



# Contents

Acknowledgments	9
1. Moms and Blessings	11
<b>Section 1: Be a Beacon</b>	
2. An Immovable Landmark	17
3. Glowing Features of a Beautiful Beacon	29
4. Monica: A Beacon of a Mother	41
“The Beacon”	44
<b>Section 2: Be a Listener</b>	
5. Listen with Your Whole Being	47
6. Time to Listen	59
7. Susanna Wesley: A Listening Mother	67
“A Mother’s Day Confession”	69
<b>Section 3: Be an Encourager</b>	
8. Becoming Your Child’s Chief Cheerleader	73
9. Cheers or Jeers	81
10. You Win Some, You Lose Some	91
11. Catherine Carmichael: An Encouraging Mother	105
“I Have a Mother Who Prays”	108

#### Section 4: Be a Self-Esteem Builder

12. Joining the Construction Crew	111
13. The Foundation: Unconditional Love and Acceptance	115
14. The Framework: Capable, Valuable, with a Sense of Belonging	123
15. Adding Insulation, Lock, and Bolts	135
16. Nancy Hanks Lincoln: A Self-Esteem-Building Mother	145
“Two Temples”	147

#### Section 5: Be a Seed Sower

17. Tending the Fields	151
18. Sowing Seeds of Scripture and Prayer	159
19. Planting in Season	169
20. Sonya Carson: A Seed-Sowing Mom	179
“Be Careful What You Sow”	182

#### Section 6: Be an Example Setter

21. Someone’s Watching You	185
22. The Fruit Doesn’t Fall Far from the Tree	195
23. Mary Ruth Diffey: An Example-Setting Mom	207
“Little Eyes Are Upon You”	211

#### Section 7: Be Diligent

24. Don’t Give Up	215
25. Don’t Give In	221
26. Give It All to Him	229
27. Ruth Bell Graham: A Diligent Mother	235
“The Warrior”	239
28. Just a Mom, You Say	241
29. A Mother Counts Her Blessings	247
A Look at God’s Good Word to Mothers	251
Notes	265

## CHAPTER ONE



# Moms and Blessings

*H*ave you ever noticed what happens when a television camera pans the cluster of college football players on a field's sidelines? The young men, most of whom are experiencing their first taste of national attention, call out two words. Those words make a woman's heart skip a beat, swell with pride, and melt in a puddle of love. "Hi, Mom!" the guys shout, following the greeting with wild waves and big smiles.

An inexplicable bond exists between a mother and her child. While a child is being knitted together in Mom's womb, the mother's very blood is pumped from her heart to her child's. And even though the umbilical cord is severed in the delivery room, an invisible cord holds them together for the rest of their lives. Elizabeth Stone aptly explained that bond when she said, "Making a decision to have a child—it's momentous. It is to decide forever to have your heart go walking around outside your body."<sup>1</sup>

And while the mother's heart is vulnerable to every pang her child experiences, that woman also realizes that God has placed another's soul in her care and given her the privilege, for a few fleeting years, to shape

that soul. What will we mothers do with those years? How will we invest the time? Who can help us to know what to do?

I've often been interviewed in my role as a spokeswoman for The Proverbs 31 Ministry. Frequently I'm asked if I think the wife of noble character described in Proverbs chapter 31 is one woman or several women pooled together into a depiction of some sort of supermom. Interviewers also ask if I think the verses exemplify a typical day for Mrs. Worth More Than Rubies or a lifetime of accomplishments. I believe that she is one woman and that the listing of her achievements spans her life. Verse 28 leads me to those conclusions: "Her children rise up and call her blessed" (RSV).

I don't know about you, but I haven't heard many preschoolers bless their mothers for devoting arduous hours to potty training, for washing a favorite Mickey Mouse T-shirt, or for staying up all night cleaning throw-up. A child is more likely to rise up and call his or her mother blessed when that child is a young adult and realizes the sacrifice, hard work, undaunted love, tender affection, and wisdom that Mom has poured into his or her life for eighteen to twenty-five years. And sometimes that realization doesn't come until a child has a child of his or her own.

When I became a mother, I wondered what exactly the Proverbs 31 woman did to cause her children to rise up and bless her. To find some answers, I've observed mothers through the years, listened to what grown children have to say about their mothers and prayed that God would give me wisdom in raising my own child. *Being a Great Mom, Raising Great Kids* consists of seven mothering characteristics I've seen again and again in blessed mothers.

King Lemuel's mother, who wrote Proverbs 31, started each verse with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet to help her son remember the essential elements of a model wife and mother. In keeping with that teaching style, each of the following seven sections begins with a word formed from a letter of "B-L-E-S-S-E-D." In each section, I've included some practical ideas to help you implement the specific quality discussed and a story about a mother who expressed that quality well. And at the end of the book, you'll find fourteen Bible studies, two for each section. These studies will help you seek the Lord for ways He wishes to affirm you as a mother and for ways you could make some adjustments. You might want to gather together a group of other mothers who long to hear their children call them blessed.

My prayer for you, dear mother, is that you will not grow weary in doing good, but that this book will encourage you to keep doing what you do well and to make alterations in areas that need improvement. Most of all, I, like you, pray that one day your children will rise up and call you blessed.