

## Influential Mothers pass it On

A mother is the Bible's most honoured woman, and great emphasis is put on the influence of mothers. The word "mother" or "mothers" appears in the Bible almost 300 times. A mother's influence is also expressed in **Ezekiel 16:44**, where we find the phrase, *"As is the mother, so is her daughter."* Let's look at some of the noteworthy and influential mothers mentioned in the Bible....

### Mary and Elisabeth

Probably, the world's most admired mother is Mary, mother of Jesus. Her cousin Elisabeth was also a very special person, who in her old age gave birth to John the Baptist. Mary visited Elizabeth for about three months while both were approaching motherhood. With this in common their age difference became insignificant. So they joyfully planned for the birth of their sons, who were going to be born around the same time. The two mothers-to-be found comfort in each other's company because of their strong faith in God.

### Salome

Another New Testament mother was Salome, mother of the disciples James and John. A few scholars suggest that she was a sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus. Certainly, she and her sons were very close to Jesus. We think of her as an ambitious woman. She was so desirous for her sons to enjoy extra prestige during Jesus' ministry that she made a special public request to Him. (**Matthew 20:21**) *"Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on your right hand, and the other on the left, in your kingdom."*

However, Jesus gently rebuked her, (**Matthew 20:23**) *"To sit on My right hand, and on My left, is not Mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared by My Father."* We should not be too severe on her, for she remained one of the most faithful followers of Jesus right to the end. Evidently she handed down a rich spiritual legacy to her sons. It was to Salome's son John that Jesus entrusted His own mother at the end; and it is commonly agreed that James was the first apostle to be martyred.

### Hannah

Hannah trusted God enough to leave her young son Samuel in the House of the Lord at Shiloh, *"I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he lives he shall be lent to the Lord"* (**1 Samuel 1:28**). Hannah had named her son Samuel, meaning *"asked of the Lord."* She had prayed for his birth and made a promise that if she was rewarded with a son, she would set apart her child to God. Then when he was about three years old, she took him to Eli the priest for training. Once a year all the family went to Shiloh for the yearly sacrifices and each time Hannah took with her a robe made of blue fabric for Samuel to wear. I'm sure Hannah's love for her son went into each stitch.

### Jochebed

Jochebed was the mother of Aaron, Moses, and Miriam. Her name lives on, not by how many big things she

accomplished, but by how wisely and well she served as a mother. She was able to save Moses from the Pharaoh's edict of death for Hebrew male children. For the first three months of his life, she kept him hidden. Then she wove an ark of bulrushes and put Moses in it to await the coming of Pharaoh's daughter who took pity on the child. When she sought a nurse for the child, it was Jochabed who was given the task of caring for him until he was seven. Perhaps we can trace back the gentle character of Moses to the influence of this devout mother.

## **Sarah**

We should also look at the beloved wife of Abraham, Sarah, who was to be the Mother of Nations. Her son Isaac, was born in her old age (the Bible's first story of a miracle conception). Sarah's life was one of continuous trial, but through it she emerged as a woman of faith, one who was a beloved wife and who finally became a favoured and highly regarded mother.

## **Eunice and Lois**

I kept this story for last because we can all learn from these two mothers. The Apostle Paul loved Timothy as if he were his own son. In **2 Timothy 1:5** he writes, *"I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also."* Eunice and Lois seem to step right out from the pages of the Bible to tell us that nothing is more important in a mother's life than the early training of her children. They were probably very familiar with these two verses, *"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."* And, *"I have taught you in the way of wisdom; I have led you in right paths."* Timothy was only about fifteen when he left to go with Paul and Silas to preach the gospel. We can only imagine the pride, coupled with deep sadness, these two women must have experienced as they bid him farewell.

So what exactly can we all learn from these two mothers? Candidly... That we all have something to pass on! **2 Timothy 1:5-7**, *"I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also. For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid or fearful, but gives us power, love and self-discipline (a sound mind)."*

Mothers, you have a great legacy to pass on. Your "faith walk" has a ripple effect, and this is marked by an eager motivation to discover, embrace and pursue a deepening intimacy with the Lord. This is, an active visible connection between your faith and everyday living. And, its noticeable mostly through your perseverance – an unwillingness to give up on the goodness and faithfulness of God. Mothers, you have a God-given ability to influence generations! The destiny God has mapped out for you is amazing. Yet your personal journey is only the beginning of the work that God wants to do through you. In fact, God is equipping you to stand the tests of time, so that your offspring may benefit from what God has placed in you. Therefore, you can be sure that He is not finished with you yet! *"He who began a good work in you is faithful to complete it."* (**Philippians 1:6**)

Notice also that God has a unique way of pouring Himself into you and working through you. So it's up to you to nurture that gift and not neglect it. God wants us all to be fully released into our calling and destiny. However, a **spirit of timidity** (which is associated with fear, worthlessness, lack of courage, and the inclination to hold back and be dominated) is not a sign of submission and reverence to God. It is time to break that curse over your life. For your children's sake! God is filling us with His Spirit so that our lives might be marked by; explosive, influential, **power**. Not fear and timidity. Fear and timidity does not represent a sound mind! Rather, unconditional **love** that honours God first and effectively touches people's lives is a **sound mind** (a mark of self-discipline). Yes, we are talking about a sound and disciplined mind that never allows itself to be deceived by any temporal circumstances (the stresses of life). Why? Because perfect love casts out all fear! **1 John 4:18** says, "*There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. So he who fears has not been made perfect in love.*" You can't truly love God and at the same time fear for your future, or be in bondage to your circumstances. There is no fear in love!

The message that comes across clearly in this passage of scripture is this... *Our mental attitudes can seriously effect future generations.* This is part of God's plan! What the Father is accomplishing in us, He is also wanting to see passed on through us. However, a word of caution, this works both in the positive and the negative. Our positive attitudes can **influence** our children's children, but so too can our negative habits.

Regarding Eunice and Luis, we can be sure that their attitudes were 'right' before the Lord, and this made them the mothers God wanted them to be. And they were both women that were honoured by being mentioned in the Bible. However, remember this, their glory (honour) was seen in Timothy. Where is your glory being seen?