

MATRIARCHS

A 13 Week Study of Mothers of the Bible
*Discover the Power of Motherhood
through the Lives of Those Who Have
Gone Before Us*

Week: Ten

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Biblical Mom: Elizabeth, the Mother of John the Baptist

Title of Lesson: Mother Knows Best OR God Knows Best?

Key Passage: Luke 1 & 3

Key Influence: Mother of John the Baptist

Video Link: <https://youtu.be/f7ThVv15N3c>

ELIZABETH: Mother Knows Best OR God Knows Best?

From the moment I found out I was pregnant, I scoured books to find out what was best for the precious little ones growing inside of me. Determined that nothing would go into my mouth that was bad for them, I ate healthy, whole foods to give them every possible benefit of a well-developed body and mind. I was determined to choose wisely for them.

When Taylor and Lauren were born, I continued to study and tried to choose for them what I considered best. As they grew, I assumed responsibility for not only what went in their bodies but also their minds and spirits. Some people laughed at me for not allowing them to watch certain shows and movies. But in my heart, I knew it was my responsibility to protect their hearts and minds from violence, course-talk, and sex scenes. I stuck to my convictions.

Most parents do what they consider best for their children. I think that's why it's so hard when the time arrives in our child's life when we can no longer control what we consider "best" for them. The Plan B

may come through an illness, a learning disability, an accident in which they are involved—or, when they're adults, job loss, marital problems, infertility, and other things.

A Promising Beginning

Our Plan A for our children will not always turn out. Even though we raise them the “best” we can, they have their own plans for their lives—as does God. Part of parenting is learning when to let go and trust God; understanding that His ways are higher and better than ours, even though we can't see it at the time.

John the Baptist's mother, Elizabeth, is an example of a mom who probably thought she knew what was best for her son but had to come to grips with truth that God knows best.

Both she and her husband, Zacharias, no doubt raised John the best they could. Zacharias was a priest, and Elizabeth was a descendent of the priestly line of Aaron. This power couple is identified in Luke 1:6 as “righteous in the sight of God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and requirements of the Lord.”

When the angel Gabriel, appeared to Zacharias and told him Elizabeth would have a child who would be great in the eyes of the Lord; that he would drink no wine or liquor, that he would be filled with the Holy Spirit while in Elizabeth's womb; and that he would turn many back to God; they must have rejoiced. In addition, Gabriel told them that their child would be a forerunner to Jesus to turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

Can you imagine being told all that about your child? Before being born, the couple may have already set John on a pedestal of their definition of greatness.

Mom's Plan versus God's Plan

What I would give to know of the details of John's upbringing. His saintly, elderly parents likely had their hands full. Luke 1:80 says “The child continued to grow and to become strong in spirit, and he lived in the deserts until the day of his pubic appearance to Israel.” I can't help but wonder how many times Elizabeth called John in from chasing lizards to sit down for his Scripture lessons.

When she saw him eat his first locust, did she scream, “Get that out of your mouth!”? Did Elizabeth continually repeat to herself that God had a plan for her son's life and she needed to trust Him?

What did Elizabeth think when, instead of serving in the temple as Zacharias did, John headed for the desert? Did she try to reason with her son? “The angel, Gabriel, said you're the Messiah's forerunner. How can you be His forerunner if you're in the desert?” Certainly this godly mother must have thought she knew what was best for her son. But, did she?

John didn't follow traditional religion

- His ministry was in the wilderness and around the Jordan River, not the synagogue.
- He preached a baptism of repentance for forgiveness of sins (Luke 3:2–3), not tradition.
- He called out hypocrisy (Luke 3:7–8).
- He preached a baptism of the Holy Spirit and fire (Luke 3:16).
- He confronted political leaders about their sin (Luke 3:19).

And he suffered for his righteousness stand: Herod threw him in prison (Luke 3:20).

Where was Elizabeth during this time? Was she already in her grave? Was she alive and wondering what had become of her son? Was she cheering him on? Was she crying out to God, “What happened to the joy and gladness you promised?”

I would imagine if we asked Elizabeth, “What did you think would be best for John to do?” she might say, “Come home, shave, put on some priestly clothes, and get in the position to announce the Messiah.” **The truth is, mothers don't always know what's best.** Jesus said of John that no one born of a woman was greater.

God's Higher Ways

It's easy for us to read about another mom's child and say, “God knows best.” However, what happens when it's our child who isn't following what we consider the best career path? What if it's our child who is being outspoken about his or her spiritual convictions to the point of offending others? What if it's our child sitting in prison for taking a scriptural stand on moral convictions? How easily do we then relinquish what we think is best in favor of God's will for our child?

On this side of heaven, we will never fully understand God's ways. Why? Isaiah 55:9 explains: “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.”

When Bad Things Happen

I wouldn't dare tell you that everything that happens to our children is God ordained. God doesn't ordain physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional abuse of children. God doesn't ordain child pornography and human trafficking. Our Plan B world, under the reign of Satan, is filled with the fallout from sin—which is the very reason Jesus came, to redeem us from Satan's tyranny. Unfortunately, sometimes our children will suffer for the cause of righteousness or at least being in a “fallen” world. This is what happened with Elizabeth's son, John.

God's higher way was for John to be His mouthpiece, to call people to repentance, and prepare the way for Christ. In the line of duty, he offended Herod Antipas; who had John beheaded in prison" (Matthew 14:10).

Was Elizabeth still alive? If so, how did she hear the news? We don't know. But we do know that when Jesus heard of John's death, "He withdrew from there in a boat to a secluded place by Himself" (Matthew 14:13). Although Jesus knew John would live forever in God's presence, He still mourned his cousin's death and the evil that caused it.

Not the End of the Story

Often, with our mom-vision, our child's present predicament is all we can see. However, the Bible is filled with story endings that our minds often fail to consider. God's higher ways bring ultimately good endings. Elizabeth's son isn't in the grave. He's alive in God's presence; united with Elizabeth and Zacharias.

Plan A Mom Tip

Adopt the attitude that our heavenly Father has eternal plans for your child. Stay close to God in prayer, and be alert to His higher ways.

Plan A Mom Checkup

1. What thoughts would have run through your mind when your son headed for the desert instead of the synagogue?
2. What speaks to your heart about Jesus' comments about John?
3. What parenting truth do you want to take from the account of Elizabeth and John?
4. Memorize Isaiah 55:9. Teach it to your children. Share it with your adult children or another mom as a word of encouragement to her.

MEMORY VERSE:

"As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts." Isaiah 55:9

BETWEEN YOU AND GOD

I defuse the land mine of thinking I know what's best for my children by looking to and trusting God's higher ways.

Father, thank You that You have a plan for my children. Thank You that Your plans are good and righteous and holy. Help my children follow Your plans. In Jesus' name, amen.

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