

## **“Shepherding Your Child’s Heart”**

For the week of February 23, 2020

### **In A Nutshell**

Here’s a news flash: You never stop being a parent! You are constantly moving from one phase of parenting to the next, and each phase presents new challenges. Those challenges include raising your kids and working out the “kinks” as you do so. It’s tough but thankfully God’s Word gives instructions and guidance about life and parenting specifically. Parents can have wisdom from God on how to navigate effective parenting in a defective world.

### **Startup Questions**

There are so many aspects of parenting. So before we dive in let’s chat in your community group on the following :

- What aspect of parenting has been the most fun and rewarding for you?
  
- What aspect of parenting has been the most challenging for you?

### **Point #1: Your child lives out of his/her heart (Read Proverbs 4:23).**

The word for “keep” in verse 23 is also translated “guard,” or to protect. The point is that the heart is the battlefield for your child, which means parents need to be very careful about what ideas and habits we let shape their hearts. How have you provided the filter for your children in what they hear or see or do? How do you balance between protecting your child from the bad while still allowing them exposure to the world?

Read Proverbs 20:5. Why is probing our kids’ hearts with thoughtful questions and a listening ear critical? What are the challenges in doing this?

### **Point #2: Your child’s heart is sinful. (Read Jeremiah 17:9).**

Every child has a heart disease and it is called sin. If left untreated, it is deadly. You’ll often hear someone tell a child “to follow their heart.” Why is this dangerous? Instead of telling your kiddo to follow their heart, what would you say to encourage them?

When we think that the heart is sinful, we assume this reveals itself in doing bad things – and it does! But it can also manifest in wanting good things too much. How can wanting too much of good things be a problem?

**Point #3: Your child's heart is an idol factory. (Read Colossians 3:5).**

Covetousness is idolatry because it is desiring too much of a good thing. Our children's hearts are idol-making factories that take good gifts from God and turn them into ultimate things in their lives. What might idolatry look like in your kid's life?

Ideally, our kids need a big picture of God who is all-satisfying to such a degree that He becomes your child's greatest desire. How can this be accomplished? List the ways and discuss.

**Point #4: Your child's behavior flows from the heart. (Read Luke 6:43-45).**

What your child says and does is directly connected to what they think in their heart. But parents are most concerned about the behavior of our children. Why?

Comment on this: "Getting a child to behave without addressing the heart is like hanging store-bought apple on a rotten apple tree. You may have achieved the right look in the short-term, but that tree will never produce those apples on its own."

**Point #5: Your child needs a heart transplant (Read Ezekiel 36:25-27).**

As a group dissect Ezekiel 36:25-27. How does each verse address a "heart transplant" for your child?

Verse 25 –

Verse 26 –

Verse 27 –

**Final Thought**

It is easy to feel inadequate in providing the parenting your child needs. That is why we must keep pointing our kids back to the Gospel, and not settle for behavior manipulation. Behavior manipulation is about our comfort. Gospel transformation is about their good.