

# MOTHERHOOD, THE GUTS AND THE GLORY

By Deb Walkemeyer

*“Her children arise and call her blessed”. Proverbs 31:28*

**The Early Years of Childhood** - Some of the basic needs your babies and young children require are:

- 1. BONDING: This is a loving interaction between parents and children.**
  - a. In our busy technological society, we often neglect putting time into interacting with our children. It is vital for infants to have time from you to be cuddled, played with, kissed, tickled, etc.
  - b. Young children need you to make eye contact with them, get on the floor to play with them. This increases the likelihood that later in life your child will feel close to you.
  
- 2. ROUTINE: Children need a predictable, daily schedule to feel secure. This helps them know what to expect each day. Children really are creatures of habit.**
  - a. Early on try to establish a regular routine for your children, including mealtimes, naps, scheduling bedtimes, playtimes, etc.
  - b. If you are a working mother and your children are with a sitter, instruct the sitter to keep your child on a consistent schedule, in order to keep your established routine going.
  
- 3. STIMULATION: When children are bored, they often get into trouble. As parents, mothers need to ensure their child gets varied forms of activities to keep them stimulated.**
  - a. Some ways you can provide activity for your infants would include: swings, “johnny-jumpups”, baby gyms, stroller rides, blankets to roll on, baby toys.
  - b. Young children can be stimulated with easy crafts, building blocks, physical activity, outings (zoo, museums, parks, and beaches), dramatic play, puzzles, books, music and computers.
  
- 4. EMOTIONAL COACHING: Is identifying a child’s feelings and validating them without giving in.**
  - a. At any age, it is important to help your child recognize feelings and then teach them how to properly handle their emotions.
  - b. DO NOT discount your child’s feelings – “That’s silly to feel that way.”
  - c. Empathize with your child’s feelings to help them feel that you understand what they are experiencing at that moment – “That must feel really bad...”

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## **The Teen Years** - The adolescent years can be exciting and fun...learn to enjoy them!

- 1. ATTENTION: Developmentally, teens need just as much attention as a 2 year old!**
  - a. They look all grown up, however they still need their parents' time and energy.
  - b. Take your teen out once in a while and just let them talk...don't barrage them with questions.
  
- 2. AFFECTION: Aging teens may not be as receptive to your "hugs and kisses".**
  - a. Find other ways to express your love to them: wrestling, jostling their hair, writing them a special note in their lunch.
  - b. Your teenager still needs to hear frequently and consistently that you love them.
  
- 3. COMMUNICATION: Your teenager has matured thinking capabilities, allowing for more adult-like conversations.**
  - a. Allow your teen to question and philosophize with you
  - b. Don't ram your ideas down their throats...calmly explain why you hold a certain opinion.
  - c. The Bible says to be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger...become a great listener so that your teen feels safe coming to talk to you.

## **The Empty Nest Years** - Parenting now takes on a new emphasis...you build a friendship with your children.

- 1. EYE CONTACT: It is so important to maintain with your grown children.**
  - a. When your children need to talk to you in person, your eye contact conveys the message that they are important to you and worth your time and effort.
  - b. Your adult children are watching your body language to see how you are reacting to them...eye contact conveys that you are listening to them.
  
- 2. ENGAGEMENT: Your child is now an adult and needs to think for themselves. There is now a sense of "mutuality".**
  - a. Be curious when your adult child talks to you, not critical.
  - b. Wait for them to bring up difficult issues in their lives.
  - c. Take time to appreciate your children for what they have become.
  
- 3. ENJOYMENT: Now you can enjoy special times with your adult children as peers. A toddler can't fully appreciate the opera, but your adult child could.**
  - a. Create times of "play" with your children; maybe even develop mutual hobbies together.
  - b. You will also get to enjoy the fruit of your grown children's lives...GRANDCHILDREN!  
What a wonderful opportunity to love little ones without having to raise them.

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