



WEEK ONE

MATTHEW 3:3-4, 11, 13-15

John the Baptist tells people to get ready because Jesus is coming.

**SAY
THIS**

**WHO CAN YOU FOLLOW?
I CAN FOLLOW JESUS.**



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**SAY
THIS**

**WHO CAN YOU FOLLOW?
I CAN FOLLOW JESUS.**

**DO
THIS**



MORNING TIME

When you go into your child's room this month, say, "Good morning, [child's name]! Give me a big hug. (Give child a hug.) Today's a great day to do things Jesus' way!"

**DO
THIS**



MORNING TIME

When you go into your child's room this month, say, "Good morning, [child's name]! Give me a big hug. (Give child a hug.) Today's a great day to do things Jesus' way!"

REMEMBER THIS

"Come and follow me," Jesus said."
Matthew 4:19, NIV

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**BASIC
TRUTH**

JESUS WANTS TO BE MY FRIEND FOREVER.

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THE ART OF DISCIPLINE: MAKING IT HELPFUL

by Gina McClain

Shepherding the hearts of our kids is one of those daily behaviors that does more to refine and challenge me than anything else in my life. In my interactions with my kids, God reveals more to me about my own humanity than I care to know, particularly in disciplinary situations. One thing I've learned about kids is that I cannot control their actions. There are times when I try. There are times I guide, nudge, remind, even harass . . . Yet in the end, they decide what action they will take. Not me. I don't know about you, but that really gets under my skin. So I have to actively pray for guidance and patience. Recently, I was reminded of these words in Ephesians 4:29:

"Don't say anything that would hurt another person. Instead, speak only what is good so that you can give help wherever it is needed. That way, what you say will help those who hear you." (GW)

It's a timely reminder for me that my role as mom is to fight for the heart of my kids, to create a culture of unconditional love in my home that fuels their emotional and moral health. Approaching discipline in a helpful way takes Practice, Planning, and Patience.

1. I need to PRACTICE the way that I talk to my kids. That means that

through my everyday interactions I need to habitually speak words that are helpful to them. If I practice speaking them in positive interactions, I'm more likely to remember to speak them in a negative interaction.

2. Good discipline starts with good PLANNING. If my child makes the wrong decision, what are the consequences? Do they know what they are? There have been times we've sent a child to their room letting them know, "We're going to think about the right consequences for your action. In a little while, we will sit down with you and talk through them."

3. PATIENCE is critical when fighting for the heart of your child. Why? Because children are going to make mistakes. And my ability to be patient with their mistakes communicates unconditional love. They need a safe place to mess up and know that they are capable of doing better the next time.

In what way can you make your discipline more helpful than harmful this week as you fight for the heart of your child?

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WEEK TWO

MATTHEW 4:18-22

Jesus tells Andrew, Peter, John, and James to follow Him, and they do.

SAY
THIS

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I CAN FOLLOW JESUS.**



WEEK TWO

MATTHEW 4:18-22

Jesus tells Andrew, Peter, John, and James to follow Him, and they do.

SAY
THIS

**WHO CAN YOU FOLLOW?
I CAN FOLLOW JESUS.**

DO
THIS



DRIVE TIME

As you drive, ask your child to name the color of the car you are following. Each time the car changes, ask your child to name the color of the new car you are following. Talk about how we can follow Jesus and He will show us the right way to go.

DO
THIS



DRIVE TIME

As you drive, ask your child to name the color of the car you are following. Each time the car changes, ask your child to name the color of the new car you are following. Talk about how we can follow Jesus and He will show us the right way to go.

REMEMBER THIS

"Come and follow me," Jesus said."
Matthew 4:19, NIV

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BASIC
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FIGHT FOR THE HEART

by Reggie Joiner

My firstborn daughter, Hannah, has a lot of leadership potential. That's just another way of saying that she challenged the process a lot growing up in our house.

I distinctively remember having a conversation with her one night when I was tucking her into bed. It was one of those days when there had been a lot of conflict, and she had gotten in about as much trouble as a five-year-old can. For some reason, I was compelled to ask her a question right before I turned out the lights. I said, "Do you think I love you more when you're good, or more when you're bad?"

She immediately responded, "You love me more when I'm good!" My heart sank when I realized that was her perception of our relationship. I tried to apologize to her for my reactions as a parent. I remember telling her that night (and for several months afterwards every night), "I hope you will always remember that I love you the same, when you are good or bad."

It's so easy for us to make the rules more important than the relationship. It's in the tone of our voice, our body language, and our eyes. If we are not careful, disappointment in our kids' behavior can be translated into their hearts as rejection. The truth is our children will always challenge the rules

and debate our reasoning, but we should strive to parent in a way that they can never question how much we love them.

Looking back, I realize that I have never explained the rules so clearly that my children agreed and said in unison, "Oh, now we understand, father! You have explained it so well. We will do exactly what you say." It is natural and normal for kids to challenge the process. As they move toward independence, it will happen more frequently. That's the problem with rules—you can always debate their rationale, but you can't debate a trusted relationship. Unfortunately, most of us parents are better skilled at fighting to win the argument than we are at fighting to win the heart.

It's not that parents shouldn't give answers when kids ask, "Why?" It's just that the answers carry more weight when combined with a healthy relationship. One of the most powerful things a parent can do is learn to communicate in a style that values the relationship.

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WEEK THREE

MATTHEW 9:9-10

Jesus tells Matthew the tax collector to follow Him, and he does.

SAY THIS

**WHO CAN YOU FOLLOW?
I CAN FOLLOW JESUS.**



WEEK THREE

MATTHEW 9:9-10

Jesus tells Matthew the tax collector to follow Him, and he does.

SAY THIS

**WHO CAN YOU FOLLOW?
I CAN FOLLOW JESUS.**

DO THIS



CUDDLE TIME

Cuddle up with your child this month and pray, "Dear God, thank you for giving us Jesus to show us how to love you and love others. I pray as [child's name] gets older that [he/she] will follow Jesus so [he/she] will know the right way to go. Help me be a good example for [child's name] of what it means to follow Jesus. We love You, God. In Jesus' name, amen."

REMEMBER THIS

"Come and follow me," Jesus said."
Matthew 4:19, NIV

BASIC TRUTH

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DO THIS



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MAKING PEACE WITH YOUR KIDS

by Sarah Anderson

Have your kids ever hurt your feelings? I don't mean their critique of your clothes, cooking, or stupid jokes. I mean the thing they say that just cuts to the quick.

A couple of weeks ago, one of my boys said something and it hurt so much, it felt like the wind was knocked out of me. He's young enough where I don't think the words were said with the intention to hurt, and he was oblivious to how hurtful his words were. But I am not naïve. I know a day will come when my boys will know the power of their words. And then they'll use those words to cause pain on purpose.

As hard as it was, I decided to not let those careless words create a rift. To not let hurt feelings dictate my behavior towards him. To move towards the one I felt inclined to back away from.

I decided to be a peacemaker. To be a mender of things made wrong—even when I was the one who had been wronged. To move past what had been broken in me, in order to make right what was broken between my son and me.

Not just a peace-liker. Not simply a peace-supporter. But a peace-maker

Jesus said peacemakers are called the children of God.

James, the brother of Jesus, said peacemakers reap a harvest of righteousness.

I say peacemakers have a better chance of a healthy relationship with their kids in the future.

Making peace is hard. Moving towards the one who's hurt us is challenging. But a parent who makes peace with their kids now sows a relationship of peace in the future.

No matter what my child does or says, no matter what my child doesn't say, or doesn't do, I want there to be no doubt about what he'll get from me: a mom who'll go to great lengths—not to keep the peace, but to make the peace.

As parents, let's work on resembling our heavenly Father in this. And live in expectation of what might happen when we do.

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WEEK FOUR

MATTHEW 21:1-11, 15-16

Jesus enters Jerusalem riding a donkey, and the people praise Him.

SAY
THIS

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WEEK FOUR

MATTHEW 21:1-11, 15-16

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SAY
THIS

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DO
THIS



BATH TIME

As you bathe your child, drag your finger through the water. Ask your child to follow your finger with their finger. Have fun making circles and figure eights. Talk about how we can follow Jesus and He will always show us the right way to go.

REMEMBER THIS

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THE POWER OF A QUESTION

by Sarah Anderson

Questions are powerful—made all the more powerful when they are a response to what we intentionally listened for first. Purposeful questions are the best and easiest tool we have as parents to invest in the lives of our kids. They communicate that we want more than information—we want insight into what makes our kids tick, motivates them, challenges them, and hurts them.

A good first question says, “I’m interested.” Active listening says, “I care.” An intentional second question says, “You matter.”

And what follows creates relational equity between you and your kids. So sure, we can start, with the “How was your day?” “What happened at school?” “What did you learn at church?” But what happens next can’t be found in any book, blog, or article. What happens next is up to us. It can’t be scripted or predicted, but that’s where the magic happens.

It happens in the quiet, as your child slowly peels back the layers of their life, and you thirstily drink in what they have carefully entrusted with you. And it happens when your reaction and your response communicate over and over and over again, “You’ve got my full attention, there is no where I would

rather be, thanks for letting me in.”

Be prepared. You may get more than you bargained for. You may learn the details of everyone’s show-and-tell treasures, about the kid next to them on the bus, or the specifics of what was served in the lunch line. But you’ll also become the best student of your child and then earn yourself a reputation as being the person in your child’s life who did whatever it took to get to the heart of the matter, to get to the heart of them.

They may not know it now, but what you are working towards as a parent who asks a good first question, but even better second question, is becoming the best front row attendee to your kids’ lives they’ll ever know. Becoming their cheerleader, their confidant and their biographer of life, who remembers all the big stuff but has managed to tuck away the little stuff too—the stuff that makes your kids uniquely them and uniquely yours.

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