

*Parenting Tools:*

## **Dealing With Bullying**



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## **Parenting Tools:**

### *Helping Your Child Deal with Bullying*

Bullying can come in many forms. Complicating a parent's perception, boys and girls bully in different ways. Boys tend to be more blunt and physical, whereas girls take on snobby glares and sarcastic compliments. Whether it is through face-to-face interaction, gossip behind one's back, or cyber bullying through social media, there is, fortunately, a biblical response to bullying.

There are two methods to dealing with bullying, depending on if the bully is a confessing believer or if the bully is a nonbeliever.

#### **When the bully confesses to be a believer**

Help your child reflect on the following verses in the event that the bully confesses to be a believer: Matthew 18:15-17 & Luke 17:3-4

If your child feels as if he or she is being sinned against, then the first step for him or her (not you) is to confront the bully. Your child is not to confront in a physically threatening or revengeful way, but to confront in hopes that he or she might "gain the brother" back into fellowship. After the confrontation, if the person repents, then your child must forgive.

If the individual does not repent, then your child is allowed to bring two or three others with him or her to confront the bully a second time. Having the others come along adds witnesses and safeguards your child in several ways. First, the witnesses protect your child from the bully. Second, this measure allows the bully to understand his or her actions better now that multiple people are in agreement about the actions.

If the individual still does not repent, then you as a parent may bring church leadership in to help in the confrontation effort.

If the individual still refuses to repent, that person is asked to leave the church. In order for this person to leave the church, the pastors must be involved. Even at this point in the process, the hope is that the bully will still come to repentance. 1 Corinthians 5:5, in speaking about an immoral brother, instructs, “Deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.” Here is the belief that even by asking a person to leave the church is not outside the realm in which God can bring a person back to Himself.

One final note for dealing with a bully who claims to be a Christian: the bullying situation among believers should stay among believers. 1 Corinthians 6:1–4 says, “Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints? Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life? If then you have judgments concerning things pertaining to this life, do you appoint those who are least esteemed by the church to judge?”

#### **When the bully is not a professing believer**

Help your child reflect on the following verses in the event that the bully is not a believer: Matthew 5:38–48, Luke 18:1–8, Romans 12:17–21 & 1 Peter 3:13–17

It is easy to assume that when our children are being bullied the greatest goal is to stop the bullying; however, in the case of a bully who is a nonbeliever, remember that a good testimony about Jesus is the utmost goal. We are to act in a way that would be honorable in the sight of all.

Understand that the Lord hears us when we pray and that He promises justice in His timing. Our Heavenly Father is not like an unrighteous judge who is unaware of our adversaries. When we pray to Him, we can confidently believe that He will bring us justice.

We do not repay evil for evil, but rather we repay evil with good. Repaying evil with good shows that believers are different from unbelievers. As believers, our task is to be different from the unbelievers. Even unbelievers can love those who love them. What reward should we expect for doing what unbelievers do?

Like the widow in Luke 18, believers are given permission to tell proper authorities about bullying when it occurs. If bullying takes place in school, your child is allowed to tell a teacher or principal. On a sports team, he or she is allowed to tell the coach.