

Moms, It's Time to Let Go of the Guilt Trip

Do you ever feel as if you aren't enough? Do you struggle with feelings of unworthiness? I have for most of my life. I crave perfection, but I look in the mirror, around the house, and in my roles as wife and mom and I see all the shortcomings:

- "Not disciplined enough," my reflection tells me.
- "Not clean or organized enough," my house screams.
- "Not loving or respectful enough," I read in my husband's eyes.
- "Not fun enough, joyful enough, or compassionate enough," my child's actions or cries tell me.

If I was more—if I did more or gave more—then my life would be easier. That was the lie I believed, but I always, ALWAYS fell short.

As the years passed, I'd work and work on being more, but I'd get tangled over all the same shortcomings. Or, just when I'd get one area tackled, a new fault would simmer to the top ... blazing in my conscious like a neon sign. I listened to the word that replayed in my mind: *unworthy, unworthy, unworthy*. Yet at the same time, I was also working to speak truth into the minds and hearts of my children because I wanted more for them. I wanted them to know:

- *God created you for a purpose.*
- *He has good plans for your life.*
- *You don't need to be perfect; Jesus is there to love and forgive.*
- *You are enough ... just as you are.*

The problem is our kids are insightful. They see and understand our feelings of ourselves—even if we try to hide them.

Our children pick up the way we put ourselves down, and it's easier for them to follow us than to listen to us. Soon their little feet follow ours. They begin to step into our footprints and walk down the path of unworthiness, too.

As a mom for 26 years I've discovered one thing: If I want my children to live their lives a certain way, I need to model it.

Does your child feel unworthy? Maybe it's time to model what feeling worthy in God's eyes looks like.

If I want my children to live a life of meaning, purpose, and hope, I need to show my kids what that looks like—without letting my feelings of unworthiness get in the way. How can I do this? By understanding it myself. By knowing:

- Jesus is only a whispered prayer away, and He loves me.
- He longs to forgive me and remove all the burdens of pain and shame I carry.
- Jesus wants me to know and FEEL His words of truth deep down: *You are enough. Just as you are.*

But how can we believe these words? How do we let them sink in? Here are two ways:

1. Overcome guilt with trust

There is both healthy and unhealthy guilt. Healthy guilt turns us to God. When we mess up, it urges us to get our hearts right with our heavenly Father and ask Jesus for forgiveness. Unhealthy guilt points out our mistakes—like non-stop instant replay—even if we've been forgiven.

The only way to overcome unhealthy guilt is with trust. We have to TRUST we are forgiven. We have to thank God for our forgiveness. Then we need to live as those who have been forgiven.

And when we mess up again (which we all will do), we need to

repeat the cycle, trusting God's forgiveness is greater than our sins.

"Dear children, let's not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions. Our actions will show that we belong to the truth, so we will be confident when we stand before God. Even if we feel guilty, God is greater than our feelings, and he knows everything" (1 John 3:18-20, NLT).

God is greater than our feelings. If we feel guilty, it's time to test and see where that guilt is coming from. It also may be time to trust God to know His forgiveness is enough.

2. Overcome unworthiness with awe

When we focus on our weakness, it's easy to feel unworthy. We often find ourselves comparing our weaknesses with other people's strengths, and we wonder why we can't *be* more and *do* more.

Yet if we never did one more good action, we would still be enough. If we believe in God, He lives in us ... and that gives us something to be in awe about!

In the Old Testament 1 Kings 6 describes the elaborate temple God directed King Solomon to build. When it was complete, God's Spirit moved into the inner sanctuary, but today He lives in us. We are intricately beautiful in His sight. How amazing is that?!

"Don't you realize that all of you together are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God lives in you?" (1 Cor. 3:16, NLT).

Instead of feeling unworthy, friend, take time to celebrate that the God of the universe has taken up residence in you. He finds you worthy, and knowing that—remembering that—will push out unwelcome thoughts.

As a mom, when we overcome **guilt with trust** and **unworthiness with awe**, we'll start to live with more peace, more joy, and more purpose. And this is a great thing for our children to follow!

When you live in a way where you feel, "I am enough," your children will learn to live that way, too. They'll see themselves in God's eyes as someone who is worthy. I can't think of a more beautiful gift we can give the little ones in our home. It's a gift that will carry them through life and take them closer to God's throne.

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