



***HOW DO I GET
THESE KIDS
TO LISTEN?***

4 Heart-Based Strategies for Christian Parents

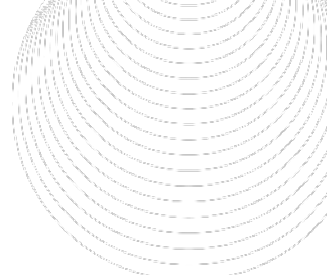

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Table Of Contents

BEHAVIOR STRATEGY #1 – THE REPEAT RE-DO	2
BEHAVIOR STRATEGY #2 – THE REQUIRED RESPONSE	5
BEHAVIOR STRATEGY #3 – CALM CONSISTENCY, CLEAR CONSEQUENCES	9
BEHAVIOR STRATEGY #4 – DISCIPLINE AS DISCIPLESHIP	13

01

***Behavior Strategy
#1 — The Repeat Re-
do***



In this ebook, I'll share multiple ways to quickly and effectively address common behavior issues with your kids through heart-based strategies that work.

While my wife and I got plenty of things wrong when our kids were young, these were some of the things we got right in balancing rules and relationship. I believe implementing these proven strategies will benefit any parent.

Strategy #1 – The Repeat Re-do

- Problem: Ever gotten an incorrect, inappropriate, or even disrespectful response from your child?
- Solution: What if you could correct your child's inappropriate responses on the fly? The Repeat Re-do strategy helps you to do just that.

For example, your child is 'hangry' and wants a snack, and naturally comes to you demanding, "Give me a snack!"

Rather than getting upset or sarcastically saying something back, you instead calmly respond with the repeat re-do strategy by looking them in the eyes and saying something like, "Let's try that again."

You might briefly explain what a respectful Christ-like response should look like and then allow them to respond correctly... "Please may I have a snack?", etc., before getting what they want.

This scenario can take on many forms with a child, including things they might say or request. However, the strategy is the same. Whenever their response or tone is incorrect, calmly ask them to repeat what they said, but with an appropriate response, whether that be something more kind, polite, or respectful.

This helps them on the fly to:

- Recognize that their behavior, tone, or approach was not appropriate
- Gives them an immediate opportunity and practice to correct it



Benefits of the Repeat Re-do Strategy

With consistency over time, your child, through practice, will quickly catch on that asking or responding the proper way the first time is always in their best interest.

By doing this, you are subtly helping your child acknowledge a needed change in their behavior. You're also guiding their heart towards a simple and respectful solution to fix it before having to resort to more serious discipline strategies if the misbehavior were to continue.

Whether the issue at hand is an improper verbal response, a temper flare, or a selfish reaction, a repeat re-do gives you an on-the-spot training opportunity to help your child course correct by reframing the situation and their proper response to it.

Grace-Based Approach of the Repeat Re-do Strategy

As parents, our job is to prepare our children for life and adulthood. This simple training strategy helps us 'train up our child in the way he should go.' (Prov. 22:6).

A repeat re-do is also a small version of the biblical principle of renewing our mind (Romans 12:2)—continually changing the way we think to become more like Jesus.

In a sense, as parents, we are our child's "Holy Spirit" until they come to know Christ. By teaching children self-awareness to self-correct over time, you can prepare them for the voice of the Holy Spirit, who will help them continue making changes and course corrections for the rest of their lives.

In the next few pages, we'll talk about behavior strategy #2 — How to deal with a child who constantly uses excuses like, "But I didn't hear you" or "I forgot."

02

***Behavior Strategy
#2 — The Required
Response***

As a child, our youngest son had a terrible habit of repeatedly failing to do what he was asked. And his excuse was always the same... "But, I didn't hear you," or "I forgot."

On some level, all parents deal with kids not doing what they're told. And most kids have a million excuses for why they don't obey. Especially some common ones.

Because we're always giving out instructions, as parents, we can begin to feel more like drill sergeants than disciple-makers, and experts at behavior management rather than heart shaping.

But is there a simple solution to avoid all the excuses, and help our kids respond positively to correction and instruction, all while tapping into their hearts?... Yes!

Strategy #2 — The Required Response

When our son started making these repeated excuses, we implemented what we now call "the required response." The required response involved two specific things:

- mutual eye contact
- a verbal response

Prior to this, there were times we would give him instructions, and there would be no eye contact and no verbal response. This left plenty of room for him to use excuses when he didn't get things done.

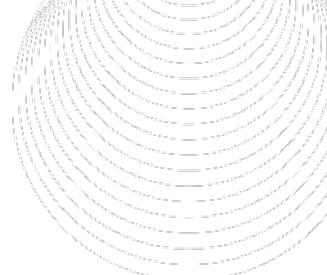

However, once we started requiring eye contact and a verbal response, his obedience success rate increased considerably.

I encourage parents to teach children to respond with, "Okay Mom... Dad" or "Yes ma'am... sir" as they look you in the eyes.

With really young kids getting right down on their eye level can also be helpful.

This practice of making eye contact and getting an answer provides three benefits:

1. Mutual understanding that the child has heard you



Sometimes, we would have our son repeat back to us specifically what we had just asked him to do so that there was no confusion. Simply ask your child to repeat the instruction back by saying, “I will..” and then fill in the blank. This provides clarity.

When both players understand and acknowledge the game plan, their team is a lot more likely to win.

The second benefit of a required response is:

2. Accountability and an intent to follow through

A child’s response confirms that they understand your expectations. A simple “Okay Dad” will give greater confidence that your child will obey you than no response at all.

If a child doesn’t respond, simply repeat the instruction by saying, “I’m not sure if you heard me, but will you please...”

If they say they heard you the first time, simply remind them of the expected response to acknowledge you and your request.

This strategy provides greater clarity around discipline when instructions aren’t followed through or are intentionally disobeyed. Excuses on the back end don’t fly when there is eye contact and mutual understanding on the front end.

It also teaches your child the life-long habit and importance of verbally acknowledging all adults and authority when spoken to.

The third benefit of a required response is:

3. A window into your child’s heart and attitude

Obedience is not everything. Attitude matters (Ephesians 6:2).

When asking your child to wipe off the table and they respond with a huff, or a sarcastic “Okaaay, Mommm” you know that your child has an attitude problem that needs to be addressed at the heart level.

When this happens, sharing your observations, and asking questions are your friend. For example, “When I asked you to wipe off the table, what made you feel the need to respond sarcastically, or with frustration?... Is that an appropriate response?” (You can utilize the repeat re-do strategy from chapter 1 here.)

Teaching your children to provide “the required response” gives you a window into their hearts, and an opportunity to have needed heart conversations when you notice something is off.

By implementing strategies like these, you can live according to biblical principles (Psalm 15:1, Colossians 3:21, James 1:19) in your parenting while at the same time intentionally reaching your child’s heart, not just their head.



03

***Behavior Strategy #3
– Calm Consistency,
Clear Consequences***

Training your children up right in the younger years will set you up for parenting success in the older years.

When parents neglect their responsibilities in those first few years, it's not impossible to succeed, but it is a lot harder. They'll have to play "catch-up," possibly for years, and try to establish control in seasons not meant for that. I explain this more fully in my book, [Godly Parenting](#).

This is Why Establishing Control Early Matters

The toddler years can be gruesome, but they are foundational years that generally set the tone and future of a family.

God has called parents to be in charge of the direction of their children's hearts and lives, and when could it possibly be more important than in the early years? Psalm 127:4 reminds us that "As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth."

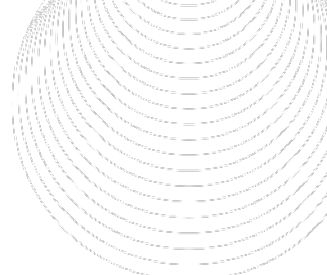

Regardless of your child's age or your personal scenario, God has given us an opportunity and responsibility to guide our children's futures by nurturing our children's hearts. This begins the moment they are entrusted into our care.



Never underestimate the incredible power of consistency.

Strategy #3 — Calm Consistency, Clear Consequences

There are two things that every child needs in his or her life—consistent boundaries and unconditional love. There must be a proper balance of both in our parenting.



Your child must be able to see that you will be kind yet serious. You will be firm without being harsh. Your words will speak for themselves. You will say what you mean and mean what you say.

Your words alone (not your tone mixed with anger or frustration) will carry the weight of consequence and consistent follow-through. And through it all, you will unconditionally love them, and they will know it.

Consistency is the key.

Telling your children what you expect of them, and then consistently enforcing expectations, does not make you the bad guy. It simply means you're guilty of good parenting.

To help parents establish control and consistency, I often ask them to complete an exercise called [The Parent Discipline Strategy](#). It requires them to list the specific details of the three areas listed below for their home/child, and then have a conversation with their child to explain and get on the same page. I'd encourage you to complete this yourself.

- Clear Boundaries/Expectations
- Clear Consequences (when those boundaries are crossed)
- Consistent Follow-Through (what consistency and accountability will look like)

Once boundaries and consequences have been established, they can be calmly and consistently enforced by allowing your plan to work through simple follow-through.

Calmly telling your child what to do (and the consequences if they don't), and then following through on your word speaks louder than threats or countdowns.

Allow your words and expectations to speak for themselves by following through. Yelling, throwing adult temper tantrums, and raising your voice isn't necessary. Use words with teeth, not necessarily volume.

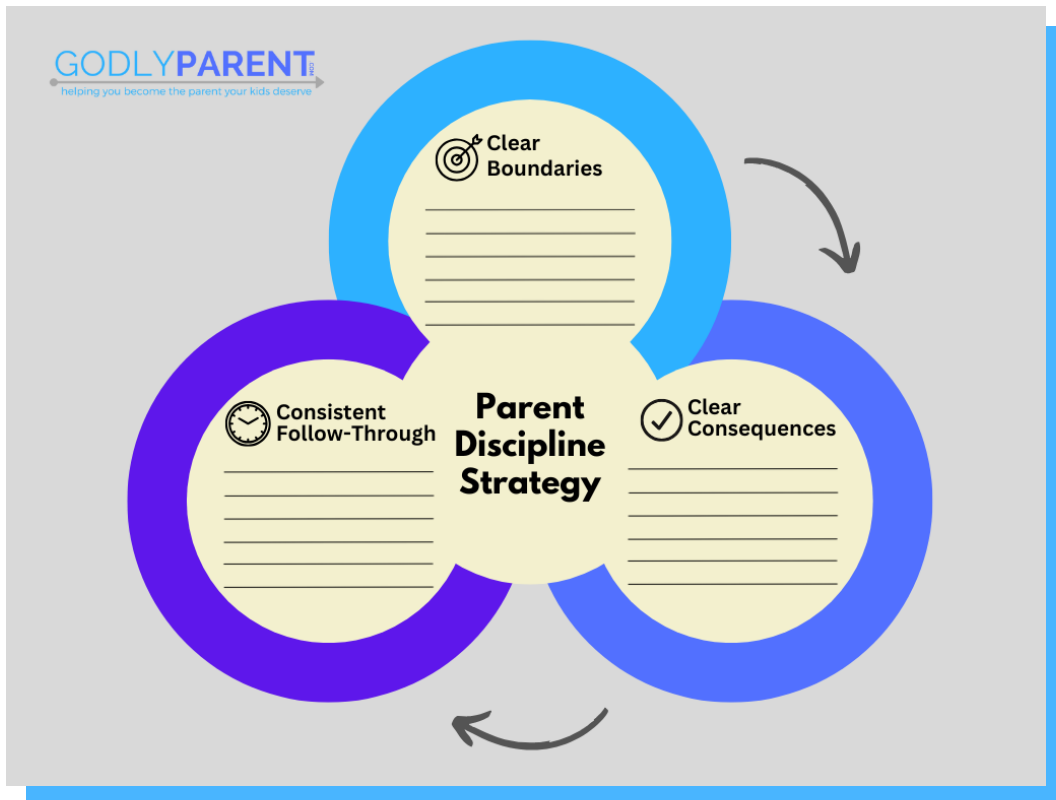
Just like in any other area of life, when people say what they mean and mean what they say, others learn to respect them for it. Because they don't have to question whether or not their words carry weight.

Our children are no different. They know when we are in control and when they are. They know when we're serious and when we're bluffing.

A clear expectations strategy of calm consistency and clear consequences will benefit any parent and child. Once you've established this in your home, then trust God to help you with the hardest part—consistent follow-through.

Let me guarantee you this—it's worth it!

How could establishing a strategy of calm consistency and clear consequences benefit your home?



04

***Behavior Strategy #4
– Discipline as
Discipleship***



No parent can avoid it. No child is without need of it. Discipline.

But, believe it or not, discipline is a gift.

Discipline provides parents with an unparalleled opportunity to tap into the innermost workings of their child's heart. As a parent, you have:

- An opportunity to draw their heart towards you not away from you
- An opportunity to focus on forgiveness and restoration rather than frustration and retaliation
- An opportunity to highlight God's grace over your rules

In each case, the first is better than the second. Discipline done right provides an avenue for discipleship where we always point our children to an ultimate authority greater than ours.

Strategy #4 — Discipline as Discipleship

If all of this is true, what happens after discipline is just as important, if not more important, than the discipline itself.

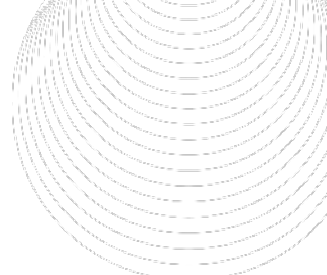

- What is your follow-up plan after discipline?
- Is there a positive conclusion that you are striving toward?
- How can you win your child's heart rather than lose it during these times?

When dealing with your children during times of discipline, here is a three-step follow-up plan that we used and found successful:

1. Talk with them.

No child should ever be dragged by the ears to the bedroom or smacked upside the head and told to change.

Discipline in the home should happen with the same love and tenderness our Heavenly Father uses when he disciplines us as his children.



He is patient and kind, yet he doesn't budge an inch.

It is important (both before and after discipline) that kids clearly understand what they have done wrong that has required discipline.

This requires an intentional conversation that includes sharing your heart and listening to theirs.

Here are a few questions from my friend Scott Turansky at biblicalparenting.org about how to have a "settle down" discussion after discipline.

- What did you do wrong? (Help them admit they were wrong.)
- What should you have done differently? (Help them realize what they could have done instead.)
- What will you do next time? (Help them commit to doing the right thing.)
- Who do you need to apologize to? (Encourage them to say "I'm sorry" only if they are truly sorrowful. Otherwise, "I was wrong for... Will you forgive me?")

2. Pray with them.

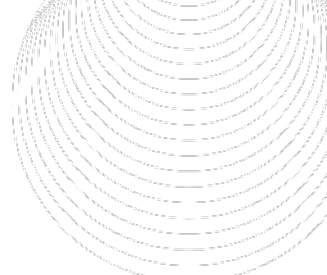

After talking with your child about how to make things right, always end these times with prayer.

This step can be a beautiful moment of reconciliation as you embrace your child and pray with him, asking God to change his heart in ways you never can.

Not only does this communicate your love, but it also communicates God's love and forgiveness.

By praying together, these times can become spiritual moments of repentance and restoration.

Your child's actions have not just been against a person but against God himself.



Praying also serves as an opportunity to teach your kids the value of talking to God and trusting him to help them change in needed areas of their hearts and behaviors.

When done in a God-honoring way, discipline prepares a child for God's grace through salvation.

In a real sense, discipline is discipleship. You are pointing them to Christ and the cross he endured because of their sin.

Teaching our children proper submission to our authority now teaches them ultimate submission to God's authority forever (Proverbs 23:13-14).

They can learn this indirectly through these intentional times of prayer.

3. Love on them.

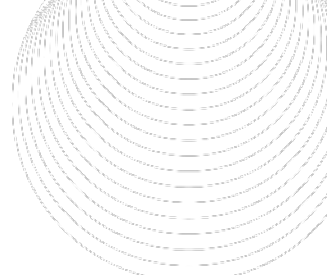

After talking with them and praying with them, it's time to love on them like never before. Times of discipline are opportunities to win your child's heart through your unconditional love.

So always end on a positive note with hugs and confirmation of your love.

Kids want and need reassurance that you love them unconditionally just as God loves us and that you will never stop loving them no matter what they do.

Squeezing your child tight for an extended period of time communicates something powerful—unconditional love, acceptance, and forgiveness. And be prepared to hug your child for as long as she wants until she is ready to let go.

This needs to be an intentional time of apology, acceptance, and restoring of the relationship (and other relationships if necessary).



I've seen parents send their kids to their rooms without doing any of the three things listed above. I've also seen parents who, after disciplining their kids, storm out of the room angry, spewing words like, "You just sit here and think about what you've done before you come back out."

Do this enough times and you'll be guaranteed to break your child's spirit, and ultimately, to lose your child's heart.

But, on the other hand, if you love your child unconditionally through discipline, even though she's disobeyed and disappointed you, you tap into her heart and hit parenting gold.

When your child understands what he has done, who he has truly done it against, and that your love for them hasn't changed, you have succeeded at turning a negative into a positive while at the same time positively shaping your child's view of their Heavenly Father. Score!

Discipline balanced with love equals respect,
but discipline without love equals rebellion.

When you discipline with such love, compassion, and intentionality, you experience some of the sweetest moments that exist between a parent and a child (Hebrews 12:11).

You are no longer just conforming your child's behavior. You are now changing your child's heart. And you're doing it by winning that heart, moment by moment, through times of discipline as you ultimately point your child to his greatest need of all: Jesus.

You are using times of discipline as discipleship.

By ending discipline this way, you are communicating the two things every child needs: clear boundaries (you aren't going to budge on the rules) and unconditional love (you're never going to love them any less, no matter what they do).

This is how God loves us as his children. This is how we can love our children like God.





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