

BOOK REVIEW: SEASONS OF A MOTHER'S HEART

(by Sally Clarkson, 1998; 210pp; ISBN 1-888692-03-0)

Sally Clarkson sub-titles her book as 'Heart-to-heart encouragement, inspiration and insight for homeschooling mothers' and I feel it lives up to this claim. The book is a collection of twelve essays, each of which could be pondered upon for a season. The following paragraphs are from her chapter titled 'Prayers from Home'.

"For me, the greatest benefit of prayer is that it forces me to acknowledge, like David, that 'God is there'. Prayer opens my heart to his reality and puts all the earthly details of my life into heavenly perspective. And if 'God is there' for me, then that will be true for my children, too."

"It is so easy to fall into the trap of trusting in methods rather than trusting in God. ... We lose sight of the sovereign God who shepherds our children, and we focus narrowly on what we are or are not doing, worrying unnecessarily and vainly, 'It's all up to me!' We inadvertently begin to think we are just as important as God in our children's lives."

"At the end of the day (or at the end of the homeschooling!), the fate of my children will not be determined by whether I've used the right materials, read the best books, taken enough field trips, or done more of whatever I didn't do enough of. God is in control of their lives, not I. How they turn out might depend more on how much I prayed for them, more on how much I depended on God for them, rather than on how much I did for them. I want to be able to say to my child that I am 'confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.'"

"Most of my work as a homeschooling mother can be finished—it has a definite beginning and a point of completion that allows me to say, 'That's done, what's next'. But prayer, the most important work I can do for my children, is not like that—it is never really finished. I can finish a lesson, complete a unit, discipline my children and organise my house, and all those tasks are done. But the work of prayer is never 'done'. If anything, the work expands as the children grow, and more prayer is needed every passing year."

"The more time I spend with my Father in prayer, the better prepared I will be to help my children. And even more important, the more I can rest in the Lord knowing, by faith, that my children are in his hands. When I can trust in God's providence, draw upon his grace, join in the spiritual battle through prayer, and praise his name, all the other things I do as a mother seem to pale in significance. The more I grow as a mother, the more I grow convinced that the most important impact I will ever have on my children will be through my prayers for them."

"Sometimes I feel like I have fallen to my knees out of exhaustion, tiredness, or frustration. But no matter what has brought me to my knees, that is right where God wants me. It is only from being on my knees in prayer that I will have the strength and assurance to stand up and keep going as a mother. The battle belongs to the Lord. Amen!"