

# *Mom Enough*

10 WAYS THE CROSS SETS MOMS FREE



By, Trisha Mugo

**Mom Enough: 10 Ways the Cross Sets Moms Free**  
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# Introduction



*"For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power" 1 Corinthians 1:17*

As women we're under so much pressure. We bear the heavy load of self-imposed expectations and feel the weight of measuring ourselves against culture's ideal.

Whether we're trying to live up to the cover of a magazine or measure up to the Proverbs 31 woman, so many of us trudge through life feeling inadequate. Nothing makes me quite so inadequate as motherhood.

If you're like me, most days you don't feel up to the task of motherhood. The days are long, and those precious babies have a way of wearing us out.

We rarely live up to the hopes and dreams we take into motherhood. We may yell at our kids and blow it on a regular basis.

I wrote these ten devotionals because I needed to remind myself of how the Cross qualifies me as a mother. Because of Jesus' death on the cross:

- ⇒ **We are Forgiven**
- ⇒ **We are made righteous**

*You are mom enough because the Cross qualifies you as a mom.*

In the Cross, Jesus became our substitute. All the wrath of God we deserved because of our sin was poured out on Jesus. He took our sin and shame while God clothes us in His righteousness. Our record is clean because of Jesus. When God looks at us, He sees the perfection of Jesus' sinless life—not all of our mom fails.

The Cross brings such good news to us as weary moms. The fact that we have a perfect substitute releases us from the pressure of trying so hard to be perfect and the mom guilt so many of us feel. The Cross releases us from the judgement of other people and the verdict we hand down on ourselves.

Nothing else has the power to free moms like the Cross. My prayer for this little book is that you would not only hear this good news but that the Cross would become the filter through which you see all of life.

Live Loved,  
*Trisha Mugo*

## Day One—How the Cross Settles our Worth

*“For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” 2 Corinthians 5:21*

Yesterday I really blew it with my kids.

I was cranky and irritable. Between yelling I prayed, “Lord, help me get my attitude turned around.” But it didn’t happen.

By the time I dropped the kids off at VBS (small mercies!), I felt like the worst mom ever. As I drove home, shame’s familiar voice hurled its lies at me. But then I remembered two little words that changed everything.

*But Jesus . . .*

Those words stopped the guilt and shame spiral and ushered in peace. Yes, I had failed my kids and God.

*But Jesus . . .*

- ⇒ **Bore the guilt and shame of my sin.**
- ⇒ **He already forgave me.**
- ⇒ **Jesus lived a perfect life for me.**

How much time do I spend thinking about all my shortcomings? Do you do this too? But here’s the problem—Obsession with sin makes us forget the whole point of Jesus.

When I obsess about trying to live a perfect life and rehearse all the ways I don’t measure up, I miss precious opportunities to remember what Jesus has done on my behalf.

*Sin consciousness robs us of the joy and peace of having a Savior!*

When I hatch endless self-improvement plans, I take my eyes off the ways my failures have already been provided for.

*But Jesus . . .*

- ⇒ **Died for my sins.**
- ⇒ **He purchased my peace.**
- ⇒ **Jesus paid the highest price so**
- ⇒ **He clothes me in robes of righteousness, not the rags of shame.**
- ⇒ **He eagerly welcomes me back into His arms every time I fail.**
- ⇒ **He accepts me completely, sin and all.**
- ⇒ **Jesus still loves me, and He still loves you.**

*Lord, help us remember what Your sacrifice purchased for us. Teach us how to rejoice and rest in Your work—Your perfection, not our own.*

## Day Two—The Cross Frees Us from Comparison



*"He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world." 1 John 2:2*

From the edge of my seat, I watched each class take their place in front of the gym. Which award would my son get?

I secretly hoped that he would take home an arm load of academic achievement awards. But when they called his name, I scarcely had a chance to raise my phone to snap a picture before the principal called the name of the next kid.

*Citizenship award! Was that it?*

My hopes were dashed. How did those other first graders excel where my son hand not? That day in the school gym exposed my sin.

I want my kids to be the best. I want them to shine the brightest. I'm guilty of putting such a high premium on academic achievement that it borders on idolatry. I pushed my kids because I wanted to look good. I wanted the other moms and teachers to think I was a good parent.

Last time I checked the school doesn't give out award for this. Neither does God. The days following that awards assembly, I took my issues to the Cross, and I found that understanding the Cross frees me to accept my kids for who they are.

The talents of other kids don't diminish the good gifts God has instilled in my kids.

Jesus custom-designed my children for a purpose and a future. The cross reminded me that I'm not raise generic kids, but ones who have a specific calling. We serve a God who orders our steps as well as the steps of our children.

As I reflected on the immeasurable worth granted to us on the Cross, all the pressure and expectations I had laid on my kids began to dissipate. The joy of raising a brainy child compared little to God's ultimate story for my child.

The Cross frees us from the unrealistic expectations when it comes to our kids. Culture urges us to push our kids, but God's Spirit shows us a gentler way to lead.

Culture feeds us a barrage of fear, but the Cross lets us glimpse our children through the eyes of perfect love.

*Jesus, gives us ears to hear the good news of Your Cross and how it applies to our children. Thank You that we don't have to compete with the mom or the student next door. Help us remember this good news in moments of weakness when we're tempted to compare.*

## Day Three—How the Cross Seals our Identity as



*“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16*

Sunlight dappled through the kitchen window, and like usual, I stood over the sink scrubbing dried oatmeal out of breakfast bowls.

My husband sat transfixed in front of the TV watching yet another college football game while my kids dragged more toys out of their room.

*Do these slobbs think that I’m their maid?*

Bitterness bubbled up inside me. I felt like the sole caregiver for my children and a slave to their messes. Motherhood can make us forget that we’re daughters of God first and foremost.

We give of ourselves all day long, forever putting the needs of our children above our own. The Cross teaches us that the role of wife and mother isn’t our only identity.

We are daughters first, brought into the family of God when we first believed. Before we ever gave ourselves to our children, God gave Himself to us through Jesus.

**He gave his only Son to seal us forever as His daughter.**

You know who doesn’t feel like a slave? Meghan Markle. How could she now that she’s married to Prince Harry?

When we understand the Cross, we understand that we are no longer commoners but daughters of the King Himself. We can “come boldly to the throne of our gracious God” (Heb. 4:16 NLT).

When our identity is vested in our role as daughter first, we won’t have to hustle trying to prove our worth to our spouse, our in-laws, or ourselves. We can rest knowing that our value lies in the Cross—in Jesus’ work, not our own.

This is the difference between working for God to earn love versus working because we know that we are loved. And it makes all the difference!

**Rest in the knowledge that you’re loved as a daughter first and see how it transforms your role as a mother.**

*Lord, instill us with the knowledge of our intrinsic value because of Jesus. Let His work be the filter through which we see our own. Show us just how special and important our lives are to You because of our position as Your daughter.*

## Day Four—All Those Expectations



*"But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world." Galatians 6:14*

Moms today live under the weight of culture's ideals. We feel like our lives are under constant scrutiny. We fear the ugly mom-shaming of social media pointing its finger in our direction.

As a mom fairly grounded in Scripture I felt the expectations—both real and imagined—strangling me. I felt pressure to live up to this fantasy lady I had created in my mind—the ideal mom.

She was active in PTA, read the classics to her kids, cooked budget-friendly, scratch dinners every night, held down a side gig to pay the bills while still having time to volunteer in the community.

For years I lived with the cognitive dissonance of the mom I wanted to be and the mom I was. I lived a life of dichotomy. I wanted to stay home and have a full-time job. I was torn between homeschooling and public school. Caught between the ideal and real life, I fretted about these two decisions almost hourly.

But here's the good news. The Cross frees us from other people's expectations as well as the self-imposed ideals that bombard us.

The above verse, Gal. 6:14, paints a graphic picture of crucifixion, one that was meant to linger in our minds. The Apostle Paul, the author, then states that the world has been crucified to us. But not only that—we've been crucified to the world.

What does it mean?

Crucifixion speaks of death. In one very real sense, the world—in all of its ways and wants—dies to us when we begin to live for Christ. This includes the expectations and ideals of culture. Its standards of beauty and perfection no longer hold sway over us.

The pressure to groom, feed, and nurture our children in just the right way ceases to hold us captive because we're not living for the respect of people anymore.

But in the same way, we die to the world. The old ego that wants everyone to admire us also dies. We no longer expect validation from the world, and instead we look only to Christ.

Isn't it good news that letting our minds dwell on the Cross helps defeat this disease to please?

*Lord, help us accept this idea that we must die in order to live. Let us not shrink from the Cross and all the ways we must die to ourselves so that we can live to You. Exchange our desire to meet all those expectations for a desire to keep in step with You.*

## Day Five—How the Cross Simplifies Prayer



*“By canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.” Colossians 2:14*

*Just Ask.*

I repeat these words on constant refrain at my house. Sometimes with exasperation and often with a forced smile, these words are a sort of code I use with my kids.

*Stop whining and simply ask. Don't complain for what you need; just ask.*

As I remind my kids how to communicate their needs, I can't help but feel a divine tap on my shoulder. Am I the only one who senses God turning my instructions right back at me?

Jesus invites us to ask Him for what we need. Not only that, He invites us to “ask, seek, and knock” (Matt. 7). In other words, we're to ask and keep on asking.

God loves it when we ask for help. He loves it when we spill out our desires—Both wants and needs matter to Him.

Human nature teaches us to go it alone—to work for what we need—to pull ourselves up by our own bootstraps. We don't please God by trying to do this Christian life on our own. Heck no! Do you know what does please God?

Faith.

In fact, faith is the ONLY way to please God. “It is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him” (Heb. 11:6 NLT).

So many days I have the wrong kind of faith. Faith in myself and my ability to hustle. If I'm honest that schoolgirl who loved to earn gold stars still comes out in me.

Human nature compels us to prove ourselves to God, but the Cross settles our worth and teaches us to rest in Jesus' achievements on our behalf.

It takes humility to come to God and simply ask for what we need.

Children who know they're loved have no trouble asking their parents for what they need.

Likewise, when we understand just how much God loves us—and how we've been reconciled in Christ—we won't struggle to ask. Prayer will become a stream of consciousness, second nature to us like breathing.

*Jesus, settle our worth as your dearly loved daughters and teach us to come to You for all of our needs and wants, knowing that You desire to give us good gifts.*



## Day Six—The Cross Frees Us to Live Small



*“By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.” 1 John 3:16*

“Do small things with great love,” the meme read. As I scrolled past it, a question niggled in my mind. *Why do I hate this saying?*

I admire Mother Teresa, but her words always fell a little flat on my ears. *Why?*

Slowly it occurred to me that it was the idea of “small” that I despised. I didn’t want to do small things; I longed for grandiose.

I stopped scrolling when I realized the pride lurking in my heart. My entire life felt small, and I pined for the acclaim of “big.”

Here I was a regular mom scrubbing toilets and mopping floors, and I was scared that my small life meant I had failed God. I had prayed for an extraordinary life. I wanted to serve God in all the big ways of someone successful at writing and ministry.

But life doesn’t happen in those big moments—the book contracts or the blog posts that go viral. No. Life happens in the smallness of everyday life. That’s where we find God.

When we live from the perspective of the Cross, we no longer live under the tyranny of ambition. The Cross sets us free to relish our smallness so we can live gigantic lives of worship.

The Cross frees us from our own ego and lets us put on humility. This is the only way to live a large life of love.

The Cross cures our myopic view of how life in the Kingdom works—the Kingdom where the first is last and the last is first.

Only when we learn to embrace the smallness of our lives can God flow the kind of big love through us.

A life entrenched with selfish ambition cannot love big or serve big.

It’s fear that feeds our egos, but thanks to Jesus and His love poured out at the Cross we can experience the kind of perfect love that casts out fear.

*Jesus, help us to live loved today in light of the Cross. Forgive us for all the ways our hearts yearn for attention and acclaim. Set us free to live small and turn all the hundreds of small tasks into large acts of worship to You.*

## Day Seven—How the Cross Proves God's Love



*"For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." 1 Cor. 1:18*

I heard my son trot down the hall and peek around the corner, grinning into the office where I sat. Twenty minutes ago, I snuggled him in for a nap. Now, my 2-year old looked high on caffeine and sugar.

This day was not going as planned.

My heart sank at the thought of a round-two nap. My mind raced and fingers itched to write, and I didn't want to "squander" my next hour cuddling a toddler.

As I begrudgingly gathered my son close, pulling the covers over both of us, God reminded me how He so often gathers me close, persuading me to rest.

I consider how He tucks me into His presence and speaks in heart whispers, still and small. As I lay next to Sam, I understood why the psalmist said God gives sleep to those He loves, (Ps. 127:2). Zephaniah 3:17 even paints God singing over us as we sleep.

Almost like God poured a bucket of love over me, I lay next to my son drenched, soaked by His compassion to draw me close. Then, I heard these lyrics stream from my phone's speaker.

*"When the rain is blowing in your face,  
And the whole world is on your case,  
I could offer you a warm embrace  
To make you feel my love."*

The words caught me off guard. Seldom do I feel God's love. Love's deficit, I know. Stress. Condemnation. Performance-ism.

Hadn't I asked to feel the love of God yesterday? The tears ran from my eyes as I realized the good gift given by a good Dad.

The O'Neil brothers continued to croon about romantic love, but I knew God was singing about agape love—a love I'm only beginning to catch a glimpse of.

Sam looked at me with concern written across his face and asked why I was crying. How do you tell a toddler you're weeping because of joy?

How do you tell him how grateful and stunned you are that God can serenade you through Pandora's lullaby channel? Or that tears can be beautiful prayer to Jesus?

I'm beginning to see this crucible of motherhood as chance after chance to see with new eyes how God loves us. To see how, over the years, God keeps on loving us.

Beyond the Cross, I can't think of a better way to show us self-sacrificial love.

As parents, our days are chock-full of training and correcting. Most days, I'm so consumed being a parent, I forget how to be a child.

As I lay with my son, I remember whose child I am and marvel how we never pack up and leave this house of love Jesus built for us. God's no empty- nester.

His father heart beats in the middle of all our moments, compounded throughout time. Until the day when we'll step out of time—even then, we remain children of God.

The room is dark and still, now. My chest no longer heaves in sobs. Sam sleeps in the crook of my arms, and I know this feeling is fleeting. But I linger, hoping to keep the song in my head.

He stands over you singing too, friend. Listen, do you hear it?

*Jesus, open our ears to hear the love song You're writing for us. Attune our ears to Your song that You serenade over us. May we know the depths of Your love.*

## Day Eight—How the Cross Saves Us from Mom Guilt



*“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” Romans 8:1*

I’ll never forget the day in Dubai when our son boarded a plane without us. We were on our way to Kenya to visit my in-laws when Josh, who was six at the time, wandered off.

We had been awake for close to 24-hours. I was probably trying to pacify my 3-year-old while navigating through the terminals like a zombie. Talk about Mom Guilt!

Thankfully, a flight attendant found Josh and just as quickly escorted him off the plane. No harm was done except to my pride. I’m sure you have your own highlight reel of shaming moments, and when you’re feeling low that movie plays in your mind.

Motherhood is fraught with failure and lessons learned the hard way, but the Cross teaches us to learn the lesson but throw away the condemnation attached to all our mom fails.

In Christ, there is zero condemnation.

The gospel is the great equalizer of women. When we see with “grace-healed eyes”<sup>1</sup> we can’t help but cease the categorizing and comparing—that drive to label ourselves and others into “good,” “ok,” and “bad.”

The Cross helps us see that we’re all mothers who’ve missed the mark. I’m convinced that the single biggest lesson of parenthood is to show us just how weak and prone to failure that we actually are.

Every mother fails, but these failures, when viewed through the Cross, teach us to believe the gospel. Our inadequacies remind us again and again of how much we need a Savior.

Thank God we have a Savior who doesn’t despise our weakness. He doesn’t shun us but welcomes us.

Not only does Jesus welcome us, but He gets us. Scripture says that Jesus understands our failings. “This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin” (Heb. 4:15 NLT).

Because of the Cross, His record of perfection becomes ours. We don’t have to obsess over mistakes. We’re free to worship and live in the moment, utterly joyous.

*Jesus give us grace-healed eyes to see our failures through the lens of the Cross. When we’re tempted to measure ourselves against culture’s ideals for moms, teach us to remember the Cross and Your Perfection provided for us.*

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<sup>1</sup> Philip Yancey. *What’s So Amazing About Grace?* Zondervan, 1997.

## Day Nine—Finding Fulfillment in the Cross



*"When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, 'It is finished,' and bowed his head and gave up his spirit." John 19:30*

Imagine a person going to the White House, hobnobbing with the entire executive branch, even meeting the first lady and the president's family. The first family invites you to stay for dinner and a game of Monopoly . . . but you never get to meet the president.

A bit of a letdown, huh?

I felt like this a few years ago. I spent all my time hanging out with God's family but precious little with the God-Man Himself.

Christian activities divorced from day-to-day interactions with Jesus will never fulfill us. It took God removing me from my hamster-wheel of church activities to find contentment in Jesus alone.

I remember this season well. The words Jesus uttered from the cross, "It is finished," seemed to tattoo themselves on my weak and tired soul. When my heart clamored for affirmation or in the moments when I felt like a total failure, a gentle voice whispered, "It is finished."

Jesus' last words became a place where I built my self-worth—a place I returned to when I felt worthless and a bedrock for my faith in a God who is enough.

I've learned I will never be good enough or righteous enough to meet His standard. Nor will I ever measure up to my own expectations, but it doesn't matter anymore.

In the Cross, we find Someone who is enough. Someone who satisfies our endless searching for more.

Jesus' words from the Cross blow the whistle on my ceaseless striving. They invite me into much more than a truce with God. They gesture me to climb onto the victor's platform where only winners stand. In this race of life, I finally figured out that I win because He won on the Cross.

**Because He's already enough, I don't have to be.**

When I fail, I can rest in forgiveness. When I want, I can wait on God to lead me beside still waters and green pastures. When I'm anxious and depressed, He restores and satisfies my soul (Ps. 23).

The book of Revelation pictures a beautiful scenario, one of Jesus knocking at a door. He says, "If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends" (Rev. 3:20).

The only food for our ever-yearning hearts, the only thing that will ever satisfy us is a relationship with God. Thanks to Jesus' death on the cross, we can enjoy Him every day.

**The Cross gives us a seat at the table where we find soul-deep fulfillment in the broken body and spilled blood of Christ.**

**Will you pull up a chair to God's table?**

*Jesus, satisfy us with Your Love. Let us never reach the bottom of the depth of Your Love. Show us the true fulfillment that comes from plunging deeper and deeper into the love You poured out for us on the Cross.*

## Day Ten—How the Cross Frees Us from Regret

*“And through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.” Colossians 1:20*

“Soak up every minute. You’ll blink, and they’ll be twenty-five,” the gray-haired mom whispered, nodding to the newborn bundle in my arms.

She meant the words to give me perspective and wisdom. Instead they set off alarm bells in my mind. What if I forget? What if these years fly by so quickly and I live with regrets?

The list of ways I could screw up this mothering gig was growing longer by the day. I began to question why I decided to have kids in the first place.

Not a lot has changed since Solomon penned these words: “A wise child brings joy to a father; a foolish child brings grief to a mother. Prov.” 10:1 NLT. Notice who gets the blame for the wayward child?

As if moms don’t have enough guilt already.

I wanted to avoid regret. I was really hoping to live up to my own inflated expectations. Naïve, huh?

Fast forward almost nine years, and I embrace regret as the learning opportunity it is. Because of the Cross all my failures and all my regret reflects the beauty of Jesus. Because of Jesus, God has reconciled all things to Himself. What exactly does that include?

- ⇒ **Every failure.**
- ⇒ **Every missed opportunity.**
- ⇒ **Every regret.**

In Jesus, God redeems our regrets. Even time itself, God has reconciled to Himself in Christ.

Not just regret, but the Cross frees us from FOMO—that fear of missing out.

We don’t want to miss out on all the opportunities we see for ourselves and our children. And so the pressure begins.

But when we allow Jesus’ work on the Cross to settle our worth and our work as mothers, we no longer need to spend hours in the car chauffeuring our children from activity to activity to feel like we’re doing enough for our kids.

We can get off the performance (and guilt) hamster wheel. We can take off our Supermom capes. Thanks to the Cross we can accept ourselves because Jesus already accepts us.

The Cross helps us see ourselves for who we really are, pretty much the opposite of Supermom. God loves us right where we are, and when we truly understand this He sets us free to live loved—right in the middle of our messy lives.

The Cross tells us that our homes don't have to be immaculate and our children don't have to behave perfectly in public.

Isn't this good news?

Through the lens of the Cross we can prioritize our time, making the most of every opportunity, but without becoming a slave to regret.

*Jesus teach us to live free lives drenched in faith. Convince us that You know what's best for us and that You orchestrate the experiences and the life we were meant to lead.*