



Family Matters



A CHRIST-CENTERED RESOURCE FOR FAMILIES AND TEACHERS

Workbench Parenting: Envisioning How Common Household Tools Can Remind Us to Be Stronger Parents

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AN ADJUSTABLE WRENCH

"Son, please bring me a crescent wrench."

"What's that, Dad?"

"It's the wrench that adjusts in size."

"Oh, the 'twirly' one! OK!"

While many of us call the common workbench tool that adjusts with the flick of a thumb a "crescent wrench," few of us know that "Crescent" is really a brand name for an adjustable wrench developed in Jamestown, N.Y., in the early 1900s. Tools with a similar design go back to Europe in the late 1800s.

This tool has been around a while, and for good reason! We love it because it has the ability to adjust to various sizes. No matter how unusual the task, we know it will be there to serve us in our time of need. We also like the fact that we can carry one tool instead of many.

When we become parents, it helps to take on the traits of an adjustable wrench. It is good to learn how to adapt to various circumstances. Sometimes we need to "lock in quickly and tighten things up" if a situation is out of balance. Other times, we should be mindful if a situation requires some "loosening up" and try to help our children and other family members become more relaxed. As parents, we desire to be all things to our children — to adjust to every situation, to be great providers, to give them our all.

This is not a new concept as St. Paul describes himself in a similar way to the

people of Corinth. In **1 Cor. 9:19–22**, he speaks about being free — yet needing to be a slave to everyone. He talks about being Jewish to the Jews. He says he is willing to go under the law to become like those under the law. To the weak, he becomes weak. Paul desires to become all things to all people so that by all possible means he might save some. Why does he do this? For the sake of the Gospel — to share the blessings of the Good News of Jesus Christ!

We will come up short in our parenting, even in our most self-sacrificing moments. We will never be able to give our kids all they need. Thanks be to God that in Christ Jesus, He gave up everything on the cross for us! Jesus gave Himself into death so that we might have life.

Jesus came from the glory of the heavenly realm, became human, lived among us and eventually died for us. Then the biggest adjustment of all time took place when Jesus rose from the dead! He turned what looked like the sure grip of death into the sure promise of eternal life for you and me!

May we as parents continue to learn, grow and practice the fine art of being adjustable every day.



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FAMILY LINKS: Activities for families to reinforce Bible story truths in the home.

Gather the family together for a time of Bible study and discussion following the outline below.

OPENING PRAYER: Given by the one who everyone thinks is the most flexible.

FAMILY FUN TIME WITH TOOLS

Have an older sibling or parent locate an adjustable wrench or two. Have an adult demonstrate how to use this tool by turning the adjustable thread in ways that shorten or lengthen the wrench opening. Walk around the house and find nuts and bolts, and adjust the wrench to fit accordingly.

FAMILY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Did you find this tool easy or hard to use? Why?
2. How is this tool helpful to our family?

FAMILY FUN TIME: BALLOON TAP

Obtain a large balloon (at least nine or 10 inches). Have someone blow it up. As a family, stand in a circle facing each other. The youngest one in the family taps the balloon in the air with his or her right hand. The object of the game is to try and keep the balloon in the air with other members “tapping it” by never repeating any previous motions or having any person go twice in a row. So, the second person could tap the balloon with their left hand, the next with the left elbow, the next with a right foot, the next with their head, etc. Just make sure that no one goes twice in row and that you don’t repeat any “body part taps.” Count and see how many you can get in a row as a family. Try to set a new record each time! See how well and creatively the family adjusts to the challenge!

GOOD NEWS/BAD NEWS LEARNING TO ADJUST:

As a family, respond to the following questions.

What would you do if...

- You were all dressed up for church and then spilled milk on yourself?
- You were planning to go out in the yard to work or play, and then it started raining very hard?
- You were in a restaurant and they brought you the wrong meal, but it was something you liked anyway?
- You had the chance to go to a cool movie with a friend, but it was the day the family was going to visit Grandma and Grandpa?

FAMILY BIBLE TIME:

Look up **1 Cor. 9:22**, and have someone read it out loud.

1. What does it mean to become weak? (Answers will vary)
2. Why would the apostle want to become weak?
(To connect with others, to relate)
3. Why would he want to become all things to all people?
(To bring them salvation)

CLOSING ECHO PRAYER: Have an adult read the prayer below, with the others repeating it phrase by phrase.

Dear God, Thanks for making us different. Thanks for giving us the ability to figure things out. Help us to be smart when we need to adjust to new things. Thanks for sending us Jesus, who gave us eternal life through His death. Amen.

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