

Do You Have the “Heart” of Your Child?

Revival In the Home Ministries, Inc.

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Introduction:

- How are things between you as a parent and your child?
- What is happening to their respect, honor, or esteem shown to you?
- To what degree have you already *lost your child*... does he largely ignore you, reject what you stand for, and rarely listen to you?
- What happens that brings about a *loss of a child's heart*? Why does this take place?
- For some of you, this study will be like a dose of herbs and vitamins... helping to keep your family better, for some of you it could bring a relationship back to life that has been lost.
- Raising kids is a challenge, raising good kids is a big challenge, and raising godly kids is an incredible challenge.

I. THERE ARE SEVERAL IMPORTANT INGREDIENTS TO RAISING GOOD, GODLY KIDS:

A. We must teach children to obey:

1. The clearest command given to children in relation to parents is found in Col. 3:20, where God says, “*Children obey your parents...*”
2. For obedience to be genuine obedience it must be immediate and it must be sweet. If a child chooses how they are going to obey, or when they are going to obey... then they have not obeyed.
3. If the child has not obeyed immediately, then they have not obeyed.
4. If they have not obeyed sweetly, then they have not obeyed.
5. Obedience is not an option in raising godly, good kids, it is vitally important.

But I don't think it is the most essential ingredient in raising good kids.

B. Another vital ingredient is to teach your child respect and honor.

1. A child who isn't taught to respect his parents, also will not respect God.
2. A boy who does not respect his Dad and Mom will not respect girls, older people, other adults or his wife.

3. A child who isn't taught to respect others will grow up expecting the world to revolve around him instead of being a servant.
4. Teaching respect and honor is a tremendously important ingredient.

But I don't believe this to be "the key" ingredient in raising good kids.

C. A vital ingredient is *Teaching*. . . *Molding With the Word of God*

1. Deuteronomy chapter six teaches us how we are to teach our children, and when: (See Deuteronomy 6:1-2, 4-9, 17.)
 - a. when we lie down, when we rise up,
 - b. when we walk by the way.
 - c. It is essentially telling us that the parent is a teacher all the time.
2. No matter where your kids are in school, YOU are your kid's primary teacher. You need to understand this!
But again, this isn't the most important ingredient!

D. Another primary ingredient for rearing good kids . . . is to *Protect Them From Evil*.

1. Evil in general, and evil influences in particular.
2. It is a false philosophy that says you will produce better kids by exposing them to the filth and garbage of this world.
3. God says, "*I would have you to be wise concerning that which is good, and simple (or ignorant) concerning that which is evil.*"

*I have given a number of ingredients which are needed if we are to raise good kids, but I have not given what I think is the **key ingredient of all**. In fact, you may practice all these things as they ought to be and still fail to have godly children without what I believe is the key ingredient.*

II. THERE IS A "KEY" INGREDIENT IN REARING CHILDREN:

A. The truth stated:

Look at Proverbs 23:26: "*My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways.*" *Why?* Because if you **give me your heart**, I will be able to steer you around the two greatest dangers that can ever happen to a young man. . .those are the dangers of wine and the wrong kind of women.

Now look at Malachi chapter 4:5-6:

Four hundred years later, God had a **special message** about "**turning the hearts of the children to the fathers, and the hearts of the fathers to their children.**"

1. There is a curse upon children in our day, in our society, in general.
2. We have a curse because we don't have the *hearts of the father with the children*, therefore, we don't have the *hearts of the children with the fathers*.
3. We see the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophesy as the

angel of the Lord is speaking to Zacharias, about the birth of John the Baptist. (Read Lk. 1:16-17.)

- a. There would be a mighty anointing on John the Baptist, similar to the anointing that was on Elijah in the O.T. He would come in the power of Elijah for a very special ministry.
- b. John the Baptist was to make the crooked straight, bring the high things low, and make the rough ways smooth, and prepare the way for the coming of Christ. (Lk. 3:3-9; Matt. 3:1-3; Mark 1:1-3)
- c. His ministry was: *“To turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient (the children) to the wisdom of the just.”* (Mal. 4:5-6)
 - Children will not give their hearts to their parents -- ***until their parents are first seen as being just.***
 - The number one characteristic of wisdom is ***justice.***
 - When parents are seen by children as being ***just...*** then the children ***feel free to trust their hearts to their parents.***
 - Then the disobedient become open to the wisdom of the just. This will make ready a people prepared for the Lord.
- d. Young people are not ready for God to work in their hearts ***until their hearts are turned from themselves to their parents.***
 - When a teenager gets right with his parents, he finds it easy to get right with God at the same time.
 - His biggest problem in surrendering to the Lord is surrendering his heart, will, mind, and emotions to the parents.
 - And if he can do that, then he can get right with God at the very same moment.

B. The truth illustrated: story of Absalom and his rebellion!

(II Sam. 13; 14; 15) In chapters 13 to 19 the primary character involved is this man, Absalom.

Look at some key events!

1. Amnon, with bad counsel, found out how to rape his half-sister Tamar.
2. David did nothing about it, two years later Absalom killed Amnon.
3. In the first part of Chapter 14, Joab seeks to get Absalom back to Jerusalem.
4. Absalom spent two full years in Jerusalem, but still was not able to see his father, the King.
5. Absalom sent a servant to set Joab's barley field on fire, to get his attention, just as his heart burned to see his father, David.
6. When he did get to see his father, the king, there was no conversation, no hugs, no words of acceptance, etc. (chap 15-16)
7. Absalom worked to undermine his father. He stole the hearts of the men of Israel, by sharing with them, speaking to them, etc., rebellion is set up.
8. The hearts of the men were with Absalom. Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel. (II Sam. 15:1-6)

One of the most important statements that could ever be made is this:
The key ingredient. . . is to get their heart early, to keep their heart, don't lose their heart, and if you do lose it... find out when, and where you lost it... Go get it back quickly no matter what it takes to get it.

III. REACHING THE HEART LEST THE CHILD BECOMES A REBEL:

The heart of every problem is the problem in the heart!

God said of Israel... (Heb 3:10) "They always error in the heart!"

A. The Problem Is We Lose The Heart of Our Own:

1. The problem David had was he lost Absalom's heart.
2. Absalom's life wandered because his heart wandered.
3. Many parents have lost their child's heart!
How can we help the child, if we don't have his heart?
4. When we see defiance and rebellion, and we really don't understand what is really going on underneath everything. We have lost the child's heart.

Why is it such a big deal about the heart?

B. The heart controls almost everything about the life -- it is much like the physical heart which is the most vital organ of the body. You could lose your leg or arm and live. . . but that is not true of the heart! (The word heart (spiritual) occurs about 900 times in the Word of God.)

1. If you have access to the child's heart -- then you have access to everything else in their child's life.
 - a. You have access to your child's friends,
 - b. to your child's music, to the places your child goes,
 - c. to the things your child does, the activities in which your child is involved.
 - d. Because if you have the child's heart you have access to every thing else in the child's life.
2. It is better, in the long run, to have a child that at times disobeys you -- but you have their heart -- than to have a child that is continually, compliantly obedient, but you don't have his heart.
3. He could be doing what the parents says -- but is like a volcano just waiting to erupt.
4. There is a far greater potential for the child to become a rebel -- no matter how obedient they are -- if you don't have their heart!
 - a. If you have their heart -- you have their respect;
 - b. if you have their heart -- you can teach them, you can protect them,
 - c. whoever has the heart -- eventually has the child.

This is the reason why the world all around us is working to tie the heart of children with a whole bunch of things. The world is continually trying to tie the heart of children to baby setters instead of mom and dad, to TV, to school teachers, to cartoon figures (some of the cartoon characters have the child's heart, more than

mama does), to basketball or foot ball stars, and rock stars which is especially one of the biggest problem areas of our day. Satan uses the boy-friend-girl-friend craze to steal the hearts of children from parents prematurely. This is especially true in our day!

5. Children naturally want their parents to have their heart. This is normal! From time the child is born this is the way it ought to be!
6. Parents want to have their children's heart! Again this is normal! (The heart of David hungered to see Absalom, and Absalom was hungering to see his father. Yet David failed to take the time to minister to his son.)

C. Wisdom That Comes From These Truths.

1. Satan's lie he has propagated is: -- **"Some adolescent rebellion is expected out of every teenager."**

Why is that so dangerous? *Because just a little bit of rebellion should be a sign to a parent that their child's heart has wandered... and is hungry for love, and attention and acceptance. If you expect your child to rebel, you won't take action and do something about getting the child's heart-- then the heart wanders further. By the time you recognize what has happened it is almost too late to do anything about it...most parents don't know when they lost their child's heart, do you know? Think with me, do you have your child's heart? Would they rather spend time with you than most any one else!*

2. It is sad that between age 13 to 15, or 16 teens are taught to look for boy friends, or girl friends. We must teach them to give their hearts and emotions to only **one person** in life.
3. It is sad that later on we have a "*generation gap*," because there is a great void in the hearts of parents and in the hearts of their children.
 - a. Would your child rather spend time with you than anyone else?
 - b. Does your child give you respect and honor?
 - c. Does your child come to you for wisdom for decision making?
 - d. Does your child have a genuine desire to please you as a parent?
 - e. Does it hurt your child when they realize they have done something to displease you?
 - f. Are they loyal to you, do they follow you?
 - g. When you teach them, do they look at you and gladly listen?
 - h. Do you know what is going on inside your child's heart and mind?
(Prov. 21:2)

D. The Bible gives an ideal example of the heart of fathers and children being knit together!

1. What is the Bible ideal of the parent-child relationship?
 - a. Was it Adam and Eve and their kids? NO
 - b. Or Abraham and Isaac? NO
 - c. Was it Jacob and Joseph? NO
 - d. How about Moses, or Joshua? NO
 - e. How about Samuel, or David? NO
Where is it?

2. You know where the ideal picture is? -- ***It is the Heavenly Father and His Son -- Jesus Christ!*** (It is so crystal clear... it is incredible.)

(Jh. 5:19; Jh. 5:30; Jh. 8:28; Jh. 10:30)

3. Another picture is of the ***Heavenly Father and Us, His Sons:***
What is He always checking on? (The heart -- I Sam. 16:7) Parents need to be like God, also checking our child's heart. (Prov. 21:2; Prov. 4:23)

*It is the picture of the heavenly Father, looking at us and looking at our hearts
This is what we ought to be concerned about, not how do our children look?*

*Are they following my standards? Are they dressing like I want them to? Do they cut their hair like I want them to or use lipstick like I want? etc.? **This is all well and good -- but -- DO I HAVE THEIR HEART?***

E. There are three big dangers for the heart... and it happens in this order:

1. The heart can be **lost**, (maybe parents violate Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21)
 - a. Perhaps we provoke to wrath by raising the standard too high,
 - b. by seldom praising them, or showing appreciation,
 - c. by not regularly affirming them, by raising expectations too high,
 - d. by not giving them honor, and respect,
 - e. by not giving them your heart, your care, your time, by not communicating with them; maybe you don't talk to them when they need to talk and maybe you watch too much TV., etc.
2. The heart can be **hardened**, (we help produce a hard heart!)
 - a. Often accommodating the hurting heart, the child hardens his heart.
 - b. After the heart is hardened, someone else can come along and steal the heart. (Illustration of David and Absalom)
3. The heart can be **stolen**, (stolen by peers, TV, stars, boy-friend, girl-friend)
 - a. Sometimes family members or friends steal hearts,
 - b. or perhaps teachers come between the children and their parents.

F. Only the heart can keep the heart!

1. When the heart keeps the heart -- then the heart keeps straight.
2. The hand will not keep the heart -- spanking will not keep the heart.

The first thing we often do when we are disgusted is to turn away from the child. This should not happen. When things are bad or difficult is when the child needs us the most. Draw closer to the child, even the rebel hungers for the praise and acceptance of his father. The heart of the parents should keep the heart of the child or youth. Do we work at keeping the heart? If not we will lose our child.

One of the most powerful motivation is praise! Give praise, give acceptance, give them your heart, and keep their heart!