

By Alex Larsen

I always knew I wanted to be a mother, but when I was growing up, it wasn't always on my mind. When my fiancé and I were engaged, one day I was talking with one of my college professors—a woman I greatly admired—about my engagement. She said something that brought my life choices into sharp focus. “You are wasting your talent,” she told me as she shook her head. She went on to say that someone as smart as I was should not get married young. She assumed I would have children in my future and would be “throwing away” my education and chances of a stellar career on my future motherhood. I could tell by the way she looked at me that she thought I was making a terrible and naïve mistake.

It's been several years since that conversation, and my husband and I have two little girls. Kate is three years old and is my little sweetheart. She moves through life at a leisurely pace, savoring all of the little details she notices. Annabel is one year old, with bright, blue eyes and a head of curls. She's exuberant and determined. Though I didn't change my mind because of what my professor said, our discussion has stayed with me. In one way my professor's predictions were correct: I do not have a prestigious working career. But my professor got the most important point wrong, because I have wasted nothing.

The world told me I would be giving up everything, but what I gained was worth so much more.



WHY
BEING A

ROCK

I love the opportunity to stay home and care for my young children, because these are the most formative years of their lives. I have the opportunity to create a rich home environment for my girls by reading and discussing things with them as part of our everyday life. Kate will often astound me by remembering and commenting on something we'd read in a book several weeks before, and

Annabel learns a new skill almost every day. But as fun and important as it is to watch them learn new information and skills, I feel the most satisfied when I see

their spirits growing and developing. I remember the first time Kate pointed to a picture of the Savior and said, "Jesus." I knew then that what I was doing was eternally significant in the lives of my children.

The world often tells us that life's rewards come in the form of status, money, or grand accomplishments, but I know there's great satisfaction even in the small acts of changing diapers or wiping sticky fingers. Every little thing I do as a mother is part of helping to build the kingdom of God by nurturing His children. I always knew I wanted children, but it was not until I held my first baby in my arms that I began to realize how much my heart was capable of loving.

The love I have for my daughters has helped me better understand how much my Heavenly Father loves all of His children. When speaking of little children, Jesus taught that "of such is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 19:14). More than anything, motherhood has helped me to grow as a daughter of God, because now I know what a daughter of God looks like from the eyes of a parent. The world makes us think that a woman loses herself in motherhood—she loses her body, her free time, and her career. But I have found myself in motherhood. I feel more beautiful and more valuable than ever before. **NE**

Alex Larsen lives in California, USA.

MOM KIS!

