

## Grace Based Parenting: Discipline and Strong-Willed Children

Discipline, correction, and redirection are sophisticated forms of God's grace. God loves us too much to stand idly by and watch us self-destruct. We'll learn how God's grace empowers parents to maintain order and apply discipline all the while maintaining an intimate heart-connection to their children. All kids struggle when it comes to aligning with the leadership of their parents, but strong-willed children ramp this tension up many times over. We'll learn how God's grace can come to our rescue when we're assigned highly-compelling children to raise. More than that, we'll learn how grace positions us better to align their compelling personalities to bring glory and honor to God.

**Tim Kimmel** is the founder and Executive Director of Family Matters, whose goal is to see families transformed by God's grace into instruments of reformation and restoration. Tim develops resources for families and churches and conducts conferences throughout the world on the unique challenges facing today's families. He has authored many books, including: *Grace Based Parenting*, *Raising Kids for True Greatness*, *Little House on the Freeway*, *Connecting Church and Home*, and *Grace Filled Marriage*. Tim and his wife Darcy count their role as parents and grandparents as one of their greatest joys. God has blessed them with four children, their children's spouses, and a growing number of grandkids. Tim is a graduate of Bryan College (BA), Dallas Theological Seminary (Th.M.), and Western Seminary (D.Min.).

**Darcy Kimmel** is the Vice President of Family Matters, which she helped found with her husband, Tim Kimmel, in 1982. Family Matters is a ministry dedicated to "equipping families for every age and stage of life." Darcy has a heart for encouraging and equipping women to maximize their unique callings in life as wives, mothers, and grandmothers. She speaks at conferences with her husband regarding marriage and parenting issues. As a writer, Darcy is co-author of several books on parenting, grandparenting, and family relationships. Darcy is also a regular contributor to the Family Matters' blog and writes a quarterly column of encouragement and advice in Family Matters' publication, *Heart of the Home*. Darcy has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Family Studies from Ottawa University. Darcy loves being a wife and mom more than anything else she does.

**Kory Schuknecht** is one of the founding board members of Family Matters and has been leading the charge for spiritually strong families for over three decades. He continues to advocate for this powerful message through personal relationships and through the leadership he provides as the Pastor of Family Ministry at Scottsdale Bible Church; a church of more than 7000 congregants in metropolitan Phoenix. There he has served as an elder for much of the past thirty years as well as teaching in the Children's Ministry and Student Ministry. Kory and his wife Gail teamed with Tim and Darcy Kimmel to teach and disciple 30 young couples (for thirteen years) in the grace-based model of relationships. Kory and Gail have four children who bless them with their own expanding families. He has a Bachelor of Science in Business from Arizona State University.

### I. Applying Everyday Grace to Discipline and Correction

*God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. Hebrews 12: 10b*

A. Grace-based parents realize discipline is a form of \_\_\_\_\_ and follow four simple principles:

1. Have as few rules as possible.

2. Make sure expectations, boundaries and consequences are clear and consistent.
    - Clarify the moral reason behind a biblical standard.
    - Explain the practical reasons behind house rules.
  3. Don't make a rule that you are not committed to enforcing.
    - Inconsistency encourages children to push the envelope.
    - Nagging undermines grace and causes bitterness.
  4. Categorize infractions properly as \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ and discipline accordingly.
- B. Grace-based parents correct behavior out of love, not anger, by following five simple steps.
1. Avoid making the infraction personal by using reality discipline.
  2. Discipline with both the rules and the relationship in mind.
    - Rules without relationship lead to \_\_\_\_\_.
    - Relationship without rules leads to \_\_\_\_\_.
  3. Clarify the infraction and the consequence and then administer the discipline.
    - Never discipline at the height of your anger. Cool off first.
    - Make correction swift and memorable enough to deter them from repeating the offense.
    - Pray in your own heart that God uses this to develop, protect and direct your child.
  4. Choose a method of discipline that takes into account your own personal background, the child's age and personality style and the nature of the offense.
  5. Restore your child once the discipline is over and chalk this infraction up to a learning experience

## II. Applying Everyday Grace to Strong-willed Children

*...A child left to himself disgraces his mother...Discipline your son, and he will give you peace; he will bring delight to your soul. Proverbs 29: 15b, 17*

- A. An environment of grace is the ideal context for bringing the best out of a strong-willed child.
1. Too often we allow the overwhelming nature of our strong-willed child to rob us of the joy of parenting them.
  2. Strong-willed children are a \_\_\_\_\_ from God.
  3. The biggest obstacle to bringing the best out of strong-willed children is weak-willed \_\_\_\_\_.
- B. There are several factors that may contribute to the compelling nature of your strong-willed child:
1. Their unredeemed \_\_\_\_\_.
    - They want control over themselves and their parents. This must not be tolerated.
    - We must be patient and consistent with them as they decide to turn their life over to God.
  2. A lack of structure and clearly defined \_\_\_\_\_ in their life.
    - Inconsistent rules and consequences
    - Cluttered schedules
    - Lack of time with Mom and Dad
    - Over-stimulation
    - Too much junk food
    - Not enough sleep
    - A marriage in disarray
  3. Performance-Based Parenting
    - Many times children misbehave or lose interest in school when there is a lack of praise, feelings of failure, and when we consistently communicate disappointment if they don't measure up.
    - We must avoid using grades as the primary measurement of your strong-willed child's future potential.

#### 4. Learning Difficulties

- Different learning styles are often misinterpreted as a disorder.
- Don't allow a diagnosis to become a \_\_\_\_\_ that shames your child or becomes an excuse.
- Realize many so-called "learning disorders" are actually incredible \_\_\_\_\_ that your child has been given.
- Medication may be a viable aid to help your child deal with their challenges, but it should only be used after other external pressures are dealt with (See #2 on previous page).
- Learning difficulties are tailor-made for teaching your child how to depend more on God for their strength.

*My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is perfected in your weaknesses.*  
**2 Corinthians 12:9**

C. Some children are strong-willed because God \_\_\_\_\_ them that way.

1. Knowing the unique make-up of your child's strengths helps a parent accept and appreciate the way God made them.

*He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity. 1 Timothy 3:4*

2. Strong-willed children usually want some \_\_\_\_\_ in what is happening in their life.

- As parents, we must not surrender our authority while at the same time allowing our kids to make some choices.
- Our job as parents is to keep our children \_\_\_\_\_ control, not to control them.

3. A strong-willed child responds well to:

- Clear boundaries
- Consistent Consequences
- Praise and rewards for cooperative behavior