

TOOLS FOR PARENTS



A Pirate's Life

QUESTIONS FOR CUBS

NOTE TO PARENTS/TEACHERS:

The goal of this questions-and-answers section is to initiate interaction between you and your kids. Please do not just read the questions and answers to your kids. These answers are given for you at an adult level to think about and to process. Once that is accomplished, you can then translate them into appropriate answers for your kids.

LESSON

Obeying the rules

KEY VERSE

"If you love Me, you will keep My commandments." (Jn. 14:15)

EAR CHECK (STORY COMPREHENSION)

- Q: Why was C.J. expelled from school?
A: *He broke the "no fighting" rule by fighting with Hugh*
- Q: What did Jeremiah recommend that C.J. should do to escape his punishment?
A: *Stow away on a ship*
- Q: What did C.J. tell the pirates on the rowboat that he would like to be?
A: *A pirate*
- Q: What did the pirate rule book say C.J. must do?
A: *Polish the boots of every man on board*
- Q: Who was on the boat that the pirates were planning to attack?
A: *C.J.'s father*

HEART CHECK (SPIRITUAL APPLICATION)

Q: What is the point of rules?

- A: Let's be clear. Some rules are good and some rules are bad. Good rules are for our benefit or the benefit of the community around us (which makes them ultimately for our good). Rules guide us, organize us, protect us, and help us do things that we couldn't do otherwise. Bad rules merely control us for the exclusive benefit of others. We often resist rules because we think they all fall into this second category. All the rules, laws, and commands in Scripture are in the first category—they're for our benefit. The sooner we can fully embrace this deep truth, the better off we will be.

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Q: Do I have to obey bad rules?

A: Scripture tells us all authority has been placed over us by God (Rom. 13:1). We need to obey the rules of our non-Christian teachers, police, lawmakers, and government (Rom. 13:2-7). But if a rule is truly harmful, then working to change that rule is appropriate. Occasionally a government or authority figure is so evil that obeying it would cause us to disobey God. At this point, action is called for—but that isn't something that kids need to deal with.

"I" CHECK (PERSONAL APPLICATION)

1. We all have rules that we have to live by. Which rules would you change if you could? Why would you change them?
2. Are there some rules that you have to follow that you think are good? Which ones? Why do you think they are good rules?
3. What are some rules that God made for us to live by? Do you think these are good rules? Why, or why not?



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DIRECTOR'S NOTES

We had a lot of fun with this episode. We swashbuckled around the office for weeks.

Rules are as much a part of life as gravity is. We may be annoyed or even angry about rules and gravity, but they will be there nonetheless. This is one of those “world view” issues that we at *Paws & Tales* consider so often. To live our lives in opposition to rules is to be selfish, harmful, and stupid. It is also a sin. I clearly remember one afternoon when my fifth-grade teacher discussed the concept of freedom with us. Of course, our first thoughts were something like, “Freedom is when you are allowed to do whatever you want.” My teacher smiled at our foolishness and replied, “Freedom is when you are allowed to do the right thing.” Well, as incomplete as that definition was, it shocked me enough that I remember it still. Having learned that truth, today I would say that freedom is the result of obeying God. One of the great difficulties we have with Christianity is that it often asks us to do things we don’t want to do and tells us not to do some really fun things. It feels so . . . negative. If we feel this way, it means we need to alter our view of Christianity. Without doing so, we will chafe at these rules our entire lives.

The first task in correcting our world view is to trust God more than we trust ourselves. We must be ready to say, “I really do not know what’s best for me, but God does.” This is big. If we can accept this truth, we will make great strides in correcting our world view. A large part of our struggle with God comes in thinking we have a better plan than He does. Most people wouldn’t admit that out loud, but look at how we act. We do not, for the most part, pray and wait for guidance. Instead, we make a plan, we go barreling in, and we pray that God helps our plan work out. Similarly, the real reason we don’t tithe like we should is because we believe we will not be able to buy what is good for us. In both cases we behave as though God’s ways are in opposition to our best interests. The problem is we’re not sure what our best interests are. Down deep we believe they are our own comfort and ever-greater success. God, on the other hand, knows what is really best for us. The best thing for each of us is to do what we were made to do—become more like Christ. Admittedly, this path includes struggles and sacrifice, but—and this is the pivotal point—we must come to understand that to struggle, sacrifice, and endure discomfort for the sake of Christ is better than the small comforts, minor perks, and dusty possessions we fight so violently for. That is what faith is all about. We must get to the place where we will obey God’s rules even when they don’t make sense to us. The only reason we would ever be able to do this is because we trust God’s desires for us more than we trust our own.

A second way we need to correct our world view is to believe that some rules are good things. As a kid, I desperately wanted to be a gymnast. I longed to do handsprings and back flips. One day I was walking across my elementary school yard, and I was overcome with the desire to do a handspring. I ran forward and with total abandon threw out my hands, aimed them at the ground in front of me, and . . . landed flat on my back gasping for air. I didn’t have the faintest notion of how to do a handspring. The rule of gravity would not be put on hold for a well-meaning but ignorant kid. I needed to know and follow the rules of physics. I needed to learn to use not my arms but my shoulders as the spring. I needed to follow the rule of body position and not whip my body over but make it stiff as a stick. Had I known these rules at the time, they would have enabled me to bounce right across the grass. In cases like this, following the rules actually gives us freedom. This is true in almost everything—following good rules gives us freedom to do things we otherwise couldn’t.

Good rules also bring protection. Only a fool would be angry that he has to stay on his side of the white line while driving down the road. A rule like that can save lives. With this episode, *A Pirate’s Life*, I really want kids to begin to understand that not all rules are bad; they are tools, like a hammer. They are designed to build, to improve, and to enable us to do greater things than we could have without them. Good rules are very good things. Bad rules, however, are a desecration. But we will deal with that in a future episode.

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