

Question: I left a good job that I enjoyed in order to have a baby. Now that the baby is here, the company wants me back. We could use the money, but I would also like to be with my child. What would Jesus do?

Not every young mother has a choice of either going back to a job outside the home or staying at home with her child. Single mothers and those with husbands who are unable to work have no choice but to work if they can. On the other hand, some young mothers think they have no choice when they do. While I don't believe Jesus would offer one simplistic answer for all young mothers, he does teach some principles that can help guide mothers in making this kind of decision.

I believe Jesus would begin by encouraging you to set your priorities (Matthew 6:33), understanding that these priorities may vary at different times in your life. As you set your priorities, consider that Jesus values human life above material gain. We can always use the money in one way or another; but for the sake of our children, we can also delay buying some things. Don't miss out on the critical years of a child's life for the sake of extra hours at work and a few more measly dollars. Jesus challenged us by asking, "What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul?" (Matthew 16:26 NIV). We might paraphrase by saying, "What good will it be to gain the whole world and forfeit the souls of our children?"

Even more to the point, Jesus highly values children. When His disciples asked who is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven, he called a little child and said: "Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me" (Matthew 18:4-5). Without the proper emotional, mental, spiritual and physical development of our most valuable asset, our children, the future of our world is in jeopardy. We have a very short time to be with our children and to shape their character for the future. God will hold us accountable if we allow them to stumble into the future unprepared.

Above all else, parents—not the schools, daycare centers or babysitters—have the God-given responsibility to nurture their children (Ephesians 6:1-6; Colossians 3:20-21). From the time a child's

developing brain becomes active in the womb, there is meaningful communication between mother and child. For a mother to abruptly turn over primary care of her infant to others, especially during the first three years seems less than wise. God knew what He was doing when he charged parents with this important responsibility.

There is no one solution for mothers that will fit every situation. Each mother, child and circumstance is different. Each case should be considered individually. However, I believe that if you will prayerfully weigh the above principles and seek God's guidance, you will be able to make the right choice for your situation. If you love your children and follow the principles taught by Jesus, you will be a good and wise mother.

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