

“Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one’s youth.” Ps. 127:4
Session 11: Shepherding Children Ages 6-12

- I. **Many issues cannot be reduced to obedience—we need to get to the sin beneath the sin**

- II. **The heart directs behavior**
 - A. Note the illustration from Matthew 15
 - B. It is what comes out of the heart that makes a man unclean
 - i. **Ungodly behavior flows from ungodly attitudes**
 - ii. **Godly behavior flows from godly attitudes**
 - C. The danger is that parents isolate behavior issues from heart issues
 - i. **Very easy for parents to focus on behavior instead of the heart**
 - ii. The temptation: trying to produce behavioral change without addressing heart attitudes behind behavior
 - iii. Note the “Shut up Jar” illustration
 - iv. A fight over a toy is really a fight between two selfish kids

- III. **Does God commend right actions for wrong motives?**
 - A. This is what Jesus condemned the Pharisees for
 - B. **If you deal with the heart, the right attitudes will follow**

- IV. **See chart for a suggested list of attitudes of the heart**

- V. **The attitudes of the heart push and pull our children’s behavior**
 - A. As parents we want to give our children these truths
 - B. Develop a heart notebook
 - C. Address practical concerns (e.g., what does revenge look like for an eight-year-old?)
 - D. Concerns about electronic media
 - i. Children are ready to deal with the Internet only when they gain insight into the attitudes of their heart.
 - ii. Technical proficiency is not enough to prepare kids for the internet world

- VI. **Attitudes of the heart are about much more than information transfer**
 - A. Yet we say to our kids, “I can’t believe you would be so selfish”

- B. We act as if having the right information is all that matters
- C. The attitude of the heart is what matters most

VII. Dealing with issues of the heart

- A. **Allows parents to stand in solidarity with children, since they are facing the same issues**
- B. The beauty is that Christ has come to transform the heart
- C. When we are dealing with the heart we are naturally led to the gospel
- D. **The goal: give children a way to understand themselves in light of the grace of the gospel**
- E. We want our children to have an intelligent grasp of the grace and power of the gospel

Take Home Principle: The elementary school years are the “golden years” of parenting. If your child has learned the Principle of Authority, then this is the time to build character into their lives in preparation for adolescence and for life.

Homework: Read chapter 16 & 17 in “Shepherding a Child’s Heart”. Try to have a date night to discuss the following questions

1. Talk about the use of a “heart notebook” with your children.
2. Talk about the use of electronic media in your home.
3. What changes should we make in our parenting to bring the gospel to bear on sinful behaviors in our home?
4. How can we encourage each other to keep the “bigger vision” in mind as we parent?

Resources:

“Answering Your Kids Toughest Questions” with Elyse Fitzpatrick

“What I Want My Children to Know” with Todd Wagner

“Approaching Adolescence: What your preteen needs to know” with Dennis Rainey