

5 God-Honoring Ways to Keep Your Joy While Serving

My husband has seen millions of people come to Christ in more than 60 nations on five continents. Translation: He travels—a lot. Meanwhile, somebody has to run the errands and manage the household. That would be me. I spend most of my time raising our four children and tending to the more mundane aspects of life.

As a result, I have discovered that some people expect me to be bitter and jealous of my husband's whirlwind tours and international adventures, but that is not the case. While I enjoy travel and adventure, I also love my life and I take my role as seriously as he takes his.

I don't claim to be an expert, but along the way, I have learned some invaluable lessons from the Holy Spirit and through godly mentors. I believe I can boil those lessons down to just one word: focus. If you wonder how I can keep a smile on my face in this world full of travel, intense scheduling and high demand—and family life—I've learned that keeping my sanity is truly a matter of focus. This is what I aim to focus on:

1. The good parts. What we choose to dwell on is very powerful. Rather than thinking about how lonely I feel or where I wish I could go, I can choose to focus on the wonderful reunion we will have on the day my husband returns home. Rather than dwelling on how demanding our schedule is because of the ministry, I can choose to focus on the privileges and blessings God has given us because of the call.

Many years ago, a dear friend, the wife of a traveling minister who had been living this lifestyle for decades, gave me some wonderful counsel: "Your children are like mirrors.

They will reflect what they see in you.” I remember this and try to stay optimistic even when things seem less than perfect. It’s amazing how simply keeping a positive outlook can brighten the day for you and your family.

2. Quality rather than quantity. Since our family can’t spend every day together, we try to make the most of the time we do have. This doesn’t happen without intentional effort. We prioritize family devotions, praying, eating and engaging in activities together as a family. We schedule date nights for my husband and I and “daddy dates” where the kids get quality one-on-one time with dad. We may not have much time together, but we savor the moments we do have and intentionally get the most out of each opportunity.

3. Eternal purpose. Despite the modest nature of my role, I feel the call of God as much as my husband does. I consider my contribution vital to the fulfillment of what God has asked us to do. We share the calling and, therefore, we share responsibility. No, I’m not often there with him when he is ministering, but I realize that without my devotion to my calling as a mom and wife, my husband’s calling to evangelism would suffer tremendously. Is it hard? It can be. But when the kids come to me with tears in their eyes saying they miss daddy, we take it as an opportunity to pray for him. I take great comfort in the fact that the Lord knows every tear shed and every sacrifice we make. One day we will see it was all worthwhile. By focusing on the eternal purpose of our ministry, everything comes into proper perspective.

4. God as Father and Husband. When I drop my husband off at the airport or kiss him goodbye, I immediately pray and focus on God as my Husband and our Father. When I do this, I can feel a tangible difference. I’m saying, “Hands off, devil! We are the King’s.” As I focus on God as Father and Husband, I feel the pressure release as I rest in the fact that He is in control. It’s called “trust.” It’s called “rest.” And I have found it makes all the difference.

5. Taking care of yourself. At first, this may sound a bit selfish, but if you don't take care of yourself, you aren't much good for those who depend on you. This is much like on an airplane when you're told in case of oxygen loss to first put on your oxygen mask before assisting others. The devil would love to see you discouraged and frustrated with yourself. This would poison your home and become an inroad for depression and tension, so you need to make time for yourself. What does this look like? It looks like exercising and eating right, even when you feel lonely and want to go on an ice cream binge. It looks like taking a hot shower and putting makeup on—even when no one is going to see you. It means finding a way to get some alone time, especially—and most importantly—time in prayer. This is where strength comes from. Taking care of yourself is important, not only for you, but for everyone who loves and depends on you. By keeping your heart happy and your mind busy, you'll discover there's no time to be negative.

By practicing these principles, I've been able to keep my sanity as well as have a healthy marriage and peaceful family life. When challenges arise and struggles rear their heads, I lean on God and dwell on my favorite Bible verse, which I'll leave for you to focus on too: "Be strong and of a good courage. Fear not, nor be afraid of them, for the Lord your God, it is He who goes with you. He will not fail you, nor forsake you" (Deut. 31:6).

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