

Connections

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When Your Kids Don't Live Up to Your Expectations by Sharonda Cooper

In today's world, we often crave limitlessness. We prize technological advancements that promise around-the-clock productivity. We worship larger-than-life athletes who appear to defy the bounds of human physiology. We idolize the timeless beauty of celebrities and elevate business tycoons for their seemingly carefree, lavish lifestyles.

We chase after people who make us think we can have it all, and we recoil at the idea of being held back from reaching what we deem to be our full potential. In our world, limitations are a liability.

Perhaps this is why we often struggle to cope with our kids' limitations. Without realizing it, we might inadvertently expect our kids to live up to our version of limitlessness. We may subtly communicate that their value comes from their achievements. We might put pressure on them to reach their "maximum potential." Or we might even express disappointment when they struggle with things we think should come easily.

When we realize our kids can't meet our expectations, we might be tempted to blame ourselves or think God is punishing us with a child who can't succeed.

Consider the many possible limitations our children may face. There are personality strengths and weaknesses, physical conditions, learning disabilities, and mental health issues. Our children's opportunities may be limited by our geographical location or income. Even their passions or preferences might seem to us like limitations, simply because they differ from our own. Both real and perceived limitations can drive us to fear, anger, sadness, or guilt.

But God's Word offers a better way. We find wisdom for understanding our children's limitations in the details of a well-known Old Testament story.

Consider Moses

In Exodus 3, God appears to Moses "in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush" (v. 2) and calls him to lead the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt. But Moses tries to convince God that he isn't the man for the job. After multiple failed attempts, Moses points to his speech impediment to prove he's simply incapable of being God's spokesman: "Oh, my Lord, I am not eloquent, either in the past or since you have spoken to your servant, but I am slow



of speech and of tongue" (4:10).

But Moses's oratory skills don't concern God. He responds, "Who has made man's mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the LORD? Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak" (vv. 11–12).

This wonderful story provides three truths to help us think rightly about our children's limitations.

1. God ordains our children's limitations.

God was aware of Moses's condition and had every intention of speaking through him anyway. Likewise, our children's limitations aren't a surprise to God and in no way hinder his plans for their lives.

God lovingly weaves every child together in the womb (Ps. 139:13). And as he pointed out to Moses, he even ordains our specific limitations. He makes no mistakes in the process of human formation.

Like a potter skillfully crafts his clay, God shapes and forms each of us according to his own desire; no two jars are the same, and each one is a masterpiece. Every child is "fearfully and wonderfully made" (v. 14), uniquely designed by God for what he has set before him or her to do.

2. God can overcome our children's limitations.

God told Moses, "Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak" (Ex. 4:12). God didn't need Moses to be a skillful orator. The Lord can speak through a donkey (Num. 22:22–31) or supernaturally write a message on a wall (Dan. 5).

With God, anything is possible (Mark 10:27), and he'll ensure our kids complete all he has ordained for them to do (Ps. 138:8). His plans cannot be thwarted (Job 42:2).

3. God is glorified through our children's limitations.

Who received the praise when Pharaoh finally let the Israelites go? It wasn't the one who begged, "Oh, my Lord, please send someone else" (Ex. 4:13). All the glory for the Israelites' deliverance was attributed to God alone (14:30-31). When God uses weak, flawed, and broken people to accomplish his will, there's no question about who deserves the credit.

Limitations Lead Us to Christ

The world pushes back on any sense of limitation by telling us we can do whatever we want. It whispers that we can be our own gods. But our limitations are a stark reminder that we aren't completely autonomous. They humble us. They put us in our place. They force us to reckon with a God who alone is limitless and sets boundaries around our lives so that we feel our need for him.

Our limitations should make us long for Christ. He is everything we can't be, and he shares all his benefits with us (see 2 Cor. 1:19-20; Heb. 3:14)—including the greatest benefit of all, everlasting fellowship with God.

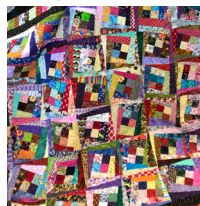
When you struggle to understand what God is doing with your kids' limitations, remind yourself that he created your children uniquely for his own glory. Their limitations (and ours) are sovereignly ordained, that we all might be captivated by Christ's limitless perfection.



Cool down this summer with Women's Summer Bible Studies...

Time to slip on your sandals, shorts and cotton tees as the heat climbs. Grab a girlfriend and a cold drink and attend one of our Women's Summer Bible Studies. Choose from one of the many topical studies of six to eight weeks in length, call the leader to register, and get excited for an amazing small group experience! Connect with other women you don't know, while immersing yourself in a topic of your personal interest! A full list of classes coming soon on our website!

Prayer Quilt Ministry



Prayer quilts are sewn by a team of women committed to sharing the burden of others through prayer and the giving of quilts. The quilts are completed with knots tied by our praying congregation and given as tangible expressions of God's love to people with prayer needs. Anyone who is facing a special need for prayer such as surgery, treatment or a crisis illness may receive a quilt when they are sponsored by someone attending RiverLakes Community Church. To sponsor a quilt, visit our [website](#), call the church office (589-9733) or Kathy Palmisano (330-8055).

Cheerleaders



Our Cheerleaders group meet monthly on the third Saturday of each month from September to May. Our desire is to encourage and inspire old and new friendships for widows and mature single women. Join us and be supported as we continue to grow in our faith making disciples who make disciples, deepening our roots together. Contact Carol Feil, carolmom64@gmail.com, for more information.

Counseling Available



People Encouraging People (PEP) is a ministry of trained Biblical Lay Pastoral Counselors to hurting people. PEP counselors draw upon the comfort they have received from God to help others move closer to Jesus in the midst of their problems. When life challenges get tough, are you strong enough to ask for help?

Referrals to Christian professional counselors are available as well. Don't let your spiritual and emotional health be threatened. Call (661) 589-9733 x222 for assistance, appointments or referrals.