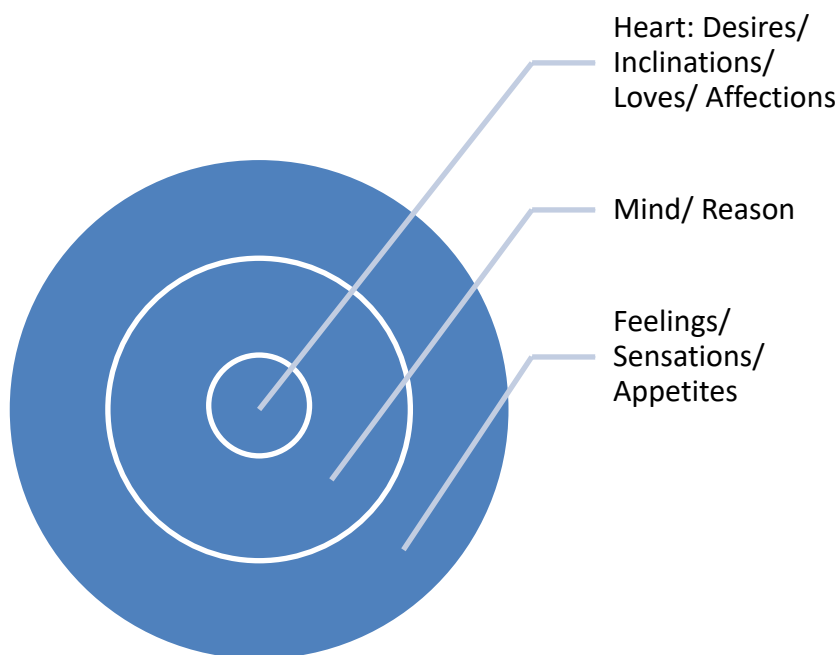


Biblical Parenting – 5 Teaching the Heart

If parenting is shaping and teaching a child to know the world as it really is, then it is crucial that we relate to our children the way God relates to us. There are differences, of course – our children are not to worship us – but we do want our children to see in us something of God’s authority, and we want to treat them the way God treats us.

What does that mean? Among other things, this means children need to learn to be people under authority. **Just as we live under God’s authority as his children, so our children need to live under our authority.** Very practically, therefore, our **goal in ages 0-5 is establishing our authority; teaching obedience.** It also means that, in love, we want them to become more and more like Christ, which is God’s loving plan for us. So our **goal in ages 6-12 is to help them grow in character.** In the end, we want our children to become worshipers of God, by God’s grace, to serve alongside us as adults in the church. From ages 13-18, we want them to train to become useful Christian adults.



I. The Importance of the Heart

A. **The heart is the control centre of behaviour; so behaviour reveals the heart.**

Proverbs 4:23, Mark 7:21, Luke 6:45.

B. **Too often, our parenting is often designed to control behaviour.**

Tripp observes: "A change in behaviour that does not stem from a change in heart is not commendable; it is *condemnable*." SCH, p. 4. Jesus repeatedly rebukes the Pharisees for honouring God in their behaviour, while rejecting Him in their hearts.

What does this look like?

- Bribery
- Random penalty
- Guilt / manipulation
- Fear of man
- ***Mere*** forced obedience

C. There is a time to control behaviour; but that must not be the whole story.

II. Examples of how to reach the heart.

III. Common questions about heart-centered parenting.

A. How can I expect obedience from the heart—after all, if my children aren't Christians, then they can't keep the law?

The law of God is not easy for natural man. Its standard is high and cannot be achieved apart from God's supernatural grace. God's law teaches us our need of grace. When you fail to hold out God's standard, you rob your children of the mercy of the gospel.

SCH, xxii.

B. Do I do this every time they disobey?

C. This is hard work, and I'm seeing little fruit!