

A Lesson From Jesus Every Parent Needs to Know

It's amazing how transparent children can be when you take time to actively hear what they have to say. After listening for a while, it's often possible to identify some key thinking errors that perpetuate the child's problems.

Take some time to study your children. What weaknesses do they have? What lies do they believe? What are some of the unproductive things they're saying in their hearts? It can be helpful to simply make observations and write them down.

Ask yourself: What does he say when he's arguing with me? What does she say when she's angry? What does he mumble under his breath in his room or as he stomps down the hall? How does she report offenses to her friends? How does she rationalize and justify her mistakes? As you listen to your child talk, you'll get a bigger picture of beliefs, values and impressions that are guiding behavior.

Matthew 12:34 says, "Out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks." As you learn to listen to your child's heart, identify target areas that you sense are a problem. Behavior indicates what's happening inside, so when you see a particular weakness, jot it down on a piece of paper. You might list things like procrastination, pride, fear, gloom and doom or lack of confidence.

You've probably known these character weaknesses were causing problems. By identifying the misconceptions at the root of the behavior, you'll be ready to do some deeper work in your child's heart. Once you identify a heart issue that concerns you, then you can develop a strategy or action plan to help your child grow.

*This parenting tip is taken from the book, **Parenting Is Heart***

Work by Dr. Scott Turansky and Joanne Miller, R.N., ., For more information about developing an Action Plan, consider the Motivate Your Child Action Plan book. This book walks you through the process of developing a strategy for character growth in your child, complete with 12 30-minute audio sessions, fill-in-the-blank opportunities and suggestions for parent-child meetings to develop teamwork in the process.