

Parenting Session 1

Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth. Psalm 127:4

Goals for Parenting series:

1. Encourage you in the high calling of being a mom and dad
2. Help you develop a gospel centered plan for parenting
3. Enhance your teamwork as a couple
4. Build confidence in the Bible as God's primary textbook for parenting

Getting to the Heart of Behavior

- I. **We live out of our hearts (Proverbs 4:23)**
 - A. The heart sets the course of life
 - B. All behaviors have their origins in the heart
- II. **The Bible uses the term *heart* much differently than our contemporary culture does**
 - A. Culture – *heart* refers to our soft, emotional side.
 - B. Bible – *heart* refers to all of the immaterial part of humans, uses terms like *soul*, *spirit*, *mind*, *inner man* as well as *heart*.
 - C. 700 passages refer to *heart*.
 - D. *Heart* is about thinking, remembering, knowing, and other cognitive activities.
- III. ***Heart* is a major theme in the ministry of Christ recorded in the Gospels**
 - A. Law is applied in terms of the heart
 - i. For example: adultery and murder
 - B. Christ does not draw behavior lines but says that your sin is in your heart.
 - i. Note Matthew 7
 - ii. Nothing that enters a man can make him unclean; rather, it is what comes out of a man that makes him unclean
 - iii. Concerns about fairness, deceit, and slander are heart issues
- IV. **Out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks**
 - A. Trees are recognized by their fruit.
 - i. Note the illustration about hanging apples
 - ii. Watch for monofilament apples in your child's behavior
 - iii. Real fruit is not produced by manipulation and behavior modification
 - iv. Manipulation does not address the real need of the heart.
 - B. Behaviorism presents a false basis for ethics.
 - i. Behaviorism trains the heart in wrong ways—whatever parents use to motivate their children will ultimately train their hearts
 - ii. Relying on behavior means the gospel will never be central—you can't tag the gospel onto the end of a threat

iii. Behaviorism shows the idols of our hearts

V. See graphic on Ungodly Attitudes and Godly Attitudes

- A. No one has better resources for understanding children than the Christian who has the word of God
- B. It is the attitudes of the heart that push and pull behavior
- C. Behaviorism can produce right behavior for the moment, but ultimately these behaviors will wither and die, just like the apples hanging on the tree by monofilament line.
- D. When training a two-year-old, begin with using the language of the heart

VI. Tremendous benefits of focusing on the heart.

- A. Keeps attention on the heart, not just behavior—looking for the sin under the sin
 - i. Behavior shows the overflow of the heart
 - ii. Family photo at Niagara Falls demonstrated a failure to understand heart issues
- B. If we focus on the heart our focus will be on the gospel
- C. The most important benefit is to engage our children, not just reprove them

VII. The word of God gives us sufficient resources to understand our children

- A. We need to dig deeply into the word of God and live richly out of the word of God.

Take home Principle #1: Parents need a sacred commitment to one another and a team approach to raising children.

Homework: Read chapter 1 in book “Shepherding a Child’s Heart”. Try to have a date night and discuss these questions.

1. In light of this discussion, what is our goal (our target) as parents? How will we describe or define the target toward which we want to release our children?
2. Where are we currently in our parenting? Where am I as a parent? What do I need to confess? What changes do I/we need to make?
3. How can I encourage or support you as we parent our children together? Take a moment and renew your commitment to each other as you begin this study on parenting your children.

Additional resources:

familylifetoday.com

“What is your End Game” with Brian Housman

“Shepherding a Child’s Heart” with Tedd Tripp

“The Sticky Faith Guide” with Kara Powell