

GOING FURTHER

RESOURCES

Successful Single Parenting by Gary Richmond, a single-parent pastor

Provides practical help and Biblical principles for balancing your needs with those of your children.

Help and Hope for the Single Parent by Tony Evans

Offers you an encouraging reminder that you are not alone! God can – and will – help you live a satisfying life and succeed in parenting.

Single Parenting that Works: Six Keys to Raising Happy, Healthy Children in a Single-Parent Home by Dr. Kevin Leman

Shows parents how to develop their children's self-esteem, and how to discipline and relate to their kids in accordance with their unique God-given personalities.

While we do believe all of these resources have tremendous value, not all theology presented therein reflects the beliefs of the leadership of Mandarin Church of Christ

GOING FURTHER

MANDARIN CHURCH OF CHRIST SUPPORT

The Mandarin Family

The Mandarin family is willing to help you in whatever capacity you may need. We want to be sure you have the support and encouragement you need to cultivate your own faith and the faith of your children. Develop a relationship with someone in the congregation you can assist in whatever needs you may have and encourage you along in your endeavors.

Home Garden Center

Check out the Home Garden Center in the Mandarin Church of Christ foyer or on our website. There you can find Idea Cards and other Pointer Books to equip you cultivating a Christ-centered home.

Pastoral or Ministerial Consulting

Our Ministers and Shepherds are always willing to sit with parents and/or young people to discuss, assist, and equip everyone involved in whatever stage of life in which you and/or your family may be.

SINGLE PARENT

Raising Children Alone

HOME  GARDEN

RAISING CHILDREN ALONE

One of life's greatest blessings and sources of joy is being called somebody's parent. But if you find yourself raising children alone, you know better than anyone else that parenting is a job meant for two. That's why Dr. James Dobson calls single parenting "the toughest job in the universe." Few understand the loneliness and emotional hurt many single parents carry or how exhausting the role can be.

So, how can you be hopeful and experience joyful success as a parent despite more challenging circumstances?

PRIORITY ONE

Keep Your Child's Best in Mind

Every parent is called to lay aside his or her own interests for the children. That calling takes extra commitment when you're going at it alone. You may still be working through the painful circumstances that led to becoming a solo parent or dealing with an ex-spouse who is a negative influence on the children.

Regardless of the emotions your specific circumstances may be causing, you are called to place your child's needs above your own. Give them as much stability and nurturing as possible within your limitations - even though they may not seem to appreciate the sacrifice you're making. Be assured, the Lord receives your selfless caring as an act of worship to Him because it reflects the spirit of Christ who "made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant" (Philippians 2:7).

Being a servant includes doing your best to maintain a Christ-like attitude when you are navigating legal decisions, shared custody or seeing your ex with a new romantic interest. Putting your children first is also a priority if

you don't have custody - if you are limited to small windows of time together. Those times are your opportunity to show love and influence and not to get caught up in disagreements over parenting differences. In your visitation, in your support, and all other connections, your first priority is serving the needs of your children.

PRIORITY TWO

Choose Good Relationships

Few people understand the load you carry. You're likely to be under stress with extra work and the constant demands of parenting. You know how your loneliness and desire to be loved can lead you toward relationships with the opposite sex that may be harmful, only adding to the uncertainty and anxiety. If you are not ready to marry, be very cautious about dating during this season of life. You want healthy Christian friendships that can help you face this emotional maze and make wise decisions through it all. You need to be a part of a community of believers committed to forgiveness, redemption, and growth. Your children also need the support and modeling of other Christians to give them a vision for their own future home. Pray that God would bring other families in to your children's lives to be a part of family meals, holiday events, etc. Others may not know how to help your family best, so give them the opportunity to be and receive a blessing by asking for their help.

PRIORITY THREE

Become Intentional

God can make your next chapter better than the last. Be careful not to see yourself as a "second class" parent. Raising children alone is harder, but the goal is the same for you as it is for two parent families - to nurture Christian faith and values in your children. That means becoming intentional about building a strong relationship, modeling Godly character, and creating occasions for meaningful interaction about life's most important truths. Remember, it is no accident that God gave you the blessing of children. He also is eager to give you the grace to be the parent they need.