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Sunday, May 20, 2018  
Did You Know?

## The Goal of Parenting

Several years ago I was listening to a podcast sermon on parenting by Pastor John MacArthur. There's a line from that sermon that hit me like a ton of bricks. It went something like this: "The goal of parenting is not behaviour modification. The goal of parenting is heart transformation." It was one of those statements that wielded so much truth, that it realigned everything I knew about parenting. I was reminded of this truth again in the parenting class that began a couple weeks ago (Sorry. The class is full, but it will be offered again in the future). In the class, pastor and instructor, Tedd Tripp said repeatedly that Biblical parenting aims to shepherd the heart of the child.

Most all parents, me included, have to confess that our goal in parenting was to get our kids to behave, to obey, to conform to their parent's wishes. Tripp tells us that this is fundamentally wrong because it goes against everything the Bible teaches about how people change; because it's wrong, it will always fail. One of things he did was to expose the motivations behind our parenting. For example, if we use guilt to motivate our children, or shame, or pride, or any other negative or unBiblical motivation to get our child to do the correct behavior, then we are training the child's heart to respond only to guilt, shame, pride, etc. I was thinking, "How come I never saw that?" "Why does this sound so new, so revolutionary?" As I thought about this more, I knew it was true. As a pastor, how should I motivate people? Should I use guilt, shame, pride? Sure, there may be times when those could be proper motivations, but they must not be the primary motivations. I should motivate people from grace, from love, from joy, from hope, from God and his glory, and from his beautiful Gospel.

If you and I use these as our primary motivators, then we will be "training" (another word for "disciplining") the people around us to respond and behave in such a way that grows out of these beautiful virtues. As I thought about it more, I realized that I first must learn to live out of these things. Far too many times I am motivated by guilt or pride or just duty. Instead, I should be motivated out of love for God and love for people. I have to remind myself that because I have been so deeply transformed by the Gospel, I should behave in a manner that reflects that transformation. Take a look at the relationships you're in. Think of how to do those relationships from the heart, from the very center of your being to the very center of the other person's being. Ask yourself if you are working from the right motivation and if you have the right goal -- the transformation of the heart. For this, we need God's help in the Word, in prayer, and we need the power of the Gospel.

Soli Deo Gloria.  
*Pastor Peter*