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REAL MOTHERS

What makes one?

LOVE IS THE ANSWER

A parent's greatest asset

A LIFE DOUBLY BLESSED

A daughter reflects



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personally speaking



Have you ever heard or read something and wished *you'd* said that? That happened to me when I was sorting material for this month's *Activated* magazine—a tribute to mothers. Ian Bach said of *his* mother just what I would say of *mine*. Many would probably say the same, and for good reason: Mothers are one of God's universal gifts, yet of the billion or two mothers in the world, He somehow manages to find the perfect match for each of us. Thanks, Ian!

THE WORLD'S GREATEST MOTHER

By Ian Bach

If I called you "The World's Greatest Mother"
Some people might say that I'm biased.

"My, he's got a nerve
To claim his mum deserves
Such an accolade, this planet's highest!"

So I've come up with numerous findings,
With evidence strong and empirical;
And do hereby attest
That indeed you're the best!
(Please forgive if I wax a bit lyrical.)

You carefully nurtured your children,
As plants in your garden so fair.
Grew us kinder and wiser
With love's fertilizer,
And warmed us with sunshine and care.

You fed and you clothed and you taught us,
And kept us in line when essential,
But at the same time
Gave us freedom to climb
To new heights, to reach hidden potential.

I could surely provide further data,
But my time and my paper's run out.
So here's my submission,
You win the position,
Beyond any shadow of doubt!

Keith Phillips

Keith Phillips
For the *Activated* Family

(IAN BACH IS A FULL-TIME FAMILY VOLUNTEER IN THE MIDDLE EAST.)

BY MICHELLE CHARISSE

A life DOUBLY blessed

A young mother gets up from her table and dances with her baby girl in her arms. The baby laughs. She is secure. She is loved.

IT'S MOTHER'S DAY. I take my place on stage, test the microphone, and scan the hotel restaurant where some friends and I are about to perform. Most of the 200 people who came for the Sunday brunch are mothers and daughters—young mothers with little girls, elderly mothers with adult daughters, short round mothers with tall slender daughters, and some who look like they could be sisters. There are a few sons and husbands, but they are greatly outnumbered by the women, who are all radiant. The reception desk is heaped with individually wrapped pink roses, the hotel's gift to the mothers on their special day.

As the opening chords of our first number fill the room, I feel my mother's presence. The lyrics remind me of her. "Surround me with the little people..." Mom brought eight little people into this world, each of us her favorite in some inexplicable way. "I want to be held in the everlasting arms of eternity..." Those arms hold her now. It's been seven years since she died of cancer. My dad held her in his arms till she took her last breath. We kids still hug her goodnight as we say our prayers. Now she's in Jesus' arms for eternity. I blink away the tears.

"Laughing and singing, what a way to live..." Now I think about my stepmom, who I love just as dearly and can only think of as "Mom," whose voice I heard on the phone just days ago. As usual, she was full of laughter. If there is one person who knows what it means to live, it's her. "Life ain't worth living, if it's not to give..." I can see her now, giving tirelessly as she cares for my dad and their eleven children who are still at home. (Three of us are grown and living abroad.) Twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, giving.

A young mother gets up from her table and dances through the restaurant with her baby girl in her arms. The baby laughs. She is secure. She is loved.

Then I realize why I can smile and laugh and come halfway around the world to show other people God's love. It is because I have been blessed with the love of not one, but two mothers—one who had to leave me but is ever near in spirit, and one who came when I needed a mother the most. What am I doing, fighting back the tears? I am secure. I am loved. God has blessed me in double measure. ◇

(MICHELLE CHARISSE IS A FULL-TIME FAMILY VOLUNTEER IN INDIA.)

To do the job of a mother takes the strength of Samson, the wisdom of King Solomon, the patience of Job, the faith of Abraham, the insight of Daniel, and the administrative ability and courage of King David.

BY DAVID BRANDT BERG

REAL *mothers*

THERE'S A LOT MORE TO BEING A MOTHER THAN JUST HAVING A BABY! Almost any woman can have children, but it takes a real mother to raise and care for them and do all the work that's involved—and it's a full-time job! Motherhood is probably one of the hardest jobs in the whole world, yet one that is seldom appreciated enough. People who have never done it can't possibly appreciate what a big job it is! It takes great faith and a whole lot of plain hard work.

Up until a couple of generations ago, most women believed that their calling in life was to be a wife, mother, and homemaker. They gave themselves to it, and began learning it at an early age by helping their mothers do all the things they would one day need to know.

In many modern countries today, however, girls grow up without learning that kind of responsibility. Young women may receive little or no preparation for motherhood and

homemaking before they are plunked down with a full-grown man and a baby and find they don't know what to do with either one of them, much less the housekeeping and cooking. To them, boys were romantic playthings and a husband some kind of a dream, apparently with no work attached. But real life is a drastically different picture. Even with all the conveniences of modern living to take much of the pain out of housekeeping, children are still a full-time job!

To do the job of a mother takes the strength of Samson, the wisdom of King Solomon, the patience of Job, the faith of Abraham, the insight of Daniel, and the administrative ability and courage of King David. David was a fighter, and it takes a lot of fight to be a mother. It also takes the love of God, that's for sure!


I think motherhood is just about the greatest calling in the world! Mothers of the next generation are the ones that are molding the future. The

Never out of style

—A Message from Jesus for Mothers

Old-fashioned motherhood never goes out of style because it's all about love. I made people to need love, and I intended for them to first experience that love through their mothers. Mothers are the embodiment of love and care and tenderness—love that even the tiniest baby can feel and respond to.

So if you think you're missing out or living in the past because you're stuck at home "just" caring for a baby or raising children when you could be pursuing a career, think again. Love is the best thing in life! It's the most important lesson anyone can ever learn and the greatest gift anyone can ever receive—and mothers teach it and give it like no one else. Life would go on fine without many things, but not without mothers. Old-fashioned motherhood is here to stay! ◇



world of tomorrow is what the mothers of today make it, according to the way they raise their children.

My mother undoubtedly had the greatest influence of anybody over my life. Even though she couldn't be with me all the time due to her ministry for the Lord as an evangelist and pastor, I was constantly conscious of her spiritual presence, her love, and how she felt about things. Others had a great influence over me too, of course, like my grandfather and my father, my teachers and caregivers. Children are influenced by a combination of a lot of people and a lot of things—parents, caretakers, teachers, scoutmasters, Sunday school teachers, uncles and aunts, and friends they admire, books, and so on. Nowadays kids can also be greatly influenced by what they are exposed to on television and in movies.

Throughout my childhood, there were wonderful, dedicated people who helped mold my character and



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make me what I would become. I remember well the caretakers and Sunday school teachers my brother and sister and I had when we were young, who read us the Bible and told us Bible stories.

Bible stories and the Bible itself were a tremendous influence on my life, because I knew God was speaking to me through His Book. Thus God was a tremendous influence on my life through my teachers and mother and father, who all taught me of Him. Even as a small child, I knew the Lord, and He was a powerful influence on my life. I also learned a great deal from reading books, especially historical classics with their idealism and heroism.

As a young teen, my father became a tremendous influence in my life too. That is a crucial age when young people learn a lot about the world around them, much of it from their friends and peers. Young teenagers are very idealistic and begin to form strong ideas of what they think is right. The ideals, morals, goals, standards, and hopes that will largely steer their later lives are crystallizing.

At the age of 19 I was filled with the Holy Spirit. After that I just lived in the Bible and devoured the Scriptures all the time. I would say that from then on Jesus really became the greatest influence in my life.

After completing school I helped my mother in her full-time evangelistic work, and she continued to influence me. At 25 I married, and soon came another tremendous influence in my life—my own children!

Children make us parents serious about life and inspire us to be good and do good, to be an example and train them in the way they should go. We realize the sober responsibil-

ity of having a little child's life in our hands, and that he's going to be what we make him. Probably the final greatest influence in your life will be your own children.

Psychologists say that a child learns more in the first five years of his life than he'll learn in all the rest of his life put together. Those first years are extremely important. Parents can't wait till their children are five years old; every passing day is important. Parents are responsible to see to it that their children are not only fed and clothed and protected, get proper sleep and are physically healthy, but that they are also trained, taught, stimulated mentally, and inspired spiritually.

Childrearing is a serious, sobering responsibility. God will hold parents responsible who don't do what's right for their children or don't take care of them properly. If both parents must work at other jobs or are otherwise unable to be the primary caregivers to their children, then it is their responsibility to their children and to God to find somebody who is qualified to give that care and dedicated enough to do it right—and the same goes for single parents.

It cannot be stressed sufficiently how important children are to the future, or how important a mother's job is. God will bless you mothers for all you give of yourselves for these precious, eternal gifts from Him, your children. In fact, He is no doubt blessing you daily in ways that others can't even imagine!

Train your children in the way they should go, and when they are old they will not turn from it (Proverbs 22:6). When they are grown, your children will be so thankful that they had a *real* mother! ◇

Mother is the name for God in the lips and hearts of little children.

—WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY (1811–1863), BRITISH NOVELIST

The role of a mother is probably the most important career a woman can have.

—JANET MARY RILEY (1915–), U.S. LAWYER AND WRITER

Rejecting things because they are old-fashioned would rule out the sun and the moon and a mother's love.

—AUTHOR UNKNOWN

Women and children, mother and child—these belong together as naturally as heaven and earth.

—TANG MIN (1956–), CHINESE WRITER

The heart of a mother is a deep abyss at the bottom of which you will always find forgiveness.

—HONORÉ DE BALZAC (1799–1850), FRENCH NOVELIST

Most of all the other beautiful things in life come by twos and threes, by dozens and hundreds. Plenty of roses, stars, sunsets, rainbows, brothers and sisters, aunts and cousins, but only one mother in the whole world.

—KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN (1856–1923), U.S. AUTHOR AND EDUCATOR

A mother is the truest friend we have, when trials, heavy and sudden, fall upon us; when adversity takes the place of prosperity; when friends who rejoice with us in our sunshine, desert us; when troubles thicken around us, still will she cling to us, and endeavor by her



thoughts on mothers and motherhood

kind precepts and counsels to dissipate the clouds of darkness, and cause peace to return to our hearts.

—WASHINGTON IRVING (1783–1859), U.S. WRITER

Life began with waking up and loving my mother's face.

—GEORGE ELIOT (1819–1880), BRITISH NOVELIST

An ounce of mother is worth a pound of clergy.

—SPANISH PROVERB

My mother was the making of me.

—THOMAS A. EDISON (1847–1931), U.S. INVENTOR

The thing that makes a mother wonderful is that self-sacrificial spirit that is willing to sacrifice her own time and strength and even her health, if need be, for the sake of her child.

—DAVID BRANDT BERG (1919–1994)

All that I am or hope to be, I owe to my angel mother. No man is poor who has a godly mother.

—ABRAHAM LINCOLN (1809–1865), U.S. PRESIDENT

Motherhood is the most important of all the professions, requiring more knowledge than any other department in human affairs.

—ELIZABETH CADY STANTON (1815–1902), U.S. CAMPAIGNER FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE

From my experience and observation, if a family is held together in difficult circumstances, nine times out of ten it's the woman who's doing it.

—RODDY DOYLE (1958–), IRISH NOVELIST AND PLAYWRIGHT

The hand that rocks the cradle is the hand that rules the world.

—WILLIAM ROSS WALLACE (1819–1881), U.S. POET AND SONGWRITER



LOVE IS THE ANSWER

THE PRIMARY FACTOR IN RAISING CHILDREN IS LOVE. If parents can just learn to treat their children with love and consideration, the children will feel loved and secure.

Most parents can't be with their children all the time, but it's difficult for small children to understand that. Children think they should be the most important things in the world to their parents, so when the parents can't show them constant attention because of other obligations, it hurts the children—and of course, the more children you have, the less individual time and attention you can give each one. That's why it's so important for parents to tune in to their children and give them love and attention when they do have the opportunity.

The first step is to pray for understanding of your children. Ask the Lord to show you what each child needs in each situation, and then do the little things that can mean so much.

Everybody needs to feel special to somebody, to have a personal sense of belonging. No matter how many children you have, you can still give each one something special—either special attention or a special something that means a lot to them—and you should try to do this consistently

so none of them think they're just one more child in the line-up.

Give each one lots of love and encouragement, because words have the power to build them up and help them feel loved. "Look what a big boy you are! We're so proud of you. You've learned so much!" Say things that will let them know they really are special to you.

Small children, especially, don't yet have a concept of time, so if you give one child something and tell the others that theirs will come next time, "next time" will probably seem a long way away and very nebulous. So in most cases when you give one something, you should try to do a little something special for the others too.

You can't and shouldn't treat all of your children the same all the time. Each needs to know they are special in their own way. And when one needs something that the others don't, they have to be taught that it's according to need, not because one is more loved. If you take one out to get a needed pair of shoes, for example, and you bring the others back a little toy or something that may cost only a few cents, this shows that you love them and remembered them too.

A lot of adults don't realize how

Everybody needs to feel special to somebody, to have a personal sense of belonging.

The rich parent

What can I give my children, Lord,
When there's not much I can afford?
They rate the best, these girls and boys,
Yet get along with so few toys.
I see nice things I'd like to get,
But can't, for we are poor, and yet
We have great riches in our keep
That kings but dream of when they sleep!

We've wealth to share with all our house,
The Words of Heaven, from God's mouth.
We've love that stands when all else flees,
And mountains tumble to the seas.
We've trust that will not break or tear,
And hope we know is always there.
We've Heaven in our hearts today,
The Son of God who's come to stay.

We've got a Rock on which to stand,
When fears and tremors fill our land.
We've faith to stand the toughest test,
And give us peace when none can rest.
It whispers softly in our ears
To calm our hearts and melt our fears.
It stills the storm and sends the sun,
And helps us stand when all is done.

Jesus, Jesus, what a store
Of treasures, diamonds, at our door!
Your precious Words, so great yet free—
What *riches* You have given me!
I've gifts, new gifts, to give each day,
And when they're gone, I hear You say,
"Come here, My child, peer in My chest,
Behold it all and take the best.

"Heaven's treasures, old and new
I've stored it all for them and you.
Choose everything they'll need someday,
Bright jewels to shine and light their way.
Give each of them a crown of gold,
Whose worth's so great, it can't be told.
Choose all the gems your children lack,
If you need more, why just come back."

For things so priceless, precious, rare,
Most mortal men seem not to care.
But when the earth begins to quake,
Their stores and mighty buildings shake,
When towers tall come tumbling down,
And all man's dreams lie on the ground,
God's own "poor" children then shall find,
A place of rest for heart and mind.

Yes, we are the more truly blessed
For having sought and found the best.
Now all the Words God's given me,
I'll share with children on my knee.
Yes, untold wealth is what we own.
It fills our hearts and fills our home!
What greater gifts could we impart
Than Heaven's Words to children's hearts?

—KAY SPAIN

(KAY SPAIN IS A FULL-TIME FAMILY VOLUNTEER
IN MEXICO, MOTHER OF 11 AND GRANDMOTHER
OF 16.)



important it is to explain things to children. You can't just assume that they understand. How can they understand hardly anything unless you explain it to them? Most adults don't take things without some kind of explanation, and children have as much right to an explanation as anybody. If you think there could be any question in their minds or hurt feelings, explain. Even if they can't understand everything you say, just the fact that you try to explain it conveys to them that you're concerned about their feelings, and that will help.

It's nearly always a problem when somebody else comes along, like a new baby, who they think is going to take their place. Children's feelings are just the same as adults', only difficult situations can be even more traumatic for children when they haven't experienced those things before and therefore don't have the assurance that things usually work out in the end. That's why children are so much more vulnerable than adults, because of their very limited experience. So you have to treat children even more carefully and tenderly and considerately than adults.

It breaks my heart when I see parents in public places cuff their child on the head or lash out over something that the poor child probably didn't understand in the first place. It's tragic! Children are more sensitive and more easily hurt than adults. They instinctively love and trust their parents, and to destroy that is really sad!

Children aren't that hard to understand if you just put yourself in their position. The experiences they go through are very similar to the things we adults go through, only harder for them to understand and harder for



them to take. When we go through difficulties, even though we know that if we pray the Lord will work things out and see us through, it's still often difficult. But when children go through these things, they're sort of lost unless we do everything possible to reassure them with love.

I once heard a true story about a boy who went to a banquet and found he was the only male guest. He was so nervous that he knocked over his glass of water. The hostess saw his embarrassment and immediately knocked over *her* glass to draw everyone's attention away from the boy and spare his feelings. Without saying a word, she reassured him that it was okay; everyone makes mistakes.

A little love goes a long way! Children are bound to have problems, but no matter what the problem stems from, love can correct it. Even if you don't understand what the problem is, the *Lord* understands—and the answer is love! “Love covers over all wrongs” (Proverbs 10:12 NIV). Just a little love and concern can make up for a lot of mistakes and failures, no matter who or what is to blame. Anybody—child or adult—can be helped by love! Love is the answer! ◇

Without saying a word, she reassured him that it was okay; everyone makes mistakes.

Q My husband and I have very different personalities. One way this is manifested is in how we show affection to each another. I like to express my love by giving little presents or cards. I secretly wish he would do the same for me, but it seems that's just not "him." This is only a small part of our lives, but these little gestures of affection mean a lot to me. What should I do?—Try to change my husband by encouraging him to be more like that, or ask the Lord to change me so I don't desire those things so much?

A: Your husband's personality is probably one of the things that attracted you to him in the first place, so you wouldn't want to change that in a big way. Of course, there are probably some things about his personality that you didn't realize when you married him, and this may be one of them.

Couples whose marriages have stood the test of time often credit their success to three things: respect, acceptance, and communication. Marriage partners who genuinely respect each other find it much easier to accept their mates as they are, blemishes and all. If you don't feel this type of love, ask God to give it to you. His love is great enough to overlook shortcomings, and keeps on loving even when we fail.

Also remember that just because people are a certain way doesn't mean they need to stay that way—and *love* is a great catalyst for change! People who are in love are willing to do almost anything in order to please the ones they love. Here is where communication comes in. Too often mates rely on hints or suffer in silence, when just a little honest and open communication about their likes and dislikes, needs and desires would solve the problem.

Here are some practical steps that you could take to get more of the kind of affection you would like from your husband and to give him more of what he would like from you:

- Each make a list of the other's admirable qualities—all the things you most love and respect about your mate.
- Think about the ways your mate expresses affection. (Hint: Women tend to be more sentimental and to express their love in the form of notes, cards, and gifts; men tend to be more practical and to express their love through actions that say, "I want to protect and provide for you.") When you stop to appreciate your mate's expressions of love, it helps you overlook his or her "lacks" in that area.
- Take some time together in a relaxed setting to talk about your favorite ways to be shown love, affection, and appreciation. Listen and learn.
- Once your mate has explained how he or she likes to be shown love, make a point of doing at least one of those things within the next day or two, then do them regularly until doing them becomes more natural. ◇

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MAJOR points of the ENDTIME

AN OVERVIEW OF BIBLE PROPHECY – PART 2



Part 1 of this article covered the first seven major stages or events of the Endtime: 1) various signs of the times, as described in Matthew 24 and other passages; 2) the rise of the world dictator known as the “Antichrist”; 3) the signing of a “covenant” that will usher in a brief period of stability and signal the beginning of the Antichrist’s seven-year reign; 4) the breaking of that covenant three and a half years later; 5) a time of unprecedented trouble and suffering known as the “Great Tribulation”; 6) a nuclear war that will destroy “Babylon, the great whore” in one hour; 7) the “Rapture,” when Jesus returns at the end of the Great Tribulation to rescue His children out of this world.

8. Marriage supper

In the Rapture, Jesus has come back to catch His bride, His Church, out of the evil clutches of the Antichrist and to whisk her away to unite with Him and each other in the grandest, most glorious and thrilling wedding party that’s ever been held, the great marriage supper of the Lamb in Heaven, where the Lord will reward all His faithful children with beautiful, eternal “crowns of life” (Revelation 19:7–9; 2:10).

9. Wrath of God

After the Lord rescues and raptures His children to be with Him, the horrific vials of the great “wrath of God” will be poured upon the Antichrist and his evil forces still remaining on earth—the most horrible plagues the

world has ever known! God’s angels of judgment are going to give the Antichrist and his forces what they deserve (Revelation 11:18; 14:9–10; 16:1–11).

10. The Battle of Armageddon

On a plain in what is now northern Israel, the Antichrist will lead his armies in this major campaign against those who still oppose him. But Jesus and His army of saints—all of His born-again and now resurrected children from throughout the ages—will return to earth on majestic white horses to utterly defeat and destroy the Antichrist and his evil forces in the apocalyptic Battle of Armageddon (Revelation 16:12–16; 19:11–21).

11. The Millennium

The earth will be restored to a perfect, Garden-of-Eden state (Isaiah 11:6–9; 14:7; 65:25; Hosea 2:18), and Jesus and His saints will set up the kingdom of Heaven on earth (Daniel 2:44; 7:18,22,27; Revelation 5:10). The Devil will be bound and cast as a prisoner into the bottomless pit for a thousand years (Revelation 20:1–3), and the world’s unsaved inhabitants—those who survived the Battle of Armageddon—will be *forced* to do what’s right. Then and only then, under the righteous rule of Jesus and the saints, will all wars cease. The world will at last be governed fairly and well with true justice, liberty, peace, plenty, and happiness for all

(Isaiah 2:4; Revelation 2:26; 20:4–6). This thousand-year period is known as the “Millennium.”

During the Millennium, the resurrected saints will have new supernatural bodies with amazing powers like Jesus had after His resurrection (Philippians 3:20–21; Luke 20:36)—invincibility; complete freedom from pain, sickness, and death; abilities such as being able to fly, appear and disappear, change their appearance, read minds, communicate with each other telepathically, and stop wrongdoers with as little as a thought or a glance (1 John 3:2; John 20:19,26; Luke 24:31; Acts 10:40–41).

Those on earth will still be in natural bodies, like the ones we have now, and will have none of the saints’ supernatural powers, so they will be fairly easy to rule over with the love, wisdom, and power of Jesus and His personal leadership. Because everyone will *see* God’s glorious power and kingdom, there won’t be any unbelievers in the Millennium (Hebrews 8:11; Habakkuk 2:14). But sad to say, there will still be some *unreceivers*—those who won’t yield or obey, but rather choose to stubbornly and defiantly rebel when they get the chance, at the end of the Millennium (Isaiah 26:10).

12. The Battle of Gog and Magog

At the end of the Millennium, Satan will be released for a “little season” from the bottomless pit where he has been imprisoned—just

COMPILED BY
JOSEPH CANDEL
FROM THE WRITINGS
OF DAVID BRANDT
BERG

During the Millennium, the resurrected saints will have new supernatural bodies with amazing powers like Jesus had after His resurrection.

long enough for him to deceive those unconverted rebels who will again follow Satan to the full, in open rebellion against the Lord and His government.

This rebellion will result in the catastrophic Battle of Gog and Magog, in which God will send down fire to devour them completely. In fact, it is such a horrible fire that it will completely burn up the surface of the planet, and the atmospheric heavens will roll back like a scroll and depart with a great noise (Revelation 6:14; 2 Peter 3:10). The entire surface of the planet will then be recreated into a beautiful new Earth with no more seas (though there will likely still be bodies of water), no more pollution, and no more Devil, for he will have been cast into “the lake of fire” (Revelation 20:7–10; 21:1).

13. The Great White Throne judgment

After the climactic Battle of Gog and Magog, the unsaved of all ages will be resurrected for the final Great White Throne judgment, where “the books are opened” and they will be given their final sentences according to their works and assigned to their places in the hereafter (Revelation 20:11–13). The worst and most cruel and wicked will be sent to Hell or Purgatory for punishment and purging, while those who tried to be good but were unsaved because they had not heard the Gospel, whose names will be found in the Book of Life, will be given a chance to receive Jesus and enjoy the marvelous new Earth (2 Peter 3:9; 1 Timothy 2:4; 1 Peter 3:18–19).

14. The new Heaven and new Earth

God’s great heavenly city will then descend from above to the beautiful, re-created planet Earth, and God Himself will dwell *with us*, right here on earth (Revelation 21:1–3). The heavenly city will measure nearly 1,500 miles (2,400 kilometers) long, 1,500 miles wide, and 1,500 miles high (Revelation 21:16).

The entire city is made of pure gold, like clear glass (Revelation 21:18), and through those transparent walls we will be able to see out onto a beautiful, fully restored and re-created earth, which will be populated by new nations who will truly have learned the righteousness, goodness, and love of God. And eventually, because of God’s mercy and justice, all punishment on earth and under the earth will end. Almost everyone who has ever lived will finally be reconciled to God and live either with the elect within the heavenly city or else outside the city. “For God is not willing that *any* should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9). “Who desires *all* men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:4). “That at the name of Jesus *every* knee should bow ... and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:10–11).

Almost everyone who has ever lived will finally be reconciled to God and live either with the elect within the heavenly city or else outside the city.

Will you enjoy the Rapture, the wedding party, the millennial heaven-on-earth, and God’s eternal, heavenly city? Are you one of the *saved* who will be allowed to live in that great city? Receive Jesus as your Savior, if you haven’t already, and you’ll be granted instant, permanent citizenship to that great golden city and be given a foretaste of what Heaven and eternal life will be like, right here and now! ◇

A STRONG

or a woman of strength?

WOMAN

- A strong woman works out every day to keep her body in shape.
- A woman of strength kneels in prayer to keep her soul in shape.
- A strong woman isn't afraid of anything.
- A woman of strength shows courage in spite of her fear.
- A strong woman won't let anyone get the best of her.
- A woman of strength gives the best of herself to everyone.
- A strong woman makes mistakes and avoids the same in the future.
- A woman of strength realizes life's mistakes can also be God's blessings and capitalizes on them.
- A strong woman walks surefootedly.
- A woman of strength knows God will catch her if she falls.
- A strong woman wears a look of confidence on her face.
- A woman of strength wears grace.
- A strong woman has faith that she is strong enough for the journey.
- A woman of strength has faith that it is in the journey that she will become strong.

—AUTHOR UNKNOWN

If you haven't yet met the Man who has the power to change any life, forgive any wrong, heal any heartache, and give heavenly happiness here and now and in Heaven to come, you can do so right now by praying the following:

Dear Jesus, I open my life and heart to You now and accept You as my Savior. Please forgive me for all the wrongs I've done, give me a fresh start, and help me get to know You and Your love. Amen. ◇

FEEDING READING

God's guide to parenting

Teach your children in love.

- 1 Corinthians 16:14
- Ephesians 6:4
- Colossians 3:21

Teach your children God's Word.

- Deuteronomy 6:7
- Deuteronomy 11:18–19
- Proverbs 22:6
- Isaiah 38:19b
- 2 Timothy 3:15

The good influence of godly parents, and resultant blessings:

- Deuteronomy 12:28
- Proverbs 20:7
- 1 Kings 9:4–5
- 2 Chronicles 26:4
- 2 Timothy 1:5

The bad results of being an indulgent parent:

- 1 Samuel 3:13
- Proverbs 29:15b

Severe warning against offending children's faith:

- Matthew 18:6

Examples of motherly love:

- Hebrews 11:23
- 1 Samuel 1:22–28; 2:18–19
- 1 Kings 3:23–27
- 2 Kings 4:17–20,27
- Isaiah 49:15a
- Matthew 15:22–28
- John 19:17–18,25

Examples of fatherly love:

- Genesis 37:33–35
- Mark 5:22–23
- Luke 15:20–24

Thank you, dear parents...

for being part of the miracle of bringing new lives into the world;
for loving the children I have entrusted to your care;
for opening your hearts and lives to these gifts of joy;
for teaching them that I am love by your own loving examples;
for giving them a listening ear and a shoulder to cry on;
for comforting them when they hurt and need extra tender loving care;
for giving of yourselves for them, asking nothing in return, which teaches them unselfishness and self-sacrifice;
for showing mercy, even when they least deserve it, that they might understand My mercy and forgiveness;
for praying for them in all things big and small, that they might learn the power of prayer;
for leaning on Me when your own strength runs out, which teaches them that My grace and strength are always enough;
for never losing faith, which teaches them the rewards of faith;
for holding on to the promises of My Word, that they too might learn to put their trust in Me;
for giving them back to Me, knowing that I always care for My own;
for loving them unconditionally, no matter where their choices may take them;
for helping them grow into men and women we can all be proud of.

FROM JESUS WITH LOVE