

MOTHER, THE GUIDE

I have often contemplated I Timothy 5:14, *"I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully."* I want to focus on the phrase, *"guide the house."* This most auspicious phrase carries a powerful responsibility. I am overwhelmed and in awe of mothers whom I have known who have fulfilled this role that God gave them so beautifully. Mother as the guide means that she is a:

1. Conductor

A mother is assigned to conduct her children into the sheepfold of God. The word translated "guide" in I Timothy 5:14 is from the Greek word "ago" which is translated different ways: "bring" in John 10:16, "leadeth" in Romans 2:4 and "bringing" in Hebrews 2:10. In all three instances it has to do with God guiding sinners into salvation and ultimate glory with Him. This word can just as easily be translated "conduct."

From this usage we see mothers can become one of God's chief recruiting agents for the Kingdom of God. Billy Sunday said, "The last thing you can take from a boy is that which he learned at his mother's knee." Paul said to Timothy, *"...I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also"* (II Timothy 1:5). The word "unfeigned" means genuine and sincere. Even as mothers naturally see to their child's physical needs, the Christian mother gives her children the sincere milk of the Word. *"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby"* (I Peter 2:2). Solomon admonishes, *"My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother"* (Proverbs 1:8). *"My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother"* (Proverbs 6:20). Dad lays down the law and Mom enforces the law. And what is the ultimate goal of the law? *"Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith"* (Galatians 3:24).

As a mother understands her assignment from God, she likewise conducts herself in a most holy manner of life. *"Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies"* (Proverbs 31:10). She is priceless in her virtue. I

Peter 3: 1-6 admonishes the women to be as the holy women of old. In the same way the Bible says in Proverbs 31:21, *"She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet."* The godly mother will live in such a way, witness in such a way and pray in such a way that her children are covered by the blood of Jesus.

Mother as the guide means she is a:

2. Corrector

The word "guide" is also translated "to lead by laying hold of." It was used in this sense in Matthew 21:7, Luke 19:35 and Mark 11:7 when referring to the way a donkey is to be led. A mother is to take the reigns of a child's life especially in the early days and lead him along. Like a farmer or rancher would break an animal, the mother breaks the stubborn heart that is in need of taming. Proverbs 13:24 says, *"He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes."* The word "betimes" is an old word meaning "before the usual or expected time or early." Proverbs 19:18 tells us the benefit of early discipline: *"Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying."* Proverbs 22:15 tells us, *"Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him."* Proverbs 29:17 says, *"Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul."* Proverbs 23:13 informs us, *"Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die."* Proverbs 29:15 says, *"The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame."*

Mother as the guide means that she is a:

3. Comforter

The word "guide" means to lead by accompanying or to lead with oneself. Jesus said, *"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come"* (John 16:13). This was in reference to the Holy Spirit of whom Jesus prophesied six verses earlier, *"Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you"* (John 16:7). There is an old saying that said, "Since God could not be everywhere, He sent us mothers." This may sound sweet, but it is incorrect, for God says, *"Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD. "* (Jeremiah 23:24).

We are safe in saying that a mother is a mighty vessel in the hand of God and she is one of our Lord's best representatives in the earth.

As a rule a child's first choice when she or he is hurting is Mom. From bumps, bruises to broken hearts, Mom is the "go to" person. Mom goes with the child into arena of this world. She softens the blow and sometimes takes the hit that the kid would have received. Kevin Durant of the Oklahoma Thunder was given the Most Valuable Player Award by the NBA. It's hard to believe that at one time he was labeled "Mr Unreliable" by The Oklahoman. How does a young man come from that title to Mr. MVP? I suggest it is found in the words of his acceptance speech directed to his mother Wanda, "We weren't supposed to be here." Durant said. "You made us believe. You kept us off the street. You put clothes on our backs. You put food on the table. When you didn't eat, you made sure we ate and you went to sleep hungry. You sacrificed for us. You're the real MVP." He also said "I want to thank God for changing my life; He let me really realize what life is all about. Basketball is just a platform for me to inspire people and I realize that. ...You're the First and the Last, The Alpha and Omega." I would like to think his mother shaped his view of God.

Finally, I see mother as the guide who works hand in hand with Christ as a...

4. Constrainer

"For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead" (II Corinthians 5:14). The word "constraineth" is from the Greek word "sunecho" which means to hold together and to hold completely.

A Christian mother teaches her child to love Jesus with all his or her heart. This love is given to us *"...because He first loved us"* (I John 4:19). When we come to terms with that love, we are changed forever. This is what holds us together; this is what holds us completely. *"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it"* (Proverbs 22:6). The mother is not strong enough to hold her children together or to hold them completely; she must direct them to Christ, who alone has the power. In my most difficult times my mom would say, "I'm going to turn you over to God." I discovered God's chastening hand was a loving hand that became a constraining hand. There is not a biblical conviction my parents have that I do not also share at this hour. Dad has been in heaven now for twenty-five years and Mom has long past the ability to keep constant surveillance over me. Going back to the speech given by Kevin Durant, he said, "I don't know about you

guys, but I tend to look back to what brought me here." I would like to say, Thank you to our Christian mothers, because it is not "what", but rather "who" brought us here. Through Christ, it was you dear mothers.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Johnny Pope". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.