

**Caught in the Middle:**  
**Caring for Aging Parents and Your Own Children—at the Same Time**  
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I. Introduction

- a. The “sandwich generation”—adults who have a living parent age 65 or older and are either raising a child under age 18 or supporting a grown child.
- b. Struggling to live out two callings simultaneously: Honor your father and mother. Bring your children up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. What does it look like to do that faithfully?

II. A heart-wrenching experience

- a. Loss and lament
- b. Pressure and perplexity
- c. 2 Corinthians 1:8-9—“For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead.”

III. A heart-revealing experience

- a. The reality of being caught in the middle brings out certain temptations, desires, and fears.
- b. Fear of man and people pleasing tendencies
- c. Control
- d. Competency
- e. Comfort

#### IV. Living in the middle

##### a. Two orienting perspectives

###### i. The necessity of wisdom

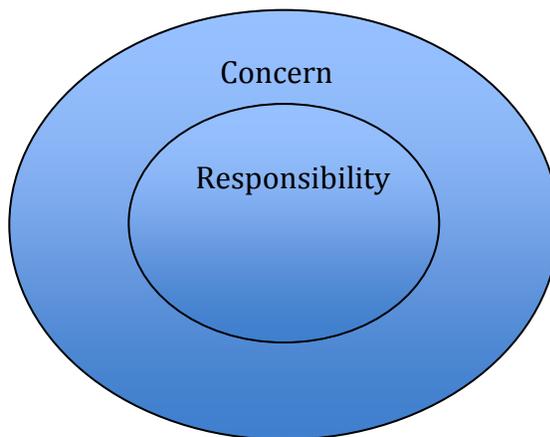
1. This is not simply a pragmatic, time-management issue.
2. Wisdom from Jesus Christ (1 Cor 1:30)

###### ii. The necessity of being still

1. Being caught in the middle usually feels like the antithesis of stillness!
2. Psalm 46:10: “Be still and know that I am God.” And notice the preceding verses.
3. Psalm 131
4. If He is God, you are not (and that’s a good thing!) You *can’t* “fix-it-all, know-it-all, or be everywhere-for-all” (Zack Eswine, *Sensing Jesus*; also see his book *The Imperfect Pastor*)

##### b. Practical steps:

- i. Assess areas of concern vs. responsibility (See Paul David Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer’s Hands: People in Need of Change Helping People in Need of Change*, 250)



- ii. Seek to be fully engaged in the present moment. The temptation is to think, “I should be . . . “ or “I could be . . .”
- iii. Be proactive about creating the space for family time.
- iv. Look for “double duty” opportunities rather than simply “divide and conquer.”
- v. Accept help (and sometimes require it!) from others
  - 1. Prayer (2 Corinthians 1:11—”You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many.”)
  - 2. Help with your children
  - 3. Help from your children
  - 4. The art of delegation
- vi. Don't forget you have a body
  - 1. Sleeping
  - 2. Eating
- vii. Change what you can with your schedule. Contentment “is not opposed to all lawful seeking for help in different circumstances, nor to endeavoring simply to be delivered out of present afflictions by the use of lawful means.” (Jeremiah Burroughs, *The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment*)
- viii. Engage your kids with how *they* are doing
- ix. Where you see your heart being exposed, proactively address it.
- x. Practice the discipline of gratitude. “When the cares of my heart are many, your consolations cheer my soul” (Ps 94:19).
- xi. Nurture your marriage