

## **Mom: Model, Optimist and Mainstay**

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[Luke 1: 26-47](#)

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The following are answers given by elementary school age children to the following questions:

### **Why did God make mothers?**

1. She's the only one who knows where the scotch tape is.
2. To help us out of there when we were getting born.

### **What ingredients are mothers made of?**

1. God makes mothers out of clouds and angel hair and everything nice in the world and one dab of mean.
2. They had to get their start from men's bones. Then they mostly use string, I think.

### **What kind of little girl was your Mom?**

1. My Mom has always been my Mom and none of that other stuff.
2. I don't know because I wasn't there, but my guess would be pretty bossy.
3. They say she used to be nice.

### **What did Mom need to know about dad before she married him?**

1. His last name.
2. She had to know his background-Like is he a crook? Does he get drunk on beer?
3. Does he make at least \$800 a year? Did he say NO to drugs and YES to chores?

### **Why did your Mom marry your dad?**

1. My dad makes the best spaghetti in the world. And my Mom eats a lot.
2. She got too old to do anything else with him.
3. My grandma says that Mom didn't have her thinking cap on.

According to a survey by Ladies Home Journal, 85% of women say that mother-hood is the best thing that ever happened to them. What's the greatest part? 21% say it's watching their kids grow. A category called "Everything" came in second (18%), followed

by kids' "unconditional love" (14%). But 70 percent of all mothers consider motherhood incredibly stressful.

It was certainly stressful for Mary. She was the mother of no ordinary boy, but she was still a mother, with all of the concerns, hopes and dreams of any mother for her children. She had found favor with God, was a recipient of His grace, and therefore could say:

**Luk 1:47 And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.**

Yet there would come a time when a sword would pierce her soul. The calling of motherhood isn't an easy one, but Mary demonstrated how to be an effective parent, living a life in His favor and grace. From observing a few varied scenes in her life, I want us to see three attributes every godly mother needs.

### **GREAT MOMS ARE...**

#### **1. MODELS**

Why, out of all the women in the world, did God choose Mary to bear His Son? While some Christian groups overemphasize Mary's role, those of us from an evangelical bent tend to minimize it.

I don't think there can be any doubt that God chose Mary because He knew that she would truly be a model of what it means to have faith, and what it means to give God first place in your life. God picked Mary specifically because she would be the best model for Jesus.

After Mary had been visited by the angel Gabriel and informed that God had chosen her, a virgin, to bear the Christ child, her reaction is astounding.

**Luk 1:38 And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.**

Just prior to this response, the Bible tells us that Mary is confused and disturbed.

**Luk 1:26 And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,**

**Luk 1:27 To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name *was* Mary.**

**Luk 1:28 And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, *thou that art* highly favoured, the Lord *is* with thee: blessed *art* thou among women.**

**Luk 1:29 And when she saw *him*, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.**

She doesn't fully understand what God is calling her to or why. And even though she still doesn't fully understand, she models tremendous faith in simply accepting whatever the Lord would have her do.

The kind of faith she models, is the same type of faith we see later displayed in the life of Jesus. I fully understand that Jesus is completely unique, and that God the Father would be watching over Him, and that He, being God in the flesh, inherently was endowed with a faith beyond our own.

But I also think we'd be making a mistake if we downplayed the influence His mother had in His life as He grew from an infant to an adult. And I think we'd be making the same mistake if we downplayed the influence today's mothers have on their children as they grow up.

If you expect your child to mature to a person of faith and commitment, then you are going to have to model faith and commitment like Mary did. At some point in every mother's life, they need to say, "I am the Lord's servant, and I'm willing to accept whatever He wants."

At first it must have been hard for Mary to understand God's plan for her life, but she was faithful. Though she struggled to understand, she depended on God moment by moment. This is exactly what God wants mothers to do today.

The good news is, that just like Mary, you don't have to do this on your own. God is here to help you, to guide you, to strengthen you, and to be your shoulder to cry on when things aren't going as you planned – God is your strong ally.

Ruth Bell Graham, wife of evangelist Billy Graham once said, "As a mother, my job is to take care of the possible and trust God with the impossible."

Godly mothers are models who trust and who can be trusted.

Great moms are not only models, they are:

## **2. OPTIMISTS**

Zig Ziglar says that he is such an optimist he would go after Moby Dick in a rowboat and take tartar sauce with him.

The importance of optimism in raising our kids can't be overstated. Your children need to know that you believe in them.

There's an interesting account in the Gospel of John that demonstrates this. By the time we get to this story Jesus is already an adult. But I think Mary's attitude shines through of a mother who believes in her child.

**Joh 2:1** And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there:

**Joh 2:2** And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage.

**Joh 2:3** And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine.

**Joh 2:4** Jesus saith unto her, **Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.**

**Joh 2:5** His mother saith unto the servants, **Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.**

The wine had run out at the wedding feast. Mary apparently had some responsibility at the wedding, so she asked her firstborn for help. She didn't know what Jesus would do, but she knew he would do the right thing, and she told the servants to follow His directions.

**Whatever He says to you, do it:** The recorded words of Mary are few. However, it is good to pay attention to her words that are recorded, because they consistently glorify Jesus, not Mary herself. If only we would obey Mary's direction, **whatever He says to you, do it.**

She believed in Him, and this is an attribute children desperately need from their parents today.

Psychologist Martin Seligman of the University of Pennsylvania has demonstrated that children's attitudes are more shaped by their mothers than by those of anyone else.

"The mother's level of optimism and the child's level were very similar," he wrote in his book *Learned Optimism*. "This was true of both sons and daughters.... If a child has an optimistic mother, this is great, but it can be a disaster for the child if the child has a pessimistic mother."

Do you build your kids up, or tear them down? Do they know that you believe in them, and that they can succeed in life? Are they assured that you, more than anyone else, are a person who can point them to a brighter future?

I can remember talking to my mom about what I'd like to become as an adult. For as long as I can remember, as a kid, I had my heart set on being a baseball player. My mother had her eyes set on something more like a doctor, or an attorney.

Now, obviously, neither of these ever happened, but I can remember my mom telling me what type of skill-set I would need to advance from high school to college, from college to the pros, and how long it might take to realize that dream, if I ever did. She even reminded me that I had a better chance of being struck by lightning twice, than I had of ever even placing one foot on a major-league field. But it never occurred to her to think that I didn't have what it would take to be a ball player, even when I was horribly injured – she simply believed that I could do what I had set my heart to doing.

And that's how most good moms are – they believe in their kids, and they encourage their kids to become the best that they can possibly be.

And that optimism is contagious – when you’re a kid and you have one of the most influential people in your life up to that moment believing that you can accomplish just about anything, you start to believe it yourself.

### **3. MAINSTAYS**

Police don’t know where Deborah Kemp found the strength. But Kemp knows – 6-year-old daughter Ashley was in the backseat, and Kemp wasn’t going to let the man steal her car after she pumped gas.

The 34-year-old mother was dragged on her knees for several blocks as she clung to the door and the steering wheel of the car. “I wasn’t trying to be a hero,” she said. “I was concerned about my baby...that was part of me in that car.”

Kemp eventually pulled the thief from the car and beat him with an anti-theft club device while he apologized and begged her to stop. The driverless car went out of control and smashed into a restaurant, breaking a gas line – that’s when the child woke up.

Kemp suffered only ripped pants and bloody knees; the child wasn’t injured. The thief cannot walk – one leg is broken, the other fractured. He also suffered head injuries.

You know, while Deborah’s story is quite dramatic, I don’t think she did anything that most good mothers wouldn’t do. She knew that she was the central figure in her daughter’s life, and she was going to do everything she could to save her – she would stick with her till the end.

The word “mainstay” isn’t a word that we use very often – it describes something that is the chief support of something or someone else. We might say, “Agriculture is a mainstay of the economy.”

A mainstay is also a nautical term to describe the supporting line extending from the mainmast of a ship. It is the chief support of the mast and crucial to the ship’s ability to set sail.

Mary demonstrates the fact, that as a mother, she was a mainstay of the faith. There are two interesting passages where we see this in her life – one at the crucifixion of her Son, and then, after His ascension into heaven in the upper room.

**Joh 19:25** Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the *wife* of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.

**Joh 19:26** When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, **Woman, behold thy son!**

**Joh 19:27** Then saith he to the disciple, **Behold thy mother!** And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own *home*.

It is hard to imagine what it would be like watching your own child having spikes driven through His flesh into a Cross. Have you ever considered the suffering of Mary at the Cross?

Here is the one she cradled in her arms, the one she taught to talk, the one whom she had watched take His very first steps, now hanging before her in the agony of death and there was nothing she could do about it.

And while I was not there, and while the Bible does not say, I can almost guarantee you that she couldn't take her eyes off of Him. Until the very end, she would be there for Him to rely on, to strengthen and uphold.

And then after Jesus' death and resurrection, and ascension into heaven, we read this about His disciples, including Mary.

**Act 1:14** **These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.**

At the foot of the cross when the world had turned its back on Jesus and in the Upper Room when Jesus had left the earth, Mary was firm in her reliance on God. While I realize that she wasn't perfect, there has probably never been a better example of a mother who was always as solid as a rock. She was a mainstay of faith for her Son, His followers and the early church.

From the day she conceived Him, till the day He was crucified, to the day He rose from the dead, and even after He left the earth, Mary was a mainstay of the faith. What a wonderful example she is for mothers of every generation – what a wonderful example she is for us all.

There are many other characteristics that great moms exhibit, but today I would like you to consider just these three. Model, Optimist, Mainstay.

My hope this Mother's Day, is that you will see in Mary an example of the type of mother you can become. She was just a poor teenager when the angel came to tell her she would be the mother of the Christ child. But even then, she had what it took to know the kind of person she would have to be to be a great mom. I know that many of you here today are great moms like Mary, I have seen you exhibit these characteristics with your own children, and especially with the children of others here at Lighthouse. I think you deserve to be honored, and cherished, and we all thank God for you this morning.