

Would the Real Super Mom Please Stand Up?

by Mary May Larmoyeux

Chapter 1 of *Help for Busy Moms*

As water reflects a face, so a man's heart reflects the man.

—Proverbs 27:19

It's 8:30 p.m. and the kids are asleep. My second load of wash for the evening is in the spin cycle. If I get up twenty minutes early tomorrow, then I can dry the clothes so Chris's uniform will be ready for his 5:15 p.m. baseball game.

The cupcakes are cooling, and I should have time to ice them tomorrow before John goes to school. It's his birthday! And then there's the \$2.50 that Chris needs for his field trip tomorrow. I'll have to put it at his place with his permission form. I've got an extra casserole in the freezer, so that will take care of dinner tomorrow. Maybe Jim can stop by the bakery and pick up John's birthday cake; we'll celebrate after Chris's baseball game. And then there's . . .

What's a mom to do? Let's be candid. We both know that Super Mom doesn't exist, but why do we pretend that she does? Do you feel guilty when you pull out that green moldy stuff from a bowl of leftovers in the fridge? I sure do. And what if an unannounced guest drops by and your house isn't immaculate? If you come to my house, please don't open the rolltop desk—an avalanche of stashed papers could knock you down.

As moms, we have many roles to play and they may include being a wife, mother, full-time or part-time employee, volunteer . . . the list goes on and on. Have you ever put unrealistic expectations on yourself?

Somehow, I often think that I should always be cheerful, Christlike, and have extra energy to not only help the kids with homework, but also to meet the needs of our

neighbors on a daily basis. My home should always be spotless and ready for any unannounced guests. The laundry should be properly put away. And, of course, there won't be dirty dishes in my sink. But this is impossible!

I just can't work full-time and have a perfectly managed home. Actually, as long as there are little ones enjoying life in our home, I'll never win a Susie Homemaker Award. I really need to remember that my main priorities are loving the Lord and being a wife and mom. Someday the kids will be grown, and the house can then be spotless. But it will also be very quiet. I need to appreciate the clutter. It must mean that real life is going on in our house.

I can still vividly recall one day when I knew for sure that I needed to slow down. I was picking up my husband's suit from the cleaners and was asked for the last four digits of our home phone number. (That's how clothing is organized at our particular cleaners.) I remember the sense of mild panic when I could not remember them. I had drawn a blank. Couldn't they have asked an easier question? Finally the numbers came to me and I went home with the suit. When things like this happen, I know that I am on the competition trail for the unrealistic "Super Mom of the Year" award. I am doing far too much and need to slow down.

And I'll never forget the day when I started the coffeemaker (at work, no less) and forgot to put the coffeepot on the warmer. What a mess! But do you know what? I discovered a great spot remover that even takes out coffee stains from carpets.

I think of a young friend of mine who not only has a baby, but also is employed full-time. Her husband, who works full-time, is finishing his college degree. He gets very angry if she doesn't keep the house perfect and have a home-cooked meal prepared every night. You and I know that these are unrealistic expectations.

Even as Christians, we can find ourselves competing for the "Super Family" award and miss the prize that Christ has in store for us.

I really like what Jean Fleming says in *A Mother's Heart* (Colorado Springs: Navpress, 1996, p. 53): "A sentence from Psalm 101 has been both challenging and convicting for me: 'I will walk in my house with blameless heart.'"

When God speaks to me about being more loving, this verse reminds me to make application in my family first—and then to others. It forces me to ask, ‘Am I more spiritual, more loving, or more fun somewhere else? Who gets my best—my family or others?’”

God’s Version of Super Mom

In the world’s economy, Super Mom seems to do it all. But what is God’s definition of “all”? His Super Mom walks with a blameless heart in her home. She models biblical values through her daily actions.

The woman described in Proverbs 31:31 not only received accolades from her family, but also at the city gate. Her concern for her own family and hard work are highly honored. So much so that verse 10 tells us that she is worth far more than rubies. Since she speaks with wisdom, I believe she knew truth. Her fear of the Lord and obedience to his desires resulted in a woman with the right priorities.

This speaks to me. What is a mom’s goal of hard work? Are we choosing proper priorities and spending our time as God desires? How does God’s Word individually guide us concerning working outside the home, schooling issues, and daily time with each of our children?

Scripture tells us that we should honor and respect our husband, manage our homes well, and live in such a way that our children will recognize that our strength comes from the Lord—not from ourselves.

I think balance should be a mom’s desire. She realizes that God and her family are her first priorities, and also admits her limitations. She simplifies her life as she practices the fact that she can’t be all things to all people at all times.

You may want to ask your husband’s help in determining proper priorities. My husband, Jim, is a wonderful sounding board for me. I’m often too quick to volunteer, so I try to ask his advice before I commit to something that will take time away from our family. (Jim seems to know my limits better than I do.)

If you aren't married, you may want to ask a female friend to be your accountability partner. Ask her for advice when it comes to adding more to your juggling act. Where must you win?

We can always go back and clean, paint, work, and even volunteer. But we can't recapture the days with our children or reverse time to make them toddlers again. They are only children once.

An ancient Chinese proverb says:

*If you are planning for one year, grow rice.
If you are planning for twenty years, grow trees.
If you are planning for centuries, grow men.*

How our country and world need genuine Super Moms: women who want to please the Lord, honor and respect their husbands, and nurture and train their children. Women who get their marching orders from the Word of God—not from the evening news. Women who ask the Lord to help them choose the right priorities for their unique lives.

Questions for Purposeful Living:

You may want to use a notebook to record your answers to the questions at the end of each chapter.

- 1.** Read Luke 10:38–42. Why did Christ say that Mary had chosen what is better?
- 2.** What are my goals for today? For this week? For this year?
- 3.** Which goals are realistic? Why do or don't my goals match God's desires for me? (If you are married, discuss this with your husband.)
- 4.** An old Chinese proverb says, "The glory is not in never failing, but in rising every time you fall." How can remembering this encourage you today ... this week ... this month?

After answering these questions, write down one thing that you can do to live a more purposeful life. This could be something that you need to start doing ... or stop doing.

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