

What a Lovely Child

by Ray Comfort

Parents must teach their children the fear of the Lord to prevent them from growing into a great tree of evil and to steer them to the Savior.

Scripture: Proverbs 29:15, Romans 3:10, Romans 8:28

Topics: "Child Rearing", "Original Sin"

Description

Ray Comfort delivers a powerful sermon on the importance of recognizing the potential for evil in every human heart, including children, and the necessity of instilling the fear of the Lord to guide them towards righteousness. He emphasizes the concept of 'ugly baby blindness syndrome,' where parents overlook their child's faults out of blind love, but warns against allowing rebellion to grow unchecked. Comfort urges parents to address the inherent sinfulness in children early on, using the 'monster-slayer' of the fear of God to combat the evil nature within them, as outlined in Proverbs 29:15 and Romans 3:10-18.

Transcript

Most dads think that babies are a bit boring. They look forward to the day the infant becomes a "real" human being. Until he can relate, smile, talk, etc., men are usually happy to let the baby be the woman's responsibility. Not that the dad doesn't love his offspring. He loves him as much as he does when the child is older, it's just that it's not in his male makeup to "goo" and "gar" over a baby. If you disagree, pass a baby to a man and see how awkward he looks, and how long he wants to hold onto it. Holding a baby comes as naturally to a man as chopping a large tree down comes to a woman. She can do it, but flying chips of wood, beads of sweat and muscle-flexing aren't really her thing.

However, one thing that both men and women have in common when it comes to their offspring is something I call "ugly baby blindness syndrome." Face it, most newborn babies are a little on the ugly side. But to the parents, the frog looks like a handsome prince. This is the wonderful thing about parenting. It brings with it a blind love. This is important because this cute little newborn is about to shake the very foundations of a peace-filled happy marriage. The sweet little babe is going to strip both parents of what they have taken for granted from the moment the marital knot was tied. It will steal sleep, peace, liberty, time, friendships, romance, and even regular meals. It demands an attention that leaves little room for much else. But love will carry them through.

Looking back on pictures of our newborns, opened our eyes to love's blindness. We would stare in unbelief at old photos of our baby sparrows and say, "Man, we used to think that they were gorgeous!"

Blind love syndrome was never more evident than when friends would show us pictures of their sparrow, and use the word "cute" in the same sentence.

This inbuilt blind love shouldn't be carried over to when the child begins doing ugly things. It is a tragedy when ugly doings are seen as cute. One of the first horrible things to reveal itself in a child is the back-arch. This often happens when the parent uses the word "No" and stops the child from touching something he wanted to touch. Mom or dad then picks up the precious bundle, and instead of finding cuddly cuteness, they find the back-arch of protest.

This is the first sign of infantile rebellion against parental authority, and if it isn't dealt with, this seed will grow into a monster and destroy everything in its path.

It shouldn't come as a shock to any godly parent when the rebellion comes. They have seen it is their own heart, and so to them it is just a matter of time until it manifests. From that time on, a battle begins against the monster until it is destroyed.

Perhaps it makes you flinch to use the word "monster" when referring to your beloved child, so let me back up my description with Scripture, so that any argument you may have will be seen to be with God and not with me.

If there was no answer to our dilemma I would keep my mouth shut. But the Bible points out the monster and then hands us the weapon that will deal with it. There is a valiant monster-slayer, and if it is not introduced into the life of your child, you can expect a lifetime of heartbreak. So make sure you take notice of the Bible's warning--"The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself brings his mother to shame" (Proverbs 29:15).

Let's look at Scripture and see our potential for evil. Remember, don't let blind love stop you from seeing how ugly we all are (including your child). He has been born with the seed of Adam resident within, and if it is left to itself it will grow into a great tree of evil. Here is God's explanation of his nature (from Romans 3:10-18). He doesn't understand or seek after God. If you leave him without godly instruction he will be destitute of true knowledge of his Creator. As I have mentioned earlier, the Bible tells us that there is none that seek after God. None. Like a magnet swings toward the north, human nature swings towards idolatry. Without the light of Scripture there is no lamp to our feet or light to our path. The child will remain in spiritual darkness until God gives him light. He will turn aside, and go the wrong way rather than the right. He will choose darkness rather than light, evil rather than good. He has an inbuilt love of sin and that will become clearly evident when he hits the teenage years. The monster in him will want to be fed, and without the introduction of the monster-slayer, he will gladly yield to its appetite.

Understandably, no parent likes to think that their beloved child is evil, just as parents of newborns would reject any thought that their baby is ugly. However, when a youth stretches his wings, and gets away from the prodigal father's eye, sin is given full reign. You just have to listen to the average teenager talk to see that the testimony of God is true when it says "their throat is an open sepulcher," and that "their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness." Perhaps you could never see the little child in your arms as "having feet that are swift to shed innocent blood," but the potential to do so is there. Godless kids love violent movies and sadistic video games. They don't see the blood-thirsty murder of another human being as being something that is horrific. Rather, it is something to be enjoyed. It gives an adrenalin rush. This is why you must introduce the "monster-slayer." You must get rid of the fiend at an early age.

What is this slayer of the monster that is within your child? The Bible tells us why humanity has such a propensity to do evil. It is because "There is no fear of God before their eyes" (verse 18). If there is no fear of God, then there is no fear of the consequences of sin...there is no fear of Judgment day or of eternal damnation in Hell.

Don't look to a supposed goodness in the heart of your child for a restraint against evil. Man's goodness is a cracked dam. The weight of sin cannot be restrained. It is common for the mother of a vicious murderer to say that her teenage son was actually a good boy. Such loyalty comes from godless reasoning. It comes from the thought that there is good in everyone. That seems to hold true until you define the word "good." It means to be morally excellent. It means to be perfect in thought, word and in deed. It means to love God with all of our heart and to love our neighbor as much as we love ourselves. In that case, Jesus was right. There is none good but God. So, reject the world's philosophy, and instead embrace the biblical viewpoint. Again, God's Word says that there is none good. Not one. Your child isn't good. He is like the rest of us. His heart is evil. Face the ugliness.

Don't wait until you have a Jeffery Dahmer on your hands before you use the word "evil." That monster murdered and cannibalized seventeen people, but his background is no different than that of most children. He himself said, "When I was just a little kid I was just like anybody else."* However, when, as a child he began showing cruelty to animals (something common in human nature), the monster wasn't restrained. So it is up to you to understand that the first back-arch isn't cute. It's ugly. It is the beginning of rebellion. You must deal with it by cultivating the restraint of the fear of the Lord in his life.

What I have said may sound shocking, but those who live in darkness see nothing but darkness. The ungodly have a darkened understanding. Ask yourself how often you hear anyone use the word "evil." That word is usually reserved for beasts who cannibalize other people. We don't recognize evil because we are evil. It takes the light of God's Word to reveal that to us.

I live in Los Angeles county and the city in which I live in doesn't have a smog problem. All the other cities do. I can see the smog in the distance, hanging over them. But I can't see it in our city. But if I get into a plane and fly over the entire area, I can see that a black poison covers every city in the county. It is from there that I get a true perspective. This is why we must get above human reasoning to see God's perspective of good and evil; and if we have never believed the testimony of Scripture and seen evil in our own hearts, how will we ever see it in the hearts of our children? That's why it is essential to make sure that you are soundly saved yourself, or you will be the blind leading the blind, and both you and your children will fall into the ditch.

This Fear Tends to Life

Most of us have favorite Bible verses. One of mine is Proverbs 19:23. Read it through two or three times and think about this incredible promise from God,

The fear of the Lord tends to life: and he that has it shall abide satisfied; he shall not be visited with evil.

Do you want your child to live? Do you want him to be saved from death and Hell? Then teach him the fear of the Lord. It "tends" to life. It will steer him to the Savior. It will guide him to the One who claimed to be the way the truth and the life. Without the fear of the Lord, the Ten Cannons of God's Law are unloaded. I have no fear of unloaded cannons. They can't do me any harm. Preaching the Ten Commandments and telling your child that God is going to judge the world by their righteous standard should put the fear of

God into him. It should cause the Law to act as a schoolmaster to bring him to Christ, and once he abides in Him, he will be satisfied. He shall not "want," because the Lord is his shepherd.

Then look at the last part of the promise: "He shall not be visited with evil." God will work all things out for his good (see Romans 8:28). What more could you want for your child? So if you love him, agree with God's testimony about him being morally bankrupt, and teach him the fear of the Lord. You will never regret it.

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