

**A Godly Mother**  
*The Godly Family*  
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**Bible Text:** Titus 2:4-5  
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Let us read again in the book of Titus, Titus 2, and we'll read verses 3 to 5. Titus 2:3-5,

3 The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; 4 That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, 5 To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.

I'd like to begin a series of studies today which we might call "A Biblical Look at Family Life." We want to cover topics such as a godly mother, a godly father, godly wife, godly husband, what it means to be a godly single, godly grandparent, a godly child, and a few other topics as well.

I want to begin, though, by just giving you a bit of introduction seeing why and how. Why are we doing this and how are we going to do it? First of all, why such a series? Well, first of all, because the family is the building block of the church and of society. That's not just acknowledged by the Bible but by sociologists who have studied society. Even they, even secularists will admit and statistics back it up, that without the family, society crumbles. God has chosen the family with which to build his church and to build society. It's a vital foundation.

Secondly, because the family is under such attack today by the media, by politicians, by judges, by educators, really wherever we look we see attacks coming in upon this basic building block of the church and of society.

Thirdly, because we cannot assume that our children will be absorbing biblical patterns today from our culture. It might have been in the past that the church might have got off with not training its members, its mothers and fathers and children, in these areas because there was a wider Christian culture, you might say, a cultural Christianity that had basic norms and values that matched the Bible. This was God's common grace. But we simply cannot assume the existence of this today and the influence of this today, in fact, we must assume the opposite. We've got to assume that due to the hostility and enmity towards the

family, that our children and our young people and our young families are going to be absorbing very ungodly and unbiblical norms and values from our culture and, therefore, this needs to be combated and corrected. It's also critical because we have a growing number of young families in our congregation and while previous generations may have had such training, again, every generation needs this foundation to be relayed.

I've also been asked a few times to give teaching on this and I'm very glad to do so but I think we also have to present today an attractive case for the biblical family. We have become very adept at criticizing the un-Christian, the unbiblical family and we have to do that, we have to show where society is going wrong in their redefining of the family and of marriage and of biblical roles and responsibilities, we do have to do that but we have not been so good at presenting a winning, a compelling, and a persuasive case that the biblical pattern for the family is the best way to live and so we want to try and do that with this series to show how beautiful God's order is in what he has designed.

And lastly, we want to do it because the Bible has got a lot to say on the subject, as I hope to show you over the coming weeks and months.

So that's why. A few words on the how, how are we going to do this? Well, first of all, we want to do this topically. As you know, there is no one place in the Bible where we can go and there is the chapter on motherhood, there is the chapter on being a good husband. Instead, the texts are scattered throughout the Bible and so while we be studying the Bible, we will be studying various texts, most of these addresses will be studying texts from different parts of Scripture and drawing together the Bible's teaching on this topic.

Secondly, we want to try and do this unselfishly. There are going to be weeks, Sundays, when the topic is not going to apply to you directly, if at all. For example, today we want to look at a godly mother. That more or less rules out at least half of the congregation, you might say, but instead of switching off or even saying, "I'm not coming when it's nothing to do with me," I think we have to try and listen to these addresses and study these subjects unselfishly even when it's not directly or even at all about me. So the way, I think, to do this is, first of all, to listen prayerfully for other people so that today, for example when we're looking at the subject of godly mothers, your role if you're not such is to pray for such and to pray that the teaching would be blessed to them. It's going to be an exercise really for some of you at some times in self-denial and desiring the good and the best of others rather than self.

But secondly, we want to do this unselfishly and prayerfully but it benefits everybody anyway. Obviously, having more godly mothers, for example, is going to benefit everybody in the home and in the church, so though it may not benefit you directly, it will benefit you, I believe, indirectly.

I think it also gives you help for interacting with our culture so that you can go into your workplaces, communities, even your un-Christian family and friends and say, "Here's the

biblical case. Here is what God's view of a woman, of a man, of a child is." It will help you, I believe, apologetically.

And also I think we have to remember that although it may not apply to you now, it may well apply to you down the road. So, for example, younger women and young girls here today, no, you're not mothers yet but you will be perhaps, hopefully, down the road so listen for the future as well.

So we want to do this topically. We want to do this unselfishly. We want to do this, thirdly, worshipfully because I want you to see if anything as we go through these topics, the beauty of God's design and that it would just lead us to awe and worship and that God has given us families and that God has given us mothers and fathers and children and the other relationships we'll look at as well.

And fourthly, we want to do this theologically. It's going to be practical, obviously, but that's not divorced from theology. You see even, for example, here in Titus 2, it says, "Speak the things which become sound doctrine," and then it goes on to list for different categories of people, men, women, young and old, lots of practical things to do. So Paul is very clearly seeing a connection between sound doctrine and sound living. He's saying there are things that become sound doctrine, that fit sound doctrine, that flow from sound doctrine, that even support and testify to the soundness of our doctrine.

So we want to do this theologically and that's not just connecting these truths with theology but seeing how these practical roles, relationships and responsibilities actually also teach us theology because what will surprise you, I hope, as we go through this, is how much God uses the family unit to teach the deepest theological truths. He uses the role of father and mother, as we'll see, even to describe relationships within the Godhead and between the Godhead and his creatures. We are familiar with the idea of father and son and God has given us fatherhood and sonship in this world to help us to some degree understand the Godhead, the persons in relationships in the Godhead.

So that's how we want to do it but let's now do it. We want to begin today with a godly mother for obvious reasons. It's an appropriate day to start with such and I want to emphasize here that we're looking at the woman's role as mother, not wife. That will come. Both of these subjects, being a mother and being a wife, are massive and huge. To attempt to bring them into one is really virtually impossible, even to look at them separately as one is almost impossible as we'll see. So we're focused today on the woman's relationship to her children and on another occasion we'll look at her relationship to her husband. So it's particularly mothering that we are focused on.

The first thing we want to say about a godly mother is that she loves Jesus Christ more than anything or anyone else in the whole world. That's what a true godly mother begins with. She loves Jesus Christ more than anyone or anything in the whole world.

She obeys the Gospel by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ for her salvation. As Paul puts it in 2 Thessalonians 1:8, she obeys the Gospel by trusting in Christ alone for her salvation.

She also obeys the first and greatest commandment which is to love the Lord her God with all her heart, soul, mind and strength, and she does that, again, by loving Christ with all her heart as Jesus puts it in Matthew 22:37. She puts Christ at the very center of her life, not her children. Christ is at the center of her life. However much she love her husband, her children, she loves Christ more. She obeys the words of Luke 14:26 where Jesus says, "Except a man or a woman hate," and then lists, "father, mother, husband, wife and children," are in there and he's really saying not that we have to hate but compared to the love that we have for Christ, all other loves pale in comparison. He's saying unless the godly mother loves Christ in such a way that puts all other loves in the shade, she cannot be my disciple.

She loves Christ. She puts Christ at the center of her life and she does that primarily by reading his word. She is the Psalm 1 female version. Yes, it says, "Blessed is the man," but it's generic for the woman as well. There are not two paths to blessedness, the man does it by reading the word and being a theological student, and the woman does it by doing things and being practical. No, both man and woman find their happiness and their blessedness through being students of God's word. She finds time, she finds space, she finds peace to be a student of God's word and that's how she keeps Christ at the center of her life, by prioritizing that reading and studying of God's word. And it doesn't have to be an hour a day, of course. It's not. It's almost impossible for a young mother or any kind of mother at some point in her life, this is a big priority every day to be studying God's word and by that showing, "I love Jesus Christ more than anyone or anything else in the whole world."

Secondly, she seeks God's will regarding the number and spacing of her children. She seeks God's will regarding the number and spacing of her children. Now, this is a massive subject and a very controversial subject. Perhaps we can come back to this as one of the topics we can look at in more detail but I want to just give two very basic biblical principles here. Obviously, mothering involves having children and the question is how many or when, and there are two basic biblical principles and they are both found in the first chapter of the Bible, Genesis 1:28, where we are told two things: multiply and manage.

Now, oftentimes one of these gets imbalanced so God says here, "Be fruitful and multiply," but he also says on the other hand, "subdue and have dominion," and both these things have to be taken into account in deciding how many and when. There is this basic command to multiply but never to be considered in isolation from subdue and have dominion. In other words, the multiplying is with a view to proper management, order, control in the home. Obviously, some people could overemphasize that aspect of making these decisions and just want everything really neat and tidy and totally controlled and under their supervision, everything just all their ducks in a row and so they minimize the multiplying command. But on the other hand, the multiplying command can be so

emphasized that this whole idea of communication and organization and administration and management is minimized and so there is multiplying but there is lots of disorder and chaos as well.

So basically this mother in consultation, obviously, with her husband, is seeking God's will as to how many children to mother, when to have these children, balancing these two biblical principles, looking at one's own capacities, strengths, talents, weaknesses, to make that prayerful judgment, ultimately though, of course, submitting everything to the sovereignty of God who is in ultimate control of these things. So a godly mother seeks God's will regarding the number of her children and when to have them.

Thirdly, this godly mother prioritizes her children's salvation and one thing that's very clear here when you look at Titus 2 is the prioritizing of husband and children in a mother's life. For example, the ages women are told, the older women are told to be teachers of good things and then they are told what are these good things they are to teach and who they are to teach them to. So for example here at the end of verse 3, "not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women." There is the first step: who are older women in the congregation to teach. The younger women.

And what are they to teach them. Here are the subjects: to be sober, self-controlled or self-denying even, to love their husbands, to love their children. Do you see the prioritizing here? They are to teach them to be sober, to be self-controlled, not to just be pursuing their own passions and desires, instead to be putting first husband and children. So for example, a woman, a godly mother, may have a job, may even have a career, may seek an education, may have friends outside the home, but her priority is clearly her husband and her children.

But if there's one thing she prioritizes above anything else in her relationship with her children, it's her children's salvation. Yes, she wants her kids to be healthy and she wants her children to be educated and she wants her children to be socially skillful, she wants her children to excel in sports and other hobbies and activities, she wants her children to be well dressed and well presented and mannerly, but above all she wants her children saved. She wants her children to know the Christ that she loves above all. She wants her children to love Christ more than they love her. Nothing would make her happier than to see her children loving Jesus more than herself and this really is the primary way that she shows love to her children.

When it says here to love their children, what's the greatest way to do that? It's to point her children to Christ. It's to present Christ to her children and point her children to him and plead with her children to seek Christ and find Christ and enjoy Christ. And then her prayers for them and with them, she again makes this a great priority. "Lord, help my daughter, my son, to know the Lord Jesus as their Savior." This is her burning ambition for her children. Not a 4.0. Not loads of letters after their names. Not the American dream. No, she's got a much higher dream. She's got a heavenly dream. Her dream is that at the end of her days she'll be able to stand before God and say, "Here am I and the children whom you have given me," that not one of them be lost.

She puts Christ in front of her children regularly, not just on Sundays, not just in times of family worship either. But regularly. Naturally. Throughout the day as opportunity arises she seeks to bring Christ into her children's lives. So she prioritizes her children's salvation.

Then fourthly, she trains her children for this world and the next. She trains her children for this world and the next and she does this, first of all, by example. I think that's what we have here in Titus 4, "That they may teach the young women 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 be not blasphemed." And really what Paul is saying here is, "Let the young women teach by example. Let them model before their children what it means to be godly, and especially what it means to be a godly mother." She's to be a pattern of self-control, not pursuing her own passions or desires at the expense of others. She's to be a pattern of industry, of diligence, of busyness. A pattern of good works. A pattern of how to believe and a pattern of how to repent. A pattern to her children of confessing sin and seeking forgiveness, not just from God but sometimes from her children themselves. There is something very wrong if a father or a mother has never asked their children to forgive them. It's saying, "I've never done anything wrong against you or towards you," which is impossible. So modeling for our children that humility, that contrition, that ability to even come down below a child's level and say, "I'm sorry. I got this wrong. Please forgive me." What a pattern it is to set before your children that they will then, we trust, put into practice in their life.

So you teach by example but also you teach by teaching and here this is said here, "to teach good things." Now what does that mean? Well, yes, you want to teach your children to be able and to be competent. To be able to do things practically. But the greatest thing to teach our children is not abilities and competencies but character. Character issues. Character qualities. Not so much teaching our children how to do but how to be so that goodness is deep in them. They're not just doing good works, it's coming out of a God-given goodness within.

So you teach by example, you teach by teaching, you teach by discipline. In the book of Proverbs time and again we are shown the role of discipline in a child's life and, of course, the father is involved there and we'll look at that, but often the father is not there and the mother has to act. And there are many many warnings in Scripture as to the consequences of not acting to discipline our children. In fact, in Proverbs 29:15 says, "An undisciplined child is a shame to their mother." A shame to their mother. You don't want to be that, do you? A shame to your mother. That's why she disciplines you lovingly.

She also trains her children for this world and the next by kindness. It says here that they are to "love their husbands, love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good," and the word means kind and loving. It's very easy in the midst of busy homemaking life trying to do all the things that have to be done, juggling 1,000 balls that you become almost hard and heartless, unfeeling, children are there to be just managed.

But here this word is kind, loving, compassionate, touching, involved in an affectionate way in children's lives.

I'm noticing a lot of people are suffering in here with the heat today. I wonder if we are getting cool air in the auditorium? Somebody responsible for that, could you put it up a bit?

So she trains her children for this world and for the next but also, she centers on her home and family. She centers on her home and family. There may be times and seasons in a family's life when a mother may work outside the home, where a mother may pursue an education, where a mother might be involved in ministry as well in the church, serving in different roles, but whatever, whether there's a work situation or an education opportunity or a ministry opportunity, there is no question in a godly mother's life that the home is the center of her universe; that everything revolves around the home whether there's a job or education or friendships or ministry. Everything is centered around the home and nothing takes that place. The career never becomes the center. Education never becomes the center. Ministry never becomes the center.

This is what this word here in Titus means, "keepers at home." They keep the home. They're centered in the home. The home. The home. The home. That's what dominates their minds. "How can I keep this home better? How can I work in this home better?" And in fact, the word is home manager, sort of administrators, and that's really what this mother's role is. It's a management role. It's a leadership role. It's an administration role. It's as such a vocation, a divine calling, and part of a woman's good works that she presents before God as her Christian service. It's not, well, there is home over here and I serve God doing this ministry. No, home is the primary place of service and ministry and it's a great mistake to have anything else at the center of the orbit in a mother's life.

Now, where do you learn how to keep the home? You don't just become a homemaker and a homekeeper like that because if you're married and suddenly you're blessed with all these skills or you have your first child and out with the child come all the abilities to care for that child and manage that home. No, we need to learn like in all areas of life, especially this exceedingly difficult management, administrative and leadership role and the primary source of that training, of that education, is older Christian women. That's very very clear in this passage. The aged women are given instructions in verse 3 that it's all to this greater purpose. Not just that these older women become more godly but in order that they are equipped to disciple, train, educate, bring up and nourish the next generation.

That involves two things. That involves the older generation stepping into the lives of the younger women, offering themselves practically, helpfully. Not just coming in and saying, "You're doing this wrong and here's how to do it right," but really coming alongside, mentoring, discipling, spending time with, making positive contributions to. Every older woman in this congregation, this is your role. Anyone who is older in years, this is your primary ministry as a woman, to mentor younger women. There is nothing

clearer. Of course, primarily it will be your own daughters as they grow up, but some of you won't have daughters here or at all and there are plenty here needing it.

It's a very clear biblical instruction but it also needs not just the older women being willing to do this but the younger women being willing to take it, seeking it out, asking, approaching an older woman in the congregation saying, "I need help. Can you train me? Can you help me? I need advice. I need counsel. I just need someone to pray with me and for me regularly." This is the primary source of training.

There are wonderful Christian books out there to help Christian moms and we can learn a lot from them. There are lots of really good non-Christian books out there on basic things like time management, organizing homes, spaces. For example, you might want to go onto Amazon and look up the books by Julie Morgenstern. She's got such wonderful, practical advice on managing time and space. You might think also of Dave Ramsey and his financial teaching. Lots of areas to learn and this is full time work really, isn't it? But the primary teacher is an older Christian woman and this is how she centers on her home and family.

Our time is going and I want to just briefly mention a couple of things further that I hope to develop at greater length as individual topics down the road, and the first is she opens her home for hospitality. She opens her home for hospitality. That's very clear in numerous verses in Scripture as we'll see in a future occasion, but let me just give you one little test or task: how about just once a month, one meal, inviting somebody to join you and your family? Just once a month? Not a friend, that's easy, but maybe there's somebody in that pew beside you or in front of you who you've never had over for a meal. Over a few months, you could easily cover those within arm's length of you, around about you. Hospitality for, yes, the financially needy but also the emotionally needy and the socially needy. There are lonely people. There are lonely couples. We don't like to admit it but that's the truth. So why not just once a month, one meal a month? It doesn't have to be fancy, just an ordinary everyday meal in an ordinary everyday house for a reasonable period of time, a couple of hours or something like that.

How much blessing could be done in that time and received as well. It would be wonderful for our church to cultivate this spirit of hospitality as I hope to show at a later date. It's one of the primary responsibilities of a godly mother, and it's like everything, it's hard to start a habit but once you start, it's hard to stop, especially when it's a good habit like this. So open your home for hospitality.

Another area, seventhly, is model attractive modesty. Model attractive modesty. Again, this is a topic in and of itself. It's not just restricted to dress but also to conduct and to words. Numerous verses, again, on this subject. Notice I said model attractive modesty. Again, two principles that we must hold together at all times.

The eighth area of a godly mother's responsibilities is build a happy home. Build a happy, cultivate a happy home. When you look at all these things I've got to do, I've got to love Christ more than anything else, I've got to seek God's will about the number and spacing



of my children, I've got to prioritize my children's salvation, I've got to train my children for this world and the next, I've got to center on my home and my family, I've got to open my home for hospitality, I've got to dress modestly and attractively. "I'm feeling like a robot," maybe you're saying. "This is just going to be a nightmare for me to function like this. It's just going to be hyper-efficiency, hyper-organization, hyper-discipline." And you can do these things and the home is miserable. The home is devoid of joy. The home is a place of dread, it's not welcoming. The home is a place of negativity and critique of the children, of the husband, of self, and of lots of other people too.

Nothing is more devastating to children than a critical, negative, miserable home. I've seen it time and again in pastoral ministry. You see beautiful children growing up and then being infected and poisoned and twisted by a hyper-critical and hyper-negative spirit and then you begin to hear it from little children's mouths and it's agony. You're seeing a life destroyed, influence diminished. No, cultivate a happy home, a positive home, an encouraging home, a cheerful home. Lots of things can be let go but not this.

Whatever else a godly mother is about, it's about being a cheerful joyful homemaker. Let that be way up the list of priorities. Surely it's better to have that than everything spic-and-span and hyper-organized. Let your children see you just love being a mother. Let your children see you just love being a homemaker. Let your children hear praise and encouragement at least three times more than critique and discouragement. Psychologists have looked at relationships and have studied husband/wife, have studied child/parent, and have studied employer and employee, and there's a ratio that's standard in every human relationship, that for every negative comment there has to be three positive comments just to break even, just to bring that relationship back to normal. In other words, you say a critical word to your wife or your child or your husband, in order for you to just get back even, you've got to do or say three positive things. Therefore if we really want to build and cultivate cheerful, happy, joyful, welcoming homes, we're looking at five times as much positive as negative really, aren't we, with the Lord's blessing.

Let me conclude with a word to a few groups here. First of all to children here. If you have a godly mother, you have the greatest treasure in this world and you should be in continual thanksgiving to God for that gift. No, she's not perfect. She doesn't match up in all these areas. No one does, but isn't she trying? Doesn't she desire to do that? Of course she does and you should honor her. You should treat her like a queen. You should speak of her and speak to her in a way that shows you're honoring and you're loving, you're appreciating, you're treasuring of such a gift of God to you.

Secondly, a word to young unmarried men and women. Obviously young women here, aim to be such a mother and don't wait until you become a mother to learn. Why not start training now? That's what we do, isn't it, when we're planning something down the road, we get ready, we prepare. So already be in contact with older women in the church. Already be reading good books, studying these matters, praying that you'll be the godly mother we've outlined here today.

And young men yet to be married, when you're looking for a partner in life, when you're looking for a wife, here's the kind of wife to look for. You won't be able to tell for sure if she's going to be these things but you want to know if she's aiming to be these things; if this is where her priorities lie. And let the word of God be your criteria for making this most important of decisions in your life.

Thirdly, let me address the unconverted children of godly mothers. You've been given such a gift and you have abused it. You've been given a godly mother and you haven't used that gift as God intended. You've rebelled against her. You've refused her instruction. In fact, do you know what a good exercise for you to do today would be to go to Proverbs and read through that book and find out the effect of an unconverted child and a godly mother. It is heartbreaking. It's heart-rending the grief, the pain, the sorrow, the devastation of a foolish child to a godly mother and let that break your heart. Let it turn your heart towards her and above all to her God. You may give her the biggest happiness that she could ever have in this world.

A word to fathers, to husbands, of such wives: nourish her. Cherish her. Encourage her. Build her up. Help her along these lines. Give her time off. Give her a break. Let her go out at times on her own and with friends or the mall or to a hobby. She needs a rest. This is massive. It's a mammoth job. We guys get tea breaks, they don't. We get to sit down at prepared meals, they do all the preparing. We walk away from the dinner table and do our stuff and she's still working until 9 and 10 at night cleaning up and doing the laundry. She needs a break. That's part of the nourishing and the cherishing of such a godly mother.

A word to everyone, really: let's pray for our young mothers. They need our prayers. They need our help. They need our encouragement.

And let me just close with a word to mothers and this all applies to single motherhood too. The only difference really is a single mother has the added responsibility of trying to find male input into their children's lives as well. But you are going to, the mothers here are going to experience God's curse on motherhood. It's a strange thing, isn't it? Such a blessing and yet as a result of sin, God cursed child-bearing and child raising. It wasn't just the act of having a child, it's the whole child thing. There is a lot of grief, there is a lot of disappointment, there is a lot of frustration, there is a lot of boredom and God has done this to make you needy, to realize you can't do this on your own, to make you seek his grace and to make sure you don't seek to find your full satisfaction in your children but to point you towards the only one who can truly satisfy all your longings and aims.

Be patient. Just take the next step. Don't think, "Look at my child here. He's going to be this in six years time. If this isn't fixed, he's going to be...." Just take the next step, do the next thing, and leave the end result, the consequences, with God. Just be patient.

Remember, motherhood is a privilege. For all the griefs and burdens, it's a privilege denied to many.

Remember the way God has used motherhood to advance his purposes through the years. You look at the Bible, you look at Eve, Sarah, Rachel, Rebecca, Ruth, Hannah, Elizabeth, Mary, God uses motherhood to advance his purposes. They probably didn't see it at the time, you don't see it in this time, but God uses motherhood to advance his plan of salvation and redemption in the world.

And you want to learn a wee bit of theology from motherhood? God portrays himself as a mother at times. Father is the predominant image but in Isaiah 66, God is pictured as dandling his children on his knees. Do you know what dandling is? It's what parents do with their kids, they bounce them up and down. They give them fun. They take pleasure in them. God is pictured as doing that with his children. He is pictured as holding them at his side. He's pictured as teaching them how to walk, holding their hands, and he and Isaiah picture this dandling them on his knees. The next time you dandle your child on your knees, remember that's how God views you, child of God.

And that's really where I want to end: keep yourself in the love of God. God doesn't love you because you are a godly mother, he loves you because you're his child, believer. Keep yourself in that love, Christian young mother, Christian old mother. Amen.

Let's pray.