

Hi KC Parents!

My oldest son is what you would call, "tatted up". Over the years, he's continued to add to his collection... arms, legs, back, neck- you name it. When he was a teenager, we made a firm rule- "No tattoos until 18 years of age!" By then, we figured that maybe one tattoo might not be so terrible. When the clock struck midnight on his 18th birthday he made a beeline to the tattoo shop, and he's been happily returning, ever since.

Years ago, we were at a family party and he decided to go swimming with his cousins. Upon disrobing to his trunks one of my aunts was incensed, and she let me know it as she expressed her discontent with many choice words.

"How could you allow this indecency? Look at him, he's covered in tattoos!"

I wasn't surprised that she was not a fan of his tattoos. Neither was I! However, I was surprised (and angry) that she attacked me in front of our family. I felt shame and embarrassment because at least to my aunt, I looked like a bad parent, and my son looked like a "bad guy".

Some people will not have the empathy to understand our children. They'll fail to understand their unique needs, issues with fitting in, struggles with anxiety, behavioral challenges, and so on. Our kids will embarrass us if we are worried about what other people think. In addition, kids will feel overwhelmed if they constantly have to put on a show to impress everyone we care about.

My aunt was judging my son's character based on the way he looked, based on his "punk" style. I knew my son, and I loved him regardless of how the world would view him, or what stereotypes and assumptions other people would make based on the colorful "artwork" on his body.

While we parent our children, we must look for approval from our heavenly Father, not from the world. He knows you and he knows your kid. He has compassion and understanding concerning everything you are going through. All the way from tantrums to tattoos, He's a God who can decipher between the essentials and the non-essentials.

Looking back, I laugh (and cringe) over the ridiculous things I was embarrassed about. What seemed so important at the time, is nothing in the scheme of things now. Lord help us to remember that we parent unto YOU, not unto the critical eyes around us!

So, Aaron has a lot of tattoos. Who cares? Certainly not me! I've grown to love those tattoos because I love him. I'm proud of the difference he's making in the world around him because of his love for God and his commitment to Christ.

Lord, help us keep our eyes on you as we parent our children. Let your opinion be the one that matters to us most as we navigate through the highs and lows of raising our kids!

Blessings,
Viv Stone