

The Myth of the Perfect Mom (Parent)

Mother's Day

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

All mothers, fathers, and parents want to do their best for their children. Mothers, fathers and parents want to do a perfect job in parenting. We think if you do all the right things with the right formulas, we will get perfect results.

My parents raised four kids. None of us are the same. We raised two kids; they are not the same. Did we use the biblical commands about raising kids? Yes. How come the results are various?

Today parents are worried and anxious that they will not do a good job in raising their kids. I understand that God gave us our kids, and we should be diligent in raising them. We instruct and raise our kids in the path of the Lord and create a healthy environment for them to grow.

Psychologists categorized mothers using the following images:

-Some mothers are called **Tiger Mothers**: These fierce parents emphasize strict discipline, intense study and outstanding academic achievement.¹

-Some mothers are called **Helicopter Mothers**: Helicopter parents have been simultaneously applauded for their involvement and blamed for over-managing the lives of their children. Hours of long after-school activities, location-monitoring of children's cell phones and calling college students' professors have been attributed to the rise of helicopter parenting.²

-Some mothers are called **Lawnmower Mothers**: These mothers go before their children and remove every obstacle that may come their way. They do a lot of things for their children in order to help them.

-Some mothers are called **Free-range Mothers**: This parenting style is the antithesis to helicopter parenting, emphasizing children's independence and learning through unscheduled play and exploration.³

How about us, Christian parents?

How are we doing?

It is difficult to measure how we are doing as mothers, fathers... How do we evaluate ourselves? The world challenges us by asking **how successful** we are? Like: How successful is our business? Same way the world teaches us to ask: How successful are our children? And so on.

In *Christianity Today* magazine of January 2010, I find an article about this. I loved what the author says about parenting:

1. Success vs Faithfulness

We need to quit asking, "Am I parenting successfully?" And we most certainly need to quit asking, "Are others parenting successfully?" Instead, we need to ask, **"Am I parenting faithfully?"** Faithfulness, after all, is God's highest requirement for us.⁴

Jesus told the parable of talents. One servant received five and made five more; another received two and made two more. There was a lazy man who hid his one talent. The master was not commanding for success, although he rebuked the one who did nothing with his talent. He said: **'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'**" (Matthew 25:23 ESV)

Jesus is looking for faithful individuals whose success is in obeying God's commands.

Another biblical example is **Ezekiel**. He was called by God to be a prophet to the Israelites. God sent him to his people knowing that it would be a tough job. God warned Ezekiel that His people would not listen to him (Ezek. 2:3-4).

A very strange mission, when you know that God is sending him to a place where people will refuse to listen. Who wants to be their "pastor"? God sent Ezekiel to tough places but He did not leave him alone. **God was with him. God shaped Ezekiel's character.** Ezekiel learned to trust God in those impossible situations.

-Don't you feel like that, parents, when your children don't listen to you? Don't you feel like that, mothers, when you try your best, but the results are what

you like them to be? How often do we see ourselves facing an impossible situation? How often?

Ezekiel's mission looks like failure. But read carefully how God spoke to him and his people. Read carefully how God shaped not only Ezekiel but also the Israelites. Here is what God said to Ezekiel:

And whether they hear or refuse to hear (for they are a rebellious house) they will know that a prophet has been among them. (Ezek. 2:5 ESV)

I love this statement: **“they will know that a prophet has been among them.”** What God is saying: “Be faithful to me and have faith in me. Be with them even if they do not listen. Your presence is very important.”

Illustration: Once a mother from my congregation gave birth to a stillborn baby. The father called me and asked me to come to hospital and help his wife to deal with this sad situation. This was a very difficult situation. I was praying on my way to the hospital. What words would comfort the mother and the father? This was their third child. I arrived. She was holding the baby's body in her hands and not giving up to the nurse. I stood up next to her. Like those words: “They will know their pastor is among them...” Then God gave me the words to encourage her to look ahead and see that it was time to stand up and move out of that room. Their two children were outside waiting for them. She gave the body to me and I gave it to the nurse... Still I communicate with this family. God gave them another child after a few years. She told me many times in the next years: “You stood next to me...”

How important is this in our lives? God is telling you, parents, when you feel you failed, listen to me, be with your kids, stay calm, keep praying and be faithful parents. God is in control and not you. Sometimes they just need to know you are there. They need to know that their mother, father, parent is right there...

2. The best legacy we can leave: Faith in Jesus Christ.

As I mentioned before, how do you measure if you have been a good mother, father, or parent?

The article I read said:

It is likely that we are asking the wrong questions as parents. We are so focused on ourselves—on our own need for success and the success of our children—that we have **come to view parenting as a performance or a test.**⁵ Who can pass the test?

No one.

That is how Paul describes God's GRACE:

“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast.” (Ephesians 2:8-9 ESV)

It is a myth that we can be perfect mothers or fathers. It is a myth that there is a perfect marriage! If you find one, let me know. It is His grace that allowed us to have faith in God, to know God. It is not based on our abilities, our merits. We cannot earn faith. We cannot earn parenthood. It is a gift given from God by His grace. So, as mothers, parents, let us be on our knees in prayer to approach to God in humility and respect to teach us how to be mothers and parents.

Thus:

3. Teach them to love the Lord

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.⁵ You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.⁶ And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart.⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.⁸ You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.⁹ You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. (Deuteronomy 6:4-9 ESV)

That was what my mother did. She passed on to me most important thing in my life: **the fear of the Lord.** She taught me to love and worship my God, my Father, my Creator, my Savior and my Sustainer. I learned that I cannot be perfect. I learned I am a child of a God who leads me **to live a holy life.**

I learned that my children are not mine. I learned not to have a possessive love towards my kids. I learned that they are a gift from God and they belong to God. I learned that I should be careful with them, not to provoke them, but raise them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:4)
Let me finish with the article's last words:

We are not sovereign over our children—only God is. ...They are full human beings wondrously and fearfully made. Parenting, like all tasks under the sun, is intended as an endeavor of love, risk, perseverance, and, above all, faith. It is faith rather than formula, grace rather than guarantees, steadfastness rather than success that bridges the gap between our own parenting efforts, and what, by God's grace, our children grow up to become.⁶

Happy Mother's Day, Parents, and Aunts and all who took the role of parents.

1. <https://www.freep.com/story/life/family/2015/10/08/parenting-types-helicopter-attachment/73572608/>
2. *ibid*
3. *ibid*
4. <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2010/january/12.22.html>
5. *ibid*
6. *ibid*