

# 'Living Life Together'

## My Mama Told Me



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I looked up 'What your mamma never told you' on the internet and I was surprised how long the list was of sights entitled 'The things mamma never told you.' They cover things like, 'what your mamma never told you about, sunscreen, teenage girls/boys, treating pain, looking for work, church history, sex and raising kids. But what I can tell you from experience is that one of the things that your mamma never told you was how you would change over the course of having more than one child. As I look at the baby boom we are having around here, I think it important that I warn some of you of the ways having a second and third child is different from having the first.

### **Preparing for the Birth:**

1st baby: You practice your breathing religiously.

2nd baby: You don't bother practicing because you remember that last time, breathing didn't do a thing.

3rd baby: You ask for an epidural in your 8th month.

### **Pacifier:**

1st baby: If the pacifier falls on the floor, you put it away until you can go home and wash and boil it.

2nd baby: When the pacifier falls on the floor, you squirt it off with some juice from the baby's bottle.

3rd baby: You wipe it off on your shirt, or lick it, and pop it back in.

### **Worries:**

1st baby: At the first sign of distress, a whimper, a frown, you pick up the baby.

2nd baby: You teach your 3 year old how to rewind the mechanical swing.

3rd baby: You buy a fan to place in your room at night, so you can't hear the little angel cry.

### **Diapering:**

1st baby: You change your baby's diapers every hour, whether they need it or not.

2nd baby: You change their diaper every 2 to 3 hours, if needed.

3rd baby: You try to change their diaper before others start to complain about the smell or you see it sagging to their knees.

Every woman who is a mother will tell you that there have been a few surprises along the way during motherhood. But can I remind you that your mother was the first person who ever touched you. She wrapped you up in her womb for months, and as you came out her first priority was to hold you, and she cuddled you, stroked your head, rubbed your feet, held your little cheeks against her, and gave you a finger to grasp. In love she did all these things, including grooming you with a licked thumb. She changed your diapers, potty trained you, and held the Kleenex for you to blow your nose! And she wiped food off of your face years longer than she should have had to! That is why

today we wanted to begin this sermon with simply saying thank you and praying for our moms today.

Today I want to combine some words to our mothers and the women of our church with a new series we will begin today entitled "Living Life Together". A number of weeks ago Adam Monkman (Our B-True youth Pastor) led devotions at our staff meeting by reading *Titus 2*, which is found in a short book written to the young pastor Titus who is serving in a church in Crete. Paul is giving him instructions on how each age group within the church can make a profound impact on each other. For God places us together as people of different ages, with different life experiences so together we can help each other grow in faith. This morning I want to look at Paul's instruction to 'older women' and while we don't have any 'old' women here, we do have a few who are 'a little more mature' than others. Paul's strategy is that we use the gift, the lessons learned, and the experience gained by godly women on their journey through life to have a profound impact on the rest of the church. Paul is writing in a setting where the young women were having trouble knowing how to do life in a society that pulled the family apart and away from God. So they were saying Mammias will you tell us how to live. As we look at this passage there will be lessons that we can all take with us this morning. (*Titus 2:1-5*) So what is your job as more mature women?

## **I. Be a Mentor**

As I have talked to more 'senior' women they tell me that after a certain age they begin to notice that people begin to look right through them. That younger folk seem to act as if they don't have anything to contribute to a conversation, and that they don't have things to speak about which are relevant to the lives of younger people. What happens is that many older folks (men/women) start to buy into this notion and step back. They stop sharing their ideas and insights with those around them. Can I stop and remind all of us of 2 crucial things?

1. If you think back to the words and actions of your parents which have had the most profound impact on your lives, how old were they? I'll bet they were over 50. Why? Because you have grown up enough to want to hear their words of wisdom, so don't miss that. As you get a little older you are entering into a time in your lives when you can have the most profound impact on your kids, grand kids, and other younger folk.

2. There is a cultural change happening in our society that is very biblical. Younger folk, who have often been raised in a one parent home (In 1960, 5% were raised by a single mom) today the 42% are raised in a busy parent home and are craving the input and mentoring of older, more mature adults who will move in a caring way toward them. I am constantly hearing people in their early to mid 20's asking for a person to mentor them, someone to be a caring influence in their lives. That is exactly what this passage is saying. If you look at (*Titus 2:3*) Paul is calling older women to "Teach what is good". (*Titus 2:4*) "Train the younger women to..." By the way if you are a woman in your mid 30's to mid 80's there are younger women who are watching you and would love to have you speak into their lives.

Now this is important, while our 'generation next' is desperately wanting the input of older caring people they will only listen if you are worth listening to. What happens is very simple, they will sit back and watch you, and then they will decide if you are the kind of person who is worth listening to. What do I mean by that? Paul tells you what needs to be part of your life before others will want to listen to you.

You need to be a woman who radiates Jesus. (*Titus 2:3*) 'Teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live". The word for 'reverent' used here, picks up the Old Testament picture of a priest, whose job it was to light the incense candles which burned in the temple. What would happen was that because they were around these incense wafting candles all day long they left the temple with the smell of incense still with them. It is like in the New Testament when they described some of Jesus' followers. They said "You could tell they had been with Jesus". When we were in Edmonton we knew Kathy and my parents wouldn't be able to visit that often for they lived far away. So we adopted a lady we called 'Grandma Blanche". We would drop over to her place, she baby sat our kids at times, she would give them a birthday present and we always had Boxing Day meals at her house. Blanche loved Jesus, and loved our kids. And let me tell you, she made a profound impact on not only our kids lives but our lives as younger parents. She prayed for us, loved us and radiated Jesus over us; she became a Mentor to us. When you love Jesus and love us you have no idea how profound an impact you can have on the lives of those of us who are around you.

You need to be a woman who lives right. Paul doesn't mince words does he? He knows that sometimes when you get a little older you may have more free time or when life gets a little tougher, sometimes it is easy to make our selves feel better by speaking against someone else (making them look worse) or by grabbing some addiction. We self medicate by drinking too much, for some it is using too many prescription drugs, shopping too much or gossiping too much. In other words, our world begins to revolve around us rather than thinking about how we can make a difference in the lives of others.

There have been a number of times over the years when I watched as an older lady began to attend some of the gathering with younger ladies. It was amazing to see how quickly the younger women were drawn to them. They would then begin to speak against other people, to gossip and slag others and those younger ladies who had come to them with hope in their eyes fled with broken hearts and crushed expectations. The next generation is tired of phonies who talk like Christians and yet in large areas of their lives live like Jesus doesn't exist. So here is the Question: Is there anything in your life that neutralizes your spiritual impact in the lives of others?

You need to be women who know when to speak. (*Titus 2:4*) 'But teach what is good'. My wife every so often will say, 'Dave I know you have lots of experience and wisdom but make sure you only speak when you are asked and that you answer their question without giving them a monologue of your life story". It is easy when you are a little older to always have a story of 'in my day this is how we did it better then' etc. Paul knows that things change, the church of tomorrow may look very different than it does

today. He says that your job as 'Mentoring women' is to teach (sharing insight learned the hard way in life, transferable concepts that the younger women can apply to their lives which are different and yet the same as your life. And in that way bless them and encourage them.

So here is the question: Who is watching you? Older women know that there are many younger women around you who are not only watching you but desperately wanting to be mentored, encouraged and cared for by you. Look around (daughter, grand child, younger women) for someone who you can seek out to gently begin to care for, so that you may shine Jesus into their lives. It is time you began to redefine yourself in terms of how God sees you, as a mentor who is making a difference. And younger women, watch for those whom you see radiating Jesus. Pray about that woman who may be 5 – 50 years older than you and invite them out for coffee and see if you fit well together. It may take a few tries but it will be well worth it, you are wired to enjoy the godly mother care of another women.

## **2. Be a Mother**

Paul then adds (*Titus 2:4*) "Train the younger women to love their husbands and their children". I read that and I want to ask: Why do women need to help other women know how to love their husbands? And then I asked Selma Radke who is about to celebrate her 60th anniversary in a week, with her husband Ernie, if she is finished training him yet. Her comment was that 'after 60 years of hard work he is showing signs of improvement but there is still a lot of hard work yet to go". Don't miss this, for it is written to a culture where marriages were arranged. You didn't get to pick the one you truly loved; instead you had to "learn how to love the one's chosen for you". Why were older women asked to help teach the younger women how to love their husbands? It is because in every marriage there will be times when you need to choose that you will do the loving thing, choose to continue loving them, choose to stay together so that your love will have enough time to get deeper as you go through the tough stuff of life which will make that love even more precious. No where is that more important than in a culture like ours, where it is so easy to step out of a marriage? Don't forget that we live in a time when most kids don't know of a marriage which they would call good, that can give them hope that they could have a good marriage in their future. I still remember in Moose Jaw as a young youth pastor that if Kathy or I even looked cross at each other that the youth would jump in, to make sure we were OK for we were the only 'happy couple' they knew. If you want a profound ministry, love your husband/wife well and be open to share some of the struggles and joys that helped you keep it good.

Then it says love your kids and teach them well. At the conference I was just at with our Family Matters team they quoted two statistics that scared the life out of me. The first, is that 60 - 70% of the kids who grow up in church will leave and not come back when they grow up, and secondly, when kids (those who have been involved in church) go to university, 6 out of 7 set their faith aside, like you set a jacket aside at least for a while. They take off their Jesus jacket for a while, some do come back but often they have done things which may leave scars for a long time. Numbers are numbers until you go. If I have 4 kids at least 2 of them will leave their faith behind (that affects them and ALL your grandkids). Even if 2 out of 3 follow Jesus, there is still one that will not. That one is my kid that I love, doing life without Jesus, and it means my

grandkids do eternity without Jesus. If that doesn't terrify your soul, nothing will. That is why we pour resources into our Family and B-true ministries, that is why we work so hard trying to provide resources so that we can help you to better teach your kids at home (for on average we only get a child in church activities about 40 hours a year where you as a parent get them for over 3000 hours). That is why the drama happens between services every Sunday, that is why we have all kinds of handouts for you as parents on how to help grow your kids the Jesus way and that is why this fall we will have an app. for your phone to help instruct you in how to care for your kids.

(*John 6:8*) You remember this story, Jesus was near the Sea of Galilee, and about supper time there was no food for the crowd. So he asked the disciples what to do. Andrew comes forward with this little boy's sack lunch and with a grin goes 'Sorry that is all that I could find'. So, what does Jesus do, he prays and tells them to pass out the meal, and somewhere between 5 -15,000 people had lunch and there were 12 baskets of food left over. So, who is the hero of the story? Of course the answer has to be Jesus, it always is in church. Maybe it is the little boy, or maybe it is his mother who packed the lunch. Remember this was before Tim's existed, so I would presume that his mom made the lunch. But here is where it really gets important, who was the one who prepared the little boy to be at the right place at the right time to be used by Jesus? Who was the one who prepared the little guy to recognize Jesus as someone who he could trust his lunch with? Who was the one who put things in place so that he was open to have an encounter with Jesus that changed his life, his mother?

Now listen carefully, often as churches we have targeted behavior modification as the goal in our children's lives' through the church. If we can just get them to not swear, get baptized, not party to badly with their friends and then we think we have done well. What the stats are saying is that if 6 out of 7 get to university and at least for a while set aside their faith jacket that means that their faith really has stuck when they need it the most. For that is the time when they can do things that will affect them for the rest of their lives and when they will possibly marry their spouse and choose the path of their lives? If they do that without the help of Jesus, it has profound implications.

This is the time when their faith not only needs to be rock solid but they need, like this little boy to Recognize Jesus enough to give their life stuff to him. They need to know him as the ever present King of Kings and Lord of Lord's in their lives. How does that happen? The key to that happening is that they see and hear from your lives and the lips of other mentors in their lives not only how real God is in their lives but how when he is near, life is different. On a recent missions trips with High School students all who had a passion to care for needy people. The students were asked 'how many of your parents ever told you about how they came to faith in Jesus, and how many told you of ways Jesus is impacting their lives? The answer was '0'. That is why Paul says here, mom's (I'll add dad's). 'Love your kids' and the way you do that is packing their lunch (sharing your faith journey) with them so that you know that they need to keep their faith through all their lives and that they need to keep their faith jacket on them through even the new adventures of life.

While at the Orange Conference I saw two young ladies interviewed, one was Andrea Lucado (Max Lucado's daughter) and one was Taylor Roy (a pastor's daughter)

who is working for Brad Pitts project of re building New Orleans. After being asked a number of questions, they were asked, what is the number one thing you need to hear from your parents? Andrea said I need to hear that I am beautiful to them and Taylor responded I need the example of strong women who will challenge me in life. Two ladies 2 opposite answers, both however are looking to old men and women to help them navigate the situation of life.

God's plan is to place Godly Women in our lives, as mentors, as mothers and models so that our faith will stay strong and our live's path will be Jesus centered.