

Call Her Blessed

“... let her own works praise her in the gates.”



I can't believe it's not bleeding. That was the first thought that entered my head. I stared at the large gash at the base of my thumb again. Yes, no mistake about it. That was my bone and muscles I was staring at.

Weren't bones supposed to be blindingly white? That's what I had always thought for some reason, yet this bone was sort of off-white. Whatever its color, a bone really should be protected by skin, and this one was, just seconds earlier. Not anymore.

I couldn't figure it out. Always when I had been cut, I started bleeding immediately. But not this time. Why wasn't I bleeding?

Then it hit. No, not blood. Pain. Lots of pain. I must have been in a state of limbo for the first few seconds while my severed nerve endings tried

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desperately to make contact with my six-year-old brain. Boy, there was sure no doubt about it now. The pain was getting stronger.

What to do now? What a silly question! I had to find my mom, and quickly! I raced to the kitchen where Mom was working with several other women washing a large stack of dishes. She knew instantly that something was wrong. Rushing to my side, she carefully examined the hand that I thrust up toward her.

The pain was still there. My hand was still badly hurt. But somehow I knew that it was going to be all right. Why? My mom was there. She had never let me down before and I trusted instinctively that she wouldn't let me down this time.

As Dad drove us to the emergency room, Mom continued to soothe and comfort me.

It had started as such a happy day. Our family had gone to church for one of the many, many "work days" scheduled. We weren't a rich church, and the men were doing a lot of the work on the renovation that was going on. The women had busily and cheerfully cooked a dinner for us to eat. So much food! After eating, the women cleared away the mess while I and some other boys put away the folding tables that we had used. We would fold the legs up and then carry them in a horizontal position until we got to the storage closet. Since they were too wide, we had to tilt them to a vertical position to get them through the door. As I was tipping one of the tables, my hand slid along the underside lip of the table, the same technique I had used many times before. But this table had a lip

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that was sharp enough to cut my skin open to the bone.

At Children's Hospital, emergency room staff carefully examined me, decided that I needed stitches, and started getting everything ready to fix me up. Not ever having had stitches, I was worried. Wouldn't it hurt when they put the needle into my hand to sew? Could I bear the pain? I looked over at my dad. He smiled at me, a confident look on his face. I could sense his strength and protection for me. I was glad he was there. The pastor had followed our car to the hospital and he, too, was standing a few feet away, telling me that everything was going to be all right. Outside the emergency room doors several of the men of the church were also there. They probably didn't know the diagnosis, yet I was sure they were praying for me. Yes, I was surrounded by love, concern, protection, and prayer. I felt secure. Probably most comforting was the knowledge that my mom was there. There was nothing she could do that the other people were incapable of doing. She couldn't sew up my hand. She couldn't pray any better than those present. Yet, she was there. Everything was all right, precisely and simply because she was there.

No doubt many of you can relate to this story. Your mom was there when you needed her. And she's the first one you think of going to now. Isn't that a wonderful feeling, knowing you can go to her and trust her completely to meet your needs?

But I wonder how many children today, if they were honest, would say that when they are hurt or frightened or in need they do not look to their mother

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for reassurance, love, and attention because they have learned they will not receive it. I've had the chance to observe probably thousands of mothers interact with their children at Wal-Mart, the grocery store, state parks, church settings, and elsewhere. I'm amazed at the number of mothers who apparently want their children to be totally "independent" as soon as possible. After toddlerhood, many children seem to be left "on their own" emotionally. I find this to be the case even if both mother and children are at home. And even if the mother is a committed Christian. It breaks my heart. Because it doesn't have to be.

Many mothers have received their "mommy training" from sources advocating worldly philosophies, including television, books, magazines, and public school education. In addition, I'm aware that many mothers are "first generation" Christians and didn't have a godly mom for an example to learn from even as a child.

Christian mothers of our generation (and all generations, for that matter) need good examples of "mothering" skills — just what a godly mother should be like. What if we wrote a book about godly mothers? What if we gave examples of mothers who know how to nurture and strengthen their children's faith in God? Would it result in mothers turning their hearts to their homes, to their husbands and children? We would hope so.

This book is a humble attempt to do just that. It will provide role models for the Christian mothers in our land. I also hope the book will be an encouragement to those moms who are being godly mothers

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right now. I want to send a message that is simple yet strong: *Keep it up! We desperately need you to keep it up! For the benefit of your children, their future children, your community, your nation, and even the world.* I also hope this book might help fathers and children to see what true greatness in a mother really looks like. I'm afraid many fathers also have inaccurate views of what motherhood is all about, again, thanks largely to the media.

Please understand that this book is not designed to be a traditional "self-help" book. You won't find lists of things you can do to be a godly mother. You won't find "strategic plan outlines" for you to fill out or "goal accomplishment checklists" to measure your success as a mom. I won't be interviewing famous people or parenting experts, not even Christian ones, to give you their slant on what a godly mom looks like.

Also, you won't find stories about mothers who win prestigious awards, are recognized by the President of the United States, or have articles published about them in *Reader's Digest* or *Guideposts Magazine*. Do you personally know any "celebrity" mothers? Maybe you do. I don't. What I do know are a number of moms who quietly and consistently, day by day, follow God's will for their lives. Moms who give of themselves even when no one else is looking. Moms who make sacrifices even when they know that no one else could possibly ever know of their sacrifices. To me, their unheralded lives make them true celebrities, and their rewards will be forthcoming where it matters the most: in eternity.

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I will provide examples from the lives of several such mothers. I will use, as my primary example, my own mom. I don't apologize for that. God has blessed me with a wonderful, godly mom, as I think you'll see as you read the book. Besides, Mom has made her wishes clearly known. At her funeral, which we hope won't occur for a long, long time, she has asked her sons not to say one single thing about her or her life. She wants no attention focused on her. Instead, she wishes to have a simple service in which we call on those who attend the service to get ready to meet the Lord Jesus Christ. Since we can't say anything about her life at her funeral, I'm going to take this opportunity to say a few things in this book. [I know what you're going to say, Mom. You want all honor and glory to go to Jesus, not to you — I couldn't agree with you more! I know you could not be the mother you are without the help of the Holy Spirit.]

My mom's not perfect. She wasn't a tough disciplinarian (but boy, did my dad make up for it!). She probably should have made her three sons do more work around the house to help her out. Why, at times she even fed her family canned Ravioli® for supper! Yet, she's been a consistent model for many, many people over her long lifetime.

This book is dedicated to you, Mom. I love you.