

Servanthood 101 - Homework for the soul...

By Susan Kemmerer

(Taken from her book, "Homeschool Supermom...NOT!" © 2009)

Remember, it's nearly impossible to teach something to our kids that we ourselves don't practice. With that in mind, take the following test to see how your heart is doing in the area of servanthood (and remember, when you are homeschooling, your kids aren't the only ones learning!):

Am I a servant?

1. Why do you expect my kids to do chores? (List all the reasons - look deeply into your heart. You probably have mixed motives, such as wanting them to be trained, and because it's not fair that you have to do them...)
2. What is your attitude when the burden of housework falls on your shoulders?
3. Based on your answer to question #2, what does it look like when the burden falls on your shoulders? In other words, what is the *fruit* of your attitude? (lecturing, whining, self-pity, complaining, threats, cold-shoulder treatment, joyful service, training opportunities, etc.)
4. When doing housework or homeschooling, who are you working for? Yourself? Your family? Your Lord?
5. Would you say that you have a heart posture of gratefulness when your kids help with chores? Is your heart grateful when they do chores grudgingly or partially? Is your heart grateful when you are the one that has to remind them?
6. Are you kind and gentle when they mess up, complain, or show laziness? What attitude do you portray when they mess up, grumble, or exhibit laziness?
7. Are you trying to train yourself out of a job? What are your motives for doing so (or not doing so)?
9. Do you complain about your work and responsibilities - how much work there is, how unfair it is, how lazy and irresponsible everyone else is, etc.?
8. Based on your answers to the above questions, how closely would you say your child's *attitude* toward work and responsibility mirror's yours?

Pick a project that is overwhelming *to you* (like the garden, the laundry, the basement, or hospitality). Spend a few minutes in prayer that God will help you to walk out the gospel in joy. Begin to work with your kids on the project, breaking it down into small steps, and assigning each a step. Laugh and talk with them while you work. Don't be surprised if they are grouching at you and bored. Allow God to lift your spirits. Appreciate your kids every step of the way, smiling at them a lot and sympathizing with their frustration (we can all understand *that*). Work side-by-side, allowing them to see (by your example) how God helps *you* to joyfully work through boring distasteful tasks. Offer a reward when you are done. Record the job in your homeschool log as "home ec."

Pick a project that is overwhelming *to your child* (like clean their room). Offer to help them with the job. Have them help you create a list of what needs to be done to complete that job (i.e.: pick up legos, get rid of all clothing that no longer fits, organize shoes, get rid of books they've outgrown, etc.) This teaches them to look logically at a job and "see" it, and organize it. Ask them what they would like you to do to help. Serve them joyfully, so that you'll be living the example of a godly servanthood before them. Record the job in their homeschool log. Take pictures for their portfolio (if you live in a state that requires portfolios).

Think back to a recent confrontation over chores. Humbly ask your child to forgive your impatience and anger. Do not point back to their sin. Just apologize for your own sin. This will serve as one more compelling example for your kids in your homeschool.

Think back to a recent time when you whined or complained about your chores. Apologize to your family for your attitude and tell them that you are going to try to serve more joyfully as God strengthens you.

Other scripture for consideration:

Matthew 11:29-30 – taking *on* His yoke brings rest...

Luke 10:1-24 – Jesus serves *with* his disciples – and they come back energized (vs. 17)

Matthew 14:13-21 – Jesus, the cheerful servant, allows His agenda to be interrupted to serve those around Him.

John 14:21 – Despite their blunders and mistakes, Jesus encourages His followers, focusing on evidence of God's grace rather than on their weaknesses.