

Were you a rebellious child growing up? Did you talk back to your parents when they asked you to do something or set a new rule in place? Do you remember pushing back on your parents? We all would answer yes to one or all of these questions. We can all look back and think of a time when we were rebellious. If we can all remember a time when we were rebellious, why do we enter parent freak-out mode as soon as we sense our own kids being rebellious? Every child is going to go through seasons of rebellion, so we want to help you know how to handle a rebellious child. Breathe deep. We are going to help you think through this issue and form a plan for helping your child!

When our kids are acting out in disobedience, we often forget how much we love them and move quickly to try to fix them. Even though your child may be driving you crazy with their behavior, rebellious kids don't need to be fixed, they need to be led. Dealing with outright disobedience is the parenting job we dread most. In part because most of us have no idea how to handle it, but also because decades of advice from parenting experts have both confused us and left us scared that we'll somehow compromise our darlings' burgeoning self-esteem if we react in the wrong way.

## Encouragement

The honest truth is that helping your child move away from a rebellious heart will not happen unless you lead them that way. There is no other way to guide a child in a new direction unless they are lovingly led. If this is an issue in your house, get ready for more conflict before you have less conflict. The good news is that every child is waiting to be led, and every child desperately needs boundaries because, deep in their hearts, they just need you to lead them.

1. Be decisive. Land on a consequence and enact it upon rebellion.
2. Give your child the appropriate amount of power. It's OK to decide what clothes to wear as long as they're acceptable to school, and you don't get sick wearing shorts in the snow.
3. BE PATIENT AND BE CONSISTENT.
4. Figure out the root of rebellion, the why behind the behavior.
5. Keeping your cool is just as important as consistency.

Source: [ministrytoparents.com](http://ministrytoparents.com)

Dealing with a

## Rebellious Child



## The Concern of Rebellion

In the world of psychology there exists a law called the Law of Reinforcement: Behavior which achieves desirable consequences will recur. I think we'd all agree that rebellious behavior is NOT something that we want to occur in our children, so we have to begin with the question: "Is there a desirable consequence my child receives when he disobeys? Is there a reward for their rebellion that leads them to continue rebelling?"

In James Dobson's Dare to Discipline he says, "If you can't make a five-year-old pick up his toys, it is unlikely you will exercise much control during his most defiant time of life." However, it's been proven that harsh, unloving and critical parenting can drive a child to rebellion. So how do we walk the fine line of making our child do what they should without ruling with an iron fist?

The answer lies in how the Lord disciplines us. Take the time to ask yourself how the Lord has disciplined you. Has he been patient? Has he been forgiving? At times has he allowed you to suffer the consequences of your sin?

Hebrews 12:10-11 says God's point in discipline is holiness: "For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, that we may share His holiness. For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it." So shall our discipline be for our children.

But take heart. The fact is, dealing swiftly with a child's misbehavior or rebellion—and doing so consistently—matters more than the details of your response. Confronting rebellion with consistency and consequences is the key to leading your child to a better place in following your leadership as a parent. You probably don't connect leadership and parenting often, but never forget you are the most influential leader in your child's life, and a child will rise to the standard and expectations you set.

The book of Proverbs contains many wise sayings shared by a King named Solomon. One of those sayings is Proverbs 22:6

*"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not turn from it."*

This is one of those moments where it's clear that it is wise for parents to lead their children. For all children, the way they should go is toward God, but also they should follow our leadership because God has placed us in their life. The problem is most of the time kids will choose to push against us. We have to lead them to follow us. You do have to fight for a heart connection with your child, but you also have to choose to lead them because children need to be shown what matters in life.

## Practical Steps

Most parents think that rebellion is a season that will pass, and that is just not true. A rebellious child who is allowed to reject their parent's authority will continue to become more and more isolated and rebellious. This is not a season. This is an issue that you can lovingly guide your child through.

1. Pray for God to help you lead and help your child follow. You don't need to try to confront this issue alone. Why not invite God into the situation to help? Praying for your children is one of the greatest gifts you can give your child. When things are difficult, prayer will help center you on trusting God!

2. Set boundaries and communicate them to your child clearly and frequently. You have to identify where the rebellion is most frequent and figure out what kind of behavior you expect from your child. You also have to communicate these expectations clearly, and it may take several times to get your point across.

3. Follow through. This is the hardest part. Do what you say you are going to do, and do not back down. Make your punishment for rebellious behavior something you will consistently follow through on, even when it's not convenient.

4. Stay calm and be consistent. Try to remember that this is a process and also lead, don't nag! Nagging is evidence that consistency is lacking. Say it once and enact consequences.