

PARENTING TIPS

Saying “NO” is A Spiritual Challenge

Some kids have a very hard time accepting no as an answer. They argue, whine, or badger to try to persuade their parents to change their minds. Parents must use several strategies to help kids live within limits and be satisfied with what they have.

The solution is contentment. Contentment comes from trust in God. You may want to help children understand that their inability to accept no as an answer is really a spiritual issue. As children are able to understand, you can share with them about godliness and why you are taking such a strong stand in certain areas.

One dad remembered a key turning point with his teenage daughter when he approached her problem of arguing from a spiritual perspective, “Honey, I know you are just focusing on the limits I’m place on you but would you think about something else just for a minute. Our relationship is important to me and I try to say yes to you whenever I can. Sometimes I have to say no and when I do, I feel hurt because you attack me as if I’m the enemy. Your persistence hurts our relationship. That’s why God talks about contentment in the Bible. Contentment is the ability to be grateful for what you already have instead of complaining about what you don’t have. Would you please think about my limits as a spiritual challenge for you?”

Children who are demanding and grow up with unchecked selfishness will have a harder time as they grow older. They won’t have the character necessary to understand and accept the limits that God may place on them. As you help your children address their arguing, badgering, and whining, you will begin to prepare them for a life of contentment. We all need to learn to live within boundaries, whether they are financial limits or health restrictions. Limits are a part of life. Contentment means that we say no to things we can’t afford or shouldn’t eat. If children can’t accept no from their parents, how will they ever learn to say no to themselves or accept limits from God?