

THE GAP

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I am pregnant. (!!!!!!!) Yes, that somewhat explains my silence — my sudden and irrefutable need for sleep has trumped, well, almost everything once my parenting duties are complete for the night. And not surprisingly it has also inspired some reflection and pressed me to pause to ponder our parenting. And my personal capacity... Anyone who seamlessly waltzed into life with 3 or more kids can have a little chuckle, but honestly, the control freak in me threw up a few times (or maybe it was the hormones, totally possible).

Regardless, In the last few weeks I encountered a challenger... and I'm grateful to say that I also encountered some hope that has since engulfed me. I'm grateful to God, because as I watch my littles wrestle in the grass or finger paint at our table and wonder at who they will become and what they will take on, I need an answer to the challenger of my peace. So let's start with the challenger.

The challenger is “the gap.”

Have you ever felt the presence of “the gap?” You know — the gaps we all know we

have. The places we know we are lacking — or fear we are. I realize that I myself am not enough alone to point my boys in the perfect direction. I am flawed. I am not as wise today as I will be when my children are old, and I am contending with massive tidal waves of influence that will touch them. God help me. I realize that at some point I will say the wrong thing, react poorly, or feel lost in the midst of a situation of some sort. **My kids will witness their imperfect Mom attempting to do life in an imperfect world, and through my imperfections I just don't want my kids to pay.**

What I am so grateful for is that as a Christian parent, anchor-worthy truths are thrust your direction if you'll just pay attention. If you'll listen for his voice.

And my freeing moment, my moment of hope, was a gentle reminder:

We were never meant to be enough. God is bigger, and he is *engaged*.

"Trust in the Lord with all of your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all of your ways acknowledge him and he will make your paths straight." Proverbs 3:5-6

He makes my paths straight. Not because I tried harder, not because I read all the books and mustered up my energy. Not because I'm smart, or funny, or organized. Because he loves me. Bluntly said, I must actually *trust* God. And I *acknowledge* Him in all that I do. That's it. (I'm not saying this is easy, but it *is* simple). I am not to depend on myself to "do it all." Because, let's face it; try as we might, we cannot possibly know everything there is to know and do everything there is to do that will benefit our families. We weren't made to be able to function at our peak potential without God involved — and it's a loving thing that we can't; because we need to know that we need Him.

The story of our lives and certainly our kids' lives were never about us. We do not own them. *They are His.* And while it is a tremendous thing to be a parent, we are not God. If he knows every hair on their heads, and if he designed them, wired them specifically for his own purposes... well, isn't it fair to consider that he is capable of filling "the gap?" And that perhaps, if we can step out of the way long enough to watch, we'll see Him move in their lives in ways we never could have dreamed.

Honestly — It's a relief. To realize that in those moments when for whatever reason I cannot be everything they need — a voice of truth, or love, or reason in their lives — **there is a trustworthy God who cherishes them and who *will always be present***

when they need Him. And it's glorious, to think that the God that I worship, who loves me and pursues me and forgives me in so many ways, loves my children just as relentlessly. He has promised that he will be with us. He has commanded us to be strong and courageous. And that's what I want my children to see — a strong and courageous mommy who utterly depends on God, flaws and all.

Please know this is not a Christian cop out to responsibility. I still believe that if you walk out into a busy intersection, you're probably going to get hit by a car. I believe a careful examination of effective discipline benefits a family. I believe that if we want our kids to believe us when we say something is important, we must show them it is important to us. I believe the more we understand and embrace truth, the more optimal the potential is for our kids to catch hold of it. **But we must learn to walk the fine line between intentionality and ownership. There are some things we were never meant to own.** And when we try to take on that responsibility, the pressure will crush us. And so, because of this, I will get over the gap. I will run the race of parenthood joyfully, clinging to what is true and right and good for my family, because I know that my God loves my children even more than I do. **And He is enough. He is everything — so I don't have to be.**

"If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you." -- James 1:5

Lord, thank you for these beautiful children you've offered me to parent. Give me wisdom and discernment for their benefit. I beg of you to beckon them to you, to open the eyes of their hearts up to truth and their ears to your voice. I beg that you will fill the gaps for their sake in the places I am so lacking. That you would empower them. Make them strong and courageous so that their lives might be pleasing to you...