

Raising Kids Well :: Week 2
Vintage21 :: April 12, 2007
Tyler Jones, Erika Lizotte

What is primary role as a parent? What has God called us to?

- Raise children into followers of Christ. Worshipping God gives him honor & always fulfills us
 - We know we are his child
 - God gives us purpose
 - Gives us meaning
 - John 10:10 – we are able to have deep life like Jesus' life on earth
 - Revelation 21:1-4 – gives us eternal life

Problem: kid's hearts are broken & corrupt

- Psalm 51:5, Psalm 58:3, Genesis 8:21 – the human state is that we have hearts that are only capable of sin
- Isaiah 53:6a – created with a choice to worship God or self. . . sinful hearts choose self
- Romans 6:23a – choosing self leads to death, no eternal & beautiful life worshipping God
- Kids only have devices that lead to death, we can't let kids choose
 - it's not controlling; it's forming. Kids are hedonistic with no concept of consequences.

Problem: parents have no capacity to change a child's corrupt heart

- Hearts need to be redeemed
 - Heart: Proverbs 4:23, the heart is the control center for life
 - Redeem: restore to the image of God, love & give mercy & live sacrificially like God
 - Redeemed heart: finds value & life in God & gives that value & life to others
- Kids need to:
 - Understand the high & holy standard for which they are created
 - Understand they can't reach that standard on their own
 - Invite God to replace their sinful heart with a God-centered heart
- Parents prepare kids for acceptance of this free gift: divinely appointed shepherd of the heart
 - Help kids understand their hearts
 - Help kids understand world around them
 - Help kids understand God's reality

Help kids understand their hearts

- Luke 6:45, Proverbs 4:23 – heart is control center of life (everything we say, think, do)
- Matthew 15 – what we do is determined by the condition of our heart
- Practical dialogue:
 - Goal: help child express himself
 - Method: facilitate conversation, comprehend behavior & words, discern matters of the heart – Proverbs 20:5

- Process: the nature of the temptation → the possible responses to this temptation → the motives for those responses → the sinful response that was chosen
- Poor dialogue:
 - Why did you hit your sister?
 - What do you mean you don't know?
- Helpful dialogue:
 - What were you feeling when you hit your sister?
 - What did your sister do to make you mad?
 - Help me understand how hitting her seemed to make things better.
 - What was the problem with what she was doing to you?
 - In what other ways could you have responded?
 - How do you think your response reflected trust or lack of trust in God's ability to care for & protect you?
- Scripture: kids have to know what scripture says about their hearts, how they are broken & what they are intended for

Help understand the world around them

- The world is disturbing, but we can't shelter our children – Matthew 5:14, 24:14, John 1:9, Mark 16:15, Psalm 127

Help kids understand God's reality

- Parent like God the Father parents us – bring love, conviction, & mercy like God
- Romans 11:22 – kindness & severity
 - Kindness – spiritual transformation & physical renewal
 - Severity – rigorous with the ways of God in our fallen state
- Kindness – shepherding into life
 - Gospel – teach it with our lives, our interactions, the way we build the kingdom
 - Instruction – constantly care enough to guide children into healthy places, Proverbs 22:6, rhythmic
 - Scripture – kids won't choose it, we have to choose it for them, make it fun & real
 - Prayer – with our children, for our children

Questions for personal reflection:

1. What has been the primary role of your parenting thus far? Is it biblical? Do you believe that God's primary desire for the billions of children in the world is that they know him? Do you believe that God's primary desire for you is that you would be a follower?
2. Do you understand your sinful state? Do you understand your kid's sinful state? Will you let your child continue in corruption or will you step in & prevent your child from continually choosing brokenness? What will this look like for your family?
3. What does it mean to have a redeemed heart? Do you see the need for your child's heart to be redeemed? Do you see this need for your heart? Practice understanding your behavior in terms of your heart. Start engaging your kids in this process. What tools have you been given to form & shepherd your child's heart? Imagine the joyous experience it will be when your child asks God to redeem his/her selfish heart!
4. Does your child have an understanding of God's purposes, promises, & abilities? Do you have such an understanding? How will you rearrange your life so you have the opportunity to know what scripture says about us, God, & the world? How will you rearrange your life so your kids have the opportunity to know this as well?
5. Do you understand the difference between innocent & naïve? How is it that sheltering children does not produce godly children? How will you raise children that are innocent but not naïve?
6. How does God deal with you in kindness & severity? In your fallen state, are you rigorous with the ways of God? Are you rigorous with your children? How accurate a picture of the gospel is your life painting for your child? What does it mean to constantly instruct our children into healthy places? Do you claim God's promise in Proverbs 22:6? How can you make scripture fun & real & consistent for your family? Is your life rhythmic or chaotic?