

## JUDGMENT CALL

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### WE'RE TEACHING THIS

We all have opinions. And most of the time, we feel very strongly about those opinions. There are some things we just love. We love to talk about them and how much we love them. But more than that, there are things we love to hate. When it comes to talking about things we don't like, we could go on and on and on! The truth is, we love to judge things. We make judgment calls all the time, and not just about things like movies, or restaurants, or sports, or music. We judge other people, and we judge ourselves.

And the problem with making those kinds of judgments is that they typically end up being more hurtful than helpful. When it comes to looking at ourselves and others, our lens for judgment is flawed. But God can change all that! In this series we'll take a look at the way God calls us to look at the things and people around us. And when we apply His lens for judgment, we'll find that the way we see both ourselves and other people will be changed.

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### THINK ABOUT THIS

By Holly Crawshaw

I just got off the phone with my best friend since 7th grade. Her name is Megan\* and she is one of my favorite people on Earth. First, she makes a mean grilled cheese (I know you don't need a second after THAT, but) second, she is one of the most loyal people I know.

Between Megan and I, we have five kids ranging in age from 18 months to 13 years old. We're lucky to get a few texts out to each other a day. They usually look like this:

Me: Ezzy peed on the white rug. I need a new one.

Megan: I could use a few throw pillows.

Me: Home Goods?

Megan: Tuesday?

Me: Are we bringing the kids?

Megan: Do we have a choice?

Me: A girl can dream, right?

Ezzy is my two-year-old, by the way. And she's a human. Not a dog. And this is a real conversation Megan and I have had.

So when Megan called me—an actual phone call—at ten o'clock in the morning on a summer day, I knew something was wrong.

"Hey?" I answered. "What's up?"

"I just need someone to talk to," she said. "I feel so defeated. I feel like a failure."

I listened with my heart aching as Megan talked about how

tired and lonely she was. How *judged* she felt as a mother—by others, *and* by herself.

Her baby is teething and still nursing. She's trying to get her older kids ready to go back to school. She's carpooling them to practice, doctor's appointments, and friend's houses. Not to mention the laundry, grocery shopping, bill paying, baths, meal preparation, and cleaning. Oh, yeah, Megan wants to connect with her husband, too.

No one loves being a mom more than Megan. And I don't know anyone who is better at it. But today she felt like a failure. Because she was giving everyone every ounce of herself and it still didn't feel like *enough*. She didn't feel like she was *enough*.

I look at all she does for her family and I want to (and do, actually) say, "Hey, you're better than I am. I quit nursing about fifteen minutes into this whole parenting thing. The laundry piles in my house are massive safety hazards, and the last home-cooked meal my kids had was a cereal buffet."\*\*

And then suddenly, *I* don't feel like enough. I feel defeated. I feel like a failure.

Have you ever felt like that? Like Megan and I? Like, no matter how hard you try, something is always left undone? Like your best is never sufficient? Like you don't measure up to the standard?

Have you ever judged your parenting and given yourself a failing grade?

Having these types of thoughts in moments of weakness is one thing, but letting them take root in our hearts is another. If we convince ourselves that we aren't enough, we will push ourselves beyond healthy boundaries to compensate for what we perceive to be areas of deficiency. And there is no joy there. There is no hope in that way of thinking or living.

Because it leaves no room for grace. No room for Jesus.

I have a crazy idea. What if we believed what the Bible says about us is true? What if that defined us, and nothing and on one else?

We'd believe we are...

- Justified and redeemed (Romans 3:24)
- Accepted by Christ (Romans 15:7)
- Chosen, holy, and blameless before God (Ephesians 1:4)
- Forgiven (Ephesians 1:7)
- Righteous and holy (Ephesians 4:24)
- Made complete in Christ (Colossians 2:10)

I suck. Like, no, really. I am selfish and insecure and flakey and needy and my two-year-old pees on things.

But my fleshly weaknesses do not define me. My worth was eternally forged on the cross when Jesus exchanged His perfection for my filth.

On days when I feel like I'm doing a good job at life, and on days that I feel like I'm totally screwing everything up, my worth is the same. It never changes, and it never will.

You know how I know? **God chose me.** He chose me to be my kids' mother. He chose Megan to be her kids' mother. And if our kids needed another parent, God would have given them another parent.

God is *for you*...so be *for yourself*. You'll never get these days back, so fight for joy. Not only are your kids worth it, but so are you.

\*This is not accurate

\*\*This is 100% accurate

*For more from Holly Crawshaw or to connect to a wider community of parents, check out [www.parentcue.org](http://www.parentcue.org).*

## TRY THIS

When we parent out of personal deficiency, we are often the worst version of our parenting-selves. When we attempt to parent out of...

- Guilt
- One-upping other parents
- Fear
- Selfishness
- Disconnectedness

...well, none of those things will work out, either. It's the classic, "You can't pour into others if you're empty" scenario. Whatever is—or isn't—in your cup, you pour into you children. You probably don't want things like guilt, fear, or selfishness in your "cup," but you *especially* don't want those things in your kids' "cups."

So, what can we do to overcome the persistent burden of parent-guilt?

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- Get connected in a parenting community group.
  - Find at least 1 other parent-friend you can connect with regularly—even if it's just a few texts a week.
  - Listen to encouraging podcasts, sermons, or video-blogs from parents in a similar season of life, or even from parents who are down the road a bit— it's always good to hear you're not the only parent who feels like a failure.
  - Text yourself Scripture or encouraging quotes. Set reminders on your phone to read these throughout the day. Replacing lies with truth is key in transforming your mind.
  - Do something for yourself without feeling guilty. Time to and for yourself should be a priority so you can refuel and recharge.