



By Shannon Lionel

LOOKING UP AND NOT DOWN

It happens at the grocery store, when your toddler, having had enough of the shopping cart, is clearly getting ready to enter full meltdown mode and another mom passes by with two sweetly content and quiet children in tow. Or it happens as you're scrolling through Instagram, when you notice that the photos your friend posts always seem to feature an immaculate house, while you're all too aware of the growing pile of dishes in the sink and the never-ending parade of toys on the floor. Your brain goes into hyper drive.

"Am I as good a mom as she is?"

"How does she do it? I should be more like her."

"My children deserve THAT type of mom."

"I'm not doing enough. I'm failing."

How and when did motherhood become a competition? We lose so many of the joys of mothering when we're constantly comparing ourselves to others. Instead, we spend time being fearful that we aren't living up to the standards of the moms we feel are doing "better" than us. And on the flip side, we become prideful when we

see other moms doing "worse" than us. We sometimes forget that the only standard and opinion we should be seeking is God's.

"Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ" (Galatians 1:10, NIV).

God wants us to follow Him. So shouldn't we be looking to God for approval and not to others or to ourselves? We need to remember that God's verdict is the one that truly matters, and let go of the notion that our identities as moms are tied to any earthly standards.

The bonus? When we look to God as our only judge and avoid comparing everyone else's situation to our own, we can not only let go of our personal self criticisms, but we can more easily celebrate each other at our best and empathize during our lows too!

So next time you're tempted to turn a critical eye inward, try looking toward heaven instead.