

#269 12/20/2004 John the Baptist's mother taught humility

Last week, I wrote about John the Baptist's mother. She showed great humility in the presence of the unborn Savior. Despite the fact that her long-awaited pregnancy was a miracle, she recognized the greater miracle of Mary's pregnancy.

Elizabeth's son was a special child. Filled with the Holy Spirit from birth, he was dedicated to the strict vows of the Nazarites. With parents who waited many years for a child, he could have easily been overindulged.

Apparently, that was not the case. Luke reports, "And the child grew and became strong in spirit..." Luke 1:80a. Zechariah surely knew of God's instruction: "These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up." Deuteronomy 6:6-7. Zechariah and Elizabeth must have worked hard to bring their son up to be a godly man.

Although much of what we teach our children is done by direct instruction as commanded in Deuteronomy, probably the most effective lessons come from the examples we provide in our own lives. Elizabeth demonstrated humility in her Savior's presence even before He was born. Humility must have been ingrained in her nature. She was perhaps especially humbled by the fact that God chose her to bear and train the forerunner of Christ. Her son observed her humility, and it also became part of his nature.

As an adult, John had a band of disciples who followed him as he preached the coming of the Messiah. Because of his popularity, it would have been easy for him to be proud. However, like his mother, when he stood in the presence of the living Christ, he humbled himself. He spoke of Jesus as one "whose sandals I am not worthy to untie." John 1:27b. Then, Jesus came to be baptized by John. "But John tried to deter him, saying 'I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?'" Matthew 3:14.

This week, as you approach the Christ-child in the manger, do it a spirit of humility. Your children will notice.