



Mother's Day
Her lessons, My Gifts
Pastor Ted Cunningham

Mother's Day is always a special time here. Today, we're talking about *Her Lessons*, and Matt and Sandy already kind of kicked those off for us today. But also, *My Gifts*. What do I bring to my mom? When you read in proverbs 23... And kids – there are a lot of kids in here right now – this is the most important part of the message for you. I want you to hear this and hear this clearly from the scripture. We're going to see that what Mom is teaching you right now is what you are to, in turn, give her as a gift.

Here's what the scripture says. ***22 Listen to your father, who gave you life...*** How many of you didn't know that was in the Bible? Dad always reminding you of his role of bringing you into the world. ***...and do not despise your mother when she is old.*** Now watch these four. ***23 Buy the truth and do not sell it—wisdom, instruction and insight as well.*** ***24 The father of a righteous child has great joy; a man who fathers a wise son rejoices in him.*** ***25 May your father and mother rejoice; may she who gave you birth be joyful!***

How does a mom receive joy from a child? It's the child who returns to her with "I get what you taught me. All the lessons you poured into me, Mom, I'm now living those out."

I asked some moms this week, "What are some ways your kids can bring great joy to you?" Look at the kids look right at me right now. Shep, pay attention, okay? This is very important. He was down there earlier after the second song, "How many more songs are we doing?" I said, "One more song, Shep." So, he's been doing great. You lost me already, Shep. Look right here, buddy. This is very important. Truth, insight, wisdom...

I asked Mom, "How can your kids let you know they are getting it? Here are just a few of those answers. Matt needs to come up with a new 50 now that he's returning those lessons to Mom, all the things he heard, how is he now living out the 50. Mom, I want you to engage in here and at home. If this is true for you, if this would bring you joy, say amen.

Mom is most blessed when we return her lessons as gifts:

- Holding a door open for a stranger.
- Showing kindness to an enemy. That was a little bit softer. How many moms need to learn that?
- Taking initiative to help out around the house.

This one was from Amy Cunningham. I can say with my son sitting here that Carson clears the table every night after dinner. What a small thing for him to just grab the plates and take them into the kitchen. He has no idea what that does for Amy.

- Being thoughtful in gift giving.
- Showing compassion for someone who is hurting.

Let's go back to that taking initiative around the house for just a second because that seems to be the big one. If the kids heard that lesson, would they say amen.

Motherhood has changed a little bit. Let's just kind of walk through it. I love that Sandy already covered a lot of this for us. As she started speaking, I thought, *Take as much time from the message as you want today.*

Remember when your mom felt no pressure to entertain you? Does anybody remember those days? No pressure. That's why Matt is a comedian. You sent him outside with an air pump and he forged a career out of the whole thing.

Remember when you told your mom, "I'm bored," and she filled the rest of your day with chores? We learned quickly not to do that.

Remember when your mom's arm was your airbag. She didn't even care. My favorite story with this is a friend of mine that said they had this old Dart (a car I guess) that the passenger door no longer shut. So, every time a kid got in the passenger seat, they weren't allowed to put the seatbelt on because the seatbelt was used to keep the door closed. They would pull the door in as tight as they could, pull the handle out and then wrap it around.

My friend Mark said, "One day, my mom, who was a smoker.... She usually left the cigarette in her mouth. She did a left hand-turn so sharp that the door flew open and I went out... I was flying out the side because the seatbelt didn't keep hold of the door. I was flying out the side of the car and you would think that's when a mom would grab the kid and throw the kid back in. No, she immediately just took a hard right to shut the door and while she did it, she even took a drag from her cigarette."

Now that's a good mom. Not that I'm saying you should smoke, but I know some of you probably picked that habit up through quarantine.

Remember when mom spanked you with whatever she had handy? Whatever she was cooking with.

Remember when you got in trouble in school and your mom automatically sided with the teacher? She's definitely doing that right now. She's definitely siding with the teacher.

I love that thing I saw; it was one of my favorite signs. Mom wrote on her car, "My children are not the joy to have in class I've always been told."

Remember when your mom sent you outside to play all day and told you to be home by dark? Again, you're on your own.

Remember when your mom didn't have texting capabilities and you had to arrange your own play dates with friends? This one I know was Amy's heart always. You went up the street and planned your own time.

Remember when your mom threatened you with her grandchildren? "One day you will have kids and I hope they turn out just like you." My mom gave me that one all the time.

Those are a lot of the lessons that we picked up, but let me tell you, as you return lessons as gifts, we read this great word picture in 1 Thessalonians. Paul actually uses mom's nurturing care toward a newborn to talk about how you and I are to disciple people, how we are to care for people in discipleship, how we are to impart to them the gospel of Jesus Christ, but to do it with our own lives.

1 Thessalonians 2 - ***6 We were not looking for praise from people, not from you or anyone else, even though as apostles of Christ we could have asserted our authority.*** I always love when Paul shares that. He's like, "There are moments that I could have asserted my authority and told you what to do and just made you fall in line and do it, but he we took this approach." It was a different approach. ***7 Instead, we were like young children among you. Just as a nursing mother cares for her children, 8 so we cared for you. Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well.*** If that isn't what a mother does... Teaching, wisdom, insight, truth imparted into children, but to do that with our lives.

In 2 Timothy 1, Paul explains this again to Timothy when he says, ***5 I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also.***

When you get over to Chapter 3, he continues the thought - ***4 But as for you, continue in what you have learned...*** Young people, there is no greater joy coming to your mom than continuing what she taught you. And of first importance he says, ***...that you have been convinced of this from the very beginning because you know from whom you've learned it and how from infancy, you've known the holy scriptures which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.*** And that's why I appreciate Sandy sharing her story today.

Here's what we pick up from 1 Thessalonians as we look at this idea of how a mom cares for her children and how it translates into the discipleship process in the church. A mom is gentle, a mom is patient, and a mom is unselfish in the way that she works toward caring for her children.

Pause and Reflect: We're going to try something new. I wish we would have gotten this idea six weeks ago, but Alex Himaya, my friend... I know many are watching from Tulsa as well. He said, "We have done a lot of surveys of our people throughout quarantine. We're discovering that not a lot of families are singing together at home. We put this into the message part, and we have found families loving it. They asked for more time for it."

So, we are introducing this idea today of pause and reflect. We're going to take two minutes, right now, in the middle of the message. We want you to practice it here. We're just going to give you two questions for you to discuss as a family. We want you to do it right now. If you're single – I want to encourage our widows – this is a time for reflection as well; it's a time of prayer. We want you to ponder these questions as well.

Just take two minutes. We're going to put the time on the clock and then we'll be back to continue the message. I love this first one.

1. What is something your mom said or did on a regular basis that still brings a smile to your face?

The thing that brings a smile to my face because I watched my wife do it with our kids... My mom would walk into our bedroom in the morning and throw the curtains open and start singing... well she had multiple songs, but she loved, "This is the day, this the day that the Lord has made, that the Lord has made..." What's something your mom did that brings a smile to your face.

2. Share a lesson that your mom taught you that you now gift to her?

Take two minutes to pause and reflect.

How many moms are pleased with the answers? Can I just see the hands in here? How many moms would like a few more moments? Stephanie Watson... who else would like a few more moments? Kari Brawner... You'll get that at lunch.

The Bible speaks of two seasons of life: childhood and adulthood. If you study the scripture, they're really marked by simple ways. We respond as the scripture tells us to listen to, to cling to, cleave to mom and dad's teaching to bring joy to them. There are really two ways we do that: in a season of childhood and a season of adulthood.

In childhood, it looks like this: **Listen And Obey**. It's that simple. We read in Proverbs 1 - ***8 Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching.***

In Ephesians and Colossians, we see two reasons why we should do this. 1) because it's the right thing to do. Ephesians 6: 1 – ***Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.*** 2) It also pleases the Lord according to Colossians 3: 20 – ***Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.***

The scripture teaches two seasons of life and I think the transition is what we get caught up in a lot. Years ago, I had somebody tell me that you're supposed to obey your parent your entire life. To which I said the Hebrew term for that is "Haa!" That is just not true. You don't obey your parents at 40 and 50 years old, but you enter a new season and this transition can be very challenging. We talk about it a lot around here – moving from childhood to adulthood.

In adulthood, you move from listening and obeying to honoring and caring. Children, as you grow from childhood to adulthood, you never stop honoring your parents. You never stop respecting your parents. Honor your Lord by honoring your parents. Respect for authority begins at home.

1 Timothy 5, we read this: **3 Give proper recognition to those widows who are really in need. 4 But if a widow has children or grandchildren...** I'm not going to get political today, but your parents are your primary responsibility, not the government's responsibility. It falls on you and me to care for our parents. **...these should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God.**

I just have to tell you... And I know I have friends watching right now in Wisconsin. I think of Mike and Sherry who moved to Wisconsin to care for aging parents. I saw adults drive through the line yesterday to pick up flowers for mom who is in a nursing home here in the community. We even have someone on our staff who has recently lost her mom. Just to watch life go on hold to care for a parent; to watch that take place. What we're doing there is repaying, we're honoring our parents by caring for them.

In Verse 8 of 1 Timothy 5, Paul is very clear. **8 Anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.** So, we honor all of you who have taught us how to honor our parents. You've taught us how to care for them. Many of you have moved to where they live. Some of you... I've done this; I've asked our parents to move here. They don't need help yet, but... Some of you have made big decisions in life to honor and care for your parents. And this is something we honor.

I'm going to do another **Pause and Reflect**. Just take a moment and talk through this honor and care and this transition between childhood and adulthood.

1. How does a young adult best honor his or her parents in the transition between childhood and adulthood?

I love speaking at the Kanakuk Link Year for Adam Donyes because they are all 18, 19, 20 years old. They are in the middle of the transition between childhood and adulthood. I always get nervous speaking there for what they share with their parents later on that night on the phone. I say it every day, multiple times a day. I want to teach them how to transition from childhood to adulthood in an honoring and respectful way. "If you take anything out of this class and give it toward Mom or Dad in a disrespectful way, you've missed the whole point."

So, why is this transition so difficult? Some of you are here today with adult children. It's a great conversation to have.

2. What is one practical way we can show Mom appreciation for the years she spent caring for us and teaching us?

Take another two minutes for those questions there.

Well, I hope the pause and reflect times have been helpful. We look to do that more as next week rolls on, just to see for more ways to not only engage with our whole church family on Livestream, but for you to engage at home and to get the whole family involved.

We are grateful that you've spent Mother's Day with us, and we want to end with this. We always know that Mother's Day comes with a lot of emotions.

In Romans 12: 15... This is a verse I quote often, and I know my family accuses me of quoting this verse a lot. I've been listening this week to that blessing song. It's been on repeat all week from the UK to here in the US. My son actually came in Thursday and said, "How long is that song!?" I told him it was on repeat.

This has just been a season for us to do a lot of reflecting on how we've lived and how we'll move forward. The emotions that come with Mother's Day... On this day, if we were all gathered as we have gathered in the past, walking through the church, you'll rejoice with one, mourn with another, rejoice with one, mourn with another. It seems like that's the whole day on Mother's Day as the church is doing family life together, as we are fellowshiping together.

We're rejoicing with moms, we're rejoicing with those who are expecting, we're rejoicing with those who have become new parents or first time parents, and we're rejoicing with those of you who are in here now and at home surrounded by family.

At the same time, we're mourning, and we are to mourn together. We're mourning with those who have lost moms. I just want to share with those who are watching right now that this has been a season of compounded grief. We want you to know that our church is very serious about helping with those of you who have experienced a loss of a job, a loss of our way of life, the loss of income. And then add to all of that, a greater grief and that was the grief of losing your mom during this season. I know several of you have communicated with me about that loss.

We want you to know that, as a church family, we truly mourn with you, but we also want to help. We have counseling available at our church. You can call the church office, you can email hello@woodhills.org. We would like to provide that for you. Our care pastors have been active and busy ministering to people for the last couple of months. They are available to talk to you. In this season of grief, we want you to know we're processing the quarantine and we're processing all of this through the cycle of grief, but then add to that many of you have lost moms.

Many of you have desired to be moms and your trying to start that family. This can be a very challenging season for you. It can be a challenging day for you on Mother's Day. I have a dear friend that tells me most every Mother's Day, "I don't like going to church," but I'm proud of her for going to church because she knows that as a follower of Christ, as she mourns on this day, she also wants to rejoice with those who are expecting and those who are starting families.

We also think about those who have lost children on this day. Your church family mourns with you. We are rejoicing and we are mourning all in the same day.

We hope you have a happy Mother's Day; we're grateful that you spent it with us. We're going to end in a different way as well, so don't go anywhere just yet. This is that moment in the service where you hear books closing and keys jingling and you're getting ready to... We've invited some of the moms of our worship team to come up, and I'm going to ask Katie to introduce that part as we close our service.

Katie: Yeah, so it's been a great morning. Thank you, Pastor Ted, for that word and for sharing that encouragement with us in our hearts this morning. Grateful for all of you being with us online this morning and, as Pastor Ted said, we have invited... Of course, you met my mother-in-law Sandy a little bit earlier and she is super special. We've also invited Ethan's mom, Marilyn, Lisa's mom, Viola, and Lisa's daughter, Emory. So, we have three generations on stage this morning. We've asked them to close us out with a special song this morning. The truth be told, the Lord only knows where we would be without our moms. I know that's true for me and I know that's true for many of you. So, we have asked them to lead us in a special element this morning. We pray it blesses you.

Group sings *God Only Knows*.