

About Moms

I'm sure some readers have seen the title of this article and skipped over it. Sometimes, people grow up without a Norman Rockwell sort of good-as-apple-pie-mom with perfect children. But that is not what this article is about. In fact, I wonder if that mom really exists outside of our nostalgic memories.

Sometimes moms have to get down and dirty. One of my early memories of Mom was when I had measles—that totally debilitating ailment that nearly everyone used to get. I don't remember much, but I recall being stuck in bed; it was dark all the time; me being about as sick as a person can be; and mom cleaning me up. I remember not wanting her to leave....

Sometimes moms teach about big things in small ways. Ever see a mouse in a mouse trap? It's another one of my early memories with Mom. I don't think she intended for me to impose my curiosity at just the wrong moment, but I did just that. Two things I learned: mice are not cute, and death is real. We might think that death is something that everybody intuitively understands from birth, but I'm pretty sure we all needed to be taught that *Tom and Jerry* cartoons are not the way it works.

Sometimes moms make hard decisions. In a fading memory I see the little trailer we had lived in, and we are driving away from it for the last time. Mom was leaving an abusive husband and was rescuing us from an abusive dad. That was back in the day when women didn't do such things. Society and even the church told moms to stick with the abuse. But Mom knew better, and she had backbone, and she had faith. She had three kids and a "long hard row to hoe" as they say—but we made it.

Sometimes moms teach about contentment. Those were simpler times, and perhaps it was easier to be happy with just a little. Do you recall those aluminum Christmas trees, with a lamp underneath, shining through colored glass? There wasn't much else under the tree, but we thought we were living high.

Sometimes moms get what they've been so unselfishly giving. I remember the evening that Mom and Jim, the guy next door—he loved all of us—told us they would be getting married. Jim became Dad in every way. I remember Mom smiling a lot more and life got better for all of us. Even then, Mom never quit working to make a better life. In fact, I guess we were early 60's trend setters—among the first two-income families, working their way up into middle-class America.

Well, that's enough reminiscing. I'm sure that if you asked my mom, she would remember these things differently. It's funny how some of our memories become bigger than life, and some fade into obscurity.

Why write about moms? May is the month we honor mothers, and I wanted to give a few examples of why we might do so. If you have had a good mom, then give thanks for your blessings. If you haven't been blessed with a good mom, then you be the kind of parent you missed out on. Most of all, trust that God loves you more than any mother could. In fact, God's love may be where good moms get their ability to get down and dirty; their wisdom to teach big things; their gumption to make tough decisions; their easy contentment; and their determined commitment. Finally, God's love is required for what I recon is the hardest thing about being a mom: watching from the sidelines—their task never finished, but seemingly accomplished—as children move on to become wards of the living God alone.

The prophet Hosea wrote God's thoughts about mother's love:

"...it was I who taught Ephraim to walk,

I took them up in my arms;

but they did not know that I healed them.

I led them with cords of human kindness,

with bands of love.

I was to them like those

who lift infants to their cheeks.

I bent down to them and fed them." Hosea 11:3-4

Motherhood—great blessing of God's love for all; great responsibility for those who accept God's love; great reward for those whose love never gives up.

Be the church, --pastor tony