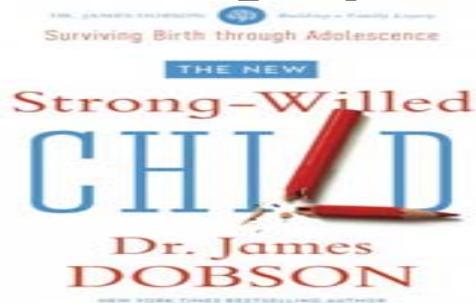


Building a Family Legacy

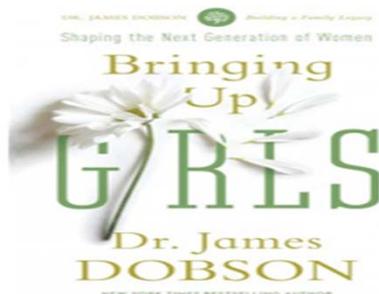


The Strong-Willed Child

Session 1

ATTRIBUTION/CREDITS

- “The Strong-Willed Child Bible Study – Surviving Birth Through Adolescence”
- Written by: Dr James Dobson, developed w/Michael O’Neal
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Cold, Hard Stats

- There are 3X as many strong-willed kids as there are compliant
- Male strong-willed children outnumber females by 5%
- Most parents know the child is strong-willed early on
- 1/3 can tell at birth!
- 2/3 can tell by first birthday
- 92% are certain by age 3

Cold, Hard Stats

- Per this study, a child's temperament tends to reflect that of his parents
- While there are many exceptions, 2 strong-willed parents are more likely to produce a strong-willed child (and vice versa)
- The compliant child typically enjoys better self-esteem and tends to be a better student
- Parents of a strong-willed child can expect a battle during teenage years (despite proper raising up to that point)

Cold, Hard Stats

- Fully 74% of strong-willed children rebel significantly at adolescence (so I have that to look forward to!)
- The weaker the parental authority when kids are young, the greater the conflict in later years
- In young adulthood, more often than not, these once-angry, rebellious and resistant kids peacefully rejoin the human community¹

¹Dr James Dobson, *The Strong-Willed Child* (Carol Streak, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.), 49-50

Childish or Defiant Behavior?

- Some children have a naturally compliant and joyful nature (though I've personally never experienced one in my house!)
- Some children enter the world looking for a fight, with a tough, even contrary or discontented spirit (outlier)

Childish or Defiant Behavior?

- For perspective, can we all agree on two foundational truths as we approach this topic?
 1. All children are born sinners, full of selfishness and rebellion (just like we are)
 - They (as we) need a Savior

Childish or Defiant Behavior?

2. Jesus is the **ONLY** Savior (parents are not)
 - Only His atoning sacrifice can rescue anyone from sin and transform a life
 - Parents – **YOU** can't do it on your own– you're not Jesus!

Childish or Defiant Behavior?

- All children like to push boundaries
- Part of growing up is to seek independence by testing boundaries
- As loving parents who want only the best for our children, we give them rules to follow
- There are days, however, when they push back, rebel, or just plain disobey

Childish or Defiant Behavior?

- As sinners, we are all born with a **WILL** that is selfish and desire to get our own way
- While its intensity varies from child to child, most make their will known early in life
- Willfulness seems to be built into the nature of some kids
- Your child's will must be molded, shaped, and brought under the guiding influence of parental leadership

Childish or Defiant Behavior?

- A child's *SPIRIT* is different, and can be much more fragile than his *WILL*
- His spirit reflects his self-confidence and sense of personal worth
- The *SPIRIT*, therefore, is more vulnerable to rejection, ridicule and failure

Childish or Defiant Behavior?

- Parents, therefore, need to walk a fine line, shaping and molding your child's *WILL* without crushing her *SPIRIT*
- A compliant child may have her *spirit* crushed by confrontation, while the strong-willed will relish the battle of *wills* and grow from it

Childish or Defiant Behavior?

- To effectively shape a child's will while protecting her spirit, parents *must* set reasonable and appropriate boundaries, in advance, and then enforce those boundaries in love
- How have you done/are you doing with this?

Childish or Defiant Behavior?

- What are some reasonable and appropriate boundaries you've set in your home?
- What are some ways you've used to enforce them?

Childish or Defiant Behavior?

- Now, there IS a difference between childish irresponsibility and defiant behavior, can we agree?
- Kids will do stupid things—
 - Take the Legos in the car and into the concert hall then leave them behind despite you telling them it's best to leave them home so they don't lose them...

Childish or Defiant Behavior?

- Knock over the glass of milk you JUST told them to be careful not to knock over...
- Forget to pick up the toy on the floor that you said they'd step on and break, and then they step on it and break it...
- These are not necessarily *willfully defiant* acts, agree?

Childish or Defiant Behavior?

- Defiance, however, willful defiance, is different
- A child is willfully defiant when he knows what you want, and willfully decides “I’m not going to give that to you”

Childish or Defiant Behavior?

- It’s a choice where the child decides “I’m not going to accept your leadership or authority”
- You may hear “I will not!” or “You can’t make me!”
- Or you may just get that leer that speaks the words without the child making a sound

Childish or Defiant Behavior?

- The difference between willful defiance and childish irresponsibility has to do with the intent of the child's heart, and that's a tough nut to crack
- And what is the root of willful defiance?
- The sinful nature of children

Childish or Defiant Behavior?

- Sin is the one problem that affects every single person who has ever lived
- Understanding the sin nature behind the willful defiance can at least give a parent a better sense of why your strong-willed child acts like she does
- Just like in the Garden of Eden, it's all about "Who is in charge here?"

Who's in Charge?

- When a child is willfully defiant, a parent must respond immediately and with conviction, and that's where those pre-established boundaries come into play

Who's in Charge?

- God's will, and His direction throughout Scripture, is that parents assume and assert leadership in the home and over the children He's entrusted to us
- Not acting immediately in the face of defiant behavior works against our raising godly children who seek the Lord, and encourages further acts of defiance

Who's in Charge?

- The funny thing is, deep down the strong-willed child needs – and ultimately wants—to be led by the parents
- Inherent in children is their admiration for strength and courage
- Your strong-willed child very much cares about who is the toughest and will, on occasion, test you to see just how tough you are

Who's in Charge?

- The prodigal son is the perfect example – let's read **Luke 15:11-16**
- Did the younger son act irresponsibly or defiantly?
- What was the result?

Who's in Charge?

- Read **Luke 15:17-24**
- What did the young son do once he realized he'd acted foolishly?
- What was the father's response?

Who's in Charge?

- This is a classic, God-given account of rebellion and redemption
- It also highlights a father's (parents) love, grace, and forgiveness

Who's in Charge?

- Never forget, as they develop more concrete understandings, both strong-willed and compliant children develop a view of God based upon the character, behavior, and actions of their parents
- Our children have selfish desires, just like we do

Who's in Charge?

- If they see us consistently act on our selfish desires, it sends the message that it's ok for them to do so
...so don't do it!
- They will be disrespectful at times (boy, will they!)
...they need called on it immediately, every time

Who's in Charge?

- Sometimes they'll be sneaky, tell lies, or even intentionally disregard your wishes just to get what they want or see how you react
- In each of these instances, parents have to mirror God's insistence on obedience while modeling His love, grace and acceptance

Who's in Charge?

- Remember, God is the only perfect parent...
...and we've rebelled and sinned against Him throughout history!

QUESTIONS?

Next Week...

Good news for all...

Let love be your guide...

