**Belonging by Single Parent Leader, Holly Crain**

Walking to the softball field with my daughter and six-month-old son, I noticed one of the couples from the team walk past us. They were holding hands, swinging their arms, and thoroughly enjoying their time together…it was obvious! I began wondering if that was possible for me someday…it seemed picture-perfect. But as they passed, they glanced back at us. Now, I can't tell you what they were talking about or why they looked back, but I can tell you that I've never felt smaller than I did at that moment.

As a single parent, I had to make sense of these moments and keep moving for the children's sake. But I couldn't quite shake it. It just kept coming to my mind. I knew I had to turn to the Lord and plead that He would remind me of who He says I am.

The Bible is filled with scripture that tells us who God says we are, and I needed those constant reminders. This time, I needed to receive them truly and believe. In 1 Peter 2:9 it says that we are "a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light." We belong to Him.

We must know who we are when we step onto the softball fields, put our children on the school buses, and even take them to Sunday school classes. We will encounter people who just don't know what to say or how to act. I'm sure most have good intentions but end up saying nothing.

Once I got to know the couple, do you know what I found out? They didn't have it all together like I thought they did. But, from my first encounter with them, it seemed they did, and I didn't. I had to pull away that evening and pray that my heart would be right. It was a process that the Lord used repeatedly through the years. And guess what happened? Many years later, when their daughter was grown, I was there when she needed someone to listen to her concerns. After I prayed with her, I thanked God for completing that full-circle moment that only He and I knew about.

So today, lift your head and know that He says we belong to Him.

If we haven't met, I want you to know that when I walked into my local church alone with a five-year-old daughter and a two-month-old son almost 30 years ago. I didn't know if that church was ready for me. But do you know what happened? That church embraced me and walked me through my biggest life trial. But even more significant than that, the Gospel and what God did in my life changed this girl forever! And I know He will do the same for you as He did for me! He will! Enjoy your local church and these single-parent family articles.

**Allow yourself to get excited about what God has in store for you and your children. It's so good!**

If you would like information about how to start a single-parent ministry in your church, email t HollyCrain1031@gmail.com to set up a meeting. I have 16 years of experience running a single-parent ministry and would love to help others do the same!

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