

The Pitfalls of Merely Moral Parenting

I. What is Morality?

- Merriam-Webster defines moral as “of or relating to principles of right and wrong in behavior, expressing or teaching a conception of right behavior, conforming to a standard of right behavior, sanctioned by or operative on one's conscience or ethical judgment, capable of right and wrong action.”
- The thread through all those definitions has to do with a sense of that which is right and wrong. Moral behavior is that which is considered right, and immoral behavior would be all the stuff that is wrong.

II. What is Merely Moral Parenting?

- Merely Moral Parents are dads and moms who tell their children what is right and what is wrong.
- Now, that probably doesn't sound so terrible. Isn't that good parenting? Don't we need to tell our kids what's right and what's wrong?
- The problem is that there isn't a single parent on the entire globe and over the entire course of history who hasn't parented in morality. It doesn't matter if that parent believes in God or not. It doesn't matter the country in which they live. All parents communicate to their kids every single day what they believe is right and wrong.
- The issue is that there are fundamental disagreements with what is actually moral and what is actually immoral

III. What's Wrong with Merely Moral Parenting?

- It's a question of authority. Who gets to make the claim that something is right?
- Too many parents today are turning to their political parties for the definition of right and wrong.
- Many families across the globe rely on religion—in the broadest sense—to discover what is moral.
- But there are so many other individuals and entities that are invited to define our worldviews for us. We trust entertainers, teachers, friends, doctors, non-profits, and internet influencers to help us frame what is bad and what is otherwise.
- The problem is that—ultimately—there are only two people who can define your morality. Either God gets to say what morality is, or you do.
- If we pretend morality exists outside of God, it's because we've made ourselves god. And that is exactly what every parent in this world does when they define their morality apart from the God of the Bible.
- Therefore, from a godless perspective, merely moral parenting is an absolutely failed exercise. It's pointless because there is no consistency. Everyone is going to believe what they want to believe. But we Christians aren't off the hook simply because our morality is defined by the Scriptures.
- For the Christian, merely moral parenting is telling our kids that it's wrong to steal and right to read our Bibles, that it's a good thing to work hard and a sin to look at pornography . . . and that's where we stop. The simple explanation of what is wrong and what is right is a failed parenting model.
- When we are constantly telling our kids what to do and not do, but we're never telling them *why* . . . we're setting them up for two massive failures.
- Strange as it may sound, having good kids isn't good enough. There's a massive chasm between good and godly. Good kids do the right things in the right ways, but for the wrong reasons. Godly kids to the right things in the right ways for the right reasons.

IV. What is Biblical Parenting?

- If Merely Moral Parenting fails because we're giving our kids the wrong set of morals, than Biblical Parenting is giving our kids the true morality of God.
- If Merely Moral Parenting fails because it teaches the true morals of God without talking much about the God of the morality, then Biblical Parenting makes the *why* of obedience far more important than the *what* and *how*. Biblical Parenting focuses on talking about God and introducing their kids to God and encouraging their relationship with God far more than it merely demands right and punishes wrong.
- Biblical Parenting does what Jesus did. When Jesus was on this earth, He manifested the Father to everyone. Glorifying the Father, speaking of the Father, and doing the work of the Father was His goal. He didn't merely preach about right and wrong, He rooted it in the authority of the Father and called people to a relationship with Him through Jesus Christ Himself. We need to do the same thing.
- If true morality is God's morality, and if God's definition of what is moral includes not only what is done and how it's done, but also why it's done, then couldn't we call Biblical Parenting Moral Parenting? That's technically correct. If we're using only the biblical definition of words, then, yes, that's accurate. However, the world doesn't use those definitions. Just like they adulterate and pervert the concept of love, they don't understand what morality truly is. Therefore, it's important to speak in such a way that it makes it very hard to be misunderstood.
- As long as our definitions of morality are God's definitions, and as long as we're worshipping God with our parenting the way He wants us to parent for the reasons He wants us to parent those ways, then it is moral parenting, it is biblical parenting, and He will be pleased.
- The key is that we make a bigger deal of the God of the morals than we make out of the morals. Listen to your parenting and try to determine what percentage of it is merely talking about the what and how and what percentage talks about the why.

Parent.
with AMBrewster