

American Decency Association

PO Box 202, Fremont, MI 49412 231-924-4050 www.americandecency.org
Encouraging Christians to guard their hearts May 2019

Moms, You Are Not Enough: The Freedom of Depending on God

by Susan Narjala



“Mama, you got this. You are enough.” My heart sank when I read the last lines in an article on a leading website for Christian mothers. My heart sank, because it was my article.

The article was intended to encourage moms in the trenches of raising little ones and overwhelmed by trying to do it all. When I saw the article online, though, I noticed that the last lines had been altered. The original, unedited version read, “Mama, you got this, because he has got you. You are enough, because he who is in you is enough.” The published article had left out God.

One message women, including Christian women,

have heard on repeat is these three words: “You are enough.” Christian authors and speakers have been incorporating this phrase in sermons meant to encourage women, especially moms, who are bogged down by guilt and plagued by self-doubt. ...

But what does the seemingly innocuous phrase really mean?

Am I Ever Enough?

“You are enough” is a well-intentioned way of saying, “Life is hard, but you got a handle on it, because you’re a fierce, independent woman.” When you forget your child’s kindergarten orientation (true story!) ... don’t beat yourself up, because being a mom is undeniably challenging. And don’t give up, because you are strong enough for motherhood — you can do this.

While that seems uplifting, as Christian women, we’re hearing less than the full truth. The message is slowly diluting the gospel. This may sound disenfranchising to women, but

you and I are not enough. No one is. The calling of motherhood — and of the Christian life — is a high and overwhelming calling for anyone. None of us is good enough, kind enough, right enough, or strong enough. And that’s why each of us so desperately need Jesus in the trenches every single day.

Your Never-Enoughness

The idea of being inadequate is unpopular in our earn-your-way-up culture. We would rather lap up nice-to-hear platitudes than grapple with what God says in Scripture. The Bible is not undermining our worth. It is simply pointing out that we find our true worth in Christ alone. ...

When you’ve finally tucked the kids into bed and still have to load the dishwasher, it’s okay to recognize that you are not always gracious enough to respond kindly to a little voice that hollers, “I need water.” That’s when you and I have the beautifully freeing option of confessing, “Father, I just

American Decency Association

PO Box 202, Fremont, MI 49412 231-924-4050 www.americandecency.org
Encouraging Christians to guard their hearts May 2019

Moms, You Are Not Enough: The Freedom of Depending on God

by Susan Narjala



“Mama, you got this. You are enough.” My heart sank when I read the last lines in an article on a leading website for Christian mothers. My heart sank, because it was my article.

The article was intended to encourage moms in the trenches of raising little ones and overwhelmed by trying to do it all. When I saw the article online, though, I noticed that the last lines had been altered. The original, unedited version read, “Mama, you got this, because he has got you. You are enough, because he who is in you is enough.” The published article had left out God.

One message women, including Christian women,

have heard on repeat is these three words: “You are enough.” Christian authors and speakers have been incorporating this phrase in sermons meant to encourage women, especially moms, who are bogged down by guilt and plagued by self-doubt. ...

But what does the seemingly innocuous phrase really mean?

Am I Ever Enough?

“You are enough” is a well-intentioned way of saying, “Life is hard, but you got a handle on it, because you’re a fierce, independent woman.” When you forget your child’s kindergarten orientation (true story!) ... don’t beat yourself up, because being a mom is undeniably challenging. And don’t give up, because you are strong enough for motherhood — you can do this.

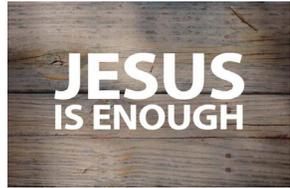
While that seems uplifting, as Christian women, we’re hearing less than the full truth. The message is slowly diluting the gospel. This may sound disenfranchising to women, but

you and I are not enough. No one is. The calling of motherhood — and of the Christian life — is a high and overwhelming calling for anyone. None of us is good enough, kind enough, right enough, or strong enough. And that’s why each of us so desperately need Jesus in the trenches every single day.

Your Never-Enoughness

The idea of being inadequate is unpopular in our earn-your-way-up culture. We would rather lap up nice-to-hear platitudes than grapple with what God says in Scripture. The Bible is not undermining our worth. It is simply pointing out that we find our true worth in Christ alone. ...

When you’ve finally tucked the kids into bed and still have to load the dishwasher, it’s okay to recognize that you are not always gracious enough to respond kindly to a little voice that hollers, “I need water.” That’s when you and I have the beautifully freeing option of confessing, “Father, I just



don't have what it takes. I need you." That may be all it comes down to: acknowledging our never-enoughness, so God has the chance to pour out from his endless reserves of grace.

God often lets us walk in paths that are far beyond our ability to endure. ... But in the midst of our exhaustion, when we whisper, "I can't — God please take over," that's when we can build our dependence on the one who won't ever let us down. When Paul and Timothy faced situations that were beyond their ability to endure, they learned to "rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead" (2 Corinthians 1:9).

Rejoicing in Weakness

Later in Corinthians, Paul speaks of his weakness. ... He seems to advertise it, revel in it, even boasts in it. He tells his readers that he rejoices in his weakness. Why? Because in Paul's weakness, Christ's strength is made perfect (2

Corinthians 12:9).

The Beatitudes also turn the world's definition of power on its head. Jesus calls the ones who are meek, the ones who mourn, the ones who are poor in spirit "blessed" (Matthew 5:5–11). When we hear the mantra that we are "enough" on repeat, we are likely to stop rejoicing in our weakness, we don't celebrate our poverty of spirit, we lessen our dependence on God. When I truly grasp that I'm not enough in my own strength, I don't try to dig deep into myself to pull out resources that are running on empty. Instead, I dig into the word of God and pull out promises I can lean on.

When I am overwhelmed, ... I remember that his divine power has given me everything needed for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3). When I feel isolated as a mom, buried under an avalanche of wet wipes, I rest in his promise that he has engraved me on the palms of his hands (Isaiah 49:16). And when I mess up as a mom, I don't just brush away my sin with self-glorifying platitudes. Neither do I beat myself up. Instead, I go to the one

who redeems my mistakes and gives me the grace to carry on (Psalm 103:12).

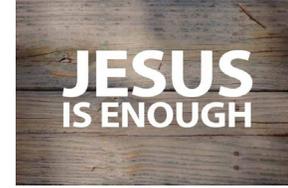
'You Are Enough' Is Not Enough

... "You are enough" puts the onus back on "you." It's a me-centric idea, where we're called to scrape out every last bit of our so-called inner strength. But pulling ourselves up by our bootstraps is not how we tend to our souls.

John Piper tells young mothers, "Constantly pray, pray, pray, pray for whatever you need. That is how you make your days an act of worship. And then there may not be in your mind such a huge gulf between tending to your child and tending to your soul." ... We look outside of ourselves to a God who wants to strengthen us and give us rest.

... The more liberating and empowering message we need to hear is this: Christ in you is more than enough. It's a message that doesn't hinge on self-reliance, but on God-dependence. It gives us room to discover that he is an all-sufficient God.

[Used with permission: <http://www.susannarjala.com/>]



don't have what it takes. I need you." That may be all it comes down to: acknowledging our never-enoughness, so God has the chance to pour out from his endless reserves of grace.

God often lets us walk in paths that are far beyond our ability to endure. ... But in the midst of our exhaustion, when we whisper, "I can't — God please take over," that's when we can build our dependence on the one who won't ever let us down. When Paul and Timothy faced situations that were beyond their ability to endure, they learned to "rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead" (2 Corinthians 1:9).

Rejoicing in Weakness

Later in Corinthians, Paul speaks of his weakness. ... He seems to advertise it, revel in it, even boasts in it. He tells his readers that he rejoices in his weakness. Why? Because in Paul's weakness, Christ's strength is made perfect (2

Corinthians 12:9).

The Beatitudes also turn the world's definition of power on its head. Jesus calls the ones who are meek, the ones who mourn, the ones who are poor in spirit "blessed" (Matthew 5:5–11). When we hear the mantra that we are "enough" on repeat, we are likely to stop rejoicing in our weakness, we don't celebrate our poverty of spirit, we lessen our dependence on God. When I truly grasp that I'm not enough in my own strength, I don't try to dig deep into myself to pull out resources that are running on empty. Instead, I dig into the word of God and pull out promises I can lean on.

When I am overwhelmed, ... I remember that his divine power has given me everything needed for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3). When I feel isolated as a mom, buried under an avalanche of wet wipes, I rest in his promise that he has engraved me on the palms of his hands (Isaiah 49:16). And when I mess up as a mom, I don't just brush away my sin with self-glorifying platitudes. Neither do I beat myself up. Instead, I go to the one

who redeems my mistakes and gives me the grace to carry on (Psalm 103:12).

'You Are Enough' Is Not Enough

... "You are enough" puts the onus back on "you." It's a me-centric idea, where we're called to scrape out every last bit of our so-called inner strength. But pulling ourselves up by our bootstraps is not how we tend to our souls.

John Piper tells young mothers, "Constantly pray, pray, pray, pray for whatever you need. That is how you make your days an act of worship. And then there may not be in your mind such a huge gulf between tending to your child and tending to your soul." ... We look outside of ourselves to a God who wants to strengthen us and give us rest.

... The more liberating and empowering message we need to hear is this: Christ in you is more than enough. It's a message that doesn't hinge on self-reliance, but on God-dependence. It gives us room to discover that he is an all-sufficient God.

[Used with permission: <http://www.susannarjala.com/>]