

**SAY THIS:**

Who loves you?
GOD LOVES YOU.

**DO THIS:****MORNING TIME**

When you go into your baby's room, pick him/her up, look at him/her, and softly say, "Good morning, sweet [baby's name]. Mommy loves you. Daddy loves you. Grandma loves you. (List other people who love your child.) And God loves you soooooooooo, so much!"

**FEEDING TIME**

While feeding your baby this month, look at him/her and say, "God made your eyes. God made your nose. God made your smile. God made your . . . (continue listing things). And because God made you, He loves you very, very much."

**CUDDLE TIME**

Cuddle with your baby this month and pray, "Dear God, Help me remember that You love me, period. Not because of what I do or don't do, but simply because You made me. I'm Yours. And that makes me very special. I want to live believing in Your love for me so [baby's name] will know how much You love him/her and that nothing will ever change that. In Jesus' name, amen."

**BATH TIME**

As you bathe your baby, look him/her in the eye, smile, and repeat this rhyme. "One, two, God loves you!"

BASIC TRUTH:

GOD LOVES ME.

EVERY MOTHER IS A WOMAN OF VALOR

By Sarah Anderson

"Thank you for making this dinner! But I think I like Dad's spaghetti better." It was so close to being a compliment, but I'll take it. My five-year-old was right. I put forth a good effort, but his dad is the better cook. Mothering can feel like this at times. Like you are just close enough to getting *it*, only you just didn't make the cut. You want to be the best. But these days you'll just settle for someone noticing your effort. "Thanks for trying, but . . ."

Mother's Day can feel like the day to celebrate the golden standard of mothering, leaving you to hope others don't get close enough to see how insecure parenting really makes you feel. I get it. But I'm starting to think on days like Mother's Day, or any day we feel inadequate, the last thing we should be doing is worrying over everything we're not.

Proverbs 31 is famous for the picture it paints of the *ideal* woman. It's today's domestic superhero. The wife of noble character it describes is nothing short of intimidating—getting up before dawn, making her family's clothes, and conducting lucrative business with her handiwork. It's a beautiful picture, but sounds so daunting.

The Hebrew words used to describe this elusive woman are *eshet chayil*, directly translating to "woman of valor." But

interestingly, this doesn't imply something women should *aim* for. **It asserts we've already accomplished it.**

These words are celebratory, meant to be a blessing, spoken over the valorous women in our lives. It isn't, "Next week, work a little harder on making your own bread" It's, "You love our family well—you are a woman of valor! *Eshet chayil!*"

Sure, we may miss the mark sometimes. **But there are a million things we have done and are doing that make us, that make you, worthy of the title, "woman of valor."** For the clean dishes, homework help, warm hugs, listening ears—for the courage to get up each day, every day, and do it all again, *Eshet chayil!* **You are a woman of valor.**

This Mother's Day, instead of feeling inadequate or guilty for what you think you ought to be, but can't muster the strength to actually be, be encouraged. You are doing a great job. You are worth celebrating. And if no one else notices, your Heavenly Father does. He looks at you and says, "*Eshet chayil!*" Nice work, mamas.

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