

## IT'S THE MOTHER IN ME

**HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY** to all mothers, expecting mothers and those who desire to be mothers. I just want to encourage you by saying that "motherhood is joy unspeakable." I am now the proud mother of three grown children; ages 40, 37 and 30 and the delightful mother of four grandchildren; ages 12, 11, 4, and 21 months. It is a great feeling and reward to know that I birthed three healthy children and between them I have been blessed with four grandchildren. I give God all of the praise!

Motherhood is something that I never took for granted. Although it does not come without its share of ups and downs, moans and groans, laughter and tears; it boils down to LOVE. Love is what keeps "motherhood" knitted together. When they are babies they cry. When they are toddlers they touch everything. When they start pre-school and kindergarten they think they are grown. When they start high school you pray more. When they go to college or leave home they need you, your money and everything connected to family. But life has a way of changing those little people and the love of "motherhood" has to keep you and your mind together.

I thank God for my sainted mother, Susie Elizabeth Crowder Owens. God called her home 20 years ago and there is not a day that something in sight or on my mind that reminds me of her. She was the "best" example of a Christian mother any child could ask for. IT'S THE MOTHER IN ME that came from her that helped me raise three wonderful children. However, believe me; I had my times of trial and error. It did not come without some pain and heartache. It came with emotions that I never thought I would feel and sometimes distraught that I thought would never heal. It was knowing God for myself and trusting Him to help me cope with every discouraging moment that came with "motherhood" that eased the times that I had to stop and ask myself, "is this my child?"

IT'S THE MOTHER IN ME that taught me what I know today. My mother had that unconditional love. Her love was unselfish. Her love was a love of devotion and caring. We were poor but happy. We were not always dressed the best but we were clean. We did not have the luxury of riding in an automobile, but we mastered walking and the transit system. We had to eat hot dogs and beans and add water to our milk for cereal but we were never hungry. We never had a shower in our bathroom but we had learned how to share a tub and the water. Our clothes were passed down and we often had to wash them out by hand and hang them out to dry, but we were well groomed. We had boarders in our home to help pay the rent but we were taught to respect them.

My mother, my younger sister and I shared a room until I was 12 years old. My 3 brothers shared a room for as long as I can remember. My oldest brother's first room to himself was in the attic with me where we used a curtain to divide our space. We were happy kids and we knew that God was looking out for us even back then and that better days were ahead. My mother raised all 5 of us alone when my father left us when we were young. We never complained. We just knew that mama was somewhere in the house praying, stretching a meal or working two jobs to provide for us.

IT'S THE MOTHER in me that has lived inside of me for 62 years. Her lessons of courage, dignity, love, appreciation, giving, caring, fearlessness, and adoration to God has been a guiding force in my life. When I lost my mother I just knew my life had fallen apart and no one or nothing could put the pieces back together again. It was a hard thing to endure. She had only 6 months to live and we had accept, although we prayed continuously, what God allowed. Before we knew it she was going home to meet her Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Did it hurt? Terribly!

Mama made the best homemade rolls. How I wish I had gotten that recipe. Yes, my meatloaf tastes like hers and my BBQ chicken was first cooked in her kitchen. I watched her early on Sunday mornings as she cooked cabbage, collard greens, and yams and THAT'S THE MOTHER IN ME. But those rolls were already rising when I got out of bed. Mama fed us every Sunday the real meal and we invited anybody we wanted to share in the Owens' Sunday dinner. It became a tradition after church every Sunday, fried chicken, roast beef, baked ham, mac and cheese, corn pudding, name

it ... and those rolls.

**THE MOTHER IN ME** taught me to say “thank you” and “please.” She disciplined me with love and loved me with discipline. Our birthdays were special with pound cake and ice cream. We never sent invitations to our friends to come to our birthday parties because we could only afford to have a party for us. After all, 6 were enough for a party! Love kept us together. Love was our birthday present. There was no greater gift!

So, on this Mother’s Day, or if you are reading this after Mother’s Day ... treasure every moment you have with your mother. Call her. Send her flowers. Sit in the same room with her and share in conversation. Tell her you love her. Take her to dinner. Cook breakfast for her. Drive or fly to see her.

**THE MOTHER IN ME** left me with good virtues and values, honesty, compassion, and perseverance. As warm as her homemade apple pie, it has been a sensational time being a mother and such heartfelt moments being a grandmother. If I had known grandchildren would be so much fun, I would have had them first! So, sit at your mother’s feet and be blessed. Learn from her. You may not be able to learn what she can impart in your life from a textbook. Your mother is the textbook. Learn from her what will take you through life so you can say **IT’S THE MOTHER IN ME** that I am able to look at you and say, “I love you, my children.

My mother’s words of wisdom were simple – love one another, help one another, don’t be critical of others, and do not take what does not belong to you. But her best advice that has kept me rooted and grounded in my God was, “keep Him first in your life. There is no other way!

**THE MOTHER IN ME** has to cope with this “changing world” but we all must cope with something every day. But the ties of motherhood are still fastened to my heart where they will remain forever. Happy Mother’s Day to you. I pray that you are blessed beyond measure as you continue to let the “joy of the Lord” be your strength. **THE MOTHER IN ME** can attest to the fact “Her children rise up and call her blessed.” (Proverbs 31:28)

**HAPPY MOTHER’S DAY .... With Love!**

**Just Carol**