**To all the moms and dads out there feeling a little trapped:**

Such feelings of entrapment may smother your joy or even challenge your faith, but know that your efforts matter. Know that everything you do for and with your children matters significantly. Nothing is more important than raising your children to know the Lord. Each moment, whether making play dough, cleaning up another mess, or dealing with a belligerent child, is an opportunity to point your children to Christ and to an understanding of their need for Him.

Does this sound daunting? It is. But, know that God doesn’t leave you on your own. When they are sleeping, it seems easy to start fresh, to be intentional about loving them well, about disciplining them in love and then they wake up…. How is it that things fall apart before breakfast is even finished? It is just as easy when they are sleeping to be intentional about being humble and repenting when we fall short. Do your kids know of your struggles only when you yell, or do they see you take your struggles to the Lord? Know that when your children wake up, God promises to walk with you every step of the way (Psalm 23).

Smile. Let your children know that God’s face shines upon you (Numbers 6:25). Reflect His glory. Go outside. Let your children know that His creation declares His glory (Psalm 19:1). Experience His world and let the joy of His creation lift your soul.

When you feel trapped and isolated, remember that Jesus sympathizes with us in our weaknesses (Hebrews 4:15). Jesus did not consider equality with God something to cling to but took up the humble position as a human (Phil. 2:6), spending 9 months in the womb. Think of that, the omnipresent God of the universe confined himself to a gurgling mass of amniotic fluid for us, for the sake of His children.

He gave up His freedom for us in obedience to God. Know that there is fellowship in suffering with Christ. Cry out to Him, and know that He hears. Thank Him. Know that every time you think you can’t do this parenting thing for a minute longer, thank Him that not only did He confine himself to a womb, but the He also confined Himself to the cross for His children. That’s you. That’s your child. That’s sacrificial love. When you think you’re going crazy, don’t take it out on your children, examine your relationship with God. Surrender yourself to your loving heavenly Father.

Pray with your kids. Help them experience the reality of Christ sharing their struggles with them. Let your children know that the Lord lives. Exalt Him as you care for your children today.