



## WEEK FOUR

**MATTHEW 5:43-48**

Love Your Enemies

## SAY THIS

**Be kind to people who  
aren't kind to you.**

## DO THIS



## MEAL TIME

Q & A for kids: What is the most valuable thing you own? How do you treat it?

Q & A for parents: What is the kindest thing anyone has ever done for you?

## REMEMBER THIS

**"Do to others as you want them to do to you."  
Luke 6:31, NIV**

## LIFE APP

**KINDNESS** – Showing others they are valuable by how you treat them

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## RULES OR RELATIONSHIP: A SIMPLE MAXIM FOR PARENTS

by Carey Nieuwhof

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My guess is that in your house—like my house—there's a constant tension between rules and relationships. Your nine-year-old is supposed to help wash the car, but instead decides that riding his bike is a far more important to the functioning of the universe than cleaning your dirty minivan. How do you respond?

On the one hand, you need . . . rules—boundaries, guidelines, and limits that make life work and shape character. On the other hand, you need . . . relationships—love for each other, respect, and even some basic kindness.

But rules and relationships always seem to be in tension with each other, don't they? Clamp down too hard on the rules, and the relationship suffers. Or work hard on relationship and the temptation is to slack off on the rules.

To make matters more confusing, in most families, one parent tends to be the relationship parent and the other tends to be the rules parent.

If you're like me, a rules guy, you are tempted to ground your nine-year-old for life, pull all video gaming privileges and be angry enough that most observers would assume you discovered your son had joined a super-villains army, not failed to pick up a sponge.

If you're more the relationship type, you'll abandon your bucket in the driveway, get on your bike and go have a picnic

in a green field with your new found best friend while gentle music plays in the background and your rules-loving spouse drives the car to the junkyard in protest.

Here's a maxim that I think can help those of us who struggle with this tension, which definitely includes my family:

Never ruin a relationship over a rule.  
Never ruin a rule over a relationship.

We need them both, because as even we learn, far more freedom is found in keeping good rules than in breaking them. And so much freedom is found in great relationships. It's a both/and approach that wins in the end, not an either/or.

So how do you solve the car wash situation with your mildly rebellious nine-year-old? You hang in the tension of rule and relationship long enough to save both.

I know this isn't an easy tension to manage, but it is a tension almost every family experiences. If you commit to honoring both rules and relationships, your kids might emerge into adulthood a few years from now with respect for both rules and relationships in place.

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