

Parenting Sorrowing Children, Part 3 | Discontented Sorrow

I. The experience of Children with Discontented Sorrow.

- The emotional experience of Discontented Sorrow is the same as other forms of sorrow. There is sadness and potential crying and the feeling of heaviness, and the other feelings-words used to describe the experience.
- Discontented Sorrow can grow out of Daily Sorrow, or it can appear all on its own.
- This is a sorrow motivated by *discontentment* that leads to grumbling, murmuring, and complaining. It's similar to Daily Sorrow in that the person is often sad about the circumstances, the loss, the trials and the testings, but instead of *resting* in the provision and promises of God, they *reject* or *neglect* God's will for their lives. This leads to complaining and protesting about the situation. These individuals are not accepting what He's allowed for the reasons He's allowed it.
 - I Corinthians 10:10, Numbers 16:41
- Two people can experience the exact same Daily Sorrow, but one can take it to a level that the first does not. For example, two children can be displaced because of flooding from Hurricane Helene. One of the children appropriately mourns the loss of his home and bed and toys and sense of security, and yet the child acknowledges the trustworthiness of the Lord and what He desires to do in this situation. On the other hand, his sister complains and grumbles. She says things like, "This isn't fair" or "Why did this have to happen to me" or "I hate this" or "I wish I had never been born" or any other versions of complaining and grumbling and whining and murmuring. Similar experience, different response.
- **An interesting note about the difference between Daily and Discontented Sorrow.**
 - There is no sin in Daily Sorrow. It's an appropriate sorrow over a legitimate loss, but it also acknowledges the God of sorrow. On the other hand, Discontented Sorrow always involves sin.
 - Sin ruins everything . . . even our sorrow. Why do I say that? Well, if Daily Sorrow is an appropriate—albeit difficult experience—adding sin into the mix is going to stain that experience, thus making it harder to bear. Felt sorrow is made *deeper* and *stronger* by the fact that we are sinning while we experience it. Remember this, sin doesn't *add* to our sorrow, it *multiplies* our sorrow exponentially. This happens because now we're inviting other types of sorrow into our lives.
 - We're not merely adding discontentment to our Daily Sorrow. The sin of discontentment makes all of the pain I'm already feeling grow by factors because now each individual pang of sorrow is being viewed as wrong and bad, and that casts God's goodness and sovereignty into question. Discontentment is a sin that grows from not trusting God. It lacks gratitude. It's devoid of peace and joy. It's self-focused, and it dares to suggest that God messed up by allowing things to be as they are.
 - A person experiencing Discontented Sorrow is always going to carry a much heavier and painful burden because of the poison of discontentment.

II. Parenting Children with Discontented Sorrow

- **Identify the discontentment.**
 - When it becomes clear—through their bad attitudes, complaining, and biblically false statements—that they're experiencing discontentment, identify that about which they're discontent.

- The events don't produce discontentment. If that were true, Jesus would have been discontent because of all the unfair, wicked things that were done to Him.
- But the reality is that discontentment grows from a lie . . . not an experience. The lie is that I deserve better. It may sound like "God hates me," or "This isn't fair," or "Yeah, but she . . .," "I hate this," or "This isn't right," but it all comes back to the belief that I shouldn't have to experience what is happening. And that lie flies in the face of what the Scriptures tell us concerning the divine purpose of suffering.
- **Utilize all previous parenting strategies we've discussed.**
 - Your child needs to understand what emotions, sorrow, suffering, and loss are. They need to be equipped with the truth concerning the God of suffering. They need to submit to God's expectations for our suffering.
- **Reprove them by showing how their response is a sin.**
 - This is where we mustn't weep with those who weep. Your child may be sad about the flat tire, but they're sinning in their discontentment because they're believing a lie. And that discontentment is resulting in them feeling much more sad than they otherwise had to feel.
 - They need to be reproved about their complaining. Philippians 2:14, John 6:41-43, James 5:9, I Corinthians 10:9-10, I Thessalonians 5:18, Romans 8:28-29, James 1:2-4, II Corinthians 4:7-18, I Peter 1:6-7, and Romans 5:3-5
 - Now, here's the cool thing. In addition to rehearsing the wondrous truths about God, suffering, sorrow, and loss, you also get to reprove your child. You get to expose their faulty thinking and help them interpret the situation correctly in light of the truth.
- **Introduce them to another form of sorrow.**

III. The Relationship between Deceived Sorrow and Discontented Sorrow

- The individual experiencing Discontented Sorrow is only doing so because they're believing a lie.
- Therefore, we could argue that the Discontented Sorrow actually is a consequence of the Deceived Sorrow.
- The child was sad because they believed a lie about the situation. It was more than the bike ride, it was more the fact that the child doesn't deserve to miss out on what they so badly wanted. Of course, that's not true. That's a Perceived Loss. The child didn't miss out on what they deserved. The child actually was presently experiencing far better than they deserve. Their sin means they deserve eternal separation from God. But God not only allows them to go on bike rides, He graciously makes opportunities for their spiritual growth in the midst of suffering. But they believed the lie anyway, and so that sorrow gave way to grumbling and complaining.
- Deceived Sorrow laid the groundwork for Discontented Sorrow to flourish.

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