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Digging Deeper

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As soon as things slow and seem straight forward, right when I feel l have my wits about me, a new riddle gets thrown my way. It seems like life has been a series of road bumps, blocks and then some break-through blessings over the last few years. I suppose ease is not what this is all about…it's more about endurance, I'm certain of it!

All this bumping along has me feeling fatigued from time to time. For you too, right? Day in and day out. Right when the road seems smooth, we suddenly start slipping and swirling.

That's how it feels for me these days. You see, I kept my cool during the holidays this past year (an accomplishment in the still fresh wake of loss and loneliness). No major breakdowns or burnouts. The girls gave me this wonderful gift of good—no, great!—behavior and caring cooperation. You know the kind I'm talking about: it's the peace and joy of family cohesiveness. The three of us were right there, in stride with one another, over Christmas break. I basked in that blessing, feeling every bit of joy and gratitude for the beautiful family God blessed me with.

Then, it all started. I should say, it started OVER. School began and the spiral of sibling rivalry re-entered our home with a vengeance before I could regain control. I had seen this before—an uncharacteristic, almost unrecognizable version of my eldest. I'll be honest—it scared me. I started second guessing my parenting skills and struggled to maintain composure as each battle commenced.

But then the picture became clear. I opened up some articles I found months ago but buried because I didn't want to jump to conclusions or on bandwagons. I finally read them—over and over—I was reading about my daughter! But she could have told me, in her always articulately ways that something was wrong. She already had described how she feels in her frenzied moments-- frustrated, agitated, out of control and heartbreakingly remorseful afterwards. After each episode, she asks forgiveness of me and of God.

What the doctors suggested several months prior was proving true. The puzzle seemingly solved—at least somewhat. I always blamed it, I mean her short temper and lingering tantrums, on childhood grief. Her high anxiety and sensitive personality must play a role, right? So I bought books on worry

and feelings, on strong-willed girls and seeking Jesus in your home. I sought answers in my mothering approach (which will always come into play to a great extent, I know). I wanted her to heal emotionally….but there was something more. Something just not right about a six year old holding it together at school only to arrive home ready to burst—too often, to many tantrums.

There were other pieces to the puzzle coming together too. It's more than the mood swings. It's the frequent stomach aches, strange pains and SO many nights of sleep disturbances and the resulting frustration and fatigue.

Could it be that we are falling prey, despite our already healthy-whole-food-habits, to a food allergy? Really? I'm not one to attribute food consumption to flawed character.

You see, unbeknownst to anyone else, during break—when it felt like bliss—I withheld gluten. There. I said it. I did my due diligence in research, spoke with the doctor and decided it was time to try. I withheld all (well, 90%) gluten containing foods when we were home and I had more control. Ah—what's wrong with an experiment, right?

Then, when school restarted gluten was slowly re-introduced. And the results, or what I now can call symptoms, returned with a vengeance.

I'm still teetering a bit….I will wait and see what happens. But, I feel like my digging deeper did us some justice. I feel like my smart, SWEET, kind-hearted Stella could have less of a struggle! Sure, she will still have Daddy issues, a sensitive personality and perhaps even a short fuse. But, we can manage that. Perhaps even see her more clearly for WHO GOD MADE HER TO BE when home feels more like, well, home.

I will continue with my Christ centered parenting, the emphasis on making good choices…on **kind hands, kind words and kind hearts** as our family's philosophy. But, maybe I found one more way to make things a bit easier—a bit more joyful—around here! If it's not the answer, I know we tried.

My message in this post is NOT to try what I'm doing with my little family. But my message is to dig, to uncover what your family might need in the season you are in now. **Each strife and struggle requires some searching.** Don't give up! I'm not going to.

There's a lot more I could tell you about what got us here, but I will wait and allow us time to adjust and her to heal. With matters of my family, I mostly try to fix 'it' (whatever 'it' is) with feelings, talking and faith. But, this time my prayers and faith led me to digging deeper, learning more and seeing another piece of the puzzle.

What is it that YOU, as a Mom, as your family's fervent investigator can uncover about a need your home has? It might be that your children need more time, emotional support or educational stimulation. For, me, I am looking at the WHOLE picture and praying that my digging proves promising! For you, each day dig a little deeper…..and with a prayerful approach I am sure that your digging will also prove promising!

Digging Deeper,

Katie

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