



Hands On, Hands Off

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Eternally Speaking Now

*"Therefore, my beloved, as you have always **obeyed**, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out** your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is **God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.**" Philippians 2:12-13*

My parenting journey took a new turn this month. I was yet again dragged up to the next step of our son's **growth** and **maturity**, though I didn't want to 'go there' yet. I'd finally gotten used to the step to which I'd been yanked during his last **growth spurt**. Every stride of **development** comes with its **ups** and **downs**, **joys** and **sorrows**, and I had to admit I was not **delighting** in the process.

Regardless, change is inevitable.
So, we can either ignore it and fail,
or we can jump in with open eyes and fail...
or succeed.

At least we have the option of success with the latter approach.

In the midst of the internal **angst** that accompanies **growth**—whether on the path of parenting or any other track of life-- God never fails to **teach** us. He also reminds us of things we need to **relearn**.

One of the **lessons** I've had to **revisit** is to discern between the times I'm to jump in and **make things happen**, and the times I'm to step back, shut my mouth, and **get out of the way**. This can be tricky and confusing, because we're equally responsible to **actively obey** God, as we are to **rest** in Him and **let His Spirit** work His will.

So, how do we live this way?

The Lord recently provided a beautiful, fitting picture of this delicate balance between **doing our part** and **letting Him do His**. He did it last month, when our family went to Michigan to see my parents.

When we arrived, my parents **jubilantly** unveiled an endearing scene:

On their deck, a mother dove was warming her two eggs on a roughly assembled nest.

This wouldn't have been a unique thing, except that her nest was completely **open** and **exposed**. There was **nothing** at all to **protect** her from the elements. **No wall**, no awning, no nothing.

In addition, the nest was **very close** to my parents' sliding glass door. Despite that, their feathered friend **wasn't scared** by their frequent, gentle greetings. It was like she **felt safe** in their presence and **found comfort** in their voices.



To our surprise, the next day, two precious newborn doves appeared!

I was thrilled to have witnessed this **transition**.

They were adorable.

Then came the **test**.

I don't know if it was more **challenging** for my family of humans or that little family of doves.

An intense **storm** hit.

As you can see from the pictures, it was incredible. **Winds roared** over 60 mph, and **waves radically changed** the shoreline throughout the night.

We peeked once more before bedtime to check on the birds. The mother dove sat with feathers ruffled, **faithfully shielding** her chicks from the **raging tempest**.

She looked so **vulnerable** and **defenseless** against the **wild weather**. Would they survive? To be honest, I didn't think we'd see any evidence of birds or nest by the next morning.



We **longed to help** the little creatures. Could we build a makeshift tent to **block the wind**? Bring them inside until the weather passed? We wanted to **get our hands into** the situation to **fix** it, yet...we knew that wouldn't work. Our basic knowledge of nature led us to conclude that, if we touched the nest or messed with the mother and her babies, we'd likely **make the situation worse**.

We knew we were **safe**. We had a basement for **refuge** and a generator to **restore** electricity. What about the doves? They had nothing to **defend** them.

Or did they?

True, we had **walls of protection** and the doves didn't, but both families-- of people and of birds-- had one thing in common: a common Creator who always knows what He is doing.

"Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?"

Matthew 6:26

At this point, you may wonder why a family of fowl mattered so much to us. I realize birds are just birds, and many die every day. But hopefully you're seeing the **LESSON** here, as it is one worth **relearning**. **We had to trust God**. After providing a **loving** environment, full of **kindness** and **stability**, there was nothing else to do but **trust in the One who created** it all.

The following morning, we rushed to see if the birds were okay. As the Lord our Creator would have it, there was Mama Dove, still seated on her newborns, exactly where we'd left her.

We'd been tempted to **put our hands on** something reserved for God alone.

I'm so thankful we **chose** to **trust** Him!

CHALLENGE

So, what are the lessons to relearn?

For me, they are:

Stop worrying.

Choose to trust God.

Remember how much He cares for us.

Stay open and vulnerable before Jesus, and Pray.

Sometimes He'll say to **get your hands ON** something,
and other times He'll say to **take them Off.**

Do as He says.

Whether it is I-- parenting a child through pre-adolescence,
an employer-- managing a difficult employee,
a wife-- praying for her unbelieving husband,
or any child of God-- facing any kind of challenge:

as we obey the Lord, He will work His will as He has designed.

**"So let go, my soul, and trust in Him.
The waves and wind still know His
name. It is well with my soul."**

It Is Well by Kristene DiMarco

P.S. Here's a picture of the "babies,"
almost **grown** up!

