



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: I Can't Believe You Just Said That! Biblical Wisdom for Taming Your Child's Tongue- Part 2

Guest(s): Ginger Hubbard

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Dr. James Dobson: Well, hello everyone. I'm James Dobson and you're listening to Family Talk a listener-supported ministry. In fact, thank you so much for being part of that support for James Dobson Family Institute.

Roger Marsh: Psalm 127:3, "Children are a heritage from the Lord. Offspring, a reward from Him." I'm Roger Marsh. You know, when your days consist of changing diapers and driving to and from soccer or T-ball practice and the seemingly never-ending meal planning that goes in with raising a family, it can be hard to remember what life without kids was like in the first place. The child-rearing years though, truly are a precious time. They're a unique time that has really gone before you know it, take my word for it. And the way we as parents interact with and discipline and disciple our kids during those important years can dictate our relationships with them once they become adults.

Today on Family Talk, we are bringing you the conclusion of Dr. Tim Clinton's recent conversation with author, speaker, and mom Ginger Hubbard. They'll be discussing Ginger's book with a great title, *I Can't Believe You Just Said That! Biblical Wisdom for Taming Your Child's Tongue*. Now on yesterday's program, they talked about the importance of reaching past a child's bad behavior and getting to their heart and the true heart of the issue. On today's program, they'll continue that discussion by giving practical tips for correcting a child and building relationships with them. We hope you'll listen very closely to this program, perhaps this is a broadcast that someone you know needs to hear as well.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Ginger, welcome back to Family Talk. So great to have you, and we're also delighted to have a conversation about your new work called *I Can't Believe You Just Said That! Biblical Wisdom for Taming Your Child's Tongue*. Yesterday we began a conversation about encouraging parents to reach the hearts of their children for the glory of the Lord. Just reset that piece of our conversation.

Ginger Hubbard: Okay. Yeah, sure. The whole thing with parenting is that it is so important that we really learn how to reach past that outward behavior and pull out what is going on in the hearts of our kids, because so many parents, they think that if they are just getting their kids to outwardly comply and to speak with respect, that they're raising them the right way, but there is so much more to parenting

than just getting our children to outwardly comply. We want them to understand their need for Jesus, that it is sin in the heart that drives this outward behavior with all of us. And then we want to see how God's Word addresses those different behaviors so that we can address them from a heart-oriented perspective that's going to point them to their need for Christ. So that, in a nutshell is what I'm super passionate about encouraging parents to do.

Dr. Tim Clinton: You and I dabbled with the conversation a little bit about rules without relationship leads to rebellion. Rules with relationship leads to respect. In other words, it's really important, first of all, that we take care of ourselves as parents, and that we are attuned to our children in this whole process. Ginger, just a little piece on that real quick, from your perspective.

Ginger Hubbard: Yeah, we don't want to just administer these consequences for what we see our children doing wrong. We want to help them understand what is going on in the heart. Consequences for wrong behavior, I don't want to negate those altogether because consequences definitely have their place, but they are not a substitute for training and instructing. Our purpose in parenting is not just to teach our children how to avoid consequences, but to encourage them and motivate them to honor God with their lives.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Ginger, let me take this a step further. In your book, each chapter addresses a different verbal offense like lying, tattling, whining, complaining. Every parent's going, whoa, turn that up real quick. Ginger, but you developed a three-step plan, kind of a method for dealing with each one of these issues. Can you explain this three-step plan?

Ginger Hubbard: Sure. The first thing we want to do is get to the heart. So we want to ask some heart-probing questions. And if you think about it, in all the stories in scripture, when someone did something wrong, Jesus didn't point his finger in their face and say, "This is what you did wrong and this is what you should have done instead." That's not what He did. Instead, He asked heart probing questions. And in order for the people to answer those questions, they had to evaluate themselves because Jesus was a skilled heart-prober. He knew how to ask those questions in such a way that the people would have to take their focus off of the circumstances and the situations going on around them and on to the sin in their own heart. So that step one is to "ask those heart-probing questions."

And Tim, I'm sure you would agree that when we figure out something on our own, we're less likely to forget it than if someone else just figured it out for us and just gave us the answer. Like in solving math problems, let's say, we all know that we learn more and understand more about a math problem if we figure it out on our own versus someone else figuring it out for us and then just telling us the answer. Somebody just gave us the answer to a math problem A, they're probably going to have to give us the answer to problem B as well, because we've not learned anything on our own. But if we're required to figure out the answer to that math problem A, we're going to be better equipped to figure out the answer to problem B.

Likewise, when our children learn how to recognize what is going on in their own heart, when they're able to figure that out on their own, they're more likely to start making godly responses on their own. And in doing this, they're growing in wisdom. But when we just always point our finger at them, say, "This is what you did wrong, and this is what you should've done instead," we're hindering them from learning how to think like a Christian. And they can actually become handicapped in the area of discerning matters of their own heart. We want to help our children understand the issues of the heart that's just driving that outward behavior and then we're able to get somewhere with them. So that's step one is to ask, just...Ask a couple of heart-probing questions.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Okay.

Ginger Hubbard: And let's just give you a quick example of that. Even a very small child, let's say that you tell your two and a half or three-year old to come to you and he stubbornly refuses to obey. Just ask very simple question for that age like, "Honey, are you obeying or are you disobeying?" And even if they don't answer, some kids are going to clam up and not answer well, don't get into a power struggle to answer for them. "Well sweetie, you disobeyed. I told you to come to me and you didn't and that's disobeying." So even if they don't answer, they're still pondering the answer to that question in their heart and they're going to realize that what they were doing was disobeying. And then something like, "Sweetie, what could you have done in this case? You should have come to me when I called you." And so that is just an example of just some heart-probing questions that we can ask.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Step two.

Ginger Hubbard: So, step two is "what to put off." Think about that verse in Ephesians 4:22 through 24, it says that we're to put off our old selves which has been corrupted by deceitful desires and to be made new in the attitude of our minds and to put on our new selves created to be like God, in true righteousness and holiness. So step two is, "what to put off," what God's word says about that particular behavior and what it can lead to if it's continued.

And then step three is "what to put on," how to replace what is wrong with what is right. And so that is just the very simple three-step plan that helps us to follow through in not just administering consequences, not just telling our children what they should have done instead, but really getting to the heart of the issue and then training them in righteousness. So many parents, including myself, we have this tendency to stop our parenting at telling our kids what not to do. Say that a child speaks disrespectfully, we say, that was disrespectful, no TV for you tonight, now go to your room. But see that is ineffective child training because the most important part is left off.

We always want to take it a step further and teach them to put on respectfulness. So that would be having the child come back and communicate the right way by using the appropriate words and the appropriate tone of voice.

And for many kids, particularly mine as they grew into their teen years, the appropriate facial expression. So it's all about reaching the heart, teaching them what to put off and then what to put on. It's never enough to train our children in what not to do. We always want to take it a step further and teach them what to do.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Mom's listening, she's probably saying, "Hey, wait a second. My two-year old is different than my seven-year-old and different than my fourteen-year-old." Age appropriate, how do we step into this? Is there like modifications of this? How's it work?

Ginger Hubbard: I think the heart-probing questions are just across the board, no matter what age they are. Now, how you word those questions need to be tailored to-

Dr. Tim Clinton: So, they can understand.

Ginger Hubbard: That. Sure. So the way you're going to heart-probe with a two year old is going to look very different from how you're going to heart-probe with a teenager that was speaking disrespectfully. So that is going to look different, but I think that the training is still the same, asking those questions is an effective way to help us do that no matter what age they are.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Ginger, in *Dare to Discipline*, Dr. Dobson talked about willful defiance being an issue. In other words, it's one thing to have childhood irresponsibility, like leaving the bike out in the yard, which is, I just forgot my bike. I wasn't being bad. I don't need a lecture. You know what I'm saying, I just forgot my bike out there versus a willful defiance. Can you help us understand your thoughts there? How do we discern that?

Ginger Hubbard: Yeah. I remember reading about that for the first time, as a matter of fact, in some of Dr. Dobson's books. And he helped me a lot in understanding the difference in childishness versus foolishness. And so, we always want to be on the lookout for that and ask God to give us discernment between the two, because obviously you address those things in completely different ways. Like childishness, say that a young child is playing slip and slide in the tub and gets the floor all wet. That's childish behavior and they shouldn't be disciplined for something like that. But then I will say if the child has been given clear instructions to not play slip and slide in the tub and he understands those instructions and then chooses then-

Dr. Tim Clinton: Willful defiance.

Ginger Hubbard: Willful defiance. Then you have an issue of foolishness because the child has directly disobeyed the parent. And so, yeah, so there's a definite difference in how we address those issues and we need to be mindful of that.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Ginger, the journey here of parenting, I go to Proverbs 22:6, "Train up a child in the way he should go, when he's old, he won't depart from it." Two ways of

interpreting it. One is, train them up spiritually in the ways of the Lord. And I love this, heart-focused. And some would say it also includes in their natural bent, their uniqueness, attuning ourself to that and instructing. Whining is whining. Lying is lying. Take us down that road. How do we use this process to help battle and tame that in our children?

Ginger Hubbard:

I wouldn't have any material without my kids, but Alex, she struggled a little bit more with whining, my daughter, than my son did. And so I can definitely relate and sympathize with parents dealing with that annoying behavior of whining. That is one that can really, like you said, push our buttons and get under our skin. Different things, push different parents' buttons. And so whining was one of mine and I think only second to interrupting when I was talking to another adult, that was one that really got me. But so whining, that's a pretty common one that we're seeing a lot. And so let's say that Alex comes into the kitchen and instead of asking for a cup of juice in just a normal tone of voice, she whines for it. And so, I would always start with that heart-probing question, something very simple like, "Honey, are you asking for juice with your self-controlled voice? No, sweetie, you're not. God wants you to have self-control even with your voice. And because I love you so much, I want to help you get that self-control."

So, this is just a handy little tool that I implemented for whining with mine. This is not a biblical mandate that you handle this, this way with your kids, but it was a tool that worked for mine. I would set a timer and I would say, "Honey, when that timer goes off in three minutes, then you may come back and ask for juice the right way with your self-controlled voice." And so, see, I reprimanded her for not having self-control. I had her suffer the consequences of having to wait three minutes, which can seem like an eternity for a small child. Some kids maybe you shouldn't even make them wait that long, maybe just a minute or two would be appropriate. Again, they're all unique. And then most important, I would have her come back and ask for juice with self-control. So that's what to put off and what to put on.

And you know, Tim, actually, since we're on the topic of whining, I've noticed that so many kids today, they don't whine only when they want something. There's so many kids today that whine just as a general means of communicating. That's just their language, that's how they talk. And so this same method, it can be helpful in that instance too. So moms say, again, let's do a scenario. Let's say that you're driving the minivan and your little one is strapped in the backseat, in his car seat and he's whining, not asking for something, but just talking to you in a whiny voice. Same sort of thing to say, "Sweetie, are you talking in your self-controlled voice? Well, no, honey, you're not. God wants you to have self-control even with your voice." And so have a little timer.

I actually had these cute little timers on my website, like ladybugs and farm animals. And so you can even make it fun. Let them pick out their own little timer somewhere. And so, and then hand them the timer and set it for them. And then they can watch it and when that timer goes off in three minutes, two

minutes, whatever you think is reasonable, mom or dad, “then you can have this conversation with me in your self-controlled voice.”

Now having said that, I know there are so many listeners out there thinking, “Yeah, right. Well, that worked with your kids, but you don't know my kid. My kid, after that three minutes goes off for two minutes or whatever, my kid wouldn't come back and ask for juice the right way. My kid wouldn't come back and have that conversation with a self-controlled tone of voice.” Well, natural consequences. They don't get that cup of juice. They don't get to have that conversation with mom or dad until they're willing to communicate with self-control. So that's a good scenario where we realize that natural consequences can play a part in training our kids.

Dr. Tim Clinton: So, Alex is the one that had a little juice in her, huh?

Ginger Hubbard: Yeah. She was the fireball, for sure. She's actually an actress now. She was always so dramatic and she's actually now making a living with all that drama.

Dr. Tim Clinton: If you don't mind me asking, Ginger, how's your relationship with her?

Ginger Hubbard: My mama and my daughter, Alex, are my best friends. And Alex, she says the same thing that I'm her best friend and there's no greater blessing than being best friends with your mama and your daughter. And same with my son, we're super close and it's just not about consequences. It's not about being a militant dictator. It's about showing respect for our children and requiring them to show respect for us and training their hearts. And something else I think that helped with my relationship with my kids. Like I said, I read all the books, I even wrote a couple of parenting books, but I still blew it with my kids. And one thing that I found really helped our relationship is those moments when I blew it with my kids was to go to them and humble myself and to ask their forgiveness.

And I had to do that a pretty fair amount in my parenting. And I would just sit them down and just say, Will you forgive me? The angry way that I just spoke to you, it did not honor you and it did not honor God. Let me try that again in a way that does show respect for you and does honor God.” And man, when I would humble myself like that and ask their forgiveness, God's grace came down and some of the moments that I really blew it became some of the most precious opportunities for them to see what the conviction of the Holy Spirit looks like and the right way to respond to the conviction of the Holy Spirit. And so they were always so forgiving when I would do that and it just modeled for them the right way to respond when we do blow it.

Dr. Tim Clinton: You use that word relationship. It's my favorite one in parenting. When I think of it, I think of my relationship with God. “God, help me to be tender toward my children, help me to see them. And God, help me to see the tenderness of their hearts knowing that sometimes when I draw a line, maybe I'm going too far or maybe in this moment, it's not the right line to draw.” Or maybe it worked last week, but that's not the line this week. They're in a different place. There's

something else going on. And as I'm tender that way, it makes me tender horizontally in that relationship with my son or daughter. When I spend time with them, I learned about the issues of their life. If I can hang out with them 20, 30 minutes a day, just one-on-one time, it changes the dynamic radically that opens the heart, I think. Gary Small used to talk about the closed spirit. I think a lot of kids have closed spirits because there's brokenness between parents and children and this journey of parenting, God, help us all as moms and dads. The amazing thing, Ginger, in this journey called parenting is you never stop being a parent.

Ginger Hubbard: You don't, you absolutely do not. But it changes the way that we parent. My relationship with my adult kids now, they're 25 and 27. Wesley's the oldest. And you have to move from trying to tell them what to do to encouraging them and coming alongside them as more of a coach. I think one reason that I am close to my kids today is that I respect the fact that they are adults now and I've spent all of these years pointing them to the Lord and pointing to them to the scriptures and so they know that we've made that transition in our relationship to me, requiring them to do what I say that they know they can come to me and talk to me about things as their friend now. We don't want to be their friend when they're growing up, we need to be their parent because that puts security in their hearts.

It's a dangerous thing when we try to be friends per se, with really young kids, because that places them in a position that they are not mature or responsible enough to handle. It kind of erases that line of authority that God has placed between the parent and the child and brings the child up to a peer level with a parent. And so we don't want to do that, they need to know who's the parent and who's the child and so those boundaries need to be established when they're young. But as they grow into their adult years, even their teen years, we kind of move from being parent to being guidance counselor, to where they can come and share their hearts and then we just encourage them to make the right choices.

Dr. Tim Clinton: If people want to learn more about Ginger Hubbard and your writing, your speaking ministry, where can they go?

Ginger Hubbard: Probably the easiest way to find me is through my website, which is gingerhubbard.com. You can check out all my resources there. I also love to encourage parents on Instagram. I'm @Ginger.Hubbard. Offer lots of parenting advice, practical tips, and counsel there. And then probably the biggest way that I'm able to encourage folks right now is through my podcast, *Parenting with Ginger Hubbard*. And my friend, Katy Morgan and I, we air a new episode every Monday and we are all about helping parents learn how to move past that outward behavior, pull out what's going on in the hearts of their kids, and then point their children to the transformational power of Christ.

And from a practical standpoint, Katy and I, with the podcast, we are so passionate about helping parents move past the frustrations of not knowing

how to handle certain issues that their children are struggling with, like whining and tattling and lying and interrupting, and really how to parent from a heart-oriented, biblical approach that is going to nurture good parent-child relationships.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Ginger, it's interesting, through this whole pandemic and everything that's happened since then, homes that were doing well seemed to be doing well. Homes that weren't doing very well, aren't doing very well. I hear a lot of parents talk about how their kids have disengaged even more, living up online and they don't talk much. What do you think the antidote is to kind of win them back? What do you say to mom and or dad who feel like they really are disconnected or they've lost their son or daughter?

Ginger Hubbard: Yeah. Well, one thing that you said earlier, Tim, that I really liked was the importance of spending time with our kids and doing things that they enjoy is a great way to get them to talk to you a little bit, instead of it always being what we want to do. Getting involved in things that they really like and then taking those opportunities to have good conversations with them. And as my kids were growing up and I still do this, even with my adult kids sometimes, but one thing that I did when they were growing up, that I found, it just made precious moments for us was I spent a little bit of time every single night with both of my kids separately for maybe five or 10 minutes, right before they went to sleep.

And, I homeschooled my kids all day so I was with them and talking to them all day, but that was more instructional and geared toward just the everyday activities of life. But at night I would just lie down beside them. And I wouldn't even lead the conversation. It wasn't a time to talk about whatever they did wrong that day or what they needed to do better, or even to try to get them to talk about a certain thing. I would just lie there and just wait. And something happens in those moments right before they drift off to sleep when their little bodies are unwinding, it just seems that they become more vulnerable and just a little bit more willing to share their hearts. And so that was something that we still do. My husband laughs because when my kids are home, I mean the first thing they want to do, they want to come upstairs and climb in bed with us. And that's just some of the most meaningful conversations. And it's because they grew up that way, having those few minutes.

And I know some of you might be listening and you think, "Well, I have 10 kids. I can't spend 10 minutes every night with all 10 kids. I'm raising an entire tribe here. That would be impossible." Well then, rotate one or two kids a night, but just give them some of that time. Because when we spend that time with them, that lets them know how special they are to us and how important our relationship is with them. And when we listen to whatever it is that that comes out of their mouths and is on their heart, and we're willing to engage and talk about those things that they want to talk about, that can really make a difference in our relationship with our kids. And I mean, seriously, some of the most meaningful conversations I've ever had with my kids took place just a few minutes before they drifted off to sleep as they were growing up.

Dr. Tim Clinton: I grew up in a family of eight siblings and I can promise you, we had the same thing. And sometimes we had a pig pile, if you know what I mean.

Ginger Hubbard: Love it. Awesome.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Hey, on behalf of Dr. Dobson, his wife, Shirley, our entire team at Family Talk, we thank you for joining us, Ginger, and applaud what you're doing to help strengthen the family. Thank you for joining us.

Ginger Hubbard: Thank you, Tim.

Roger Marsh: Heartfelt and encouraging words from today's guest here on Family Talk, author Ginger Hubbard. Now to learn more about Ginger Hubbard, her podcast, and her books, you can visit our broadcast page at drJamesdobson.org/broadcast. That's djamesdobson.org/broadcast. Remember, you can always give us a call as well. Our number is (877) 732-6825. That's (877) 732-6825. We are here 24/7 to receive your call. Thanks for making Family Talk a part of your day, today and every day.

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Announcer: This has been a presentation of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute.