



From The Pastor's Heart . . .

### Mother's Day

<sup>20</sup> My son, observe the commandment of your father, And do not forsake the teaching of your mother; <sup>21</sup> Bind them continually on your heart; Tie them around your neck. <sup>22</sup> When you walk about, they will guide you; When you sleep, they will watch over you; And when you awake, they will talk to you. <sup>23</sup> For the commandment is a lamp, and the teaching is light; And reproofs for discipline are the way of life" (Proverbs 6:20-23 NAS77).

There is a story about four preachers discussing the merits of the various translations of the Bible. One liked the King James Version best because of its simple, beautiful English. Another liked the American Revised Version best because it was closer to the original Hebrew and Greek. Still another liked a contemporary version because of its up-to-date vocabulary. The fourth minister was silent for a moment, then said, "I like my mother's translation best." Surprised, the other three men said they didn't know his mother had translated the Bible. "Yes," he replied. "She translated it into life, and it was the most convincing translation I ever saw."

Tony Campolo said that his wife is a brilliant woman. She has a PhD and is capable of pursuing a very profitable career. But she elected to stay home with her children when they were young. Her decision didn't bother her at all except when other women would ask, "What do you do?" She would answer, "I'm a homemaker. I stay home and take care of my children and my husband." They would usually respond with "Oh" and then ignore her from then on.

So Mrs. Campolo came up with this response when she was asked what she did:

"I'm socializing two Homo-sapiens in Judeo-Christian values so they'll appropriate the eschatological values of utopia. What do you do?" They would often blurt out "I'm a doctor" or "I'm a lawyer" and then wander off with a dazed look in their eyes.

May 13 is Mother's Day. When I was growing up, Mother's Day was a family tradition where we, as a family, dressed up (which meant I wore my only Sunday suit and tie) and went to church as a family. Everyone would wear a flower on their lapel for the guys or on a dress for the ladies. And the tradition was that if your mother was still living, you wore a red flower; if your mother was deceased you wore a white flower. Red for honor and white for remembrance. You can look up the origin and discover the practices in America. That seems to be pretty standard for everyone I knew, because everyone I knew either went to our church, I attended the same school, or was part of my family.

And every year on Mother's Day there were a number of recognitions of mother's. First of all, the oldest mother was recognized at our church. I remember Patty's grandmother was always frustrated because her neighbor and friend was older than she was. I can't remember if she outlived Mrs. Miller (which was what Grandma and everyone else called her). Also, we used to recognize the youngest mother. That was tricky sometimes because occasionally, the youngest mother wasn't always married. They would recognize the mother with the most children.

They didn't really have to point her out, she was the most disheveled, exhausted looking lady in the church. Then it would be the mother who had traveled the farthest to be there that morning. Sometimes it was a missionary from on the other side of the world.

When I became a pastor, I decided that I would not follow that tradition. As many of you know, my mother had 3 sisters who never married and consequently were never recognized by the church. In spite of the fact that they raised me, my brother and sister right along with my mother, mother always felt anguish for them. So, instead of celebrating Mother's Day in the traditional way, I chose to honor all ladies, mothers or not. One year I got the idea of recognizing the mother with the heaviest purse. We laughed until we had tears running down our cheeks.

But, in spite of my crazy sense of humor, it was ingrained in me that I always honored my mother. My dad had a hand (or a belt, or a threat of both) in that. The KJV of Proverbs 23:13-14 says, "Withhold not correction from the child: for *if* thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell." My folks expressed that this way: "Spare the rod and spoil the child." That is still good advice today (notwithstanding those who go beyond what is helpful and acceptable).

At any rate, my hope and prayer is that if your mother is still alive, you will honor her on Mother's Day. If she is deceased, you will honor her memory.

**See you Sunday: Looking Up, Reaching Out, Going Forward.**

**From My Heart To Yours,**

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