

Single Parent

Raising Children Alone

Parenthood is one of life's greatest blessings and sources of joy. But raising children isn't easy under any circumstances, and all parents will struggle at some point. The trick is to maximize your time with your kids, something that becomes even more crucial if you're raising kids alone as a single parent.

Whatever personal circumstances brought you into single parenthood, your child needs your attention and love more than ever. So how can you be hopeful and experience joyful success as a single parent?

PRIORITY ONE: Keep your child's best in mind

Every parent is called to lay aside his or her own interests for the children. That calling takes extra commitment when you're doing it alone. You may still be working through the painful circumstances that led to becoming a solo parent. Regardless of the emotions your specific circumstance may be causing, you are called to place your child's needs above your own.

Give them as much stability and nurturing as possible within your limitations—even when they don't seem to appreciate the sacrifice you're making. Be assured, the Lord receives your selfless caring as an act of worship to Him because it reflects the spirit of Christ *who made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant* (Philippians 2).

Being a servant includes doing your best to maintain a Christ-like attitude when you go through the headaches of court appointments, seeing your ex with a new romantic interest, juggling financial challenges, maintaining a home, or having people ask awkward questions about your family.

Putting your children first is also a priority if you don't have custody—if you are limited to small windows of time together. Those times are your opportunity to show love and influence and not to get caught up in disagreements over parenting differences. In your visitation, in your support, and all other connections, your first priority is serving the needs of your children.

PRIORITY TWO: Choose good relationships

Few people understand the load you carry. You're likely to be under stress with extra work and the constant demands of parenting. As humans we want to be loved and valued, and too often we seek relief from loneliness in relationships with the opposite sex that may be harmful, only adding to the uncertainty and anxiety of single parenting. Be very cautious about dating during this season of life.

Foster healthy Christian friendships that can help you face this emotional maze and make wise decisions through it all. You need to be a part of a community of believers

committed to forgiveness, redemption, and growth. Your children also need the support and modeling of other Christians. God can make your next chapter better than the last.

PRIORITY THREE: Become intentional

Good parenting doesn't happen by accident for anyone. There are many forces working on your children. Some of those things are in your control and some aren't. But you can create healthy cycles for your family by becoming intentional about building strong relationships and modeling Godly character. Pray for opportunities to share life's most important truths with your children. You have much to offer them, and God will give you the grace to be the parent they need.

GOING FURTHER - Resources

Recommended Books:

Some books are available for checkout at the Faith@Home Center or for purchase online.

Successful Single Parenting (by Gary Richmond, a single-parent pastor) provides practical help and Biblical principles for balancing your needs with those of your children.

Grace Based Parenting (by Dr. Tim Kimmel) discusses a new map for learning to see ourselves and our children through God's limitless tenderness to raise our kids the way God raises us.