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# Parenting on My Knees: Squeezing Oranges and Signing Contracts

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Sometimes being brought to our knees is just what we need. ***It's a strangely perfect posture to ponder, pray and look up into the purpose found in our Savior's eyes.*** From this low, humble pose we often uncover gifts of gratitude and growth as we find our way to our feet.

But once we've been broken down, how exactly do we go about being built back up? After kneeling a while, eventually our legs ache and it's as if we're stuck, wallowing at the bottom of a deep, dark well. We become accustomed to only hearing the far, faint sounds of optimism echoing from up above. Our bowed eyes adjust to the dark and suddenly it's easy to stay stuck, believing we belong at the bottom of the well.

***Sometimes we need someone to pinch us with new perspective.*** We need a heart-prick to look up for respite and see the sun…to experience the ever shining Son who's always ready to reach down

and save us.

*But what's more heartbreaking for me is when the one stuck at the bottom of the well is one of my children and I know it's me who's been bringing her to her knees.*

It feels like I'm kneeling there with her, *holding my heart in my hands trying hard to wring all my mama's love from my heart into to hers.* But lately it's tough love I'm squeezing out as she's been taunting my expectations and testing the boundaries. How long will she bang her head on the wall of pending punishment before she hits her knees in exhaustion!

Well, she finally fell. Bruised and broken down with a brokenhearted mama….but this mom's on a mission!

Frayed yet determined not to fail, I met her there. We knelt together after spiraling down the sides of the well in a series of 'training' sessions and, I confess, I succumbed to a few power struggles.

Please tell me you've been here too! In this narrow, suffocating space where we know ***we're digging deep and it's only God's command and bigger plan keeping us going.*** **Here's my recent post as I began digging deep with discipline: A Battle Between Toothpaste and Bubbles [1]**

When parenting perplexes us to this extent, our souls only find respite in the Word. We repeat Biblical mantras like the one from Proverbs 3:12 "For the LORD reproves him whom he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights." This means that as we dig deep to discipline our dear children, we love them in the way God loves His children. So, mustn't we stay the course doing this parenting thing purposefully!?

Then right there at the bottom of that well, it happened! It was the Holy Spirit who pricked my heart with a new perspective. My eyes lifted and my feet were ready to run the race in a new direction!

It was time to change my tone. The tide shifted giving us a new view from which all my teaching could be tangibly tested.

So I tossed her a rope, wrung out more of my heart and urged her to climb up with words crafted to affirm her abilities and encourage a new kind of confidence, a confidence to climb up clinging to Christ instead of white knuckling her own human capabilities.

*Softening her heart was the hard part of picking her up. Pride kept paralyzing her!* I'd give her a glimpse of hope but before she could climb all the way out she'd end up slipping down. If you've ever met a strong-willed child, you know a bit about this one. Only she comes complete with an extra dose of deep critical thinking skills so questioning everything, including my authority, made matters more difficult.

At one point on her way up, I sat her down and we enjoyed making a sticky mess from squeezing an orange. Then, I gave her **THIS LETTER** [2] explaining our activity… and it seemed to stick something sweet right in her heart because she started softening. (read the Letter here: A Letter to Squeeze Her Heart [2])

**I stayed the path and kept praying** for her to stand tall but with a bowed heart, not to me, but to God's will and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. I knew with a heart humbled to Him ***her strong will would turn towards His will***. And that's how she'd be able to use her powers for good!

That's what we parents really want, right? ***Not perfection or our own child prodigies, but to teach our children to use what they were uniquely given for God's greater purpose.***

I didn’t want my girl to obey simply to scale that well’s walls for her own good or even for me! I want her to find shining light of the Son so whenever she finds herself on her knees, she’ll know which way to turn.

**As I proceeded, I kept praying.** I prayed she’d see herself as a special, incredibly significant part of God’s bigger plan. That truth is amplified right here in our home. In the context of our family, she can truly see how significant she really is. Her attitude, choices and actions can serve the group and glorify God all at once.

So, my next step was creating a contract. The girls each initialed their own copy and now it’s my job to carry these Biblical truths out in our home. Here's a **blank copy of the CONTRACT** in case you’d like one for your precious family!: Family Team Contract.pdf [3]

**I’m still forging ahead in my motherhood mission with prayer, patience and perseverance** trying not to get ahead of God. Because just like I’m trying to teach ALL these girls to obey out of honor and loving obligation, I’m always (too often imperfectly) working to stay in step with my Savior.

I know parenting with purpose will forever be a rocky road. But for now, I believe we’ve begun crawling out of the well we’d been stuck in for a while. And we’ll be better for it! Thank You, God!

Now let’s all pray for each other in the mission field of motherhood [4]…that we all know how to climb out of our own wells!

Family Team Contract.pdf [5]

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