

## Why Whine?

Why do little ones whine? Because it works! Whining is such an annoying sound that most parents are quick to either back down or change the request so the whining will stop. This, of course is exactly what the child wanted. The whining worked once again. But no one wants to raise a whiner. So let's tackle this head on.

Training against whining has at least three aspects: parental example, voice training and heart training. So the first step is to check both Mom's and Dad's forms of responding when they don't like what's been asked of them. Do Mom or Dad whine? Sometimes it's the whole family that needs to learn not to whine. Take a day and just listen to each other, and learn to recognize whining in all its forms. Whining displays the attitudes of discontentment, defiance and even laziness. But prayerful confession and thankfulness will help Mom and Dad to begin modeling a no-whine attitude for their children.

A child needs to recognize the differences in the sound she makes with her voice. Ask her to use her normal voice. Say something like, "You may not whine. This is whining...(imitate whine, make an ugly face). I want you to use your normal voice, like this...(use a normal, calm voice, make a pleasant face). Now you try it." Children can easily learn to change the tone of their voices with a little practice. Children also need to practice the correct responses. Occasionally throughout the day, have the children practice these phrases outloud, several times right in a row: "Ok, Mom. Ok, Mom. Ok Mom." or "Yes, sir. Yes, sir. Yes, sir" or whatever your family deems appropriate. Use the correct inflexion and attitude. Make it a fun game. Practice will make these phrases come off the child's tongue more easily. This is good training for parents too!

Whining is a form of rebellion. It tells the parent, "I don't want to do what you said!" It's the outward indicator of an inner heart attitude. So simply modeling and training the child's voice will not get to the root of the problem. Spanking will, however. By God's design there seems to be a connection between pain on the backside (administered appropriately) and the release of a bad attitude held in a child's heart by sin. I don't understand it fully, but it is so. Spanking a child for whining trains the heart and not just the voice. So if I've asked a child to do something and she comes back whining, "But I wanted to...." I stop her mid-sentence with an "Aht-Aht" and a shake of my head. "You may not whine. Go get the rod." If she talks back to this or makes a fuss, I begin adding to the number of spanks she'll receive, "Ok, one more, now two." If the whining is occurring in the form of begging, I simply say, "I will not listen to you if you are whining. Use your normal voice." If I've already said no to a request and a child whines and begs again, that child gets a spank. This says to the child, "I meant what I said the first time."

Older children can learn how to ask an appropriate question such as, "May I ask why you want me to...." or "May I finish here first?" But in the early years, children must learn to quietly and immediately obey Mom and Dad without back talk. **We want to train our children to respond to us the way we want them to respond to God when they are older: quickly, the first time, and with a good attitude.** Good training prepares a child's heart for spiritual growth. If training in this area is consistent in a child's early years, it will be immeasurably easier for that child to respond appropriately to God.

Whining is something that creeps in again and again, so parents must be diligent over the years to watch for it in themselves and to reinstitute this training for their children as needed. Parenting is a long-term commitment and a never-ending lesson in personal holiness as well! That's one reason why children are so good for us. They help us to discover what may need changing in our own lives!

