

Bulletin

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THE MARVELOUS MONTH OF MAY

THE POWER OF A MOTHER'S LOVE

BY JIM DALY

A STUDY OF WORLD WAR II BATTLEFIELD PROMOTIONS LED TO A surprising discovery. Researchers wanted to know why some men rose through the ranks and others didn't.

A lot of factors contributed to the men's success, of course, but there was one common denominator. It wasn't the man's IQ or physical strength. It wasn't even his courage in the face of danger. It was whether or not he had grown up experiencing unconditional love from his mother. Great male leaders, it turns out, are formed at their mother's knee.

I can attest to that. The worst experience of my childhood was when my mother died. I was only 9. It's been so long I don't remember the sound of her voice, but her love has remained a constant force in my life. Mom's love has carried me through some difficult times, filled me with a sensitivity for others and given me a foundation to stand for what's right.

Mom, if you fear that you don't have much to offer, remember this: A boy wants to wrestle with his father, but he wants you to cradle him in his arms. Masculine love is rugged. Feminine love is nurturing (Isaiah 66:13). A child needs both.

In its fullest expression, love doesn't weaken boys; it turns them into men with the strength to do what's right.

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WHAT SHE REALLY WANTS

A husband may often wonder what in the world to give his wife on Mother's Day. Here are some suggestions that may meet the desires of your wife's heart.

Surprise her with a spotless house.

If you struggle with tidiness, make every effort to clean up after yourself. Look out for tasks she would normally take care of. First John 3:18 says, "Let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth." If you complete a task that will bless your wife, she'll see a little more clearly how much you love her.

Encourage her with words of affirmation. In the busyness of keeping up with schedules, school-work and cleaning, your wife can lose sight of the truth of who she is. She'll most likely encounter days when she simply feels inadequate as a mom.

Proverbs 16:24 says, "Gracious words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the body." Your honest words of encouragement can refresh her more than you'd think and motivate her to become a better mother.

Be the spiritual leader of the home. Ephesians 6:4 urges fathers to "bring [children] up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." Many wives desire this for their husbands. Set aside times to pray as a family for your wife on Mother's Day and the days afterward.

Schedule a time each day to read Scripture with your family. Psalm 119:11 encourages believers to store God's Word in their hearts.

Plant her a summer garden. If your wife is fond of flowers, gather the children and take a trip to your local home improvement store to pick up some of her favorites. Plant a summer garden together while she relaxes on Mother's Day.

If you don't have the land, consider purchasing some of her favorite flowers or small plants for the windowsills of your home.

Spend quality time together. Life with children can drain opportunities to spend time as a couple. Call a babysitter and go on an adventure together with some of her favorite activities.

Whatever your plan, make sure your wife has no major tasks or responsibilities that deplete her time and energy on Mother's Day. Let her breathe, relax and soak in her day.

—Heather Drabinsky



HELP KIDS PLAN A GREAT MOTHER'S DAY

Our long-term goal should be to have our kids take over the responsibility of celebrating Mother's Day, so we need to teach them the uplifting power of words and actions. With a little effort, we can inspire our kids to make truly *meaningful* Mother's Day gifts.

A few heartfelt words can let Mom know she's valued. Borrow her phone and record a video of the kids saying a few nice things about Mom. When the kids see the power their words have to communicate love, they may even say those words more often without being reminded.

Everyone loves finding notes of encouragement in unexpected places. Help the kids create Mother's Day notes for Mom's coffee mug. Add labels of appreciation to the milk jug or her toothpaste tube.

A coupon book is a great way to get the kids involved in a Mother's Day gift. Encourage each kid to design a few coupons that Mom can cash in anytime. Think about ways to serve Mom or spend time with her doing something that she enjoys.

—Jared Hottenstein



MODELING RESPECT

Since the Bible goes out of its way to honor mothers, it's incumbent on fathers to help our kids "get it." When we're with our kids and our wife says something, we need to create a climate of respect.

"Kids, when your mom has something to say, you need to give her your attention."

If the kids don't immediately look up from their television program or video game when their mom speaks, they should lose the right to finish whatever they are unbiblically valuing above their mom's words. It won't take long for them to learn the lesson of active respect.

Here's the most challenging part for men: Our kids will look to us first. If we ignore our wife when she speaks, our kids will ignore their mom. She's the same person, after all, and we can't cultivate respect for a person by modeling disrespect. We must create an attitude of reverence for the most important woman in our home.

—Gary Thomas

FAMILY MATTERS

Answers to your questions...

Why is family prayer so important?

ANSWER:

Prayer for family is foundational to spiritual growth. Prayer is a very personal form of communication between us and God, our Creator. But it's also meant to be shared with others! The Bible tells us: "Therefore, confess your sins to *one another* and pray for *one another*, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working" (James 5:16, emphasis added).

Prayer is an essential skill, and your kids will learn it from you as you do it together. Nothing will communicate the *why* and the *how* of effective prayer to your kids like seeing

you pray.

Prayer strengthens relationships. Prayer means spending time with God, speaking to Him, and—just as necessary—listening to Him. The more time you spend with God, the more your relationship with Him will grow.

By praying with your family, you are building relationships with them as well. Maybe you're praying with them about something they're worried about or are joining them in praise for good news. Whatever the case may be, you are spending time with them, having shared experiences and supporting them.

Some kids may be afraid to share their struggles because they don't want to disappoint you. Effective prayer provides an oppor-

tunity to open up to each other in an environment of love and support rather than judgment. By doing this, you become more than just an overseer for your child—you're their advocate. And that can make a world of difference.

Prayer fosters communication and spiritual awareness. Here are some things you may see as a result of consistent, effective prayer with and for your family:

- Improved trust and openness to share struggles, fears and more.

- Family spiritual growth and opportunities for your kids to connect with their faith.

- A greater chance that your kids will approach situations from a spiritual perspective.

—Bret Eckelberry

TOUGH QUESTIONS FROM KIDS

ANSWER:

God likes us to pray together because it is one of the ways we can help and support one another. The Bible calls Christians a "body." This means that we work best when we work together, like the different parts of a body. When believers pray together, we strengthen and encourage each other. Also we can share prayer requests and pray for each other. It is powerful.

For more information on any of the topics in this bulletin, go to FocusOnTheFamily.com or call 800-A-FAMILY (232-6459). To reach Customer Service regarding your subscription, please call 1-800-692-9912. To check out more ministry resources, please visit us at www.tyndaleperiodicals.com.

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