

Are Older Children in Charge of Younger Children, Part 2 | birth order and admonition

I. Real Life Scenarios

- **All of your children are growing in their conformity to Christ.**
 - From a spiritual perspective (in situations like this) there generally is little reason to think that you have to give any one child your Inherited Authority over the rest. If they are all imperfectly desiring to make Christ-honoring choices, and they're teachable (which means they receive admonishment from you and their siblings well enough), then each child needs to recognize that they all have Inherited Authority from God Himself to keep the others accountable whether you're in the home or not.
 - Of course, sometimes there's still wisdom in giving Inherited Authority from a practical perspective. If you're going to be gone during dinner, and you believe that your oldest child is physically and spiritually mature enough to safely use the stove to make dinner for the rest . . . then by virtue of their height, knowledge of the kitchen, practical competence with kitchen appliances, knives, food safety, etc, combined with their spiritual maturity, it would be best to give them authority over dinner selection and prep than a child that is not capable. Because no matter how spiritually mature your six year old may be, it would likely be very unwise to give them free reign in the kitchen while you're gone.
- **Some of your children are growing in their conformity to Christ, but others are not born again (or are double-minded).**
 - Two questions have to be asked:
 - First, if you were to leave, what are the chances the unsaved or double-minded child is actually going to listen when their sibling admonishes? If the answer is "pretty good,"
 - Second, is the more spiritually mature sibling capable of using their Inherited Authority to help keep the unsaved and unstable siblings physically and spiritually safe — especially if they were to push against the authority?
 - If the answer to both of those questions is yes, then there is wisdom in giving your Inherited Authority to the more mature sibling when you leave the home, and — as always — all of your children have the same Inherited Authority from God to keep each other accountable. But since an unsaved child is incapable of exercising God's Inherited Authority, and since a double-minded child cannot be trusted to correctly use their Inherited Authority, identifying the more spiritually mature child for that role (regardless of their age) is a good strategy for setting everyone up for success.
- **None of your children are growing in their conformity to Christ, or some are mature but others are terrorists.**
 - First, once again, all of your children have God's Inherited Authority on their lives, but if none of them are going to exercise it by biblically admonishing each other, then they can't be trusted to glorify God without the proper authority present in their lives.
 - Second, even if one of your kids is on the mature side, it would be unwise and unkind to leave that child to be the spiritual authority over another child who is dead-set on doing wrong.

II. Practical Inherited Authority among Siblings

- **Inherited Authority doesn't exercise Inherent Authority.**
 - Your kids are never allowed to boss each other around.
 - Children are allowed (and should be encouraged!) to remind their siblings of what their parents and God want them to do.
- **Inherited Authority only works when the Inherent Authority has clearly set High Biblical Expectations.**
 - One of the reasons our kids are tempted to flex their perceived authority is the fact that we parents haven't clearly taught our kids what is right and wrong. (Nehemiah 8)
 - In order to help the children know, understand, and apply the truth, parents need to be specific.
- **Inherited Authority upholds Parental Authority.**
 - II Corinthians 3:4; 10:17
 - We want your kids to be able to admonish with confidence knowing that the instruction and warning they're passing on to their sibling is from their parents and grows from the things of God.
- **Inherited Authority upholds God's Authority.**
 - As we're careful to teach our kids that they have no Inherent Authority and, therefore, how to use their Inherited Authority as Ambassadors of God and you, you will need to carefully teach them God's Law and apply it practically to your home life.
 - Remember, doing the right thing in the right way with the wrong motivation is a sin. We need to root our reason for obedience in God.
- **The best application of Inherited Authority will root the Parent's Authority in God's Authority.**
 - Teach your kids not merely to drop your name, teach them to point their siblings to Christ.
 - This is exactly how God expects us to parent. As intentional, premeditated, disciple-making, Ambassador Parents, it's supposed to be all about God.
 - We need to exercise our Inherited Authority by pointing to Christ because it's what God commands, but it's also a really important way to lead by example, and help our kids do the same.
- **Inherited Authority understands its boundaries.**
 - From a human perspective, if the child is the ultimate authority in someone's life, then it is their sole responsibility to make sure the other person submits to their power, and — if they don't — it's the child's sole responsibility to punish them. That's why your kids flex their perceived power in the family, and that's why they punish those who don't cow-tow.
 - But, if the child isn't the Ultimate Authority, that means two things . . .
 - First, it means that their authority is limited to the authority they've inherited from the Ultimate Authority. They're not allowed to overstep their bounds.
 - And second, it means that when they've come to the end of their Inherited Authority, they have to pass the situation off to the Ultimate Authority.
 - And this is as true in our parenting as it is with our kids' interactions with each other.
- This really isn't a complex situation. God has given everyone in your family the permission to admonish each other in truth and love. We just need to teach our kids how to do it the best way possible.