

What Does It Mean to Teach Your Children to Think?

I. Why We Need to Teach Our Children to Think

- **No human is born into this world with mature thought processes.**
 - Barring medical issues, an infant's mind functions just as God intended it.
 - It keeps the child's bodily systems running including the chemical reactions that occur as a result of external and internal stimuli.
 - In animals we often refer to their instincts. These are behaviors programmed by God into the animal which they do not need to learn, but — instead — comprehend innately.
 - In a similar way, children have innate, instinctual behaviors.
- **Infants respond to the world through instinct and emotions.**
 - The ability to rightly interpret emotions and respond to them correctly is a function of thinking. But, as we've discussed, no human possess the inherent ability to think. They must mature into it.
 - Barring medical conditions, we all are born with the *potential* for deep and glorious thoughts, but even that is not a guarantee.
- **If children do not learn to correctly interpret their emotions through accurate cognition, they will be ruled by them.**
 - The Bible introduces us to the most joyful, peaceful, loving, merciful, gracious, and almighty God of the universe, but the nations rage because they don't *feel* that He exists or that — if He does — He couldn't possibly be as good as the Bible says. This is the world in which we live. This is the world in which are children are growing.
 - The same influences that persuaded a generation to act out the way they are today will only continue to encourage more and more irrational behavior from future generations. And it has everything to do with the fact that mankind rejects logic, reason, and Truth, and they sacrifice it on the altar of what makes them feel good.
 - We must teach our children to think maturely and accurately because it does *not* come naturally. The Fall and subsequent Sin Curse has instilled in us a proclivity to act like blind sheep wandering around in the dark with no motivation beyond the silly voices in our own heads deceiving us into thinking that we're right even though the evidences of our folly lay strewn all around us. We must teach our children to think because — without careful instruction — they will prefer to turn their brains off in favor of wafting through life like unthinking animals. II Peter 2:9-19; Jude 1:8-13
 - If you love your children — regardless of their age, sex, or how they currently process information — you will desire to train your children to think the way they were created to think.
 - All throughout the Gospels, Jesus calls people to think. He challenged their thinking at every turn. He came — in part — to interpret humanity for itself and — in the same turn — teach men to think the redemptive thoughts of God.
 - This is why we're admonished to have the same mind Christ did (Philippians 2:5). This is why in Philippians 4 Paul lays out exactly how we are to think.
 - Romans 12:3; I Corinthians 13:11; Luke 2:52
 - If Jesus had to mature and increase in His ability to correctly interpret and apply what He was learning, what makes us think that we and our children will somehow naturally learn these abilities on our own?

II. How We Need to Teach Our Children to Think

- **It is not enough to teach our children what to think. We must teach them how to think.**
 - If the greatest mistake in parenting is to assume that our children will naturally think God's thoughts after Him, then the second greatest mistake is to assume that it's a good idea to hand our children mind-ammunition without teaching them how to use the weapon that is their brain.
 - Teaching our children how to think requires that we provide them a baseline expectation for how human beings are to process information, respond to reality, and view truth.
- **If children are not consciously taught how to formulate ideas and logically work through concepts, they will unconsciously adapt the thought patterns of those who influence them the most.**
 - If we don't teach our children to think, they will take on the thought-characteristics of those who influence them.
 - Just like children adopt their community's accent, our children learn to work through questions and come to conclusions about truth based off the ways their parents, siblings, teachers, friends, entertainment idols, and the like think.
 - The more consistent and uniform the echo-chamber, the easier it is for kids to start thinking like everyone around them. And when no one around them is actually thinking God's thoughts after Him, they won't do it either.
 - This is the scariest admonishment today — whether you've actually taught them to or not, your children think exactly like you.
 - Set a good example of mature, Christ-honoring thought
 - Actively teach your children to work through problems and casual decisions in a mature way.
 - Guard your children from influences that will only teach them to exchange their well-reasoned, logical thought for that which makes them feel good.
- **Our greatest calling is to teach our children how to think God's thoughts after Him.**
 - God created us. He knows how we were created to flourish and prosper. He Himself is the standard of perfection when it comes to Truth, logic, reasoning, and observation.
 - In the same way that humans can only reach their full potential in any and every field through conformity to the perfect God-man, Jesus Christ . . . no one will ever think maturely until they submit to the mind of God.
- **We need to teach our children to think like God by training them in theo-logic.**
 - We must teach them what the Bible says about Truth.
 - We must teach them to understand biblical Truth.
 - We must teach them to work through biblical Truth in logical ways.
 - We must teach them to use that biblical truth in practical ways.
 - We must teach our children what it means to truly worship God with our mind and strength.
 - Every one of us and every one of our family members must have the same mind that is in Christ Jesus. We must all take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ (II Corinthians 10:5).
 - And God has put you specifically into the lives of your children so that you can help them mature in their wisdom.