

ADHD Devotional 6: I Want All of You

Many of you probably have at least heard of the popular TV show, "This is Us." Well, I recently jumped on the bandwagon about 2 months ago and started watching it on Hulu. The latest episode that I watched touched me deeply and honestly, and abruptly brought me to instant mama tears.

Without ruining the show for any of you that have not watched it, I will keep the details at a minimum. Basically, the father of one of the main characters had an "ah ha" moment when he realized that his son was hiding his academic giftedness in an effort to fit in with his siblings. He sat down with this little boy and asked him to figure out complex math problems. The little boy denied knowing the answers and hung his head down, saying he did not know, mumbling a deliberate wrong answer.

His father pressed him further and almost brought the little boy to tears, finally achieving his goal of getting the correct answer to a very complex math problem in a much shorter period of time that would be expected for his age. The father then looked at the son and said, "You are gifted and know these answers, why are you pretending you don't?" The young boy replied, "I know my siblings will make fun of me and I won't fit in. I don't want to get ice cream for my good grades when they don't." The father then said, "I want you to be all you can be. I have tried to make sure that you and your siblings have been given everything equally...but the truth is that you are not all the same. You have a gift and I want to help you use that. You are special. I want you to be your best and I want all of you."

Tears rolled down my cheeks and thought of my oldest son with ADHD and what it looks like to embrace all of him...high frustration level, insult hurls, backtalk, true inability to complete school projects on his own, sloppy handwriting, disdain for reading and writing...all of him. As frustrating as all of these parts of him are, he also has amazing gifts that are truly unique. Supporting him so that he has the opportunity to shine in such things as math, baseball, and memorization of facts takes an extra bit of fight for my son that often goes against the standard and typical way of looking at learning.

In the same way that I thought about my reaching out to my son, I thought of our Heavenly Father reaching out to me as a mother, a mother who is imperfect, one who tries, but often fails...and I thought about the times I have held back in my parenting potential due to doubt and comparison to other moms around me, those who do not have children with ADHD and/or other such challenges that make the school experience much different. I thought about the unique opportunity I have to be a voice, not only for my child with ADHD, but for all children with ADHD who are told that they need to fit in, they need to look like everyone else in our education system. I want to let God use all of me so that I can allow my son to be fully who God made him to be and to stand firm in that.

Our Heavenly Father wants all of us. He wants our hurts, our fears, our struggles, our hopes, our disappointments, our creativity, our gifts, our successes, our failures, our great ideas, our terrible ideas, our laughter and our tears. He doesn't want us to hold back in what we know is best for our children, as we look to him for that guidance. He wants all of our children too. He calls us to teach our children in the way they should go so that when they are older they will not turn from it. (Proverbs 22:6) He also challenges, "These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates." (Deuteronomy 6: 6-9)

The only way to be fully who God wants us to be and then model that for our children is to be so connected to God through His Word that we can recognize even the slightest shift in the direction that the Holy Spirit is leading us. He speaks to our hearts, He hears our cries for mercy in the middle of those projects with our children with ADHD, he is always present and always leading us. He speaks to us in His training manual, His Holy Word.

Heavenly Father, Help us to recognize how vital it is that we allow you to have all of us. May we be better prepared to help our kids recognize your desire to have all of each of them too. Help us to surrender our all to you, so that the insecurities that tempt both us and our kids to “just fit in with everyone else” are erased and we can all fully be who you have created us to be. Amen.