

## God's Heart for Single Mothers

Phil Congdon

The Bible does not directly address single mothers, but there are many examples of God's interacting with women, mothers, widows and their children. Examples in the Old Testament like Sarah, Hagar, Tamar, Naomi, Ruth, Abigail, and others demonstrate God's special concern for and assistance to women in times of crisis. Whether a woman is single, married, widowed, or divorced, God gently and lovingly gives to them. This isn't surprising, since God knows each of us intimately, and every situation completely. Scripture provides no 'litmus test' for whether or not God will graciously provide for our need. Instead, we find in God an inexhaustible fountain of forgiveness and grace.

The Bible unequivocally asserts that sex outside of marriage is sinful and will lead to problems; a major issue today is unmarried women being forced to raise children alone, something very difficult, which God never intended. But even if it is a result of willful sin, God is still gracious, and willing to give help and comfort. First and foremost, He offers forgiveness of sin and the assurance of eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ for the single mother who accepts Him, for her children who accept Him, and even the children's father who accepts Him.

Sometimes a woman finds herself alone and raising children through no fault of her own. In many parts of the world, women are innocent victims of terrorism. In times of war, husbands go off to battle and never return, sacrificially giving their lives. If a husband's death has left a woman single with children, God will help and comfort her.

God cares about families, but He is more concerned that each person, no matter what their family looks like, repents of sin and comes into a relationship with Him. He wants us to know Him, because knowing Him brings us joy and brings Him glory. We can get bound up in the details of our lives, worrying what other people will think of us, and whether the church will accept us, and whether we have ruined things entirely. But God offers Christians a joy that transcends worry. He invites us to *cast all our cares upon Him, for He cares for us* (1 Peter 5.7). He wants to forgive our sins, carry our burdens, then enable us to put our sins in our past and move on. All we have to do is to trust Him.

Single mothers are often very responsible people, and sometimes it can be hard to just 'set aside' worries and cares. A single mother may feel guilty just thinking about it! But God commands us to do it anyway, to spend a little time each day to focus on Him, and trust (during the rest of the day) that He cares for us, both physically and emotionally, as we lean on Him.

What this might look like for a single mom is setting aside time to read the Bible and pray. She might think, "I just don't have time for that between working and raising a child and taking care of the house and everything else." But even half an hour when her child is sleeping or being watched by a relative or friend is valuable; she can talk to God in prayer and listen to His voice in Scripture. It may mean leaving that pile of dishes until later, but time with the Lord will provide strength and comfort through the rest of the day. Verses like "The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?" (Ps. 118.6) and "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil. 4.13) are tangible reminders of God's love and protection when things get tough or stressful.

What does God have to say to single mothers? The same thing He says to everyone else. Trust in Christ as Savior and receive forgiveness of sin and the gift of eternal life. Then talk with God daily in prayer and 'listen to His voice' by reading Scripture. Ask God for strength in trials, and begin to experience the eternal life that He has given you.