

Brave Moms, Brave Kids
Excerpt (4) for blog post

I wasn't very far into motherhood when I began to realize that some of the misbehavior and attitude problems in my kids were caused in part by the actions and attitudes of their mother. While each of them proved at a young age that they were wicked in their own right, I can't deny that I've snapped when I felt as though they were being disrespectful or taking advantage of me. I've been known to be selfish when they've interrupted my sleep, to raise my voice when it wasn't necessary or helpful, and to fail to listen when I hurt their feelings. I'm not perfect, and I'm pretty sure you aren't either.

Occasionally, I feel like telling the kids that the quarters I find in our laundry machines will be used to fund their counseling as adults. I can wake up to a peaceful house, make a cup of coffee, spend an hour with the Lord, and even pray for the day that lies ahead of us all...and then walk five feet into my "not a morning person" daughter's room and need to hit my knees in repentance again.

Our job as mothers is to help our children know and experience the love of their heavenly Father. Yes, this is done when we read Scripture to them and talk to them about the Lord, but we also have the privilege and responsibility of modeling the love, discipline, forgiveness, and grace of God as well.

This is no small task. We must somehow learn to create an environment that resembles the spiritual truths at work in the gospel story. Of course, we need to teach our children there are consequences for sinful choices, but we also need to show them through the actions of our love that "if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

The best way to teach children forgiveness is to go first. I want my kids to say, "Yes, my mom taught me how to ask for and give forgiveness, but the way she modeled it is what stands out in my mind. She gave me a safe opportunity to learn how to forgive by asking me often for forgiveness when she fell short." That practice looks like God and paints the picture of the gospel story in real time.

Isn't that what we are looking to instill in our children? Humility says, "I've done something wrong and I need forgiveness." We can race to Jesus, and the offer there is an unlimited well of forgiveness for ourselves and stronger relationships with our kids.

What have you done to show God's forgiveness to your children? What are some times when you've had to seek forgiveness for not being the best example to them? How did they respond?