

DISCUSSION GUIDE

★ i CAN'T BELIEVE YOU
JUST SAID THAT!



GINGER
HUBBARD



CHAPTER ONE

I KNOW YOU DIDN'T JUST SAY THAT

1. “When children speak offensively, parents often respond in one of two ways: either we ignore the child, hoping he will outgrow it, or we administer some sort of consequence, hoping to put the fear of God in him. Both methods are ineffective, because they fail to train and instruct” (p. 7). Which of these tendencies is your usual default? Why would merely administering consequences be ineffective in the long run?

2. Ginger says on page 9 that “all children are sinners, all parents are sinners, and because we are sinners we will all make mistakes, no matter how well studied and well prepared we think we are.”

Where does relying on ourselves to improve our parenting get us? What is our only hope for improvement?

3. “No matter what stage of life our children are in, the most important thing we can do for them is pray. . . To pray for our children from God’s Word is to pray in harmony with God’s perfect will for their lives” (pp. 13-14), Ginger says. What grade would you give your prayer life? How faithful are you to pray for your children? Are you praying Scripture for them? Start by praying through passages like Ephesians 1:17-19, Phlippians 1:9-11, and Colossians 1:9-14 to use Paul’s prayers as a model for your own.

- 4. What is your child’s biggest problem with his or her speech? Look through the chapter titles in the table of contents if one does not immediately come to mind. Have you had a strategy so far for addressing it? Would you say that this discipline has been effective or ineffective? Do you have a deliberate strategy for making changes?

- 5. “It is not enough,” Ginger says, “to tell kids what not to do; we must teach them what to do” (p. 20). How do you replace wrong behavior with right behavior and attitudes?

CHAPTER TWO

WHINING

1. What are two reasons that Ginger says children whine (p. 26)?
What are the results? What is at the root of this behavior (p. 27)?

2. Can a child understand the concept of self-control? Why does Ginger believe that it is important to use the Bible's own terminology to help a child recognize his or her sinful speech?

3. What do you think about the statement, “A child is old enough to learn to obey when he is old enough to disobey” (p. 28). Is this always true? How old was your child when he/she first was deliberately disobedient?

4. Are you ever guilty of reprimanding in anger, as Ginger describes on page 29? Why is it so vital that parents practice self-control in trying to teach self-control? Do you think that the three-minute consequence (p. 30-31) would be effective in overcoming whining?

5. What is the connection between whining and idolatry? Is this a concept that young children can understand? Do children “outgrow” whining?

CHAPTER THREE

LYING

1. What is the reason children (and their parents) lie? Do we treat exaggeration, half-truths, and white lies differently from outright deception? Should we?

2. Who is the “father of lies” (John 8:44b)? Why do lies tear down foundational family trust (p. 39)?

- 3. When you require your child to practice telling the truth instead of the lie, what does that accomplish?

- 4. What are some of the dangers Ginger notes about punishing a lying child and how can you respond to them?

- 5. This week, plan to be very intentional in correcting your child in this area. Take time to write down the opportunities you find for correcting him or her. What did you do well? What can you improve? Even if Ginger's strategies seem awkward as you begin to practice them, can you see how this might be helpful in your family?

CHAPTER FOUR

TATTLING

1. How do you usually handle the issue of one child tattling on another at your house? Do you identify with the parents who ignore the tattler because they don't know how to deal with the issue or rationalize their lack of action?

2. What are the wrong motives for tattling that Ginger lists on page 48? What are the right motives (p. 48-49)? How can you help your child recognize the difference between tattling and genuine concern?

3. How can addressing tattling improve the relationship between siblings in your home?

4. Be on the lookout for tattling in your home this week. Arm yourself with a notecard where you have copied the Scripture verses Ginger mentions in this chapter. Or better yet, be proactive, providing some role play incidents where you give you children a chance to do the right thing!

CHAPTER FIVE

DEFYING

1. Ginger says on page 52 that “children disobey not because they are busy, tired, hungry, or having a bad hair day. They disobey because they are sinners who are selfish by nature.” Do you have a tendency to make excuses for your child’s bad behavior? What does this teach them?

2. “All the way, right away, and with a joyful heart” (p. 54). That is Ginger’s standard for biblical obedience. Can we expect this of our children? Does it change with age? Post a sign with these words, especially if your child is old enough to read them, and proactively practice them. Watch for opportunities to praise your children when they are successful!

3. What do you know about power struggles with your children? Do some strong-willed children seem willing to go on a hunger strike rather than obey? How can you act more wisely than they do and require obedience without a major battle?

4. What do you think about the “five-minute warning” that Ginger mentions on page 55? How does this both show respect for our children and keep them (and ourselves) from exasperation?

CHAPTER SIX

MANIPULATING

1. How does Ginger define manipulation on page 57? How do younger children and older children differ in the way they practice it? Do we ever unintentionally reward the child's negative behavior? Part of changing this behavior is making ourselves aware of it!

2. Why does Ginger recommend that we train our children privately, rather than in front of others (p. 62)? How can you avoid humiliation for your child?

3. How can you tell the difference between the “why” of curiosity and the “why” of manipulation? Which do you (or did you) face most often?

4. Are you tempted to use manipulation against your children? Or your spouse? What are the warning signs? Do you see this as more acceptable than your child’s attempt to manipulate you? Why or why not?

CHAPTER SEVEN

INTERRUPTING

1. What sin is at the root of interrupting? Ginger reminds parents of the importance of setting a good example, avoiding monopolizing the conversation or jumping in when others are talking. Do you think that families are prone to generational sin in this area? Are you tempted to interrupt (or even ignore) some of your child's long-winded stories? How can you show consideration to them instead?

2. How does the telephone affect your conversation with your children? Do you have techniques to share about preventing interruptions during important phone calls?

- 3. “Your children need time with you,” Ginger says (p. 72). How can you deliberately validate their desire for connection and communication?

- 4. Ginger suggests spending some time talking with your children individually at bedtime. Why did she avoid this opportunity for correcting them? What can a few minutes at bedtime do for your relationship with your children? What is your current bedtime routine? What one thing can you do—starting this week!—to improve it?

CHAPTER EIGHT

COMPLAINING

1. How is complaining a violation of God's command in 1 Thessalonians 5:18? How can we help our children choose attitudes of thanksgiving rather than complaining? Write down five practical suggestions and try one today!

2. Which of the biblical examples of thanksgiving do you most connect with: Joseph, Jesus, or Paul? Do you think your children will connect more with these scriptural examples or with your own testimony of overcoming complaining? Take time to think of at least one victory over complaining you have had and reflect on the way it changed your perspective in a difficult situation.

- 3. Focus on the positive! If your child learns to avoid complaining and instead finds ways to be thankful and content, she will be a better friend, a better team member, a better students, and will help the family to be happier! Many families have tried a gratitude journal (you can find dozens of examples and suggestions for them online) with great success. Try one for 30 days (it is just fine to use a spiral notebook!) by asking each family member to contribute one thanksgiving at supper each night. Try not to repeat what anyone else has said. This will help your children be intentionally positive and grateful, both on a daily basis and as they look back at their entries!

- 4. Be prepared! If you are going to reprimand your children about complaining, you are going to have many opportunities to learn the lesson yourself. Go ahead and make the review cards for your own memory verses and exercise the discipline of gratitude!

CHAPTER NINE

BLAME-SHIFTING

1. Blame-shifting, or trying to dismiss our personal guilt, is a form of pride. Accepting personal accountability is not easy, though, for our children or for us. Are all mistakes sin? Is all blame-shifting sin? Why or why not?

2. In the Bible's account of Adam and Eve, blame-shifting is quite obvious. Adam blamed Eve; Eve blamed the serpent. In life in your house, there may be some typical patterns of blame-shifting as well: Brother blames Sister; Sister blames the cat. Or Dad blames Mom; Mom blames the alarm clock—or the bank, or the check-out clerk, or the traffic. How can you stop the cycle? What can you do to change your family's pass-the-buck pattern?

3. When Ginger moved her family to accepting more responsibility for their actions, what did they learn? What were some of the components she put in place for helping them to be accountable? What will the rewards of personal responsibility be for your children?

CHAPTER TEN

TEASING

1. Can you give an example of a time when someone used teasing to send a “hidden” message? Though the comment may have been masked as something to receive attention or be entertaining, the barb was still painful and harmful. What would your children say if you asked them what percentage of the teasing they hear from their family is meant to tear them down instead of building them up?

2. What is the difference in edification and in flattery? How well do you model edification to your children? Compliments that merely address appearances (“you have such beautiful hair!” “I love your blue eyes.”) are “cheap.” Compliments that address

abilities (“You are so smart!” “You played better than anyone else on your team.”) are only slightly better. Work to compliment your child’s character (“I really liked the way you were kind to your friend when she fell down.” “I am so glad that you told the truth today.” “You waited so patiently in the doctor’s office this afternoon.”). These count for much more. These are earned compliments! Reinforcing good behaviors and modeling sincere edification means much to your children.

- 3. Is teasing ever appropriate? What parameters would you theoretically set up as tests for “good” teasing? You may want to make a list of do’s and don’ts, for yourself and for your child.

- 4. Some children are targets of teasing that becomes bullying. Children who are small for their ages, who have disabilities, who are not well-coordinated, or who are not wealthy, are much more likely to be the targets of teasing. How do you teach your children to respond if they see teasing happening? What if your child is the one being teased?

- 2. Everyone has an “aggravating story.” What is yours? What was the motive for your sibling (or neighbor or cousin, but most likely, your sibling) to aggravate you?

- 3. Are you consistent in disciplining your child for aggravating? Why or why not? Is it easy for you to get discouraged at the slow process you are making in this area?

CHAPTER TWELVE

BRAGGING

1. Bragging stems from pride, and pride, in essence, puts us in opposition to God. How many of these “sins of the tongue” reveal a heart of pride? If we conquer pride, we may have a better chance to conquer our tongues. What can you do to combat pride without killing appropriate self-esteem and confidence in your child?

2. Ginger says that “we can humbly accept the praise of others as long as we keep a right perspective on it” (p. 118). How can you help your child to keep a right perspective? How do you teach your child to handle compliments appropriately?

3. Do parents (or grandparents) contribute to a child's conceit? How can you reframe your encouragement to help a child acknowledge God as the giver of good gifts? How can you help your children recognize Jesus' example in humility and find their validation in the Lord?

4. Use the words of others to teach your children to recognize bragging and humility. Many celebrity interviews (athletes, musicians, actors) are teaching opportunities. Help your children recognize the quarterback who thanks his offensive line or his coach instead of taking all the credit; help them also see the actress whose comments center only on herself. Help your child think of appropriate responses if he or she is often in a position to receive the praise of others.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

ARGUING

1. What is at the root of arguing, according to Ginger (p. 124)? Think of a recent example when your child argued with you. What steps did you take? Were they successful?

2. Arguing is foolish behavior according to God’s Word, and parents must be diligent to address it with discipline. How can parents teach children the “consequences of disobedience and the blessings of obedience” (p. 128)? Make a list of key concepts in

teaching discipline to your children. There may be different plans for different ages.

3. Ginger says, “Wise parents will take time to discipline and instruct their children” (p. 128). Why is *time* a requirement for discipline? How do you do with managing your time as a parent? What changes do you need to make? Write down one change—even if it is a small one—that you can intentionally make this week to give you more time for your children.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

YELLING

1. Ginger says that anger is a God-given emotion, but she also says that yelling is a sinful expression of anger (p. 130). What are the signals that anger has become sinful (page 135)?

2. If “anger can be likened to a blinking light on the dashboard of a car, which alerts you that something is wrong under the hood” (p. 130), how can you help your child work to identify and correct anger problems? Help your child identify a “means of escape,” a strategy for appropriately working through anger.

Why is including action (not just thinking) important in this strategy?

3. Communication with angry child is important in managing their behavior and helping a child learn not to be enslaved by emotions. What can a parent do to improve communication? Why is a cool-down period effective? How can active listening help? How important is helping a child to name his/her emotions?

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

GOSSIPING

1. Ginger connects being judgmental (or judging) and gossiping. Do the two always go together? What sin is at the root of both judging and gossiping, according to page 140? Is there a connection with hypocrisy? (It just gets worse and worse!)

2. Sometimes parents seem to be focusing only on outward behavior (p. 140) for our children. What happens when this is the case? Do parents really lead their children to legalism and manipulation? How can we make sure that we address heart issues?

3. How serious is gossip? Have you ever been hurt by gossip? Have you ever hurt someone else by gossip? Can we teach our children, and model for them, the choices necessary to avoid gossiping?

4. Social media has provided a new landscape for gossip. What guidelines have you set up for your children (especially your older children) to control their exposure to and participation in gossip? How can gossip become a form of bullying?

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

BICKERING

1. Is it normal for siblings to not get along with each other? What kind of relationship did you have with your brothers and sisters? Is the relationship between your children similar? If your siblings argued, what could your parents have done to correct or improve it?

2. How can you teach an immature child to determine whether an argument is worthwhile? How can the child recognize a foolish argument? Brainstorm some suggestions for quick questions the child can learn to ask before responding to conflict. What strategies can you give your child for choosing to walk away from the quarrel?

3. What is involved in resolving conflict biblically? Though you are thinking about these things as a parent instructing your children, the same strategies will work in your own relationships! Name three practical things that you (and your children) can do to “live together in unity.”

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

WHAT'S A GOOD PARENT TO DO?

1. “We should never issue a warning or a command without following it through,” Ginger says on page 158. Ouch! Here it is, in the parents’ court. Empty threats do not teach our children what we want them to do! On a scale of one (“They never listen!”) to ten (“I always follow through!”), where are you in the matter of letting your yes be yes and your no be no?

2. Do you agree with Ginger about the ineffectiveness of time-outs (p. 159)? How does a parent determine appropriate consequences for disobedience? How can you avoid exasperating your children with consequences that are too burdensome?

3. Ginger encourages parents to fight battles with training when children are younger to prevent more difficult battles in the future. Do you agree with her? Can a young child learn these difficult issues? Why is it “better to train than to retrain”? (p. 161). But, “it is never too late to begin training your children in the ways of the Lord,” Ginger says on page 164. Does this encourage you to step up?

4. Training children in God’s Word does not have to be strict or formal; it does not have to be negative. Instead, what is the Deuteronomy 6:6-7 model for teaching children God’s Word?

5. When you feel angry at your child, how do you make wise parenting choices in spite of your emotions? Do you have strategies to add to those that Ginger mentions on page 163?

6. “If day-to-day parenting or day-to-day life in general has us bogged down, stressed out, and uptight, it can be a sign that priorities need adjusting,” Ginger says (p. 167). When you honestly examine your priorities, are they reflected in the things you spend your time and energy on? Are your daily habits in line with your priorities?
