

## Harp is Not Just a Musical Instrument

I'm really good at harping. And I'm not talking about the musical instrument. I may not have the foggiest idea how to strum a harp, but I sure am good at the other kind. Just ask my son.

Sometimes it starts before he even gets out of bed: "Let's go...time to get up. Come on! Are you getting up, or what? Quit being lazy. I told you not to go to bed so late last night."

And so I've set the course for the day. As soon as he's out of the shower, I start in: "Did you pick up your clothes off the floor? What about your towel? Are you sure you got all of your homework done? Why didn't you tell me you wanted hot lunch today? I already made you a lunch." Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah...

No wonder my son all but races out of the house in the morning.

Harping has become a familiar tune in our house. One that doesn't emit beautiful music and one I'm not particularly proud of. It's not that I enjoy getting after my kids about stuff; I just can't seem to help myself. Whether out of habit or a subconscious "control-freak" thing I have going on, harping is something I've been trying to get a rein on. I'm afraid that if it keeps on, I will, indeed, drive my children to "exasperation," as the Bible warns in Ephesians 6:4. If you're like me and struggle with this musical disaster, consider the following ways to keep harping at bay in your home.

- Pray. This may seem like a no-brainer but there are many of us who bypass this crucial step. I love the Message version of Mark 11:22. It says, "That's why I urge you to pray for absolutely everything, ranging from small to large." Somewhere in between small and large lies our issue of harping on our kids.
- Make a decision. Every morning, decide that harping will be kept to a minimum. Your kids are bound to do things that push your harp button. But deciding not to allow the devil to use those buttons to get you going is the key to breaking this ugly habit.
- Come up with a better plan. You know by now that all of your pestering and getting after your kids is not very effective. Take inventory of those things your children do that require some extra attention and come up with a plan of action. If one of the problem areas is leaving towels on the bathroom floor after showering, try leaving the towel on the floor and removing all other towels from the bathroom. The next morning, the only available towel will be the one left on the floor in a heap. Using a dirty, damp towel might be just what she needs to get the message.
- Tongue biting really works! Before those words start rolling off your tongue, bite it. Besides preventing you from launching into your favorite harp melody, the pain will give you something else to focus on.

Kids certainly need direction. Harping on them may seem to be the easiest way to do that but it has been proven to be ineffective. Also, as the Bible warns, it turns kids' hearts away from their parents and drives them to anger. Today, won't you join me in deciding to come up with a way to decrease the amount of harping we do so we can keep the harmony in our homes?

## About the Author

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