



Grandma Said So

Sheila Graham

I *fit isn't worth mending, it isn't worth keeping.* I could still hear my maternal grandmother's words in my ears as I folded the shirt with the tiny hole under one sleeve. *I can wear it once more,* I thought. But grandmother won out. Okay, to be clear, I don't sew anymore, but I still mend if forced to. And, though long gone, my grandmother is still a force in my life.

Same with my mother, a lady who never went out without her makeup, heels and hat. When she remarked that one should "Make Life Pretty," it has become a catch phrase for her grandchildren. To them it means more than creating a beautiful flower garden or perfect lawn or nice home. They use their grandmother's phrase as motivation to overcome any ugliness they face in the world.

Becoming a Mother

Married as a teen, I became a mother at age 20. When I first held that beautiful child in my arms, my whole take on life changed. I became an adult. The thought that I was responsible for this new life was overwhelming. I now understood what my mother and so many other mothers had experienced. For the first time, as I looked into her precious face, I knew here was someone I would sacrifice anything for, even my very life.

My appreciation and love for my own mother also deepened. I always loved her, but now I realized how much of herself she had given up for me. She meant so much more to my entire life than I had ever imagined.

Honoring Mothers

In this country we have set aside a day to honor our mothers, and rightly so. God holds mothers in high esteem. He even used mothers to describe his own comforting love for his people. *"As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you"* (Isaiah 66:13).

He does the same in the New Testament. After warning the people about their religious leaders and severely reprimanding those same leaders,

Jesus cries out in sorrow, describing himself as a mother hen. *"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets...how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing"* (Matthew 23:37).

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Ephesians: *"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother'—which is the first commandment with a promise—that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth"* (Ephesians 6:1-3).

Make a Difference

Mothers and grandmothers make a difference. My mother and grandmothers are gone now, but their influence remains. And, not only parents and grandparents, but other family members, whether parents or not, are part of that familial chain. We are made up of family past, present and future through our influence on our family's offspring, an influence that can go well beyond our families.

Knowing this makes me ask, what kind of influence am I leaving, not only on my children, but on my grandchildren? What will they remember that I said or did 30 or 40 or more years from now? It may not be what first comes to mind. My kids already remind me of sayings or deeds I've long ago forgotten and am amazed they remember.

What difference does it make? Quoting William Barclay: *"It is our terrible responsibility that we leave something of ourselves in the world by leaving something of ourselves in others."*

Only by continuing to look to Christ can we make sure we ourselves are strong links in that ongoing family chain. □

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