

## The Culture of Disrespect

The culture of disrespect that is pervasive among children in the United States, is less so in other countries and cultures. In the U.S., you will find kids in almost every classroom who disrespect the teacher, undermine authority, and inflict mayhem. You say, "That's nothing new..." True. What is new: teachers used to consult with parents who would make "attitudinal adjustments" and correct the problem of misbehavior, but those days are long gone.

Have we forgotten how to parent?

One writer tells of visiting an American school in an upper class neighborhood. The teacher stopped several times to warn students about interrupting and misbehavior. As she was talking, one of the boys belched loudly and then said, "Oh, just SHUT UP!"

The embarrassed teacher responded calmly and said, "That is uncalled for and rude." "Oh, I'm sorry," the boy said. "PLEASE ...shut up!" The other students giggled.

I can't imagine being a school teacher in the culture of disrespect. Those individuals have my utmost respect and admiration.

The book of Proverbs speaks to defiant behavior and the culture of disrespect. "A child left to himself [undisciplined] will bring shame to his mother" [and father and everyone else]. "Discipline your son and he will give you rest." "Folly is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod [literally "switch"] of discipline drives it far from him."

In 1978, Dr. James Dobson wrote a best-seller called, "The Strong-Willed Child." I'm not sure it would sell that well today. Come to think of it, I'm not sure the book of Proverbs is getting much respect these days either.

BTW, childish "folly" is not a reference to childishness, but an attitude of defiant disrespect and rebellion. Sadly, such is becoming the norm in American culture. If you don't believe that, ask a teacher.

Wilson Adams