

PARENT CONVERSATIONS

Although it's not specifically discussing parenthood, Psalm 62 has always been my spiritual lifeline. When I face tough times as a mom, it's Psalm 62 that comforts and encourages me. "Truly my soul finds rest in God; my salvation comes from him. Truly he is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will never be shaken" (vv. 1,2). Those are words I need when so much of parenthood is out of my control. God is my fortress. God is my children's fortress. He is our rock. Read on for more great Scripture to ponder as you live out your calling as a Christian parent. Then share *your* favorites with us at ficsubmissions@wels.net.

—Nicole Balza

WHAT BIBLE PASSAGES DO YOU TURN TO MOST AS A PARENT?

MY HUSBAND and I have learned that, especially to our middle schoolers, the word *different* is a bad word. They want to fit in, not stand out. Jesus, however, is clear that he created us all different on purpose and following him looks different from this world's norms. Lately, Paul's letters (especially Romans 12 and Colossians 3) have encouraged me as a parent that my family should be different! Read through them and be emboldened with me.

Paul begins Romans 12 by encouraging Christians not to conform to the pattern of the world and urging us to offer ourselves to God as living sacrifices (just the opposite of the all-about-me worldview). He reminds me that I'm blessed with different gifts than other mothers and that my children are uniquely blessed to serve Jesus too.

As I keep reading, I see the ways God wants my family to be different. We're to be devoted to one another in love, honoring one another above ourselves, joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer, practicing hospitality, overcoming evil with good (see vv. 9-21).

Colossians 3 reminds me that only as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, can we even begin to clothe ourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Only because the Lord forgave us, can we forgive others (see vv. 12,13).

When I feel defeated because my family doesn't always look like this, Paul reminds me that peace comes when the message of Christ dwells among us richly "as [we] teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit" (v. 16).

This resonates with me because my family is a musical one. Some of my favorite words of Scripture come to

mind easily because they are joined with a melody and with happy memories from my time at Camp Phillip.

When facing the challenges of being different, we often sing these words from Psalm 143:8:

"Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you. Show me the way I should go, for to you I lift up my soul."

When our failures weigh on our hearts, another song reminds us of the white robes of Revelation 7:

"I am covered over with a robe of righteousness that Jesus gives to me. I am covered over with the precious blood of Jesus and he lives in me. Oh, what a joy it is to know my heavenly Father loves me so. He gives to me my Jesus. And when he looks at me, he sees not what I used to be, but he sees Jesus."



Laura Schaefer; her husband, Will; and their three children are members at Christ the Lord, Brookfield, Wisconsin.

HAVE PARENTING QUESTIONS?

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I OFTEN REFER to myself as a “reluctant mother.” It’s certainly not because I drag my feet when it comes to loving the four amazing children God has seen fit to place into my care. Rather, this is the nod to the person I was before becoming a mom—a person who had changed less than five diapers, who would rather watch your pet chinchilla than your toddler, who knew next to nothing about being a parent.

Since I hadn’t spent much time around kids in the years prior to having my own, I really didn’t have much of an instinct when it came to knowing what they needed. Everything was new to me: how to know when each needed to be fed, changed, or put down for a nap.

So, in these nearly 13 years of motherhood, I have clung to the one thing I know for certain they need: faith in Jesus.

No, I cannot give them this faith. There is no magic sequence of actions I can take to guarantee that they will have a flourishing relationship with their heavenly Father and that they will possess true faith in him on the day they leave this earth. Yet, God has given us as parents quite clear instructions on how to keep this one thing needful in front of them every day:

“Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates” (Deuteronomy 6:5-9).

So, we pray in the car. We marvel at the wonders of God we see in nature. We discuss how God would want us to treat a difficult classmate. We talk about the unexpected passing of a fellow believer and how in our grief we can still feel extreme joy since that soul is now truly home. There is not a corner of our lives his Word does not touch.

I pray that God continues to give me the strength and wisdom to implement this on a daily basis. It truly is the one thing needful.



Melissa Anne Kreuser and her husband, Michael, are raising two sets of identical twins. The family attends Morning Star, Jackson, Wisconsin.

OF COURSE, I’m concerned about my grandchildren. The moral fuel tank of their world is becoming empty.

Nonetheless, God’s grace overwhelms my concerns. The Savior’s resurrection guarantees fortress-like security. So, I value Ephesians 2:10’s promise of a God-planned future. “We are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared in advance so that we would walk in them” (Evangelical Heritage Version).

God created my grandkids for this moment in history. He designed my grandchildren—DNA strand by DNA strand—to fulfill his purposes on earth. He recreated them as his children when he brought them to faith in Jesus. Now he is shaping them—day by day—to accomplish the good he planned to do through them. No matter the moral mudslide that is burying the globe, God’s baptism commitment to my grandkids cannot be swallowed up. He has created them for unique purposes. His plan can’t be frustrated.

He’s also created me for a unique purpose. Part of that purpose is to guide my grandkids toward accomplishing the good they exist to do. My wife was created for that too. So were my grandkids’ parents.

God has made us responsible for bringing my grandkids into his workshop. There he continues to craft them into the gifts this planet needs. The tools in his workshop are the words he has spoken. Through worship and Bible study with us, he shapes them. Through Bible reading and memorization, he hones them. Through our Scripture-directed prayers, he develops them. As we live out those Scriptures, he prepares and polishes them.

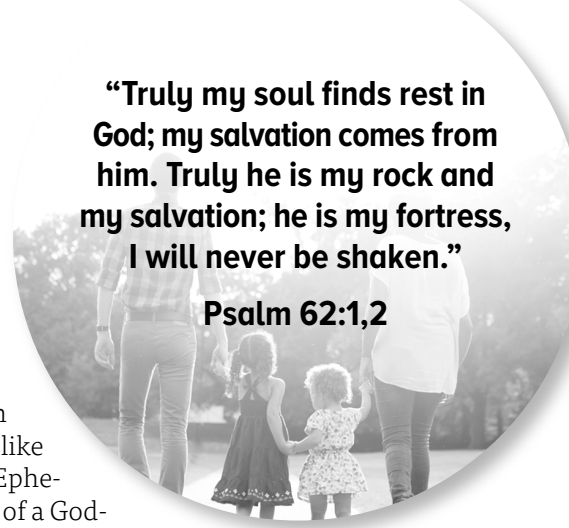
I have reason for alarm over my grandkids’ temptations. I have more reason to ignore that alarm. God’s grace is always greater than any concern. My grandchildren—his children—are “created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared in advance so that [they] would walk in them.”



James Aderman and his wife, Sharon, raised three daughters and are now enjoying their ten grandchildren.

“Truly my soul finds rest in God; my salvation comes from him. Truly he is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will never be shaken.”

Psalm 62:1,2



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