

克利夫蘭華人教會

Cleveland Chinese Christian Church

27700 Emery Road, Orange Village, OH 44022 (216) 531-2499
3224 Payne Ave., Cleveland, OH 44114 (216) 621-1412

Youth Pastor Letter

January 2018

Dear Church Family,

We have all been there at some point. There are points in our lives when we are so emotionally charged by a situation that we respond in a way that is harmful and negative to us and those involved.

Often parents will see their kids fumble in negative ways and our responses can be quite negative. How should we react to offenses and bad behavior, especially those committed by our children?

Should we excuse our child's bad behavior? Should we try to prevent consequences and results because our child was provoked and misbehaved? Or do we allow natural or imposed consequences to ensue, forgiving both the instigator and our child's sinful response? How we respond to offenses as parents will shape our children's responses in the future.

As Christians, the right response for us to model in front of our children is that of forgiveness. Forgiveness includes forgiving both the instigator and the reactor recognizing that both behaviors and decisions are flawed. Forgiveness also includes supporting the consequences for poor decisions. Our children need to learn from their mistakes, and still know they are loved. Through forgiveness, we can also teach our children to cancel the offender's debt, as Jesus cancels ours.

We are all sinners and all sin has consequences. This is something that we must teach our children as we model forgiveness in front of them.

This is modeled for us in Genesis 3 when Satan tempted Eve with the deliciousness of the fruit from the tree that God told her not to eat. Satan told her that she would in fact not die, but that it would give her wisdom. So, she ate it. When God confronted Adam and Eve, Eve placed the blame on the serpent for her actions and Adam blamed Eve for influencing him. However, God did not excuse their choices and give them a pardon. They disobeyed God's instructions. While God was angry with them, he made sure they were clothed before telling them the consequences of their sin, which was banishment from the garden. God still loved Adam and Eve, forgiving them, but he allowed them to suffer the consequences of their disobedience.

We know we will sin. We know our children will sin. Ultimately, how we handle the sin is imperative in how we will train up our children. Wisdom teaches us to choose forgiveness, pointing our children to the gospel when they are offended or have done something wrong. God's example in the Garden teaches us to allow the natural and imposed consequences of sinful reactions to ensue. His example also teaches us to cover our children with love, as he clothed his children with animal skins.

Jesus died on the cross so we could be forgiven of our sins and live in a right relationship with God. Forgiveness is essential for us because we were forgiven for our sins. Making excuses will not lead us or our children to the gospel; confession of sin and forgiveness will.

As always, if you have any questions, comments, or prayer requests, please contact me at jmlilley@clevelandccc.org.

In Christ,
Pastor Jonathan Lilley