

Stop Comparing Your Kids

I'm sitting at the table with my boys, watching them put together (cooperatively no less) a lego boat. It was an airplane, now they are deconstructing it and following the directions to put the boat together from the same pieces. I am struck by the significance of this event. It's only moderately significant for them, but it is monumentally significant for me. Let me explain.

I regularly default as a mom into exactly the thinking of which Paul warns us in 2 Corinthians 10.

2 Cor. 10:12 "...But when they measure themselves by one another and compare themselves with one another, they are without understanding." (ESV)

There is a lot of depth to Paul's arguments in 2 Corinthians 10 – about sufficiency in Christ, inappropriate boasting in ministry, and something unique to Paul's particular ministry to the church in Corinth. I haven't explored the full context of 2 Corinthians 10 in a way to which I can speak clearly. Yet the simple wording of verse 12 has stood out to me at multiple points in my life.

It is not wise to measure myself by an earthly, human standard.

One of the first things I learned as a new mom was there are many childhood milestones. The second thing I learned is that my child didn't seem to care. At one month, most kids can lift their heads. At six months, most can roll over. At two years, most can make two or three word sentences, and so forth.

After missing almost every milestone by several months, the best advice I got was from the mom who told me my son would be ready to potty train when he was ready to potty train. If I tried before he was ready (which I did), he and I would both

be stressed (which we were). But if I waited until he was ready, it would be a smooth transition. I finally gave up training him, and when he was ready, we did it in a few days.

I've tried to remember that potty training lesson. But I compare myself among my friends and their kids. And I stress. Their kids are walking, and mine is not yet crawling. Their kids are talking in complete sentences, and mine is nowhere close. Their kids are riding bikes with 20 inch wheels while mine is still on his 12 inch balance bike. And their kids can put together legos without adult help.

I noted today as I watched my boys put together their lego set that at some point previously I had stopped worrying about legos. Sure enough, when they were personally ready, they figured it out. They are now riding their big boy bikes with no training wheels too.

There remains a long list of milestones ahead of them, but I hope my current perspective lasts. When they are ready, they'll be ready. I need to expose them to what I reasonably can and walk with them through their frustrations as they learn, but I also MUST put away the self-condemnation that goads me to push them into things for which they are not ready because I'm afraid of what it reflects about me.

That's Paul's point. Even when people try to project some such thing onto you, there is a place to rest that frees us from that very unwise mutual comparison we tend toward. He said previously in verse 7, "If anyone is confident that he is Christ's, let him remind himself that just as he is Christ's, so also are we." Maybe those projecting onto you do not consider themselves Christ's. Nevertheless, you are! And being IN Him gives us access to a boldness and confidence that gives perspective to those niggling comparisons that threaten our emotional state daily.

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