

Why Setting Rules With Your Child Doesn't Work

Many parents use a simple behavior modification approach to raise their children. "If you get your homework done, then you can go out and play." "If you clean your room, then you can watch a video."

Unfortunately children trained this way often develop a "What's in it for me?" mentality. "If I don't get something out of it, why should I obey?"

God is concerned with more than behavior. He's interested in the heart. The heart contains motivations, emotions, convictions and values. A heart-based approach to parenting looks deeper. Parents still require children to finish their homework and clean up their rooms, but the way they give the instructions is different.

Instead of just getting things done, parents look for long-term change in their kids. Sometimes children aren't ready to change on a heart level and parents must work to address the heart. That may mean more relationship to open the heart or it may involve more boundaries to show kids that the way they're living just isn't going to work.

A heart-based approach shares values and reasons behind rules. It focuses on character development, not just correct behaviors. It requires more dialogue, helping children understand how their hearts are resistant and need to develop cooperation. A heart-based approach is firm but also relational. It's a mindset on the part of parents that looks to develop heart qualities that then bring about significant change.

As you consider your kids remember the words that God said to Samuel in 1 Samuel 16:7, "For man looks on the outward

appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.”

*This parenting tip is from the book, Parenting is Heart Work, by **Dr. Scott Turansky and Joanne Miller, RN, BSN.***