

# Issue 32 - Raising Children Who Can Evaluate Themselves

## Messy Story of the Week

Emma never missed an assignment.

She color-coded her planner. Checked the online portal twice a day. Volunteered for extra credit before it was offered.

Her parents were proud. Teachers loved her.

“You’re so responsible.”

“You always go above and beyond.”

“We never have to worry about you.”

And they didn’t. Until the stomachaches started. Then the tears over a 94.

Then the quiet confession one night at the kitchen table: “I don’t know how to stop.”

Stop what? “Trying to be the one who never messes up.”

No one had demanded perfection. But somewhere along the way, performance became about safety.

Praise became pressure. And responsibility became identity.

That is when her mother realized: Emma didn’t need more encouragement to excel.

She needed to learn how to evaluate herself without fear.

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## Faithful God Then and Now

### 1 Corinthians 4:2

“Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.”

God measures faithfulness, not flawless performance. He entrusts gifts. He does not demand image management.

When evaluation always comes from outside, children learn to perform. When evaluation begins inside, children learn to steward.

Stewardship asks:

- Was I honest?
- Did I give effort?
- Did I grow?

It does not ask: Did everyone approve?

Parenting that centers self-evaluation trains courage. Parenting that centers constant reaction, even positive reaction, can unintentionally train performance.

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## What We Can Learn

- If every outcome is quickly praised, children may begin to measure themselves by our reaction instead of their own effort and integrity.
  - Praise is well-meaning. But when approval becomes the goal, children may drift toward people-pleasing, winning at all costs, and vulnerability to manipulation.
  - Children trained primarily on external motivation often struggle to develop internal steadiness.
  - Self-evaluation is a learned skill, not a personality trait.
  - Character formation requires reflection, not reaction.
  - You are not graded by your child's performance.
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## Behind the Curtain

Many of the high-capacity women I coach were once Emmas.

They were praised for responsibility. Celebrated for achievement. Trusted to handle more than most children should. They learned to manage expectations beautifully.

And they are tired.

If you recognize yourself in this story, this is not an indictment. It is an invitation. You do not have to repeat the performance cycle to avoid harsh criticism. There is another way.

When you shift from "How did you do?" to "How do you think you did?"

When you ask about effort before outcome,

When you name honesty and perseverance more than results,

you begin training internal governance.

And here is the good news: God does not evaluate your motherhood by your child's report card, talent, or temperament.

You are forming a person, not producing a résumé.

Formation is slower than applause.  
It is also steadier.

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## Faithful Family Tools

If this resonates, here are some ways to find support:

- On Facebook: [Faithful Families | Christian Marriage and Parenting Help | Facebook](#)
  - Work with me - [Start the application process](#)
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## Faith Step for the Week

After your child completes something, pause before reacting.

Ask:

“How do you think that went?”

“What are you proud of?”

“What would you improve next time?”

Let them practice self-assessment before you speak.

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## 2-Minute Practice

Privately reflect:

Where did you learn to measure yourself?

From inside?

Or from the room?

Awareness helps you parent differently than you were formed.

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## Prayer

Lord,

You measure faithfulness, not flawless performance.

Free us from parenting as image management.

Teach us to form children who can steward their gifts with courage and honesty.

Guard our hearts from tying our worth to their outcomes.  
Make our homes places where growth is steady and faithfulness matters more than applause.

Amen.

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