

Tantrums 2

Ok, so let's say you're already fairly consistent in your discipline skills, you're using an actual rod, the spanks hurt enough and you're balancing it at other times with plenty of fun and smiles and snuggles. But your little one is still having melt-downs or freak-outs. So let's dig a little deeper and look at what else is going on in the child's life. Here are some questions to ask yourself. All these things affect children's behavior:

What is he eating?

What is his normal daily schedule like?

What else is going on in his life?

Are both parents in agreement about discipline?

How is my marriage relationship doing?

One of my sons is extremely difficult to work with after he's eaten ice cream the day before. It's become predictable. Nearly every time we have a "confrontation" with him, we've learned to look at what he had to eat. Cheese does it too (like on pizza). He's now in his teens and it still affects him. Another friend heard about this and started watching what her little guy had eaten when he had melt downs and pinpointed red food coloring. So food sensitivities are definitely something to consider. Often the culprit is a food for which the child begs or asks extra helpings.

A regular daily routine at home can seem boring to a mom, but is very important and helpful to a little one. Few adults are used to staying at home for more than a half day. But I have found that our home runs better the more I'm home, really at home. It used to drive me nuts. I love going. I was addicted to it. I felt empty (barren?) when I stayed home. But over the years, I've sought the Lord and asked him to "settle me."

"He settles the barren woman in her home as a happy mother of children. Praise the Lord." (Psalm 113:9).

A relaxed, daily routine that children can count on helps them know what's expected. Home with Mom is a child's favorite place to be. If you think your home is an uninteresting place to be, talk to God about it. Ask Him to show you how you can gradually make your home the place to be!

Are there other disruptive things happening in the child's life that he might be responding to by having these tantrums? Perhaps he recently lost a pet, or Daddy's been out of town a lot lately. Sometimes it just takes some talking things out and reassuring him, preferably during calm times, to get him through a rough time. Take a fresh look at what's going on in his world.

Even though spanking with a rod is biblical and right, it will not be effective if both parents are not in agreement. Moms, if your husband does not want you to spank your children, your obedience to him has to come first. Pray for him, share the scriptures, show him some articles, but let God change his heart.

"Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives."(1 Peter 3:1,2)

Children's behavior sometimes is a barometer of what's going on in the marriage; not always, but it can be. If your marriage relationship is strained, your children will be affected, and it can come out in bad behavior. They know something's not right and feel out of control. If you think this is affecting your child, let him see you and your spouse together and happy. Sit on

your husband's lap occasionally. Hold hands. Make time for each other. Even a quick sit on the couch with your spouse to share each other's day does wonders for the whole family.

Still perplexed about tantrums? You may want to ask God specifically if there is anything satanic affecting your child. Demons aren't always deadly and gruesome, they can sometimes just be pesky and bothersome, stirring up trouble in our relationships. But praise be to God we Christians have victory over them in the Name of Jesus. Some folks have found their children's behavior improved after praying over them as they sleep and asking God, in the Name of Jesus, to bind satan and any demons who might be affecting the child. Satan's effect on children can stem from a parent's unconfessed sin, bitterness or unforgiveness. So these are all things to look for. You may need to do some confessing and repenting. Children too need to learn that any act of disobedience leaves them more "exposed" to satan's ways. They need to learn how to ask forgiveness too. This is spiritual warfare that we need to teach our children. We are in a battle, but the war is already won! Scripture tells us satan's end. But in the meantime, we need to take God at His word and apply the spiritual warfare skills he has given us, for the sake of our families! More on this topic another time.

As always, prayer needs to be an important part of figuring these tantrums out. Pray for wisdom and keep asking. Ask every day, several times a day. Pray that God will give you the "intestinal fortitude" to do what's best and what's right, despite the child's crying, and despite what others may think. Pray for your marriage. Pray for mercy. Pray for insight. God uses these parenting situations to train us and to bring us to Himself. The greatest parenting lesson I ever learned is that I am totally incapable of raising children. But Jesus is completely capable. You can count on His word. He is faithful. Give your parenting to Him!

Ah, aren't children good for us! They bring to the forefront those things that God wants to work on in our lives!