

Mother's Day 2024

“I am 30 years old, I am unemployed, and I am living off the very end of my savings. I switched jobs 3 times in the last 2 years, ... I have no 401k, ..., I have no desire to get married or have kids for the foreseeable future, ... I feel like I am completely irrelevant. I am so not where I thought I would be at 30 years old.”

I recently heard that testimony from a woman who seemed to be very disappointed with her life. I feel sorry for her. She's made a series of decisions that have resulted in significant failure and disappointment. I wonder what her testimony would be if she'd have gotten married and had a couple of kids. I wonder if she would feel “completely irrelevant” if she were taking care of a husband and children instead of working a series of dead-end jobs.

That woman has thus far avoided both marriage and children. Many people today, married or unmarried, are purposefully avoiding having children. You've perhaps heard of the “Dual income no children” arrangement where a couple gets married and intentionally has no children. Because they have no children, they have more money to spend on themselves. I wonder how they'll feel about that when they are 70 or 80 years old and have no family to care for them, no grandkids running around, no one to inherit their wealth.

Because people are choosing not to marry and not have children, the birth rate has been decreasing in the US for many years. In the 1960s, the average family had about 4 kids. Today, the birthrate in the US is 1.62. The replacement rate is 2.1 children per family. That means that our population is decreasing—except for immigration.

Many women are choosing not to become mothers. Some choose not to get married; some who marry choose not to have children. And sadly, many women have children without getting married; those children grow up in an unstable home.

Today is Mother's Day, so we want to celebrate and encourage the biblical model of motherhood. People choose many other models for living today, but I would encourage all young women to plan on getting married and having children. Plan to assume the traditional roles of wife, mother, and homemaker. For those who already are married and have children, I'd encourage you to appreciate your privileges and responsibilities as mothers.

Fulfilling the roles of wife and mother is a good way to avoid the disappointment and irrelevance expressed by the woman I mentioned earlier. Fulfillment is found in doing what God designed you to do. There can hardly be anything more relevant and meaningful than having children and raising them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Today I want to consider several biblical truths to focus on this Mother's Day:

I. It's good to be a woman.

I can't speak from experience on that issue, but I can affirm what the Bible says about it. The Bible verifies the value of women.

A. Being a woman is an aspect of the image of God.

Gen 1:26 *Let us make man in our image.*

Gen 1:27 God created them *male and female.*

Being female is a reflection of God's image in humanity. God designed the woman intentionally and for a good purpose.

B. God's original intent was for two sexes to exist.

1. Man was made for woman and woman for man. The two go together.

2. The full human experience requires both male and female. Adam was incomplete without Eve; it was not good for the man to be alone. Eve was the helper suitable, complementary for the man.

3. We should have no confusion about these issues. The world is very confused about this issue these days, but we should not be. There are only two sexes, and the sexes are distinct.

C. There is perfect human equality between men and women.

1. We recognize different roles and responsibilities for men and women. In the home and in the church, leadership is supposed to be male, not female. God's plan for authority is often male.

2. But that does not mean that men are superior to women in terms of their humanity, value, worth, or dignity. All humans are perfectly equal in their human worth/value.

D. Women enjoy certain privileges.

1. Bearing children is a great privilege. The most significant privilege that women have is that they can bear children. The capacity to produce another human being from within your own body is an amazing ability.

Sadly, many women have been indoctrinated to believe that they should avoid having children as long as possible. It's ironic that, many who say that they don't want to have children suddenly change their minds in their late 20s-early 30s. That biological clock suddenly becomes important.

Many women learn, after a few years of working, and especially after having a child or two, that they'd rather be stay-at-home moms than work in the marketplace.

Recent survey: 56% of women with a child under 18 would prefer to stay home and care for their home and family.

For many decades, feminists have claimed that getting married and having kids is the worst of all choices. Being a stay-at-home mother and homemaker is nothing but drudgery and boredom according to feminists. They tell us that meaning and purpose is found in working a job. But that's not what the Bible says, and that's not what many women say, either. Many women say that their greatest sense of meaning and value comes from bearing children, making a house a home, and caring for family. So we dispute and disagree with feminist claims against motherhood.

2. Caring for children is a great privilege.
 - a) Caring for children is obviously a lot of work and inconvenience. We know that child care is filled with much mundane drudgery.
 - b) But there are also great rewards that go along with being at home with your kids and caring for them.
 - c) Someone is going to have great influence over your children, and usually it's best for the mother to have the primary influence.
 - d) With so many evil influences in the world today, parents need to be very intentional about shielding their children from the wickedness so common today.

3. Being the object of a man's love, protection, and provision is a great privilege.

- a) The biblical pattern is traditional marriage—a man leaves his family and cleaves unto his wife. They establish a new household, and in the providence of God, may have children.

Mt 19:4-6 [Jesus] said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made [them] at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they two shall be one flesh? ... What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

That's the normal, traditional, correct pattern; that's the model we uphold and promote.

- b) If you marry the right kind of man, you will enjoy love, protection, and provision. Most traditional men want to provide that for their wives. Obviously, you don't want to marry a man who can't or won't provide these things.
- c) Even the best of men fail from time to time in fulfilling their obligations. They fail to love, nurture, protect, and provide, or they come up short of what they should have done. No one is perfect, but some men are fairly good at providing for and protecting their families.
- d) Sadly, many women today don't bother with getting married. They have children without the benefit of marriage. But along with single motherhood go all sorts of problems.
- e) If you follow the biblical pattern that Jesus affirmed, you will enjoy the privilege of love, protection, and provision for yourself and your children.

E. The Bible portrays women in a positive light.

The virtuous woman of Prov 31 sets an ideal for women. The virtuous woman is portrayed in very positive terms. There is nothing comparable for men in the Bible (other than Jesus).

Pr 12:4 An excellent wife is the crown of her husband, ...

Pr 18:22 *He who finds a wife finds a good thing, and obtains favor from the LORD.*

Pr 19:14 *... a prudent wife is from the LORD.*

Trans: So the Bible presents marriage and motherhood in very positive terms. Young women should aspire to these roles. The biblical model is the best pattern to follow. The unsaved world cannot provide a better way to live.

II. It's good to be a mother.

A. The Bible is uniformly positive in its regard for mothers.

1. We find some bad mothers and grandmothers in the Bible, but not many.
2. Most of the mothers who we read about in the Bible are positive characters. E.g., Hannah, Elizabeth, Mary
3. The Bible describes motherhood in positive terms. In fact, God compares himself to a mother who comforts her child.

Isa 49:15 *Can a woman forget her nursing child, and not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may forget, Yet I will not forget you.*

Isa 66:13 *As one whom his mother comforts, So I will comfort you; ...*

B. The Bible affirms that the normal course of events is for women to get married and have children.

We uphold the biblical, traditional, conservative model for women as reflected in passages like

1 Tim 5:14 *Therefore I desire that [the] younger [widows] marry, bear children, manage the house, ...*

Titus 2:3-5 *the older women likewise, [must] be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things—... young women [should] love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.*

1 Pet 3:4-5 *[Let your adornment] be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands,*

Those passages express God's general intent for women; that's the biblical model that is suitable for most women. Sadly, many women—even many Christian women—deny and reject that clear biblical model. But that is God's pattern and it usually works out best when we follow God's expectations.

1. Of course, some women do not get married, and that's fine as well. Some have the gift of singleness. Some, in the providence of God, remain single. Being single has its own set of privileges and freedoms.

2. And some women get married but do not have children.

a) Some don't want children, which I think is a shame. Christian couples should have children unless providentially hindered.

“Dual income no children” is not a Christian philosophy. A woman might be able to work outside the home, but the ideal situation is what we see reflected in Prov 31—the wife is taking care of the home and of the children. She may be able to engage in business beyond the home, but her main concern is her husband and her children.

b) Some women can't have children. In the providence of God, for various reasons, some couples cannot have children.

(1) Some are satisfied not to have children. They don't consider any other means of acquiring children.

(2) Some couples become foster parents. Some seek to adopt. These are certainly biblical options for those who want kids.

(3) Some seek other ways of having children.

I'd like to say a couple of things about options that some couples seek when they want children but can't seem to get them naturally

(a) Some choose IVF. There's been a bit of talk in the news about that lately; it's a rather controversial issue.

The primary problem with IVF, as I see it, is that it usually creates a number of embryos that end up in a freezer somewhere. Some of these are eventually destroyed. There are programs out there that help adopt these frozen embryos, but many are still destroyed. If we believe that humanity begins at conception, we should be opposed to the destruction of the products of IVF.

- (b) The other option that some women pursue is surrogacy, which amounts to renting a womb. There are various options involved in surrogacy, and many of them are not optimal, especially for the child. While surrogacy could be beneficial in rare cases, for the most part, I would not recommend it. The practice is fraught with moral perils.

What I would recommend for couples who can't have children but want them is adoption. Sadly, adoption is often a long, costly, and convoluted process, and outcomes are sometimes not very good. But for couples who cannot have children in the normal way, adoption is still probably the best option.

And it is often a great blessing for both the adoptive parents and for the children who get adopted. In most cases, adopted children will be raised by people who want them and love them.

- c. For those women who have children, one of the great privileges and responsibilities of parenthood is raising children. Mothers in particular have a tremendous set of responsibilities. Both parents have these responsibilities, but the bulk of the work in raising children often goes to the mother.

What are some of these responsibilities?

- 1. Provide for the physical needs of their children. Parents are responsible for food, shelter, clothing, medical treatment, etc. Mothers usually take care of the day-to-day welfare of their children.

2. Provide for the spiritual needs of the child.
 - a) Deut 6:6-7 *And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.*
 - b) Proverbs 22:6 *Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it.*
 - c) Eph 6:4 *bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*

We hope that our children, in response to their training, will “rise up and call [their mothers] blessed” (Prov 31:28). We pray and hope that our children will “not forsake the law of [their] mother” (Prov 1:8; 6:20). I.e., we trust that if we raise our children right, they will not depart from the faith. Sadly, sometimes they do. Some depart temporarily (e.g., the Prodigal Son), and some depart permanently. But our hope and prayer is that they remain within the faith that we taught them.

We must be intentional in teaching them the faith to our children. One of the benefits of home schooling is that parents can take a much more active role in teaching the Christian faith to their children.

3. Provide for the education of the child.

Education is a major responsibility that parents must take seriously. Christian parents these days cannot simply send their kids to the government schools and think that everything will be fine. Those days when we could trust public schools are long gone. Most of us realize that the best interests of the children require that we provide education outside of the public schools.

4. Provide for the preparation for the child’s future life.

We want our children to be well-prepared for adult life. Part of our job as parents is to prepare our children for adulthood. We have to ease them out of the nest slowly. And especially for girls, much of that preparation falls to the mother. The goal should be that their girls are prepared to take on adult responsibilities when they leave the home. The mother's job is to prepare her girls to be wives and mothers. We prepare our children to "leave and cleave."

We all know that mothers have profound responsibilities. The best case is for mothers and fathers to cooperate in achieving these goals.

In our day and age, when many women don't want to get married or have children, we must encourage and celebrate those women who want both marriage and children. While many women forsake marriage and children, and while many married couples are pursuing a "dual income no children" lifestyle, Christian couples should plan to have children unless providentially hindered. Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth. And once you have children, it's your obligation to raise them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Serving as a mother is a great responsibility but also a great privilege. If you are a mother now or are planning to become a mother, realize that you are doing very important work. Very few things in life are more significant than having children and raising them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. It's a difficult job, but no Christian mother would ever say anything like "I feel like I am completely irrelevant." If you are very relevant and necessary.

If you are fulfilling the biblical model of motherhood, you deserve recognition and praise, especially on mother's day.

Pr 31:28 Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her.