A BIBLICAL COUNSELING RESOURCE
FOR CHRISTIAN PARENTS

Why Does My Child *Get Angry* When I Discipline Him?

Understanding Resistance to Correction and Responding with Biblical Love



FREE DOWNLOAD

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A PRACTICAL BIBLICAL COUNSELING BOOKLET

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Introduction: "Every Time I Correct My Child, We End Up Arguing"

> "I can't correct my child without an argument."

Many Christian parents understand that frustration.

A mother tells her son to stop playing a video game and complete his homework. He immediately complains that she is being unfair. A father corrects his daughter for speaking disrespectfully. She becomes angry and accuses him of always picking on her.

Parents establish a reasonable boundary, and their child responds with complaining, arguing, or an angry outburst. Sometimes the child says, "You don't love me!" Such responses can be discouraging, particularly when parents are sincerely attempting to fulfill their biblical responsibilities.

Some parents begin questioning whether they are too strict. Others become reluctant to correct their children because they want to avoid another confrontation. Eventually, some parents simply overlook sinful behavior rather than risk another argument.

But avoiding correction does not solve the problem. In fact, it may contribute to a much greater problem.

When children repeatedly practice sinful anger, arguing, and rebellion, those responses can become established habits.

What begins as an occasional angry response to parental correction may eventually become the child's customary way of responding whenever he is disappointed or told to do something he does not want to do.

This is one reason loving parental discipline is so important. Parents are not simply correcting an isolated incident of sinful behavior. They are also teaching their children how to respond differently before repeated sinful responses become deeply entrenched.

Scripture provides the instruction parents need.

This booklet will examine why children sometimes respond angrily to correction, how sinful anger can become habitual, and how parents can teach their children to replace sinful responses with biblical ones.

It will also address the responsibility of parents to discipline their children without responding in sinful anger themselves.

The goal is not simply to produce children who stop arguing. The goal is to help parents faithfully teach their children to respond to correction with humility, respect, and obedience to God's Word.

1. Why Does Correction Produce Anger?

Consider a familiar situation.

A child is enjoying an activity when his father tells him it is time to stop and complete a responsibility. The child does not want to stop. He complains, argues, and eventually becomes angry.

What caused the conflict?

The father gave an instruction that interfered with something the child wanted to do. The child's desire was frustrated, and he responded with sinful anger.

When Desires Become More Important Than Obedience

James 4:1–3 teaches that conflicts arise from desires that are at work within people. The passage helps us understand an important principle concerning human behavior. People often become angry when they do not get what they want.

A child wants to continue playing, but his parents say it is time for bed.

A teenager wants to go somewhere, but his parents refuse permission.

A child wants to avoid completing a chore, but his parents insist that the responsibility be fulfilled.

In each situation, the child wants something different from what the parents have instructed. The original desire may not be sinful. There is nothing inherently wrong with wanting to play, spend time with friends, or enjoy a particular activity.

The problem develops when the child becomes unwilling to accept the parent's instruction and responds with sinful anger, disrespect, or disobedience. The desire has become so important that the child is willing to sin when it is denied.

Parents must learn to recognize this connection between desires and behavior.

Anger Reveals More Than Outward Behavior

When a child responds angrily, parents naturally notice the outward conduct.

They hear the disrespectful words.

They observe the refusal to cooperate.

They see the angry facial expressions or other inappropriate behavior.

But biblical correction must address more than what is visible. The child's outward response may reveal inward attitudes such as selfishness, resentment, pride, or rebellion.

A child may be thinking:

> "My parents have no right to tell me what to do."
>
> "I should be allowed to do what I want."
>
> "They are always being unfair."
>
> "I am not going to listen."

Such thoughts can contribute to angry words and disobedient behavior.

Proverbs 4:23 emphasizes the importance of guarding the heart because the issues of life flow from it. Parents must therefore help their children examine not only what they did, but also what they were thinking and wanting when they responded.

Not Every Expression of Anger Is Rebellion

Parents must exercise biblical discernment.

Children may experience anger, sadness, fear, disappointment, or frustration for many reasons. Some may struggle to communicate their concerns appropriately because of their age or level of maturity.

Not every expression of displeasure is sinful rebellion. A child may have a legitimate concern about a parent's decision. Parents should be willing to listen and examine whether their expectations and responses have been appropriate.

Scripture does not give parents permission to dismiss every disagreement as rebellion. Nevertheless, disappointment does not justify sinful conduct.

Children must learn that they can respectfully express concerns without insulting, threatening, arguing sinfully, or refusing appropriate parental instructions. This distinction is important because loving correction must be both biblical and fair.

2. Why Early Correction Is So Important

One reason loving parental correction is necessary is that parents understand something their children may not yet recognize.

Behavior that is repeatedly practiced can become habitual behavior.

A child who occasionally responds with sinful anger has not necessarily developed a habit of anger. However, if that child repeatedly responds with anger whenever his desires are frustrated, he is practicing a response that can eventually become habitual.

This is why parents should not ignore sinful anger simply because the child is young or because the incident seems relatively insignificant.

How Sinful Anger Becomes a Habit

Consider a child who becomes angry whenever his parents tell him to stop playing and complete a responsibility. Initially, the child may deliberately argue because he hopes his parents will change their minds.

The next time he receives an unwanted instruction, he argues again. The same response occurs repeatedly. Eventually, arguing may become his customary response whenever he receives correction or an instruction he does not like.

What began as a sinful response to a particular situation has developed, through repetition, into a habitual sinful response. The child may now begin arguing almost immediately, without giving much thought to what he is doing.

This does not remove his responsibility for sinful behavior. It explains why changing an established pattern can require more than a warning, a consequence, or a promise to do better.

Why Loving Parents Correct Sinful Anger

Parents should recognize the danger of allowing sinful responses to be practiced repeatedly without correction. Each incident provides an opportunity either to continue practicing the sinful response or to learn a different way of responding.

When parents consistently ignore sinful anger, the child may continue practicing the same response until it becomes deeply established. This is why early correction matters.

The purpose of early correction is not merely to stop the present incident of sinful anger. It is also to interrupt the repeated practice of that anger before it develops into an established habit.

Proverbs 13:24 connects loving parental discipline with diligent correction.

Loving parents are concerned about more than their children's immediate happiness. They are concerned about the attitudes, thoughts, and patterns of behavior their children are developing.

A parent who lovingly corrects sinful anger is not simply concerned about what the child is doing today. That parent is also concerned about the responses the child is learning to practice for tomorrow.

Correction Must Include Instruction

Correction does not mean merely telling a child to stop being angry. Parents must explain why the response is wrong and teach the child how to respond biblically.

For example, a parent might say:

> "When I told you to stop playing, you became angry and argued. You wanted to continue playing, but that did not give you the right to speak disrespectfully. God instructs children to obey and honor their parents. I want you to practice responding respectfully."

This approach identifies the sinful behavior, addresses the desire behind it, and explains what the child should do differently.

Loving correction is not simply about stopping what is wrong. It is also about teaching what is right.

3. When Sinful Thoughts and Attitudes Become Habits

Parents often concentrate on correcting outward behavior. They tell their children to stop arguing, complaining, yelling, or refusing instructions.

Those responses must be addressed. However, sinful habits are not limited to outward behavior. Thoughts and attitudes can also become habitual.

Repeated Thinking Establishes Patterns

Consider a child who repeatedly thinks:

> "My parents never let me do anything."
>
> "They are always treating me unfairly."
>
> "I shouldn't have to obey them."
>
> "Nobody cares what I want."

If the child continually entertains these thoughts, they may become an established pattern of thinking. The child may begin interpreting almost every parental instruction as unfair or unreasonable. Consequently, resentment and anger may develop even before the parent finishes giving an instruction.

The outward argument is only part of the problem. The child has also developed a habitual way of thinking about parental authority.

Just as repeatedly practicing sinful anger can produce a habitual angry response, repeatedly entertaining selfish or rebellious thoughts can produce habitual patterns of sinful thinking.

This is why parents must address what their children are thinking, not merely what they are saying or doing.

The Importance of Renewing the Mind

Ephesians 4:22–24 teaches believers to put off the old self, be renewed in the spirit of their minds, and put on the new self.

This passage is foundational to understanding biblical change. The believer must not merely stop sinful behavior. His thinking must also be renewed according to God's Word.

Parents can use this biblical pattern to instruct their children.

A child who habitually thinks, "My parents are always being unfair," must learn to examine that thought in light of Scripture.

Is it true?

Is it a fair judgment?

Does it reflect a respectful attitude toward parental authority?

The child must learn to identify sinful thinking, put it off, and replace it with biblical thinking. However, simply telling a child to "think positively" or "have a better attitude" is not sufficient biblical instruction.

Parents must teach their children what Scripture specifically instructs them to put off and what they are to put on in its place.

Replacing Sinful Thinking with Biblical Thinking

Philippians 2:3–4 provides a practical Scripture pair for addressing selfish thoughts and attitudes.

PUT OFF — Philippians 2:3a (NASB 2020)

> "Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit"

The child must recognize and put off selfish thinking that places his own desires above the legitimate instructions and responsibilities of his parents.

PUT ON — Philippians 2:3b–4a (NASB 2020)

> "but with humility consider one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests"

The child must learn to replace selfish thinking with humility and consideration for others.

Consider a child who is told to stop playing and complete a responsibility. His immediate thought may be, "That's not fair! I want to keep playing!"

Rather than continuing to entertain that selfish thought, the child should remember Philippians 2:3–4 and deliberately consider his parents' instructions and responsibilities instead of concentrating exclusively on what he wants.

He must learn that his own desires are not the only consideration. His parents have responsibilities, and God has instructed him to obey and honor them (Ephesians 6:1–2).

This does not mean the child will never experience disappointment. It means he must learn to respond to disappointment without allowing selfish desires to control his thoughts, attitudes, and behavior.

Parents should encourage their children to memorize this Scripture pair and practice applying it whenever selfish thoughts begin to develop.

The goal is not merely to stop arguing. It is to replace the selfish thinking that contributes to sinful anger and rebellion with biblical humility and consideration for others.

When children repeatedly put off selfish thoughts and deliberately practice biblical thinking, they are learning a new pattern of responding. Over time, what was once a habitual pattern of selfish thinking can be replaced with a habitual pattern of biblical thinking.

Parents Must Address the Heart

A child may stop arguing outwardly while continuing to harbor resentment. He may complete a chore while thinking angrily about his parents. He may obey only because he fears losing a privilege.

Although outward compliance is important, it is not the ultimate goal of biblical parenting. Parents should help their children understand why their attitudes and thoughts matter to God. They should ask thoughtful questions, listen carefully, and use Scripture to teach biblical responses.

For example, after correcting a child's disrespectful response, a parent might ask:

"What were you thinking when I told you to stop playing?"

"What did you want that you were not getting?"

"What does Philippians 2:3–4 teach you to put off?"

"What does that passage teach you to put on?"

These questions can help the child identify the thoughts and desires that contributed to his sinful response and learn how to replace them with biblical thinking.

Parents must remember that they cannot know everything taking place in their child's heart. Only God knows the heart perfectly.

The goal is not to accuse children of motives their parents cannot establish. Rather, it is to help children honestly examine their own thoughts, desires, and attitudes according to God's Word.

Biblical correction must address both the outward behavior and the inward thoughts and attitudes that contribute to it.

When parents consistently teach their children to put off sinful thinking and put on biblical thinking, they are helping them develop new patterns of thought and behavior that honor God.

4. When Parents Discipline in Anger

There is another problem that must be addressed.

Sometimes parents respond to their children's sinful anger with sinful anger of their own.

A child argues.

The parent becomes irritated.

The child continues resisting.

The parent raises his voice, makes threats, or speaks harshly.

What began as an attempt to correct the child's behavior becomes an angry confrontation between parent and child.

This is not biblical discipline.

Parents Are Also Responsible for Their Responses

Ephesians 6:4 instructs fathers not to provoke their children to anger but to bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

The passage places responsibilities upon parents as well as children. Parents are responsible to discipline and instruct. They are also responsible to avoid sinful treatment that provokes their children.

A parent who corrects a child in uncontrolled anger may be demonstrating the very behavior he is attempting to correct. For example, a father tells his son that yelling is wrong while yelling at him. A mother demands respectful speech while speaking harshly and disrespectfully to her daughter.

Such responses create confusion. Children need to see their parents practicing the biblical principles they are teaching.

Discipline Must Not Become Retaliation

Parents should examine their motives when correcting their children. Are they seeking to teach biblical obedience? Or are they reacting because they feel disrespected, embarrassed, or inconvenienced?

There is an important difference between correcting a child's sin and punishing a child out of personal anger. Biblical discipline seeks the child's good. Sinful retaliation seeks to satisfy the parent's frustration.

Parents must never use discipline as an excuse for intimidation, humiliation, threats, physical abuse, or other harmful treatment. Parental authority is a responsibility entrusted by God, not permission to mistreat children.

What Should Parents Do When They Become Angry?

Parents must apply the same biblical principles to themselves that they teach their children.

When a parent responds to disobedience with sinful anger, yelling, threatening, or harsh words, that parent must recognize his own sinful response and replace it with biblical conduct.

Ephesians 4:31–32 provides a clear PUT OFF / PUT ON Scripture pair for addressing sinful anger.

PUT OFF — Ephesians 4:31 (NASB 2020)

> "All bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and slander must be removed from you, along with all malice."

Parents must put off sinful anger and the attitudes and behaviors that accompany it. This includes yelling, threatening, insulting, harboring resentment, and responding harshly when children disobey.

PUT ON — Ephesians 4:32 (NASB 2020)

> "Be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you."

Parents must replace sinful anger with kindness, compassion, and forgiveness. This means correcting their children with patience, speaking respectfully, and exercising self-control even when their children are disobedient.

Consider a father who becomes angry when his son repeatedly argues about completing a responsibility. Rather than raising his voice or making threats, the father must deliberately put off his sinful anger and put on kindness and compassion. He must still correct his son's disobedience, but he must do so without responding sinfully himself.

Parents should memorize Ephesians 4:31–32 and deliberately practice applying these verses whenever they are tempted to respond in sinful anger.

When a parent has sinned against a child, he should acknowledge his wrongdoing and seek forgiveness.

For example:

> "I was wrong to yell at you. My anger was sinful, and I am asking you to forgive me. Your disobedience still needs to be addressed, but I should not have responded that way."

Such an acknowledgment does not undermine parental authority. It demonstrates that God's Word applies to everyone in the family.

Parents must not merely teach their children to put off sinful anger and put on biblical responses. They must faithfully practice the same biblical pattern themselves.

As parents repeatedly put off sinful anger and put on kindness and compassion, they are developing new patterns of responding that provide a godly example for their children.

5. Teaching Children to Put Off and Put On

Many parents understand that their children should stop arguing, complaining, and responding with sinful anger. But they may not know how to help their children change.

They repeatedly say:

> "Stop arguing."
>
> "Don't talk to me that way."
>
> "Quit getting angry."
>
> "Stop complaining."

These statements identify undesirable behavior, but they do not fully explain what the child should practice instead. Biblical instruction must include both putting off sinful conduct and putting on godly conduct.

The Biblical Pattern for Change

Ephesians 4:22–24 describes the pattern of putting off the old self, being renewed in the mind, and putting on the new self. The passage concerns the new life of believers in Christ.

Parents can teach this pattern while remembering that true spiritual transformation is not produced merely by parental instruction or behavioral exercises. God's Word provides the standard for change, and genuine spiritual renewal depends upon His work.

The practical principle is straightforward. It is not enough to identify what must stop. Children must also learn what should replace it.

A Practical Example: Arguing with Parents

Suppose a child habitually argues whenever his parents give an instruction.

The parent can teach the following Scripture passages.

PUT OFF — Ephesians 4:29a

The first part of the verse prohibits unwholesome speech.

The parent explains that disrespectful, insulting, or sinful argumentative speech must be put off.

PUT ON — Ephesians 4:29b

The remainder of the verse instructs believers to speak words that are good for edification according to the need of the moment.

The child must learn to speak in a manner that is appropriate, respectful, and helpful.

ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTION — Ephesians 6:1–2

Children are instructed to obey their parents in the Lord and to honor their father and mother.

These passages provide clear biblical instruction concerning both speech and obedience.

Teaching the Replacement Response

The parent should explain the difference between the sinful response and the biblical response.

For example:

> "When I tell you to complete a responsibility, arguing is not an acceptable response. God instructs you to obey and honor your parents. You need to practice listening and answering respectfully."

The parent can then teach an appropriate response.

> "Yes, Mom."
>
> "Yes, Dad."
>
> "May I ask a question?"
>
> "May I explain something respectfully?"

These phrases are examples, not magical words.

The important issue is that the child learns to respond with genuine respect and obedience rather than sinful anger and resistance.

Practice the New Response

Suppose a mother tells her son to put away his toys. He responds, "Why do I always have to do everything?"

Instead of entering into a lengthy argument, she calmly identifies the problem. "That was a disrespectful response. I want you to stop and think about how God wants you to answer." She then gives him an opportunity to respond appropriately and complete the instruction.

This process may need to be repeated. The child is learning to replace a familiar sinful response with a different pattern of conduct.

Parents should also recognize appropriate responses when they occur. When the child responds respectfully in a situation where he previously would have argued, the parent can acknowledge the improvement.

The purpose is not simply to produce outward conformity. It is to teach biblical obedience and encourage the child to practice it consistently.

6. Why Repetition Matters in Biblical Change

A common mistake parents make is expecting immediate, permanent change after one correction. A child may acknowledge that his anger was wrong. He may apologize sincerely. He may promise not to respond that way again. Yet the next time he is disappointed, he becomes angry.

The parent may conclude that the child was not sincere or that the instruction was ineffective. But another factor must be considered.

The child may have spent months or years practicing the sinful response.

Established Habits Do Not Disappear Simply Because They Are Recognized

Recognizing sinful behavior is important. Confessing sin is important. But recognizing and confessing an established sinful habit does not automatically mean that the habitual response has been replaced.

The child must learn to practice a different response. First Timothy 4:7 instructs believers to discipline themselves for the purpose of godliness.

The principle of deliberate spiritual discipline is important. Children need more than information about what is right. They need repeated instruction and opportunities to practice appropriate responses.

A Practical Plan for Parents

Parents can use a simple approach when helping a child who repeatedly responds with sinful anger.

First, identify the specific sinful response.

Avoid vague descriptions such as "You always have a bad attitude."

Identify the actual problem.

For example: "You argue whenever I tell you to stop playing."

Second, identify the biblical replacement.

Explain what Scripture requires.

For example: "God instructs children to obey and honor their parents. You must learn to respond respectfully."

Third, teach one appropriate Scripture pair.

For disrespectful speech, Ephesians 4:29 provides a helpful PUT OFF / PUT ON assignment.

Keep the instruction focused so the child understands what is expected.

Fourth, require appropriate practice.

When the child responds sinfully, correct the response and provide an opportunity to practice the biblical replacement.

Fifth, continue the instruction consistently.

Do not abandon the process simply because the child struggles.

A sinful response that has been practiced repeatedly may require considerable instruction and practice before a different pattern becomes established.

Repetition Must Not Become Mechanical

Parents must be careful not to reduce biblical change to a mechanical exercise. A child can repeat respectful words without possessing a respectful attitude.

Parents should therefore continue addressing the child's thinking, desires, and motives. They should encourage honesty, confession, repentance, and obedience from the heart.

The repeated practice of godly conduct is important, but it must remain connected to biblical instruction and spiritual responsibility.

7. When Children Say, "You Don't Love Me"

Few statements are more painful for a loving parent than hearing a child say, "You don't love me."

Such statements often occur when parents establish boundaries, refuse requests, or administer correction. A child may interpret discipline as rejection because the discipline interferes with something he wants.

The parent must respond wisely.

Love Is Not Measured by a Child's Immediate Approval

Hebrews 12:11 explains that discipline does not seem joyful at the time but sorrowful. Nevertheless, it can afterward produce the peaceful fruit of righteousness in those trained by it.

The passage concerns God's discipline of His children, but it provides an important perspective on the unpleasant nature of correction. Discipline may be painful or unwelcome even when it is appropriate.

Parents must not assume that their children will always appreciate correction at the moment it is administered. A child may be disappointed, upset, or angry.

Those reactions do not automatically mean the parent has acted wrongly. However, neither do they automatically prove that the discipline was appropriate. Parents must evaluate their conduct according to Scripture, not merely according to the child's approval or disapproval.

Explain the Purpose of Discipline

Parents should help children understand why correction is necessary.

For example, a parent might explain:

> "I love you, and that is one reason I cannot ignore your disrespectful speech. When you continue practicing anger and arguing, those responses can become habits. I want to help you learn to respond in a way that honors God."

This explanation connects correction with the child's long-term welfare. The parent is not simply attempting to win an argument. The parent is helping the child recognize the danger of repeatedly practicing sinful behavior.

Listen Without Surrendering Biblical Responsibility

Sometimes a child's complaint may reveal a legitimate concern. Perhaps the parent misunderstood the situation. Perhaps the consequence was unreasonable. Perhaps the parent spoke harshly.

Parents should be willing to listen and acknowledge their own mistakes. But when correction is appropriate, parents must not abandon their responsibility merely because the child becomes upset.

Loving discipline requires both compassion and firmness.

8. Consistency Is Essential

One of the greatest obstacles to effective parental discipline is inconsistency. A parent may correct arguing one day and ignore it the next.

A child may be required to obey immediately when the parent is in a good mood but permitted to delay when the parent is tired.

Consequences may depend more upon the parent's frustration than upon the child's conduct.

Such inconsistency creates confusion.

Children Need Clear Expectations

Parents should explain what behavior is expected and why. Children should understand that sinful anger, disrespectful speech, and disobedience are not acceptable responses to parental correction. Expectations should be appropriate to the child's age, understanding, and abilities.

Parents should also distinguish between deliberate disobedience and situations in which a child genuinely needs additional instruction or assistance. Consistency does not mean treating every situation identically. It means applying biblical principles faithfully and fairly.

Avoid Endless Arguments

Some parents unintentionally encourage arguing by allowing every instruction to become a lengthy debate.

A parent gives an instruction.

The child argues.

The parent explains again.

The child continues arguing.

The discussion continues until the parent either gives in or becomes angry. The child may learn that arguing delays obedience or occasionally produces the desired result.

Parents should be willing to answer reasonable questions and listen to legitimate concerns. But they should not allow sinful arguing to replace obedience. A calm

explanation followed by consistent expectations is generally more helpful than repeated threats or angry confrontations.

Parents Must Be Consistent in Their Own Conduct

Children should see their parents practicing patience, kindness, respectful speech, and self-control. A parent who continually responds in anger while demanding that the child stop being angry presents a contradictory example.

Parents must be willing to correct themselves as faithfully as they correct their children. The home should be a place where God's Word governs the conduct of everyone, not merely the children.

9. When Correction Does Not Produce Immediate Change

Some parents become discouraged because their children continue responding with sinful anger despite repeated corrections. They wonder whether anything is working. They may be tempted to give up or become increasingly severe.

Neither response is the answer.

Do Not Confuse Slow Progress with Failure

When a child has developed an established pattern of sinful anger, change may require considerable time and repeated instruction. Parents should look for evidence of progress.

Is the child beginning to recognize his sinful response?

Does he sometimes stop arguing sooner?

Is he learning to acknowledge wrongdoing?

Is he beginning to respond respectfully in situations that previously produced anger?

Such improvements should be encouraged. However, parents should not establish an arbitrary timetable and assume that every child will change at the same rate. Children differ in age, maturity, understanding, and circumstances.

Faithful instruction remains the parent's responsibility even when progress is slower than expected.

Examine Whether the Approach Needs Adjustment

When repeated correction is not producing improvement, parents should evaluate their approach.

Are the expectations clear?

Is the child receiving biblical instruction or merely consequences?

Are the parents responding consistently?

Are they correcting with sinful anger?

Are they helping the child practice a biblical replacement?

Are they addressing the child's thoughts and attitudes as well as outward behavior?

These questions may reveal areas where parental instruction needs improvement.

Seek Help When Necessary

Some family situations involve more than ordinary arguing or occasional angry responses. Persistent aggression, threats, intimidation, serious emotional distress, or unsafe behavior require careful attention.

Parents should not assume that every difficulty can be resolved through the same discipline procedure. When problems are severe, persistent, or beyond the parents' ability to address safely, they should seek appropriate assistance.

A qualified biblical counselor may help parents examine their approach and develop a more consistent plan for instruction. Where safety, developmental, or medical concerns are involved, appropriate professional evaluation or intervention may also be necessary.

Seeking assistance is not an abandonment of biblical parenting. It may be part of exercising wise and responsible care.

10. A Practical Biblical Assignment for Parents and Children

The following assignment is designed to help parents address a child's repeated sinful anger and disrespectful speech. It should be adapted to the child's age, understanding, and circumstances.

The assignment is not intended to replace appropriate parental judgment or to be used in situations involving abuse or danger.

Step One: Identify One Specific Problem

Choose one repeated sinful response to address. For example: "My child argues whenever I give an instruction he does not like."

Avoid attempting to correct every problem at once.

A focused assignment helps the child understand what needs to change.

Step Two: Teach the appropriate put off and put on Bible verse

Use Ephesians 4:29.

PUT OFF — Ephesians 4:29a

Put off unwholesome speech, including disrespectful and sinful argumentative responses.

PUT ON — Ephesians 4:29b

Put on speech that is appropriate, edifying, and beneficial to the hearer.

Explain the passages in language the child can understand.

Use Ephesians 6:1–2 to reinforce the responsibility to obey and honor parents.

Encourage the child to memorize the Scripture assignment when developmentally appropriate.

Step Three: Identify the Old Response

Help the child recognize what he typically says or does when corrected.

For example:

> "When Mom tells me to stop playing, I complain and argue."

Ask the child to consider what he was wanting and thinking when he responded.

Do not force the child to agree with a parent's guess about his motives.

Help him examine his own response honestly.

Step Four: Identify the New Response

Teach the child what an appropriate response should look like.

For example:

> "When Mom tells me to stop playing, I will answer respectfully and obey."

The child should understand that respectful questions may be appropriate, but sinful arguing and refusal to obey are not.

Step Five: Practice the Biblical Response

When the child responds sinfully, calmly identify the problem and direct him to practice the appropriate response, the put on.

Provide opportunities to practice respectful speech and obedience in ordinary daily situations.

The purpose is to help the child learn a new pattern of responding.

Step Six: Address Sinful Thinking

If the child repeatedly complains that his parents are unfair, help him examine those thoughts according to Scripture.

Teach him to distinguish between legitimate concerns and sinful resentment.

Encourage him to replace rebellious thinking with biblical truth.

Step Seven: Encourage Progress

Recognize occasions when the child responds appropriately.

Encourage him to continue practicing biblical obedience.

Do not demand perfection as evidence that the instruction is worthwhile.

Look for sincere effort, growing understanding, and increasing consistency.

Step Eight: Parents Must Practice Their Assignment

Parents should also identify sinful responses they need to put off.

For example:

PUT OFF: Ephesians 4:29 “Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth” (Yelling, threatening, insulting, or responding harshly).

PUT ON: “Only such a word as is good for edification” (Kindness, patience, compassion, and self-control).

Children benefit from seeing that their parents are also seeking to obey God's Word.

11. An Important Word About Abuse and Personal Safety

Biblical discipline must never be used to justify abuse. Parents do not have unlimited authority over their children. They are accountable to God for how they exercise the responsibility entrusted to them.

Physical violence, intimidation, humiliation, degrading treatment, and threats are not acceptable methods of biblical instruction. A child who is frightened because of abusive treatment should not automatically be accused of rebellion or sinful anger. Likewise, a child's resistance to an abusive or dangerous demand must not be treated as ordinary disobedience.

Parents must distinguish between a child who is sinfully resisting appropriate correction and a child who is responding to mistreatment or danger. If a child is being abused or is in immediate danger, protecting the child must take priority over ordinary discipline procedures.

Appropriate protective and professional assistance should be sought, and suspected abuse should be reported in accordance with applicable law.

The biblical responsibility to honor parents does not require children to submit to abuse or conceal wrongdoing. Loving discipline seeks a child's good. It must never become a means of controlling, frightening, or harming a child.

Conclusion: Loving Discipline Looks Beyond Today

When your child becomes angry because you have corrected him, it can be tempting to avoid confrontation. You may want to overlook the behavior because you are tired of arguing. You may wonder whether correction is damaging your relationship. You may even question whether insisting upon obedience is worth the conflict.

But Scripture teaches that loving parents have a responsibility to instruct and discipline their children. Proverbs 13:24 connects diligent discipline with parental love.

That responsibility involves more than stopping an argument or obtaining immediate compliance. It includes helping children recognize sinful responses and teaching them how to respond biblically.

Remember this important principle: Not every expression of sinful anger is habitual. But sinful anger that is repeatedly practiced can become habitual. This is why early correction matters.

When parents consistently overlook sinful anger, children may continue practicing the same response until it becomes deeply established. What begins as an occasional argument may eventually become the child's customary response to disappointment, correction, and unwanted responsibilities.

Loving parents recognize this danger. They understand that their responsibility is not merely to deal with today's behavior but also to help their children develop biblical patterns of responding.

They teach their children to put off sinful anger, disrespectful speech, and rebellious attitudes. They teach them to put on respectful speech, obedience, kindness, and self-control. They patiently provide opportunities to practice those responses. And they recognize that they must practice the same biblical principles in their own lives.

Parents cannot guarantee that their children will always make righteous choices. Nor can they produce spiritual transformation through discipline alone. But they can faithfully teach God's Word, provide appropriate correction, demonstrate godly conduct, and pray for their children.

Loving discipline is not simply about stopping what is wrong today. It is about teaching what is right so that children learn to practice godly responses tomorrow.

That is one of the important responsibilities God has entrusted to Christian parents.

Final Encouragement to Parents

If you have struggled with your child's anger and resistance to correction, do not assume that the situation is hopeless.

Begin by examining your own responses.

Identify one specific sinful pattern that needs attention.

Teach the relevant Scripture.

Explain what must be put off and what must be put on.

Help your child practice the biblical replacement.

Continue with patience, consistency, and prayer.

Do not allow the child's immediate displeasure to determine whether appropriate correction is loving. And do not allow your own frustration to determine how discipline is administered.

Remember that biblical parenting is not simply about controlling a child's behavior. It is about faithfully teaching God's Word and helping children learn to live according to it.

Additional Biblical Counseling Resources

For additional practical biblical counseling instruction concerning anger, marriage, parenting, and the development of godly habits, visit:

https://davidtylerresources.com

Resources include free biblical counseling booklets and more extensive books and workbooks designed to help Christians understand and apply the teaching of Scripture to everyday problems.

About the Author

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He has served in pastoral and biblical counseling ministry for many years and has written extensively on marriage, parenting, anger, and practical biblical change.

Additional books, articles, and biblical counseling resources are available at:

davidtylerresources.com