

# S.I.L.L.Y.



S I S T E R S I N T H E L O R D W I T H L O T S O F Y O U N G ' U N S

## Help!



I came in late from chores this morning, only to find that my 22-month-old had stuffed a ripe banana into my printer. There's nothing in the "Help" menu that tells you how to fix that.

I read a lot of books on parenting. Many of them make me feel guilty, inadequate and frustrated. Often, the authors have two, or perhaps three, well-spaced, compliant children. Like the "Help" menu on my computer, what they have to say just doesn't apply to my situation! I want someone to tell me what to do when I wake up and find myself with six children, ages eight and under, thinking, "Somewhere along the way, I got behind!" I can barely keep my head above the piles of laundry and dishes, and I'm supposed to be Raising my Kids God's Way, Shepherding their Hearts, Teaching them the Charlotte Mason Way, Daring to Discipline, and Saying Good-bye to Whining, Complaining and Bad Attitudes, so I can Have a New Kid by Friday! (But at least I don't have Twenty and Counting....) I write this tongue-in-cheek, because I know some of you are like me, thinking "If I can just read the right book, just implement the right system, THEN everything will be perfect." (For those of you who don't frantically read parenting books, those are all titles).

A typical scenario for me goes something like this: My three-year old, bless her heart, has a way of trying my patience like nothing I've ever encountered. I've never had one of those veins that stick out of a person's forehead and pulsate in times of stress, but I think I'm going to get one before she reaches adulthood. She'll do something that I know needs correction and discipline, but simultaneously, the baby starts crying, the phone rings, the oven timer goes off, and someone falls off a chair backwards. I'm not really exaggerating. My days are like this. So, now what? All too often, her behavior problem gets lost in the shuffle. How do I intentionally parent when it feels like I'm just reacting to a string of major and minor crises all day long?

If you are reading this and identifying with me, you may as well stop waiting for me to reveal the brilliant solution to this problem. I don't have it. I am praying and plugging along, because I don't know what else to do. What I find myself asking is, *does that work?* I am desperately afraid of messing this up. My husband tells me helpful things, like, "God gave you these kids because He knows you can do it!" However, it's obvious to me, as I look around the world, that God allows many people to have children who *aren't* doing a good job of raising them. (In spite of good intentions, in many cases). How do I know I'm not one of them?

This would be the time for any of you older sisters to write in and tell me a great story, like "I felt just the same as you when my kids were small, and now all nine of them are saved, happy and prosperous!" Anyone? Anyone? Sigh....

**"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy,  
and find grace to HELP in time of need." Hebrews 4:16**

It all comes down to a question of faith. Do I choose to take God at His Word? Will I believe that I am on God's "Help" menu, and that He offers me the grace I need to HELP me parent these children? Will I remember to do the most important thing I can, when I'm dealing with my daily crises? Pray.....and keep plugging along, knowing that HELP is on the way!

## WALKING IN THE SAND

I grew up mere minutes from sand dunes near Lake Michigan. I have some fond memories of climbing sandy hills and sliding down the other side. I also have some not-so-fond memories of having sand embedded in my clothing, but that's not what I'm writing about today.



Kierra Skiles

*I recently read  
"Finding the Hero  
in Your  
Husband" by Dr  
Julianne Slattery.  
I found it very  
practical and  
encouraging.  
~Sister Sarah  
Skiles*

When you climb a sand dune it is a rigorous process. For every step you take you slide back a half step. It can feel distinctly like you aren't making any progress at all. Your leg muscles burn and your breath fails you and you gaze toward the top of the hill with the sun in your eyes thinking--"I'll never make it."

Not really that much different than parenting is it? Some days you feel like no progress has been made.

You tell the eight year old that only HE can choose to have a good attitude--only to hear him huff under his breath.

You remind the six year old that obeying mom is what he must do first--only to have him once again debate what you have asked him to do.

You remove the almost two year old from a no-no spot for the millionth time--only to have him happily return.

You can't accomplish any laundry because the baby is mysteriously fussy, and nothing will calm him, but being held **CONSTANTLY** by you and you alone.

Your heart aches and your patience fails you as you look up and think--"I'll never make it."

But wait--there is a strategy to climbing sand dunes that also applies to parenting. You need to look back to see how far you have come. You can see your straggling footprints trailing up the sandy hill, and suddenly you have courage.

**"I've come this far--I can keep going."**

~Sister Rebecca Miller



## HE IS YOURS, GOD

Fourteen years ago, I heard my mother tell about the day my nephew had a serious side effect from his immunization shot and stopped breathing. As Mom drove them to the hospital, my sister held her baby on her lap and prayed over his little purple face. She said, "Lord, this baby is not mine. He is yours. And if You are ready to take him, that's okay." I thought to myself at the time, "I don't think I could ever say that."

I married my husband several years later. With a love for him that was passionate and strong, I thought again about my sister's prayer and knew if Ryan was the one at the point of death, I could not say that. I gave birth to two beautiful daughters and held them tightly during their nighttime feedings and knew I could not say that about them either. They were just too precious.

Then I became pregnant with our third child and was told that there were serious complications. I was sent to a larger hospital, halfway across the state from my husband and daughters. I spent days with no one and nothing but God and His Word to sustain me. I didn't know it yet, but God was preparing me for more difficulty.

Noah was born two months too soon. He and I were in and out of the hospital off and on over a period of three months as Noah spent his first weeks in NICU and then kept contracting serious viruses, dangerous to a preemie baby. Three times I thought we would lose him.

The first time, I was carrying him down the sidewalk as our little family ventured out of the house for the first time since Noah came home. He was already a month old, and wore a heart monitor at all times. His alarm went off and we realized he had stopped breathing. We tried to stimulate him and couldn't get him to respond. Ryan administered CPR right there on the sidewalk while I called for help. Noah finally took a breath after 3 or 4 agonizingly long minutes. By then, support had arrived. But before that, seeing my little baby on the sidewalk, gray and still, I had to say, "God, he is yours, not mine. If You choose to take him, that's okay." Noah had contracted a virus; we never found out what type. He stopped breathing because a preemie is not quite developed enough to remember to breathe when his body is working hard on doing something else, like fighting an illness.

The second time I thought we would lose him, Noah became ill with RSV, despite our best efforts at keeping our home a sterile environment. Ryan and I could tell our son was getting sick and we headed out on the hour drive to the doctor. Only minutes after we left, Noah's condition deteriorated. He could not get a full breath in his car seat with his chin resting on his little chest, so I held him in my arms. As he lost more and more color, I knew he could go to heaven as easily as he could stay with me. And I had to say again, "God, You can take him. It's okay."

In the hospital, Noah was put in the children's intensive care unit and hooked up to a Si-pap machine to help him breathe. He was sick for so many days without noticeable improvement that I began to fear he would never get better. And for the third time, I had to say, "God this child is Yours. I love him desperately, but if You have to take him, I know You love him and You love me. It's okay." Then, like Abraham, when he was completely and totally willing to give up his son, Isaac, God gave Noah back to us.

It has been a difficult year so far for us, but God is good. I say He is good, but not because Noah is now a strong and healthy five month old. God is good because He forced me to look at my heart and discern whether or not I could still trust Him even if He took my baby away, or my husband, or my daughters, or anyone or anything else that I hold close to my heart. I made the choice to trust God with Noah three times. I pray that I will always make the right choice. Because God is trustworthy and He is enough.

*"He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me."*

*Matthew 10:37*

~Sister Erin Inman



Noah Inman

## PEACH-PEAR FREEZER JAM

1 1/2 c. diced pears

1 1/2 c. diced peaches

Crush & measure to 3 c. Stir in 2 Tbs. lemon juice & 5 c. sugar. Let set for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally.

In a small saucepan, bring 3/4 c. water & 1 box Sure-Jell to a boil & boil for 1 minute, stirring constantly. Pour into jam mixture; stir 2-3 minutes. Pour into containers. Let set 24 hours. Freeze.



Grubby Jamison children in the garden! (mine, so I can say they're grubby)



"Gardening requires lots of water—most of it in the form of perspiration!"

~ Lou Erickson

## MIXED BERRY FREEZER JAM

1 1/2 c. crushed strawberries

1/2 c. crushed blueberries

1/2 c. crushed raspberries

4 1/2 c. sugar

3/4 c. water

1 box Sure-Jell pectin

Mix fruit and sugar until well blended.

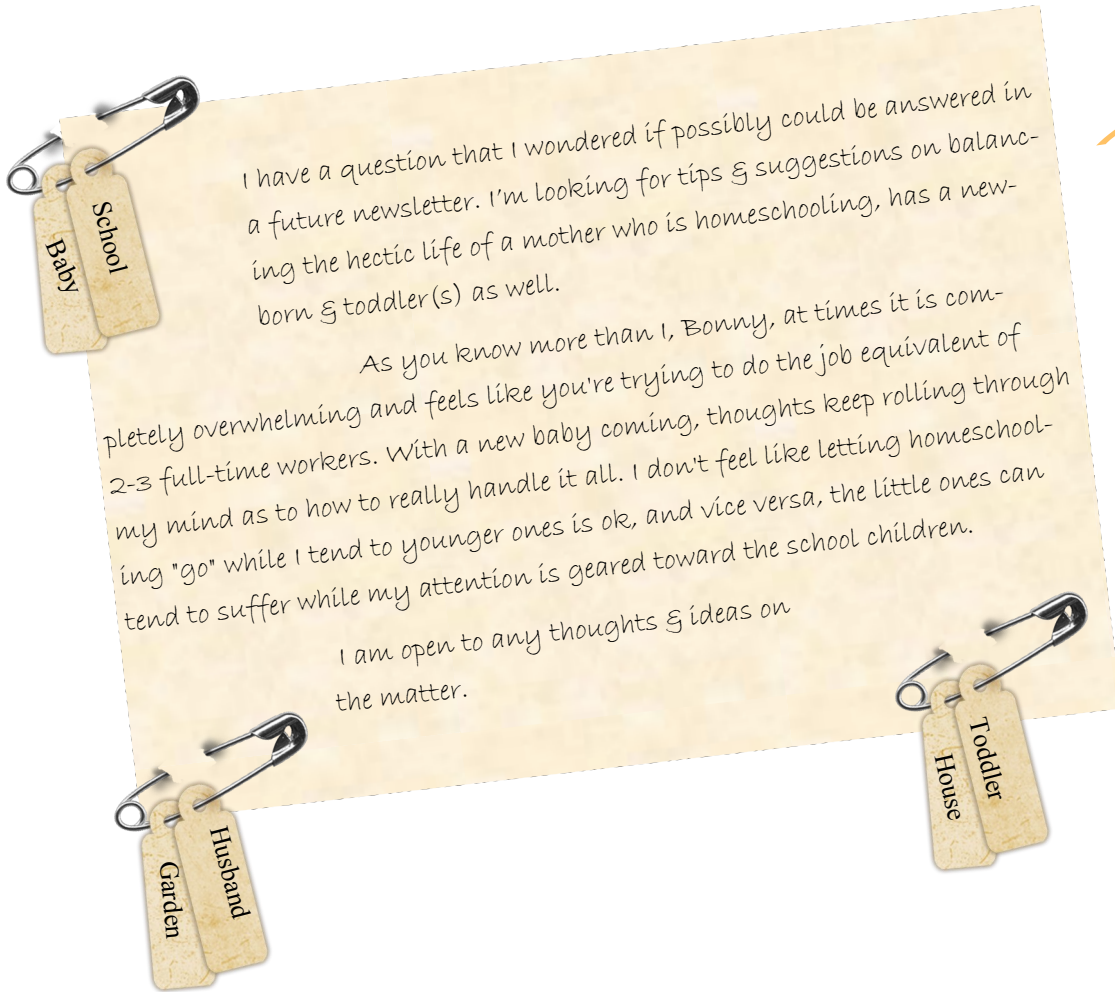
Let stand 10 minutes, stirring occasionally.

In a small saucepan, combine water and pectin; bring to a boil. Boil and stir for 1 minute. Add to fruit mixture; stir 2-3 minutes or until sugar is dissolved. Pour into containers. Let stand at room temperature 24 hours. Freeze.

**TIP (AND ABOVE RECIPES) FROM SISTER CARA LORENZ**

On another "canning/freezing" note, when you're in the midst of this abundant season filled with so many fruits, try making some different "sauces" for your family. Our children enjoy applesauce, but really prefer pear sauce or peach sauce. I asked them this year if they want me to do more applesauce or stick with mainly pear sauce and they unanimously voted for pear sauce :) For pear sauce, I make it just the same as applesauce... coring & peeling the pears, cooking with a little water until tender. Then I run them through the blender and add sweetener to taste. For peach sauce, I cook equal amounts of peaches & apples together and then blend and sweeten. It's fun to have a variety of sauces to choose from during the winter months :)

## Reader Question



*"Any child can tell you that the sole purpose of a middle name is so he can tell when he's in trouble." - Dennis Fakes*

Wow! I can't wait to hear your answers to this reader's question! As you can tell by my article, I am in exactly the same place in life as the woman who wrote this note. I really feel her pain. I have been sure, at times, that my younger ones would turn out to be underdeveloped, speech impaired, and have flat heads, because I simply don't have enough hours in my day. So far, they seem to be turning out okay, but still.....I look forward to any suggestions you have, and will print them in the next issue of S.I.L.L.Y.

The way toilet paper is dispensed at our house.



## S.I.L.L.Y.

Dear Sisters,

It is late as I sit and type this, but I feel good, knowing that it will go out. When I have been faithful to do this thing that God has called me to, He has been faithful to me in richly repaying any small sacrifice I make in producing this newsletter. It is short this time, to make up for extra-long last time! Due to time constraints as we prepare for our trip to Washington, I couldn't wait any longer for material. If you were preparing something, send it in anyway! I will try to put out another newsletter in November, a Holiday issue. Please pray for Brant and I, and our family, as we set out on this trek, for patience, safety and good health, and that the kids will remember only the good parts!

Love in the Lord,

Sister Bonny Jamison

August 23

(Written as though God is talking to us)

Entrust your loved ones to Me; release them into My protective care. They are much safer with Me than in your clinging hands. If you let a loved one become an idol in your heart, you endanger that one - as well as yourself. Remember the extreme measures I used with Abraham and Isaac. I took Isaac to the very point of death to free Abraham from son-worship. Both Abraham and Isaac suffered terribly because of the father's undisciplined emotions.

I detest idolatry, even in the form of parental love.

When you release loved ones to Me, you are free to cling to My hand. As you entrust others into My care, I am free to shower blessings on them. My Presence will go with them wherever they go, and I will give them rest. This same Presence stays with you, as you relax and place your trust in Me. Watch to see what I will do.

~Taken from "Jesus Calling" a devotional by Sarah Young, suggested by Sister Erin Inman, to follow her article about Noah.