Dear Parents,

Have you ever had one of those days when you just barely make it out the door? House is a wreck, you haven’t had a shower today and the kids are already fighting. Your parenting self-esteem has already taken a hit when you run into that family. You know the one: they look like they just stepped out of the pages of a magazine, kids are behaving perfectly and mom has brought homemade goodies for the kids to share. How do they do it? Why can’t we do that? Why can’t our child excel like theirs? Sometimes you feel like a parenting what-not-to-do.

It is completely normal to compare ourselves and our kids to others. Unfortunately, we often can pick out our own faults and flaws and they seem to be amplified next to those “perfect people”. The truth is that no parent and no child are perfect. Even those seemingly perfect families have their own problems, too. So what can we do when we catch ourselves falling into the comparison trap?

Remember that milestone development is relative. Of course you want to make sure that your child’s development is on track, but obsessing over it is not helpful. Don’t let others set the standard for where your child should be. Talk with your child’s pediatrician. If they are comfortable with how your child is growing, you should be too. If you don’t trust your pediatrician, you need to find a new doctor.

Don’t turn parenting into a competition. Being a parent is hard, even on a good day. Why make it even harder by setting unrealistic expectations on yourself and especially on your child? Every family has their own set of issues that they struggle with every day; some just hide it better than others! You never know what someone else may be dealing with behind closed doors.

Realize that comparison can steal your joy. Why purposely invite any sort of conflict into your life? We should be striving to be joyful and to find joy every day. Comparisons can lead to envy and jealousy. Proverbs 14:30 states “A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones.” Find parent friends who are supportive rather than competitive and be that friend to others.

Be able to admit and own weaknesses, and at the same time recognize and utilize strengths. What is your child good at? Celebrate that and let them know that you are proud of them. Help them to find activities and projects that interest them and that they enjoy. Your child is a unique individual who has things they are good at…do you know what they are, or are you too focused on what they cannot do? Apply this to yourself as a parent as well. You may not be the best goodie-baker, but you tell the best stories.

Take a good look at your child. Are they happy, healthy, safe and loved? Congratulations, you are a good parent! Ultimately, these are the things that are important. Enjoy your children for who God created them to be and appreciate the job you have been blessed with as their parent.

Take some time and check out this video to see how we can deal with those moments we feel like we don’t measure up. You will also receive some tools to help you when you are playing the comparison game.

Here is the link to the video: <https://vimeo.com/parentministry/review/90162336/2b9dba9f43>

Building Young Disciples,

Pastor Sarah