

My 73rd Mother's Day

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By Bob Young

Mother's Day 2021! Another article, another sermon. If your mother provided stability and spiritual guidance in your life, you are blessed. If your mother is still living, you are doubly blessed! I am not an expert on mothering—I am an expert on being mothered. What I share today is a reflection of my mother's love, attention, discipline, and support. On this Mother's Day, I am thinking about my mother and her example. I honor my mother; I seek to honor all mothers. From my mother I learned about God, love, and life's mystery. I remember the life of my mother—a pioneer, model, and my greatest fan!

My mother has been gone 27 ½ years. I was 45 years old when she died prematurely in an auto accident. That experience, which is now a part of a long-ago history, taught me about faith. I learned that one must decide before the fact whether God is God and whether God is good. When difficult days and faith challenges come, it is too late to decide what one thinks about God. I drew my faith-conclusion from the faith I saw in my mother—a faith that continues to sustain me even as it sustained her.

My mother had a stroke about two years before her death. From that point on, I never again went to visit her as a care-receiver, I went as a care-giver. There were always things to be done—yard work, house repairs, and special projects. I never again woke up to the smell of bacon cooking. Life was different; but my mother's love was the same. I learned love by watching my mother in action—I learned love by receiving it, and by giving it.

My mother's death was a door-opening event. Most likely, Jan and I would never have felt free to move half way across the country to work in higher education had we still had the responsibility of helping care for my mother. Mother's Day reminds me that God works in mysterious ways.

My mother was a pioneer—not only because her family moved from Missouri to New Mexico in a covered wagon while she was still an infant, but because of the way she experienced and endured and overcame life as a single-parent in the middle years of the 20th century. It seemed to me then (and still does) that my mother was fearless in a time when there was much to fear.

My mother was a model to many. She is my greatest heroine—greatest hero. She taught and influenced countless young people. She is still the gold standard of excellence for my life. She is my guiding star and great moral compass.

My mother was my greatest fan. She saved everything I wrote—as though it were priceless. It was—at least to her. She was my great encouragement in preaching. She would be amazed to know where God has led her boy and his bride since—literally around the world for the Kingdom. She would be proud. Her memory compels me.

I cannot tell my mother “thank you” in person today, but I say “thank you” to God for mothers, and for my mother. May God bless mothers, and the memories we cherish of the mothers who blessed us and continue to bless our lives.