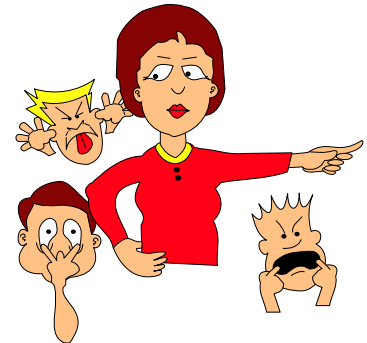




What We Can Learn From Our Kids

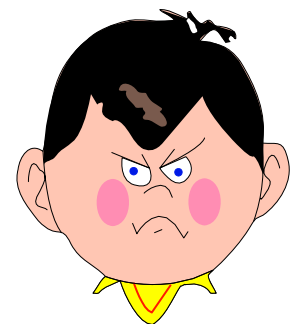
By Angie Kmita

Although times may change, there is nothing new under the sun. The packaging may be different, but the problems and situations are the same. Raising children is not any different today than when my parents raised me or their parents raised them. It is easy to get wrapped up in everyday life and be so busy with the little details that we don't see the big picture. I recently overheard two of my children in an argument over whose turn it was to pick up the toys (even though I had told them both to do it) and finally the youngest told his brother that God was not happy that he (the oldest) wasn't following directions. I just listened as they worked through the situation interested in where the conversation was going. The oldest said the Bible didn't say anything about picking up toys. To my surprise the youngest quoted a memory verse he had learned in Bible class - Ephesians 6:1 - Children obey your parents in the Lord for this is right. I was so impressed! The oldest then said he always had to clean up and he didn't want to anymore! At that point, I intervened and took care of the situation. But it got me thinking about complaints that kids make and their perceptions of situations.



How come I always have to do it? It doesn't matter what I ask my kids to do, they are bound to reply with this question, "Why don't the others have to do it too?" My response is always the same too, "Because I told you to do it." As parents, we expect our children to do as we tell them without questioning us. Why is it that when there is work to be done for the Lord, we often complain about doing it or try to shift the blame to others who aren't doing the work?

I don't want to. My 3-year-old has this standard reply to any directive he is given. In fact, we have told him to do something he likes to do just to see if he listens to what we say or if his first reflex is to spit out the words "I don't want to." It is difficult to always explain to him why he has to do things, other than to say that in life we often have to do things we don't want to do. I often wonder what God would say to us if we told him we didn't want to come to services,



read our Bible everyday or teach a children's Bible class. God knows our hearts and our thoughts. If we are thinking or wishing we didn't have to do something, our Father knows!

I'll do it after I finish... This statement bothers me more than any other response my kids might say. When I tell them to pick up the toys or put their laundry away I mean for them to do it immediately. Not later, not tomorrow, but **RIGHT NOW**. Aren't we as Christians guilty of the same situation with God? We know what He expects and wants but will put off His work to pursue our own wants and desires.



I'm sorry. I won't do it again. As soon as a child is caught doing something they know they shouldn't, those words come out of their mouths. I have tried to instill in my children that their actions speak louder than words. When you say you are sorry, you have to refrain from that behavior/activity in the future. Otherwise, those words eventually become meaningless and no one will believe you when you say it.

That's not fair. How many times have you heard this! I'm reminded of the parable in Matthew 20:1-16 where the vineyard workers didn't think it was fair that they worked all day and received the same amount of money as those that started hours after them. Christians are guilty of this attitude as well. Have you ever heard someone make the statement "It's not fair that I always have to clean the building," or "It's not fair that sister so-and-so never has to teach a class." How thankful am I that Jesus didn't throw a fit and say how unfair it was that He was beaten, humiliated, and crucified for me!

Learn from your kids - sometimes you have to look at the whole picture to see the situation clearly but God doesn't want our excuses and complaints. Before you put off doing the Lord's work or complain about a job you've been asked to do, think about the big picture. If complaints and excuses aren't acceptable from our children, why do we think they are all right for us to utter. After all, we are all God's children.

