

CHRISTLIKE MOTHERING

I swept pretzels, cereal, popcorn, and chips into a pile.

“Nope. I didn’t eat any of these things,” I said as I brushed them into a dustpan.

My husband, sitting at the table, said quietly, “It’s the mother’s sacrifice.”

I straightened up. “What?” I asked.

He spoke louder and clearer between bites of breakfast: “It’s what mothers do. They spend their lives cleaning up messes that they had no hand in making—just like the Savior did.”

This observation was profound to me. I should have been pleased to consider that sweeping crumbs was more Christlike than I had thought. But instead, I felt a wave of guilt. I felt uncomfortable with the comparison. How many times had I mentioned to my spouse or simply to myself all the things I had done for my children, hoping for recognition and gratitude?

My husband, sitting at the table, said quietly, “It’s the mother’s sacrifice.”

It didn’t seem wrong to desire that my children be more grateful, but in that moment of clarity, I saw that my desire was more about *me* receiving praise or compensation than it was about them learning gratitude. But the Savior never required praise. He never asked for it or wanted it.

I can recall conversations with my teenage children when they would list all the things they had done for me in an attempt to get out of a work request.

I would usually reply, “Well, if you’d like to compare service lists, we can, but you’d lose, so get to work!”

I then realized my motives were rarely pure enough for the comparison my husband had made. The Savior never keeps a list to compare what He’s done to what I’ve done. I would lose every time.

With the broom still in my hand, I awoke to a new concept of mothering—mothering as *He* would. Not for

praise, recognition, a hug, or even a thank-you. I would sweep up crumbs with love because that is what He would do.

Everything He did was in obedience to His Father. It was never about Him. The Lord always mends the broken and cleans up our messes infinitely with perfect love, for His Father and for us. I will now strive to teach and serve my children with the purest love I can. Only then do I feel like I am truly participating in Christlike mothering. ■

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