

Interview with Mrs. Kendra Smiley! --part 1--

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I am so excited that MamaKnowsBest has had the chance to interview [Mrs. Kendra Smiley](#) - LIVE! She was very gracious to agree to this interview and I so enjoyed getting to meet her - what a godly woman and vivacious sanguine!

I video taped the interview, and was *really* hoping to provide that footage here, but.... after my most valiant effort, I have had to give up on the idea. I won't get into the long, boring details, but let's just say we had some serious incompatibility issues, and after four computers and five different programs, I have officially thrown in the towel on that portion of it.

That is very unfortunate, as I know you would have enjoyed seeing and hearing Mrs. Smiley LIVE, but here you have the next best thing. I have typed up the interview in its entirety, leaving it in a more conversational style, so you will still feel like you were right there!

I will be posting the interview in segments to make it more "digestible", so stay tuned for future segments coming your way soon! We will start with getting to know her a little bit as a mother, and soon we will hear more from her about marriage, parenting, and managing a home-based business!

Also, enter a comment below to win a copy of one of Kendra's books! More info below!

And now, without further ado.....

INTERVIEW

WITH

MRS. KENDRA SMILEY

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We would like to start just by getting to know you a little bit, especially as a mother.

Can you tell us a little bit about your family? How many children do you have and what are their ages, and grandchildren as well?

John and I have been married 37 years, and I married up. He was a catch! I was recently talking to someone and said that I didn't deserve John, but I appreciated him, and that went a long way.

John and I have three sons. They are all regular grown-ups. Our oldest son is a football coach at Eastern Illinois University and is married to Marissa, who was an athlete at the university. They have 2 little girls, Madelyn Grace who is two years old and makes me smile – as all the little girls do! – and Madelyn also has a little sister named Ella Jean, who is probably about 5 weeks old. And then our second son Aaron, who is a veterinarian, mostly of horses – he's a large animal vet, and lives in Indiana. He and his wife Kristin have a little girl named Jenna Ruth, who is 18 months old. And our son Jonathan is married to Ashley and they don't have any children yet. She is a family therapist, and Jonathan is getting ready for dental school in the fall. They are a delight and they are all just fun, fun, fun.

What are some of your fondest memories with your children?

I have LOTS of them. I grew up in a dysfunctional home and one of my unspoken goals was that when I was the mama, we were going to have FUN! One of my delights as a mother of older children is to hear them recounting fun things from their childhood. The other day when my son and his wife were over, he was telling her that we only had ONE rule at our house, and that was "no singing at the table"! His wife said, "Did you have a lot of problems with that??" And it was so fun. I guess we had only two rules, the one about singing at the table, and the other one was simple: OBEY us. That took care of all the rules. I didn't even remember the singing one, but I guess we had that one too.

We also lived on a farm when the kids were growing up and that gave them the opportunity to do a lot of things to do. We didn't have to create responsibilities for them – they were built-in. It gave them an appreciation for the land that God created, to care for it. And it also gave them the opportunity to stay close to family. One of our sons said at one point that he couldn't wait to get his drivers license, so he could find somebody else to play with, but now as adults, all of the boys are very close. They even have a weekly Bible study together. They use Skype and webcams and have a Bible study together. So, it all paid off.

What have you found most challenging about motherhood, and how have you handled this challenge?

Not being selfish. I really prefer, although it's not very godly, to have the world revolve around me. :-)

remember when I was pregnant with our first child, thinking that I was going to have to clean up my act. And, my act was not really all that messy. I just realized that it is a huge responsibility, and I was SO excited about it.

If you are going to do things God's way, you've got to be unselfish, and that is hard on us human beings. I have heard a lot of people say, "If I knew then what I know now....", and yet, I am glad to still be learning things now, and to not have stayed where I was then.

What book or resource has helped you the most as a mother?

God's Word! Although, I want to encourage people to read the books I've written! :-) But, God's Word was the foundation. Back when our children were little, there were not as many resources available either. There was no internet, no MamaKnowsBest.... :-)

How did you come to the decision to send your children to public school?

Well, we really considered all the options: Christian school, private school, public school, homeschool. My husband and I are both educators by trade, and both of us taught school for a while, so we have maybe a unique perspective on the plusses and minuses of public education. So, some were ruled out: private school that was not Christian - there were not any. Christian school - there were two that were both quite far from our home and were quite denominational. Neither seemed to be the best choice for our family. So, that left us with public school or homeschool. Our kids all went to public school, but we had an advantage. We live in a rural area, and at that time the parents were able to choose the teacher they wanted for their child each grade! So, for three children going through 13 years of education each, we only made one grievous error, when we asked for a teacher that was not a good match for our son. We had had a good experience with this teacher with our oldest son, but we were forgetting that this son was not the same son! But, other than that, it worked out well.

Also, we were not afraid [of being pro-active], so that was a leg-up. For example, when our first-born son was about to start kindergarten, we went to visit the school the previous year to check it out, and we did not like what was going on. So, we went to talk to the superintendent of schools, with a lot of confidence, because we

had an opinion!

Another example is when our youngest son started kindergarten. My husband was in Kuwait as a military pilot, and when I went to pick up my son after his first week in kindergarten, I did not like what was going on. I didn't like the setting, etc., and it wasn't anything horrible, but I didn't think it was good. So, I immediately went to the principal of the school where I thought he would thrive, and she said that he absolutely could switch, so he did.

So, my sons really did learn to be salt and light. They all went to public universities, where they could take a stand, and the way I like to spin it, is that they were already practiced in taking a stand, when people around them weren't. So, that's how it worked for us.

What do you wish you would've done more of when your children were at home?

Oh, golly, yeah. I'm kind of a sanguine person, so I tend to not think about this much! But I do wish I had been not as selfish. I wish I had been as mature as I am now, and there is no way I could have changed that. I'm just glad that I have matured now and didn't stay the same way I was! But even looking at our sons, six years separate number one son from number three son, and looking at their walks with Christ, the baby got more out of our growth, because my husband and I were both more mature in the Lord. But, now they are all at a good place in their walks with Christ.

And, I guess I could've cleaned the house more, but I don't think it mattered much. Their wives might have appreciated it though!

What's your favorite book of the Bible and why? (or if you would prefer to talk about a favorite verse, that is okay too.)

My favorite verse is John 8:32 – "You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free." I grew up in a dysfunctional home where we did not know nor practice the truth. We never dealt with what was really going on! You are always in bondage to whatever you are dealing with, until the truth sets you free!

But I spent a lot of time in Proverbs when my children were young. God really covered everything there!

What are some ways you are/were able, as a mother with small children, to spend time with the Lord?

THAT's a challenge! I think I'm playing on one string this morning! – on selfishness again – I am a woman who loves my sleep! I like 8 hours, 9 hours is even better.

So you really have to stay a step ahead on this one, which I think is the KEY to not stressing out. And you are still going to stress out as a mom. You are still going to be behind. We all wish we were pro-active in everything, but one of the keys is to just fight for that quiet time- and sometimes it is a fight! Even if it means getting up at what you think is a ridiculous hour – and some people think 7am is a ridiculous hour, but I had to get up much earlier.

What it really comes down to is going to bed earlier.

I had a friend who said that was when she mopped her kitchen floors – at night when her kids were in bed, and I told her to let the kitchen floors go! Her children didn't mind!

Early on, I used to tell my husband, "I just have such trouble getting up in the morning!" and he used to tell me, "No, Kendra, you have trouble going to bed at night!" He is so realistic! But he was right.

So, we resolved early on to go to bed at the same time, and that really helped. {See more about this in a later segment, when Mrs. Smiley speaks on marriage.}

THANK YOU SO MUCH, Mrs. Smiley, for sharing with us! It has been a pleasure to get to know you a little bit better! You may also want to check out her site: www.kendrasmile.com

In future segments, Mrs. Smiley will be answering questions on parenting a strong-willed child, making marriage a priority, and managing a home-based business. Stay tuned!

Edited to Add: [Link to Part Two: Mrs. Smiley speaks on parenting and the strong-willed child](#)
[Link to Part THREE - Mrs. Smiley speaks on marriage, especially to those of us with small children in the home](#)

[Link to Part FOUR - Mrs. Smiley speaks on managing a home based business](#)

NOW, TO WIN A BOOK!!!

Mrs. Smiley has given two copies each of four of her books for readers of MamaKnowsBest! Simply leave a comment below to be entered in the drawing, which will take place after the last of the article segments is published. You do not have to be a member to leave a comment and enter the drawing!!! If you have a preference about which book you would like, you may include that in your comment. MORE INFO ABOUT HER BOOKS HERE: [Kendra Smiley's books](#).

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