



GROW. PRAY. STUDY.

The Church of the Resurrection – Weekly Guide

This is Us: Building Strong and Beautiful Families **“The Care and Nurture of Mothers”**

SUNDAY 5.12.19

Scripture: Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth stayed with her. Naomi said, “Look, your sister-in-law is returning to her people and to her gods. Turn back after your sister-in-law.” But Ruth replied, “Don’t urge me to abandon you, to turn back from following after you. Wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you stay, I will stay. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God. Wherever you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. *Ruth 1:14b-17a*

A mother’s and grandmother’s legacy: “authentic faith”

MONDAY 5.13.19 2 Timothy 1:3-7

Paul the apostle was not a father, as far as we know, but he seems to have formed an almost fatherly connection with Timothy, a gifted younger protégé. (You can read about their first meeting in [Acts 16:1-3](#).) The apostle expressed gratitude for Timothy’s godly grandmother and mother, who had shaped Timothy’s faith. Now Timothy was leading a church on his own, carrying on the faith he’d learned from his family and his apostolic mentor.

- ✚ In what ways, if any, have your mother, grandmother and other adult mentors encouraged you to value and use your God-given strengths? In what ways have they shaped your life? How can you mentor and encourage those who are younger than you are? Ask God to show you someone you can encourage and uplift today.
- ✚ Paul told Timothy that he remembered him in his prayers, night and day. Likely his mother (and grandmother, if she was still alive) did that, too. Is there anyone you value who you know prays for you regularly? What effect, if any, does knowing you are in their prayers have on your walk with God? Who do you pray for regularly? Do they know you are praying for them?

Prayer: Lord God, thank you for your work in the lives of Lois and Eunice, who influenced young Timothy to become your devoted servant. Help me, like them, to make a difference in younger lives. Amen.

How five “mother figures” changed history

TUESDAY 5.14.19 Exodus 1:15-2:10

Mothering is not only biological. One of a mom’s primary purposes is to keep her children safe and secure. Moses’ biological mother did just that in a heartbreaking, unconventional way. Pharaoh wanted Moses killed, but Moses had several other mother figures from his birth. He was snatched from the reeds by his eventual adoptive mother and nursed by one who had to hide her identity as his mother. Without these women, Moses likely would never have lived to carry out God’s mission to deliver his people from slavery and bondage.

- ✚ Moses played a pivotal role in the Bible story. He was the human instrument God used to deliver Israel from slavery in Egypt. How crucial were his mother’s (and sister’s) courage and creativity in saving his life? In what ways do you see God’s power at work with and through

Moses' biological and adoptive family? What blessings and limitations do you see in your own life, past and present?

- ✚ Keeping a child safe involves more than just physical protection. What are some of the ways your biological mother or other mother figures have protected you? On Mother's Day, we remember that not everyone has the privilege of a positive mother figure in their life. Are you in a position to offer the gift of love and protection to someone who needs it?

Prayer: Loving God, thank you for the mother figures who have kept me safe and guided me throughout my life. Give me the strength to offer this gift to someone in need. Amen.

Motherly devotion led to King David—and Jesus

WEDNESDAY 5.15.19 Ruth 1:14-18; 4:11-17

Scholar Linda Day wrote, "The book of Ruth is a beautiful story....this isn't a story about national or international affairs. It is set in a village of farmers. Action revolves around family relationships." * (Today's reading just samples the book. It only has four chapters—if you've never read it, try to make time to do so.) The family relationships in the story had far-reaching effects. Ruth became the great-grandmother of Israel's King David, and an ancestor of Jesus (cf. [1 Samuel 16:1-13](#), [Matthew 1:5](#).)

- ✚ Today we often hear Ruth's words in Ruth 1:16 used in weddings. Do not overlook the fact that in the story she was speaking, not to a suitor, but to her mother-in-law! Not only that—the young Moabite woman was committing herself to "join a new culture and take on a new identity." ** How do you imagine Naomi must have treated her daughter-in-law to have inspired that kind of devotion?
- ✚ In the story of Ruth, God used Boaz, a prosperous farmer, to help Ruth and Naomi by letting her glean in his fields (cf. [Leviticus 19:9-10, 23:22](#)). Pastor David Jackman wrote that Boaz's generosity was "a reflection of the covenant-love (*hesed*) of Yahweh for His people, and at the same time a very practical illustration of how the quality could be worked out in interpersonal human relationships." *** In what ways have you sensed God's steadfast love for you? How has God's love shaped the ways you treat other people?

Prayer: O God, guide me to live in ways that make the people I influence to value our relationships. Make me a person of loyal, devoted love. Amen.

* Linda Day, introduction to Ruth in *The CEB Study Bible*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2013, p. 410 OT.

** Linda Day, study note on Ruth 1:16-17 in *The CEB Study Bible*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2013, p. 411 OT.

*** David Jackman, *The Preacher's Commentary series, Volume 7: Judges, Ruth*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1991, p. 345.

Jesus' compassion for mothers

THURSDAY 5.16.19 Luke 7:11-17, 8:51

"To lose a child is among the most painful of human experiences....[As] the woman Jesus encountered in Nain...walked with her community in sorrow, Jesus had compassion for her. When he told her not to cry (7:13), he was not chastising her emotion but extending comfort and preparing her for the resurrection to come." * Again, in chapter 8, Luke said as Jesus raised a dead child, he made sure the child's mother as well as her father were present.

- ✚ In Jesus' day, losing an only son was a terrible disaster for a widow. Under Jewish law, only through a male relative did she have legal standing to own property or sustain herself. Jesus saved the widow in Nain not only from emotional loss, but also from likely poverty and marginalization. What has Jesus saved you from? In what ways does a sense of his loving power at work with and through you give you strength and comfort for each day?

- ✚ Luke recorded the response of those who saw Jesus' action: "A great prophet has appeared among us," they said [cf. 1 Kings 17:21-23; 2 Kings 4:32-36]. "God has come to help his people." In what ways was their reaction accurate, and a first step toward accepting Jesus' lordship over their own lives? In what ways did it fall short of fully understanding the reach and significance of Jesus' ministry?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, you said your actions gave us a preview of your eternal kingdom. How I long for the day when you will restore all lost children to their mothers' loving arms, as you did in these stories! Amen.

* Ginger Gaines-Cirelli, "Portrait" note on "Widow from Nain" in *The CEB Women's Bible*. Nashville: Common English Bible, 2016, p. 1300.

Jesus' commitment to his mother

FRIDAY 5.17.19 John 2:12, John 19:25-27

Jesus loved his mother Mary. We seldom note John 2:12's report of a family visit amid Jesus' busy ministry. Mary was lovingly, loyally at the cross—and even dying, Jesus was loyal to her. "When Jesus saw his mother, he...could not commit her to the care of his brothers, for they did not believe in him yet (John 7:5)...So Jesus committed Mary to John's care and John to Mary's, so that they should comfort each other's loneliness when he was gone. There is something infinitely moving in the fact that Jesus in the agony of the Cross, when the world's salvation hung in the balance, thought of the loneliness of his mother in the days ahead." *

- ✚ When Mary and Joseph took the baby Jesus to the Temple, an elderly man named Simeon told her, "This boy is assigned to be the cause of the falling and rising of many in Israel...And a sword will pierce your innermost being too" (Luke 2:34-35). Can you sense how those words may have stayed with Mary as she watched her son on the cross? Do you believe Jesus' few but caring words brought her some comfort in that awful moment?
- ✚ The dying Jesus made sure a man he trusted would care for his mother. We live in a different time and culture, but Jesus can be an example to us. Most of us don't want to think about our mortality, so we often put off making a will or other end of life provisions. Are you willing to conquer your discomfort for the sake of any who depend on you, or might need to care for you if you became ill? If you haven't, make plans that will help your family when you are going or gone. (www.caringinfo.org has resources to help you.)

Prayer: Lord Jesus, what a great choice Mary was to be your mother! Thank you for showing your love and caring for her, even in the hardest experience you ever faced. Amen.

* William Barclay, *Daily Study Bible Series: The Gospel of John—Volume 2 Chapters 8–21 (Revised Edition)*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1976, page 257.

God: our ultimate mother as well as father

SATURDAY 5.18.19 Isaiah 49:13-15, Matthew 23:37

Almost all of us know that the Bible used fathering images to describe God. Some of us may be surprised, however, that Bible writers also used "mothering" images to express how much God loves us. Isaiah said God is less likely to forget us than a mother is to forget her nursing child. Jesus compared himself and his compassion for the people of Jerusalem (who didn't want to accept it) to the way a mother hen shelters her baby chicks from danger and cold. ([Psalm 131](#) was yet another example of using a mothering image about God.)

- ✚ Was your mother a reliable positive presence in your life, making God's steadfast love seem real to you? How can Isaiah's promise speak to your heart at those testing times when God's

presence and power are not on obvious display? Isaiah 49:14 showed Israel's wary, guarded response to God's promises. Did your mother or other important people let you down? How has opening yourself to God's nurturing love begun to heal any gaps left by the way you were parented, and in your parenting of your children?

Prayer: Loving God, sometimes all we talk about or think about is your strength and eternal reach. But you also love and care for me with all the tender, unfailing love of the very best of mothers. And I thank you. Amen.

Family Activity: Research the women in Bible to discover how God used them to share His message of love and hope. With younger children, use a Bible story book and discover how many stories of women are told. With older kids, use a concordance or the Internet to explore the stories of women. You may also want to discover how many names of women are mentioned whose stories are not told. Read a few of the stories and describe the qualities of the women mentioned. Discuss what their stories teach us about God. Think of the women in your life today and compare Biblical women with them. Write a note to a woman who displays God-like qualities. Thank her for sharing her faith. As a family, commit to praying for the special women in your life.