

Do You Beat Yourself Up About Parenting Mistakes?

When I first became a mom seven years ago, I found myself in a place of great **dissatisfaction** and **discomfort**. I was in a place where I was feeling heavy amounts of **criticism, judgment** and **disapproval**. Most of it was in my head, but some of it was actually expressed to me in some very awkward face-to-face conversations.

Knowing there was more—or at least hoping there was more—to **parenting** than just raising well mannered, healthy kids who dress too adorable for words and who follow perfect “eat, sleep, play” schedules and can count to 20 and spell their names before they are 2, I began to search for more. In my search for more, I found that I was parenting to make myself look better.

My parenting was beginning to be about me, my comforts and what everyone else was thinking about me. Although I don’t think I ever admitted this out loud, when I look back on some of my early parenting moments, there is an underlying motive of self. I had a deep desire for everyone else around me to be pleased with the way I **parented** my **child**.

After my second son was born, I felt empty. My parenting felt shallow, and I craved to be genuinely fulfilled in my parenting. That is where God met me. God met me in the brokenness of my parenting. His grace came in and swept me off of my stumbling feet.

And so I was humbled. God began showing me that neither parenting nor my family was about me. Nor was it about all the other people I had let into my family through my obsessive thoughts and people pleasing. God was showing me that I had allowed the thoughts of so many others to drown and push out the thoughts and opinion of the one that matters most: Him.

Through God’s gentle grace, I learned that family is not about

me. It is about Him. He has created these children for His glory. They belong to Him, and He has entrusted me with them, to steward them and to raise them in the way that they should go. To raise them in a way where they will live a life of confidence in the Lord.

My children—our children—and our families are a gift. A gift from the Lord. They are a reward from Him (Ps. 127:3).

These children are our first mission field. We are to train them, teach them, love them and direct them to their Creator so that they, too, can go out and reach the ends of the earth proclaiming the name of Jesus.

In my newfound revelation of parenting, I have found a satisfaction that runs deeper than I ever imagined. Though I grow tired and weary from day to day, I am reminded of the bigger picture. I am reminded of God's sufficient grace. When our hearts are increasingly satisfied in God and our center focus is on Him in all that we do, a new affection begins to gradually expel old cravings and old frustrations.

The way to break the powerful grip of self in parenting is to fill up on God and abide in His joy. The joy that we receive from God will leak out into our parenting, and it will empower us to train and equip our children to chase wildly after God's heart. We are then also able to capture and grasp the most beautiful and cherished moments of our lives with our children.

When I begin to feel daunted by the daily tasks of parenting, a small voice whispers, "Cast your cares on Me. My grace is sufficient. You are parenting for My glory, and I am well pleased."

In what ways has God been showing you that family is not about you?

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