

If I Could do it Over, I Would . . .

By Bobbi Sims

. . . Make sure my children *felt loved* beyond doubt, by me and by God. Feeling loved frees us to be who God created us to be. Unfortunately, we get old too soon and smart too late to know what is critically important. We especially realize this after rearing our children who did not arrive with a manual. *Hind sights* provide us with *great insights* that were not available at the time we needed them most. I have gained some of those insights, and if I could do it over, I would view my children with new wisdom that eluded me when my precious boys were entrusted into my care.

Therefore, I am sharing with you what I would do if I could live my life over as a mother with the insights I learned along my journey. I would get off to a good start when the doctor placed that little bundle of joy in my arms the very first time. I would see that precious little one as God's child, not mine. I would be clear that my responsibility was to care for and nurture this little soul for his Heavenly Father. For the sake of this precious soul, I would strive to look beyond our family traits and acknowledge that spark of the Divine inherent in him. Yes, he has our genetics, and he, too, has the DNA of God within him. I would trust God in him to guide his days so I would not interfere in God's purpose for his life. And very importantly, I would let each child know I trusted them to make good decisions for their life. Trust is a great gift. It conveys we believe in them. Children need us to have confidence in them. In addition, they have a tendency to live up to our expectations.

Since our child is God's child too, I would remember that I am not raising this child alone. I would go to my knees for guidance on his upbringing and especially when dealing with issues arising out of the norm. When the big issues come up, I would surrender those challenges into God's care to work out.

I would start to teach children when very young that they have their best friends—"God and Jesus lived inside them" and they can talk with them about anything and everything seeking their guidance. I would also teach them it is OK to make mistakes; in fact, mistakes are normal and God knows that. If we humans could live without making big mistakes, then God would not have had to become man through Jesus Christ. Unmerited love and forgiveness for all our mistakes are a gift, not earned or merited. We are loved and accepted beyond anything we can imagine, even with out mistakes and flaws.

Most importantly, every day, I would look each child in the eye so the message would go straight into the soul and say, "*I love you. God loves you too.*" Growing up never doubting being deeply loved will change the world and the outcome of our lives. The lack of *feeling* loved is the source of most pain, hurtful behaviors, and harmful acts. We cannot pass it on if we have not experienced unconditional love. If you have any doubt about being loved and accepted by God, then go to a mirror, look yourself in the eye and say, "*I love you. God loves you too,*" until you can feel it. Tears will come when it lands in your heart. As long as there is life, it is not too late to do these things. Adults still need to hear it, as well as our adult children and grandchildren. Better to take action now rather than say later, "If I could do it over, I would. . ."

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