

American Decency Association

PO Box 202, Fremont MI 49412 231-924-4050 www.americandecency.org
Encouraging Christians to guard their heart May 2026

Monuments to Mothers by Steve Huston



“Honour ... thy mother.”
Deut. 5:16

While mothers come in all shapes and sizes, have various temperaments, and are at different stages of spiritual maturity - from ungodly to godly - every mother knows what it is to sacrifice. From the nine months of physical aches, pains and incumbrances to the emotional ups and downs, from denying oneself habitual pleasures for the sake of the baby to normal anxieties regarding the growing life that God has made a resident of her womb, mother's know sacrifice.

We often think of the personal sacrifice that little Katie spoke of to her teacher when asked: “If your mother made a pie and there were ten at the table: father, mother, and

eight children, how much of the pie would you get?” The young girl replied, “One-ninth, teacher.” “Don't you mean one-tenth, Katie? Don't you know your fractions?” “Yes,” she said, “I know my fractions - but you don't know my mother. She would say, I'll do without - I don't care for any to-night.”

But now I would like to direct our minds to the spiritual travail that ought to belong to godly mothers; it's a sacrifice of time for prayer, Biblical training, application, discipline, and admonition, for these are more than mere children, they are souls which will one day occupy eternity in either Heaven or Hell. Take heed to Puritan John Flavel: “*Think on this particularly, you that are mothers of children, when you find the fruit of your womb quickened within you: you bear a creature within you of more value than all this visible world - a creature upon whom, from that very moment, an eternity of happiness*

or misery is entailed. Therefore, it concerns you to travail as in pain for their souls before you feel the sorrows and pangs of travail for their bodies... O let your cries and prayers for them anticipate your kisses and embraces of them. If you be faithful and successful herein, then happy is the womb that bears them.” Sacrifices of love seldom seems as sacrifices at all.

Oughtn't we to follow the examples of godly Biblical mothers like Jochabed (Moses), Hannah (Samuel), Eunice (Timothy) and her mother Lois? What if these mothers hadn't fulfilled their God-ordained roles? What if we do not?

As Thomas Boston wrote: “*Stir them up to the duties of holiness and the practice of religion. Often inculcate on them the doctrine of their sinful, miserable state by nature, and the remedy provided in Christ. Shew them the necessity of holiness, pointing out Christ to them as the fountain of sanctification. Commend*

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[Christianity] to them, and press them to the study of it as the main thing they have to do in the world (Prov. 4:4)."

H.G. Bosch relates the account of the passing of John Phillips Brooks' mother. That great preacher of decades gone by, together with his brothers, erected a grave marker in grateful testimony to her saintly character. On the tombstone they inscribed these precious words spoken by Christ to a Syrophenician mother: "Oh woman, great is thy faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt." What a monument as "Her children arise up, and call her blessed..." Pr. 31:28

A monument of living flesh and blood is one which is greater than stone. John Phillips Brooks and John Wesley were both living monuments to their mothers because they were living monuments to God, their mothers' God.

John Wesley said of his mother, Susanna: "I learned more about Christianity from my mother than from all the theologians in England." Could this be, in part, because she taught him very practically about sin and holiness?

When young John came to his mother to ask her what sin was, this was her reply: "Whatever weakens your reason, impairs the tenderness of your conscience, obscures your sense of God, or takes off the relish for spiritual things then it is sin for you, however, innocent it may be in itself."

Wesley also stated, "My mother was the source from which I derived the guiding principles of my life." Perhaps that was because his mother spoke to him plainly and with application: "There are two things to do about the Gospel – believe it and behave it."

To put Christ, sin, faith, and holiness constantly before our children's eyes (Duet. 6:4-9) in a practical and disciplined manner of application through our lives and the

teaching of the Word, will be the foundation of a living monument to our holy God.

Let us follow the example set forth in Flavel's words: "*I remember [Augustine] writes of his mother Monica that she planted the precepts of life in his mind by her words, watered them with her tears, and nourished them with her example. A precious pattern for all mothers.*"

Very few will be "larger than life" monuments to their mother and her God and very few mothers ever feel that they have been important, but let us simply be the monument that God would have us to be, in accordance with Susanna Wesley's desire: "**I am content to fill a little space if God be glorified.**"

The best monument that a child can raise to a mother's memory is that of a clean, upright, and holy life – one of prayer and true compassion – such as she would have rejoiced to see her child live. Let us be such monuments to mother and to Christ for the glory of God.



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