

Escapism versus Reflection

I. Escapism

- People hate uncomfortable situations. One of our fundamental problems is that we sprint and fight toward our perceived version of security—a mixture of safety and satisfaction. But because we're finite, foolish sinners, we're incapable of correctly identifying that which is truly safe and satisfying. And so we so often pursue that which is the exact opposite of spiritual security.
- In Proverbs 18:1-2 we read, "*He who separates himself seeks his own desire, He breaks out in dispute against all sound wisdom. 2 A fool does not delight in discernment, But only in revealing his own heart.*" Left to ourselves, when we think about what we've done, we're going to conclude that we did the right thing and that anyone who disagrees with us is wrong.
- Left to ourselves, when sent to our rooms to think about what we've done, it's going to be easier to further intrench ourselves and even grow in bitterness toward our parents who are giving us consequences for doing what was clearly okay. And that's because of what I said a moment ago. In our foolishness, we run toward that which is spiritually dangerous. Solomon illustrates this reality as he interacts his son in the first chapter of Proverbs. In verses 15 through 18 we read, "*My son, do not walk in the way with them. Withhold your feet from their pathway, 16 For their feet run to evil And they hasten to shed blood. 17 For it is no use that a net is spread In the sight of any bird; 18 But they lie in wait for their own blood; They ambush their own lives.*"
- Proverbs 26:27, "*He who digs a pit will fall into it, And he who rolls a stone, it will turn back on him.*" And even when people aren't actively pursuing the hurt of others, Proverbs 12:15 reveals that "*The way of an ignorant fool is right in his own eyes, But a wise man is he who listens to counsel.*"
- And when confronted by that verse, so many are quick to push back, "I'm not an ignorant fool!" But Proverbs 21:2 says, "*Every man's way is right in his own eyes, But Yahweh weighs the hearts.*"
- This is why "Go to your room and think about what you've done" is so dangerous. It actually enables the child to separate himself to seek his own desire and break out against all sound wisdom because he doesn't delight in discernment; he only delights in revealing his own heart. This is escapism—escape the situation and further entrench myself what is right in my own eyes.
- Now, of course, no parent would actually *want* that to happen. Every parent is hoping the child will do what? Well, unsaved parents are hoping the child is going to see it the way they—the parent—see it. Perhaps the parents have a general idea of common sense or cultural wisdom they expect the child to apply to the situation.
- For the Christian parent, hopefully we don't want them to merely see it the way we see it. Hopefully, we're expecting our child to think about the situation the way God wants them to. But without an act of God's grace in empowerment, or the intentional direction of a born again parent, that's not going to happen. The child will not come to spiritual truth. In fact, if they're not saved, there's no chance they're going to come to any biblical conclusions. I Corinthians 2:14 says, "*a natural man does not accept the depths of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually examined.*" Earlier in I Corinthians 1:18 Paul wrote, "*For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God,*" and John 14:16-17 reads, "*I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate, that He may be with you forever; 17 the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him. You know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.*"

II. Reflection

- **We tell.**
 - We simply *tell* them what they did was wrong. Some of us may even tell them *how* what they did was wrong and *why* what they did was wrong. But we're still just telling, hoping they'll "think correctly about what they did." But if the number 100 represents all we tell our kids, they will only retain 5% from lecturing.
 - The chances that our kids will think correctly from merely hearing truth over and over again . . . is low. Now, yes, God's Word doesn't return void, we are definitely supposed to teach and reprove and correct and train our kids, and—yes—most of that will involve talking to them. Deuteronomy 6 and Ephesians 6 command us to teach our children.
- **We show.**
 - Hopefully, we Christian parents recognize that there is no more important tool in our parenting than the Bible. Lord willing, we're drawing our children to it through Daily Discipline as well as Reproving Discipline. Lord willing, we're teaching our kids to desire and pursue God's Word.
 - If all the information shared through reading is represented by 100, they will—on average—only retain 10% of what they read, 20% of what they see in infographics and visual aids, and only 30% of what is demonstrated for them. And if you total up all of the retention that occurs due to the audio and visual categories, we can hope that they will retain more than 30% of what they took in, but so often that's not the case—especially because they're already going into the conversation disagreeing with you.
- **We engage.**
 - We need to engage their minds. We need to bring them into the process of meditation and reflection with us and the Lord.
 - If the information being taught is represented by 100, we retain 50% of what was discussed. Discussion refers to us participating in the conversation—not arguing the points and disagreeing with them—but expanding on the ideas, contributing, collaborating, and workshopping them. But that's still only 50%. 75% of the information is generally retained when the child actually practices what they're learning. But the best way to retain the information being communicated is to actually teach it. 90% of the information learned through the process of having to teach the material is generally retained.
 - Even though our kids will nearly never engage well with the teaching phase of learning, we can set them up for success for inviting them into all the others.
 - First, teach your children the truth, but don't spend a ton of time on this if it's not a new concept. New concepts need more time in order to be understood. Treat this like a touchstone moment where you reach back and review the main truths that have—inevitably—been discussed many times before.
 - Second, ask your children to sit down with the Scriptures. Point them to passages which deal with the what, the how, and the why of what of the situation. Be ready to answer any questions they may have. This stage is also a good place to utilize any videos or object lessons that can further clarify and substantiate their retention.
 - Third, invite them into the discussion. Don't just tell and show . . . listen. Do what Proverbs 20:5 discusses and draw out the purpose of their hearts by asking questions. I also recommend having them practice what the Scriptures have taught them.