

About Your MOTHER.

J.R. Miller:

Your mother is the first friend you ever had. When you came into this great world as an utter stranger, not knowing anyone, never having looked into any face — you found her love waiting for you. Instantly you had . . .

a friend,
a bosom to nestle in,
an arm to encircle you,
an eye to watch you,
a hand to minister to your helplessness and need.

Your mother received you eagerly, took you into her deepest heart, and began to live for you.

You never can know what you owe to your mother. It was a long while before you even knew what she was doing for you. In your helpless infancy, she sheltered you and cared for you in unwearying patience and gentleness. She nursed you through your illnesses, your teething, your whooping-cough, your measles, and all the other illnesses which infancy is heir to. She walked the floors with you nights, trying to soothe your pains and quiet your bad tempers. She gave up her days to you, teaching you how to walk, how to talk, how to use your hands, your eyes, your ears — and giving you your first lessons in loving, in praying, and in everything beautiful.

You do not know, you never can know — all that your mother has done for you. It was not easy, either, for her to do it. She never complained, for love does not count the cost of its serving and sacrificing; but there was serious cost nevertheless. Some of the wrinkles you now see in her face, are marks left by the toil and care which she gave so freely to you — marks of her unselfish love! Perhaps she is not so beautiful as she used to be — she has wrinkles, and a tired look, and seems older, with more gray hair. Not so beautiful? Ah, she is more beautiful just because of these wrinkles and traces and furrows. They are love's handwriting. They are like the soldier's scars — honorable, because they tell what she has suffered, sacrificed, endured — for love of you.

Now, what about this mother of yours? Do you think you appreciate her at her true worth? Do you think you are returning to her in the worthiest way, the love which she has lavished upon you through the years? Do you think you are proving yourself worthy of such unselfishness, such self-forgetfulness, such loving and serving unto the uttermost?

It is very beautiful when a mother is old and feeble, or sick — to see her children ministering to her in sweet love, without thought of cost, without stint of sacrifice, doing all they can to comfort, bless, and brighten her old age. Often this picture is seen. When the children were in their infancy the mother's hands ministered to them in countless ways; now they are giving back a little of the love, paying a portion of the debt they owe to her. God must look down with gladness upon such holy scenes.

But not all loving mothers are sick or infirm; sometimes they are strong and active — but lonely. Are you good to your mother when she is not an invalid? Some of us wait until our friends are sick, before we show them the best that is in our heart. Just today, a sick woman said to me, that she had never dreamed she had so many friends, or that they loved her so much — until she fell alarmingly ill — the doctor said she might not recover. Then the love poured out. Everybody she had ever known, came to ask about her, and to express sympathy with her in her suffering, or to offer service.

This was very beautiful. But it would have been better if some of the love had been shown before — when she was well and strong, carrying burdens and dispensing good. It would have made life easier and sweeter for her. It would have put into her heart courage for even better and richer serving.

If your mother were to grow very sick tomorrow — there is nothing you would not do for her gladly and cheerfully. She would be most grateful to you, too, for your gentle kindness. But think how much of this ministry of love you might render now, though she is not sick.

For example, you can give her your fullest confidence, and keep up a close and intimate friendship with her. Some young people drift away from their mother. They do not give her their heart's confidence as they used to do in their childhood. They hide things from her. They resent her questions when she would know about their companionships, their friendships, their pleasures, their plans of life. It is a great comfort to a good mother, to

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have her children confide in her, always telling her everything. Why should they not? Surely she has a right to know their most confidential affairs.

The son, now a full-grown man, with heart and hands full, can give his mother no greater joy, than by coming into her room every evening for a little confidential talk, just such as he used to have with her when he was a little fellow.

The daughter, now a woman, need never be afraid to trust her mother with all the interests of her happy life. She needs the mother-counsel quite as much now, as she did when she was a child — and the mother-heart craves the sweet confidence.

We should never cease to be children to our mother. Nothing is more beautiful than such intimacy of children with a mother, even though the children are men and women in mid-life. To the mother they are always children, and their confidence is always sweet and sacred.

Another way you can return your mother's love, pay the debt you owe her, especially if you are a daughter — is by relieving her as much as possible of the care of the home and the housekeeping. Some daughters seem very thoughtless about this. The mother always has done everything — perhaps she has done her children harm in this very way. Some mothers are altogether too good to their children — they make life too easy for them, and bear too many of their burdens. It is mistaken kindness. Our best friend — the best mother — is one who makes us do what we can ourselves, thus training us to self-reliance. It would be better for mothers to do as the eagle does with her young — make the nest rough for them, even push them out of it, that they may learn to use their own wings.

But no daughter, when she is old enough to think, should ever be content to let her mother continue to do everything for her, while she herself sits with folded hands, or runs the streets with her friends, or passes her time reading worthless novels. She ought to determine to do her part — that her mother may have rest. It is not a picture which God can rejoice over — a strong, healthy girl lounging or wasting her time; and her poor tired mother toiling, slaving, serving, in kitchen and living-room; cooking, sweeping, dusting, sewing, darning, until her strength is exhausted.

This is enough to start earnest thought about your mother. What kind of a child are you to this good mother of yours? No matter about your age; for whether you are younger or older, it is all the same. What kind of a child are you to your mother? We make our life beautiful, only when we are true and faithful in all our relations with others. No matter to what eminence we may attain, or to what noble character — there will always be a blot on our record and on our life as God sees it — if in climbing upward ourselves, we fail in any of love's duties to others. To be a complete man or woman in the world — you must be ever a loyal and faithful child to the mother to whom you owe so much.