Mothers, High and Holy Calling

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I have walked with the Lord for over 40 years, been married (to the same man) for almost 40 years, raised 4 children, and am the proud granny of 6 delightful grandchildren. Like most (if not all of you), I have not lived a trouble-free life. Some of my troubles have been a result of my stubbornness, some the result of ignorance, but many have simply been the result of living in a fallen world. But by God's grace and mercy, I am still like Paul 'pressing on toward the goal to win the prize' (forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead). Despite my many shortcomings, God has been absolutely faithful and merciful and has never let go of me!

I want to remind us all of how radically different God's ways are to the ways of the world around us, and that unless we recondition or renew our minds on a daily basis, we will get sucked into this "natural" way of thinking.

For a season, Christians in the West have enjoyed a season of "peace". Biblical values have, until recently, been respected in society, and it has even been quite the in thing to be a Christian, but this season is changing very quickly. I believe that God wants us to prepare ourselves for this change of seasons where the age-old enmity between the world and the kingdom is becoming increasingly obvious and more vocal.

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God's Perspective on Children

Let's quickly look at how this applies to marriage and raising children. The Biblical portrait of marriage is diametrically opposite to the "pattern of this world". What about God's perspective on children?

1. Firstly, **children are very precious to God**. They are not "nuisances "and they are not "obstacles" preventing us from serving Jesus. It makes me sad (and angry, in a righteous kind of way) when I hear some people talk in that way and criticise people in the church for choosing to have more children than the acceptable worldly norm, because it will hinder their usefulness in the kingdom. This is contrary to Scripture! Jesus loved children and always welcomed them (Mark 9:36, 37). Children were seen by Jesus as an integral part of the kingdom! As a mother, this is very comforting!
2. Secondly, as precious as children are, **they are never to become 'idols'** in our lives. We do not build our lives and identities around them. We do not put them before the Lord. They come from God, are made for God and will one day return to Him! We are given the responsibility and privilege of stewarding their lives by discipling them to the best of our ability according to the Word of God, not our preferences.

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What is Your Priority for Your Child?

Their education? Their safety? Their health? Their comfort? Their happiness?

I have had the joy of seeing my children excel in a number of worldly arenas. All 3 of my girls were head prefects in high school, they all excelled academically, Lara was chosen to speak at the World Forum in New York at the age of 12, they are graced with good looks etc., but I can honestly say that none of these come close to the joy I have experienced from seeing my children embrace God's truth. In 3 John verse 4, the apostle John says of his "spiritual children", 'I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth'. I heartily agree with him! My greatest heartaches as a mother have been when one of my children has wandered from the truth and made unwise choices, ones that are contrary to God's ways.

The greatest gift you can give your child is to bring them up according to God's Word – His pattern and not the pattern of the world. The greatest disservice you can do your child is to lead them to believe that they are the centre of the universe and that their comfort matters more than their character. We live in an age that panders to our flesh. It is all about gratifying our flesh

and doing what we want to do when we want to do it. The Kingdom of God is totally different. It is a disciplined life of being progressively transformed into the image of Christ. As I said earlier, we are living in an age of increasingly obvious opposition from the "world". Our children will face this head-on more than we have, and we need to make sure they are grounded in truth. If we "mollycoddle" (treat someone in an indulgent or overprotective way), they will not be able to stand in the days in which we live. May our children's heroes be Daniel and Esther and Joseph rather than the "world's" icons.

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Fear or Faith

For those of you who fear the untimely death of a child (or yourself), I want to encourage you from the Word of God. Psalm 139:16 says "**All the days ordained for me were written in Your book before one of them came to be".** Think of Daniel, he was in his mid-teens when he was taken into exile in Babylon (a country that was hostile towards God's kingdom). He was around 90 years old when he died. By rights, he should have perished in the lion's den. Think of Joseph and Esther and David. Each of them lived in dangerous times, but the truth is that 'All the days…'. No one can take our lives from us one second earlier than God has recorded in His book. As mothers, I encourage you to face any fear that you may have for your children head-on and allow God's Word to reformat your thinking, which will eventually reformat your feeling. There are approximately 110 times in the Word where we are told to 'fear not'. Fear cripples us and is not God's way for us.

Perhaps those examples are extreme, so what about the 'smaller' anxieties for our children, the ones that are not life and death situations? 1 Peter 5:7 says, '**Cast all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you'**.

How is it Possible to Live This Way?

1. **Spend time in God's presence**, allowing His words of life to refresh you and reprogramme your mind. Meditate on His Word, which reveals His character and His promises, **until they take root in your heart** and produce courage, peace and joy.
2. **Cry out for wisdom**! Proverbs 8:34 says, 'Blessed is the woman who listens to me (wisdom), watching daily at my doors, waiting at my doorway'.

3. Ultimately, **live with an eternal perspective**! This life is not it! Hebrews 12:2 says, ‘Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith’.