

Kids Conform

The wonderful mind of a child! Other than an innate sense of morality, every new person coming into the world is blessed with a mind that feeds on influences. At birth they have a clean slate on which to write the marvelous thoughts of the ages. The environment a child is raised in, and the influences involved, will dictate much the mindset that person will have as an adult.

Knowing the potential in every child, the parent is daunted with the weight of responsibilities resting upon their shoulders. Though the child will ultimately choose for themselves what they will or will not think or do, the parent raising that child will make countless decisions that will affect their outcome.

The daily newspapers are filled with illustrations of what not to do when it comes to parenting. When children are left in cars during the heat of the day, or left to their own devices at a young and impressionable age while the parents are at work, it is quickly evident that so many are failing in their parental duties. Some parents have a desire to liberate their children as a sort of reaction to the strict upbringing they received. Often the Bible's teaching on corporal punishment is replaced with quiet time. In so doing, discipline is almost non-existent, resulting in children who know very little about boundaries.

In reality, children enjoy knowing limits. They come into the world having spent nine months in a very disciplined and confined environment. After birth, and through their early years, safety and emotional well-being will depend on whether the child senses that their world is kept in balance and in control. If parents are openly fighting with one another, yelling, are inconsistent in their discipline, or are unwilling to follow God's word in regulating the world of their child, the result will often be that the child is unruly and annoying to most people around them.

Most important it is for parents to see the connection between respect a child has for them, and the respect they will have for God as adults. Unless a child learns early to respect authority and know limits imposed, they will have a most difficult time with developing their own faith as grownups. The Hebrew writer said, "It is for discipline that you endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and life?" Hebrews 12:7-9 (ESV). The writer here presupposes that Christians recognize the need to follow God's discipline because as they grew up they had parents who disciplined them regularly. Basically, what it boils down to is that if you have been raised to know limits through submission to the authority of your parents, it will be easy to submit to the authority of God. Parents! Here is your challenge! Do you want your children to respect God when they are adults? If so, you must consistently discipline your children right now. If you are letting them get away with whatever they want to do, then the time to start is NOW! The salvation of your child is at stake.

The story is told of a woman who set limits for their children's TV watching habits. She had one rule. If a television program has a killing in it, the TV will be turned off. The children learned quickly that if someone was killed, they would have to turn the TV off. The mother was consistent! Before long, the mother noticed that most television shows lasted about five minutes. She also thought it was interesting that when a person was following someone to do them harm, the children would start talking to the TV saying, "Don't hurt him! Please don't hurt him!"

Children need standards. They need to know that church is where they go on Sundays and Wednesdays. They need to know that daily Bible Study and prayer are a part of family life. If you want your kids to have life better than you had, then do not miss out on faithfulness in all areas of Christian living right now.
-Scott Harp