



SINGLE PARENT

RAISING CHILDREN
ALONE




HomeLife

Building your family's faith at home

— **Guides** —

RAISING CHILDREN ALONE

 *One of life's greatest blessings and sources of joy is being called somebody's parent. But if you find yourself raising children alone, you know better than anyone else that parenting is a job meant for two. That's why Dr. James Dobson calls single parenting "the toughest job in the universe." Few understand the loneliness and emotional hurt many single parents carry or how exhausting the role can be.*

So, how can you be hopeful and experience joyful success as a parent despite more challenging circumstances?

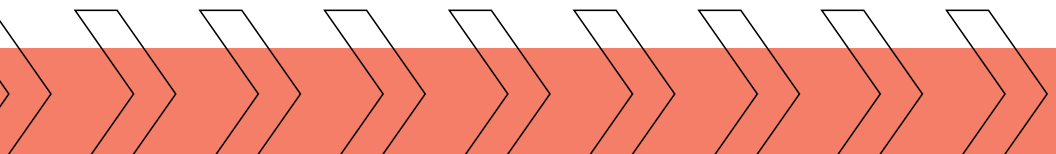
PRIORITY 1

Keep Your Child's Best in Mind

Every parent is called to lay aside his or her own interests for the children. That calling takes extra commitment when you're going at it alone. You may still be working through the painful circumstances that led to becoming a solo parent or dealing with an ex-spouse who is a negative influence on the children.

Regardless of the emotions your specific circumstances may be causing, you are called to place your children's needs above your own. Give them as much stability and nurturing as possible within your limitations – even though they may not seem to appreciate the sacrifice you're making. Be assured, the Lord receives your selfless care as an act of worship to Him because it reflects the spirit of Christ who "made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant" (Philippians 2:7, NIV).

Being a servant includes doing your best to maintain a Christlike attitude when you are navigating legal decisions, sharing custody or seeing your ex with a new romantic interest. Putting your children first is also a priority if you don't have custody – if you are limited to small windows of time together. Those times are your opportunity to show



love and influence and not to get caught up in disagreements over parenting differences. In your visitation, in your support, and all other connections, your first priority is serving the needs of your children.

PRIORITY 2

Choose Good Relationships

Few people understand the load you carry. You're likely to be under stress with extra work and the constant demands of parenting. You know how your loneliness and desire to be loved can lead you toward relationships with the opposite sex that may be harmful, only adding to the uncertainty and anxiety. If you are not ready to marry, be very cautious about dating during this season of life. You want healthy Christian friendships that can help you face this emotional maze and make wise decisions through it all. You need to be a part of a community of believers committed to forgiveness, redemption and growth. Your children also need the support and modeling of other Christians to give them a vision for their own future home. Pray that God would bring other families into your children's lives to be a part of family meals, holiday events, etc. Others may not know how to help your family best, so give them the opportunity to be and receive a blessing by asking for their help.

PRIORITY 3

Become Intentional

God can make your next chapter better than the last. Be careful not to see yourself as a "second class" parent. Raising children alone is harder, but the goal is the same for you as it is for two parent families – to nurture Christian faith and values in your children. That means becoming intentional about building a strong relationship, modeling Godly character, and creating occasions for meaningful interaction about life's most important truths. Remember, it is no accident that God gave you the blessing of children. He also is eager to give you the grace to be the parent they need.

Going Further Resources

Successful Single Parenting by Gary Richmond, a single-parent pastor // Provides practical help and biblical principles for balancing your needs with those of your children

Help and Hope for the Single Parent by Dr. Tony Evans // Offers you an encouraging reminder that you are not alone! God can – and will – help you live a satisfying life and succeed in parenting.

Single Parenting that Works: Six Keys to Raising Happy, Healthy Children in a Single-Parent Home by Dr. Kevin Leman // Shows parents how to develop their children's self-esteem, and how to discipline and relate to their kids in accordance with their unique God-given personalities

Going Further Prestonwood Support

Single & Parenting LifeGroup

Prestonwood offers a LifeGroup Bible Study and other activities for non-married adults. Consult the Group Finder at prestonwood.org/groups or pick up LifeGroup information at the Information Wall.

DivorceCare

Most people who have been through a separation or divorce will tell you that these are incredibly painful and stressful experiences. DivorceCare helps you face these challenges and move toward rebuilding your life. (The workbook is available for purchase in the Prestonwood Bookstore.) Visit prestonwood.org/liferecovery for more information.

For additional resources, scan code:



Dr. Jack Graham, Senior Pastor
972-820-5000 | prestonwood.org/homelife