

7 Tips for New Parents Trying to Stay Sane

Life gets complicated when a baby is added to the equation. No matter if you're a young mom or pushing your 40s, motherhood can be a challenge! The following is excerpted from a letter I wrote to my daughter as she embarked on this special season of her life. Hopefully these tips will be a compass for you as you embrace the hard work of making a house a home that honors the Lord.

Define priorities: These are easy to set, but harder to live out. The attention needs of a small baby and growing child can seem all-consuming! If you're putting God first, He'll give you strength, wisdom and a strategy to prioritize all of life while doing the important work of raising your child as a disciple of Christ.

Establish routines: Routines keep life sane—and will bring peace and stability to the home and the child. Your routine may not look like mine! Decide what life should look like for your household, and then as activities and opportunities come along, make decisions as to whether it's worth it to break up the routine to include them.

Identify stress points: Life can be stressful, but much stress can be eliminated or lessened with wise choices. Take time to identify stress points and determine if they can be removed or if there are ways to make them less stressful.

You can do this with your work hours by adjusting them to lessen stress and make them work better with this stage in your child's life. If anything else seems overwhelming to you—mounds of laundry, seemingly constant clutter—take time to determine the real problem and then move towards ways to get this manageable.

Set expectations: What do you expect of your child (and of yourself)? Establish rules of your household that are scripturally based and that lay out the behavior you expect in your home. Established expectations make it easy to determine if discipline is needed in a situation—and the child feels safe because the boundaries are set.

Cultivate atmosphere: What type of atmosphere do you want in your home? Make a determination—and then cultivate it! Music, movies, books, activities, friends—make sure they are helping move you toward your goal and don't be afraid to clear out what is opposing or just not helping.

Recognize spiritual warfare: As you create a God-honoring household, you will discover that it doesn't come without a fight! Spiritual warfare must be waged for yourself, your child and your household. Identify the strongholds that need to be torn down—and recognize the areas that need building and planting. Pray, fight and TRUST the Lord to send help from his sanctuary.

Overall, consider a “mission statement” for your little family. It can be as simple as “We're going to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength all the days of our lives.” Set this in your hearts, and it will guide you through all your decisions now and as your child grows.

This is a very special time in your life. More than any job or career, raising a child is the benchmark of how we walk out our Christianity. It's a divine opportunity to produce a disciple of Christ—one who loves God and lives to advance His kingdom in the earth.

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