

Family Shepherds Study #10: Remembering the Fall (Original Sin and Parenting)

Introduction (testimony)

Voddie Baucham writes on p. 113 of *Family Shepherds*: 'We must have a grasp on our child's greatest need if we ever hope to see it met. And once we do understand this issue correctly, our response will not be manipulative techniques, but the gospel of grace. Rare is the man who views his discipline and instruction of his children through the lens of the gospel. For the most part, our approach to parenting resembles more closely that of Dr. Phil, Dr. Spock, or Dr. Oprah ... The reason? Our theology.'

Most men are completely unaware of the impact their theology has on their parenting. This is a fact that cannot be ignored when it comes to equipping family shepherds. Failure to address such fundamental issues will eventually lead to great harm. At the very least, there will be much more confusion and frustration than necessary, and perhaps less dependence than is called for.'

Other areas of life affected by whether or not we believe in Total Depravity? Intro to Voddie's sermon: "Doctrine of Total Depravity" <http://www.sermonaudio.com/sermoninfo.asp?SID=5510954312>

Review Value of Catechism (chapter 5)

Below is from *A Catechism for Young Children: An Introduction to the Shorter Catechism* (music CD edition "Teach Them the Faith" [by Vitco] at Amazon or www.teachthemthefaith.com)

- TRACK 9: Q. 31. What was the sin of our first parents? A. Eating the forbidden fruit.
- Q. 32. Who tempted them to this sin? A. The devil tempted Eve, and she gave the fruit to Adam.
- Q. 33. What befell our first parents when they had sinned?
A. Instead of being holy and happy, they became sinful and miserable. [Gen 2:25, 3:7-24, 4:6-24, 6:5, etc.]
- Q. 34. Did Adam act for himself alone in the covenant of works? [*note: reformed theology defines this as eternal life dependent on obedient works, Genesis 2:17*] A. No; he represented all his posterity. [Romans 5:12-19]
- Q. 35. What effect had the sin of Adam on all mankind? A. All mankind are born in a state of sin and misery [Ps 51:5]
- Q. 36. What is that sinful nature which we inherit from Adam called? A. Original sin. [Heb 'sons of Adam,' Ps 14:2-3, 58:3]
- Q. 37. What does every sin deserve? A. The wrath and curse of God. [Rom 1:18, 2:2; Gal 3:10; Eph 5:6]
- Q. 38. Can any one go to heaven with this sinful nature?
A. No; our hearts must be changed before we can be [made] fit for heaven. [Jn 1:12-13, 3:1-10 -> Ezek 36:25-27]
- Q. 39. What is a change of heart called? A. Regeneration. [Titus 3:5-7]
- Q. 40. Who can change a sinner's heart? A. The Holy Spirit alone. [Titus 3:5-7; Jn 3:6-8; Rom 8:6-11]
- TRACK 15. Q. 54. What kind of death did Christ die? A. The painful and shameful death of the cross.
- Q. 55. Who will be saved? A. Only those who repent of sin, and believe in Christ ... [*Baptist version by Errol Hulse ends the answer here, while the Presbyterian version mentions holy lives that follow true regeneration, #39-40 and #57 clarify; Mark 1:15; Acts 20:21; 3:19; 10:43 -> 11:18, 16:30-31, etc.*]
- Q.56. What is it to repent? A. To be sorry for sin, to hate and forsake it because it's displeasing to God [Ps 51, 2 Cor 7:9-11]
- Q. 57. What is it to believe or have faith in Christ? A. To trust in Christ alone for salvation. [Jn 14:6; Acts 4:12; Eph 2:8-9]
- Q. 58. Can you repent and believe in Christ by your own power?
A. No; I can do nothing good without the help of God's Holy Spirit. [Jn 6:63-65; Eph 2:1-5; Rom 3:11-12, 8:8-11]

Contrast what most children in America from 1600-1900 learned growing up above with below voices: '**Pelagius** believed human beings already possessed the full capacity to carry out God's will, "including the capacity not to sin"; in his view, human beings "do not have any internal tendency to sin; they are not inclined toward doing evil...There is no sinful nature in people when they are born' (Baucham, 114) **Michael Pearl**: 'Before [a child] can decide to do good, his parents must CONDITION him to do good ... You can being the child's sanctification longer before his salvation ... There will come a time when your child must stand alone before "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.'" (cited, 115-16)

More on Pearl's *To Train Up a Child* (his wife Debi Pearl wrote *Created to be his help meet*):

What We Believe section of Pearl's website: "When a descendant of Adam reaches a level of moral understanding (sometime in his youth) [age 10-15 or age 19 for some, according to Pearl on p. 17-18] he becomes fully, personally accountable to God and has sin imputed to him ..." [but Rom 3:11, 19?]

Tim Challies explains Pearl 'does not believe in original sin, which is to say, he does not believe that children are born into this world with a sinful nature...[instead they're] born into this world unformed, sinless and unaccountable to God, at least until they mature. This all differs radically from what the Bible teaches--that Adam's sin is imputed to every one of us so that each one of us is born into this world in a fallen state and as a rebel against God. [see Q34-37 of Catechism, Rom. 3-5] ... If you heed Pearl's counsel, you are following a technique that denies the sinfulness of your children and their need to be justified by the work of Christ. It passes by their hearts in order to condition their behavior. Since there is no gospel of Christ's death and resurrection for children, Pearl teaches the gospel of the father's rod ... "Parents hold in their hands (in the form of a little switch) the power to absolve the child of guilt, cleanse his soul, instruct his spirit, strengthen his resolve, and give him a fresh start through a confidence that all indebtedness is paid in full." Speaking specifically to fathers he says, "A spanking (whipping, paddling, switching, or belting) is indispensable to the removal of guilt in your child." ...

He has taken all the language of the gospel and applied it to a parent's spanking. A parent who strikes his child with a rod removes the child's guilt, cleanses his soul, instructs and strengthens him, and gives him assurance that his debt has been paid...whipping...takes the place of the cross ... Instead of teaching a child that he is a sinner in desperate need of God's grace, we are to teach the child that by inflicting a measure of pain on his backside we have cleansed him of his sin and absolved him from all guilt. We have taught him that sin demands atonement and we have taught him that his own suffering can atone ... But all the while we have missed the far greater opportunity of teaching the child that he cannot atone for his sin, that his sin is too great for him to pay for even with an eternity of suffering. And we have missed the golden opportunity to point him to the One who has suffered for him, who has satisfied God's just demands, and who is so willing to trade his goodness for that child's badness. What Pearl teaches is the very opposite of the Bible's good news. And all of this because of the denial of the child's fallenness and moral corruption... an unbiblical view of human nature which in turn leads to the wrong emphases. In place of the gracious, loving mercy of gospel is the harsh justice of law.'

<http://www.challies.com/book-reviews/how-not-to-train-up-a-child-part-2>

Baucham (p. 120, 118): 'behavioral approach is built on methods...successful in training animals-while failing to recognize the works-righteousness they're fostering in both themselves and their children...a child-training approach that relies on behavioral modification as opposed to spiritual transformation. Instead of the...greatest need...the gospel...I'm well aware of the consequences of [Pearl's] influence.'

Incomplete Moral Beings - or Vipers in Diapers? The Bible says:

"every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood...Surely, I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me...from the womb they are wayward...the poison of vipers is on their lips...the hearts of the sons...are full of evil throughout their lives." (NIV Gen 8:21, Ps 51:5, 58:3, 140:3, Ecc 9:3 NAS)

Better parenting books than the Pearl's book recommended by Voddie Baucham on p. 188-89:

Tedd Tripp, *Shepherding a Child's Heart* (good quotes by Baucham, 118-119)

William P. Farley, *Gospel-Powered Parenting: How the Gospel Shapes and Transforms Parenting*

Elyse Fitzpatrick and Jessica Thomson, *Give Them Grace: Dazzling Kids with the Love of Jesus*

More on Pelagian, Semi-Pelagian, Arminian vs. Augustinian/Calvinism views (Baucham, 114-15)

Do all these "ian/ism" words matter? See Tripp quote at top of p. 120, 2nd paragraph also, and p. 121.

1. Humanism – mankind is basically good (view of most Americans, parents about their kids, even many Christian parents). Some modify somewhat and say that man may not behave basically good, but deep within is an island of goodness, or a great positive inner-something to be discovered or cultivated.

2. Pelagianism– view of Pelagius who lived in 4th and 5th century AD: mankind is neutral, no inherited original sin nature or guilt from Adam, he *becomes a sinner when he sins* because of influences and environment, not original sin. Man's unaided free will is still capable of choosing good, seeking God. Pelagius was officially condemned by even Catholicism but is alive and well among some 'Christians'

3. Semi-Pelagianism – since Adam (affirms original sin) mankind is sinful but 'capable of exercising a good will toward God even apart from any infusion of supernatural grace. This was condemned [as heresy initially but] ... Semi-Pelagianism became the popular theology of the Roman Catholic church in the centuries leading up to the Protestant Reformation; it was roundly rejected by all the Reformers ... Today, semi-Pelagianism is the default theology of most American evangelical Christians. This is revealed in the popularity of clichés such as “If you’ll take one step toward God, he’ll come the rest of the way towards you,” ... [an] almost complete neglect of human depravity and helplessness in human matters.’ -- Roger Olson, *Arminian Theology: Myths and Realities*, p. 30-31 (he is classical Arminian)

4. Arminianism – view promoted by some Christians in a 17th century council who rejected the Reformation doctrines of grace and followed the teachings of James Arminius (not a brand-new view, but somewhat modified version of Catholic view of man). Refuted by Council of Dordt in Holland by Puritan and Reformed Protestants. Some Classic Arminians use the term “total depravity,” but because of God’s *prevenient grace* in the world (undoing full effects of the fall for all without special sovereign grace for some), man’s will is freed to overcome depravity by man’s own choice, and man’s heart can decide to complete what God starts (unlike the former view where God completes what *man* starts).

The Bible doesn't teach man is good, neutral, capable, sick but able to choose remedy, or mostly dead...
***He's totally dead in sins spiritually and needs a resurrection so he can respond* - Eph 2:1-9; Col 2:13**
***His heart is totally incurably sin-sick and needs a heart transplant* - Gen 6:5, Jer 17:9, Ezek 36:26**
***His eyes are totally blinded spiritually and needs a miracle of God to make him see* - 2 Cor 4:4, 6**
***He's totally a slave to sin unless Christ sets him free* - John 8:34-36, Rom 6:20, 2 Tim 2:25-26**
2 Peter 2:19 (NIV) “they themselves are slaves of depravity...a slave to whatever has mastered him.”
***He is totally not good and not seeking God, Christ must seek him* - Rom 3:11-12, Lk 19:10, 15:5-7**

This should affect how we speak to our unregenerate children and to others about them:

- "He really is a good by (or girl) at heart"
- "The problem is his peers, his school, his youth group"
- “he’s really a good kid but in with the wrong crowd
- "she's just acting that way because she's tired"

Conclusion: How should the bad news impact the good news in our parenting?