

The Invisible Mom

Mother's Day

May 8, 2022

Years ago, I read an article beautifully written by a mother. I have the article but did not type in the name of the mother that wrote it. And that fact is a metaphor for this week's devotionals. This mom's article put in words and pictures the day-to-dayness of mothering.

DAY 1: Rome wasn't built in a day.

1. Psalm 127 is a great psalm highlighting several vital facts about life.

Psalm 127:1 Unless the LORD builds the house, the builders labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain. ² In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat—for he grants sleep to those he loves.

2. Modern man loves to think of himself as the captain of his soul. He imagines he is competent to handle whatever life throws at him. How do I know that? You rarely see him in church. He may claim to have "faith" in God in the sense that he believes God exists, but there is no felt-need of God to handle the challenges of life.

3. The psalmist makes several important observations about the interplay between our actions and the sovereignty of God. How would you fill in the psalmist's first point in v. 1?

4. No matter how competent someone or a group might be they _____
_____.

Psalm 127: 2- makes the same point but from a different angle. How would you fill in the psalmist's second point in verse 2?

5. No matter how hard you labor _____
_____.

Psalm 127:3 Children are a heritage from the LORD, offspring a reward from him. ⁴ Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are children born in one's youth. ⁵ Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them. They will not be put to shame when they contend with their opponents in court.

6. The psalmist uses three words (underlined) that describe God's interactions and intentions with our work as parents. Jot down your thoughts as to each idea.

- Heritage— _____
- Reward— _____
- Blessed— _____

7. A parent that ventures into parenting assuming that they have the competence to raise godly children without the real and present help of God inevitably places a huge amount of pressure upon himself or herself. When things don't go as you wish, you will find yourself dealing with extra bouts of self-inflicted anxiety, worry, stress, and guilt.

8. What strikes you from today's devotional?

DAY 2: Small things are the big things

1. The world in which we live, specifically the “world” in which we live prizes accomplishments, great endeavors, and life-changing decisions. The results and effects are seen in fame, notoriety, write-ups in magazines, a blog that goes viral, or becoming someone with thousands of “followers” on social media.
2. The metrics are financial success, upward mobility, becoming well-known, or such things as big moves up the corporate ladder.
3. In stark contrast is the world of parenting, and more specifically of being a mother. Your life is filled with thousands of seemingly small things, seemingly insignificant choices.
4. What comes to your mind at these thoughts?

5. The world sneers at small, seemingly insignificant actions and lives. Yet, this is exactly the opposite view of Jesus when He sees people and their lives.

Luke 16:10 Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much.

6. Anybody can do the deeds that are “big deals” or so we think. But the real test of character are the seemingly small, insignificant things. State Jesus principle in your own words.

Luke 16:11 So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? ¹² And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else’s property, who will give you property of your own?

7. The same principle finds different applications in these verses. What is Jesus saying?

Luke 16:13 “No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.”

8. How would you paraphrase Jesus’ point in verse 13?

9. The day-to-day love and work of parenting is built on myriads of small and seemingly insignificant acts. There are diapers to change, clothes to wash, spit up to clean up, doctor appointments to attend, presents to buy, late nights, up in the middle of the night, lunches to make, homework to oversee, etc. NO ONE IS APPLAUDING YOU. No one is offering you a bigger salary or more perks. No one is singing your praises at the company awards dinner. You simply attend to the seemingly small things—WHY?

DAY 3: Service: The way down is the way up

1. During my lifetime, there was a significant pushback to stay-at-home motherhood. Mothers were vilified as if they were wasting their life when they could have been building a “meaningful” career.

2. Studies over the years have shown the lie and deceit. Far more mothers find a greater joy and meaning, not in the grind of a career, but in the development and building of a home and family.

3. This reminds me of Jesus’ words on what really matters.

Matt. 20:25 Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. 26 Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, 27 and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

a. What point is Jesus making about the world’s way and the what the world values? (v. 25)

b. What point does Jesus make about true greatness? (v. 26)

c. What exquisite does Jesus make about being at “the top of the ladder,” or “the top of the pyramid?”

d. How do these principles apply to being a mother?

4. The kinds of service a mother does creates no notoriety about her daily life. She will not be written up by journalists. She won’t grace magazine covers. No one applauds her for going grocery shopping or making the trip to the drug store just before it closes in hopes of finding poster board the for project your son just announced is due *tomorrow!*

5. This requires a certain mindset. Service and sacrifice come to mind. What mindset is needed, according to Jesus in Matt. 25?

6. What strikes you from today’s devotional?

DAY 4: The desert of thanklessness

1. You've heard the sentence, "It's a thankless job." There are plenty of jobs where the worker is treated as if he or she is a robot. There is no praise "for just doing your job."

"I work my fingers to the bone and what kind of gratitude do I get? NONE!!!"

2. This is a reality in our world. Fallen human being, like us, feel entitled to having workers do their jobs without "having to thank them for doing their job." Listen to the words of Jesus.

Luke 17:7 "Suppose one of you has a servant plowing or looking after the sheep. Will he say to the servant when he comes in from the field, 'Come along now and sit down to eat'? 8 Won't he rather say, 'Prepare my supper, get yourself ready and wait on me while I eat and drink; after that you may eat and drink'? 9 Will he thank the servant because he did what he was told to do? 10 So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.'

3. Jesus echoes the realities of a fallen world. It is not wrong to want to be thanked for doing your work or your duty, but to expect to be thanked sets you up for anger and resentment.

4. What point is Jesus making with us?

Luke 17:12 As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy^h met him. They stood at a distance¹³ and called out in a loud voice, "Jesus, Master, have pity on us!"

¹⁴ When he saw them, he said, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were cleansed.

¹⁵ One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. ¹⁶ He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him—and he was a Samaritan.

¹⁷ Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? ¹⁸ Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?" ¹⁹ Then he said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well."

5. Jesus asked two rhetorical questions in v. 17. What is the point He is making?

6. Think about this. TEN men were healed of LEPROSY!!! And even THAT MIRACLE didn't create a desire in NINE of them to thank the One who did the miracle!!!!

7. When we create an expectation of someone or people thanking us for what we do we set ourselves up for some major disappointment or anger!

8. What strikes you from today's devotional?

DAY 5: Humility → Honor; the shadows are your friend.

1. The limelight beckons us all. It is a tantalizing temptation. (I must remind myself that every year I have to clean out my outdoor porch lights where dead moths have accumulated at the bottom of the glass).

Most of what mothers do occurs, not in the limelight, but in the shadows.

2. Much of the time, not even your children have any idea how much you do for them.
3. Motherhood is not about immediate “pay outs” for your loving labor.
4. It is a humbling job, where often you are more criticized for what you have left undone than for the myriads of things you have done!
5. Humility is one of God’s top priorities He is building in His people. One of His humility laboratories is parenting.

Luke 18:10 Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹ The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. ¹² I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’

¹³ *“But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’*

¹⁴ *“I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”*

6. There is a very precious promise at the end of verse 14. Put that promise in your own words.

What’s done in secret wins the gold

Matthew 6:1 “Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.

² *“So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ³ But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴ so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.*

⁵ *“And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ⁶ But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. ⁷ And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸ Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.*

7. God’s insistence on staying away from the tantalizing allure of the limelight in our spiritual disciplines carries over into our service with our kids!

8. What strikes you from today’s devotional?