



Teaching Kids About Grace



How can I help my kids understand grace?

Understanding God's grace and walking freely in the reality of it is something even adults have a difficult time with. So it is understandable that kids struggle with it. Grace is often defined as *unmerited favor*. Ephesians 2:8-9 teaches we are saved from eternal separation from God through our faith in God and because of His gift of grace. It is not something we can work for or earn. God makes salvation available to everyone because of grace.

Parents are given a unique perspective and opportunity to model the beauty of grace every day in the home. Every home will experience times when disobedience, unkind words, or annoying habits are present. We need to daily make the choice to respond to those times with grace. It is important to note that offering grace does not always mean consequences are negated. But consequences should always be tied to the disobedience or breaking of a rule. Shame and guilt have no place in grace-based parenting. Neither is grace a license to sin, as Paul explained in Romans 6.

A grace-based approach to parenting keeps the focus on the heart of the child instead of the particular offense. If we aren't careful, we can allow our pride to dictate our responses and we can show more concern that our child went against a rule we created than the fact that the disobedience indicates a rebellious spirit or sin.

God is the ultimate giver of grace. We need to treat our kids the way God treats His kids. We need to intentionally create a culture of grace in our homes and encourage our families to carry that culture of grace into the community as a witness for the Lord.

So what does that look like? What are some practical applications or illustrations of grace-based parenting?

- **Parents can model a gracious response** to each other as well as to the kids in the home
- **Parents can ask for grace from a child** if their parental response or reaction was inappropriate or hurtful
- **Parents can be quick to suggest examples of gracious responses** when helping kids navigate relationships with friends or siblings.
- **Parents can recognize examples of grace being shown in the home** and remind kids they are following God's example whenever they show grace to others.