

'I Am the Child': God's Supernatural Grace Revealed Through Parenting

I don't deserve this," I muttered to myself as I scraped peanut butter from the chair where my toddler had lovingly smeared it earlier that day. Next up: the crushed crackers that had been ground into the carpet, followed by the freshly folded laundry that remained freshly folded for all of 45 seconds before it was hurled across the room by tiny hands.

As I bent over the peanut butter chair, my archnemesis, Discontentment, took a seat on the throne of my mind, while Bitterness idled nearby, examining her fingernails and casually starting an all-too-familiar conversation:

Bitterness: Look at her, is she pathetic or what?

Discontentment: You're telling me. Spent the whole day getting screamed at. By a 2-year-old.

Bitterness: And did you see how she never even put that baby down today? Ha! Her whole day, dictated by those little humans. What a joke.

Discontentment: She doesn't deserve this. Who do those people think they are, anyway?

Bitterness: Precious cherub offspring, I believe that's what they're calling themselves these days ...

Discontentment: More like cherubs indwelt by—

Bitterness: Anyway, look at everything she's sacrificed for them, and this is the thanks she gets?

She gave up a job she loved, a job where I'm pretty sure no

one ever busted the door down while she used the bathroom ...

Discontentment: Makes all the meals, cleans all the messes, washes all the clothes ...

Bitterness: She's a saint. Pure and simple.

Discontentment: She gives and she gives and she gives ...

Bitterness: It's a shame. A crying shame.

Discontentment: ... Wow, that's a lot of peanut butter...

Earlier that week, I'd been talking with a friend who also has two young children. With weak laughter, we exchanged a few horror stories along with our frustration at the sheer unreasonable nature of young children.

And then my friend said something I won't soon forget.

"It's hard. It's *really* hard. And yet we love them. And that's exactly what Christ has done for us, right? He loves us when we're unlovable."

If humility were a fist, I'd have been punched square in the face. The ugly truth of what my friend said dawned on me: *I am the child.*

The one kicking and screaming, disobeying and resisting.

I am the child. Flinging back in Jesus' face the gifts he gives, with a heart full of ungratefulness and entitlement.

I am the child. The one turning my back on the sacrifice He made, all the while demanding more, more, more, in an angry, high-pitched whine.

I am the child.

And in those ugly moments, Jesus loves me. At my worst, at my darkest—He loves me.

As I continued scraping the peanut butter, I quietly but firmly silenced the dialogue between the two troublemakers in my mind and instead began to think on some very different words:

“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8).

I am the child who’s received unmerited favor. A gift I never deserved. And I have the privilege and responsibility of demonstrating this grace to my children every day.

I don’t deserve this, I said to myself once more.

And this time, it was true. {eoa}

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