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Blending Buttercream and My Mothering Mess

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Yes, I intended to say 'buttercream blending'…because 'frosting' seems a touch too sweet for where my mama's spirit resides in recent weeks. You see, my heart desires the smooth creaminess of harmony at home. But instead, I'm perpetually torn between my natural mothering nature and struggling to strike a balance as a step mom. It's like trying to create something smoothly sweet out of a solid stick of butter and tasteless liquid cream.

But somehow *wholesome* butter and *pure* cream DO actually beautifully blend in a union sweetly satisfying for frosting any cake! First, though, the combination calls for a ***corrupt ingredient***, something not-so-nourishing: Sugar. For me, that's when things get complicated and contrary to **my real-food philosophy** [1]. (Be sure to read more about the **NOT SO SWEET side of sugar!** [2])

How do I reconcile the recipe when I know it won't contain what I consider nurturing? How do I recreate this unlikely concoction into something pure, healthy and whole to match my food philosophy?

Switching gears but just as true, like with food, ***I prefer pure, nourishing purpose and wholesome consistency in my mothering approach*** [3]. I hope and pray Biblical principles and nurturing purpose pour out of me.

Lately though, I'm falling short, feeling compromised and inconsistent. Homemaking ingredients feel all mixed up and I haven't been able to reconcile my new mothering recipe just yet!

The struggle with consistency began with blending our families. Don't get me wrong, **I love my fuller than full home** (yes, even with five girls hijacked by hormones). A part of me revels in the opportunity to juggle my color coded calendar to show them my care and help them prepare. I humbly welcome each chance I'm afforded to encourage any of our five completely unique girls. If I ever wanted more children filling my home, remarriage was one way to make my dream come true almost overnight! ***Honestly, I adore my new life as a wife and I savor all five of these young sisters from six to sixteen.***

But, I won't sugar coat the tough truth making things appear beautifully blissful in this blending process! A smooth experience congruent with my mothering style requires creativity and LOTS of attempts at Christ-like character mixed into this non-traditional recipe.

Ah, yes, ***I feel both blessed and stretched as I sometimes struggle to draw in His breath.***

It's like blending butter and cream…perhaps not as incompatible as combining water and oil…but there's an exact art, a watchfulness required and a tightrope to tiptoe upon to ensure the blending doesn't blow up into a rebellious mess.

There! I said it. ***Blending families requires hard work, eyes-wide-open effort all the time and a constant posture of prayer.*** Oh, how I'm **parenting from my knees** [4] where it's easiest to see Him reigning over me! As soon as I mindlessly stand up in my own resolve, I'm reminded how this whole new recipe requires ingredients I've never used and am having a tough time getting accustomed to!

Why exactly is blending so beautifully difficult? The number of reasons reach the sky but here's the struggle in my heart as we speak:

Us moms stand fast on our mothering philosophies and mold our babies through eyes focused on our unique values, expectations and routines. Our homes, our rules and methods to raise them, right? Even so, I'd venture to say a common characteristic of many moms is our effort to exemplify good will and gratitude as we teach them to give back. We teach our young ones to share their toys, train our older ones to contribute in home and out and we constantly share ourselves until we're almost empty.

But the paradox presents itself where sharing becomes too much, where we draw boundaries around what we're willing to give up. We're a bit territorial, aren't we? Primarily if we're called to compromise certain things… namely those mothering ways and homemaking values we stand fast on.

It's our methods to motherhood and habits for homemaking that create the unique culture we're cultivating. We claim stakes and resist compromising what happens in our homes. It's all a part of **parenting with purpose** [3].

Perhaps I'm more militant than most. Far before children, I fantasized about the mama God might mold me into. Now, I bask in the ability to teach the lost art of homemaking. I aspire to inspire pure, wholesome values within these walls. I search His Word and seek His wisdom to shape my daily practices and overall purpose.

So, when blending blessed my home with different habits and standards, at first it felt a little like someone stomping on my toes.

(Sounds selfish, I know. But, there's no use masking the mess when so many mothers mottle through their own. We've gotta step up in honesty about our struggles so the butter and cream blend more smoothly as we support one another!)

As time went on, God weaned me from my militant attitude. Just recently (when I finally surrendered before I suffocated), He's been helping me listen more intently to Him as He reveals ways I can ***set an example without forcing my standards***. Sure, some of my expectations are firm for both my biological and my step daughters. But, I'm beginning to heart-achingly realize what I cannot require without rebellion. They have not always been mine! So, with head bowed and humbled heart, I know many of my ways are almost alien to my three dear, sweet teenage step daughters. The last thing I want to do is insensitively extinguish their truths causing their worlds to crash disastrously into mine.

Instead, I'll walk up alongside them holding Jesus' hand.

I now know part of this recipe that won't ever be blended. But there's also a whole, new sweet batch we can whip up with alternative ingredients that'll suit us perfectly!

We're a family He'll always be forming. With God writing the recipe, I only need to follow His formula***. He oversees everything so even this creative, non-traditional rendition of blended butter and cream bears His sweet, flawless flavor!***

I guess what I'm saying is we all can do a little better, no matter what we struggle to balance, when GOD does the blending. With His hand, messy recipes always turn out smooth and sweet!

Now for a REAL recipe that includes whole, pure ingredients non-traditional to **Chocolate Cake with Chocolate Frosting** [5] (and it works even though it's NOT your traditional cake with buttercream)



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