



from the desk of

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## They are all different...

...but yet are all the same.

### Ephesians 2:10 (NIV)

<sup>10</sup> For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Dear Parents,

Sometimes, in the middle of a crying, whining fit (from your children, not you, that is), it's hard to remember that this verse applies to your children as well.

In *Four Easy Ways to Improve the Way You Discipline*, authors Jim and Lynne Jackson suggest the following:

*God has created us with unique capabilities to equip us for the good works He has for us. When our kids misbehave, those gifts don't disappear; they just show up in selfish and unhelpful ways. Indeed, misbehavior often involves some sort of gift that has gone awry. Parents can either try to suppress the skill to stop the behavior or redirect it for powerful purposes.<sup>1</sup>*

They contend that you can actually see your child's strengths behind their behavior: whining has an element of persistence, an argumentative child had confidence and honesty, strong willed children may become great leaders (or at least will be less susceptible to peer pressure).

They suggest handling these strengths as follows:

*You might say: "I usually admire your persistence, and someday it will serve you well, but how you're using that strength right now isn't helpful. If you pause the game right now, you can play again after doing homework. If you don't, then you'll lose the privilege for the rest of the week."*

This last part we'll deal with more next week as we look at consequences for behavior.

Sometimes in the middle of such a parenting moment it might be hard to see the whining as a strength. Another way to look at this would be to catch your children in times when they are using their strength - take special notice of when they do something positive and praise them for that.

There are times when children simply want attention - and if the only way they can get it is through negative means, that somehow it "works" for them to at least be getting attention. How much better would it be to acknowledge and "reward" the positive behavior.

So, two thoughts today - when you and your child are having issues, try to identify what strength it is that your child is displaying. When you're not having issues, jump on the good that they do and highlight that.

Next week: As an adult you know that there are consequences for your actions. How do we get our children to realize this in their lives?

Need further ideas with specific needs? I'm only an email away! (dcerandy@blcbcs.org).

DCE Randy

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<sup>ii</sup> <http://www.focusonthefamily.com/parenting/effective-biblical-discipline/discipline/new-goal-for-discipline>