



A Graceful **RESPONSE**

Biblical responses to
five common behaviors that
will help you parent with grace.

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A GRACEFUL RESPONSE

HOW THIS CHEATSHEET WILL HELP YOU

When we begin our motherhood journey, it's hard to know exactly what to expect. Our children's temperaments, our personality and our family history all affect our parenting experience. For most of us, when we face hard situations or difficult behaviors in our children, it is easy to respond in frustration or anger.

Yet, we know we would rather have a different response. One that is **grace-filled**, so that we are not just speaking gospel to our children, but *acting* with a **gospel-motivated response**.

How does that happen? Simply by willing ourselves to be better?

There is an element of self-control in our responses, yes. But **our ability to react with grace** (for the purpose of this cheat sheet) rests in two things:

- Our understanding of how God's Word calls us to respond to specific situations
- Our recognition of the gospel--what God has done for us and forgiven us from

This cheat sheet addresses both of these elements. I hope the **Biblical prompts** for each of these **five tough moments of motherhood** will encourage and strengthen you, giving you grace-based confidence the next time they pop up in your family.

ONE MORE (IMPORTANT) THING

I'm a Type-A mom. I like to feel as though I have my ducks in a row. Sometimes this means I try to control a bit too much! How about you? ;)

Remember as you read through and use these Biblical responses:

The goal is not to control everything, the goal is to find a prayerful pause in the chaos and respond well, relying on God's grace to cover everything.

This requires practice, so don't worry if you don't get it right away. Refuse the urge to give up and continue to ask the Holy Spirit's help. He promises to be with you!

"You gave Your good Spirit to instruct them, Your manna You did not withhold from their mouth, And You gave them water for their thirst." Nehemiah 9:20

A GRACEFUL RESPONSE

Biblical responses to five tough moments of motherhood

Below are five common situations we face as moms, Bible verses that address them, and a suggested response. Some of these are for your kids and a couple are for you!

SITUATION: TALKING BACK

If you have a child who is old enough to put sentences together, they are old enough to talk back! This was a huge struggle for me as a kid, especially between the ages of 7-15 (so my mother says!). Maybe it seems like this behavior issue is hard to make progress in, but it doesn't have to feel so defeating!

First, consider the reason your child talks back. Scripture says that "out of the heart, the mouth speaks." Encourage your kids during prayer or devotion time to get their heart right before the Lord (we should too!) by confessing sin and asking forgiveness. The Holy Spirit will change their hearts from the inside out! You could start out each morning by praying together in this way.

Have consequences for talking back, such as sitting quietly for 3 minutes for each "infraction" (maybe longer for older kids). This helps them think it through. Maybe sometimes they're really just asking a question. Remind them, "please speak in a calm, plain voice". Sometimes this is enough to help them refocus the way they speak.

SITUATION: CHAOS, LOTS OF NOISE!

Kids are just LOUD! My first-born was quiet but probably because he didn't have any siblings around :) And it's totally fine for them to have lots of energy!

But what's the best way to manage the chaos and noise of multiple children on the days when you really need the calm? Scripture doesn't necessarily address kids being loud, but it does talk about turning chaos to order. Having a plan for your day can help manage the craziness and help YOU be more calm and patient because you know what comes next and can bring it all back in :) **1 Corinthians 14:40 says, "But all things should be done decently and in order."**

What about if the noise is really getting to you? The other day, when all 4 of my kids were begging for attention at once and the 5 year old was literally climbing into the fridge to look for snacks, I felt pretty scattered! One specific solution you can try is to say "everyone take turns talking, please" and then call out the name of each child when it's their turn to speak. This is a better alternative than yelling over everyone to no avail!

****Extra tip:** If you need to call your kids from downstairs or out in the yard but it's hard to throw your voice, get a megaphone. Seriously! It saves your voice and gets your kids attention quickly without hollering. :)

SITUATION: WHINING

Whining can really get on our nerves, and if we find ourselves prone to lashing out when our kids whine, I find it helpful to ask myself "what should my response be?" This almost always changes the way I react. This takes some practice, so ask the Holy Spirit to "prick" your heart and mind about it.

Whining in our children typically stems from dissatisfaction or a complaining spirit. To address it, I say to them, "It's hard for me to listen to you when you whine. Can you try it again in a kind tone of voice?" Then I might demonstrate what that should sound like and have them try several times if that's what it takes. Then thank your child for speaking in a normal tone! Younger kids, especially, like the positive encouragement.

Work on replacing the whining and complaining with giving thanks! 1 Thessalonians 5:18

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SITUATION: SIBLING FIGHTING

Sibling squabbles--they're inevitable! How can we handle them gracefully? This one takes some patience. Here are three options:

1. **Have them hug each other.** If they're not physically fighting, but they are arguing, I've found it helpful to say with a light tone, "Let's stop talking and show kindness with a hug." Then I have them hug or hold hands until they start laughing. This works (almost) every time! Mostly because you are helping to diffuse the situation and giving them something else to focus on. Galatians 5:26 is helpful here (Scripture cards at the end of this cheat sheet).

2. **Separate them for a time.** If you have tried to encourage sharing or agreement, but it isn't working, it's really okay to separate your children. Often, I will take one of the offending siblings with me to another room and have the other sit down in a chair and wait for me to come back. We talk then about thinking about others and considering them more important than ourselves (Philippians 2:3-4)

3. **Address name-calling immediately.** This is a common occurrence in our house. When this happens, physically go over to your children, get down on their level if needed and tell them that it is wrong to call names, because it tears down the other person and takes away from their worth. Remind them that God made them and their siblings and that just as He loves us, we are called to love one another. Once you see that they understand and are repentant, have them apologize and ask for forgiveness. Then ask them to **share one kind quality** about their sibling! This helps **form a habit of using words that build up** instead of tear down. (1 Thessalonians 5:11)

SITUATION: LYING, DENYING

If you discover that your child is lying, it's best to address it in private so that you don't embarrass your child, which may make them less likely to be honest with you.

Explain to them that lying breaks trust and that **you want to have a trusting relationship with them** (Luke 16:10 is a great verse for this talk). Talk about how God wants our tongues to speak truth and keep our lips from speaking lies. (For comprehension, this works best if they're 5 or older, which is usually when lying begins.)

Ask a few questions to figure out **WHY they are lying**. Sometimes they're just scared that you will be mad. I always remind my children that I love them and that I want them to come to me with the truth, even if they've done something wrong. The truth restores the relationship. It might be helpful to remind them that it will be less difficult for them (just in general!) if they come forward with the truth, because once you start telling lies, it's harder and harder to go back.

Remember to **do this with kindness** and not in a "scolding" tone! **God is kind and gracious to us** when we admit we have done wrong, and He calls us to be the same with our kids. **Remind your child that you love them deeply** and that they are forgiven for what they've done wrong.

[Click here](#) to find 11 Bible verses that address lying over at the blog, for other Scripture suggestions.

Lying can be a long-term struggle for some kids, so resist the urge to get frustrated if it continues for some time.

In all of these situations, remember to emphasize God's forgiveness AFTER you correct. We all need the gospel, every single day! So do our children! Blessings to you as you seek a graceful response!

criptures for a Graceful Response

1 THESSALONIANS 5:11

Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

1 CORINTHIANS 14:40

But all things should be done decently and in order.

1 THESSALONIANS 5:18

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

PSALM 34:13

Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit.

GALATIANS 5:26

Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

PHILIPPIANS 2:3-4

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Scriptures for a Graceful Response

LUKE 16:10

One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much.

1 PETER 4:8

Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers a multitude of sins.

JAMES 1:9

My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.

PROVERBS 10:19

When words are many, transgression is not lacking, but whoever restrains his lips is prudent.

PROVERBS 15:31

He who listens to a life-giving rebuke will be at home among the wise. NIV

JOHN 1:16

For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.