

The Secret of a Happy Mother

Psalm 113:9 – He settles the barren woman in her home as a happy mother of children.

Have you noticed how rare it is to find a *truly happy* mother? Almost anywhere, such as in Wal-Mart, you can find frustrated mothers, fearful mothers, fed-up mothers, hurried mothers, stressed-out mothers, or pre-occupied, prideful, impatient, harsh, jealous, arguing, angry, self-focused mothers. We can all act like this at times, but to be characterized as a happy mother is what every mother wants.

So, what makes for a *happy* mother of children? For surely we all want to be happy mothers. Is there a secret to being a happy mother? A double-latte from Starbucks? The perfect paper towel? The perfect house? Mr. Clean for the perfect house? The perfect baby? A better diaper? The perfect husband? Maybe Dr. Phil can help? What about the Nanny? Maybe she has all the answers? The world will try to sell you a million things that supposedly will make you a happy mother.

Notice from Psalm 113:9 that it is God who settles or establishes the happy mother of children. It is God Himself who makes the mother happy. A mother who knows God and knows God's ways (or purposes or plans) will be able to be a happy mother, regardless of her circumstances.

There is a strange verse in Scripture that actually tells us what God's plan is for women who become mothers.

1 Tim. 2:15 - But women will be saved through childbearing – if they continue in faith, love, and holiness.

This verse sounds strange because it uses the word "saved." "Saved" here doesn't mean "actual salvation," but it means "continuing salvation" or sanctification. We know that sanctification is the process of becoming more like Christ. So this verse says that **motherhood is an opportunity for spiritual growth**. Children become tools in God's hand to sanctify mothers.

So how does understanding this strange verse and God's plan help a woman to be a happy mother? It should serve as a warning for her to be prepared to struggle with sin - her own sin. Now, this might not sound right to you: that the way to make a mother happy is to tell her to expect a struggle with sin. But the rest of the verse tells how the mother can overcome the sin struggle and be sanctified. It says for her to continue in faith, love, and holiness.

First we will look at a mother's faith.

It takes faith to believe God's promises – especially when things aren't going as you thought or wanted or had hoped.

Proverbs 3:5-7 Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and He will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear God and turn away from evil.

A mother needs to trust that what God brings into her life is good for her and part of His plan to sanctify her. Some days of motherhood are such joy and blessing: days of celebration or the "perfect routine" day. Other days are upsetting and challenging: days full of discipline, crying, rebellion, or disappointments. Our responses to these days become the opportunity God has to show us our sin. Sins of pride and boasting, sins of anger, despair, or envy....all manner of sin will surface in a mother. But a mother of faith, a God-focused mother, will remember to rejoice in this – we can turn and repent and find forgiveness from God again and again. And in time, we can find victory over various sinful habits.

Matt. 18:3 Jesus said "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."

The humility of a dependent, trusting, and unpretentious child is what the end result of our sanctification looks like. As a mother holds and does everything for her newborn baby, this helpless and trusting baby is the picture of how we must trust God.

It takes faith to see past where you are now. There are seasons in life, and seasons in raising children. Some seasons seem to last forever, like the pregnant season, the diaper season, or the car seat and runny nose season. But like all things, they do fade into new seasons. Wait on the Lord as you are in each season, trust that He is perfectly working out all things for your good. Practice being content with where God has you in life, and be thankful for the work He is doing in you during each season.

Looking again at:

1 Tim. 2:15 - But women will be saved through childbearing – if they continue in faith, love, and holiness.

A mother's love will grow as she matures in her faith. The classic verse on love is 1 Cor. 13:4-7.

Love is patient - 777 thousand diapers later
Love is kind - when they constantly ask, "Why, Mommy?"
Love does not envy – other people's "perfect children"
Love does not boast and is not proud – in your child's accomplishments
Love is not rude – when having to use the Mommy Voice
Love is not self-seeking
Love is not easily angered – when sinned against
Love keeps not record of wrongs, does not delight in evil, but rejoices with the truth. Love always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

When a mother focuses on loving her husband and children like this love in 1 Cor. 13:4-7, she will be a happy mother as she sees God working this love in her according to His plan.

There are many things that creep into a woman's life and, if allowed to grow, can take over and become regretful obstacles to her pursuit of love. They really are Enemies of Love: busyness, laziness, disorganization, obsessiveness, and wrong thinking.

These enemies need to be replaced by Friends of Love: routines, organization, realistic expectations, humor (sometimes it's funny to run out of diapers – but not all the time), rest, and margin (leave time for the unexpected to happen).

***Enemies of love* become slave drivers, making it hard for mothers to respond in love. *Friends of love* serve women in their quest to be happy mothers.**

Looking one last time at 1 Tim. 2:15:

But women will be saved through childbearing – if they continue in faith, love, and holiness.

Holiness means to be set apart for God's use. This is the job of a mother: to be used by God. Mothers and fathers get to be the ones to point their children to God!

Deuteronomy tells parents to:

Teach your children about God as you teach them about God's creation
Teach them all the time – whenever you are with them
Teach them to obey
Teach them about sin and salvation

(God will do the saving, but you get to be the evangelist! If you try to save your child – you will not be a happy mother – because you can't do it.)

Eph. 6:4 Do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

God made children with the need to have instruction and boundaries. God is the law-giver – we needed instructions. Mothers, if you fail to do your job of instructing your children, they will be frustrated, and it will be your fault. When giving instruction, tell your child specifically what you want them to do and how to do it. Then let them practice obeying. This takes time but is so helpful.

If you don't obey Eph. 6:4, then Prov. 29:15 awaits ...

A child left to himself disgraces his mother.

This is not the way to be a happy mother. This is the way to be the mother we so easily can find – the angry, self-focused mother we see in the world - the frustrated mother who doesn't know God and of His plan for her sanctification through raising children. The real difference between the two mothers is their focus. The happy mother is God-focused, knowing God, and that his plans for her sanctification are for her good. The unhappy mother is self-focused and concerned with her circumstances only.

God is so good to have given us the body of Christ – our church body – to help us. Our church is full of ladies who have either gone before you in this task of mothering, will walk through it with you, or will begin after you are past it, and you will find yourself being the 'older lady' who knows the secret! Listen to the older ladies who have gone before you and have proven God's word faithful and true. Follow their examples of continuing in faith, love, and holiness, and you too will be a happy mother of children.