



Raising Daughters of the King *Princesses that bring Honor to their Royal Father*

I'd like to share with you some insight into strategy that we often have to fight against that impedes our success and growth. If we compare life to a race, the easiest way for us to be defeated is to keep us apathetic and indifferent so that we just don't try. We don't enter the race. But, if that doesn't work on us, and we get excited and determined to put our all into the race, the enemy may try this strategy against us. It is often undetected because it appears to be good. We get so excited and try to move forward so fast that we can't get our feet under us. It is as if someone put their hands on our back and shoulders and shoved us forward. The result is that we fall flat on our faces. Either way, the race for that moment is lost whether we don't try or we try too hard, the outcome is the same - FOR THAT ONE MOMENT.

Thank God for that verse that says a righteous man may fall 7 times but he gets back up. Prov. 24:16-18 ("for though the righteous fall seven times, they rise again.")

To put this in practical terms.... Physically: Either we don't exercise, or we start with a goal that is impossible. We meet that exercise goal for a day or two and then give up. Spiritually: Either we don't read and pray, or we get excited and decide to get up before the sunrise to pray and read many chapters of the Bible just to fall asleep and get discouraged and quit. After running *numerous races* in many areas in that fashion that end in a face plant, we then fall into the less painful style of *running* that is characterized with never entering the race and nursing our wounds by living in apathy.

For most of us, our lives are not a 100m sprint but rather a long distance run or jog. To finish the race, we must pace ourselves, or we will end up defeated and out of the race completely. We all love to win a competition, to do so in life and parenting: be wise and set reachable goals in your parenting, housekeeping, personal discipleship, physical fitness, etc. You may fall, but get back up and try again. The sooner we identify the traps, the easier to keep trying. Surrender the race, the process and the success to God – finish the marathon strong.

Another strategy to defeat us in parenting is through discouragement and guilt. I have mentioned it before, but I want to share something with you that you may find helpful as you search for ideas and suggestions. It happened to me this past week. I was talking with someone about holidays and my approach to some of them. Then I heard another approach that I had not used. Suddenly, I felt the temptation to feel guilty. I share this to illustrate to you how relentless the enemy can be towards us. Guilt and discouragement! What a trap set by the enemy of our souls! I have four adult daughters that made great choices and love the Lord – yet somehow I felt a wave of guilt. Oh my goodness! That is crazy. But, take it as a warning that guilt is a temptation that can raise its ugly head at any point in time, no matter how ridiculous it may appear. Keep your guard up as if you are in war. Also, if I share ideas, know that they are not intended to cause guilt. They are intended to offer ideas that may help you on this path.

Coach's Corner

It's that time of year again – lots of holidays. There are many thoughts on what is the *best* way to do things for your children. I'm sure God has the way lined up for us with our children and is so pleased when we seek Him and His ways. With all the mistakes that a mommy can make over the course of twenty-five years, what I want to look back on most, is not what I've done right and not even the great choices my kids have made, but rather that I have pleased my Father in some small ways along the way. If seeking Him for ideas and guidance have done that, then may I live seeking His direction. May you live seeking His direction. I have done things the very best I could, and it worked for me because of God's help, but my way is not the only way. There are so many things I could have done better or different. But I didn't. Maybe I did an excellent job in some ways and fell flat on my face in others (or feel like it). My goal is not to make you feel like you fell on your face, but rather to help offer ideas that might be beneficial in areas you haven't walked through before or possibly change, add to, or tweak areas that you have not felt like were at their best.

So what about holidays: Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's, Easter? Do you think life was simpler before now? Romans 14:2-8. As a child, I dressed up as a witch, a ghost and a skeleton as well as a princess and a bride, etc. Then as a parent after seeing people struggle with spiritual oppression in other locations, I didn't want my kids *celebrating* Halloween as a holiday about spirits and demons. But, I give out candy and enjoy seeing little ones dressed up in costumes of cute little things. I'm so thankful that churches use this time of year to have fall festivals to show God's love and offer safe and secure alternatives. I didn't want my kids to miss the fun of costumes, so we let them dress up as non-supernatural or violent creatures. What does God say to you? (Seek, find, follow, don't condemn others)

Since we tried so hard to tell the truth to your children, we applied that to Christmas also. We told our kids that Santa Clause was a game parents played with their children. That way, my kids didn't give up the fun of our culture without us compromising our conviction of truth. Out of respect for others, we told our girls not to tell others that it was a game. I wish that others could somehow find a way to respect the choices of others as well. It doesn't make us better Christians if we don't do "Santa

Claus” or the Easter Bunny. Our choices don’t make Jesus love us more than others. He loves us completely and fully just because He does, even in all our sin. I think with holidays, maybe it is important to focus forward. What choices can we make to help our children grow into that Christian that God created them to be? I know of people who have said that finding out that Santa wasn’t real, messed with their faith. But, it didn’t seem to mess with mine when I was a child. (Seek, find, follow, don’t condemn others)

I think you are seeing my pattern here. Well, what about Valentines’ Day? I’ve heard such sorrow over this holiday. Singles that hate the holiday. Self-esteem or self-worth would put much of that to rest. If we could help our kids see that they are valuable and complete as they are, it would be great that they don’t think they have to have a sweetheart to prove they are valuable. So, do work on self-esteem with your babies. Oh that they could find that worth in Jesus and His valuing their life so much. That is another goal I keep going back to advise you to work towards. Use every opportunity to build that (in Christ). One thing we did was use this holiday to show our girls that they had two people in love with them – mom and dad. We did the Valentines, candy, sometimes candy roses. I mailed that kind of stuff to them in college. Not only did we want to remind them how special they were to us and how loved they are, but also we wanted to make memories and build traditions for them.

That brings me to Easter! The celebration of the most important day in the life of the Christian faith. I hate that bunnies and eggs have made their way in to detract from that holiday. As with most holidays, I’ve been on both sides of opinions. Our family did egg hunts and dyed eggs the week before or day before, but not usually *on* Easter. I think these are the most controversial holiday celebrations, but for all other special days or events, follow the previous pattern of seek, find, follow and don’t condemn.

Game Plan

This is a different topic to come up with a game plan to help you but let's give it a shot.

- ❖ Seek and find. Mathew 7:7
- ❖ Follow and don't judge. James 1:22-24
- ❖ Create memories by repeating the same style of family celebration year after year according to your convictions. Take photos and reminisce.
- ❖ Find a fun way to do costumes and activities; such as Fall Festivals and fairs.
- ❖ Celebrate Thankfulness for everything God has given us, whether it has been an easy year or not. Make thankfulness a way of life. Have them collect cans for food pantries. Have them make cookies for Firefighters. Simple ways to help our children learn thankfulness and get out of themselves.
- ❖ Create fun games with your children. Have them write letters with requests and put out cookies for Santa (Parents to eat). Save those letters written in sweet little handwriting. Put out reindeer food. (We did fail to tell our last child that it was a game so we gently allowed her to be in on the game of it – but we chose to do that ourselves, hoping it wouldn't be a shock to her heart and break her trust.) We made scavenger hunt clues for our kids to find their bigger gifts.
- ❖ Help your children buy presents for those that don't have them. Use Angel tree opportunities. Help your kids give some of their toys to those that don't have them. Give gifts of time and activities rather than always using material gifts. Put a limit on the money to be spent.
- ❖ Pick a totally different time of year to dye eggs and hide eggs to hunt. We hide them in the house, and they love to hide and find after the first time of hunting. We hide them all year long.
- ❖ Give them inexpensive items other than candies. Socks are fun and memorable. Jammies and t-shirts are fun as well.
- ❖ One of our favorite Valentine gifts was a stuffed frog that reminded them to pray for their future prince. They named them crazy names. It was also a reminder to keep your heart and lives pure for your husband.