

The Indispensable Parenting Tool Called Revolving Priorities

I. I say something to my child.

- It may be a command or a question, a statement or an exclamation; it doesn't matter. For example, "*Will you please clean your room?*"

II. My child responds inappropriately.

- Whether with his non-verbals or his words, he communicates to me anger, disdain, annoyance, or any other ungodly response. For example: *with an extra helping of annoyance, a side of disdain, and full cup of eye-roll* he asks, "*Why?*"

III. I then decide whether to Revolve my Priorities or push through with my original priority.

- This is the crux moment. This is the where I either set myself up for failure or success.
- But it's in that moment that I must realize that him cleaning his room is *not* nearly as important as the relational carnage he's attempting to create. Like we discussed in episode 5, in scenarios like this, I don't have to try hard to understand his heart. It's easy for me to see that there's a problem here. Something is causing him to be so self-worshipping that he's willing to hurt our relationship to get what he wants.
- And that's infinitely more important than the toys on his floor.
- But, again, if I decide in a moment of self-worship to respond sinfully, then all we have is a battle of idols. He wants to worship himself and not me. I don't want to worship him - I want him to do what I want . . . and how has that ever really worked out for me? Even if he gives in, am I proud I muscled him into obedience? Is it good that he just rolled over even though he thinks I'm a jerk? And generally speaking, when they get to a certain age, those fights rarely ever end quickly.
- Did I really think he'd want to worship me over himself or God?

IV. I make the right decision and Revolve my Priorities to fit the need.

- Keep in mind, that though I can tell that something's wrong, I don't really *know* what's wrong. Why is he disrespecting me? That's what we need to figure out and address. Any time we need to discover something we ask questions; we don't lecture. Lecturing is me plunging forward with my own priority, not revolving to find the need of the moment.

V. My child responds.

- At this point, the conversation could go anywhere. He could just as easily reply, "*I'm sorry, Dad. I shouldn't have said that. I was in the middle of something and didn't want to stop.*"

VI. I revolve again or conclude.

- Next thing you know, I've rotated my priorities to guiding him through the process of apologizing, I've granted permission, he's received it, and you know what . . . the room gets cleaned. The original priority is accomplished and the relationship has been preserved (and strengthened) in the process. Win, win.
- Or, he could make a very different choice and respond with any variety of bad.
- In those cases we must Revolve back to step four. Why is he continuing his tirade? Perhaps his response is exposing more heart that can help me see why he's calling God a liar. I can then use these observations to apply the right Scripture. And we work through this process until we can get back to number five - my child with a Christ-honoring response.