

How God Labors to Parent His Children

Maybe your labor in bringing your child into your home began with contractions. Maybe it began with filling out agency paperwork. Maybe you labored in having to recover from a planned C-section (as I did four out of five times).

Whatever the case, you labored to bring your child into your home.

And then the real labor began.

I labored with one of my children for 14.5 hours. It was a Pitocin-induced labor, so you can imagine what those contractions were like. And I didn't have any medication because I wanted to try natural childbirth. But when the induction failed due to lack of progress, I opted for a C-section.

Even those 14.5 hours were a piece of cake compared to the labor I've gone through with my son since his birth.

I don't mean that he's a difficult child; he's not. But as every mother knows, the actual physical labor (whether due to contractions or to completing home studies and paperwork) is the easy part. Even when it seems like it will last forever, you know it won't. There will eventually come an end, when your baby is born into the world or your child is brought into your home.

Then comes the hard part.

That's because the labor after you bring a child into your family is never-ending. True, you may have some moments or even weekends of relaxation, but there is always labor to go back to.

Nursing your baby. Fixing lunches. Driving the carpool.

Cleaning up after a sick child. Disciplining your child. Falling into bed exhausted. Then doing it all over again the next day (or maybe even in the middle of that night).

And a mom's daily, ongoing labor is little recognized. Rarely do we hear the expressions of appreciation we wish we received. Rarely does someone tell us we do an amazing job. It's not every day that someone throws her little arms around us and says, "Thank you for being the best mommy in the world."

I've written elsewhere about how God can and will affirm us anytime we need to feel appreciated (see, for example, my book *Well Done, Good and Faithful Mommy*). But I wanted us to take a minute today to stop and realize that God knows exactly how we feel.

He puts in far more labor in parenting us than we do in parenting our children, yet rarely do we stop to praise Him for His amazing fatherhood. Rarely do we tell Him how much we appreciate Him (unless He's just done something for us). Rarely do we (figuratively speaking) throw our arms around Him and thank Him for being the best daddy ever.

The next time you put in a long day with your children, let that be a reminder to you to stop and connect with God. Take some time and thank Him for the long day He just put in with you. After all, at least you get some sleep, whereas He never sleeps. He's constantly watching over you and taking care of you.

You can't force the people around you to completely meet your needs for appreciation because they're not made to do so. But you can make it a point to fully appreciate your Father—or at least to appreciate Him as much as it is possible for an imperfect human being to do so—and to tell Him so.

When was the last time you stopped to thank and praise God for His care of you? Why not do so right now?

"My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth. He

will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber. Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep" (Ps. 121:2-4, KJV).

*Adapted from **Megan Breedlove's** blog, *Manna for Moms*. Megan is the author of *Well Done, Good and Faithful Mommy* and *Manna for Moms: God's Provision for Your Hair-Raising, Miracle-Filled Mothering Adventure* (Regal Books). She is a stay-at-home mom with five children.*