

Learning from a Mother

Scripture Reading: Proverbs 31:1-10

The name “*Lemuel*” means “*Belonging to God.*” His mother understood that she was preparing her son for God’s use. Old rabbinical teaching identifies Lemuel as Solomon and his mother, Bathsheba. If this is the case, then we can see that **Bathsheba overcame a bad start and tragic events in her marriage and motherhood. She was able to teach her children a better way.**

Proverbs chapter thirty-one is a combination of two poems which were taught by Lemuel’s mother (Solomon & Bathsheba? – See Proverbs 4:1-3). The first poem is about a wise King (Proverbs 31:2-9). The second poem is about a virtuous wife and mother (Proverbs 31:10-31). In this lesson we will not examine the teaching of these two poems. We are simply highlighting the fact that **this mother overcame negative events in her life and became a positive influence.** Mothers often beat themselves up as they look at things that did not go well in their life. We want to keep in mind that failure is an event, not a person. With the Lord we have forgiveness, cleansing, growth, and the offer of gracious transformation. We all must humbly live in hope of the promises of God (Psalm 37:23-24; 90:14-17; 103:8-14; 130:3-6; Proverbs 4:18; Isaiah 40:29-31; Romans 8:26-39; 12:1-3; Philippians 1:6; I Thessalonians 5:23-24; I John 1:5-10).

Let’s consider a few other mothers and the lessons that they offer.

Eve is called “The mother of all living” (Genesis 3:20). Her name means “*giver of life.*” We know that she failed in the garden of Eden, but here is one thing that she taught us: **Children are a gift from God** (Genesis 4:1 cp. Psalm 127:3).

Sarah was a loyal and submissive wife. Her name means “princess.” She has been identified as the mother of all wives who are faithful (I Peter 3:1-6). **By the grace of God, Sarah took her weakness and failure** (Genesis 18:1-15) **and turned it into a lesson on faith** (Hebrews 11:11). Sarah brought laughter into her home and to all of us who have faith (the name of her son “Isaac” means “laughter”). See Genesis 21:1-7 – especially verse 6. She could repent, believe, laugh at herself, and tell on herself - teaching others to celebrate the grace of God with her.

Hannah was the mother of Samuel (I Samuel 1:1-28). Her name means “grace” or “favor.” She was not able to have children. A rival wife mocked her and tormented her. Her husband tried to comfort her and compensate her (I Samuel 1:1-8). **Hannah sought the Lord with all her heart** (I Samuel 1:9-18). God blessed her with a son (Samuel). She not only knew that children were a gift **from** the Lord, but she also made her son a gift **to** the Lord (I Samuel 1:11,19-28). By the grace of God, Hannah’s sorrow turned into fruitful joy (I Samuel 1:18 cp. Psalm 113:7-9). **Hannah’s example teaches mothers to never give up hope for their marriages and families.**

Lois and Eunice were the grandmother and mother of Timothy. It does not appear that their husbands shared their faith. However, **Lois and Eunice shared their faith with Timothy and taught him well** (II Timothy 1:5; 3:14-17). There is great value in husband and wife working together to teach their children (Proverbs 1:8; 4:1-3; 6:20-23; Ephesians 6:1-3). However, the ideal is not always possible. So, sometimes, one parent must do the job. Paul would encourage mothers to never give up. It may be difficult, but God can use one person to make a difference in the lives of others (I Corinthians 7:12-16 cp. Psalm 126:5-6).

Back to the teaching of Lemuel’s mother:

Proverbs 31:10-12 – The Value of a Good Wife & Mother (NKJV)

“Who can find a virtuous wife? for her worth is far above rubies. The heart of her husband safely trusts her, so he will have no lack of gain (no need of spoil - KJV). She does him good and not evil all the days of her life.”

Proverbs 31:28, 30-31 – The Treatment of a Good Wife and Mother (NKJV)

“Her children rise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her. Charm (Favor - KJV) is deceitful, and beauty is passing (vain - KJV): but a woman that fears the LORD, she shall be praised... Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates.”