



## Do your best!

Each year I am blessed with a different group of students with which to work. They all vary in their strengths and abilities. They do not learn or think in the same manner. My goal is to help them realize that they may not be able to do everything perfectly, but it is their effort toward achieving their goal that counts. Colossians 3:23 says "And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men." My students are ultimately not working for me, but for their heavenly father. They are not expected to be perfect, but to work at the task heartily. They are expected to do their best.

I try to help my students to understand that they may not be able to do what someone else in the class can do. They cannot compare themselves to others. God created each one of us uniquely and gave us all different abilities and talents. If we were all created the same, how boring it would be. It is the ability to help others with our differences that helps us realize what a gift from God these differences truly are. In 1 Corinthians 12, there is much said about the gifts that God gives us and how none are more important than the others. All these differences come together to make an effective church. I want my students to see their gifts as special and to realize that God created them exactly as they were meant to be. I want them to learn to maximize the potential of the gifts that God has

given them, but to also understand that others are gifted as well. They may be better in one area, and someone else may be better in another. They should temper this knowledge and make sure that they do not become so prideful that they think their gift is better.

I also want my students to learn that they are not able to be perfect. They are meant to strive for their best, but to realize that their best may not always be perfection. I have had many students in the classroom that find this hard to accept. We are sinful creatures and as much as we want to be perfect, we are not. It is these same children who tend to worry. They want so badly to be perfect that they worry about it. I try to constantly remind them of Matthew 6:25-32. These verses point out that we gain nothing by worrying. You cannot add a single minute to your life. We must take these worries to Christ and lay them down.

So how do we help our students meet a balance in trying to do their best and at the same time help them to realize that they are not able to be perfect? I am not an expert. I only know what I have seen work in the classroom and what has worked with my own children. One of the biggest things that we can do for our children is to pray. We should pray that our students would do their best. We should also pray for peace for our

children and for them to realize that they are not perfect, but will make mistakes.

Another thing that we can do is lead by example for our children. Children listen to what we say, but often it is what we do that has the biggest impact on them. Do we as parents strive to do our best at the tasks that are given to us? Do our children see us give up on big projects or do we work heartily unto the Lord? As parents, we need to show our children that work is not a terrible thing, but a gift from God. Parents should also not try to get their children out of completing assignments or try to make assignments too easy for them. They should see that we value work and expect them to as well. When things are difficult, we often learn about how not only to persevere, but also how to better help ourselves learn in the future. We learn the things that will help us do our best. Our children should see us work heartily, do our best, and learn that they are expected to as well. We should set high, but not impossible standards.

Finally, we can point out how others have had to work hard. History is a great place to point this out. Encourage them by pointing out that people in the past had to do things numerous times to get things right. Thomas Edison had to try many times to finally come up with the light bulb. It



might take your child multiple times to learn something new. They should continue to work hard. The Bible is another place in which we can point this out. In the Bible, Joseph was sent to prison, but did not get discouraged.

He continued the task that God had given him and was eventually placed in charge of Egypt. Joseph worked heartily unto the Lord, and so should we.

Work is not a terrible thing, but a gift from God. We should work heartily and make every moment count. We should all try to do our best!

~ *Michelle Powell*

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