



## The Words of a Twelve Year-Old

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Children don't come with an instruction manual, so we must parent as best we know how. When major disobedience occurs, I require my children to write me an explanation of why their actions were wrong and how they will conduct themselves in the future. I find that writing takes a bit more effort and thought than oral conversation. Writing causes true reflection, and may reveal more truth.

About three weeks ago I found that my twelve year-old had downloaded a social media app that I had forbidden. I took his phone, powered it down, and told him he could have it back once he wrote me a page explaining why it was sin to download an app that I told him he could not have. He went phoneless for a week as he refused to humble himself and write this brief letter/essay. I deleted the app, and patiently held on to the phone.

Finally, he broke down and wrote me a letter. He was apologetic and remorseful, and one of his sentences really surprised me. He wrote, "In the back of my head, I thought that I shouldn't do it, I think this was God telling me, 'NO, DON'T DO IT,' but I disobeyed." I did not expect that statement from him, but I am overjoyed that at least in hindsight, he is aware of gentle whisper of God's voice. I did not recognize God's voice, or what I would say is the voice of the Holy Spirit, until I was an adult. I applaud him for crediting God and realizing that it was his own flesh that was disobedient. If he can think back and identify God's voice, maybe in the future he will be able to identify His voice on the front end and stay out of trouble. Roman 8:6 states, "The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace." As time goes on and we continue to study the Word as a family, it is my prayer that my children grow to develop a mind governed by the Spirit.

Children don't come with an instruction manual, but there is a book that has great insights for both parents and children. As parents, we have so many words to share, but the Holy Spirit, in His gentle voice, speaks volumes usually in just a few words. It is our job to teach our children to listen for that voice.

Amen!

Be Blessed this week and always!

Kim