

DON'T EVER THINK WHAT YOU DO IS ORDINARY

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We celebrated Father's Day recently and we now have my husband's cards displayed on the fireplace mantel. I love walking by them and re-reading the messages our kids have written inside. When I shop for a card, I take a long time because I like to read them all—looking for the one with just the right message! This year I felt particularly happy about the card I bought. It had a little 3-D cutout shield on the front that said "Don't Ever Think What You Do Is Ordinary." So much truth!

As a parent of four kids who were five years apart, my life was filled with what you might call "ordinary" things. I stayed busy with meal planning, coupon clipping, grocery shopping, laundry, ironing—you get the picture. And let's not forget supervising schoolwork and chores, along with providing instruction (which often included some sort of discipline). But I found great motivation in knowing that what I did would matter in eternity. Four little people, each an eternal being, were counting on me.

Maybe you are asking, "How are all these everyday tasks making a difference?" Well, they give you the opportunity to teach your kids **WHY** we do the things we do. In

doing so, you are developing your child's *character*. Here are some ideas:

- When you do meal planning, explain how this helps us stay within our monthly budget. We all know it is cheaper to eat at home than at a restaurant. (And probably healthier, too.) Challenge kids to help think of healthy meals that can be prepared at home. Involve them in the preparation. **Teach them to embrace, not resent, basic limitations in life**, like budgets! This will help them grow up to be adults who do not think they are "entitled."
- When supervising chores, explain to kids that **everyone in the family is important and has a role to play**—just like the human body (and like the church family). Help them think through what would happen if just one person didn't play his/her part.
- When supervising homework, explain that we all have jobs to do. You don't have to like it, you just have to do it. (Liking it is a perk—not a requirement.) What happens when an adult doesn't like his/her job? Why is it important to **be a responsible, dependable person**?

So, these are just a few ideas, but I think you get the point. When we value strong character in our households, we contribute to having a lasting impact on not only our child, but also on the world around them.

You might also keep in mind that **understanding is not a prerequisite for obedience**. I loved giving my young children a reason for why they needed to do something, but only AFTER they obeyed. (Of course, when they became teens, I provided the reason sooner.) But I wanted them to learn at an early age that I didn't need to convince them—to persuade them—to agree with me in order to obey our rules. I tried to teach them that our rules were designed to help us, not hurt us. My end goal was always to do what I believed was best for them.

I find myself applying these lessons to my life as an adult. I wish I always understood why God does, or allows, the things He does. But I don't. But I do know who He is and I will choose to do what He tells me to do, knowing He has my best interests at heart—always.