

Five Sustaining Steps for Faithful Moms

Isaiah 26 (read Isaiah 26:1-9a)

Introduction

- A. Today is Mother's Day 2008. Our text is Isaiah 26. Here we will see five rich, simple, and yet deep, sustaining truths that enable all of us to live a faithful, fruitful Christian life.

1. My aim is to encourage us all. More specifically, I aim to serve our moms who are serving the purposes of God by raising the next generation. Thank you for being faithful!

Titus 2:3-5 (ESV) Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, [4] and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, [5] to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled.

2. Here at Living Hope we love children and moms. Moms, you may be tempted to think you are insignificant or second class. Not in God's eyes, not in our eyes.

To be a mother is by no means second class. Men may have the *authority* in the home, but the women have the *influence*. The mother, more than the father, is the one who molds and shapes those little lives from day one. She takes them into her own heart and nurses them from the earliest moments of their lives. As they grow, she is the one who is there more of the time, binding up their little wounds and taking them through the issues of life, day in and day out. And the father usually shows up after work to pontificate and issue orders. Oh, he can play with the kids and teach them things and discipline them when they need it and even win their affection in the process. But he will rarely have the same place in their hearts as mom. John MacArthur in *Successful Christian Parenting*, p 194

- B. Parenting is a trip like no other trip. God entrusts the lives of eternal souls into our imperfect hands for a very brief season of training and influence in godliness.

1. The home is God's school and we are all students. Because we invest heavily in our children we have a vested interest in the outcome.

3 John 1:4 (ESV) I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.

2. That's a large statement. No greater joy! If I were to speculate on a greater joy it might be saying that my grand-children are walking in the truth (multi-generational).

- C. Parenting can make or break our hearts. For example:

Proverbs 23:25 (ESV) Let your father and mother be glad; let her who bore you rejoice.

Proverbs 15:20 (ESV) A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish man despises his mother.

1. My title is **Five Sustaining Steps for Faithful Moms**. Because our hearts drift we need reminded about the fundamentals (the essential basics).

I. First sustaining step: Trust in the Lord.

Isaiah 26:4-5 (ESV) You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you. Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord God is an everlasting rock.

- A. Trust in the Lord and by implication do not trust in yourself. Why? Because God is an everlasting rock and we are not. We are creatures.

Proverbs 3:5-7 (ESV) Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. [6] In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. [7] Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord, and turn away from evil.

1. Make straight our path? I seem to meander a bit ("He shall direct your paths").

We may "be led" for the exercise of our faith, "in a way that we know not" (Isaiah 42:16) - perhaps in a way of disappointment, or even of *mistake*. Yet no step well prayed over will bring ultimate regret. Though the promise will not render us infallible; our very error will be overruled for deeper humiliation and self-knowledge; and thus even this mysterious direction will in the end be gratefully acknowledged, "He led me forth in the right way." (Ps107:7) Charles Bridges in *Proverbs Commentary*, p 25

B. Those who trust in God are kept in perfect peace. The mom whose mind is stayed on God is kept in perfect peace.

1. Moms, the battle you will fight is not against your children (or husband). The battle is fought in your heart and it is the battle of faith vs. unbelief.
2. The power of your example will leave an imprint in the hearts and minds of those little people you are loving and training.

Ex: Nothing like seeing your child do something that mimics you. Because more is caught than taught, therefore, moms you are always instructing.

C. Trust in the Lord because He is faithful. To trust in God is to wait on the Lord.

1. Wait? Isn't that what we do at a traffic light or checkout or microwave or ride?
2. To wait on the Lord (described in verse 8) is to trust Him. To wait on God is to think correctly, to do what is right, and not to run ahead of God and His ways (anger).

Isaiah 40:28-31 (ESV) Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. [29] He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength. [30] Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; [31] but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.

3. Moms, you are about the glorious work of raising an oak tree, not a scrawny shrub. This work takes time and perseverance. Trust God to be faithful.

II. Second sustaining step: Honor God alone (exclusively).

Isaiah 26:8 (ESV) In the path of your judgments, O Lord, we wait for you; your name and remembrance are the desire of our soul.

A. Moms, a moment of meditation might be wise. What is the desire of your soul?

1. A day off, sleeping all night, sleeping all day, a break, some peace and quiet, no diapers, some help (maid or nanny). Perhaps helpful; but shortsighted.

B. What does it look like when we say that we desire the Lord's name and remembrance?

1. This means we are saying that we want God to help us demonstrate His character in everything we do and say. It means God matters most.

1 Corinthians 10:31 (ESV) So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

2. Never under-estimate the power of your example. Surely the gospel will be ever-present. We cannot expect our children to be effected by the gospel if we aren't effected.

Ex: If your children are older, and more concerned about you than God, something is amiss because their greatest concern ought to be God.

III. Third sustaining step: Believe God is working.

Isaiah 26:12 (ESV) O Lord, you will ordain peace for us; you have done for us all our works.

- A. Rest in God's ability to do that which we cannot do. Everything that we accomplish is by the grace of God. Apart from Jesus Christ we are incapable of any good work.

Psalms 100:5 (ESV) For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.

1. Never, never, never, ever give up on your children (or anyone). As long as God is seated on His throne, and the sun came up, we have hope.

Ex: Jared's testimony last Sunday at Covenant Fellowship. I wanted to be alone (and most teens pull this way). Don't leave them alone, love them, be godly, watch God work.

- B. God is at work in every situation for your good. In God's inscrutable wisdom He trains us by grace so we have endurance.

James 1:2-4 (ESV) Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, [3] for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. [4] And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

1. You may object to this (I don't want to be perfect and complete). But to trust God, and to honor Him alone, is to desire to be steadfast.
2. It is a comfort to know our children have heard the gospel. Life and death has been placed before them. We need God to work for the lights to come on. So:

IV. Fourth sustaining step: Pray (continually).

Isaiah 26:16 (ESV) O Lord, in distress they sought you; they poured out a whispered prayer when your discipline was upon them.

- A. God disciplines those He loves. It is a part of being a child of God. Pray without ceasing but in particular, pray when you are in distress.

1. Ask God to do the things God does. Pray and rest.

Philippians 4:6-7 (ESV) Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. [7] And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

2. Moms, what might you pray for? Salvation, wisdom, and future spouse (family). Mistakes in our youth carry long consequences.

- B. Pray because a Sovereign God works and He is trustworthy.

V. Fifth and final sustaining step from Isaiah 26: Think about eternity (often).

Isaiah 26:19 (ESV) Your dead shall live; their bodies shall rise. You who dwell in the dust, awake and sing for joy! For your dew is a dew of light, and the earth will give birth to the dead.

- A. We're made for eternity with God and this life is preparation for that life. Life is short and eternity is long. Therefore, we are wise if we live life preparing for that inevitable day.

1 Corinthians 3:10-15 (ESV) According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. [11] For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. [12] Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— [13] each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. [14] If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. [15] If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.

Ex: Building a brick, building a cathedral.

- B. Recent studies show that between 80-90% of Christian youth leave the church by the end of their sophomore year of college. Moms, don't forget eternity.

1. The world will compete with you for your children. When we live with eternity in view our decisions become more focused (husbands, where present, lead the way).

Ex: Education, interests (sports), work, marriage (process).

- C. We work to impart wisdom into our children. Moms, your influence and impact is huge and your labor is not in vain. Your reward for your faithfulness is large.

1. God is working through you powerfully.

Close

- A. There are five sustaining steps for faithful moms (and all of us) from Isaiah 26.
1. Trust in the Lord (always)
 2. Honor God alone
 3. Believe God is working (because He is)
 4. Pray (continually)
 5. Think about eternity (often)