

What About Rules?

Rule-making and rule-following are essential functions in every family. However having too many rules will complicate not simplify parenting. A rule isn't needed for everything. The family that relies excessively on rules will become repressive and issue focused resulting in rebellion and problematic relationships with the focus on compliance rather than on cooperation. On the other hand, the family that does not have good rules quickly becomes mired in chaos. The key is a few good rules for good reasons.

What are good rules?

- Good rules primarily address issues of health, safety and general welfare. Good rules take into account the age of the child and the level of the child's physical, mental and emotional functioning.
- Good rules are rules that are clearly understood by all concerned.
- Good rules are rules that can be readily enforced without causing additional stress or strain on the parent.

To be effective, all rules must be consistently enforced with both positive and negative consequences. Be careful not to fall into the trap of enforcing rules only with negative consequences. This easily can turn into power plays and discouragement for all concerned. A positive consequence for a rule followed is a powerful reinforcer.

Remember that parenting is not a popularity contest.

Having just a few good rules in place and following them contributes to a family being able to function according to God's Creative Design.

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