

Vital Tip for Moms of Kids Starting College

There are only a few days left. Until *it* happens.

The day I've dreaded for almost 18 years, but also looked forward to with a heart of hope and excitement. The day we've been preparing for and counting down to for months, but one I secretly hoped would never arrive.

In just over a week, my little-blond-headed-blue-eyed-boy-turned-handsome-incredible-young-man moves into a dorm room and officially becomes a college freshman. He'll be attending the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, my alma mater (Go Niners!), which is not far from our home. Yet he will no longer be living with me but on his own. He will officially be a young adult. Mercy.

When my oldest daughter, Morgan, started college five years ago, I'll admit I didn't handle it well, as explained in today's Proverbs 31 devotion. It was so hard as a mom to let go and let God take over. When my daughter Kaitlyn started college a couple years later, it was a little easier (but not much, I'll confess) and anxieties and emotions still seemed overwhelming. Plus, I missed both of them terribly.

But now this. The baby of the family. My precious baby boy. The last one to be born, the last one to leave the nest. The one I've spent time with every single day for almost 18 years, and every day for the past several years when it was just he and I living at home. This is compounded with the reality that, as a single mom, I won't be skipping off into retirement with a husband and traveling together in these empty-nest years as I once thought. Instead, I am facing the reality of embarking on this new phase of life all alone—girlfriend, I'll confess, emotions are running high.

The truth is, even the third time around, I still don't have this whole "dropping your kids off at college" thing figured out. But I know God does. And knowing that calms my nerves and fills me with peace.

I am still going to have to pray for the supernatural ability to hold back tears, ugly cries and overflowing emotions, at least until I am in the car driving away from the dorm after move-in day. And honestly, I might need to ask God for an extra dose of sanity to prevent me from acting a little (or a lot) cray-cray in the coming weeks.

But if there is one thing God has taught me over the years, and especially over the past year, is that I can trust Him with all things. Literally *all things*. Countless times He has proven Himself faithful, leaving me in awe and thankfulness, and these are the memories I cling to when worry, self-pity or loneliness try to rear their ugly heads, especially when on the cusp of a new season of life, yet again. Maybe today, you need to be reminded of that promise as well—and also reminded to trust Him with all things, including your children.

If you're dropping part of your heart off at a college campus, might you make an intentional commitment to change your thinking from worrisome thoughts to positive, optimistic thoughts today? For your sake, but also your child's?

When we focus on our faith instead of our worries, letting go of our kids and trusting God to be their new guardian makes letting go seem a little less stressful. There is one thing we all need to remember to do no matter what, especially during emotional seasons with our children and seasons of letting go, and that is to *trust God*. And then:

- Trust that you have spent all these years raising your child to the best of your ability and teaching them to love the Lord. Don't listen to the lies of the enemy who wants to convince you otherwise.

- Trust that you've taught them right from wrong, but know they're going to make their own mistakes and learn from them just as we have learned from ours.
- Trust God loves them and will never leave them. Even if they stray, He'll always be by their side, calling them back.
- Trust God to protect them. He can always be there, when we cannot.
- Trust God will calm your fears and help you grow in faith as you learn to accept this new phase of life.
- Trust your child loves you even if you don't talk to them every day. They will need some time to figure out who they are and where they fit in, but they will always love you, love home and know whose they are and whom they belong to.
- Trust God has an incredible and beautiful plan, purpose and future for your child just as you believe He has for you.
- Trust you can survive this in faith, because all moms go through it at one point or another.
- Trust God will give you strength you can't muster up on your own and the ability to hold back mama-tears if needed.
- Trust He will catch every tear that does fall and help you put your child's excitement and happiness above your own anxieties and fears.
- Trust He can help you overcome the pull towards sadness and ask Him to fill your heart and life with laughter instead.
- Trust you can find peace and joy through faith, even if all you really want to do is curl up in a fetal position and cry. (But if you do need to curl up in a fetal position and cry, it's OK! Sometimes us mamas just need to let it all out, especially when it comes to matters of the heart regarding our children. Just try not to do it in the middle of a dorm room.)
- Trust in the people God has placed in your life and

don't be afraid to ask for support or hugs when you need it. This is an emotional time, and those who love you will be blessed by being there for you when you need them most.

- Most importantly, trust God has a plan for this new chapter of your life and for this new chapter in your child's life as well. And believe with your whole heart it is a good, good plan.

Even though as moms, our lives have revolved around our kids for 18 years before they move out and go to college—and their absence makes not only our house feel empty but our hearts feel empty too—we can stay fulfilled, joyful and hopeful if we put our full trust in God alone. Remember to look for the positives that lie ahead. Focus on the good things this new phase of life will bring for all of you.

When we think positive, we feel positive, equipping us to share that positivity with our kids.

Let's commit to intentionally choose to think positive about what is yet to come and trust in the One who holds all our futures in His hands while praying for sovereign protection and provision over the ones we love most.

And all the mamas out there said Amen!

What is your biggest fear, worry or emotion that is making it hard for you to be positive while on the brink of a new phase of life for you and your child? If not for college, for another new season that seems scary, unknown or full of change? {eo}

*To learn more about how you can begin experiencing this transformation in your life too, purchase a copy of Unsinkable Faith: God-filled Strategies for Transforming the Way You Think, Feel and Live by **Tracie Miles**.*

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