

*Matt 18:6 NIV*

*But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.*

## **Blended Not Whipped**

(How to stay happily married while helping raise another's children)

1. Determine to "like" your spouse's kids; choose to think charitably of them.
2. Don't impose any strict discipline on the other's children without their input and permission.
3. Expect *respect* for your position as a parent, but remember that *respect* for you as a person is earned.
4. Be kind and patient to all parties --- living among "strangers" is difficult.
5. Have your "hard" talks with your spouse behind closed doors; the kids need to know you are united in your decisions. Let dad lead as much as possible.
6. If you and your spouse reach an impasse, involve a Godly counselor.
7. Don't hold your spouse responsible for their kids' bad behavior.
8. Don't force "relationships." *Kind words and shared experiences* fill emotional bank accounts and bind people together; *criticism* devalues those accounts and divides. (No one flourishes in an environment where they are constantly being evaluated.)
9. Try to get along with the ex-spouses; don't speak evil of them and don't undermine their discipline of the kids.
10. Be direct and clear in your communications with your family; don't speak in code and don't stuff your grievances. Forgive quickly and completely.
11. Love your spouse big. "Love covers over a multitude of sins." (1 Pet 4:8)
12. Connect deeply with God through His Word, prayer, and close fellowship with other believers.

*Prov 18:21 NIV*

*The tongue has the power of life and death,  
and those who love it will eat its fruit.*

