

The Foolishness in a Child's Heart.

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The Word of God declares in Proverbs 22:15 that FOOLISHNESS is bound up in a child's heart, and it is the rod of discipline that removes it [the foolishness] far from him. What kind of foolishness is bound up in our children's hearts?

1. Foolishness of SELF LOVE

Every child born into this world is hard-wired with inclinations and a relentless drive to love self and protect self. No one needs to be taught to love himself more. Everyone cares for himself -- including the smallest of children. They love themselves and the way that this manifests itself is in their lust -- the *relentless craving* -- to satisfy their "desires." They do what they want to do. And if anyone begins to take that sovereignty away from them, they begin to whine, scream, kick, punch, throw a fit, and all the related synonyms. Our children suffer from the sin of self love.

2. Foolishness of SPIRITUAL IGNORANCE

Children must be taught. That's why the Book of Proverbs is so replete with verses on listening to instruction and heeding the teaching of a father and mother. Parents, be sure of this: if you do not teach your children at a young age, you may be sure the Devil will. If you neglect to fill their hearts with divine truth, Satan will fill their hearts with corruption. Our children need training, they need to be taught, they need guidance and direction. They do not know the one true God nor do they know the gospel nor do they understand the weight and trajectory of their sin. That's why God has given you and me to them to instruct their hearts so that they are taught biblical truth as it's revealed in Scripture.

3. Foolishness of SELF-STYLED SOVEREIGNTY

Children love to believe that the world revolves around them. They have made and created their own sovereign empire -- of course with them seated nicely and powerfully upon the throne. They have made their own world that revolves around them. So our job as parents is to remind our children that life -- and the world -- is *not* revolving around them. Rather, we must show them that God is the centerpoint and Christ is the apex of all things. Just as the planets revolve around the sun, so Christ is the sun of our lives. We must remind our children that they don't get all that they want. They don't get their way much of the time (indeed, they must not!). And God has given the responsibility to us to break their self-styled sovereignty and to lift their eyes to the One who does sit upon heaven's throne; the glorious, strong, mighty, and ever-present One!

4. Foolishness of ABSOLUTE CONTROL

Lust for control ruins many lives. Many men and women long for control and it can ruin a marriage, a job, a career, a church, and a soul. And yet our children are born with this sinful disposition to have and long for and protect control over "their" things. After all, we must remind them that their stuff is not really "theirs" ultimately; it's God's. God has given it on loan to our family, and God is permitting them to use it and to use it well for His glory. So we must guard from allowing, permitting, turning a blind eye to, and even worse cultivating a lust for control -- absolute control over their stuff. They must learn to share. They must learn to happily

share what God has given. And the Lord has graciously given you to help shepherd them through this.

5. Foolishness of REJECTING AUTHORITY

To submit to authority will preserve a man from many pains in life. But children are sinfully wired, by our human nature and our sinful propensities, to reject authority and to re-place themselves as the one in authority. If this is not taught at a young age, rebellious children, unruly adults, and unsubmitive citizens may be the tragic outcome which will lead a soul to destruction. Let us faithfully seek to teach our children to joyfully obey authority -- the God-given authorities in our lives. We must teach them to obey their parents for in doing this, they please God. They must learn to submit to their teachers, the police officers, governing officials, and other authorities in their lives at various times. This is good, beneficial, and profitable for all!

God has given parents the unspeakable privilege and the tireless responsibility of shepherding the *hearts* of our children so that they may see their sin for what it really is and behold the Savior and all that He and all that He has done to rescue sinners! And for the children who are small, God has called parents to utilize the rod in spanking the child so that the child will learn to turn from that sin, to flee from wickedness, and to obey God for there the blessing is found. What ongoing and daily opportunities God has given parents for evangelism of our own children! May God help us to be faithful to what He has called us to do as we pray fervently for Him to change the hearts of our children through our efforts to bring the gospel to them.