

Christian Kids Need Christ

Parenting Basics

Luke 18:15-17

Stuart W. Bryan

I. Let the Children Come (cf. Mt 19:13-15; Mk 10:13-16)

Our basic calling as Christian parents is to so shepherd our children that, by the grace of God, they come to know Christ.

God is the Eternal Father. This means, we saw, that the Father has an Eternal Son, *the only begotten Son who dwells in the bosom of the Father*. What this means is that the parent-child relationship, especially the father-child relationship, has its foundation in the nature of God. All earthly fathers derive their identity from the Heavenly Father. We don't project fatherhood onto God; we derive fatherhood from Him. He is the _____; we are the _____.

II. Theological Bedrock

A. The Character of God

These parents bring their children to Jesus that He might bless them. So what does this reveal about His character? It reveals that He is the Lord and the giver of life. God is Eternal Father, Eternal Son, and Eternal Spirit. In other words, He is a God in whom relationships have eternal meaning. So why do our kids need Christ? *Because He is life; He is light; there is no other source of these things.*

The world wants us to think that sin is cool or that rebellion is attractive. But sin is death. *"Sin destroys everything it touches... It is like rat poison. It smells and looks good, but it ultimately kills its victim. Although sin often brings short-term pleasure, if not atoned for, it terminates in infinite pain"* (Farley, 79).

"Moreover you took your sons and your daughters, whom you bore to Me, and these you sacrificed to [your idols] to be devoured. Were your acts of harlotry a small matter, that you have slain My children and offered them up to them by causing them to pass through the fire?" (Ezek 16:20-21) Other gods devour our children; but Jesus came that they might have life and have it abundantly (Jn 10:10).

B. The Condition of Children

1. By nature children of wrath (cf. Jn 1:13; Eph 2:3)

By nature, we are all born estranged from God and prone to sin – Paul writes in Ephesians 2:3 that we are all *by nature children of wrath*. Our problem as human

beings is not primarily “out there” but “in here.” We are sinners in need of salvation.

2. The heart of the problem (cf. Pr 4:23; 9:7-10; 22:15; Mk 7:21; Lk 6:45)

“The heart of the problem is a problem _____.” Our fundamental problem is not what we *do* but what we *want*. *“A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, brings forth what is good; and an evil man, out of the evil treasure of his heart, brings forth what is evil”* (Lk 6:45). David urged his son Solomon, *“Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the issues of life”* (Pr 4:23).

Our first task as parents is not to address problem behavior; our first task is to address the _____. Solomon writes in Proverbs 22:15, *“Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of correction will drive it far from him.”* The goal of our parenting, in other words, is to bring our children to an awareness of their need for a Savior who can transform their heart and cover the guilt of their sin.

- a. Bankruptcy of moralism
- b. He learned it from his father Adam

Your child’s primary problem is not outside of him; your child’s problem is himself. He is always going to face temptations from the outside that seek to draw him away from the love of God. Therefore, the only solution is if God of His grace transforms your child’s heart so that he loves God and, in that love, overcomes all obstacles. The Apostle John writes, *“For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world – our faith”* (1 Jn 5:4).

C. The Glory of Christ

1. Covenantal Kindness (cf. Ps 103:17; 112:1-2; Lk 1:50)

Psalm 103:17 – *But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, and His righteousness to children’s children, to such as keep His covenant, and to those who remember His commandments to do them.*

2. Redemptive Grace (cf. Is 42:5-7; Eph 5:25-27)

Thus says God the LORD, Who created the heavens and stretched them out, Who spread forth the earth and that which comes from it, Who gives breath to the people on it, And spirit to those who walk on it: “I, the LORD, have called You in righteousness, And will hold Your hand; I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, As a light to the Gentiles, To open blind eyes, To bring out prisoners from the prison, Those who sit in darkness from the prison house.

III. Conclusion