

Life's Lessons - The Double Standard

I listened to a Bible study teacher, John, talk about his frustrations with his grandchildren. Evidently there had been a conflict this morning causing them to be late to church. John had an expectation that one grandchild should apologize to the other one. When this didn't immediately happen, more conflict, stress, and tension was created. The grandchild's stubbornness to not say "I'm sorry" was the focus point. John's intent was noble. He was just trying to teach a life lesson. After all, that's his job and what would people think of him if he didn't do his job? Not to mention the embarrassment of dragging into church late and being frustrated. John was now ready to teach the Bible study.

I don't remember exactly what the lesson was on. John eventually got around to the part about how we deal with our frustrations with others. He gave an excellent example of his resistance to admitting to wrong doing. Class members were in agreement that many times our flesh rears up in disobedience. We all joked about how we have to "chew" on things for a while before we are able to take constructive, appropriate actions. Most of us were able to admit that sometimes that is a difficult task. Many times we need prayer and the counsel of others to get us to the humility necessary to say "I'm sorry" when we make a mistake.

Why then is this so hard for us to afford our children the luxury of time to process? What is it about ourselves that we have compassion and understanding for ourselves but not for children? Too often we have more compassion for others than our own children. I believe it is due to our human nature. I don't mean that to be used as an excuse. We need to explore our fears around our high expectations of our children. We have a "need" to get those life lessons in or our fears tell us they won't be learned.

Teaching during a time of stress is ineffective because our short term memory is shut down and we do not learn effectively while in a stress state. The scriptures give us clear guidance that will help implement the stress model principals that life lessons can be learned later. James 1:19 (New International Version) states "My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry," and Romans 12:18 (New International Version) states "If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone."

I encourage you to think about how God teaches us and how much patience he has. Since we are designed in his image, I believe he wants us to be more like him. We are the models for our children just as he is our model. Think about how you learn life lessons, when God is demanding that you do and is screaming at you or when he is patient and understanding?