

The most challenging profession

A series of high-pitched screams pierced the darkness. Denise bolted out of bed feeling annoyance and panic at the same time. Annoyance at her husband who kept sleeping through the commotion and panic at not knowing why her baby was suddenly crying. Being a mom was much more than she bargained for.

While feeding the baby at that late hour, Denise took advantage of the silence to pray for this little one God had put into their lives. She prayed for strength to get through these sleepless nights. She prayed that one day this baby would desire to live for the Lord with his whole heart. Finally Denise prayed for wisdom to be the kind of godly wife and mother God had called her to be.

Planning for the Future

It seemed like yesterday when Robert and Denise talked about their plans. Denise loved her job as a high school guidance counselor and wondered if she had what it took to be a stay-at-home mom. *Can I do this?* she wondered. *Can I go from having my office and career to being home all the time?* With her masters degree and experience she felt more qualified to be a counselor than a mom.

God quickly gave Denise the confirmation she needed to accept this challenge. Her husband's agreement was one way Denise received confirmation from the Lord. Robert and Denise believed it was God's will for them to do what was in the best interests of their children. They thought about Colossians 3:17: "And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." God values motherhood and they knew their ultimate responsibility in life was to raise their children to

love God—not an easy task in this society.

When Robert and Denise discussed this career move, two important questions came to the forefront. One question was, "Can we afford to live on one income?" That question was answered by their commitment to make the cuts and do whatever was necessary to obey God's calling. They planned to set aside Denise's present income and begin living on Robert's during her pregnancy. This adjustment was made easier when they moved from New York State to Salt Lake City. Moving to a new city removed some of their immediate temptations and helped them start over with a new plan.

The second question was a bit more difficult to answer. "How will Denise continue to actively serve the Lord while staying at home?" Sharing her faith had always been a large part of her life in the workplace. As a high school guidance counselor, many opportunities arose for Denise to live and share her faith. She wanted to continue that commitment in her job as a stay-at-home mom. Denise did not want to become so focused on her home and family that she neglected sharing her faith and helping others.

Opportunities for Ministry

This concern was quickly resolved when Denise decided to serve in a MOPS (mothers of pre-schoolers) leadership position. MOPS is a wonderful ministry that teaches and serves both mothers and children. This position gave Denise many opportunities to reach out to her

neighbors and people in her community. Her involvement in church and specifically the MOPS ministry helps her develop relationships with other Christians who have similar goals. Developing Christian friendships helps Denise to keep the big picture in mind on the days when everything is crazy. As Denise learned, being a mother is not an easy task. Yet serving others through a ministry like MOPS somehow made this difficult task easier.

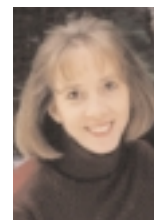


Robert and Denise Buckley live in Salt Lake City, Utah and attend Southeast Christian Church. They have a six-year-old son, Gary, and a four-year-old daughter, Canna.

Another challenge of being a stay-at-home mom is her choice to home school her two children. Part of their education includes field trips, service in the community, and contact with other families who home school. Denise is constantly running into oppor-

tunities to invite others to church and share her faith.

Stay-at-home moms face a daunting challenge. First there is the challenge to raise young boys and girls to be men and women who love and fear God and keep his commandments. Then comes the challenge to serve God and reach out to those who need him. While some moms can be swallowed up in the overwhelming tasks of parenting, Denise Buckley is an example of one who shares her faith both at home and in her community. ■



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