

The Reality of Struggle

Every child will struggle with an area of life. Even if your child is an academic superstar, they may struggle socially. We seem to all have a “thorn in our side.”

A hero of our faith, Paul, said about himself in 2 Corinthians 12:7-10:

“Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me -to keep me from exalting myself! Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ’s sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.”

It’s OK that we have weaknesses. In fact, Paul helps us see that the power of God is displayed through our weaknesses. This is definitely a philosophical stance that helps us see that weaknesses don’t make us failures. Paul even goes so far as to say that God GAVE him this thorn in the flesh. A question to pose then: “Does God give us specific weaknesses that we’ll deal with all of our lives?”

Source: ministrytoparents.com

Grades are a big deal in our culture. We place so much of our hopes and dreams for our kids on the grades they bring home. We all went to school and measured our progress by that grade the teacher gave us, so we have accepted it as a natural marker for our kids’ success. And, in some crazy way, we feel better about our own parenting when our kids deliver the good news!

So many times our culture associates bad grades with bad kids. We know that’s not true, but still the idea freaks us out. We don’t want our child to be lumped into the bad kid category, so from early on we push them to make good grades. Sometimes the pushing is not enough; and they come home with a report card they don’t really want you to see. They know how you will react - you, like me, will overreact! Most of us run right to the try-harder speech, track their progress closer, or make them start doing all homework before dinner. Most of the times it works, but what happens when it doesn’t?

What do I do when my child is

Struggling at School?



Starting Point

If you find your kid struggling in school the first thing you need to realize is that your kid's grade at school is not your grade as a parent! Great parents are parents that help their kids get the best education, not always the best grade. If your child is struggling, it is another chance for you to help bring the best out of your child.

The question we want you to ask today is what is academic success for your child? This is an honest question, and the answer is different for every child. Stop comparing your child to other kids. If your child is struggling, slow down and set some realistic goals your child can reach. When kids have realistic goals academically, they will reach them and build momentum.

Our goal is simple...we want kids to give their best and every child has a unique best to bring!

The Bible says this:

Colossians 3:17 (NLT) "And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father."

What God wants from our kids is their best. No matter the grade, our goal is to help our kids give their best and honor God. Your child's value will never be captured by a grade. They are way more amazing than that!

Practical Steps

If our goal is to help our kids do their best, then here are three simple steps to help them make forward progress at school...

1. Ask the right people the right questions.

If your child is struggling make sure you check in with their teachers and their pediatrician to find out if they are really behind. Teachers and doctors are there to help, and most are waiting for us to ask for info. Don't address the issue without the right perspective. Ask the right people the right questions. Listen, don't take feedback personally, and help your kids find forward motion.

2. Help them focus.

If your child is struggling at school they are probably not struggling with everything. Celebrate what they are good at and focus effort on where they are struggling! Your child is going to need you to frame the real challenge. You're the parent. Celebrate what is good and tackle the problem together.

3. Help them get organized.

Most school problems can be tackled with a little hard work and focused effort. Your child will probably not be able to get organized without your help. Set a schedule and help them focus on what they need help with the most.

Additional Help

Here's the harsh reality: even if our child struggles academically, he/she still HAS to get an education. How do we help them succeed to the best of his/her ability?

1. Stop the comparison game and figure out with an expert (teacher/pediatrician) if your child is truly behind.

2. Determine the subject/area in which your child struggles most and give that area attention. Don't forget that many problems originate from a child's inability to organize their things. Help them figure out a way to stay organized!

3. Don't be afraid to ask for help. Ask your child's teacher/pediatrician if tutoring will help. They'll have a perspective that will help you know if your child is just a bit behind or has some sort of developmental issue.

4. If it comes to it, don't be afraid to have your child assessed for special education. Many children just need the opportunity to learn differently and special education offers this. God has made your child unique and wonderful! Know your child's strengths and work on weaknesses. Many times our strengths teach us how to adapt our weaknesses.

Those are just a few steps you can take. Take a deep breath. It's going to be OK and God is going to give you the wisdom to lead your kids through this challenge!