

A MOTHER'S LOVE

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **Isaiah 49:13-16**. From Roy H. Enoch (05-14-1995).
- B. When God wanted to illustrate how great His love was for Israel, He likened it to the love of a mother for her child.
 - 1. Nothing is more natural than for a human mother to love and cherish her child, and to care for and protect it.
 - 2. Nothing could be more unnatural for a woman to have her child killed by abortion. It is not human. It is not motherly.
 - 3. God wanted the best for His people, therefore He forbid them to worship idols and to do as they pleased.
 - 4. He was deeply hurt when His children did not do what they should.
 - a. Children have the capacity to bring the greatest joy or the greatest sorrow to parents.
 - b. We have joy or sorrow in proportion to how much we love.
 - c. For this reason, some cannot really love because they are afraid of being hurt.
 - d. Love requires us to commit ourselves, to be open and to be vulnerable: Real, human, mothers are like that.
- C. In this lesson we want to study some characteristics of that genuine love that God has for His children and a mother has for her children.
 - 1. Genuine love will discipline and correct in a consistent and loving way.
 - 2. Genuine love will give of self, and focus on others' needs.
 - 3. Genuine love will grow, and become less selfish over time.

I. GENUINE LOVE WILL DISCIPLINE AND CORRECT, IN A CONSISTENT AND LOVING WAY.

- A. As one mother explained her love to her children:

- I loved you enough to bug you about where you were going, with whom, and what time you would get home.
- I loved you enough to be silent and let you discover that your hand-picked friend was a creep.
- I loved you enough to make you return a Milky Way with a bite out of it to a drugstore, and confess, "I stole this."
- I loved you enough to stand over you for two hours while you cleaned your bedroom, a job that would have taken me 15 minutes.
- I loved you enough to not make excuses for your lack of respect or your bad manners.
- I loved you enough to ignore "what every other mother did."
- I loved you enough to let you stumble, fall and fail so that you could learn to stand alone.
- I loved you enough to accept you for what you are, not for what I wanted you to be.
- But most of all, I loved you enough to say no when you hated me for it. That was the hardest part of all.

--Selected

- B. God's love is like that.

- 1. He loves enough to teach and correct (Heb. 12:5-6).
- 2. Jeremiah had prophesied that all in the Kingdom of X world be taught of God (Jer. 31:31-34).
- 3. Jesus says that we are drawn by the Father by teaching (Jn. 6:44-45).

II. GENUINE LOVE WILL GIVE OF SELF AND FOCUS ON OTHERS' NEEDS.

- A. 1Cor. 13 describes the sacrificial nature of true love, and Mrs. Mervin Seashore paraphrases this love for mothers.

"Though I speak with the language of the educators and the psychiatrists and have not love, I am

become a blaring brass or a crashing cymbal.

"And if I have the gift of planning my child's future and understanding all the mysteries of the child's mind and have ample knowledge of teenagers, and though I have all faith in my children, so that I could remove their mountains of doubts and fears and have not love, I am nothing.

"And though I bestow all my goods to feed and nourish them properly (vitamins and all), and though I give my body to backbreaking housework and have not love, it profits me nothing.

"Love is patient w/ the naughty child and is kind to him. Love does not envy when he wants to move to Grandma's house because "she is nice."

"Love is not anxious to impress a teenager w/ our superior knowledge.

"Love has good manners in the home...does not act selfishly or with a martyr complex, is not easily provoked by normal childish actions.

"Love does not remember the naughtiness of yesterday and love thinks no evil...it gives the child the benefit of the doubt.

"Love does not make light of sin in the child's life (or in her own, either), but rejoices when he comes to a knowledge of the truth.

"Love does not fail. Whether there be comfortable surroundings, they shall fail, whether there be total communication between parents and children, it will cease, whether there be a good education, it shall vanish away.

"When we were children, we spoke and acted and understood as children, but now that we have become parents, we must act maturely.

"Now abides faith, hope, love...these three are needed in the home. Faith in Jesus Christ, eternal hope for the future of the child, and God's love shed abroad in our hearts, but the greatest of these is love."

Mrs. Mervin Seashore, via Pulpit Helps.

B. This unselfish love for others must be learned.

1. Mothers and fathers must learn this, as a Xian must learn to love as the Father loves us.
2. Don Baker of Morristown, TN illustrates this need to learn love:

"Oh Mom, Do I Have to?"

"Have you ever heard or said this response in a groaning tone at the request of a parent to clean the room or wash the dishes? I am sure most parents have looked forward to the day when their children respond to the responsibilities of the home w/ a more pleasant attitude. It would be great for children to view their chores as an opportunity rather than an obligation. We all realize that kind of attitude only comes with time and maturity.

"I wonder how God must feel when so many Xians approach the responsibilities of their relationship to God with that same groaning, moaning attitude of a little child. It seems that we often give the impression that Xians really do not want to do what they are doing, but they feel obligated to do their part or to play the game. It must be a disappointment to God when Xians who should be mature are still in the "do I have to" stage.

"The apostle Paul and other NT writers expressed their relationship to God as SLAVES or BOND-SLAVES for God and Jesus Christ. Their attitude about their servanthood was not one of complaint, but an attitude of joy. They were thrilled to be a slave of the king, Jesus Christ. It was not an attitude of obligation, but of opportunity. Paul demonstrated that his lifestyle for X was not forced upon him but that it was the LOVE of God that constrained him. It was his glorious privilege to be able to live, work, witness, suffer and even die for Jesus. Why can not the church today adopt that same attitude about the Xian life?

"Are you a mature Xian like Paul, or are you still in the "do I have to" stage? [Do I have to study the Bible? Do I have to come on Sunday evening, and Wednesday evening? Do I have to come to Bible class and prepare a lesson?] Do you see your responsibilities as a Xian as obligation or an opportunity for you to show your love to Jesus? Do you look at living for X on a day-to-day basis as an obligation or as an opportunity? Do you view your stewardship of time, abilities, and money as an obligation or as an opportunity? When you pray, is it an obligation or an opportunity? I guess what I am saying is this: Do you want to live fully for Jesus more than anything else in the world, or is being a Xian just an obligation to you?"

3. Too many "children" do not grow up to become responsible adults, either of physical parents or our heavenly Father.

III. GENUINE LOVE WILL GROW UNSELFISH OVER TIME.

- A. It is natural for a child to be selfish.
 1. It is natural for a child to grow and mature, physically, socially and spiritually.
 2. It is natural for a child of God to grow in love and to imitate the kind of love that God shows for us in wanting what is best for us and wanting to forgive.
 3. Parents take the job of raising a family w/ little experience.
 4. They must be willing to learn and to give of themselves.
- B. One of the best examples we have on earth is of a loving mother. Temple Bailey wrote:
A LITTLE PARABLE FOR MOTHERS that is a good lesson for each of us.

"The young mother set her foot on the path of life. "Is the way Long?" she ask. And her Guide said: "Yes. And the way is hard. But the end will be better than the beginning." But the young mother was happy, and she would not believe that anything could be better than these years. So she played with her children, and gathered flowers for them along the way; and the sun shone on them, and life was good and the young mother cried, "Nothing will ever be lovelier than this."

Then night came, and storm, and the path was dark, and the children shook with fear and cold, and the mother drew them close and covered them with her mantle, and the children said, "Mother, we are not afraid, for you are near, and no harm can come," and the mother said, "This is better than the brightest of day, for I have taught my children courage."

And the morning came, and there was a hill ahead, and the children climbed and grew weary, and the mother was weary, but at all times she said to the children, "A little patience, and we are there." So the children climbed, and when they had reached the top, they said, "We could not have done it w/out you, Mother." And the mother, when she lay down that night, looked up at the stars, and said: "This is a better day than the last, for my children have learned fortitude in the face of hardness."

And the next day came strange clouds which darkened the earth--clouds of war and hate and evil, and the children groped and stumbled, and the mother said, "Look up. Lift your eyes to the Light." And the children looked and saw above the clouds an Everlasting Glory, and it guided them and brought them beyond the darkness. And that night the mother said, "This is the best day of all, for I have shown my children God."

And the days went on, and the weeks and the months and the years, and the mother grew old, and she was tired and weary. But her children were tall and strong, and walked w/ courage. And when the way was hard, they helped their mother; and when the way was rough, they lifted her and carried her; and at last they came to a hill, and beyond the hill they could see a shining road and golden gates flung wide.

And the mother said: I have reached the end of my journey. And now I know that the end is better than the beginning, for my children can walk alone, and their children after them." And the children said, "You will always walk with us, Mother, even when you have gone through the gates."

And they stood and watched her as she went on alone, and the gates closed after her. And they said, "We cannot see her, but she is with us still. A mother like ours is more than a memory. She is a living presence."

- C. Parents who have genuine love for their children and for God, will find that the end is better than the beginning.
 - 1. Peter said that the end of faith is better than the first (1Pet. 1:9).
 - 2. Paul said that to die was gain (Phil. 1:21-22).
- D. If we live for ourselves and do as we please, our children may do likewise. Then the end is bitter regret for not using our opportunities.

CONCLUSION.

- A. Isaiah describes how God uses a mother's love to illustrate His love.
- B. Both are unselfish and enduring.
- C. Both seek the welfare of others.
- D. Both are serving and giving.
- E. Let us learn this kind of love that we might have a live w/that kind of joy.