

The Missing Puzzle Piece

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This is by far my favorite and most successful approach to parenting. Simple and extremely effective! It can be revised for discussion with adults as well.

One of my dear friends told me years ago that parenting is discipling. Parenting is teaching. Through the process of taking that counsel seriously every day for almost 12 years now, this is what I've discovered: it all comes down to **gravity**.

On earth, **gravity** is a **law** of physics. There is no way around it. No matter what, at the end of the day, you and I will still be stuck on the earth's surface. Yes, we can temporarily defy **gravity** via tools like planes, hot air balloon rides, and even a jump on a trampoline; but eventually, we must come back down again.

Similarly, the **truths** God has given us in the Bible are **laws** of life. There are no ways around them. No matter what, by the end of the day, every human is accountable to God. Every action has a reaction. Our choices have consequences.

We can accept or reject **gravity**,

but the **law** of **gravity** exists despite our opinions.

In the same manner, we can accept or reject the **truth**,

but **truth** is still **truth**, regardless of our opinions.

God's Word stands,

regardless of our belief or disbelief,

obedience or disobedience.

It's incredibly freeing to present God's Word—the **truth**—to my son (and other children I've taught over the years), using **gravity** as the springboard. It goes something like this:

1. (Hold an object in your hand.) *See this item? What will happen when I let go of it? (It will fall.)*

2. *Yes, it will fall to the ground. How do you know that? (Gravity.) Correct, gravity will pull it down.*

3. *It's an unavoidable law. What goes up will come back down. Period. God has created many laws like this, to give us a sense of security, safety, order, and peace. Imagine for a moment what life would be like without gravity.*

(Children will begin by saying how cool it would be to float around and fly. After a few giggles, help them see that, when you get past the humor and think realistically, you quickly discover that it would be frightening: full of chaos, impossible to play sports or have a conversation, difficult to use the bathroom without a terrible mess. Expect more giggles with that one.)

4. *Likewise, God has given us spiritual laws. No matter what, His Word stands. We reap what we sow (Galatians 6:7-9). Let's look at what God says about... (whatever topic you want to teach-- lying, speaking respectfully, honoring parents, laziness, etc. Show them in Scripture the consequences to lying, using our tongue for evil, dishonoring parents, being lazy, etc.)*

5. After reading verses that reveal consequences to negative choices, I like to conclude with Scriptures that show the opposite: consequences to positive choices. For example, if you just examined the **truth** about dishonesty and being deceptive, then finish by reading Bible verses about what happens when we walk in honesty and integrity.

6. If the child has been choosing sin and is now convicted, he or she can be led in a prayer of confession and repentance. Let him know that it's the broken and contrite heart that God does not despise (Psalm 51:17). If we confess our sins to the Lord, He is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). Yes, the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord! (Romans 6:23)

Jesus sets us free from sin so that we may walk in newness of life.

The child can now dwell in the blessings of obedience.