

# Daily Dialogues for the Christian Parent

Sometimes parents don't know what to say to their kids. They may know lots of Scripture, but transferring it into everyday communication is difficult for them. In our home we have a number of phrases that get used repeatedly. They have biblical roots and, therefore, great value. Our family language has been shaped by these sayings. We'd like to share them with you to give you ideas, or to use in your own family.

Here are some examples straight from our home:

## **“Use 4:29 Speech.”**

*Ephesians 4:29 Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.*

All our kids who are five and over know this verse by heart. When we say, “Use 4:29 speech,” they know it means to use speech that is helpful for building up instead of using speech that tears down. It is terribly hard to tame the tongue (James 3:8) and so this is constantly said in our home.

## **“Do to others what you would have them do to you.”**

*Matthew 7:12 So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.*

If only I had a nickel for every time we used this one! Our kids have an uncanny ability to detect every infraction against the respect and justice they think they deserve. When one child offends another it is a great time to ask, “Would you want to be treated that way?” “No.” “Then, do to others what you would have them do to you!”

## **“I forgive you as the Lord forgave me.”**

*Colossians 3:13 Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.*

Forgiveness is tantamount to love, and getting our kids to love each other is one of our greatest parenting challenges. When our kids need to say sorry, we often have them repeat this phrase. We want them to be reminded of their own forgiveness when they have a need to forgive others. This will help them develop a spirit of grace toward those who offend them. Saying “I forgive you,” is not enough in our home.

## **“Mind your own business.”**

*1 Thessalonians 4:11 Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just as we told you.*

I bet a lot of people didn't know that one was in there! The kids aren't allowed to say this to each other. We say it to them when one of them is being a buttinski. In fact, the frequent offenders have memorized the first part of this verse. Kathleen says, “Make it your ambition...” and they finish with “to mind your own business.”

## **“I'm frustrated with you for a moment but my favor lasts a lifetime.”**

*Psalms 30:5 For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime.*

This is what we say to our children after we are particularly strong with them and they know we are frustrated. We want them to know that we are pleased with them overall, even though we can get annoyed at times.

**“God’s man in a godless world.”**

*John 15:19 [Jesus said,] If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you.*

Last year, Blaise started taking a couple of classes at our middle school. We wanted him to remember that God had a special call on his life. When we dropped him off we would say, “Who are you?” He would reply, “God’s man in a godless world.” This helped him remember that he was there on a mission—not to fit in, but to reach out.

**“Remember..” “Whose I am and whom I serve.”**

*Acts 27:23 Last night an angel of the God whose I am and whom I serve stood beside me.*

Blaise found this verse and we adopted it into the family lingo as another form of the previous saying. We would drop him off at school and say “Remember...” He would counter with, “Whose I am and whom I serve.” He’s not just a kid. He is God’s agent and is on a mission as His servant. We want that clearly stamped all over his teenage mind (and the rest of our kids as well).

**“Others may; you may not. Others may not; you may.”**

*John 21:22 Jesus answered, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me."*

When we don’t let our kids do something that other parents are letting their kids do we say, “Others may; you may not.” We all have different standards, but our kids need to follow our standards. Occasionally we let our kids do something that their friends are not allowed to do. To help them keep their “fairness sensors” in check we remind them that at times, “Others may not; you may.”

In the above verse Peter was asked, “What is that to you?” in regard to what would happen to John. Our kids need that same perspective in regards to how other parents parent their children. Our kids need to follow us, not their friends’ parents.

**“Be sensible.”**

*Titus 2:6 Likewise urge the young men to be sensible; (NAS)*

We got this from a conference on Titus (I think it was from John Hopler). There are several things that are required of older men and women, and younger women in Titus 2. But there is one thing required of younger men. Be sensible. This was shared somewhat tongue-in-cheek, but it stuck with us. When our boys are doing something like sticking Spiderman up their noses (true story) it is a good time to say something like, “Son, be sensible!” Kids vacillate between childish behavior and maturity. We need to keep pushing them toward maturity, which includes being sensible (ie. self-controlled).

**“Keep your promise even when it hurts.”**

*Psalms 15:4b who keeps his oath even when it hurts,*

It is easy to keep a promise when it is to your benefit. It takes character when it comes at a cost. When a child promises something and only later realizes that keeping his word will be far more difficult than anticipated, this verse is a timely reminder.