

Parenting Tips from Some of History's Most Famous Mothers
Luke 1:26-38; Luke 1:57-60; and 2 Timothy 1:5

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Introduction: You have heard me say many times before that the Bible is our guide for every area of life. Indeed, the Bible gives parents a guide. Many Scriptures come to mind. Today, we will examine the testimony of three New Testament mothers, consider a common thread in each of their lives, and make some application from that common thread.

Text: (Luke 1:26-38) ²⁶ Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!"

²⁹ But when she saw *him*, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. ³⁰ Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. ³² He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. ³³ And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."

³⁴ Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?"

³⁵ And the angel answered and said to her, "*The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.* ³⁶ Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. ³⁷ For with God nothing will be impossible."

³⁸ Then Mary said, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

(Luke 1:57-60) ⁵⁷ Now Elizabeth's full time came for her to be delivered, and she brought forth a son. ⁵⁸ When her neighbors and relatives heard how the Lord had shown great mercy to her, they rejoiced with her. ⁵⁹ So it was, on the eighth day, that they came to circumcise the child; and they would have called him by the name of his father, Zacharias. ⁶⁰ His mother answered and said, "No; he shall be called John."

(2 Timothy 1:5) ⁵ when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also.

Introduction: *TIME* magazine ran this week "The *TIME* 100: The World's Most Influential People." The usual suspects were on the list—politicians, entertainers, business leaders, and even one preacher (Rick Warren). However, in my opinion, *Time* left one of the most influential people off of their list. The list should have included "Mothers." Perhaps no one influences a person, either positively or negatively, more than a mother.

Our Scripture reading today has highlighted the testimony of three different mothers—some of history's famous mothers.

Luke 1:38—Mary, the mother of Jesus

Luke 1:60—Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist

2 Timothy 1:5—the grandmother and mother of Timothy

The Common Denominator in these three testimonies? Faith

Only with faith can we ...

1. Trust God with our children.

- Your child's potential is tied to God's providence.

All three of these mothers had to come to a point where they could trust God with their children. We believe that God has a plan for every person. We must believe that God has a plan for our children. This requires faith.

The name John means "The LORD is gracious" or "Jehovah's gift." Every child is a gift from God. That is part of His Providence.

Notice the phrase after the question in verse 66. "And the hand of the LORD was with him." The reason that John had such unlimited potential is that the hand of the LORD was upon him. As we think about these children that are being dedicated as well as all of our children, remember that each one was created by God for a reason. God knew each one of us, according to the Bible, while we were yet in our mother's womb.

As we think about our children, it is fun to think about what God has planned for these children. A couple of things are for certain. One, God intends for each one of us including all of these children to have a personal relationship with Him. In addition, God promises that He has a plan for each child. As we think about this question, please know that it is a question of God's providence.

Several years ago, I read about a young, tired father who was getting into his car with his three-month old Michael and 21 month old Mindy. Putting Mindy into her car seat first, the father put Michael, who was nestled in his infant carrier seat, onto the top of the car. Having placed his daughter into the child restraint, he got in and drove out of the parking garage with little Michael still on top of the car. Once on the freeway, the father glanced in his rearview mirror when he realized Michael was not where he ought to be. Realizing his horrific mistake, he frantically turned around to make his way back to where he had started. Another gentleman had stopped when he saw the baby come off the top of the car. James Boothville was the person who stopped. He would later say, "When the man drove up, I took the uninjured baby in the undamaged car seat and gave him to the petrified father." When I think about the young father, I immediately have two questions. The first question is "I wonder whether he ever told his wife about the incident?" The second question is "I wonder what that child is going to turn out to be?"

We've got to do our part as parents, as we are about to observe, but first we must trust our children to the Heavenly Father. Moses' mother trusted God by placing the baby in a basket to float him in the river. Samuel's mother trusted God by dedicating young Samuel to the LORD. We must trust God.

2. **Teach our children about the ways of God.**

- Your child's potential is tied to your preparation.

Again, in all three of these examples from the Bible, the implication is that these mothers taught their children the ways of God, both in example and by instruction. Each of these mothers modeled the ways of God in their own life.

God gave us a wonderful principle in Deuteronomy 6:4-7.

⁴ "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD *is* one! ⁵ You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

⁶ "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. ⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.

This passage gives us a practical way to teach our children God's ways. We must have scheduled times of teaching and spontaneous times of teaching.

Susannah Wesley, mother of such famous men as John and Charles Wesley, exemplified the importance of a mother's influence. John is credited with initiating a great spiritual awakening. Charles is credited with writing over 9,000 hymns. Susannah gave birth to 17 other children. Though 9 of those children died before they would reach the age of 2, Susannah was incredibly disciplined in the teaching of her children. She taught the children with manuals on Christian doctrine that she personally wrote. In addition to a rigorous education, Susannah dedicated herself to spend one hour a week with each child. When they left home, she remained very much involved in their spiritual lives with the writing of letters. What a model of the importance of teaching our children the ways of God.

Susannah Wesley's testimony actually brings us to the final point this morning.

3. **Testify to our children about their own need for faith.**

- Your child's potential is ultimately tied to their faith profession.

You can't force your children to trust in Jesus, but I believe you can influence them to trust in Jesus.

Someone once asked a full-time mom, "And what is it that you do, my dear?" The mother responded, "I am socializing two *homo sapiens* into the dominant values of the Judeo-Christian tradition, in order that they might be instruments for the transformation of the social order into the kind of eschatological utopia that God willed from the beginning of creation." She then added, "And what do you do?"

Mothers, Dads, Grandparents, anyone who is in a position to shape the life of a child, your greatest accomplishment will be to point them to Christ. You best do that by modeling your own relationship and commitment to Christ. Maybe that's where you have to begin today.