

I Don't Want to Raise a Good Child

*"Train a child in the way he should go,
and when he is old he will not turn from it."
Proverbs 22:6 (NIV 1984)*

My daughter, Hope, is a senior this year. And she decided her senior year should be adventurous and a little out of the "normal" box. A lot out of the box actually.

She withdrew from traditional school. Applied with the state to homeschool. Enrolled in online college courses that would allow her to get both high school and college credit simultaneously. And planned to spend the month of January serving in Nicaragua doing missions.

This didn't surprise me really. Hope has always liked charting her own course. This thrills me now. But it didn't thrill me so much in the early years of raising this strong-spirited child.

When she was really little I was scared to death I was the world's worst mom, because Hope was never one to be contained. And I honestly thought all her extra tenacity was a sign of my poor mothering.

One day I took her to the mall to meet several of my friends with toddlers to grab lunch. All of their kids sat quietly eating cheerios in their strollers. They shined their halos and quoted Bible verses and used tissues to wipe their noses.

Not Hope.

She was infuriated by my insistence she stay in her stroller. So, when I turned away for a split second to place our lunch order, she wiggled free. She stripped off all her clothes. She ran across the food court. And jumped in the fountain in the center of the mall.

Really, nothing makes the mother of a toddler feel more incapable than seeing her naked child splashing in the mall fountain. Except maybe that toddler refusing to get out and said mother having to also get into the fountain.

I cried all the way home.

Not because of what she'd done that day. But rather because of how she was everyday. So determined. So independent. So insistent.

I would beg God to show me how to raise a good child. One that stayed in her stroller. One that other people would comment about how wonderfully behaved she was. One that made me look good.

But God seemed so slow to answer those prayers. So, over the years, I changed my prayer. "God help me to raise Hope to be who You want her to be." Emphasis on, "God HELP ME!"

I think I changed my prayers for her because God started to change my heart. I sensed He had a different plan in mind for my mothering of Hope.

Maybe God's goal wasn't for me to raise a good rule-following child. God's goal was for me to raise a God-following adult. An adult just determined and independent and insistent enough to fulfill a purpose He had in mind all along.

Today's key verse reminds us we are training children so that when they are old they will not turn away from Biblical principles, but rather implement them in their life-long pursuit of God. Remember, the things that might aggravate you about your child today, might be the very things when matured that make them great for God's kingdom tomorrow.

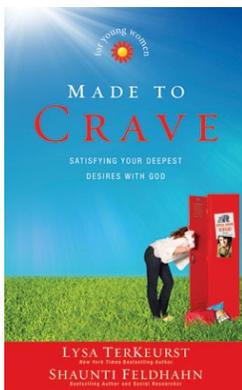
I've certainly seen this in raising Hope.

I don't know what mama needs to hear this today. But let me encourage you from the bottom of my heart with three simple mothering perspectives you must hang on to:

1. Don't take too much credit for their good.
2. Don't take too much credit for their bad.
3. Don't try to raise a good child. Raise a God-following adult.

And all the mamas of fountain dancing children said, "Amen!"

Dear Lord, I know You desire for me to raise a God-following adult. Please give me Your wisdom as I seek to become the parent You called to this high honor. Redirect my perspectives and equip me for this task today. In Jesus' Name. Amen.



For more information on this topic, read Lysa's book, *Made to Crave for Young Women*.

Lysa TerKeurst is a *New York Times* bestselling author and speaker who helps everyday women live an adventure of faith through following Jesus Christ. As president of Proverbs 31 Ministries, Lysa has led thousands to make their walk with God an invigorating journey. For more information, visit www.LysaTerKeurst.com

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