

Mother's Day Presents Mega-Challenges for Men

I've got to admit—Mother's Day is one of the most fear-eliciting, stress-inducing weekends of the year for me. It's not so much about my ineptness in selecting a gift or honoring the mother of my house—Debbie—although I've messed that up more than once.

No, the trepidation comes from the annual exercise of trying to prepare and deliver a message that navigates the veritable minefield of emotions that women are feeling on that day. You've got women who are moms; who want to be moms but haven't been able to yet; who've lost a child; who've lost a mother recently; who have wayward children; who have lost their husbands; who would *like* to lose their husband; who would like to find a husband; plus career moms and stay-at-home moms. The list goes on.

I try to do my best. But over the years, admittedly, there have been times that my sermons probably did more harm than good. My heart was right, but my sensitivity meter was broken. *Clueless* might best describe it.

Honestly, we could probably just blow right through Mother's Day—ignore it from the pulpit. It's not in the Bible. Only a few years after it became a holiday, the person who created it was arrested for disturbing the peace while protesting against it. We could just take a pass and avoid the potential pain entirely.

That's probably the best idea, but unfortunately it's not the one I've chosen. I still think it's a great weekend to tackle issues that impact women and give them an encouraging word from the wisdom of God. We simply have to be less clumsy.

So here's what I'm doing this year:

- Debbie sat me down and made me read this blog post by Amy Young. It was golden! I was going to innocently violate the most basic no-no—asking mothers to stand so I could pray for them. I would have ruined Mother's Day for someone. Good catch, Deb!
- I made a list of several women who represented some of the above-mentioned stations in life and then asked them to help me with the message.
- I'm praying like crazy that God will use my sermon in a powerful way.

Now I'm really looking forward to Mother's Day. It should be great—if I don't figure out a new way to mess it up.

Greg Surratt *is the founding pastor of Seacoast Church in Mount Pleasant, S.C., one of the early adopters of the multisite model. He is a founding board member of the Association of Related Churches and is married with four children and seven grandchildren.*