

Holy Mashed Banana Gunk!

by Adriane Heins

On my family's way out of church last week, our pastor reminded me with a grin, "Changing diapers is holy work!" At least, I think that's the word he used. He might have also said "smelly."

As the mother of a 2-year-old, a 1-year-old, and a baby due in June, I've learned a bit about diaper blow-outs and mashed banana gunk stuck to the linoleum, about irrational toddler fears that panthers live in bathtub drains and about how long a mom can listen to a colicky infant scream before crying herself. (The correct answer, for the record, is eight hours per day for four months.)

Motherhood may not always feel like holy work that is good and right and pleasing to our Father in heaven. But I've also learned that the devil, the world and my sinful nature prey on those feelings, encouraging me to channel my first mother, Eve, in a refusal to be content with the blessings God has given me. They'd love me to despise my calling to serve as a Goldfish cracker vending machine and sport spit-up stains as a fashion accessory.

I've learned that we moms too easily glom on to the sin of discontentment. Spending more than 60 seconds on a mommy blog or social media turns me into a pro at shifting the focus away from where our Lord would place it — on my husband, children, home, neighbors and church — to why I deserve a week at the spa just for

fixing chicken fingers and macaroni for supper.

Thankfully, I've also learned that the Scriptures teach me a different truth: that my daughter and son and child yet unborn are a heritage, a reward — blessings graciously given. They are also tiny teachers, instructing me daily in how to curb my selfishness, tame my temper, increase my patience and even how and what to pray. They teach me to have empathy for women who want to be mothers and aren't, and sympathy for other moms who may be struggling; to better respect my own father and mother; and to repent for my own childlike tantrums against my heavenly Father.

I've learned that raising children — little minds and hearts and souls — is blessed work. It's work that, in many ways, is more rewarding and formative for me than it is for them, regardless of how it may feel or look ... or smell. My own faith is bolstered by my children's when, during family devotions, my 2-year-old asks to get her crucifix off the wall so that she can "hold her Jesus" and point out His owies to her brother, proclaiming cheerily to him, "Cheesus loves me! Cheesus loves you!"

Mundane? Ordinary? Routine? Motherhood is anything but. Yet although this holy work may look like spilled milk and footie pajamas, the little ones on the receiving end are teaching me to be "content with what [I] have" (HEB. 13:5) each day, every day, all day. **LW**

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