



## 031: Is It Ok For My Kid To Tattle?

<https://GodFearingKids.com>

---

*Scripture says in Galatians 6:1, "You who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness."*

*Now you might stop and argue, well they've got to be spiritual and my kids aren't spiritual. No, but YOU are. So when the kid comes to you, has the issue, then YOU, the spiritual one, need to step in and discern what's going on. And in so doing you're able to instruct your kids to BECOME the spiritual ones who can see the right and the wrong in the situation.*

*A tattling situation is one where parents can, actually benefit their kids greatly.*

---

### MINDI:

Welcome dear friends, this is Mindi and Carey.

### CAREY:

We're glad that you're with us again. Hey, do you remember your childhood, and that mocking, derisive term, "Tattletale?". Do you remember that, Mindi?

MINDI:

I do. Yeah.

CAREY:

When we said someone was a "tattletale," what did we mean?

MINDI:

They would tell on their friend or their brother or their sister.

CAREY:

Yeah, for doing something. It could be good, it could be bad, all that. Well, I thought this was interesting enough to look it up in the dictionary. And actually, tattletale is in the dictionary. It's a noun, and it's "a person, especially a child, who reveals secrets or informs on others." Isn't that an interesting definition?

Now, it's fairly common to hear parents remark that they don't want their kids to tattle. Or when their kids do tattle, they rebuke them for it. They say, "Don't be a tattletale," or "Don't tell on your brother," or whatever.

I think it's important for us not to decide on some blanket rule regarding tattling until we think this through a little more, in light of scripture. I think the first step in that is trying to determine why does tattling occur?

## **WHY DOES TATTLING OCCUR? TWO POSSIBLE REASONS**

There are different scenarios in which this might happen. I could think of two.

The first one is where **one kid is upset with another kid for some reason**. Maybe the kid took their toy, maybe the kid did something to offend them, that sort of thing. And so they go and they tell on them to their parents. Well, there's definitely a lesson for the tattler to learn.

1 Thessalonians 5.15 says, "See that no one repays anyone evil for evil."

That's kind of what's happening in some cases where the kid was mistreated. So they're gonna get their sibling in trouble by going and telling on them. It's kind of this vengeance sort of a thing. And so there's an opportunity to teach your kid if that's what's going on. And not only that, there's a lot of other things that you can teach both kids in any

situation like this. You know, things like humility, sharing, consideration, love, patience, long suffering. The tattling environment, if we want to call it that, is just a wonderful opportunity to teach. Wouldn't you say?

MINDI:

Yes, absolutely. And although we don't like to use the word "tattle," and we never did with our kids, at the point when your child does go and tell, your goal is to get to their heart. What are they telling? Why are they telling? And it could be purely that they're being proud because they caught their sibling doing something? Could that be the main thing?

Or maybe what their sibling did really wasn't that big of a deal, so in that case the issue might be to deal with the child who told. So you're right., there's so much to deal with. So for a parent to shut it down and say, "Don't tattle on your sibling, don't tell," or to just make a blanket statement for all the kids, that is against what Scripture teaches regarding Christian relationships.

CAREY:

But I mentioned there could be one of two things going on. Let's think about the possibility that the kid who's coming to the parents to tell on their sibling, **maybe they really are concerned about the sibling**. Maybe there's something that they're doing that they know is wrong. Mom and dad have said, "Don't do that." Or the kid's doing something risky like putting a fork in the socket or whatever. The sibling may be really concerned.

Ephesians 5:11 says, "Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them."

Now I know some kids are more prone to do this than others. They want to expose the other kids wrong. But if it's coming from a place of a genuine heart of concern, we don't want to shut that down by saying, "Don't tattle." We want to deal with them rightly according to their motives, but then go and deal with the other kid as well.

MINDI:

This becomes very helpful when your children are learning a healthy attitude in "telling" on their siblings or their friends, because they're going to learn a heart of love for them. They might be all excited that they could tell on their sister because they are not the one who did the wrong, but their sister did, but through your teaching, they're going to learn to love them and realize, "I don't want them to do that wrong, and that's why I told mom,

because I care for my sister." And that's just the heart we need to have in the body of Christ.

CAREY:

Yeah, and let's just make that scenario very practical. Say there are two girls, one older, one younger. The older one is doing something that mom has totally said, "Don't do that." The younger one comes and she does have that attitude about getting her sister in trouble. The mom can go deal with the thing the older daughter's doing wrong, because it's a wrong thing and all that, and then come back to the younger child and say, "Let's talk about why you were telling on your sister." Were you doing that to get her in trouble? Were you doing that because you felt proud?" You take the time to dig into that. You dig into the heart. You deal with both the kids according to what their need is in that moment.

MINDI:

Yeah, and then to be able to, in that scenario, to tell your child, "Actually, it was a good thing that you told. Here's some Bible verses that talk about it. Let's expose the evil. And then your child can start developing the mind of Christ, and to think more like God. Instead of, "No, I'm going to keep secrets. I'm not going to tell."

## **ADULT VERSIONS OF THE SAME SITUATION**

MINDI:

A phrase that I have come to dislike is, "Everything that's spoken in this room will not go out of this room." Well, what if it does need to go out of this room and needs to be exposed, so that the sin in the room can be purged? I mean, there's just a whole godly mindset that has been squelched because of this whole attitude, "Don't be a tattletale, don't judge me." It just goes into that as you get older.

CAREY:

Yeah, yeah, which is why some of the commands to adults within the church are neglected, like teach and admonish one another, exhort each other. We shy away from those because honestly, I think we think we're tattling. And that's got such a negative connotation.

MINDI:

Yeah, and if we are exhorted by a friend, they're not our friend anymore. I mean, it's just really sad.

CAREY:

Yeah, and I think the heart of what we're saying here is, parents, let's not have blanket statements on things like tattling. Let's look at case by case, what's each kid's heart motive, what's going on, and let's address the issues that are happening rather than maybe being lazy and short-cutting it by just saying, "Don't tattle." Because the Bible teaches that Christians, and this would include our kids, are accountable to each other.

Colossians chapter 3: 16-17 says, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another." That's the verse I just mentioned. And it says to do so, in all wisdom. We have to teach our kids wisdom. We have to teach them how to do this rightly. It goes on there in verse 17 and says, "Whatever you do in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him." So we're trying to teach our kids to get THERE. That's where we want to go, for both sides of a tattling issue.

MINDI:

Right, if they're tattling out of wrong motive, but they did actually tell of a wrong that was done, that is good, and you will be able to train them to have the right motive next time.

CAREY:

Hebrews 10:23-24 says, "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the day drawing near." So let us consider how to stir up one another."

This requires some forethought, doesn't it? As our kids are involved in these kinds of scenarios, we can teach them how to think good toward their sibling, how to help them, how to encourage them to do right rather than the wrong. And so then the tattling turns from a negative thing into a very positive thing because you're teaching your siblings how to love each other and how to help each other do the right thing.

MINDI:

And then as they become older teenagers, college students, adults, and they notice things that they see in one another - their friends, their family members - they will have been taught how to love and care for one another and be concerned if something wrong is going on. Instead of, "Oh, I can't say anything about it because that would be judging them." As adults, we'll say judging. We don't say tattling as an adult, but we'll say judging. But this whole tattling mindset, this whole tattling theme, if we handle it rightly, first of all, parents, you can change the word from tattling to telling. It's a beautiful

opportunity to teach your children how to care and love for one another like Jesus wants them to instead of just, "Oh, it's not my business, so I'm just going to leave it alone." And they go and play with their toy. That's harmful in so many areas.

## **IS THIS STANDARD TOO HIGH TO EXPECT FROM CHILDREN?**

Some people listening may feel, "Well, that's a high bar to hold your kids to. Kids can't comprehend those nuances and the dynamics and how to love their siblings like that."

They're not going to know if you don't teach them. And that's your role as a parent. So I'm, just saying if Christian kids are to live this out rightly, and they can, Christian parents need to teach them how to handle these sorts of situations.

### MINDI:

God does not intend for us to live independent, individual lives apart from one another. He wants us to be united. He wants us to be one. He wants us to be caring for one another. He wants us to submit to one another. So telling your children to ignore a wrong that is done because it would be tattling if they were to come to you, is just going against God's whole heart for the family and his heart for his body.

### CAREY:

We see in Galatians 6:1 is kind of a counter-cultural sort of an attitude expressed, but it's exactly what we're trying to get at here. It says...

"Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression..."

PUT ON THE BRAKES... if anyone's CAUGHT in any transgression, isn't that similar to one sibling seeing the other one doing something wrong?

The verse continues, "You who are spiritual should restore him in the spirit of gentleness."

## **WHAT ABOUT HARD FEELINGS OR SIBLING RIVALRIES CROPPING UP BECAUSE OF TATTLING?**

Now, you might stop and argue, "Well, they've got to be spiritual and my kids aren't spiritual." No, but YOU are. So when the kid comes to you, has the issue, YOU, the spiritual one, need to step in and discern what's going on, how to handle this. And in so doing, you're able to instruct your kids to become the spiritual ones who can see the right and the wrong in this situation.

MINDI:

The idea is that a tattling situation or a telling situation, we much prefer that phrase, is one where parents can actually benefit their kids greatly by not shutting it down and just rebuking the tattler, but instead, using it as an opportunity to teach and grow both of your kids.

And it really is a beautiful thing, what it develops in their hearts. It doesn't cause one sibling to rebel and be secretive. It actually causes them to be more repentant and humble and more free. If their wrong is exposed, then what happens? They have an opportunity to confess it and to be taught how it's wrong, and then their heart is cleansed. They learn to be forgiven. And so it's actually a very freeing thing. Our children did not grow up resenting each other because they told on each other here or there. They actually are so very close to each other and they miss each other. Our oldest son is living outside of the state where all of our other four children are and they miss him. They want him to be close to them, and in some ways he might have been the kid that told the most because he was the older one, and they don't see him that way at all. They respect him and they love Him. So it creates the kind of environment that God intends for His body to be.

CAREY:

And some people who are listening may think, "Well, if you allow the tattling to go on, even with the hope of teaching your children, it's going to contribute to sibling rivalry."

MINDI:

And that does make sense, because maybe the child who was tattled on gets resentful of her brother who told. So that's the attitude you need to be watching. I mean, you need to deal with the brother and help him have the right thinking on it. You need to deal with the daughter who maybe is the one who did the wrong and then go back to her and ask, "Are you upset with your brother because he told?" and then you need to deal with the reasons why she would be upset.

CAREY:

Yeah and let's stop for a moment and just think about that. Why IS she upset? Because she did wrong and got found out. There's nothing godly about that. That's actually a

God-given emotion, to feel shame and guilt. It's meant to drive us to repentance. So you, as the parent, get to step in and help your child go there.

MINDI:

Help her to learn how to confess to the Lord and to receive His forgiveness and to be cleansed. It's another opportunity for her to learn more about how God loves her and forgives her. And it's OK that she did wrong because you forgive her now. It's a great growth step and growth opportunity. So don't be afraid of sibling rivalry. Just deal with it head on.

CAREY:

So as you deal with this whole issue in your family, we will be praying for you. We do pray for you, by the way, that you will have God's wisdom and you'll be able to handle these situations in a way that guides your kids towards godliness.

## **CONTACT US WITH ANY QUESTIONS ON THIS TOPIC**

MINDI:

If you have questions about this, or you want to interact, you can always reach out to us. There's contact information on the website and even in the description for this episode. And we love hearing from you.

PRAYER:

Father, we are grateful that You've given us the role as parents to guide our children, that You equip us to do so as well with Your word. We ask You to apply it to our hearts first, give us discernment and wisdom like You've promised You will do so that we can guide our children in wisdom and we can teach their heart how to love Jesus and how to love their siblings in the way that they should, so that the whole family can grow into conformity of the image of Christ. We ask it in Jesus' name, amen.





*This podcast is a production of*  
<https://MorningMindsetMedia.com>

*Explore our other podcasts there and consider becoming a*  
[monthly Partner](#) *to support this and all of our media endeavors,*  
*helping you and others align your mind with the truth of God's word.*