

## “I was wr...wr... wro...wrong”

We’ve all been there. It’s been a rough day. Maybe we’ve been feeling sorry for ourselves and come home to a tribe full of people each wanting a piece of us. The short question, “Dad, can I-” is cut off with “I don’t care!” Or maybe “Mom, Billy just hit me with a-” meets “Go tell your father. I’m through listening to it today!” If you don’t recognize it, your kids do. Mom AND/OR Dad are in “a bad mood.”

I want to encourage you with the power of the phrase, “I’m sorry. I was wrong.” It opens a door to reconciliation that is powerful for our children in a number of ways. First, it allows them to know that I, the parent, was what was wrong with the situation not them. Even our older kids are still identifying themselves by the impact they have on the world around them, and our bad mood can often make them feel like they need to be different in order to help us improve. This should not be the case.

Also, the power of apologizing allows us to put a “tag” on our behavior. Many times we think that we blew it too big for fixing. We often think that we are supposed to get it right every time. Our kids do need to have examples of good behavior in their parents, but a “blown top” is still a teachable moment. When we behave poorly, our kids need us to let them know that what we have done is an example of what not to do. It can be as simple as “I’m sorry. That is not how I should have spoken to you.”

Lastly, confessing that we are in the wrong spirit lives out the truth of the gospel before our kids. It allows them to see that while relationships have bumps and bruises, our homes are full of a bunch of sinners who constantly need to seek out and provide grace with each other. Recently, the Lord helped me out of one of those “poor me days”, and I knew that I had been a poor example of a follower of Christ to my kids. After asking forgiveness for being “grumpy,” I was able to share with them what was at the root of my problem. I said, “My problem was that I was not concerned about what God wanted from me. My heart was set on pleasing me. When my goal is to be happy and comfortable and you come to me with your needs, then I consider you to be getting in my way and an irritation.” I was then able to tell them how I was able to confess my wrong heart to God and gain a new purpose. I explained, “When my heart is set on serving Christ, then meeting your needs becomes an opportunity for me to please Him.”

Over the years, I have heard a number of parents recall that “I’m sorry” was not something that they were told very often by their own parents. Along with this lack of apology, I have heard others express a concern over whether or not their child loses some respect for them if they should have to admit that they are/were wrong. Let me assure you that “I’m sorry” has never done harm to any relationship, and the statement “I was wrong” can do wonders for our relationships when the Lord helps us out of a “bad mood.”