



FAMILY TIES

I love my children. I have four; three boys and a girl. The boys came first. Then when we thought we had a pretty good handle on parenting, God sent a daughter into our family to teach us otherwise! When the boys were young we bought a big blue van to carry all their ‘stuff’ in! It made everything, especially traveling, so nice. Lots of window area made it bright and cheerful and gave great visibility. Some of the seats faced backwards and it had a table that the boys could use while still wearing seat belts. The heating and cooling systems were fabulous so we were comfy no matter what weather we traveled in. It even got great gas mileage!

The only down side of that big blue van was that it was a BIG BLUE VAN! “Big” meant there was a *lot* to wash and “Blue” meant *dark metallic blue* so it needed to be washed *a lot*! All those windows seemed to attract bugs, birds and the roof was tall enough that I needed a step ladder to wash it. Car washes just streaked that beautiful paint and fancy car washes with people cost more than we could afford. So the job of washing the van became one of the items on my weekend ‘to-do’ list. I confess that it didn’t get it done every week! It took a 2-3 hours the first few times. I got better each time. After a while, I got the routine down to where I could get it all done in about 45 minutes.

Unless the boys helped.

Young boys have a way of turning everything into an adventure! With one or more of the boys helping out, the job would take at least twice as long (the more help, the longer it took!), I would be drenched (because a hose is an unlimited squirt gun to young boys!), the fancy wheels would still have brake dust – now smeared – on them, the windows would be streaked with soap, and dirty spots that got missed would show up as bright white – but only after the van had dried. More than once I reflected on how much faster I could do it without their help, and how much better the van got cleaned. When it was just me, the goal of getting the van clean remained in focus. I wanted to get it done so I could move on to other things. Somehow, when the boys were ‘helping’ wash the van, we forgot about the van! Our focus was on each other and the cleaning was only a convenient reason to be together. We laughed and joked. We threw wet rags at each other and chased each other around. Water balloons magically appeared out of nowhere! We squirted everything in sight and slopped soap all over the place! Sometimes cleaning up the yard, the boys and myself took longer than washing the van did! I could do the job faster and more efficiently with better results and less mess if I did it by myself. When the children ‘helped’, washing the van ceased to be a weekend chore and became instead an adventure to be shared.

I always asked them to help.

You see, I love doing things – any things - with my children. What we’re doing doesn’t even matter. I love their company so much that I’ll do just about anything – if it’s with one of them. I still ask them to help, and the firstborn is over 30!

To think that the God who spoke the universe into existence - who spoke *me* into existence – needs my help to accomplish *anything* is not just silly or even arrogant, it’s too absurd for words. It is also understandable. Everybody wants and needs to feel important. We just get focused on the wrong things. It is not *what* you or I can do that makes us important; it is *who we are* that makes the All Mighty God call to us.



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He does not ask us to help him because our assistance is indispensable, wonderful or even necessary. He could do whatever is needed faster, more efficiently, with better results and less mess without your help or mine, or even both of us together with all our friends.

He asks us to help because we are His children.
He created your life and mine to be an adventure - one He wants to share.

He asks you to do things because God is your Father who loves you, and He loves doing things *with you*. *What* we're doing isn't nearly as important as we think it is. Far, far more important is that we do it with *Him*. All those passages of scripture that tell you how to act or what to do are not the words of some stranger who doesn't understand trying to spoil your fun; they are the thoughts of a loving Father who wants to be with you and is literally asking you to commune – to be intimate – with Himself.

I suggest you take Him up on it.