for us? This little illustration may seem funny but all too often mothers are viewed as someone whose sole purpose is to wait on us hand and foot. What debts to our mothers have we incurred in our life? Do we even realize what or how much we owe this woman? Preacher, I don’t owe my mother, she does things for me because she’s my mother. Mothers are supposed to do things for their children.

While paying bills the other day, it occurred to me that we go through practically our entire adult life owing someone for something. House payments, car payments, lights, phone, doctors, you know what I'm talking about. The other day I came across a whole bunch of I.O.U's, some of which are fifty-six years overdue. And you know the odd thing; all these I.O.U's are owed to one person. Mama, I sure hope you're listening.

Mama, I.O.U. for so many things; a lot of different services you provided for me, like night watchman for instance, you were always lying awake nights, listening for my coughs and cries, and I especially remember being home from college and you sitting up waiting on me until I came in safe. You always had the eye of an eagle and the roar of a lion, but your heart was always as big as a house.

I.O.U. for services like, short order cook, chef, baker; you always had a way of making sirloin out of hamburger, turkey out of tuna fish, roast pork out of canned meat, and big ol' strapping' boys out of leftovers. I.O.U. for cleaning services. For all the daily scrubbing of face and ears all work done by hand. And for the frequent dusting of a small boy's pants to try to make sure that he led a spotless life. And for

the kind of washing and ironing that no laundry could ever do. For drying the tears of childhood and for ironing out the problems of growing up.

I.O.U. for services as a bodyguard, for protection from the terrors of thunderstorms and nightmares, and for the bully who picked on me down the street.

And Lord knows, I.O.U. for medical attention, for nursing me through chicken pox, measles, the mump, untold bruises, 5 concussions, 3 broken bones, splinters and spring fever. Oh, and let's not forget your medical advice, important things like,

“If you keep on scratching that, it'll never get well” or

“If you keep crossing your eyes, they're going to stick like that.”

And probably the most important advice of all, “Boy, make sure you got on clean underwear, in case you're in an accident.”

And I.O.U. for loyal support services, for supporting me regardless of whether I was playing a rock in the school play, playing baseball, football, ice hockey, and wrestling; even though you never understood more than if I were on the bottom that was bad, and if I was on the top that was good about the sport. You supported me throughout

my college years even though you could not be there, but you were always there with your prayers.

And I.O.U. for the entertainment that kept our household going through some pretty rough times. For your wonderful productions at Christmas, the Fourth of July, Birthdays, Picnics, and for making make-believe come true and you did it all on such a limited budget.

I.O.U. for construction work, for building boats, forts, go-carts, as well as confidence, hopes and dreams and somehow, somehow you made them all touch the sky. And I.O.U. for cementing together a family so it would stand the worst kind of shocks and blows. And for laying down a good strong foundation for each of us to build our lives on.

I.O.U. for carrying charges, for carrying me on your books for the necessities of life that a growing boy has to have, like when I just had to have those pair of PF Flyers, which we all knew helped any boy run faster and jump higher than everyone else and you provided them even when we could not afford them. And one thing, Mom, I'll never ever forget is when there were three pieces of cake and four hungry

people you were always the one who decided, well, you were not really that hungry anyway.

These are just a few of the things for which payment is long overdue. The person these I.O.U's are owed to worked very, very cheap. She managed to do what she did simply by doing without a whole lot of things that she needed herself. My I.O.U's add up to more than I could ever hope to repay, but you know the nicest thing about it all? I know that she would mark the entire bill 'Paid In Full' for just one kiss and four simple words, "Mom, I Love You!" Is your Mom living? Is she with you? Then right now turn to her and tell her don't put it off. If she lives someplace else do not hesitate to call her following this service. Let your mother know each and every day what she means to you.

This mornings Scripture says, "*Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her,*" do you call your mother blessed? Does she feel blessed? Husbands does your wife feel blessed? Dads the greatest gift you can give your children in this life is to love their mother, and let them see that love in action. Remember,

everyone here has a mother, and we are to honor them, husbands you are to love them and cherish them, but when they're gone it will be too late.

This should not be a once a year vigil, we should honor her all year long 365 days 24/7. Call upon God's Spirit to show you how. Respect, honor, and most of all cherish your mother. Mothers are blessings from God why not make them feel that way. I Love You Mom. Happy Mother's Day!