

## 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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## BIBLE STORY

**MATTHEW 21:1-11, 15-16**

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

## SAY THIS

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

## DO THIS



### MORNING TIME

When you go into your child's room this month, say, "Good morning! I see my sweet [child's name]. Today is a new day to follow Jesus!"



### DRIVE TIME

As you drive, ask your child to name the kind of the car you are following. Is it a little car, big car, van, or truck? You may even follow a motorcycle or police car! Each time the car changes, ask your child to name the new car you are following. Talk about how we can follow Jesus and He will show us the right way to go.



### CUDDLE TIME

Cuddle up with your child this month and pray, "Dear God, thank You for a great day with [child's name]. [He/she] is getting so big and learning so many new things. I pray one of the things [he/she] learns is to follow Jesus. Jesus is the best, and He will always show us the right way to go. We love You, God. In Jesus' name, amen."



### 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.

**BASIC  
TRUTH**

**JESUS WANTS TO BE MY FRIEND FOREVER.**