

Examples of Godly Families of Prominent Servants of the Lord

IN THE BIBLE

Abel

Adam and Eve certainly must have preached the gospel to their children, telling Cain and Abel how they had been created by God, how they had been charged by God not to eat of the tree of knowledge, how they had disobeyed God and had eaten of that tree, how they were in fear and trembling as they awaited the sentence of death, and how God came in to preach the gospel by promising them that the seed of the woman would bruise the head of the serpent. Furthermore, Adam and Eve must also have told them how they had stood naked in the presence of God and how God had slain some lambs as sacrifices, using the skins to make robes to cover their nakedness that they could stand before God and have fellowship with Him. I am convinced that Adam and Eve preached this gospel to their children. Evidence of this is found in Hebrews 11:4, which says, “By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain.” According to the Bible, faith comes from hearing the word that is preached (Rom. 10:17, 14). Since Abel had such faith, exercised this faith, and offered a sacrifice to God in accordance with this faith, he must have heard the preaching of the glad tidings from his parents. Out of that word he received faith. He did not present his sacrifice according to his own opinion or learning, and his offering was not his own invention. He presented his offering by faith according to the words preached by his parents.

Adam was a good father, taking the lead in believing the gospel. I hope that all the fathers reading this message will be leaders in believing the gospel. Eve, a good wife and mother, was also a believer, following her believing husband and opening the way for her child to believe. Therefore, in Genesis 4 we have a believing father, a believing mother, and a believing child. Look at this family—they all believed in the same gospel. When people have asked me if Adam and Eve were saved, I have said, “Why not? If you are saved, then certainly they were saved as well. In fact, they were saved much earlier than you were.” Adam and Eve were pioneers in believing the gospel. Adam cut the way, Eve paved the way, and Abel walked on the way. Now we are followers of Abel. I wish that every father would be an Adam, every mother an Eve, and all the children Abels. The first family on the earth was a gospel family, a family of believers.

Adam and Eve were saved, and they passed on the word of salvation to the following generation. We also must share these things with our own children, telling them the sad story of man’s fall and proclaiming to them the good news of God’s salvation.

Once again I say that I strongly believe that [Cain’s] parents preached the gospel to him and his brother, telling them of their need for coverings made from the skins of the sacrificial lambs. I believe that this accounts for Abel’s desire to be a feeder of the sheep. (*Life-study of Genesis*, msg. 22, pp. 289-290, 292, 293)

Noah

[The kind of life that God can use to change the age] always inherits the godly ways of the forefathers. Thank God that Noah, the tenth generation from Adam, had many good forefathers...Noah inherited Adam’s way of salvation (Gen. 3:20-21)...Noah also inherited Abel’s way of offering (4:4)...The third godly way that Noah inherited was Enosh’s way of calling on the name of the Lord to enjoy all that He is (v. 26)...Noah also inherited [all the fathers’] way of living and begetting (5:3-28)...Noah also inherited the fifth way, [Enoch’s] way of walking with God (vv. 22, 24). (*Life-study of Genesis*, msg. 29, pp. 390-391)

Second Generation of Children of Israel

With the exception of Joshua and Caleb, those who were qualified and ready to take possession of the land were younger ones. They were of the second generation. The older ones, those of the first

generation, had passed through many things and had learned many lessons. However, they were not qualified to enter into the land. The lessons learned by the first generation surely became part of the heritage passed on to the second generation. Their children certainly inherited from their parents all the lessons they learned during the forty years in the wilderness. By their birth the younger ones were put into a position to inherit the tradition of their family and all that their parents had experienced.

I believe that the fathers spoke to their children about their experiences in Egypt, in the exodus from Egypt, and in the wilderness. No doubt, the fathers spoke about how they were cruelly treated as slaves in Egypt, about how God in His mercy sent Moses to deliver them from bondage, about how they kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the second month, and about how they marched out of Egypt and crossed the Red Sea. The fathers must have also explained to their children that they entered into the wilderness without food but that God fed them with manna and supplied them with water from the smitten rock. They might have also explained that although they eventually felt that manna was loathsome, they nevertheless appreciated it. The people did not grow any crops, but for forty years they daily received the heavenly supply of manna. Furthermore, the younger ones learned about Moses and about the great help he rendered to the people of Israel. Moses himself was not allowed to enter into the good land, but he contributed many constructive factors to God's people.

The second generation did not pass through as much as the first generation did, but they received the benefit of what the first generation experienced. I believe that the older generation told the younger generation about all they experienced, enjoyed, and suffered. This speaking was part of the raising up, or the building up, of the second generation. What the first generation experienced was not experienced in vain, for it was passed on to the second generation. What the older ones experienced actually was not effective for them, but it was very effective in building up the younger ones. Therefore, God was able to prepare from the second generation more than six hundred thousand men with a rich inheritance and strong background who were qualified to be formed into an army to fight with Him and for Him.

The principle is the same with us in the Lord's recovery today. The recovery has been in the United States for twenty-seven years and has passed through many things. Do you think that all these things have been in vain? They certainly have not been in vain. These things are being passed on to the younger ones in the Lord's recovery and will be very effective in building them up and preparing them to fight with God and for God. The younger ones in the Lord's recovery have a rich inheritance. Because this inheritance is being passed on to the younger ones and even being constituted into them, I have the full assurance that when a further testing comes, there will be a very positive result. (*Life-study of Numbers*, msg. 52, pp. 368-369)

Samuel

In [1 Samuel] 1:1-20 we have a word regarding Samuel's origin. We should not consider that Samuel came out simply from his father, Elkanah. Actually, Samuel came out of God's economy.

God had His eternal economy, but the carrying out of God's economy had come into question. God had ordained that Aaron's descendants would be the priests for the carrying out of His economy, but that priesthood became stale and waning. God's heart's desire was to gain someone to replace that priesthood.

In order to gain such a person, God brought together in marriage Elkanah and Hannah. Elkanah had two wives. According to God's sovereign arrangement, the second wife, Peninnah, had children, but Hannah had no children. Furthermore, "her rival provoked her bitterly to irritate her, because Jehovah had shut up her womb" (v. 6). This forced Hannah to pray desperately not mainly for herself but for God. She promised God that if He gave her a male child, she would return the child to Him by the vow of a Nazarite. God was pleased with Hannah's prayer and her promise and He opened her

womb. Hannah conceived, bore a child, and named him Samuel. From this we see that actually no human being was the origin of Samuel. God was the real origin, who motivated His people sovereignly and secretly.

His God-worshipping Parents

Humanly speaking, Samuel's origin was his God-worshipping parents (vv. 1-8).

Remaining in the Line of Life Ordained by God for His Eternal Purpose

In the midst of the chaos of the degraded Israel, Elkanah and Hannah remained in the line of life ordained by God for His eternal purpose. The line of life is a line to bring forth Christ for the enjoyment of God's people that on earth God may have His kingdom, which is the Body of Christ, the very organism of the Triune God.

Elkanah and Hannah remained in this line of life not merely for God's eternal salvation but for His eternal purpose. God's salvation is mainly for our benefit, whereas God's purpose is related to the fulfilling of God's desire. We need to ask ourselves whether we are here for our profit or for God's purpose. Today on this earth everyone is concerned for his own profit. Even the majority of Christians do not care for God's purpose. I can testify of Brother Watchman Nee that he was a man altogether for God's purpose. I would like to follow his pattern. In the Lord's recovery, we are for God's purpose, remaining in the line of life ordained by God for His eternal purpose, which is to gain the Body, the organism of the Triune God, that He may have a full expression in a corporate way.

In Cooperation with the Move of God on Earth for the Accomplishment of God's Economy

This couple was in cooperation with the move of God on earth for the accomplishment of God's economy. Elkanah and Hannah were not the only ones moving; they were moved by the moving One, by the unique, divine Mover, who was moving secretly behind the scene. Under God's sovereign dealing, Hannah was suppressed in her soul with a burden in her spirit to pour out before Jehovah. This was God's move. **Because of God's moving in her, Hannah could not have peace until she prayed for a son. God, the sovereign One, kept moving her and motivating her so that she had to pray, even though Eli, the one taking care of the service in God's house, did not understand her. In her prayer Hannah cooperated with the move of God.**

God could motivate Hannah as a person who was one with Him in the line of life. **As long as He can gain such a person, He has a way on earth. I hope that at least some of us will be today's Hannahs and say, "Lord, if You have anything on Your heart to accomplish for Your purpose, I am here. I am remaining in the line of life for the carrying out of Your economy."** If you do this, I have the full assurance that you will be the ones whom God will move. He will come to you and motivate you. **God needs many Hannahs, persons who can bring forth some Samuels to turn the age.**

Especially His God-seeking Mother with Her Prayer

The origin of Samuel was especially his God-seeking mother with her prayer (vv. 9-18). Her prayer was an echo of the heart's desire of God. Her prayer was a human cooperation with the divine move for the carrying out of God's eternal economy.

We should no longer pray old prayers in a formal way. Instead, we need to pray something that is an echo of what is on God's heart. This means that what we say in our prayer is exactly what God wants to speak. Such a prayer is the speaking out of God's heart. Hannah's prayer was like this. God wanted a Samuel, yet He needed Hannah's cooperation to pray to Him, saying, "Lord, I need a son." This prayer was very human, yet it was a cooperation with the divine move for God's economy. (*Life-study of 1 & 2 Samuel*, msg. 2, pp. 9-11)

Jesus

Mary's poetic praise is composed of many quotations from the Old Testament. This indicates that she was a godly woman) qualified to be a channel for the Savior's incarnation. It also indicates that the Lord Jesus would grow up in a family which would be filled with the knowledge and love of God's holy Word.

Although Mary was a young woman, she was very knowledgeable concerning the Old Testament and could quote verses from it in her praise to God. Actually, her praise was a composition of quotations from the Scriptures. Surely she was the right person for God to use in conceiving the Savior who was to be born.

As we consider Mary's praise, we can see something of the reason she was chosen by God for the conception of the Man-Savior. No doubt Mary also taught the Lord Jesus many portions from the Scriptures as He was growing up. (*Life-study of Luke*, msg. 4, pp. 33, 37)

Timothy

Verse 5 of 2 Timothy 1 says, "Having been reminded of the unfeigned faith in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded dwells also in you." Here Paul reminds Timothy of the unfeigned faith, which is in him. This faith first indwelt Timothy's grandmother and then his mother. Now it dwells in him. (*Life-study of 2 Timothy*, p. 5)

From the Internet:

Timothy's name appears again and again in the New Testament as one of Paul's most loyal friends and most trusted companions. He was there when Paul wrote his magnum opus, the book of Romans, and at the conclusion Paul says, "Timothy, my fellow worker, greets you" (Romans 16:21). He was with Paul when he wrote 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Philippians, Colossians, and both letters to the Thessalonians. At some point he was imprisoned, for the book of Hebrews celebrates his release: "You should know that our brother Timothy has been released, with whom I shall see you if he comes soon" (Hebrews 13:23). Timothy was a stalwart defender of the faith against early heresies, a man whose character set an example of godliness, and indisputably one of the most important leaders of the first-century church.

A Sincere Faith

What was it that suited Timothy for such a ministry? Did he have a towering intellect and a world-class education? Did he have a wealthy and powerful father who padded a few pockets to ensure his son got a step up on the competition? The Bible highlights just one great privilege: The faith of his mother and grandmother. Timothy had the immense privilege of being raised in a Christian home.

In Paul's second letter to Timothy he reminds him of this: "But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 3:14-15). **From childhood, Timothy had been acquainted with the Scriptures through the care and attention of his godly mother and grandmother. "I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well" (2 Timothy 1:5).**

Timothy had the privilege of being raised in a home that was distinguished by a commitment to Scripture. It is important to consider: What was it that Timothy's mother had done that earned Paul's praise? It was not having Timothy study and memorize his catechism, though that is a very good thing for a mother to do. It was not teaching him systematic theology, though that, too, is important.

Paul says only this: that Timothy's mother and grandmother had introduced him to the Bible. And the Bible had done its work in him. The Bible had made Timothy "wise for

salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.” It had saved his soul and transformed him into the man he had become. Timothy was a man of the Word because he had been raised by a woman of the Word. Her trust in Scripture had become his trust in Scripture. Her love for truth had given him a deep love of truth. The faith of a godly mother (and grandmother) had become the faith of this young man.

Article taken from:

<https://www.challies.com/articles/no-greater-accolade-christian-men-and-their-godly-moms/>

IN CHURCH HISTORY

John and Charles Wesley

Sons of Susanna Wesley (1669–1742)

English mother of John and Charles Wesley whose “kitchen prayers” were thought to be the seed of the Methodist movement.

Born Susanna Annesley in London, England, in 1669; died at Bunhill, London, in 1742; daughter of Dr. Annesley (a minister); married Samuel Wesley (a London curate), in 1689 (died 1735); children: of 19 confinements only 10 survived, including daughters Emilia Wesley (1692–1771); Susanna Wesley (1695–1764); Maria Wesley (1696–1734); Mehetabel Wesley (1697–1750); Anne Wesley (b. 1702); Martha Wesley (1706–1791); Kezziah Wesley (1709–1741); sons Samuel Wesley, Jr. (b. 1690); **John Wesley (b. 1703, founder of Methodism); Charles Wesley (b. 1708, co-founder of Methodism and writer of 6,500 hymns, including “Hark! The Herald-Angels Sing”).**

Born in London in 1669, Susanna Wesley was the youngest child of Dr. Annesley, a prominent dissenting minister who gave every attention to her education. She learned Greek, Latin, French, logic and metaphysics and was deeply interested in the religious discussions of the day. At age 19, she met and married Samuel Wesley, a curate in London, who was earning a meager income of £30 a year. Though Samuel had also come from a strong Non-Conformist family, the couple would later decide to renounce dissent and abide by the Church of England.

In the summer of 1690, the Wesleys moved to the rural parish of South Ormsby in Lincolnshire; after seven years, they relocated to the larger parish of Epworth, where Samuel began to earn £200 per annum. During the first 20 years of this marriage which extended over a period of 46 years, Susanna Wesley had 19 children; the 15th was John Wesley (b. June 1703), destined to be the most famous preacher of his time; the 18th was Charles Wesley (b. 1705), his partner. Of the 19, only 10 survived infancy

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Because of the family’s constant struggle with poverty, **the task of educating the ten children had been left to Susanna, and for six hours a day for 20 years, she continued this work. She believed in forming children’s minds by “conquering their will and bringing them to an obedient temper,”** though she also believed in overlooking small transgressions. “Self-will is the root of all sin and misery,” she said. “Whatever checks it promotes their future happiness.” **Each night of the week was set aside for one child.** (The math holds out, for Sunday was set aside for Emilia and Susanna, ...)

....

Her noted son John followed her teachings, her will was his law, her letters through college were his oracles, her life was his example. “I do intend to be more particularly careful of the soul of this child, that Thou hast so mercifully provided for,” she wrote in her private diary, “that I may do my endeavor to instil into his mind the principles of Thy true religion and virtue.” Though they grew up under her strict and closely guided regimen, none of the Wesley children seem to have resented their mother; in fact, they matured into caring and loving adults.

In 1710, when Samuel journeyed to London to attend a lengthy convocation, he appointed a substitute curate. **But Susanna found the young man’s sermons so tedious that she began to**

hold service every Sunday evening in the rectory kitchen for the benefit of her children and servants. Word of mouth spread, others asked permission to come, until Susanna was preaching to around 200 people crammed into and out of the kitchen. Though Samuel protested on his return that it was unseemly for a woman to hold prayers, Susanna continued this practice for years in spite of hearty opposition. **Many historians contend that the “kitchen prayers” were the seed of the Methodist movement.**

After Samuel died in 1735, Susanna continued her ways until her own death in 1742. At her burial in Bunhill Fields, London, her son John preached one of his most eloquent and impressive sermons. She was the “mother of Methodism in a religious and moral sense,” wrote Isaac Taylor, “for, her courage, her submissiveness to authority, the high tone of her mind, its independence and its self-control, the warmth of her devotional feelings, and the practical directions given to them, ... were visibly repeated in the character and conduct of her son.”

It is generally agreed that without the example set by Susanna Wesley, her sons would have not had the impenetrable hides needed for reforming. Wrote Appleyard: “There seems little doubt that without the strong personality and dogged persistence in the pursuit of goodness that so characterized their mother, Susanna, her sons would have been unfitted for the great reforming tasks that lay ahead of them, and the world would have been a poorer place for that alone.”

Sources:

Appleyard, Simon. “The Family World of the Wesleys,” in *This England*. Winter 1984.

Article taken from:

<https://www.encyclopedia.com/women/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/wesley-susanna-1669-1742>

John Newton

John Newton was born on August 4, 1725, in London, the only son of Elizabeth and John. History has not recorded how his parents met and married, but it does tell of the impact they made on their son’s life—John Sr. as a stern and often absent father, and Elizabeth as a gentle, caring mother whose life was tragically short-lived.

Elizabeth Scatliff was born around 1705 in Middlesex, England, the lone daughter of Simon Scatliff who worked and lived in East London as a maker of mathematical instruments. Little is known of her early days except that she received a fine education and was raised a Nonconformist, a Protestant who chose not to associate with the established Anglican Church. John Sr. was a sea captain who regularly sailed the Mediterranean Sea, taking him away from home for months at a time. He was also a strict disciplinarian who insisted on maritime conventions even in his home.

By the time of John’s birth, Elizabeth and her husband were members of the Old Gravel Lane Independent Meeting House, a Dissenting congregation pastored by Dr. David Jennings. While Elizabeth’s faith was genuine, her husband’s appears to have been merely formal. John would later say that though his father was a moral man, he had not come under the true “impressions of religion.”

Because of his mother’s warm faith and his father’s long absences, John grew to be very close to Elizabeth, whom he later described as a “Dissenter, a pious woman” who was “of a weak, consumptive habit, and loved retirement.” As did so many in that time, Elizabeth suffered from tuberculosis, the disease that would eventually claim her life. Among the many symptoms of her tuberculosis was chronic fatigue, which often confined her to bed.

Though Elizabeth was unable to function as she might have wished, she did not squander her days. Knowing that time with her son might be short, she determined to make the most of what remained. She took on the role of teacher and spent hours with John each day. She was a good instructor, and he was an eager, bookish student. **He progressed quickly. “When I was four years old, I could read, (hard names excepted,) as well as I can now: and could likewise repeat**

the answers to the questions in the Assembly's Shorter Catechism, with the proofs; and all Dr. Watt's smaller Catechisms, and his Children's Hymns." From this list of material we know that Elizabeth consistently trained her son in Reformed theology. John later wrote, "As I was her only child, she made it the chief business and pleasure of her life to instruct me, and bring me up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

Based on her son's quick mind and easy grasp of theology, Elizabeth prayed and hoped God would call him to ministry. "My mother observed my early progress with peculiar pleasure, and intended from the first to bring me up with a view to the ministry, if the Lord should so incline my heart." She may have gone so far as to devote him to the ministry through prayer and to form plans to enroll him in the Calvinistic school of divinity at St. Andrew's in Scotland.

Sadly, Elizabeth would not live to see such a day. By early 1732, her disease had advanced and her symptoms had become grave. She traveled to the coast, hoping the sea air would provide respite or cure. But it was to no avail, and she succumbed to tuberculosis on July 11 at the age of

27. John was thought to be too young to witness his mother's final days, so he remained with family friends and learned the terrible news just two weeks short of his seventh birthday.

John Sr. returned from his voyage in 1733 and, learning of his wife's death, wasted no time in remarrying. John's step-mother was at first attentive, but she soon bore children of her own and lost interest in John, excluding him from family life. He became distant and rebellious. When John was just 11, after he had attended boarding school for a year or two, his father decided it was high time for the boy to head to sea. And the rest, as they say, is history. He would rebel against God and commit horrifying atrocities. But later, he would experience God's amazing grace and become a preacher, hymn writer, and abolitionist. He would tell his own story and the story of every Christian in his most famous song: "Amazing grace! how sweet the sound / That saved a wretch like me! / I once was lost but now am found / Was blind but now I see."

A Weak Body, A Strong Faith

When John Newton looked back on his life, he was quick to give credit to his mother. He knew his eventual salvation was inseparable from the early training he had received on her knee and from the many prayers she had prayed on his behalf. "Though in process of time I sinned away all the advantages of these early impressions, yet they were for a great while a restraint upon me; they returned again and again, and it was very long before I could wholly shake them off; and when the Lord at length opened my eyes, I found a great benefit from the recollection of them." Elizabeth, he said, had "stored my memory, which was then very retentive, with many valuable pieces, chapters and portions of scripture, catechisms, hymns, and poems."

Though Elizabeth was gravely ill for all of her son's early life, she did not allow her condition to keep her from fulfilling her God-given duty. To the contrary, her illness made her urgent to lay an early foundation of Christian doctrine and practice. She used what strength she had to express the deepest kind of love for her son. She taught him to know God's existence, God's holiness, and God's demands on his life. She taught him songs that would remain in his mind and heart until his dying day. She taught him to honor the Bible and to turn to it for spiritual knowledge and strength. She taught him the good news of the gospel, that salvation is by grace through faith in Christ Jesus. She displayed a sweet submission to God's will and a deep piety, treasuring and obeying God's every word. As biographer Jonathan Aitken says, "The spiritual lessons the boy had learned at his mother's knee were never forgotten. They become the foundation for Newton's eventual conversion and Christian commitment." We cannot understand this great man apart from his godly mother.

You, too, may be weak. You, too, may battle frailness and illness. Or perhaps you have some other besetting weakness. Learn from Elizabeth that a mother of feeble physique can still be formidable in faith. See how God delights to use even the weakest people to preach the greatest news. Like Elizabeth, make the most of every day and every opportunity, for you do not know how many years

you will have to love, teach, and train your son. Know that those early lessons are not easily forgotten, that this early foundation is not soon destroyed, that your labor in motherhood is not in vain.

Information for this article was drawn predominantly from *The Works of John Newton* and from Jonathan Aitken's magnificent biography *John Newton: From Disgrace to Amazing Grace*. I also recommend *Newton on the Christian Life* by Tony Reinke.

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Hudson Taylor

In the first article, we examined the life of John Newton, whose mother proved that spiritual strength can exist even where there is physical frailty. This time, I want to look at a great missionary who impacted an entire nation and the very course of Christian missions. To tell his story properly, we must begin with the deep spiritual crisis he endured in his teenage years, when he found himself unexpectedly torn between God and the world, drawn to the allure of wealth. It was in this moment of excruciating crisis that Hudson Taylor came to learn the power of a praying mother.

A God-Fearing Home

Hudson Taylor was born on May 21, 1832, in Barnsley, England, the firstborn child of James and Amelia. James was a chemist. He had desired to be a doctor but, as the family was unable to pay for medical school, had settled for pharmacology. **Raised in a believing home, he became a committed Christian at a young age and developed a deep love for Scripture and theology. When he was still a child, his parents moved to a home close to Wesleyan minister Benjamin Hudson. James quickly befriended the minister's daughter, Amelia, despite being six years her senior.**

Amelia, too, had put her faith in Jesus from a young age. She was raised in impoverished conditions and had to take up work as a governess in 1824 when she was just 16. Yet she was confident she would not be forever at this vocation, for by that time, she knew of James' intentions for marriage. Later that same year, the couple announced their engagement. But before they could settle down together, James had to prepare to provide for Amelia, first through education and then through successfully establishing his own shop. By 1831 he had settled into a small shop in Barnsley and on April 5, they were married. In the intervening time, James' gift for preaching had been identified, and he was set apart as a lay preacher, charged to give sermons each Lord's Day. Six days of each week were committed to the healing of bodies and the seventh to the healing of souls.

It was just thirteen months after James and Amelia's wedding day that they were joined by their first child. Though named after his father, he was always known as Hudson, after his mother's maiden name. Hudson was soon joined by Amelia Jr., who became his dearest friend, and then other siblings, at least two of whom died in childhood. **Hudson's parents had dedicated him to the Lord before his birth, giving him to ministry and especially to mission work in China. Hudson learned this information only after he had already taken up the work.**

James was a loving father committed to training his children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. But he was also severe in discipline and excessively frugal, often advocating forced austerity as a means of piety. In contrast to her husband, Amelia was kind, gentle, and forbearing. She had a quiet and pleasant personality and a rich sense of humor. **She was well-respected in her local church, where she taught Bible classes for girls. She maintained an open home and welcomed many strangers, especially believers from surrounding villages. She and James consistently led their children in family worship—reading the Bible, praying, and singing hymns together.**

The Taylor children grew up in an amiable, God-fearing home with their parents as teachers and their siblings as confidants. Hudson developed an early interest in spiritual matters and even an

interest in missionary work. But it would not be long before he would be challenged to throw it all away.

The Power of a Praying Mother

When Hudson was 15, his father determined it was time for the boy to gain a wider experience of life. Hudson took up employment at a bank, and it was in this environment that he first encountered people who openly mocked the Christian faith. He soon joined them in scoffing and swearing. The job also opened his eyes to wealth and those who lived to accumulate and enjoy it. He found himself drawn to money and to the pleasures it could afford. His spiritual life began to languish, and he lost interest in prayer and in reading the Bible. When weakening eyes eventually forced him to resign, he returned to his father's shop in a state of deep spiritual crisis. James attempted to help his son but was too often harsh and impatient. The crisis deepened. These were difficult days as **Hudson, now 17, found himself despondent and short-tempered, inwardly and at times outwardly rebelling against his father's strict authority.**

Amelia intervened because she understood Hudson in a way James did not and perhaps could not. She redoubled her efforts to be kind, gentle, and patient toward him. **She spoke to him, of course, and counseled him, but also became convinced that the best thing she could do for her son was to commit him to prayer.** During a short holiday that took her away from the family home, she felt compelled to increase the length and earnestness of her prayers. One day that compulsion grew to such a degree that she determined to pray for her son until she came to a sense of assurance that God would save him. **She locked herself in her room and for hours pleaded that God would extend mercy to Hudson. And then, all of a sudden, she believed that God had answered her prayer. Her heart turned from pleading to praise, and she worshipped God that he had, indeed, saved Hudson.**

Meanwhile, Hudson had been at home. Bored and discontent, he began looking for something to do. He wandered into his father's library and, though he pulled book after book from the shelf, found nothing of interest. **Finally, he spotted a tract titled "Poor Richard." He read the story, then came to the simple words "the finished work of Christ." In that very moment, Hudson understood that Christ had done all that was necessary for salvation and the only right response was to accept that work by faith. Right there, he fell to his knees and committed his life to the Lord, promising to serve him forever. He soon learned that as he was on his knees praising God for his salvation, his mother was doing the very same thing, though many miles away.**

A few days later, he and his mother were reunited, and he immediately exclaimed, "I have some news to tell you." Before he could say anything more she replied, "I know what it is! You have given yourself to God." She explained that for days she had already been rejoicing in his salvation.

Article taken from:

<https://www.challies.com/articles/the-power-of-a-praying-mother/>

Charles Spurgeon

Charles Spurgeon was born on June 19, 1834, in Essex, England, the first child of John and Eliza. Eliza had been born and raised in nearby Belchamp Otten, and though little is known of her younger days, we do know she married early, for she was only 19 when she gave birth to Charles. John, like his father before him, was a bi-vocational, Independent pastor who worked as a clerk through the week to support his ministry on the weekends. His work and ministry often took him away from home and left Eliza in charge of the children. And there were many children! Eliza gave birth to 17, though nine would die in infancy.

Shortly after Charles was born, he went to live with his grandparents, presumably because Eliza was struggling with a difficult pregnancy or with a tiny infant. He remained there until he was 4 or 5, then returned home, though throughout his childhood he would

continue to enjoy long visits with his grandparents. There he had access to a great library that sparked a lifelong love for reading, and there he listened in on theological debates and began to develop understanding and convictions. He gained a special fondness for the works of the Puritans and, at age 6, he read *The Pilgrim's Progress* for the first of what would eventually total hundreds of times.

When he had returned to his family, he was an older brother to three siblings, and it was time for him to begin his education. It was also during this time that his mother became his most formative spiritual influence. Though Charles was outwardly well-behaved, he was precociously aware of his deep depravity. "As long as ever I could," he later said, "I rebelled, and revolted, and struggled against God. When He would have me pray, I would not pray, and when He would have me listen to the sound of the ministry, I would not. And when I heard, and the tear rolled down my cheek, I wiped it away and defied Him to melt my soul. But long before I began with Christ, He began with me."

Christ began with him through the attentive ministry of his mother. Because John was so busy with his work and so often engaged in caring for the souls of his congregation, much of the responsibility of parenting fell to Eliza. Though this concerned John and at times left him feeling guilty, one experience assured him that his children were in good hands. During a time of busyness, he cut short his ministry to return home. "I opened the door and was surprised to find none of the children about the hall. Going quietly upstairs, I heard my wife's voice. She was engaged in prayer with the children; I heard her pray for them one by one by name. She came to Charles, and specially prayed for him, for he was of high spirit and daring temper. I listened till she had ended her prayer, and I felt and said, 'Lord, I will go on with Thy work. The children will be cared for.'"

Some of Charles's earliest memories are of his mother gathering the children to read the Bible to them and to plead with them to turn to Christ. To her children she was not only a teacher, but an evangelist.

It was the custom on Sunday evenings, while we were yet little children, for her to stay at home with us, and then we sat round the table, and read verse by verse, and she explained the Scripture to us. After that was done, then came the time of pleading; there was a little piece of *Alleine's Alarm*, or of Baxter's *Call to the Unconverted*, and this was read with pointed observations made to each of us as we sat round the table; and the question was asked, how long it would be before we would think about our state, how long before we would seek the Lord. Then came a mother's prayer, and some of the words of that prayer we shall never forget, even when our hair is grey.

In these prayers, she pleaded with God to extend his saving mercy to her children. Charles remembered that on one occasion she prayed in this way: "Now, Lord, if my children go on in their sins, it will not be from ignorance that they perish, and my soul must bear a swift witness against them at the day of judgment if they lay not hold of Christ." The thought of his own mother bearing witness against him pierced his soul and stirred his heart. Her intercession made such a deep impression on her young son that many years later he would write, "How can I ever forget her tearful eye when she warned me to escape from the wrath to come?" Another time she wrapped her arms around his neck and simply cried to God, "Oh, that my son might live before Thee!" The deepest desire of her heart was to see her children embrace her Savior.

But still Charles did not turn to Christ. From the ages of 10 to 15, he would fret and labor over the state of his soul. He knew of his sinfulness but knew no forgiveness; he knew of his rebellion but had no confidence in his repentance. He read the works of history's great pastors and theologians but found no relief. And then, one snowy Sunday morning, he was drawn to a tiny Primitive Methodist chapel where a simple pastor took up the text, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." "Young man, look to Jesus Christ!" he cried. "Look! Look! Look! You have nothin' to do but to look and live." The simplicity of the message was just what Charles needed, for now he understood

that God was not calling him to do but to believe. And he did. He put his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Soon after, he wrote a letter to his mother in which he expressed his enthusiasm and his gratitude. He paid tribute to her for being his foremost teacher and for being the one who had so often begged God for the gift of salvation. "Your birthday will now be doubly memorable, for on the third of May the boy for whom you have so often prayed, the boy of hopes and fears, your first-born, will join the visible Church of the redeemed on earth, and will bind himself doubly to the Lord his God, by open profession. You, my Mother, have been the great means in God's hand of rendering me what I hope I am. Your kind, warning Sabbath-evening addresses were too deeply settled on my heart to be forgotten. You, by God's blessing, prepared the way for the preached Word and for that holy book, *The Rise and Progress*. I have any courage, if I feel prepared to follow my saviour, not only into the water, but should He call me, even into the fire, I love you as the preacher to my heart of such courage, as my praying, watching Mother."

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<https://www.challies.com/articles/christian-men-and-their-godly-moms-charles-spurgeon/>

Watchman Nee

In February of 1920 Dora Yu was invited to Foochow, the capital of Fukien province, where she preached the gospel in the Methodist auditorium. Her preaching was so convincing and full of power that following every meeting rows of tears could be seen on the floor from the weeping of the audience. Many were saved. Among the converts was a well-educated Chinese lady, Watchman Nee's mother. She and her husband were Methodists but without the experience of salvation. After being saved, she returned home and made a thorough confession to her husband and children. Her oldest son, Shu-tsu, was greatly surprised and inspired by her confession. He felt that he must go to Dora Yu's meeting and see what it was that had brought about such a change in his mother. The next day he went, and the Lord caught him. Later the same night he saw a vision of the Lord Jesus hanging on the cross. Through this experience the Lord called him to be His servant.

WATCHMAN NEE'S PERSONAL TESTIMONY GIVEN AT KULANGSU, FUKIEN PROVINCE, OCTOBER 18, 1936

I was born into a Christian family. I was the third child preceded by two sisters. Because I had an aunt who had borne six daughters in succession, my paternal aunt was displeased when my mother bore two girls. According to Chinese custom, males are preferred over females. When my mother gave birth to two girls, people said she would probably be like my aunt, bearing half a dozen girls before bringing forth a boy. **Though at that time my mother was not clearly saved, she knew how to pray. So she spoke to the Lord, saying, "If I have a boy, I will present him to You." The Lord heard her prayer and I was born. My father told me, "Before you were born, your mother promised to present you to the Lord."**

I was saved in 1920 at the age of seventeen. Before being saved I experienced some mental conflict concerning whether or not to accept the Lord Jesus as my Savior and whether or not to become the Lord's servant. For most people, the problem at the time of salvation is how to be delivered from sin. But for me, being saved from sin and my life career were linked together. If I were to accept the Lord Jesus as my Savior, I would simultaneously accept Him as my Lord. saved, for I knew that once I was saved I must serve the Lord. Of necessity, therefore, my salvation would be a dual salvation. It was impossible for me to set aside the Lord's calling and to desire only salvation. I had to choose either to believe in the Lord and have a dual salvation or forfeit both. For me to accept the Lord would mean that both events would take place simultaneously...

(Watchman Nee—A Seer of the Divine Revelation in the Present Age, ch. 2, pp. 11-12)

Witness Lee

Our brother was born in 1905 in Shantung province in China. Like the apostle Paul, he was separated from his mother's womb and was marked out by God from the rest of his countrymen. **His early childhood testifies to God's loving provision in giving him a wise and loving mother, who was a third-generation Southern Baptist raised in a thoroughly Christian home.** His father, a farmer, died in 1923. To provide her children with the proper education in Chinese and English, his mother sold her only inheritance to raise enough money to send them to school. Such courage and foresight among women were rare in those days. While the world was paying little attention to such a humble beginning, God in His sovereign way was secretly preparing this chosen vessel for the eventual unfolding of His own economy.

In April 1925, at the early age of 19, he met the Lord in a personal way through the preaching of Sister Peace Wang. Simultaneously, he was called by Christ to be a bondsman to serve Him for the rest of his life. His own testimony states:

I still remember the experience of the God of glory appearing to me for the first time. That was on the afternoon of the day I was saved. When I walked out of the meeting hall into the street, I felt that everything was different. I stopped by the road and prayed to God, "God! I don't want anything else anymore. I only want Yourself."—*The Glorious Vision and the Way of the Cross*, p. 11

(*A Memorial Biography of Brother Witness Lee*, p. 1)