

TEXT Matthew 15:21-28

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES Joshua 24:14,15; Proverbs 22:6; 2 Timothy 1:1-5

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to explain why parental concern for a child, both physically and spiritually, is so important. They will further relate that often the physical help will come through a spiritual means.

KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER Great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. — Matthew 15:28

KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH Thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. — Deuteronomy 6:7

ANSWER TITLE: **Someone Special**

SEARCH TITLE: **A Mother's Love**

REFERENCE INFORMATION

Mothers have never received more honor than under the Christian ethic. Christ's own care for His mother at the cross (John 19:26,27) set an example for us. A comparison of societies in Old Testament times shows that even then the Jews accorded a higher place to mothers than did many contemporaries. Proverbs 31 speaks of the "virtuous woman" in beautiful praise. The Book of Ruth gives us one of the most outstanding examples in the Bible of "a woman that feareth the Lord," showing how God rewarded her virtue with a God-ordained marriage which resulted in her becoming the great-grandmother of David, and an ancestor of Jesus Christ.

Deuteronomy 6:6,7 places the responsibility for educating the children about God directly upon the parents. Moses gave them God's command, "And these words,

which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." Those mothers who have been faithful to their children in teaching them the Bible from a very early age are often rewarded when the child seeks and finds salvation before he has had to experience the bitter sting of outbroken sin.

"The woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation" (Mark 7:26). Canaan was also called Syrophenicia, lying between Syria and Phoenicia—modern Lebanon. It was an area in the coastal region about 50 miles north of Capernaum. Halley's Handbook says this is the area where Elijah was sent to a widow woman (1 Kings 17:9).

YOUR OPENER

A Mother's Love

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KEY VERSE: Thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. — Deuteronomy 6:7

RESPONSES

1. She was a Greek (a Gentile), a Syrophenician woman of Canaan who lived in the area, which is the present country of Lebanon. Jesus explained that He was sent only to the Jews, the house of Israel.

2. Your students' answers will no doubt bring out that this woman had great faith mixed with persistence. Jesus commended her for that (verse 28). Hebrews 11:6 tells us that God rewards those who diligently seek Him. Ask your students what would indicate the great love this mother had for her daughter. They should see that she wouldn't accept less than complete healing for her daughter, even though Jesus seemingly rejected her three times.

3. He was testing her faith, and then He rewarded her. Discuss with the students that at times their prayers may not be answered because they do not persevere. Being ignored and insulted was undoubtedly hard for her to accept, but because of her great love for her daughter she wouldn't take no for an answer. God wants us to have the same spirit.

The love of a godly mother for her children is one of the greatest loves a human can experience. A young child looks to his mother for care, comfort, security, and love. As that child grows older, he honors her integrity, example, and resourcefulness. A godly mother is prayerful, self-sacrificing, and dedicated to her family. The Bible speaks of her as a virtuous woman.

1. What was the nationality of the woman who came to Jesus (Mark 7:26)? What was His statement (in our text) concerning this?

2. What spiritual virtues did the woman exhibit in coming to Jesus for physical healing for her daughter?

3. Why do you feel Jesus acted as He did toward the woman? How might you have reacted if Jesus had shown such a seemingly unconcerned attitude toward your need?

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

4. We have many beautiful accounts in the Bible which depict a mother's love. How do you think these mothers felt in a time of emotional stress?

Moses' mother, as she put her son into the basket in the river — Exodus 2:3

Hannah, as she left her son with Eli — 1 Samuel 1:24-28

Mary, as she watched Jesus hang on the cross — John 19:25

5. Christ is our example. What kind of concern and care did He show toward His mother? See Luke 2:51 and John 19:26,27.

6. Tell of some ways our mothers show their love for us without words. How can we reciprocate?

7. What is the highest spiritual responsibility a mother and father have toward their children? See Deuteronomy 6:5-7.

8. Read 2 Kings 4:1-7. In what manner does this account show us how a mother's love for her sons brought physical help through spiritual means?

4. As you discuss each of these incidents with your students, the conclusion will likely be that it is not possible for anyone but a mother to experience the emotions they had. Their love for their sons was great. They undoubtedly all prayed for God's will to be done. These are all very touching accounts to share with your students.

5. As a child, He was obedient and subject to both His mother and father. On the cross, despite His own pain, He was concerned for His mother and made arrangements for her care. In Matthew 15:3-8, Jesus brought out the importance of honoring our fathers and mothers, calling it a transgression if we fail to do so.

6. This is a good time for the students to share their thoughts and feelings about their own mothers. Your students will mention the affection, care, and love a mother gives and the personal deprivation she goes through for her children. If she is a Christian mother there will be many prayers to God for her children of which they may not even be aware. By honoring and obeying her in return, they will give her a deep feeling of contentment and fulfillment. The greatest joy they could give their mother would be to commit their lives to God and experience true salvation.

7. The text in Deuteronomy stresses the need for each child to be taught the importance of loving God wholeheartedly. Broaden your discussion of this question with your students by asking them to bring out other spiritual responsibilities of parents. Their list may include such thoughts as: to teach them God's Word, to enforce their spiritual and moral standards, to be a Christian example before them, to show them Christian love.

8. Discussion of this question should bring out how this mother, when faced with the threat of her two sons becoming bondsmen, turned to the man of God for help. She then acted in faith and obedience to his words, and had the empty vessels brought into her house as he had commanded. A miracle took place, and there was oil enough to fill all the vessels. The debt was paid, and there was money left for the widow and her sons to live on. Ask your students to describe the feelings of that mother when she realized that God had provided in such a miraculous way and spared her sons. How did the sons feel? They had witnessed their mother's faith and obedience and had seen the hand of God work in their behalf. Relate this example to children of our day who see God work through the faith and obedience of their parents.

YOUR WRAP-UP

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

When you have children, how are you going to try to raise them? What will be the most important things you will try to teach them?

Tell of some ways mothers show their love without words.

What do you think was the reason Jesus did not answer the woman of Canaan? Would you have left if you had been ignored, or would you have persisted in your quest? What kind of mother-love would you say this woman had?

What does *honor* mean?

How do you think these Bible mothers felt?

Mary, as she watched Jesus hang on the cross

Hannah, as she gave her son to Eli

Moses' mother, as she put her son into the basket in the river

How can you improve your relationship with your mother, your father?

In the ANSWER story, what is suggested as being the best way to honor our parents?

THINGS TO DO

Divide the class into two teams with captains. Give them a set time (5 to 10 minutes), and have each team use their Bibles to create a list of the names of mothers mentioned in the Bible. Opposite the names have each team note whether the mother was good or bad. When you call time, review the results. The team with the most correct information wins.

Invite to your class someone who testifies about a Christian mother's influence. After a short testimony, let the students question the guest.

In succession, ask each of your students to supply a word for something our mothers do for us, beginning with consecutive letters of the alphabet. (Advise, Bake, Clean, etc.)

Ask students to bring magazine articles or newspaper clippings about concerned parents and unconcerned parents. Attach a list of character qualities (or lack of them) demonstrated by the parents in each case. Select

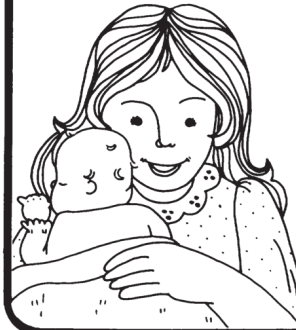
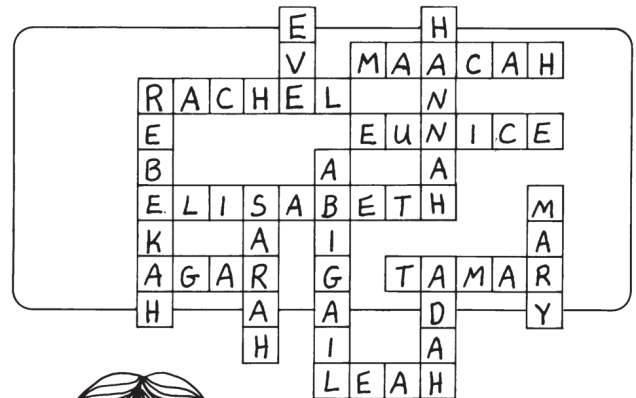
one example, from each list for open class discussion. Examine the "might have been," "had there been" aspects of each case, with regard to the physical and spiritual benefit of the child or young person in question.

Make a list of several mother/child pairs from the Bible (Hannah/Samuel, Jochebed/Moses, Sarah/Isaac, Elisabeth/John, Mary/Jesus, etc.). At the top and halfway down a sheet of paper, print the headings, "I LOVE YOU, MOTHER, BECAUSE . . ." Make a copy for each student in your class. Write the list of names together on a chalkboard. Give each student a sheet of paper and let him choose a pair of names. (The same pair of names may be used by more than one student.) Ask the students to write under the top heading what they think Moses, for example, would write if he were to finish that sentence. Then have the students finish the second heading to their own mother.

Answers for ANSWER

Special Mothers

Mothers show their love in so many special ways. Below is a list of names of mothers from the Bible. Fit them into the crossword boxes. For a personal touch (after the puzzle is filled in) find a place on the puzzle where your mother's name will fit — add boxes and write it in.



EVE	EUNICE
ADAH	HANNAH
AGAR	MAACAH
LEAH	RACHEL
MARY	ABIGAIL
SARAH	REBEKAH
TAMAR	ELISABETH