

IT'S A GOOD THING

# Children are a Treasure

...They've Broken All  
My Other Ones



52 Devotions

for Moms Who Need  
a Moment With God

Group

# Group resources actually work!

This Group resource incorporates our R.E.A.L. approach to ministry. It reinforces a growing friendship with Jesus, encourages long-term learning, and results in life transformation, because it's



## **Relational**

Learner-to-learner interaction enhances learning and builds Christian friendships.

## **Experiential**

What learners experience through discussion and action sticks with them up to 9 times longer than what they simply hear or read.

## **Applicable**

The aim of Christian education is to equip learners to be both hearers and doers of God's Word.

## **Learner-based**

Learners understand and retain more when the learning process takes into consideration how they learn best.

## IT'S A GOOD THING CHILDREN ARE A TREASURE... *They've Broken All My Other Ones*

### 52 Devotions for Moms Who Need a Moment With God

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This book was written by moms for moms. Each author's name is included with the devotion she wrote. An extra special thanks to Jody Brolsma, Sherri Smith, Brenna Strait, and Melissa Towers, who added ideas for moms to do with their kids.

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# Introduction:

## God Loves Moms!



I was in the kitchen and heard a thundering of feet pounding up the stairs.

"Mom! Dad broke the coffee table!"

Yes, my son was telling on his dad!

It turns out that father and son were doing their best Elvis Presley impressions, and my husband had jumped onto the coffee table as a makeshift stage... cracking it right down the middle. This delighted my son, since he was the one who most often broke stuff when roughhousing with dad. Lamps, windows, couch cushions—I'd learned quickly that having a boy in the house meant putting my treasured breakables into storage.

So I laughed at their mishap, and helped carry the split table to the pile for the dump.

Psalm 127:3 says, "Children are a gift from the Lord." Other translations use the word heritage or inheritance. A popular song uses the word treasure. And that's what this book is about. Reminding us that no matter how stressful and frustrating and intense life is for moms, our children truly are gifts from God.

Each devotion was written to encourage you on your journey through momhood. And along the way you'll find a few ideas to help you connect with other moms (every journey is better when you're with a friend or two) and fun ideas for things you can do with your children.

My own son who once told on his dad is now grown and a parent himself. Now I get to be a grandmom—and also celebrate the joys of seeing my son as a young father who loves God—and his daughter. I hope you find joy in motherhood—and encouragement to find that joy on the pages of this book!



—Amy Nappa and the Women's Team at Group

Sample



It's a Good Thing Children Are a Treasure...They've Broken All My Other Ones

## Love Notes



**“Three things will last forever—faith, hope, and love—and the greatest of these is love.”**

—1 Corinthians 13:13

No one challenges our Christlikeness the way our children do. When my teenager had disciplinary issues in middle school and ran away from me on the school campus, I knew I was not acting with the love of Jesus as I searched for him. Every time my middle child threw a temper tantrum in the grocery store, the first words that sprang to my lips were not gentle. And when my youngest spilled all kinds of family “secrets” to her Bible study teacher, I ached to become invisible—but not before sealing her lips.

While it’s true my kids challenge my Christlikeness with their antics, they also encourage me with their expectations of Jesus, and the way they show his character.

We were experiencing a typical chaotic morning with phone calls, home-school duties, dinner preparation, and errands. Add in the frequent requests for bathroom assistance, boo-boo kissing, a blanket fort in the living room, a story, a dance, a dog walk, and my head was spinning. Remembering my father, who counts to 10 in an attempt to stay calm, I began to recite 1 Corinthians 13.

“Love is patient and kind.”

Yet another shout from the bathroom blew my efforts at patience and kindness.

However, when I emerged from the bathroom, I found one of my middle child's tokens of love. Five years old, he delights in drawing pictures and writing "Mommy" or "Daddy" on the outside and then depositing the folded paper in a place we'll see it.

This busy morning, I saw his note taped to the wall and smiled at the blue ink-filled heart. But what he taped above the paper made me laugh out loud and forget my frustration. My son attached one of his younger sister's dirty socks to the wall.

His love note reminded me of his tender heart, and of Jesus' desire to speak into my children's lives through me, their mother. The brief break in frantic activity encouraged me to respond with the same tenderness of heart—even in the middle of daily chaos. And then to do a load of laundry.

| Shelley Ring |

### Action Step:

Write a short note to your child today, and share something you love about him or her. If your child doesn't read yet, read the note to him or her. Save it in a memory box or scrap book.





# Tweaky DNA

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**“So anyone who becomes as humble as this little child is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven.”**

—Matthew 18:4

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**M**y youngest child has a tweak in his DNA that puts him outside the spectrum of what we call *healthy*. We make at least four visits a year to Children's Hospital where we are given our marching orders for the next three months. Sometimes these visits remind me that this is not what I imagined as a young pregnant mama. A friend told me that having a baby is like planning a trip. You think you know where you're going...perhaps Ireland...and you pack accordingly, but somehow your plane lands in an equally beautiful place—New Zealand, for instance. But everything you packed is wrong for this trip. That is how I felt when I was adjusting to parenting a chronically ill child. I had not packed for this trip, and I wasn't even sure I wanted to pack for this trip. But here I was...in New Zealand.

I arrived at our next visit to Children's with my 7-year-old in tow. I had my clipboard in hand with our daily schedule. My overflowing notebook with the last five years of medical visits and lab work results was tucked under my arm. My little guy had his bag stuffed with his favorite "buddies" and games for when the day dragged on. I was laser-focused: Don't get in my way; I am a mom on a mission. Before our first appointment, I made a quick pit stop to the ladies room. Then the question, "Mom, do I have to go in there with you? I'm 7..."

"Okay, stay here, I'll be quick."

I step back into the hall where my little one is waiting for me, and that is when I see the real beauty of New Zealand. My fuzzy-headed guy is sitting on the floor with his new bald-headed friend. There isn't really much more to see than their two heads bent close together. I cannot interrupt. I wait. After a little while my sweet treasure looks up at me and simply says, "Okay." He stands up and I take his little hand in mine. "What was that about?" I ask. "Oh, we were just praying for his chemo treatments." And we walked on.

| Dawn Cannan |

### Action Steps:

Intentionally slow down today and get on eye level with a little child. Sit on the floor, walk around on your knees, play a game, sing "Jesus Loves Me" out loud! Ask God to give you a child's perspective, and thank him that you are his child.



# Shared Eyeglasses



**“You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother’s womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it.”**

—Psalm 139:13-14

“Here we go again! What do I do next, Lord?” These were some of my thoughts when my son was in fifth grade. That year, it seemed I was greeted with problems each day when I picked him up from school. His teacher recited his learning difficulties and the number of times his attention strayed. She detailed specific periods of time he was “off task.” I was at my wits’ end. I found myself cringing and wanting to avoid contact with his teacher.

My son had a learning disability. There were professionals who believed he also had Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), and there were those who thought he did not fit the criteria for ADD. A meeting was scheduled at the school with a team of experts. I had such mixed feelings. I was like a mother bear who wanted to protect her cub. At the same time, I was incredibly intimidated at the thought of being surrounded by specialists. I was afraid they only saw my son as a problem to be fixed. My longing was for them to welcome him as a work of art, created by God, a blessing and a person with abilities as well as disabilities.

In my distress, God met me with his Word over and over. He saw my struggle, my fears, and exhaustion mingled with fierce love. It was as if he gave me a pair of eyeglasses I could share with him. Through those lenses I could see my child more clearly. God did not see him as a mistake or just another problem to fix. God created my son. He formed him and made him "wonderfully complex." I would not go into that meeting or any meeting alone. The Lord even provided others along the way to share our eyeglasses. It was an encouragement each time he sent someone to really see my son, to see him as a gift.

Those shared eyeglasses transformed my vision. It was a little easier to leave the defensiveness behind. I could celebrate my son and work with a team of experts to help him grow. Whenever I became confused or afraid, all I needed to do was grab my glasses and cry out to the Lord.

| Rita J. Platt |

### Action Step:

Insert your child's name in Psalm 139:13-14 and write those verses down. Keep them somewhere you will see them regularly. Whenever they catch your eye, thank God for your "wonderfully complex" child.





# Practice Brings Progress

**“Give your complete attention to these matters.  
Throw yourself into your tasks so that everyone  
will see your progress.”**

—1 Timothy 4:15

"**M**omma." What a great name. As my children were born, I really didn't realize how wonderful that name (along with "mom") would become. As I sat in the waiting room waiting for the arrival of my first grandchild, I thought about the delivery of both of my daughters. How different it is to see your little girl experiencing childbirth for herself as she eagerly awaits the birth of her first child, a son. How must Mary have felt, as she knew the time of Jesus' birth was near? My daughter delivered in a very comfortable birthing room while Mary delivered in a barn.

Just as childbirth is not easy, being a mom is not always easy either. In fact, it takes a lot of practice and a lot of selflessness on your part. I remember that as a working mom with two small children, I always felt pulled in many different directions. My second daughter was born 26 months after my first, and they were definitely not on the same page in anything they were doing for quite some time. My oldest was always a self-starter and determined to do things her way. One night as I was bathing the baby, I heard a fall and a scream from the other room. As I ran, wet baby in hand, to check on her, I found her on the kitchen counter with a bottle of Benadryl spilled all over the counter. She looked up at me and said, "Look, Momma, I took my medicine." With my husband still at work, I went into a panic and ended up in the emergency room with black, charcoal-type

stuff being put into my daughter, since we had no idea how much she had actually taken. Needless to say, that was not one of my better nights.

I needed to practice how to be a mom to two children instead of one. As children grow physically and spiritually, each phase is different and we learn new ways to communicate and grow our relationship with our children. Being a follower of Christ is the same way. We practice and then we see progress. God has given all of us gifts to use for him, and as moms we can help our children discover their gifts by practicing serving God.

Hold your children if they are young, and never quit hugging them. Being a mom is not easy, but it sure is worth the effort. None of us are perfect moms, but if we keep God first and rely on him for directions, we'll see progress from all our practice.

| Eliese McAllister |

### Action Steps:

Look at your children as they sleep. See how peaceful they look. Thank God for all the peaceful times you have experienced—and also thank him for the chaotic times when you are reminded that he is in control.

