

Generous or Greedy?

You may find yourself saying, “YEP, my child can definitely be selfish!” Here’s the reality - WE ALL ARE! Each of us looks for ways to get what we want out of life. Yeah, we say it’s not about us, but, in reality, most of us live like it is!

Thousands of years ago, the Israelites did this same thing after being freed from slavery. They found themselves in the desert asking for more: more food, more water, more leadership.

Here’s the problem the Israelites found themselves in, and one we need to take heed of when it comes to parenting: the Israelites did NOT keep the end in mind! God was delivering them to the Promised Land, for goodness sake, but all they could focus on was not having what they wanted in the present.

Sound familiar? Our kids can’t focus on the end because developmentally they can’t think that far ahead. But WE can. As parents, we can keep the end in mind and make choices accordingly! Do we want our children to grow up to be selfless or selfish, generous or greedy? When we parent with the end in mind, we can make better decisions in the moment.

Source: ministrytoparents.com

The Selfish Child

How do I handle my child wanting more?

What do I do when my child always wants more? What do I do when it seems to never be enough and the demands get bigger and bigger? At the same time, how do we avoid turning into those “when I was a kid” - speech kind of parents and help our kids discover the profound but hard truth that they will not always be able to get what they want?

As you think through setting limits, which of these is most important for you right now, being consistent or providing choices? Is there one you struggle with more than the other?

Take some time to develop a plan for one of these areas and then practice being consistent with it!



The Concern of Selfishness

For our generation, spoiled is the new normal because, even as parents, we always seem to be fighting for the next new toy. New car, new house, new dress, new job, new vacation...you name it we go after it and our kids have caught on to our obsession. That may not be you, but I can promise you that your kids are seeing other kids become addicted to the obsession of more. Kids start believing that, if they could just have that new toy, their lives would be perfect.

If your child is stuck always wanting more, your temptation will be to just ignore it. You might try to believe this will go away with age, but truth is that an addiction to more really never goes away. Studies show that kids who display tendencies of being spoiled don't function well in the real world, don't understand the value of money, don't see the value of hard work, and struggle with teamwork.

We all want our kids to be people that understand the world does not revolve around them and have a passion to help others in this life. In the Bible God calls his people over and over to slow down, look around, and be thankful. Psalm 138:1 says...

I give you thanks, O Lord , with all my heart; I will sing your praises...

God understood that all of us need to embrace a thankful and not selfish heart in this life. Helping our kids not be addicted to more helps them see value in what they have good in their life.

Ultimately, we want our children to be completely satisfied in Jesus.

Hebrews 13:5 says:

Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.

So, when your kiddo asks for that next thing, whatever it may be, big or small, help them think through this question:

“Does this thing I desire help me become the person God has created me to be?” This question helps us to keep the end in mind. And isn't that the end goal, to help our children become the person God has created them to be?

Practical Steps

So where to begin? Here are the big 3 for de-spoiling your child...

1. **Set limits:** kids function better and have a better chance of understanding the importance of being thankful when they have limits. When something is limited we value it more. Chocolate cake is great, but eating a whole cake will be disaster. Setting limits for kids shapes their perspective of life. You are the parent, so help them have healthy limits with not just food but stuff and fun also. It's ok to say no.
2. **Be consistent:** consistency is the key to building trust with your children. Choose what matters to you and be consistent with your kids. Being consistent allows kids to know they can trust you. They actually get to know what you think is important. They will, in time, value what you value if you are consistent.
3. **Provide choices:** when you give kids choices you begin to teach them an important life lesson. They will spend the rest of their days on earth making choices. The Rolling Stones were right: you can't always get what you want! Give them the chance to make choices. We want to teach our kids to choose more of the right things.