

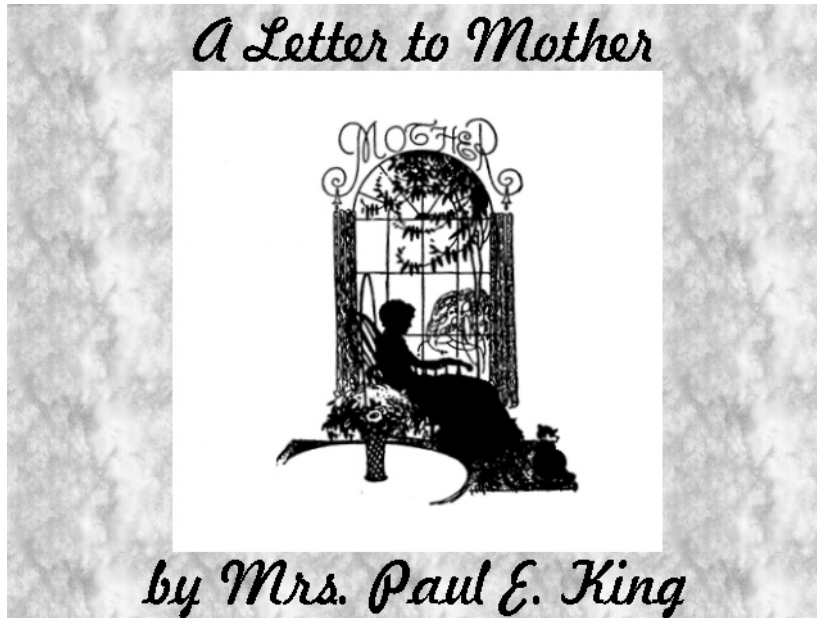
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**A LETTER TO MOTHER**  
**By Mrs. Paul E. King**

My Dearest Mother,

I am cradling our second -- and newest -- child in my arm as I write this letter to you. Marlissa is so tiny and delicate looking that I think she must resemble you when you were born. I remember Grandma telling me that she often wondered if you'd survive, so tiny, dainty, and fragile looking you were.

Looks, however, can be deceitful, don't you agree? You are proof positive about the surviving part. And, from things Grandma often told me, you survived in grand style, turning out to be the healthiest of her seven children.

What a tiny bundle of "dynamite" you were -- love dynamite! Grandma said everybody loved you. And of this I am sure: How could anyone not have loved you when, for so long as I have known you, you have been love personified -- love in action and love in deeds. Love in shoe leather, really; always willing and ready to help any and all in need, whether they were kind or unkind to you; whether they loved you or loved you not. Oh, Mother, what a shining example of true holiness you have always been! Is it any wonder we all love you so dearly and deeply!

Since I am married and now have two adorable little ones of my own and the work load has increased to a considerable degree, I often wonder how you managed to keep such an orderly and happy home, rearing seven offspring, much of the time alone, since Father's work schedule kept him gone much of the time during the week's work days. (When did the 40 hour work week have its beginning? Poor Daddy! Do you suppose he'd ever have been able to adjust to such a "meager" schedule? He worked so hard, so lovingly and willingly for you and for his children, whom he adored. Thanks be unto God for my wonderful Christian father. And mother.)

Mother dear, I have ever so many things I want to say to you, now that Mother's Day is here, and I sincerely hope I'll be able to recall and remember every single thing, since only the living can enjoy and appreciate such nice things said about them and done for them. I have never been one who believed in waiting for the casket and funeral parlor before giving my roses and my flowers; you know this. The same holds true for my loving "verbal" bouquets: I thoroughly enjoy -- and, yes, even thrive upon -- giving my "bouquets" while the one being "showered" is still living. What good are roses to the dead? They can neither see, smell or appreciate. You, dearest Mother, are still among us, and for this I thank God. What a treasure, that we still have you and Father! Each of you is a guiding light; a shining star in a world that is darkened by sin.

I want to thank you, thank you, thank you, for giving me the legacy of love -- love for you and for father, love for my brothers and sisters, love for the stranger in our midst, for the downtrodden, the poor and penniless, for the sinner, the homeless, and love for children. You have given me a

priceless gift; one which no amount of money could ever purchase or buy. And while I realize that, outside of the grace of God, this gift could not be activated or fulfilled to its top-best and greatest or highest potential, still it was you who demonstrated it to us consistently and constantly, and practiced it as naturally as you breathed. We not only read the wall motto -- God Is Love -- we saw it on display in your and Father's life. Is it any wonder each of us children came to know and love the Savior at a tender and early age! Thanks Mother dear, for being love.

To me, you have always been beautiful. Your beauty goes far beyond what the world defines as beauty. The world's beauties (so-called) can't hold a light in comparison to your beautiful self. Their beauty comes from without; yours emanates and glows and flows from within. Their beauty is a false, made-up and made-over beauty; your beauty is the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit and of a holy life. Their beauty comes from expensive and extravagant dressing; yours comes from modesty and simplicity in dressing.

Speaking of modesty, Mother, I want to thank you from the very bottom of my heart for instilling within me (from my earliest years of recollection) the wonderful principle of modesty and of being modest. Yours was not a double standard, Mother -- that of modesty for mother; another for mother's "cute little darlings," whose hemlines rose and fell as fashion dictated. Ah, no! Ever and always, you dressed us modestly, being watchful and careful that whether standing or sitting, our hemlines were well below our knees. Thank you for your priceless gift of modesty to each of us. In a world where once-treasured values have nose-dived into the ruins of dust and no harmism, I am truly grateful and thankful for a mother who taught us that some things will forever be unchanged in God's eyes, and modesty is one of those "forever unchanged" and "ever the same" Divine dictums. Thank you, Mother, for not only teaching us the value of modesty but for being our shining, sweet, day by day example of modesty.

Remember the year I wanted to get that office job in the city? Oh, Mom, I thought of all the things I could buy for you and things you really needed: not superfluous niceties but things to make life easier for both of you. I wanted that good-paying job. How I wanted it. And Mr. Bloomington said I could have it if you and Daddy gave your permission. Of course that would have meant moving into an apartment in the city and being away from my family and the church, except for holidays and special days off. I was excited.

Truly excited. What eighteen-year-old would not have been excited to be working for any of the Bloomington brothers!

I will never forget the night you came into the bedroom and sat beside me on the bed. For a long while you just sat there, with your arm around my shoulder, saying nothing. In that quiet time, I sensed your entire being having been saturated in prayer over concern for me. And when you said softly, "I love you, Lois Ruth," I wanted to cry. It was your question, however, asked so kindly and gently, that really got to me: "Have you prayed through about this job?"

I had prayed about the job; prayed much and often. But prayed through? I felt the question hit me like a thunderbolt from heaven. True, I had prayed. Yes indeed. But to say I had prayed through on it until I knew without any shadow of doubt that it was God's will for me, I could not honestly admit to this. If anything, I had always felt a hesitancy about accepting the job. But thinking of all the monetary plusses helped to drive away the feeling of hesitancy.

After another "I love you," and a loving hug, you left me with the sobering question whirling around in my mind.

I tried to sleep but sleep eluded me that night. (You know how soundly I always slept!) I suppose I tossed and turned for a couple of hours. And then, knowing I would be treading on dangerous ground unless I truly prayed through about the job, I got out of bed, tiptoed down the stairs, through the living room, out to the kitchen, and in to the kitchen pantry, where I closed the door and fell, sobbing, to my knees.

My heart was not only broken, Mother, it was open. I bared it that night to God. And needless to say, I didn't have an all-night time of wrestling to find out His will: In a matter of minutes, it seemed, it was a settled issue. I knew God's will, and that will was a definite no. What a precious lesson I learned then and there! Always -- always! -- no matter how old or young, no matter what the problem or the issue, when one prays with an open -- a bared -- heart, God will give the answer. Thank you, my wonderful mother, for guiding me in the matter of prayer: You led the way by example.

Do you recall my profound hatred for washing dishes? (How could you ever forget, huh? Oh, the woes a mother hears!) I laugh now over those

"breaking in" dishwashing sessions. What a gem of a mother you were! (And still are.) I remember my silent tears and your merry laughter as you taught me how to make a game out of the job I hated worst of all my regular household duties. And, Mother, the little game worked; soon I didn't mind washing the dishes at all. In fact, I got through the job not realizing fully just what it was that I so disliked about doing those dirty dishes. The singing, as I scrubbed, and the quoting of scripture portions coupled with giving thanks to God for His abundant provisions of food, all made that time seem to race by. You were so patient and kind and loving through it all. Thanks, Mother. And guess what; today I don't mind doing dirty dishes at all. Truth of the matter is, I am thankful for dirty dishes: They speak loudly of the great abundance of food our kind Heavenly Father so graciously provides for us.

You taught me the valuable lesson of smiling when life's pressures squeeze me and its tensions almost suffocate me. Oh, the wonder of a smile; the pure magic! It eases the tension and dissipates the pressure. And, like the Biblical "soft answer," a smile brings harmony and peace out of a storm. I'm thankful you smiled much, and often, Mother. More than once, your loving smile brought sunshine to my childish, broken heart.

And then, there is my Bible! What would I do without it? How could I meet the day's problems and its vexations without God's Word? I couldn't imagine going a single day without first partaking of the rich "food" I find in its sacred pages. Oh, I love the Word. Love it! It is indeed "a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my pathway." Thank you for seeing to it that, each and every day, each of your offspring took time out -- in private -- to read from the Holy Bible. This, in addition to our regular and daily family altar time.

I owe so much to you, Mother dear. So very much. And my one desire and wish is, that I may emulate you in all ways and that, in the bye and bye, my children may rise up and call me blessed, as we call you thus.

Today, because of you and your life, I am traveling the highway of holiness to Heaven. God bless you. I love you more and more. What a rich heritage you have given me! I am proud to be.

Your daughter,  
Lois Ruth