

PRESSING ON...

"I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." Philippians 3:14



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Teaching our Children Respect Through the Eyes of Faith

■ by Debi Mitchell, MS, LMFT

*"Train up a child in the way he should go:
and when he is old, he will not depart from it." Proverbs 22:6 KJV*



My pulse races faster than an Indy 500 driver when I see a child act disrespectfully in public. I also confess I desire to meddle in the situation, knowing it would likely become messier than any toddler eating Spaghetti-O's for the first time. I hear people grumble, "Kids these days..." and I know I'm not alone.

Respectful children, teens, and young adults do still exist, but they will not be perfect. When children act disrespectfully, parents can feel helpless. This article discusses understanding what respect is and shares some respect teaching tools, all through the lens of faith.

Understanding Respect

Have you ever tried defining the word respect? For many people, understanding respect is as easy as giving the cat a bath. Webster's defines it as: "to regard as worthy of special consideration; to consider worthy of esteem; or, to regard with honor." Respect sends a message that someone is valuable; he or she has worth.

Most people consider respect something earned. This is Biblical. Paul reminds us, "Give

to everyone what you owe them: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor." (Romans 13:7, NIV).

Christian beliefs impact respect. Most would agree, faith or not, that we should treat family and friends respectfully. However, if we believe that Jesus valued all of humanity enough to die on the cross for them, we are likely to value other people as well. In fact, God commands us by saying, "Show proper respect to everyone..." (1 Peter 2:17a, NIV).

Philippians 2:3-4 describes it this way: "Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too." (NLT). This is the attitude that God calls us to cultivate, motivating our choices and priorities.

Respect Teaching Tools

Everyone needs these respect teaching tools:

1. **Be sure the family is on the same page.** Respect looks different to different people. For example, I consider eye contact while speaking respectful, while in some cultures it is considered challenging and disrespectful. If the parents don't agree, children become confused and sometimes resentful. Colossians 3:21 (NASV).

2. **Keep expectations in keeping with ages and abilities.** People become more capable with age. Expecting a lively 2-year-old to sit quietly in the church pew for an hour without something to do is probably asking for trouble.
3. **Be consistent with respect rules and consequences.** Just like other types of rules, they are only taken seriously if expectations and consequences are consistent. Many parents fear discipline. If you fear losing your child's love, take comfort! In Hebrews 12:9, God said it works! "Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it" (NIV).
4. **Model it.** The saying, "Do as I say, not as I do" doesn't work. Jesus called those

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Why So Sad, My Soul?

The Harms of Comparison

■ by Kathy Konrath MA, LCPC, LMHC



"If you compare, you'll despair."

I'm not sure I can attribute this quote to any one person. I had a friend say this to me as I was complaining about how hard my struggle seemed compared with others. Her words have stuck with me, and I find them to be truth that grounds me when I am tempted to examine myself against those around me.

Comparison abounds in our culture.

Advertised are the beauties and successes of Hollywood. We "like" and "tweet" happy pictures of friends and family and make real time updates on our whereabouts, accomplishments, conquests, and so forth.

And somewhere in the unending frenzy of

Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes (Ephesians 6:10-11, NIV).

news and gossip, we locate a stick, carry it around, and every so often measure ourselves against it. We find we are, at times, "better than" or "less than" those around us. Our measurements may bring us anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, or worthlessness. On the other hand they may bring us a sense of pride, gratitude, or increased self-worth and esteem.

The common denominator = SELF

The common denominator, whether you feel "better than" or "less than", is **self**. Self is always in opposition to God. It is our "self" that is bruised or pampered when we compare our lives with others. Comparison seeks to rise to a certain standard. But what standard?

What standard do you measure yourself by?

In the Bible, Paul tells the Corinthian church that "It matters very little to me what you think of me, even less where I rank in popular opinion. I don't even rank myself. Comparisons in these matters are pointless." (1 Corinthian 4: 3-4, The Message). Paul didn't seek evaluation from

himself or any other person in matters concerning him. He used the Lord Jesus Christ as his standard and judge. And since there was no way his self would ever measure up to Christ, his self was forgotten. In fact, it had to be. In the forgetting of his self, Paul describes freedom.

An invitation

There is no law or set of rules that will work for us. The grace we find in Jesus Christ is at our disposal every time we look to the cross. We have the invitation to "die to self" in order that we might "follow him (Jesus)". Paul knew this when he said the only thing that matters is what Jesus thinks.

We are each made in God's image. We are individually unique and designed with a purpose and plan that only God knows and only God can reveal to us. Contentment comes when we find ourselves loved and known, in God's plan; not the plan of our parents; not the plan of our employers, teachers or friends; not the plan of a weight loss program or a dating web site. These standards will either deflate us when we see

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people hypocrites (Matthew 7:3-5). Kids WILL do what we do, particularly before middle-school when peer influence increases. Modeling respect includes body language: no eye-rolling, not texting or emailing work while she is talking, or letting him know you are listening by nodding occasionally.

5. **Apologize - without excuses.** This means no: "I'm sorry, but..." Healing happens when we confess, both within ourselves and within relationship. (James 5:16, NIV).
6. **Teach consequences, good and bad.** Keep in mind Tool #2, but start young! Point out how one choice affects others (e.g.: "Thank you. You waited to talk so I was listening better..."). For kids 7-12, it helps to draw it out, working toward the child drawing it out. Only use real situations. For kids over 12, you can discuss hypothetical situations or possible future choices. (e.g.: You attend a job interview and choose to hold the door open for a mom with a baby. She

feels grateful and tells her husband. Her husband is the manager and frustrated with disrespectful people. He decides this makes the difference and hires you).

Sometimes we try and it feels like nothing gets through, but we can't give up. The world fights for our children's hearts and attitudes. Study God's word for ways to improve. Get on the same page with your spouse and show them what respect looks like. Be real and accountable about weaknesses. Apologize when needed. Teach about the consequences of disrespect and rewards of respect. And someday, when our children are old, "they will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6, KJV). ■



Debi Mitchell is a Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist. She enjoys working with individuals, couples and families in our Schererville, IN location.

New Staff



Aimee Echevarria, PsyD
Orland Park, IL Location

Dr. Echevarria is a bilingual (Spanish), bicultural licensed clinical psychologist. Dr. E's perspective is that our behavior and perception of ourselves is influenced by our experiences. Our histories influence who we are, our relationships, and how we make sense of life. Gaining awareness and understanding into our struggles is part of the dynamic process toward change that can unfold in therapy.

Whether working with individuals, families, or couples it is of the utmost importance that the therapy experience be one that is safe, supportive and encouraging.

Dr. E has received specialized training in Prolonged Exposure for persons who have experienced trauma and Exposure and Response prevention for Obsessive Compulsive Disorder. She is also a Gottman educator for Bringing Baby Home and The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work.

Why So Sad, My Soul?

The Aftermath of Abortion

■ by Lynne B. Scherschel, MS, LMFT



For a woman or a man, a problem pregnancy is often a major crisis. Usually, they see the baby as the “problem” and think if they just get rid of the baby all will be well, so they decide on abortion. Most couples who seek abortion are unmarried. Often there are concerns about affording a child, housing, their reputations, lack of support, thinking they are too young to parent, or the ending of their future dreams. Some are threatened, coerced (illegal) or forced. Some have addictions and don’t want to have a damaged/addicted child. To these, the issues seem insurmountable, so they choose abortion. They have the choice because abortion is legal, but their little son or daughter has no choice, no protection, and finally, no life. The problem is

that they exchange what they consider to be one problem for what may potentially be a host of other problems. The aftermath of that supposed “quick fix” is often much more than they bargained for; the baby is gone, and all is NOT well.

Exchanging One Problem for Potentially a Host of Others

Although researchers disagree as to whether or not Post-Abortion Syndrome exists, many men and women are adversely affected by abortion. Below is a list of some of the after effects that are experienced by many following an abortion.

- Shame, hopelessness
- Anxiety, panic attacks
- Depression, suicide
- Drug, alcohol addiction, sometimes leading to incarceration
- Greater vulnerability to future abortions
- Fear of rejection by God
- Anger/rage at others involved and/or at themselves
- Difficulty completing things, abortion of the very dreams they hoped to save
- Intense guilt
- Low self-esteem
- Difficulty conceiving and carrying subsequent children
- Sexual promiscuity
- Relationship disruption, difficulty bonding with future children
- Eating disorders
- Increased potential to develop breast cancer
- Post-traumatic stress, including flash backs of the abortion experience

Replacing Shame and Guilt With Truth

God has genetically “wired” parents to protect their children, so when a person chooses abortion they betray God’s destiny for them. As a result, shame and guilt frequently ensue when, instead, they choose for their child to be destroyed. What most fail to realize is that, “...all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” Romans 3:23 We all stand on even ground at the foot of the cross in need of the saving and healing that Jesus purchased through His death and resurrection on the cross. God is passionately in love with all human beings, loves us no matter what we do, and stands waiting for us to come to Him through faith in Jesus. Jesus is the Healer. There is healing in no other Name.

As with all mankind, post-abortive men and women must learn that God still loves them and reach out to Him for His forgiveness. This is often difficult because many go into denial, even refusing to admit the abortion to themselves, thus needlessly postponing healing for years or decades. The Truth is that God was not taken by surprise by anyone’s decision to abort their child. He loves the child AND the child’s parents and family.

Men and Women Impacted

I have intentionally mentioned men in this discussion. Some fathers don’t want their child aborted but are given no rights and no choice, no matter how much they want to parent the child, support the mother, or no matter how much they beg and plead. For these men, the abortion of their child can be devastating, and salvaging the relationship thereafter is difficult to unlikely. At the other end of the spectrum are fathers who want no part of being a father, refuse to be involved, or even force the mother to have the abortion. At some point even fathers in this latter category may have a revelation of their responsibility in killing their child and be negatively impacted by it.

Pursue Healing

Thankfully, there is healing available for women **and** men. Following are important ways to pursue healing:

- Admit to yourself that you may have been harmed by abortion.
- Seek counseling from a therapist/counselor/pastor who has specialized training and/or experience in counseling post-abortive men and women.
- Seek out a support group for post-abortive people. Chicago Christian Counseling Center is offering **Into My Arms**, a healing group for men and women that uses Julie Woodley’s curriculum. Email us if you’d like notification of dates/locations of the group.
- Confide in a loving, non-judgmental friend who will accept and support you. Secret sins seem to be where the enemy likes to attack us.
- Participate in a Bible study, such as Forgiven and Set Free.
- Find a loving, pro-life church where all are welcomed but encouraged to be forgiven and healed.

Online resources for healing:

<http://www.ChicagoChristianCounseling.org/groups.html#abortion>
<http://www.healingafterabortion.org>
<http://silentnomoreawareness.org/resources/support-and-recovery-groups.aspx#usa>
The National Helpline for Abortion Recovery | 866 482-LIFE | www.NationalHelpline.org

And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God’s love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God’s love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8: 38-39 NIV



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Our Mission Statement

Promoting health and wholeness through professional counseling, consultation and education from a Christian perspective.

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how we don't add up, or puff us up with pride and earthly approval when we meet or exceed the mark. In either case, we have uncertainty at best. There is another way: God's plan.

Our ticket to freedom

The word of God says it is for freedom that we have been set free (Galatians 5:1). God wants you and me to live in the freedom of who we are in Christ alone. This ticket to freedom has already been paid for. The pass lets you explore a new identity and a new way of being. You must leave the standards of others and the world at the door. They won't fit into this new freedom. But as you enter in, you will find grace.

Put it into practice

Social media and the news can often trigger the urge to compare. When I work with clients who struggle with anxiety or depression, I often recommend taking a break from social media.

It matters what you look at and what you listen to. If you get especially tempted to compare your lot with those around you, consider removing the trigger for a while. Delete the Facebook app from your phone. Turn off Access Hollywood and put down People magazine. Put aside the standards of the world for a time

and replace them with the standards of Jesus. Know Jesus, and find acceptance.

Today, turn off the TV and put down your phone.

Take a moment to think about your life.

As you do, say out loud 5 things you have that you are grateful to have.

For now, let that be enough.

For a deeper and thought provoking look at the harms of comparisons, read *The Freedom of Self-Forgetfulness* by Timothy Keller. ■



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