

DISCERN RIGHT FROM WRONG

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Let's start by getting something out of the way. We live in a sinful world. Your child has sinned and they will be tempted to sin again. This may be difficult to acknowledge and it can be even harder to talk about, but it's important that we do. 1 Peter 5:8 is clear that sin, temptation, and the devil pose a real danger. This good news is that God has given your child the tools they need to discern right from wrong, and to build righteous habits. And here's how you can help your child develop those skills:



- **First, talk with your child about the fact that God has created them with a conscience** —an internal sense of right and wrong. Assure them that the Holy Spirit uses their conscience as well as the wisdom of parents, mentors, and friends to guide them. Encourage your child to talk with you about their choices (good or bad). Resist the urge to jump in and tell your child what they should do. Instead, be their sounding board. Doing so helps children build trust in their own decision-making capabilities.
- **Second, help your child learn from their sin or poor decision.** Calmly and non-judgmentally talk with your child after they have made a bad choice. Ask them what they were thinking and feeling before, during, and after. Did something inside of them alert them that they were about to do something wrong? If not, what might have kept them from being in tune with their conscience and the Spirit's voice? In order to move forward, ask your child who was affected by what happened and encourage them to think about how they can make things right.
- **Third, when appropriate, share with your child a time when you ignored your conscience and did something you knew you shouldn't have.** How did things turn out? Tell your child how the experience helped you be more attentive to your conscience and the Spirit's guidance.
- **Fourth, encourage and model righteous habits, like prayer and Bible reading.** Explain to your child how these kinds of habits keep us in step with Christ and give us strength when temptation looms.

Temptation is serious business, but we must remember that we serve a God that has conquered sin and death. You have the power to help your child recognize and trust their conscience, grow in attentiveness to the Spirit's guidance, and build righteous habits to resist temptation and live into God's victory.

Want to dig deeper? Check out Family Fire's article "[Wants vs. Needs: The Entitlement Trap](#)"

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