

**# 396 05/28/07 Goal: teach your child to respect you**

Last week I suggested that it would be good to look at some examples of goals we might have for our children and how we go about reaching those goals. I will begin with a habit we would all like our children to learn: respect of parents.

Around two years of age, a child realizes that he can actually defy his parents' authority by refusing to obey. Many two-year-olds even call a parent a name or speak in other disrespectful ways.

If this mildly annoying behavior is not corrected, it will become a much bigger problem. By the time the child reaches adolescence, he will not have learned to respect any adult. His actions will cause him problems in school and, often, with legal authorities.

Obviously, what the parent should do is make a plan to correct the behavior as soon as it occurs. The first step is to determine if the behavior is inappropriate. God thought respecting parents was important enough to make it one of only Ten Commandments: "Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you." Exodus 20:12. By reading that commandment, we realize that respecting parents is for the child's benefit rather than the parents'. You are doing your child a great good when you require that he respect you.

The second step is to set a goal. A good goal for this particular behavior would be that both parents will have zero tolerance for disrespectful behavior. That means that there will be no times that they choose to ignore the behavior.

The third step is to determine how you will reach the goal. The best way is to kneel at his level, place your hands firmly on his shoulders and say, "You are not allowed to talk to Mommy that way." Each subsequent time that it occurs, repeat the procedure but also place him in timeout for five minutes. It is especially important for Dad to reinforce a boy's respect of his mother.

When the goal is reached, you will have a child who has learned to show respect to his or her parents. That lesson, taught at an early age, will be invaluable to a teen in his relationship with you and other adults.

