

FIRST RULE FOR LIFE

by Brian Burgess, Forefront Families LLC

Rule 1 from Bill Gates to teenagers:

‘Life is not fair: get used to it!’

This is the first story Sally and I will write based on a series of 10 life rules set by Bill Gates, the Microsoft billionaire. I have read extensively and have lived a long time, but I have never seen or discovered that life is fair. Nowhere. Not even in the Bible. In fact, in the New Testament it tells us, “In this life you will have troubles.”

People without a strong faith and those unfamiliar with the Bible often say, “If God is a God of love, then why do babies die or good people get cancer, while those who do wrong live on unscathed? Plainly, it’s a result of original sin. Bad things happen even to good people. You can read about it in the first few chapters of Genesis. Then you might say, “That’s not fair!” You’re right. It’s not fair. But that is life, so let’s get over it and move on.

We often hear our kids when they are growing up saying that things are not fair, usually in relation to having to do some work around the house, or not being able to do something another sibling has been allowed to do. I said it when I was a child. You said it. My parents were great, but I cannot remember them giving an explanation about fairness. Maybe they did, but it was not earth shattering enough for me to remember it.

Let me explain what I would do. You don’t have to wait until the next time you hear the expression. In an appropriate moment when your children are in a receptive mode, have a discussion on the topic of fairness. In the discussions ahead, use words that are appropriate to your children’s ages and understanding. Start by saying that it’s not fair that they have to do chores around the house when their friends don’t have to do anything. An answer: “We are training you for the real world because nobody waits on you hand and foot in real life. Life has its fun times and its work times. It’s mainly work, so get used to it. It’s unfair that your friends’ parents are not fitting their children for real life! No mommy or daddy is going to want the person they marry to be lazy, or not be able to do some of the chores that are necessary to run a good home. It’s not fair that one parent has to do far more work than the other because that person was not properly trained by their parents.”

Secondly, it’s unfair that parents have to do a larger proportion of the work around the house than you do, as well as work to keep us all fed, safe and comfortable. An answer: “We don’t groan about this because we love you and realize that the work has to be done to run a smooth home and provide the love,

support and environment that will help you in your development. It's our task to shape you into loving, caring, self-motivated, self-disciplined, well educated, hard working adults that will make a difference in the world."

Thirdly, it's not fair that some people don't have to study hard to get good grades at school while others have to. An answer: "We are all born with different levels of intelligence and opportunity. What we expect of you is to do the very best you can with what you have been given. That's all. You cannot do any better than your best."

Fourthly, It's not fair that some people have got more money, nicer homes, flasher cars and are able to travel more than others. An answer: "These things come from getting the best education possible, working very hard, making wise choices, taking risks and seeing opportunities around you. There are some people that are fortunate enough to be helped in life by being given financial help from their hard working parents or by receiving an inheritance. However, most of us don't have that opportunity, so it means working hard. That's why we are training you to be skilled in many things that will make your life better."

Lastly, it is not fair that some people will be going to heaven and the others to hell. An answer: "God loves us all, but he has given us a choice either to follow the way he showed us through Jesus, or to ignore Him. If we live our own way and not accept the gift of life He offers, then we have made a poor choice and have to accept the consequences."

If you have any comments or questions on this subject, please do not hesitate to contact us at sally@forefrontfamilies.org. We invite you to also check out our website at www.forefrontfamilies.org and our blog site at www.forefrontfamilies.blogspot.com for further assistance.