



The Mother/Son Relationship

(Being the Example)



Prepared by

**Sister Janie Davis, President
Sister Liller Hamilton, Advisor
Sister Shanda Johnson, Member
National Women's Board**

Progressive Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Inc.

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Introduction

Mothers teach by what they say and the example they live before their children. The first feelings of love by a son toward a female will be that displayed to his mother from birth forward, and that display of love will strengthen and grow over the life time of the mother/son relationship. This parental love and bonding relationship is very different from all other relationships that the son may have with females from childhood through adulthood. This relationship will shape how a son relates to females in adulthood and more importantly, how the son will take on his God given role as head of the family, provider and protector of his family.

There are five stages of the mother/son relationship. They are: 1) infancy and attachment (0-2 years); 2) toddlerhood and exploration (2-4 years); 3) school age and identity formation (5-12 years); 4) adolescence and separation (13-19 years); and 5) adulthood and friendship (20 years and beyond). Over the span of her son's lifetime, she will transition from primary caregiver to confidante and advisor.

The first thing a mother should give to her son/children is their father in marriage, God's Way! She herself should be an example of holiness and living her life God's Way. As her son/children grow through the stages of life, she will teach by word, but *nothing speaks louder than her actions with and before her son over the course of his life.*

God's family denotes first a husband and wife united by marriage to provide protection and care for children. When a family is started without benefit of a husband, the family unit is weakened from the outset and it will have tremendous consequences for the mother and her children. God created the family to benefit from the contributions of both sexes, male and female.

It is unfortunate that around the world, there are many countries where more than half of the births are out of wedlock. In 2023, more than 40.5 percent of the births in the United States were out of wedlock. This has a significant impact on the overall well-being of humanity, i.e., mentally, emotionally, socially, economically, and most importantly, spiritually. The country with the highest out of wedlock births is Chile (75.1 percent).

You may say, why is this discussion important when talking about mother/son relationships? It is important because regardless of how loving a mother is, at some point in the life of her son (K-5 thru adolescence), he will come to the reality that he was born outside of wedlock and has no father in the home like many of his peers. He may resent and often display rebellious behavior as he wonders why he does not have a father in the home or in his life. How a son views his mother and father from that point, and the impact whether positive or negative, will vary from child to child.

While many single mothers work wonders and raise their children well despite the obstacles they encounter, for many others the challenge is too great and their children suffer the consequences. Depending on the relationship between the mother and her son, a frank discussion regarding her life choices may never be had. The son is left with his own thoughts and may suffer mentally, emotionally, and spiritually as a result. The absence of a father will impact a son; that is, how he sees himself, how he sees his mother, how he sees his father and how he seems the world around him. Who will teach him to be a man? That question will weigh heavily on the birth mother, in addition to how she will take care of herself and her family.

The Mother/Son Relationship God's Way

As stated earlier, God plan for the family from the beginning was the union of man and woman (Genesis 2:18-25; 1:27-28). Even when Adam was alone, God specifically stated, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." Certainly, if God did not think it good for Adam to be alone, he certainly never intended for Eve to be alone. He intended Eve to represent the female role in the family for balance – male and female made God his creation to populate the world.

Head of the Family

In I Corinthians 11:2, God's word sets forth the Christian order of the family: "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ: and the head of the woman is the man." In a home headed by a husband/father, a submissive wife/mother displays her obedience to the order of the family as set forth in the word of God. Her submission/subjection demonstrates her respect for God and her husband; models what a proper relationship looks like between husband and

wife; and causes her son to respect her as she teaches him to honor and respect parental roles. In many homes with the father present, if the mother does not conform to God's order, she can contribute to raising a rebellious son/daughter, who does not respect God's order, his parents, and will likely display this attitude in relationships as an adult. The mother/son relationship is critical to demonstrating and developing proper order in the family.

When there is no father in the home and the mother must assume her role and that of the absent father, this situation can put strain on the mother/son relationship. As the years pass and the son grows, the once loving and dependent son will begin to pull away from his mother's supervision and instructions, and seek more and more independence. When the son reaches adolescence, he struggles to move into manhood and to embrace the changes associated with human growth and development. The son is aware of his awkwardness, voice change, and the changes in his body. This can be a very trying time for the mother/son relationship as he seeks to demonstrate manliness.

A father in the home can help his son through this transitional period since he himself can speak from experience. This is why God intended for every child to have both their father and the mother present, to navigate life changes, and to ensure healthy parent/children relationships over a lifetime.

Additionally, with so many homes without the presence of a father, the son, ill-equipped to perform head of household responsibilities, may attempt to step into the man's role in the home out of love and concern for his mother, who now shows the wear and tear of being a single parent. This is when the mother must know her limitations and seek help to ensure her son gets the support needed to properly prepare him to fulfill his God-given role as head of household at the appropriate time in his life.

Mentoring groups, brotherhood fellowships, church affiliations, where proper family love can be demonstrated is critical.

Teen boys who develop healthy relationships with their mothers are more likely to be successful. They tend to have:

- 1) Less behavior problems in later life
- 2) Perform better in school

- 3) Better mental health
- 4) Less risky behavior (alcohol, drugs, sex, etc.)
- 5) More Success in Later Life

Nevertheless, the teen years can be a very dangerous period for a male child because of low self-esteem and feeling disconnected. A son may be enticed to join gangs, to participate in criminal activity, to become sexually active, to participate in drug/alcohol use, and in other ungodly activities.

As a mother seeks to have a proper and nurturing relationship with her son as he moves through adolescence to adulthood, she must remain **prayerful**, alert to changes in friendships and activities, and seek help as soon as possible.

Provider

With the fall of mankind in the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve's roles as husband and wife were forever changed as punishment for their disobedience (Genesis 3:8-19). Adam was assigned the responsibility to provide for himself and his family. God word proclaims in 1 Timothy 5:8, "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." Additionally, 2 Thessalonians 3:10-11 states, "For even when we were with you, this we command you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies." God's punishment to Adam was that he must work to provide for himself and his family. It is the God given role of the man to provide.

Eve's role changed as she was made subject to her husband in all things and the pangs of birth changed the experience of childbirth forever. Titus 2:3-5 clearly defines the mother's role in the family as that of a keeper at home, lover of her children and her husband, and that she be an example of many other godly attributes.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the workforce participation rate for women in July 2023 was 57.4%, which is 10.6 percentage points lower than men. Women are working outside of the home, including mothers. With this proliferation, it is easy for sons to think that such behavior is the norm and acceptable to God. However, given the sinful nature of the times in which we live, the role of the mother in the home, that is, to teach the children and to protect

them from the ills of society, is more important than at any other time in the history of the world. We are living in perilous times when ungodliness is rampant worldwide. It is important that mothers communicate and demonstrate to their children, the importance of being at home to protect them from the dangers of the world. This includes our sons, who must be trained to take their rightful place as the provider for the family and understand that this role requires them to bear the burden of providing for the family.

When God's order is not followed, a son may require his wife to work if the word of God is not settled in his heart early in life by the example of the mother. Sons, whose mothers are examples of stay at home mothers, whose mothers use their time wisely to teach their children spiritually and naturally, are more likely to obey God's word in Titus 2, and understand the value, the love, and security provided to the family.

It is important for mothers in their relationship with their sons, to promote education and explain the order of life: education, workforce experience, prepare for marriage and financial security, and finally, marriage if desired.

Protector of the Family

The holy scriptures clearly designate the father in the home as the protector of the family. The father in the home represents God's role and relationship to the church family, as head of the church and protector of the church family. A male child will observe his father as the protector of the home and will grow up to do the same with his own family. A good father will want to protect the children from harm, hurt and pain, unhappiness, bad experiences and rejection, hurt feelings, failure, and disappointments. It is also the father's God given role to discipline out of love. Ephesians 6:4 encourages fathers not to provoke or antagonize the children to anger but to "bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4).

This caution from the Lord to the father, as strong protector of the home, may provide an indication of the critical role a mother can play in maintaining a balance, when providing instruction and when discipline is necessary. A mother has the ability to calm her husband's response prior to the administration of correction and the mother has the ability to soften situations, when sons display rebellion to correction from their father. A mother must raise her son to respect God's order

in the home while he is young so that when he is older, he will know and understand the order for his own home. She must teach him that there is a balance the protector must maintain, that of love and discipline, in order for the home to be safe. A mother must show submission to the position of the husband to be the protector of the family, while being an example of honoring, respecting and loving the father of her children.

As stated earlier, when there is no husband in the home, this can cause great stress in the mother/son relationship. The son's first love, his mother must now put on another hat and take on the role of the protector of the home in every sense. This can be confusing for a son despite his desire to please his mother. The growing manliness leads him to want to assume a role to help mom while she must issue discipline and correction through adolescence to adulthood.

Single mothers must be supported as they navigate the many obstacles in their pathway. As stated earlier, while many single mothers work wonders and raise their children well despite the obstacles they encounter, for many others the challenge is too great and their children suffer the consequences. Often mothers are unable to protect them from the streets and the dangers of spiritual darkness. Many son's end up broken and in despair over life situations; spend time in jail; or lose their life to crime and addictions.

Mother's go on but their hearts bear the scars of "what could I have done differently."

Marriage and the Mother/Son Relationship

"Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (Hebrews 13:4). A mother should always want what God wants for her son – a wife, (not a girlfriend or someone else's wife). If a son desires to marry and expresses that desire to his mother even in a playful manner as a child/teenager, a loving mother should begin to pray for her son and for her future daughter-in-law. The mother should not feel that she will someday lose her son to another female, but rather be thankful that the son wants to do it God's way. Additionally, if the union is blessed, the mother will be blessed with grandchildren to help nurture along the way. What a joy!

A mother should teach her son to obey God's word to refrain from fornication and ungodly behavior toward any female, saved or unsaved. She should let her son know that she is praying that he will find the right wife for himself according to Proverbs 18:22 (Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord), and answer any questions he may have regarding the matter. Additionally, a mother should pray that the prospective wife will learn to love her new family, respect and find joy in spending time with her husband's family, and vice versa.

Much has been said over the years regarding the relationship between the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law. All relationships and God's rules for interacting with others apply to this relationship. Below are some tips that should help the transition for everyone:

1. Treat your daughter-in-law like your own (adult) child
2. Don't make everything about you (mother)
3. Find a way to praise and thank
4. Help as much as you can (Ask First)
5. Choose connection over control
6. Accept and Respect Change

If the word of God regarding how we treat and respect each other is followed, and we practice common sense, the mother-in-law/daughter-in-law relationship can be a beautiful experience. Look around our church and see the beautiful in-law relationships that are beautiful examples of the love that exist when characteristics of God are front and center. Pray God sends a blessing for your son and you!

Adult Children – When It's time to Let Go

It is always painful to let go of something you have loved, cared for and has been the center of your life for years. Think about things we struggle to give up that are not human. Some people become hoarders because they can't make the mental leap to let things go. Letting our adult children go is of course different, but just as needful for our well-being, as theirs. A mother spends 20 plus years preparing her son to live independent but wants to teach him that one last thing that he obviously did not get. Well, it's clear you were a poor teacher or he was a poor student. Next

comes “experience”, and “experience” over time has proven itself to be a great teacher, often painful in its administration. But we learn what we did not earlier, often at a great cost!

As we come to the end of this lesson, let us take comfort for ourselves and our children that God has given to us everything we need to go forward. We must pray and watch God finish the work we started, in anticipation and understanding that one day we will be taken from this world and our sons and daughters must be able to go on with their daily lives. It is a movie that is played out every day for everyone. Children find a way to go on with their lives when parents leave them. We too must let them go with God taking their hands and the lead in their lives.

In conclusion, let us pray for our sons and daughters the perfect will of God and trust God to answer our prayers. Let us by faith see and receive the fulfillment of our prayers, and pray that we are blessed to get a glimpse of God bringing our request to fruition before we leave this earth. Let us pray daily for ourselves and our children the following prayers:

Ephesians 1:17-19

“That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what is the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,”

Colossians 1:9-14

“For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

Psalm 91 (Read on your Own)

Tips – See PowerPoint Slides

Conclusion

The relationship between mothers and sons is really special. When filled with love, kindness, and trust, it helps boys grow up mentally, emotionally, socially, economically, and most importantly, spiritually. A mother can guide her son regarding how he sees females, friendships, and himself. It is a relationship that will last a life time, established by God from the creation of the world, and should always be honored and respected by a son, who should always care for and respect his mother as long as she lives.

Remember, soon your kite will be out of sight and so will your son, but he will remember the ... *(See PowerPoint Slide)*

NOTE: This lesson was written to be presented with a PowerPoint component. When presenting to a group, please use the PowerPoint for increased effectiveness. You may contact any member of the National Women's Board to obtain the PowerPoint presentation.