

Parenting Sorrowing Children, Part 6 | Deadly Sorrow

I. The Experience of Children with Deadly Sorrow

- II Corinthians 7:8-10
- The sorrow of the world is not the sorrow of God. It's a sorrow that is not rooted in God, His wisdom, His truth, and—therefore—His redemptive purposes.
- Instead of sorrowing over the fact that we have sinned against God and others and are only hurting ourselves by staying in our sin, and instead of wanting to escape that tailspin to the glory of God, something else is creating feelings of sorrow . . . and it has nothing to do with God.
- This is the sorrow that says, "I'm sad because I have regrets," or "I'm sad that I got caught," or "I'm sad that I'm experiencing the consequences of my choices."

II. Parenting Children with Deadly Sorrow

- **All previous counseling strategies are beneficial.**
- **Examine the sorrow to understand if it's Discipleship or Deadly Sorrow.**
 - **Look to see if the sorrow is lessening.** True repentance—true Discipleship Sorrow—results in the removal of all of the sinful sorrows as well as the Divine and Discipleship Sorrows themselves.
 - **Listen carefully for self-centered speech.** Are they being defensive? Are they trying to justify their actions or explain them away? This reflex to protect one's self from judgement or consequence is usually sinful. Is the child experiencing self-pity? This is a form of pride that grows from the fact that we believe we deserve better.
 - **Investigate the source of sorrow.** For example, are they sad about the consequences? When pressed about his tears, does he admit that he's sad to be losing his video game privileges? There can be an appropriate Daily Sorrow that's experienced in light of consequences. However, that sorrow is not a self-centered sorrow that bemoans our situation. It's a God-centered lament that recognizes the loss, but—more importantly—the reason for it. The loss of video games is only there to illustrate and highlight the loss of trust or fellowship or spiritual maturity.
 - **Identify if their sorrow is turning into something else.** There's a difference between Christ-honoring sorrow and brooding. Depression is not a godly ingredient of repentance, and neither is despair. Pay close attention to those responses because they too grow out of selfishness.
- **Teach them the truth about the loss.**
 - If a child is experiencing Deadly Sorrow, they're deceived about the loss in their life. They're focused on self or distracted by trivialities. They need to understand that the Secondary Consequences of sin are only there to point to the Primary Consequences of sin.
- **Reprove them by showing how their response is a sin.**
 - Be careful of superficial parenting. "All sadness needs to be comforted." "We need to weep with everyone who weeps regardless of why they're weeping." "They said they were sorry; all is well." These foolish and unbiblical beliefs are not only not going to help the situation, they're going to hurt your child. Yes, your child needs to be reprovved for sin. The selfishness and deception of Deadly Sorrow must be rebuked. They have to be shown how their beliefs, thoughts, and actions are denying God and His will for their lives.

- **Introduce them to Divine Sorrow and call them to Discipleship Sorrow.**
 - There is always hope. Instead of responding in Deadly Sorrow, the child can experience Divine Sorrow anew and—Lord willing—this time respond with Discipleship Sorrow.

III. The Relationship between Deadly Sorrow and Discipleship Sorrow.

- In the same way that Deceived Sorrow sneaks in and convinces someone to be discontent, Deceived Sorrow is a the root of Deadly Sorrow.
- The deception is that there is something worse than displeasing an almighty God. When we believe that lie, we experience sorrow that further separates us from God and eventually leads to spiritual destruction.
- Deceived Sorrow can worm it's way into every other sorrow, and that shouldn't surprise anyone who's worked through The Merest Christianity Series. The truth or lies we believe affect literally everything in our lives.

IV. Concluding Thoughts

- **All children experience the Daily Sorrow of Practical Loss.** They need to be prepared to experience this sorrow to God's glory. I look forward to a short series in the future about teaching your children to lament.
- **Many children allow the practical loss to tempt them to Discontented Sorrow.** That sorrow compounds their suffering because it layers on unnecessary sorrow to an already sorrowful situation. They need to be shown how they're making things worse by not submitting to God in their sorrow. Thankfully, the Lord is gracious.
- **God provides Divine Sorrow to show us the ugliness of our sin.** When the Holy Spirit is working, come alongside Him in that work.
- **Then the children will have a choice whether they will respond with Discipleship Sorrow or Deadly Sorrow.** Use the Scriptures to show the joys of Discipleship Sorrow and the destruction of Deadly Sorrow.
- **God's Word is the ultimate source of comfort and direction in sorrow.**
- Please stop relying on your understanding of sorrow or something a psychiatrist wrote in a parenting book or what your child feels is right. Turn to the Bible—your ultimate source of all life and parenting godliness.
- **We mustn't give any child an automatic pass on their reactions simply because they are the victim of loss.**
 - We absolutely should comfort those experiencing Daily Sorrow due to Practical Loss. Part of that comfort will include the truth and love of God, and part of it might be holding them quietly and weeping with them.
 - But Discontented Sorrow and Deadly Sorrow must be identified and confronted lest the child fall into deeper and deeper destruction.