



SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST® CHURCH

CENTRAL JAMAICA CONFERENCE

DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY MINISTRIES & COUNSELING SERVICES

***SINGLE* PARENTING**



November is *Parent Month!*
***** Let's make it extra-special *****

In God's plan, mother and father are to produce and raise children in a happy, healthy, and holy environment. Many children, however, have been raised in single parent homes; and we must lift our hats to those parents who have done their best in raising their children successfully in this less-than-ideal situation. Many are single parents by choice, while others have had the situation thrust upon them. Successfully navigating this journey, especially in our time, will require a superb support system, heightened vigilance, and the grace of God in proportions beyond the ordinary.

Statistics reveal that single parenting is most prevalent in the western world. While China, Nigeria, and India report 3%, 4%, and 5% single parenting homes respectively, the USA has 23% of their households being single-parented. And in Jamaica, it was estimated that 47% of our homes are single-parent homes, led by biological mothers (*The jfa Human Rights Journal*, Jan 30, 2021).

Against such background, the church, especially in Jamaica, has a major responsibility to educate and support single parents – these icons of strength who must settle in their minds that giving up cannot be an option, that getting it wrong is not affordable, and that getting it right is never a simple walk in the park.

No matter the role or place a father occupies in the family, whether a stay-at-home father, bread-winning father, resident or nonresident father, or stepfather, he has an important role to play in the psychological, spiritual, emotional, and physical development of his child (*Adventist Review*, June 1, 2016). Whenever one parent is taken away from the family, it inevitably brings added pressure upon the other parent, as the latter makes the bold effort to compensate for the void created.

A carefully selected support system is of paramount importance in a single parent home. Caring for a child financially, educationally, and spiritually can be very demanding; and without help, the other important aspects might be neglected or might overwhelm a single parent. Not all who present themselves as support, however, will be suitable to bring the desired influence upon the formation of your child's character. Single parents then, must be deliberate and vigilant in selecting and observing those who help in the training of their children.

Vigilance is a key factor in the job of a single parent and parents in general. "The earlier in life one contracts hurtful habits, the more firmly will they hold their victim in slavery, and the more certainly will they lower his standard of spirituality" (*Child Guidance*, p.199). When parents get things right from the beginning, the task becomes more manageable as they progress in training their children. Only with vigilance will this happen. A system must be adopted which ensures a full knowledge of the child's activities, being aware of the child's trends and friends, and discerning his intonations and his inclinations. Vigilance and a carefully selected support system will go a far way in aiding the single parent on the journey to successful parenting.

In this vicious, chaotic, and deceptive world, we see many single parents crumbling under the various pressures which come to bear upon their role of training their children. One can get lost in a world where even with vigilance and a good support system, there is no guarantee of success in training a child. Single parents, you can find hope in the abundance of God's grace.

Consider Hagar, when isolated in the wilderness with her infant son, without food or water, and about to die. In Genesis 21: 19, she got a salvific response: *And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went, and filled the bottle with water, and gave the boy a drink.* Single parents have a peculiar work to perform. With the prayers of the saints, a carefully crafted support system, and with the knowledge that God's grace is sufficient for His strength is made perfect in weakness, do continue to be vigilant, despite the challenges that inevitably accompany your task.

God's blessings for the journey!



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