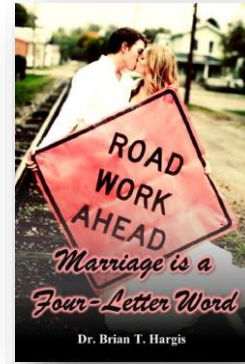


Marriage is a Four-Letter Word

by Dr. Brian Hargis

From CHAPTER 9: Reasonable Rules for Raising Rug Rats



DON'T ARGUE WITH YOUR CHILDREN

One question I have for parents.... why would you argue with your children? Parents that do this have lost control of who is in control. You are in charge, not them. You are the parent, not them. You are the adult, not them. You provide food, clothing, shelter and medical attention, not them. Therefore, you make the final decisions.

Arguing persist because parents simply allow it. A child will challenge you when they know that your word is not the final authority. Your “no” no longer means “NO.” It means “maybe,” or it means, “If I beg mom and dad long enough, they’ll change their mind.”



When you allow your children to argue, fuss, fight and get the last word, you are mentoring them to react in the same manner towards their employee, spouse, supervisor and even God. When things don't go their way, they'll whine, complain or pitch a fit.

Just the other day I saw a seven-year-old boy stomping, jumping up and down, and giving his mother a hard time at the store. Instead of dealing with him firmly, she started counting. “One, two,

three...if you don't calm down... four, five... if I get to 10 you're in trouble...six, seven.” The boy wasn't alarmed on bit because he knew that she wasn't going to do anything.

Since when did counting ever help? All this does is give them more time to misbehave, not to correct their behavior.

“If I have to count to five...”

“I'm not gonna' tell you again...”

“When we get home...”

“If you don't behave...”

“If I have to tell you one more time...”

“If you're good I'll buy you _____...”

These types of responses don't encourage, facilitate or enforce good behavior. They are methods of bargaining and a parent should never bargain with a child.

Here are some steps to change this pattern...

Get back to the basics of who is in control. Talk with your spouse of what needs to be done to gain control and make commitments to make it happen. Support each other. Fathers—you have the lead on this as the “man of the house.” When a child is arguing with mom, get involved and support your wife. Stop the irreverence and disrespectfulness in its tracks. This is especially true with teenagers. Not only is your spouse their mother, but she is your wife! Just as much as you wouldn't allow another man to disrespect your wife, neither should your teens.

Parents, take an active role in identifying the direction of the conversation. When it leads to whining—stop it. When it leads to, “But I thought....” or, “but mommy said...”

It's as simple as saying, “Don't argue with me. You were told to _____ (clean up your room; eat your food; sit down, etc.) and that the end of it. When the rules are broken and you enforce discipline, follow through with it. Never say, “You're grounded for a month!” if you don't mean it and follow through with it. Make the punishment equal to the offense and you will create a positive atmosphere of leadership in the home.

For more of Chapter 9: **Reasonable Rules for Raising Rug Rats**

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