

No Greater Joy

By Jennifer Brown

I have no greater joy than to hear my children are walking in the truth. 3 John 1:4

I realized the fullness of John's truth when my daughter was baptized this weekend. My time of worship has never been so sweet. My sense of peace has never been so complete. And my joy has never reached such a crescendo.

I was coming off a miserable couple of weeks...issues with the kids...strife in my marriage...unwelcome financial surprises...struggling to catch up at work... But standing there Sunday morning, all was right with the world. It is still turning, and God is still turning hearts to Him. Yes, there are problems and wars and sicknesses, but the God of this universe is still in control. And, with Him – because of Him - all things are possible and we are never without hope. He truly can do all things – immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine. In the 36 hours since her baptism, I have been amazed at the changes in my daughter. And for 17 of those hours she was in bed or at school!

I share this with you because so many of you are parents. And, like my husband and I, I know you're weary. Parenting is much harder work than I ever would have imagined. But I want to encourage you to fight the fight for your children. Stand up to the world around you that wants to sway them and steal them away from the joy God has for them. Say no to the things that pull them away from God and yes to the things that glorify Him and His Holy Word.

And don't just teach them, but show them! Make the Lord first in your life. Learn to love what He loves and hate what He hates. Turn to Him in times of trouble and in times of joy. Pray continuously, seeking God's will in all things. Live to model the love of Christ and live your life to please Him.

My husband and I daily fall short as parents and as Christians. We all do! But don't become discouraged. God's faith, mercy, and forgiveness are available to you every single time you turn back to Him with a sorrowful heart, asking Him to help you get it right next time.

If you don't have children, I want to remind you that John, who wrote the verse I opened with, had no natural-born children. Nor did he have children adopted in the traditional manner. His children were the people he led to the Lord. Every single one of us can seek those children and know this joy. We all have the responsibility to teach others about Christ, talking about what He has done for us and sharing the truth of who He is with the people He puts in our path.

I pray that you will all know this joy, for there truly is none greater.

Heavenly Father, we praise you that through the blood of Christ you have given us the right to be your children. Lord strengthen us to bring more children to you, regardless of their age or our age. Give us eyes to see the ways we can teach others about you. Give us the whole-hearted devotion to follow your commands and dedicate our lives to you. Amen.