

A Short Parenting Tip

Is Dialogue Good?

Sometimes it's best to have children obey without dialogue especially if they're using the dialogue to manipulate you or delay obedience. After all, children need to learn how to obey without a discussion and learn to respect authority without continually challenging it. This approach emphasizes the need for children to respond to authority, give up their agendas, and learn cooperation. We encourage you to continue with those techniques because they teach kids valuable things about life, but don't stop there.

Having significant conversations with your kids can reveal important information about their hearts. Dialogue helps you understand your child's heart so you know what to emphasize and how to teach it effectively. The older the child, the more necessary dialogue becomes in the teaching process. Unfortunately, as kids go through their teen years, it's harder to initiate these types of conversations with them. Teens may not be interested in dialoguing when you want to talk. In this case, you need to be on the lookout for conversation starters. They may begin with a simple observation from you or your teen. Prepare yourself for the unexpected discussion so you'll be able to take advantage of those teachable moments.

Listening carefully to your child can help you identify thinking errors that lead to a bad attitude. What hidden belief might Jeremy, age ten, have? He complains and argues when you ask him to do the dishes? Maybe he believes, "Chores are an interruption to my life." If pressed, he may also reveal a belief, "All work is hard and unpleasant, and I must try to avoid it." A positive attitude about work comes from several new values such as "Work is necessary in order to bring benefits to me and to others" or "My contribution to family life is a statement of gratefulness for what I have."

Dialogue can be a hindrance to parenting in some cases but it's also an asset. Be sure to spend some time thinking about what your child needs now. It will help you address some of the deeper issues of the heart.

This tip comes from chapter six in the book, "Good and Angry: Exchanging Frustration for Character in You and Your Kids."

For more information about building a strong and effective correction routine in your family check out the Training Manuals and CDs called Parenting is Heart Work. These manuals are used for in-depth training of parents both for individual study and also for mentoring others. You can learn more at www.biblicalpharenting.org.