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THE HERALD

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From Where Does Your Mom-Strength Come?

By Karen Katulka

The other day I saw a video of a woman who looked to be nine months pregnant dead-lifting heavy weights and running up and down hills without tumbling over (like I would).

Clearly she stayed fiercely dedicated to exercising throughout her entire pregnancy. I had to laugh, because currently at seven months pregnant with my fourth child, I can assure you that woman was not me. Simply climbing the steps to the top floor of my house has me gasping for air like someone who's changed altitudes while climbing Mt. Everest.

The video does make you wonder — is that hurdle-leaping mom stronger than other moms? Perhaps she is physically, but certainly her muscular ability is not the criteria for what makes moms strong. The strength of the strongest moms I know

goes way beyond and way deeper than how active one is in the gym. (Phew!)

In fact, what mom-strength looks like is entirely different from family to family. Yet, if I've seen anything over the years, it's that the strongest moms, no matter what their circumstances, share the same three godly characteristics: Faithfulness, Perseverance, and Hope.

Faithfulness to mother when you don't feel like it. How many moms out there have days when they want to secretly Uber to the airport and hop on the next plane to Mexico? How many moms want to phone it in after hearing the painstaking crunch of dry Cheerios underfoot even though you asked your child to clean them up a hundred times? How many moms have a full-time job or struggling bank accounts that make it seem impossible to keep all the balls up in the air? Faithfulness is recognizing that raising children at times can be a thankless grind, yet still believing it's an honor to mother your children by not giving up.

Perseverance when it's really hard. I can immediately think of 10 moms who are persevering through very difficult

circumstances with their children. Like one mom whose son is undergoing chemo for 60 weeks. Or one whose daughter suffered a metabolic crisis and was told she would be a vegetable, yet the now thriving 4-year-old continues to prove the world wrong by overcoming enormous obstacles. Or one whose children's father died and she's trying to help them move forward through heartache. Or one who is struggling through infertility after having no trouble getting pregnant with her first. Or one whose daughter's special needs have kept her advocating for her at every single step, assuring she not be left behind. Or one whose number of miscarriages far outweigh the number of children in her home. Or another strong mama who lost her baby boy after only seeing him face to face for 30 minutes, yet she continues to praise the Lord for his life.

Not one of these strong mamas ran from her circumstances. In fact, each one pushed forward, relying on the Lord in the midst of her heartache and challenge. The pain of her reality is ever-present, yet she perseveres.

Hope in something greater than herself. Another godly characteristic of a strong mom is her ability to have hope. The kind of hope found in Romans 8:18 that says, "Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory He will reveal to us later." She holds onto a necessary hope in Christ, knowing she is not walking the walk alone and one day there will be peace.

When I think of strong moms, I'm

reminded of Naomi in the book of Ruth. Her circumstances were grim. She lost her husband, the father of her children. Then she lost her two sons. She urged her daughters-in-law to go back to their families because her own bitterness was too great. She walked honestly through a time of great loss and sorrow. Yet, in time, God began to redeem her life through her daughter-in-law Ruth. Naomi persevered through her pain.

I'm reminded of Sarah when she laughed at being pregnant at 90 YEARS OLD. She remained faithful even when it seemed impossible.

I'm reminded of Mary, who had to accept that her Son, Jesus, was not really her own. That God's plan was far greater than anything she could ever take responsibility for. She had to let go of her own plan and have hope in One far greater than herself.

This Mother's Day, mamas, my prayer is that we would all start to see one another the way God sees us—as strong moms. Whether you're benching 100 pounds or sweeping up Cheerios or anxiously awaiting your adoptive baby to arrive or praying the tumor goes away or wiping away tears from a lost child, this Mother's Day, may Christ's strength be the endless well from which you draw.

You have not accidentally been given the wrong circumstances. You have been entrusted by a loving God with the child or children you have been given—and your role is to be their mom. May you find deep strength in believing that.

New Developments at OGBC

Pastor Joshua

This spring there have been and will continue to be some exciting new developments happening at our church. Autumn Miller has been helping us in the office one day a week for the past couple of weeks. I personally am thankful for the work that she has been completing and will continue to accomplish. Serving in this way puts her in a great position to learn more about our church and connect with all of you. We don't know for sure how long Josh and Autumn will be here with us, before God takes them to the other side of the world, but with the time that we do have, I trust all of us will connect well with them and assist them as they prepare to serve God abroad.

This year we are going to be trying a new outreach – “Sunday in the Park.” On June 10th we will be having our yearly church picnic. But this year we are seeking to make it more of an outreach. We have reserved the Rehm Gazebo and plan to hold our service there at 10am. Ashleigh Kuhns is working on designing mailers and

posters that we will distribute in our community. Begin praying with us now that God will send us some new faces that do not have a church home. This will also provide a good opportunity for you to invite family, friends, and co-workers to come to a church service outside of a traditional building. After the service we will have a picnic lunch together and then spend the rest of the afternoon fellowshiping and playing games.

This summer we are planning on offering the Alpha Class during the Sunday School hour. This class covers all the specifics of our statement of faith. It is a great opportunity to learn what we believe based on God's unchanging Word. If you are interested in attending, please talk to one of the elders.

Then in September we will be offering a marriage class for couples. Michael and Judy will be facilitating that class as we watch speakers from Family Life's “Love Like You Mean It Cruise.” It is our goal to have as many couples involved in this class. Marriage is an incredible gift from God; but it also takes a lot of work. None of us have arrived, and I personally know that Joy and I will benefit from the class. Make plans now to attend.

FUNNIES

Alice Grayson was to bake a cake for the Church Ladies' Group in Tuscaloosa, but forgot to do it until the last minute. She remembered it the morning of the bake sale and after rummaging through cabinets, found an angel food cake mix & quickly made it while drying her hair, dressing, and helping her son pack up for Scout camp.

When she took the cake from the oven, the center had dropped flat and the cake was horribly disfigured and she exclaimed, "Oh dear, there is not time to bake another cake!" This cake was important to Alice because she did so want to fit in at her new church, and in her new community of friends. So, being inventive, she looked around the house for something to build up the center of The cake. She found it in the bathroom - a roll of toilet paper. She plunked it in and then covered it with icing. Not only did the finished product look beautiful, it looked perfect.

And, before she left the house to drop the cake by the church and head for work, Alice woke her daughter and gave her some money and specific instructions to be at the bake sale the moment it opened at 9:30 and to buy the cake and bring it home.

When the daughter arrived at the sale, she found the attractive, perfect cake had

already been sold. Amanda grabbed her cell phone and called her mom. Alice was horrified-she was beside herself! Everyone would know! What would they think? She would be ostracized, talked about, ridiculed! All night, Alice lay awake in bed thinking about people pointing fingers at her and talking about her behind her back.

The next day, Alice promised herself she would try not to think about the cake and would attend the fancy luncheon/bridal shower at the home of a fellow church member and try to have a good time. She did not really want to attend because the hostess was a snob who, more than once, had looked down her nose at the fact that Alice was a single parent and not from the founding families of Tuscaloosa. But, having already RSVP'd, she couldn't think of a believable excuse to stay home.

The meal was elegant, the company was definitely "upper crust, old south" and to Alice 's horror, the cake in question was presented for dessert! Alice felt the blood drain from her body when she saw the cake! She started out of her chair to tell the hostess all about it, but before she could get to her feet, the Mayor's wife said, "what a beautiful cake!"

Alice, still stunned, sat back in her chair when she heard the hostess (who was a prominent church member) say, "Thank you, I baked it myself.."