

# Mother's Day Special: Caring for Elderly Parents

With Guests: Mary Jane (David's mom); siblings: Marnie, Mark and his wife, Gina, and John; caregivers: Tandi and Taylie

SATURDAY, May 09, 2026 at 8:00am CT

## Host: David Wheaton 0:07

Today is a Mother's Day special program on caring for elderly parents. So thank you for joining us on The Christian Worldview Radio program where the mission is to sharpen the biblical worldview of Christians and to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. I'm David Wheaton, the host. The Christian Worldview is a nonprofit, listener-supported radio ministry. Our website is [TheChristianWorldview.org](http://TheChristianWorldview.org), and the rest of our contact information will be given throughout today's program. As always, thank you for your notes of encouragement, financial support, and lifting us up in prayer.

I don't remember the exact year, but it was about 20 years ago that I began interviewing my dad and mom at this time of year on programs related to Mother's Day and Father's Day. As some listeners will remember, my dad went to heaven in February 2023 after a sudden heart event at age 91. After 68 years of marriage, my mom became a widow. That's a difficult loss, as anyone who has lost a beloved husband or wife will attest.

Over the past three years since losing my dad, my mom has experienced what many elderly people do the loss of a spouse and declining health. She broke her shoulder and suffered a brain bleed after falling off her treadmill. She underwent a knee replacement surgery, endured emergency small intestine surgery in 22 grueling nights in the hospital to recover, and later suffered another fall in her bathroom, breaking a bone in her back. She was then hospitalized for nearly a week due to fluid in her lung cavity. This past January, after a period of relative stability, she experienced sudden abdominal pain caused by a twisted intestine, again requiring emergency surgery in 14 nights in the hospital. I say all this not to make the case that she has suffered more than others, but rather the opposite that what she has gone through is very common for elderly people, and often much worse. After all, Scripture says our outer man is decaying, but the good news for the Christian is that our inner man is being renewed day by day. Second Corinthians 4: 16.

My mom is home now and doing relatively well, but she can no longer live independently due to the risk of falling. Our family is walking through this journey with her, but we are not doing it alone. God has brought some wonderful women into our lives to provide daytime and overnight care throughout the week. You will meet two of them today in the second segment. In the final segment, you will also hear from my siblings as they reflect on both the blessings and the challenges of caring for my mom. And that is the point of this program, to remind us of God's call to serve and care for aging parents, and how God does a good work, not only in the life of the one being cared for, but also in the lives of the caregivers. But first, we'll hear from my mom herself, now age ninety-two. Her voice may not be as strong as you have heard in the past, but by God's grace, her faith is as strong as ever. It is our hope that this Mother's Day you will treasure the mother God gave you and rely on his strength to care for your parents in their later years. Mom, over the last three years,

you have gone through a lot of trials, and first and foremost was losing dad. How has being a widow changed your perspective?

**Mother: Mary Jane Wheaton 3:52**

It makes me appreciate all that I've had with dad in the years we were married. We had a wonderful marriage. I know he would want me to just be carrying on as if he was here. And so that's what I do. I just carry on. And I'm happy with my children, they're all so good to me. It's hard to lose them because we had such a good marriage, but I guess it's it's all God's plan, so I accept it as as it is.

**Host: David Wheaton 4:22**

Is there any way for a believer to prepare for these kinds of things in advance, and if so, how?

**Mother: Mary Jane Wheaton 4:30**

Well, you can't prepare for it right then when it happens. You can't prepare for it until you've been really spending time in the Word of God and putting your entire life in His hands. And then it all it all works out.

**Host: David Wheaton 4:50**

The passage that's on your gravestone where Dad's body was laid to rest is from Philippians chapter 1:21. "For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain." And then Paul goes on to say, "But if I am to live on in the flesh, this will mean fruitful labor for me, and I do not know which to choose, but I am hard pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart this earth and be with Christ, for that is very much better, yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake," as Paul writes to the believers in Philippi. At least a couple times in the last three years, you were just a couple steps away from entering eternity, particularly earlier this year in late January when you had that surgery on your twisted intestine. The night going into that surgery, the doctor had told us if you don't do the surgery you're going to die. And if you do do the surgery, there's no guarantee. What do you recall thinking about the possibility of being that close to death?

Facing Surgery And Nearness Of Death

**Mother: Mary Jane Wheaton 6:00**

I'm not afraid of death at all. I'm looking forward to it. I'll see Christ and Dad when I die, so that that isn't a a fear I have. I'm very happy in where I am in my life right now. I'm living with my children who are very good to me, and I'm very thankful for that.

**Host: David Wheaton 6:23**

The great passage on faith it comes from Hebrews chapter 11. I'll just quote three verses here. Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen by faith, verse 3. We understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, was not made out of things which are visible. Verse 6, and without faith it is impossible to please God. For he who comes to God must believe that he is, that he exists, and he is the God who reveals himself in Scripture and in creation, and that he is a rewarder of those who seek him. You're in your nineties, but what have you learned about what it means to live by faith at this later stage of your life?

**Mother: Mary Jane Wheaton 7:16**

Well, it's just putting your trust in Christ, knowing that He will see you through to the end. That's what gives me complete peace. I don't have to be working at it myself. It's already there. It's something you do in your lifetime that you're thinking about with Christ. So I'm I'm happy either way, whether I'm here or there.

**Host: David Wheaton 7:41**

Well, we're very happy that you're here still. You have said though several times over the last few years and now that you need really full time caregiving. I don't like being a burden to my children, or it's hard for me to sit here and watch you prepare dinner, and I wish I could just get up and do something. What is hard about being at your stage of life when you need to be cared for?

**Mother: Mary Jane Wheaton 8:07**

I never thought about it until I was actually in it. But now I can see that it when you've been active and had a a life that you've been doing everything for yourself and now you can't take care of yourself, that's hard. And I admit it's been hard for me. But it all works out. I it's all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to his purpose.

**Host: David Wheaton 8:34**

People who are your age, everyone's at a different level of physical capability or mental capability. You've really wanted to be cared for at home, and we've been able to do that because you're still able to walk some with a walker with help, and your level of care is not super difficult at this point. So we've been able to keep you in the home and have various shifts where we and others come over to do caregiving for you. Why have you wanted to remain in your home rather than going to a care facility where things are more built in to take care of someone at your stage?

**Mother: Mary Jane Wheaton 9:13**

Because home is where familiar things are. As I'm sitting here looking up at the the little heart that says a happy family is an earlier heaven. And I have to say that I do really love just having my children. I know not everyone can have all their children around them, but I'm thankful that I do, and it's been a a good time to see my children and have them take care of me too.

**Host: David Wheaton 9:45**

Even the convenience for almost all of us to live in your same neighborhood, is far more convenient than going to visit you somewhere else. And even the cost involved in it is is fairly comparable to the the cost of being in a elderly care facility. So oftentimes families will have their elderly parents live in their home. That's also a possibility, but for now you're been able to stay in your own home, which we have really been thankful for you. Mom, when we come over to bring you dinner at night and so forth, you always are still engaged in watching the news and keeping up on current events. Why is that important to you at age ninety two?

**Mother: Mary Jane Wheaton 10:24**

I'm just interested in it. I think it's good to keep your mind sharp. Reading and watching, listening. I think when you just stop everything, there's nothing there. You aren't growing in any way. My father watched the

news every night, and I guess I liked doing that too. So it's been good to know what's going on. Not that the news is good, it isn't. But I'm glad I can follow it every day.

**Host: David Wheaton 10:57**

You were born in nineteen thirty-three and have seen a lot of change in our country and in the world. What do you think are some of the most significant changes that you've seen over your lifetime? I know it's a broad question, but I bet you you could pick out one or two things.

**Mother: Mary Jane Wheaton 11:15**

One for sure is the change in marriage and in women. Women have now sort of taken over, they've taken the role of the male of the man. And it wasn't meant to be that way. I remember when we were young I was staying at home, taking care of my children, and the house, and my husband. But now it's all the woman is doing her own career and telling the man what to do and it's all changed. I didn't know anyone who was divorced, and then all of a sudden they started to have divorce, and I couldn't believe it. But that's the way it is now.

**Host: David Wheaton 12:06**

The last couple verses in Ecclesiastes, one of your favorite books, in chapter 12 Solomon writes, The conclusion, when all has been heard, is fear God and keep his commandments because this applies to every person. For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil. How do you keep pressing on in your faith at this late stage of life to continue to fear God and keep his commandments?

**Mother: Mary Jane Wheaton 12:40**

I can't explain it, David. It's just there. I just know the right thing to do and I do it. I'm happy with life with Christ and my family, and I don't need to be doing all the things that people do. I'm just happy with a simple life.

**Host: David Wheaton 13:00**

Final question for you, Mom, is what what are you most looking forward to when God chooses to bring you home to heaven?

**Mother: Mary Jane Wheaton 13:10**

Seeing Christ. I can hardly wait to see Him. And then I'll see d Dad. So those two things I'm very happy either way, whether I'm here or there. I'm thankful for all that I've had in my life with Christ and with Dad, with the family.

**Host: David Wheaton 13:31**

Very good. Well, just on behalf of my siblings, we just are so privileged and thankful to God that He has kept you with us this time longer and got you through some of these difficult health trials. It's a joy for us to serve you and care for you, and uh we just pray that we can have much more time with you. So thank you for coming on the program today, Mom.

**Mother: Mary Jane Wheaton 13:54**

Thank you, David. You've been a wonderful son.

**Host: David Wheaton 13:58**

And my mom has been an even more wonderful mother. We'll take a short break and then we'll hear from an aunt and her niece who provide care for my mom and how they have been impacted by serving an older believer. I'm David Wheaton, and you are listening to the Christian Worldview Radio program.

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Welcome back to the Christian Worldview. I'm David Wheaton. Be sure to visit [TheChristianWorldview.org](http://TheChristianWorldview.org) where you can sign up for our weekly email and the Christian Worldview Journal print publication, order resources for adults and children, and support the ministry. Today is a Mother's Day special program on caring for elderly parents. While my siblings and I are with my mom often, we are very blessed to have a handful of women outside the family who care for my mom during daytime and overnight. This segment we'll hear from two of them, Tandy and her niece Taylor. Tandy, it was several years ago that we had put an announcement in the church bulletin that we were looking for someone to care for my mom. What was it that motivated you? Because you're a busy person involved in biblical counseling, having your own business and so forth. What was your motivation there?

**Caregiver: Tandi 17:19**

When you posted in the church bulletin that your mom was looking for a care companion, the Lord drew me to the opportunity. I remember calling you the very next day to introduce myself. Your dad had gone home to be with the Lord that February, and I began caring for your mom in April. So the Lord drew me to your mom's newly widowed. A loss like that brings not only practical needs, but also deep loneliness and significant life adjustment. And the Lord opened the opportunity to provide both companionship and support.

**Host: David Wheaton 17:57**

Yeah. And it's just been fantastic all along the way. It's been just beautiful to see your relationship with my mom and how highly she speaks of you and just enjoys that relationship and friendship. Taylie, you are Tandy's niece, and you got so-called recruited from Tandy. And uh you also have come to the overcomer course for young adults as well, too. So there's some connections there as well. What are some of the main things that you have learned or the ways that you have grown spiritually through being with my mom several days a week over the last couple years?

**Caregiver: Taylie 18:35**

Yeah, I think three main things stand out to me. Being able to witness her consistent Bible reading every single day has been a joy to witness and also be a part of. We enjoy reading the Bible together sometimes. And sometimes if she's reading by herself, she'll talk to me about what she's reading. And I feel like I get to have Bible study with someone that's older and wiser than me every single day, which is awesome. And then also consistently listening to John MacArthur. Every single day, she's learning still all the time, wanting to gain more knowledge. And I think it's been a challenge in my own life to hear someone who has experienced more life than me. And yet she is still has this deep desire to learn more. And so I think that's been a good

challenge for myself. And then I have also been able to witness her interacting with friends, whether they're coming over or it's a phone call. And a phrase that is very consistent that she shares with just about everyone is keep your eyes on Christ. And I've been able to hear that over and over again, regardless of the situation that someone is going through, whether it's a positive situation or negative, she's always reminding people to keep their eyes on Christ. And that's been a great reminder in my own life.

**Host: David Wheaton 20:02**

That sounds just like my mom. All the things you just mentioned. So thank you for that, Taylor. Tandy, what have been some of the more rewarding aspects of caregiving for my mom? And maybe a few of the challenges as well.

**Caregiver: Tandi 20:18**

One of the most challenging parts is loving someone while knowing they are nearing the end of life. This past year, your mom went through serious physical challenges that at one point became life-threatening. There were moments in the hospital when it seemed like we might lose her. And walking through that uncertainty was deeply difficult. By God's grace, your mom fought back and regained strength, but it was grievous to watch someone you care about suffer so significantly. The most rewarding part has been learning from your mom herself. She lives with a steady, daily awareness of Christ that is encouraging to witness.

She regularly listens to sermons, as Tay said, from pastors like John MacArthur. We read scripture together, sometimes poetry written by her children or lyrics from a hymn. And those moments almost always lead into stories about God's faithfulness throughout her life. She talks about the Lord's kindness in her marriage, her protection over your family during years of travel and tennis, and the many ways the Lord has sustained her. God is not finished with your mom simply because she's older. He is not uncertain about what to do with her, nor does he view her as spiritually sidelined. She is still bearing spiritual fruit. Your mom has a unique evangelistic instinct about her. She speaks about Christ sincerely and intentionally. And some of her greatest joys have centered on telling others about him. And she is still spiritually influential even now. In fact, just a couple of weeks ago, one of her longtime friends called while I was with her. And during that conversation, she asked him to share with me how he came to know Christ. Moments like that are a regular part of caring for your mom, even in her fatigue and physical weakness that come with advanced age. The Lord uses her to encourage others to disciple them, to pray, and to testify of his goodness and faithfulness.

**Host: David Wheaton 22:31**

Thank you for that, Tandy. Now, I'm sure that both of you have been changed or shaped in some way to think about yourself. I know my siblings have. We are going to be in my mom's situation, likely at some point. We're all getting older. Taylor, let's start with you. You're in your 20s, I think mid-20s. You're seemingly a long way away from that particular time of life, but how has caring for my mom shaped the way you think about and prepare for the own time of your life when you reach that stage

**Caregiver: Taylie 23:07**

It has challenged me in a few different ways. One that may seem simple, but has had a huge impact on me is just not taking for granted the abilities that I have now, whether those be physical or mental, whatever it is, I

am daily reminded. Your mom is often telling me about how she would swim across the bay or she would go for walks on the trail. And being able to hear how she longs to be able to do that has really shaped me to think differently about my own ability right now and not to take it for granted to be outside and enjoy God's creation. Because I have the ability to has been really impactful for me. And then, as well as thinking about how I want to care for my own parents someday, I have been able to witness you and your siblings outpour so much love and care and consistent compassion. And it has been remarkable to witness and it has challenged me to want to do the same for my own parents someday. And then lastly, again, it kind of seems simple, but the way I navigate the world is a little different now. I am much more aware of older adults around me. I think twice about holding a door for someone or holding an elevator, helping someone up the stairs because I simply know that those are daily tasks that can be incredibly difficult for someone. And it has challenged me to see others with more sympathy and compassion, even if I don't know them or get to spend every day with them.

**Host: David Wheaton 24:49**

You're right about my mom. She was so active in her life. I think one of the hardest parts for her is just not being able to get up and go out for a walk. I mean, she can still walk a little bit with a walker with someone next to her, but it's not the same as when you're independent and can go outside and take a walk for a mile or two. And just simple things like that we tend to take for granted when we're younger is something that I think is a big challenge or disappointment for someone who's older. Well, thank you for that, Taylor. How about you, Tandy? What have you thought about you've been with my mom now for several years, seeing her through the good times and the difficult times. How has it shaped you or changed you to think about as you get older?

**Caregiver: Tandi 25:33**

Well, caregiving has a way of bringing the realities of aging into full view. Her physical strength has changed. Independence gradually diminishes. Those realities naturally cause a person to think differently about the future. Caring for your mom has made me more aware that aging is something to prepare for wisely and faithfully. It has especially encouraged me to nurture healthy physical and spiritual habits while I'm younger. Your mom, as you both have mentioned, was very active throughout her life, teaching and playing tennis, keeping up with her husband and four active children. That lifelong commitment to stay active seems to have contributed in meaningful ways to the strength and resilience she has today. Then, even more importantly, she developed spiritual habits that now sustain her in old age. Her life has been marked over decades by regular Bible reading, prayer, and dependence on the Lord. And your mom's hope has truly been rooted over a lifetime, even as her physical strength and independence fade. She continues to love Christ and trust God.

**Host: David Wheaton 26:47**

Yes, she does. It's not that she is perfect about it every day. She has her struggles and her own moments when she misses dad so much and doesn't know if she wants to be here anymore, but that's what we're all around her for to encourage her, like we're to encourage each other to press on, even at her age and in her condition. Okay, so final question for both of you, and you've answered this. I think some listeners will be able to pull some things out of their answers, but what would be your exhortation? We'll start with you, Taylor, for people listening today, maybe your age, Taylor, in in their 20s who who aren't in this stage of life, you know,

this is more of an issue that people in their 40s, 50s, and 60s typically deal with. But what would be your exhortation for people who are younger in their 20s and 30s, let's say, to consider caring for someone who's a family member or someone else who's in this stage of life?

**Caregiver: Taylie 27:43**

I have a lot of thoughts on this. I have gained so much wisdom and insight from your mom on a daily basis, and things that I don't even think she realizes she's imparting wisdom all the time. It's allowed me to see the world through a different lens, through someone who has seen a lot more life than me. And that's been extremely valuable. I'm currently in grad school right now, and your mom will often say to me, You're learning things right now that your books will never teach you. And that is a phrase that she'll often remind me of that I am learning practical skills and caring methods and how to sit with someone in a hard situation. She's right, things that my textbooks can't teach me. I also think I would encourage people my age, even if they're not in a specific caregiving role, take the time to talk to older adults in your life. I think that has been super valuable to me. Seeing those older adults as human beings with dignity and they want autonomy and they want to be able to talk to you. And I think taking the time to slow down, especially maybe when you're younger, is hard. It's a challenge. But I would really encourage someone my age to take the time to talk to an older adult in their life because they want to talk with you, they want to share stories with you. And I think it means just as much to them as it will to you. And then I think lastly, it may feel uncomfortable. I certainly have not spent a ton of time around a 92-year-old before this, but I do think that pushing ourselves outside of our comfort zone challenges us in so many ways. Like I already mentioned, it will teach you things that you can't learn other places. Whether that's head knowledge or spiritual wisdom, I think it's something that you can't experience unless you gain it from someone that's wiser and has more experience than you.

**Host: David Wheaton 30:00**

Very well said. And Tandi, how about you? What will be your final exhortation to listeners today about caregiving for an elderly person?

**Caregiver: Tandi 30:08**

It sure has impacted me and the way that I think about caring for my own parents. Your mom often comments on what a blessing it is to remain in her own home as she ages. My dad is already home in heaven, but my mom and my stepdad are still living. Caring for your mom has reinforced how important it can be, when possible, for someone to remain in familiar surroundings as they grow older. Obviously, different physical needs and level of care make this more or less feasible, but I have seen firsthand the value of routine, familiarity, and home in contributing to your mom's sense of stability, dignity, and well-being. It's also helped me see how often aging is viewed through the lens of loss and fear. So fear of physical and cognitive decline, there's vulnerability, the fear of becoming a burden, or even the fear of forgetting Christ. Our culture frequently treats dependence as a loss of value. One of the tragic and enduring effects of sin is the tendency to dehumanize the weak and the powerless. Scripture, however, teaches the opposite. The Bible justifies and insists upon the compassionate care because aging parents are image-bearers of God, worthy of dignity and honor, and our patience and our love. Then Exodus 20:12 establishes that timeless principle for caregivers to honor your father and mother. He has given us great opportunity to live out that command with humility and faithfulness.

**Host: David Wheaton 31:52**

Very good. Well, I just learned a lot even today, just hearing both of your perspectives and both of you spend so much time with my mom, and it's so inspiring and encouraging to me to hear how God has used your time with her to impact you in many different ways. So thank you for all the incredible care you provided for my mom. Thank you for coming on the program today. We just pray that there'd be much more time with her if God wills, and we pray that you both can be a part of that.

**Caregiver: Tandi 32:23**

Thank you, David.

**Caregiver: Taylie**

Thank you.

**Host: David Wheaton 32:25**

Tandi and Taylie are special godly women. We and my mom are so grateful to God for them, and we are equally thankful for the other caregivers who are with my mom, like Shayna, Lauren, Cheryl, and Natalie. All of them are a huge blessing of God to my mom and to us. Coming up in the final segment, we'll hear from my siblings about the call and reward of caring for elderly parents. I'm David Wheaton, and you are listening to The Christian Worldview Radio program.

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Thanks for joining us on The Christian Worldview. I'm David Wheaton. Today's program and past programs, along with transcripts and short takes, are available at [theChristianWorldview.org](http://theChristianWorldview.org). While there, you can also sign up for our weekly email and the Christian Worldview Journal print publication, order resources, and support the ministry.

Today is a Mother's Day special program on caring for elderly parents. In this final segment, we'll hear from my sister Marnie, brothers Mark and John, and Mark's wife Gina with their reflections on caring for my mom. Mark, let me start with you. How would you describe these last three years since dad went to heaven? That was in February 2023, and then all the subsequent care for mom.

**Son: Mark Wheaton 35:54**

Well, thanks for having me, David. I can best describe it as a lot of rough periods through sudden unexpected health challenges. She's been through multiple hospitalizations and surgeries and other procedures that have really caused us to wonder if she's going to make it through. That has happened a lot of times since Dad has been gone. There's been a lot of calm waters in between, though, where things are really nice and smooth, and mom just looks like her normal self. She comes back from the hospitalization or the surgery, and we are always just amazed at how God has brought her back. She just continues to flourish, even if she does take small steps backwards, she continues to flourish in a way that we're just constantly amazed. Another point I would make is that the constant in mom's conversation is the absence of dad. Dad went to heaven three years ago, February of 2023, but his absence is something that she continually talks about because his presence was so calming to her that none of us can replace that. We are there all the time helping her along with her

other caregivers. It's been interesting that dad had a like a steady helm of the ship, so to speak, that really made mom feel his presence. We're doing our best to make up for that, and she so much appreciates us. But the time has really been a challenge because of the difficulties and through all the surgeries she had, but God has brought her through each one, and we're just grateful for each moment we have with her.

**Host: David Wheaton 37:33**

Yes, we certainly are. John, let's move over to you. You know, one of dad's wishes for a mom, for both of them, actually, was to always remain in their home. They they love their home, they've been there for over 50 years. There's a comfort about that. What have you seen as some of the benefits of caring for a mom in her home versus the difficulties of doing so rather than having her live, let's say, in a care facility?

**Son: John Wheaton 38:01**

Well, David, I would say that it's mainly benefits. Of course, not everyone can live near their parents and be so close, and we've had that privilege of being close and are able to do it with all of us here. I think the thing that's really made it easier is the great team of caregivers that you've assembled. That makes it able for us to bring her dinners, which we do. We take turns, each of us about two times a week. And that's just a great way for us to serve her and visit with her with meaningful conversations and just help her get ready for bed. So that's to me been ideal. Again, not necessarily something everyone can do, but for us, it's been really ideal. So I see that as the greatest benefit that we can spend quality time with her and not just during dinner either. I go over there to help out with her property, which I enjoy doing, whether it's something needs fixed or dealing with contractors or whatever. That's kind of my role. I know Mark and Gina have been just great meeting the needs of her medical needs. And then, of course, David, you've been just great in assembling that great team of caregivers. And Marnie, of course, and the time she spends with mom. It's just been great for all of us to work together to meet her needs right here in our our neighborhood.

**Host: David Wheaton 39:17**

When you think of caring for someone at home, you think of the fact that the required involvement of family, and it has been a lot. That's been a challenge, but it's a blessing at the same time. And as we thought about thinking, well, can we actually keep her in the home? Your point about her present condition. Well, if you get too hard to care for, you maybe don't have a choice to keep her in the home, but fortunately she's still at a point where she can walk with a walker with help and so forth and get her on the home and still be there. Mark, you wanted to add something?

**Son: Mark Wheaton 39:47**

A benefit that you can't even measure with money is that mom has been in her home now 55 years. There's a familiarity. Everything's been the same as it's always been. There's pictures lining the walls and the mantles, all her favorite books, her view of the bay, the neighborhoods familiar to her. All she talks about is loving where she lives. And each of us can just drop by anytime and just visit her. She likes the unscheduled drop bys that we do outside of our usual bringing dinners and so on. I would say that the caregivers we have aren't just doing a job. They really love mom, and mom loves them, and it's personal. In a nursing home you get different people just doing their jobs, and you often feel quite alone, even though there's many, many people

there. So I grant that it's not possible for a lot of people to do this, but God has given us that opportunity because we all live very close.

**Host: David Wheaton 40:43**

My siblings join us today here on The Christian Worldview as we talk about caregiving for elderly parents. You mentioned what it takes for family to do this. Each of us brings over dinner to mom a couple times a week, puts her to bed so we get that time with her. There are hospital visits to take her to, doctor appointments. There's a reason this is called serving another. That's a biblical command to serve one another, especially your family and your parents. So there's a sanctifying element to this in that you just can't do what you want to do. You have to order your life to some degree around serving, in this case, our mother. God works through that. Mark, let me start with you on this one. How has God worked in your life through, as you mentioned, the various episodes of trial she's gone through in the last few years, almost losing her on a couple occasions? How do you think God has sanctified you through this?

**Son: Mark Wheaton 41:40**

Well, there's a high degree of dependency. Sometimes it just feels like she's hanging on by a thread when she has a crisis that sends her to the hospital and has to go through surgery. And we know that she's could be moments later with the Lord. But on the other hand, we really do everything in our power to want to see her continue in her life. She has such a full life. She often will say, Oh, it's time for me to go, or time for me to go to heaven. And I said, Well, mom, you're still here, and I think that means that God really intends to keep you here longer. The very reason that you've been here in this life all along, to impact others, to put your heart and soul into us growing up and also all the different people that you've influenced for Christ. So those kinds of things are not lost on her. But I do appreciate the fact that it's hard to understand the time and life that she's in, and we're watching it in real time. It also reminds us that our time will come too. But by God's grace, we can have these special times with her day by day.

**Host: David Wheaton 42:50**

That's very well said. And John, how would you answer that? How God has worked in your life or what you've observed or learned through caring for mom at this late stage?

**Son: John Wheaton 43:01**

I think, like Mark, it's a reminder that our days ahead are likely going to involve some physical decline, right? Possibly mental decline. And it's just a reminder that we are finite and that we're facing eternity. And I like to say, I don't just prepare for my retirement, I want to prepare for my expirement. So visiting with mom, you recognize she's 92 years old. You appreciate your health, but you also recognize we don't live forever on this earth, which is really a good thing, actually, because I don't want to spend my whole life in this broken world. I look forward to eternity with the Lord. The other big benefit that I see is our own children. I have four adult children in their 20s, and they've watched me and all of us serve mom in this way. I think it's been a great benefit to them as well, as they've gained that eternal perspective as well, and that recognition that we're here to serve. That's a primary focus of the Christian. So just a great way to kind of live out our Christian faith starting right at home with mom.

**Host: David Wheaton 44:25**

Now, Gina, you have been integral in this whole process of caring for mom, especially with your nursing background and being a cherished and loved member of our family. You are heavily involved with her, and you have been around, I think, even caring for your own dad when your dad had cancer. What would be your encouragement to people listening today as they're in that middle stage of life that we are, let's say, 40s through 60s, and their parents are elderly now, they need care. What would be your exhortation to them?

**Daughter In Law: Gina Wheaton 45:00**

Thank you, David. You know, because of Christ, all the daughter-in-laws get along very well with mom, and that's just because of Christ. But that being said, it can be difficult because we're not the daughter. So I want to encourage others because as a nurse and as a wife and as a Christian, I always remember this also as an employee. I always remember this verse in Ephesians, where we are to serve wholeheartedly, as if we are serving to the Lord. And that's the key. If you serve wholeheartedly, that means sincerely and with deep commitment. And in this case, love. You're serving as the Lord served us. I just believe that in serving mom, I'm serving my husband, I'm serving my Christ family, and I think that is very important, regardless of what's happening. Sometimes it's very tiring and it can be very hard because of personalities, but you just love. I think that's very important, and I think she sees that with everybody that gives care to her. If you honor the Lord, you're honoring the person you're serving, no matter who that is.

**Host: David Wheaton 46:13**

That's very well said. Thank you for that, Gina. Marnie, you're the oldest of the siblings and the only daughter. What have been some of your reflections on caring for mom?

**Son: John Wheaton 46:23**

It gives me a great appreciation what she did for all of us all these years, and you don't realize it growing up. And uh as mom has been going through this, it's at our pleasure that we get to take care of her because she and my father have done such a good job. We've been we've benefited from having not only a strong Christian family, but just to be able to be near everybody in the family and to take care of her. And it's our turn to do that for her because she and my father gave up a lot for us.

**Host: David Wheaton 46:54**

Marnie, what has struck you about how mom has handled these last few years of losing dad and all the physical challenges that have followed?

**Daughter: Marnie Wheaton 47:04**

The thing that hits home most for her is the loss of dad, and I think it's gotten harder and harder as she has aged the past couple years. But it shows what a good marriage you have. It teaches us all to really thank God for what we have. You know, we had dad for so many years, and and we're blessed to have mom still here, despite all of the things that have come into her life recently. I know that she's very frustrated. You know, she can't do the things she used to do, and it'll probably come to us as well. But s I'll tell you one thing, she's very strong spiritually and mentally after all the things that she's gone through. It's just amazing to see her go through it.

**Host: David Wheaton 47:49**

John, you wanted to add something?

**Son: John Wheaton 47:51**

She used to be so active, swimming in the lake, playing tennis. She was such an active person throughout her life. That's probably why she's lived so long. She's lived such a healthy life, active life, and now she can't. She always says it's so hard to be old and not able to do the things she used to do. I know it's humbling for her, but she shows that humility, and I've learned humility through it as well. It's a recognition that we are a vapor and life is short, and we should make the most, but every day is precious. We should recognize our place in this universe. We're a speck of dust in the greater scheme of things, but thankfully our great God loves us and cares for us and has a great future for us.

**Host: David Wheaton 48:37**

That does drive the point home when you care for someone who's in their 90s at the latter stage of your life and watching them go through these health trials and surgeries and recoveries and barely hanging on, that this is where you are likely headed in life, unless the Lord takes you in the prime of your life quickly. This is where things are going and to number your days, apply your heart to wisdom. And it definitely is sobering. Mark, any final words?

**Son: Mark Wheaton 49:04**

It's been great to talk about this because it helps clarify things in my own mind. We've just been there for mom, just the way she was with us over all these years, and so, as much as she feels so dependent, and sometimes she feels guilty and very downtrodden sometimes. I think that our role is to encourage her that it's getting close to the day of the Lord. I mean, her parents lived till 100 years old, but it seems possible she could live that long. But although we don't know, we also know that encouraging mom each and every day, just giving her little things to look back on. Just she loves the past. She looks back at old pictures, old letters, poems that we've written, and any kind of memory that you can bring up in her mind has been very, very helpful for her to keep her mind sharp and encourage her in a way that the world just cannot. So it truly has been a privilege to be living through this time of her life as difficult as it is for her, and we are all part of it by God's grace that we can all live here and help out. And I know, Gina would like to say one more thing as well.

**Daughter In Law: Gina Wheaton 50:13**

In working with mom during these later years, the one thing I realize is that even though you might be a bad guy, you need to push her. She does so much more, along with that encouragement, but just physically, mentally, and just to help her to participate in everything. You make her do things, and then she's participating in the church or in your Christian Worldview events. And that's important to her, and that's important to the people that are watching her. It's a testimony.

**Host: David Wheaton 50:41**

It is. Well, I just want to thank all of you for coming on the program today. It was very interesting to hear your insight on caring for mom. And I just want to say that this is something that I'm so grateful that all of us are in this together, that we're all of the same mind, that we have each other, because this would be very difficult.

We all can see that how difficult this would be if there was even one less of us. So it is a great joy for me, and I know for all of us to have each other and to be in this together and to do something so meaningful and serving as it is to help mom. So thank you for coming on the program today, and and we we love all of you so much.

**Family members:**

Thank you, David.

**Host: David Wheaton**

There are others in our family, wives and grandchildren who care for my mom, visiting, making meals, helping in various ways, and we are grateful for each one.

Well, I hope you were edified by today's program on caring for elderly parents. Your circumstances are likely different than ours, but the common call is summed up in what Paul told Timothy in his first letter to him in chapter 5:3, honor widows who are widows indeed. And then in verse 8, if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he is denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. Caring for aging parents can be physically and mentally tiring, inconvenient, and at times feel hopeless. But as you humble yourself before the Lord in His perfect will and ways, He will give you the daily grace, the supernatural power and perspective to do what He calls you to, and you will be rewarded and blessed. Let's remember and follow the example of the Lord Jesus Christ, who said the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life a ransom for many.

Thank you for joining us today on The Christian Worldview and for your support of this nonprofit radio ministry. We hope you have a wonderful Mother's Day with your mom. Until next time, think biblically, live accordingly, and stand firm.

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