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Parental Matadors

Do you get angry or annoyed when you are asked to do something that you really do not want to do? Your parents have requested your attention and obedience, but you want to blow them off. Our parents are the first and most important authorities in our lives. Respecting their authority is a biblical and fundamental command. Your verbal and nonverbal responses to their petitions are hints and clues about your personal integrity.

As a teenager, I know what it is like to not want to be submissive to what my parents ask or say. Teenagers are a fountain of ever-changing emotions. Our moods can change from happy and joyful to mad and sad in the blink of an eye. Whenever my parents ask me to do a chore like take out the trash, tidy my room, or clean my horse's stall, I so often want to argue and try to find ways not to comply. When I am watching TV or playing a video game and my dad says, "Turn those off and practice your guitar," I sometimes crave to raise my voice and say, "Whatever!" Rolling my eyes at my mom as she gives me adult advice about life would surely give me pleasure. In my dreams, my ultimate defiance of a request takes the vivid form of a raging and stomping bull.

Upon further thought, I realize how my tone, words, expressions, and actions can reflect upon how people see me. A person's integrity is triangular pyramid of one's character. One's attitude sits on the top of the triangle. Tone creates an image of your attitude. I could say the same phrase and have it denote two different meanings depending upon my tone. If I say the phrase softly, it would prove that I have a calm and collected attitude. If I say the same phrase loudly and obnoxiously, it would be evident that I have a negative attitude. My choice of words can mirror insolence or conformity. Mean and hateful words have no place in the integrity categories. "Yes, sir," "I will get right on that," and "absolutely" are examples of words to use with your parents to exhibit reverence. Be a lamb with starry eyes to portray a feeling of love. Actions are at the base of the integrity pyramid. Instead of annoying your parents with procrastination or arguing when they ask you to do a chore, be accountable and responsible by immediately responding to their requests.

The Bible affirms God's command to honor our parents in Exodus 20:12, "Honor thy father and thy mother." Honoring our parents in this scripture urges children to do tasks that their parents ask and to do them without questions. We are also commanded to respect our parents' rank in the world. Exodus tells us that our parents come from anything else. They are the ones who brought us into the world, so we should honor them. To show absolute honor for our parents is to listen to them, do what they say, show reverence in words, exhibit respect in actions, and to especially love them.

I might be a moody teenager but that does not give me a reason to treat my parents with disrespect. Arguing does not serve my purpose; it only proves a lack in one's character. One's personal integrity cannot be built and balanced with angry tones, nasty words, rude gestures, or procrastinating actions. My integrity is strongest when I respond positively, responsibly, and honorably to parental authority.