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## Pearl of Wisdom #2

# Love Your Children

*Follow God's example, therefore,  
as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love,  
just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering  
and sacrifice to God.*

*Ephesians 5:1-2*

Hannah demonstrated her love for Samuel every year by stitching him a new coat. Year after year, she would visit the Tabernacle to demonstrate her faith in God as she offered the yearly sacrifice and brought a new coat she had made for Samuel. She would offer two sacrifices: one to God, and then, one to Samuel. What love! "Moreover his mother used to make [Samuel] a little robe, and bring it to him year by year when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice." (1 Samuel 2:19)

Imagine what that coat must have meant to Samuel! He must have looked forward to his mother's yearly visit, waiting for his new coat with such expectation. Throughout the year, Hannah's love for God and Samuel would be displayed through the sacrifice she made over that precious, hand-stitched coat. When we sacrifice our time and energy to love our children, we are worshiping God and offering Him a sweet-smelling aroma.

### **Faith Clothed in Love**

As mothers we must realize that the most important aspect of our lives is our faith clothed in love. As Galatians 5:6 clearly states: "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love." Hannah's faith was clothed in love, as we see in her gift to Samuel, a hand-stitched coat. F.B. Meyer writes of Hannah's loving and sacrificial gift: "Thus parents still make the clothes that their children wear. The little ones almost unconsciously become arrayed in the character that is constantly being shown before their quick and inquisitive eyes." <sup>1</sup> Our sweet little ones watch us, looking for a loving example to follow. He goes on to say:

*By their behavior to each other and to their children; by the ordering of the home-life; by their actions, more than by their words; by the way in which they speak, and spend their leisure hours, and pray—men and women are making the little coats which, for better or worse, their children wear ever after, and perhaps pass down to after generations. <sup>2</sup>*

Our faith, clothed in love and lived out within our home, is where our children learn their habits. Our habits are the clothing of their inner life.

Where are our habits formed? F.B. Meyer explains that our habits are formed: “Not in the mid-passage of life, but at its dawn, not in great crisis, but in daily circumstances; not in life’s arena but in the home, amid the surroundings of earliest childhood.”<sup>3</sup> Our children looking at and mimic us. Who they are is formed before our very eyes—and everything we do needs to be clothed in God’s love, for it is fashioning their very being! Henry Ward Beecher states, “The mother’s heart is the child’s school-room.” So true!

### **The Power of Love**

We cannot underestimate the power of a mother’s love. The love of a mother has the power to transform a child! It has been said: “When people are inspired and loved, they will do most anything.”<sup>4</sup> History proves this true, time and time again—and we see it demonstrated, here, in the life of Samuel.

Why must we love our children? So, the Word of God might not be blasphemed, or spoken evil of! In Titus 2:4-5, Paul exhorts the older women in the church to “to love their husbands, to love their children... that the word of God may not be blasphemed.” Our love represents Christ to those around us; and as mothers, we are the fragrance of Christ to the world. Our lack of love enables the world to speak evil of God and His Word.

As Christian mothers, love should be the supreme characteristic displayed in our life, in our home, with our children—as love is the fruit of God’s Spirit at work in us and proof that we are disciples of Jesus Christ. John writes, “By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35). Love is so important that Paul states that—even if we have all the faith in the world—without love, we are nothing (1 Corinthians 13:2).

The most important reason for us to love our children is so we can demonstrate the power of the gospel. God is love, and we are commanded to abide in His love (1 John 4:16). First John 3:16-18 states: “By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren...My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.” As mothers, we have the great honor of being able to influence our children into the love of God. This is our highest calling!

Amy Carmichael, a Christian missionary to India, was involved in rescuing little girls from temple prostitution. She ended up with an orphanage full of girls and, later, boys, where she ministered to children day in and out. This experience provided her with a great understanding of the power of love in raising children for Christ. She writes:

*What I specially want to bring you is this: Young children and all who do not know our Lord have only one way of knowing*

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*how loving He is. They look at us. If there be any flaw in our love, if we fail them at any point, we make it just so much the harder for them to see, to know, to apprehend, His love. Do not let us fail our children. Love through me, Love of God.<sup>5</sup>*

We are the hands and feet of Jesus, and the love we display towards our children should represent His love!

At the end of his life, D.L. Moody said, “If I could relive my life, I would devote my entire ministry to reaching children for God.”<sup>6</sup> He realized that, in their youth, people are spiritually hungry. Children accept the gospel more easily than adults do, and the gospel has the power to mold and shape the rest of their life! As mothers, we have this high calling within our home: to display the gospel through our love for our children.

### **God’s Sacrificial Love**

What does God’s love look like? It is a sacrificial love. John 3:16 tells us: “For God so loved the world that He *gave* His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” God’s love for us compelled Him to give us up His greatest treasure, His Son, so we might be reconciled to Him. Then, Jesus’s love for the Father and for us led Him to give up His life as a sacrifice— so our sins would be paid in full. And, we are called to love in this same way: “Follow God’s example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.” (Ephesians 5:1-2) We, as mothers, follow God’s example of sacrificial love when we love our children sacrificially. Our love for God should compel us to give our time, energy, and resources, so that our children might be trained in the love of God.

Remember, we are raising prophets for the Lord, like Samuel. If we are to accomplish this great task, we have to love our children enough to make sacrifices that will benefit their soul. Henri Didon, a French preacher, wrote: “We have a great need nowadays of self-sacrificing souls to teach the young generation by their very lives.”<sup>7</sup> We must be willing to sacrifice our very lives for the benefit of our children.

What do these daily sacrifices look like? Recently, I asked my six oldest children (since they are the ones who can talk), “How do you know that I love you?” All of them said, “Because you cook for us”—apparently, cooking goes a long way! They also said, “Because you...”

- Tell me everyday.
- Hug and kiss me.
- Pray for me.
- Are nice to me.
- Smile at me.
- Made a school for me.
- Listen to me—most of the time.