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Encouragement for Today

“What Kind Do You Want?”

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Key Verse:

Proverbs 17:14, “Starting a quarrel is like opening a floodgate, so stop before a dispute breaks out.” (NLT)

Devotion:

I asked my son to drive us to church. As I stepped into the car, I noticed how desperately my car needed a good washing.

“The cars need to be washed,” I said to Benjamin. “Would you do that for me this afternoon?”

“I’ll wash my car, if I get around to it,” he responded. That was a resounding “no” to washing the other cars. I first experienced anger, followed by disappointment. Then my desire to preach and chastise mixed with my need to scold and shame. Yet I said nothing.

Saying nothing won the battle for me. I have learned that all the words in the world are not going to make a whole lot of head way with my stubborn child. So, instead of losing my dignity and saying something I might regret, I kept my lips sealed, taking a mouth full of preaching, scolding, and nagging straight to the Lord. I have learned that, whenever my child disappoints me or misbehaves, if I go to God in prayer, seeking wisdom and unconditional love for my child, the potential disagreement is defused. God has also taught me to check myself when my sons let me down.

Today I asked my child to wash my car. He declined. What has God asked me to do recently that I ignored? Lots of things! Earlier in the week, I know He nudged me to call a friend and offer to watch her children, so she could get out for a few hours. I found an excuse and soon forgot. On another occasion I said an unkind thing to my husband. I know God has been waiting for me to apologize. I have a grudge that I need to drop and a neighbor who could use my forgiveness. “Would you do that for me?” I hear God gently ask.

How could I force the issue with my eighteen year old son? How could I expect him to be a more compliant child than I? At this time in my child’s life, I have to let go. (This is why it is so important to plant the seeds of discipline and obedience early in life.) Now, as a teenager, he is making his own choices, and experiencing deeper consequences than the ones I dole out or control.

Besides learning some lessons about my disobedience to God, I learned a couple of other good lessons by keeping quiet. Had I scolded my son, we would have entered God's house on a bad note. We have had too many disagreeable rides to church on Sunday mornings. As a result, I refuse to enter into battles on Sunday mornings.

Had I chastised his misbehavior, he would have come back at me. Instead, I allowed the silence in the car to teach him, praying that the Holy Spirit would convict him. I drew closer to God and no divisive words or actions came between mother and son.

Had I succumbed to a typical mother's pouting, I would have heaped hurt feelings upon the anger I felt, compounding emotions that needed to be brought under the control of the Holy Spirit. Allowing emotions to rage out of control never moves one toward a positive goal.

I am amazed how quickly I forgot the incident. I walked into church, heard praise music, prayed, listened to my pastor teach from the book of Hosea, and was reminded that God's love is a mystery. His love is unconditional. God never gives up. Sitting in church, I felt God's approval for not allowing my flesh to rule.

Praying for my son during the closing prayer, I asked God to teach Benjamin the importance of developing a servant's heart. "Help him to desire wisdom and seek your approval. Don't let him be like his mother. I am still missing the mark and only recently am learning to seek You above all else."

At the end of the day, he approached me in the yard where I was working. "Mom," he said. "I am going to buy us pizza for supper. What kind do you want?"

My Prayer for Today:

Father God, forgive me for ignoring You each time You ask me to do something. I know better. Forgive me for being harder and more judgmental on others than I am on myself. I will never be able to understand Your unconditional love for me. Help me to love my son like You love me. I ask You to rule over every aspect of my life, in Jesus' Name, Amen.

Application Steps:

Ask God to help you take a parenting evaluation. If you have children who struggle with obedience, decide today the course you need to take in order to strengthen their discipline. Do so for the sake of your child.

In addition to helping your child learn the importance of obedience, take a spiritual step in your own life toward unquestioning submission to God.

Ask God for wisdom in picking your 'battles' with your children. Also remember, the older they get, the more difficult it will be to teach them. Begin at a young age to direct your children toward obedience.

Reflection Points:

Do you obediently answer God whenever He asks you to step into His service?

Am I aware that I disobey God?

What areas of my life do I refuse to hand over to Him for service?

What can I do for Him today?

Power Verses:

Deuteronomy 30:20, "Choose to love the LORD your God and to obey him and commit yourself to him, for he is your life. Then you will live long in the land the LORD swore to give your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." (NLT)

2 Corinthians 10:3-5, "We are human, but we don't wage war with human plans and methods. We use God's mighty weapons, not mere worldly weapons, to knock down the Devil's strongholds. With these weapons we break down every proud argument that keeps people from knowing God. With these weapons we conquer their rebellious ideas, and we teach them to obey Christ." (NLT)

Ephesians 6:1-4, "Children, obey your parents because you belong to the Lord, for this is the right thing to do. 'Honor your father and mother.' This is the first of the Ten Commandments that ends with a promise. And this is the promise: If you honor your father and mother, 'you will live a long life, full of blessing.' And now a word to you fathers. Don't make your children angry by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction approved by the Lord." (NLT)

Additional Resources:

Who Holds the Key to Your Heart? by Lysa TerKeurst

http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources_whoHoldsKey.htm

What Happens When Women Walk in Faith by Lysa TerKeurst

http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources_whatHappens.htm

Being a Great Mom Raising Great Kids by Sharon Jaynes

http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources_greatMom.htm