

## Conquering Disrespect & Manipulation

### Goal

*Defining manipulation, examining anti-manipulation devices used by Jesus (and useful for us too) and introduce the Conflict Journal and Manipulation Worksheet as practical tools for addressing manipulation.*

### Manipulation Self-Test

- I have to repeat and/or reword instructions before my child follows them
- When I ask my child to do something, he asks me, "why?"
- I find myself having to justify my decisions to my child
- I walk away from discussions with my child and I feel guilty
- My child lies to me
- My child is disciplined almost entirely by one parent
- I rescind disciplinary actions because of appeals by my child
- I find myself defending my position to my child
- My child seems beyond my control
- When my child wants something from me, he tries to motivate me to give it to him without telling me directly what he wants
- My child procrastinates before completing tasks assigned to him
- I hesitate to say "no" to my child out of fear of what he might do or how he might react
- I regularly give into what my child wants to avoid regular conflict
- My child begs and pleads to have his way after I've denied his appeal the first time
- My child is more disobedient in front of others

**Manipulation Defined**

Manipulation is to attempt to control. Often times it is an effort to gain control of another individual or situation by inciting an emotional reaction. For the Christian, manipulation is using unbiblical means of controlling or influencing another person.

**Manipulation-Anger Relationship**

The same lusts which tempt you to become sinfully angry when you do not get your way tempt you to employ sinful means to obtain what you want.

❖ James 1:14

Elements of Manipulative Behavior			
The Behavior	Desired Emotional Response	Parental Reaction	Desired Controlling Effect
Accusations	Guilt	Defend self	To procrastinate
Criticisms	Shame	Justify actions	To avoid obligation
Crying	Embarrassment	Blame shifting	To change parent’s mind
“Why” questions	Hurt/Guilt/Embarrass	Answer “why” questions	To lower parents’ standards
Obligatory Statements	Anger	Yelling back	To rescind parental punishment
Sulking, pouting Whining Withholding affection Cold shoulder			

**A Biblical Response to Foolishness**

❖ Proverbs 26:4-5

**Lou Priolo Says ...**

*“Christ never answered with a foolish response. He never fought folly with folly. Although he responded to foolishness, he never did so in kind. He did not allow the fool with whom he was talk to drag him down to his level of playing the same sinful communication games as his opponent.”*

<b>Answering a Foolish Child</b>	
<b>According To His Folly</b>	<b>As His Folly Deserves</b>
You are drawn into conflict by your child	You are in control of the conversation with your child
Your child is allowed to successfully employ sinful, manipulative behaviors	Your child is confronted biblically when sinful, manipulative behaviors are employed
You react with a snappy comeback motivated by emotion other than love for your child	You respond out of love with a well thought biblical answer that aims at driving foolishness from the heart of your child
You resort to defending yourself, justifying your actions, blame-shifting, answering “why” questions, argumentation, etc.	You identify and effectively put an end to your child’s manipulative behavior
You allow your child to terminate the conversation by having the last word before biblical correction has taken place	You do not allow the conversation to end until biblical discipline and/or correction has taken place so that your child acknowledges and repents of his sin
You walk away feeling guilty, intimidated, frustrated, exasperated, like a failure and/or out of control	You walk away confident that by God’s grace you are in control of and successfully accomplishing the training of your child
Your child walks away with the satisfaction of knowing that he has punished or manipulated you	Your child walks away knowing that you have successfully thwarted his attempts at disrespect and manipulation

**Two Anti-Manipulation Devices**

- ❖ Appeal to the personal responsibility of the manipulator
- ❖ Appeal to God’s Word (God’s Will) as the standard for judgment of the manipulator

**Jesus’ Anti-Manipulation Accounts**

- ❖ Luke 10:38-40
  - Appeal to personal responsibility
  - Appeal to God’s will
- ❖ Luke 2:46-50
  - “did you not know ...”
  - “...that I had to be ...”
- ❖ Luke 6:1-5
  - “have you not even read ...”
  - 1 Sam 21:1-6
- ❖ Luke 20:19-26
  - “then render to Caesar ...”
  - “... and render to God the things that are God’s.”

<b>5 Guidelines for Employing Anti-Manipulation Devices</b>	
Examine Your Motives	❖ 1 Tim 1:5
Examine Your Life	❖ Gal 6:1 ❖ Matthew 7:3-5
Maintain a Spirit of Gentleness	Are you angry because of his sin against God, or his sin against you?
Choose the Right Words	❖ Eph. 4:29 ❖ Col. 4:6
These Anti-Manipulation Devices are only one part of your biblical parenting resources	❖ 2 Tim. 3:16

**Conflict Journal & Manipulation Worksheet**

- ❖ Conflict Journal: Blow-by-blow near-verbatim account of the dialogue with your child during times of conflict (prepared by the parent). Treat each couplet of child-parent responses as separate “rounds” to be analyzed through the lens of the Anti-Manipulation Devices.
- ❖ Manipulation Worksheet: Used in conjunction with the Conflict Journal, this tool is designed to train parents to successfully, consistently respond to foolishness in a biblical way. Examine each “round” of the Conflict Journal and analyze it according to the following 4 sections (which comprise the 4 headings of the worksheet):
  - Circumstances Surrounding Manipulation
  - Manipulative Remarks Made to Me (Refer to Elements of Manipulative Behavior)
  - My Response to Manipulation
  - Christlike (Biblical) Response to the Manipulation