Understanding Child's Heart: Godward Orientation

Determination

- Direction of sail boat not determined by direction of wind , but by the trim of the sail.
- Child's reactions not determined by shaping influences, but by his Godward orientation.
- Prov 9:7-10: Wise man and mocker reacts differently to instruction. Reason: Wise man fears the Lord.

Godward Orientation

- Every person has a Godward orientation. Everybody is created in God's image and is religious.
- Children are worshippers: either of God or an idol. Rom 1: They either respond to God by faith or they suppress the truth in unrighteousness and serve idols.
- Children are either serving the Creator, or something created (Ps 58:3; 51:5; Prov 22:15)

Tripp,T. 2005:18-21

Understanding Child's Heart: Godward Orientation

The heart is not neutral

- Not physical idols, but subtle idols of the heart: fear of man; evil desires; lusts; pride; conformity to the world; embracing earthly mind sets; setting affections on the things below.
- The heart is ruled by motives, wants, desires, goals, hopes and expectations.

Whom will the child worship?

The question is not: Will the child worship, but whom will he worship?

Tripp,T. 2005:18-21

Understanding Infant's Heart

- Heart is control centre / wellspring of life (Prov 4:23; Deut 10:12; Jer 17:10; Mark 7:21; Luk 6:45; Luk 12:34)
- What child says and does, reflects his heart. Attitudes of heart drive behaviour. Possible to honor God with lips (outside) but not heart (inside) (Matth 15:8; Matth 23:25-28)
- Example: Behavior: Two children fight over a toy. Heart: I want my happiness at your expense.
- The sin of the heart needs to be rescued/saved/freed by Jesus Christ. Parenting (e.g. correction & discipline) is shepherding the heart.
- Behaviorism only focuses on behaviour & its consequences. God expects parents to constrain behaviour & explore the roots of the behaviour. The behaviour & heart must be taken to the cross. Jesus Christ replaces hearts of stone with hearts of flesh (Ezeck 36:26).

Tripp, T. 2001:3-7

Understanding Infant's Heart

- In parenting biblical and unbiblical thought forms can't be integrated. The Word describes what is in the heart (Heb 4:12). Biblical words must be used to describe what is in the heart, e.g.

  Rom 12:19: Desire to retaliate

  Proverbs 29:25: Fear of people

  Ps 10:4 Pride

- Ask questions to your child that will penetrate his heart's thoughts & motives

Tripp, T. 2001:3-7

Godward Orientation

Implications for childrearing

- Most parenting books focus on constructive shaping influences in the hope that the child will respond constructively.
- This book wants to reach the heart of the child (Prov 4:23).
- Shaping influences are important (VC: ministering security, value & ability).
- Also important is the reaction of the child, either trusting God, or rejecting Him and relying on self.
- Selfishness and rebellion is not simply immaturity, but idolatry.

The importance of a Godward orientation

- Joseph was treated badly by his father, brothers, Potifar's wife, people in jail. He chose not to retaliate because he feared, loved and obeyed God (Gen 50:19-21).
- The servant girl to Naaman's wife responded from her faith in contrast to the king of Israel who didn't fear God (2 Kings:5:6-7).

Tripp, T. 2005:22-24

Godward Orientation Determines Child's Reaction to Shaping Influences

- Gen 50:19-21: Joseph forgave his brothers & took care of them
- Ps 10:1-11: People who despise God hurt other people
- Ps 14:1: Ungodly people destroy everything
- Prov 4:23: Heart determines life
- Prov 9:7-10: Wise people will benefit from godly teaching. Wisdom starts with knowledge of God
- Mark 7:21-23: Stuff from the inside (heart) makes us unclean
- Luke 6:45: Heart produces good or bad stuff
- Rom 1:21-25: If child changes God for idols, he sins sexually
- 1 Sam 2:12: Eli's sons had no respect for God and therefore they sinned

Tripp, T. 2001: 13-14

Godward Orientation

Shaping influences & responses

- Eph 6:4: Fathers treat children bad – children react bad
- 1 Pet 2:13-23: God expects us to react in a godly manner when we are treated well or bad
- Ps 3:1-6: Enemies attack David. He trusts in God and sleeps peacefully.
- The shaping influences that parents can control must be structured according to God's Word. Other influences come to children according to God's plan: sickness, death, social & cultural influences.

Summary

Parents:

1. Structure the shaping influences on your child under your control.
2. Shepherd the Godward orientation of your child.

Tripp, T. 2001:14-15

Understanding Infants (Kleuters) : 4 – 5 Years

Physical abilities (situation)

- Don’t grow quickly: only 15 cm
- Loose babyfat; pick up only 2 kg in weight
- Development of big and small muscles

Physical strategies

- Better muscle co-ordination
- Running, jumping and climbing
- Clothe themselves
- Can use scissors, paint brushes and penc
- Play a lot and with passion

Van Zyl, 2007:41-42

Understanding Infants (Kleuters) : 4 – 5 Years

Emotions: Abilities and Strategies

- Even more intense than babies and toddlers (0-3)
- Fearful of the unknown
- Better control of emotions, especially anger
- Use emotions like a magnet to get attention (structure)
- Sometimes unpredictable (bite, hit, push)
- Jealous -> push others away, e.g. younger siblings.

Understanding Infants (Kleuters) : 4 – 5 Years

Intellectual Abilities and Strategies

- Concrete thinking, not abstract
- Limited understanding of time, space and number: often ask how long, or how far
- Unable to contextualize properly: sequence & logic
- Better concentration and memory than toddlers
- Get to know their environment through play and imagination
- Very inquisitive, resulting in a lot of questions – important that parents should answer properly and not avoid those
- Easily trust anything they see or hear

Van Zyl, 2007:43

Understanding Infants (Kleuters) : 4 – 5 Years

Language: Abilities & Strategies

- Words more functional in conversations
- Speak more than in any other phase
- Keen to learn new words
- Vocabulary up to 1,500 words
- Love stories
- Sometimes use words wrongly
- Speak bluntly about domestic stuff in front of strangers
- Possible for some to read elementary words.

Van Zyl, 2007:44

Understanding Infants (Kleuters) : 4 – 5 Years

Social Abilities & Interaction

- Get to know their environment better – not so self centred (structure) as toddlers
- Start to interact with friends – very hungry to play with them
- Living space (leefwêreld) = a big play ground or amusement park
- Start to play with other infants
- Learn to share and do things together
- Start to compare themselves with other kids -> want to win and be the best (structure)

Van Zyl, 2007:44-45

Understanding Infants (Kleuters) : 4 – 5 Years

Moral Abilities, Strategies and Structure

- Start to distiguish between right and wrong
- Distinction is strengthened by getting rewards or punishments from parents (structure)
- Sinful nature (thoughts & desires) -> selfish & bad behaviour
- Learn to behave in order (structure) to please self or others
- Opportunity to learn to do good for God

Van Zyl, 2007:45-46

Understanding Infants (Kleuters) : 4 – 5 Years

FAITH: STRUCTURE & STRATEGIES

Perception (thoughts) of God

- Is concrete, e.g. He can do many things: create
- Distinguish to some extent between Father and Son
- Elementary conscience of Holy Spirit
- Don't understand Trinity

Sureness of faith

- Some understand the meaning of Jesus' death and claim it
- Some come to genuine faith and some may fake faith
- Can absorb some knowledge
- Think concretely; difficult to grasp abstract concepts; use the concrete redemption narratives of Scripture
- Difficult to form a logic paradigm (system of thoughts)
- Don't do a collective altar call – some may respond due to peer pressure.

Van Zyl, 2007:46-49

Understanding Infants (Kleuters) : 4 – 5 Years

FAITH: STRUCTURE & STRATEGY

Scripture: Understanding & Use

- Infants understand: Bible is God's special book for his children
- Restricted in understanding, vocabulary, attention span and memory – use stories from Bible for Children that are simple and well illustrated
- Focus on concrete acts of God in history
- Emphasize God's love, presence, care protection
- Teach them to handle the Book with care
- Playing of characters and events can be used
- Utilize infants' inquisitiveness
- Invlove all their senses when telling stories
- Use drawing and painting
- Able to memorize simple Bible verses

Van Zyl, 2007:49-52

Understanding Infants (Kleuters) : 4 – 5 Years

FAITH: STRUCTURE & STRATEGIES

Prayer

- Understand that prayer is talking to the unseen Jesus
- Prayers should be very short due to lack of concentration and memory
- Can understand that praying can be at any place & time
- Able to involve worship (I love You); thanksgiving; petition for self confession of sin;
- Can pray with help

Van Zyl, 2007:52-53

Understanding Infants (Kleuters) : 4 – 5 Years

FAITH: STRUCTURE & STRATEGIES

Koinonia

- Experience (not understand) something of the communal aspect of faith, especially with parents
- Church building = a place to learn more about Jesus & to play with friends
- Can understand more than toddlers and therefore listen to Bible reading and talk about it and ask questions
- Ministry for kids parallel to adult services are valuable
- One teacher for six kids
- Venue should be functional
- Involve kids in activities: listening to Bible reading, singing, praying, conversations, role play, drawing, painting
- Fear the unknown - workers should arrive first to put possible fears to rest
- Illness, fatigue, fighting should by understood by workers

Van Zyl, 2007:52-57

Understanding Infants (Kleuters) : 4 – 5 Years

FAITH: STRUCTURE & STRATEGIES

Giftedness: Infants can be given small tasks & be involved in activities

Witness: Can tell others that they love Jesus

Green consciousness: Can be taught to care for belongings and nature and not to litter

Brokenness: Growing awareness of own sin

Filled with Spirit: Very limited understanding; can pray for guidance by Holy Spirit

Van Zyl, 2007:55-57

Understanding Children (Juniors): 6-8 Years

Physical Abilities and Strategies

- Milk teeth are shed (haasbek)
- Big muscles of boys develop twice as fast as those of girls
- Boys stronger than girls & their big muscle co-ordination are better
- Small muscles of girls develop faster than those of boys
- Juniors are restless, tire easily, get ill easily
- Senses are developing
- Can blow nose, dress, brush teeth
- Can cut with scissors
- Much more coordinated in kicking and throwing balls, buttoning shirts tying shoes
- Can ride a tricycle or bicycle

Peace & Scott, 2010: 74-75; Van Zyl, 2007:59-60

Understanding Children (Juniors): 6-8 Years

Emotional Abilities & Strategies

- Change from home/small school big school – fear of the unknown
- Develop sympathy & empathy for c
- Struggle to express emotions
- Teasing
- Aggressi

Van Zyl, 2007:60-61

Understanding Children (Juniors): 6-8 Years

Intellectual Abilities and Strategies

- Very good observers
- Limited understanding of time, space and numbers -> struggle with history, geography and mathematics
- Logic develops: see smaller parts in context and start to organize & classify them
- Concentration better
- Can start to memorize
- Knows difference between big and small, and some colours and shapes
- Knows all his body parts

Peace & Scott, 2010: 74; Van Zyl, 2

Understanding Children (Juniors): 6-8 Years

Language: Abilities and Strategies

- Living environment enlarges and better understanding of it
- Start to read words and simple sentences
- Ability to read expands vocabulary
- Can easily learn a new language

Social skills and Interaction

- Moving into a larger living environment
- More aware of other people and their needs
- Empathy and sympathy towards people & pets
- Socialize easily
- Can make friends with own peers and gender
- Can play with peers
- Sometimes use teasing and aggression to show love towards siblings
- Try to get acceptance of adults (structure)
- Can learn to ask permission

Peace & Scott, 2010: 75; Van Zyl, 2007:62-63

Understanding Children (Juniors): 6-8 Years

Moral Structure and Strategies

- Doesn't always want to obey
- Can be taught obedience and to speak respectfully to people (Eph 6:2)
- Need a lot of teaching, explaining & correcting
- Need guidance on what they get from the media
- Sensitive for reward and punishment; need rules/boundaries; should learn to obey because God wants it and not because they are rewarded
- Behavior is also motivated by pleasure associated with it; should learn that pleasure is a gift of God and is limited by what is right
- Some act in order to be accepted (complimented/acknowledged) by others; teach them the importance of God's acknowledgement
- Juniors imitate parents – their example is crucial
- Sexuality: awareness and interest; opportunity to share basics in simply language (see page 64-65)

Peace & Scott, 2010: 76-78; Van Zyl, 2007:63-65

Understanding Children (Juniors): 6-8 Years

FAITH: STRUCTURE & STRATEGY

Perception/Understanding of God

- Concrete: Get to know Him from what He says and does (2 Tim 3:14-15)
- Can distinguish better between Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- Can understand power of Holy Spirit in their lives

Peace & Scott, 2010: 75; Van Zyl, 2007:66

Understanding Children (Juniors): 6-8 Years

FAITH: STRUCTURE & STRATEGY

Sureness of Faith

- Understand meaning of Jesus' death better and accepts it easily
- Can understand Gospel through concrete stories
- Can understand basic truths better, especially when illustrated with pictures:
  - God loves people and want them to be close to Him
  - Man is sinful and this prevents him to be close to God
  - God punished Jesus in my place for my sin
  - If I accept Jesus as my Saviour, I can come close to God again
  - If I don't believe, I can't come close to God and will go to hell one day
- Can come to faith in Jesus Christ and fear Him
- Confession of faith may be genuine of false

Peace & Scott, 2010: 76,80; Van Zyl, 2007:66-68

Understanding Children (Juniors): 6-8 Years

FAITH: STRUCTURE & STRATEGY

Scripture

- Can understand it is God's special book for people
- Want to hear more stories
- Want to know if stories are true
- Due to concrete thinking, the use of a Bible for Children is recommended
- Can handle longer stories with longer sentences because their vocabulary is bigger, their logical thinking is better as well as their concentration and memory
- Juniors think concretely :
  - Use one picture for each story to stimulate juniors visually
  - Focus on God's deeds in concrete situations (historical stories)

Van Zyl, 2007:68-70

Understanding Children (Juniors): 6-8 Years

FAITH: STRUCTURE & STRATEGY

Scripture

- Address fears by ministering God's love, presence, care and protection (security)
- Will outgrow the Bible for Children
- Due to better small muscle development, juniors can open, close and page Bible better
- Involvement of parents is crucial even if juniors start to read Bible on their own
- Minister Bible at their level at church
- Can understand themes like life, death, heaven and hell
- Involve all senses when sharing Bible stories, as well as diologue, play and role play
- Memorizing by writing and repetition of short verses

Van Zyl, 2007:68-70

Understanding Children (Juniors): 6-8 Years

FAITH: STRUCTURE & STRATEGY

Prayer

- View prayer as talk to Jesus
- Prayers can be short
- Any place & time
- Content:
  - Can worship (telling Jesus that I love Him)
  - Give thanks
  - Ask for personal needs (petition)
  - Can confess own sins
  - Can now learn also to intercede for others
- Can pray on their own

Van Zyl, 2007:71

Understanding Children (Juniors): 6-8 Years

FAITH: STRUCTURE & STRATEGY

Koinonia

- Experience the communal aspect of faith at home
- Can be involved in activities: singing, praying
- At church services
- One youth worker for six to eight kids
- Venue must be functional
- Activities (page 73)

Giftedness

- To some extent gifts can be identified by looking at what a child likes doing and what he does best
- Junior can experience that he can make a contribution to others
- Some juniors really want to help

Van Zyl, 2007:71-76

Understanding Children (Juniors): 6-8 Years

FAITH: STRUCTURE & STRATEGY

Witness

Due to better understanding and level of social development, they can share te essence of the Gospel to someone else; spontaneously tell others that they love Jesus

Green consciousness

Can understand that they should care for God's creation

Brokenness

- Are aware of own sin and can understand necessity of repentance
- Can comprehend that they are not perfect after coming to faith in Jesus and that they should daily turn to Him

Integration and Balance

Juniors need parents to help them to handle the joys and sorrows of life

Filled with Spirit

Should be guided to ask Spirit to fill and guide them, although they can't understand it properly

Van Zyl, 2007:74-76

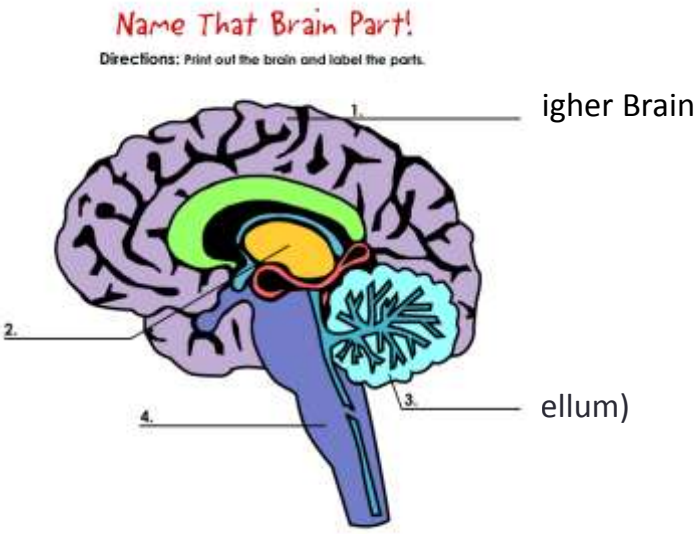
Understanding Children (Juniors): 6-8 Years

Helpfull Tips for Parents of Preschoolers

- Help child to remember household duties on his fingers Work with, then beside, then check behind him
- Be sure child has adequate rest
- Practice social skills with child: looking at person; speaking loud enough, please, thank you
- Provide age-appropriate games & puzzles
- Provide lots of play time and exercise
- Be discerning about the cartoons & movies

Peace & Scott, 2010: 80-81

Understanding Child's Brain



igher Brain

(2) Mammalian Brain

(1) Reptilian Brain

ellum)

- (1) and (2) can hijack (3): fight or flight reactions are impulsive.
- Ideal that higher brain should manage the lower two parts : rational brain (3) should coordinate with emotional systems in (1) & (2)

Sunderland, 2007: 16-18

Three Brains

1. Reptilian brain

1.1 Activates instinctive behavior related to survival

1.2 Controls essential bodily functions that sustains life: e.g. hunger, digestion/excretion, breathing, circulation, temperature, movement, posture , balance, territorial instincts, fighting, fleeing

2. Mammalian brain = emotional brain / lower brain / limbic system

2.1 Triggers strong emotions: rage, fear, separation distress, caring & nurturing, social bonding, playfulness, exploration, lust in adults

2.2 Controls fight or flight impulses

3. Rational brain = higher brain / frontal lobes / neo-cortex: 85% of total brain mass

3.1 Rational functions: creativity and imagination, problem solving, reasoning and reflection, self-awareness, kindness, empathy and concern

3.2 When cut off from mammalian brain's social-emotional systems, responsible for cruelties.

Sunderland, 2007: 18-19

Child's Unfinished Brain

- At birth babies have approximately 200 billion brain cells, but few connections between them, especially in the higher brain.
- These connections will develop and regulate the social and emotional intelligence of child.
- At birth the baby is an "external foetus" with only 25% of the final brain size.
- 90% of brain growth occurs within the first five years of life – then millions of connections are formed, unformed and re-formed due to his emotional experiences with parent.
- At 7 the sculpting is slowed down because many cells are being myelinated.

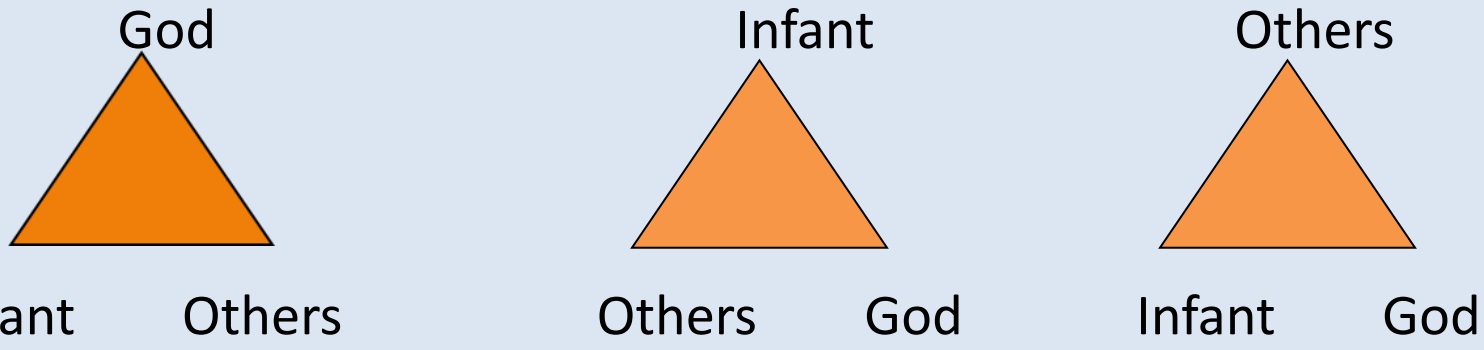
Sunderland, 2007: 20-21

Understanding Infant's Heart = Identity Structure

Thoughts & Desires

with regards to

SAFETY, VALUE & ABILITY



God Centred

People centred

People centred

Infant's Treasure

- Who is infant's God/idol?
- Who/what is most important in infant's life?
- Who gets the glory?
- Where does infant look for identity (security, value, ability)?

… in this situation (internal & external)

Control of the Heart

- Desire for God & identity in Him OR
- Desire for identity in man

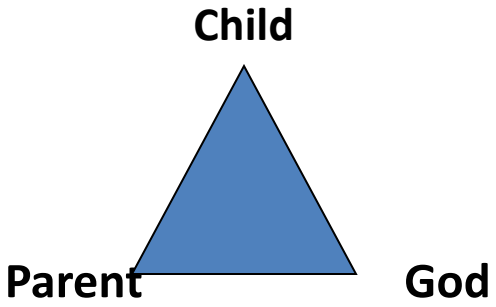
TREASURE/SOURCE/CONTROL

Who is Your God?

- Failure to trust God leads to trust in people for life/identity.
- Passion for/worship of a false god.
- The core problem is not the situation, but trust in what is not God while pressurized
- Problems are used by the devil as a temptation to distrust God.
- Problems are used by God for our sanctification (Heb 12).

Child Seeking Identity From Parent

When child forces parent to give him security, worth & ability

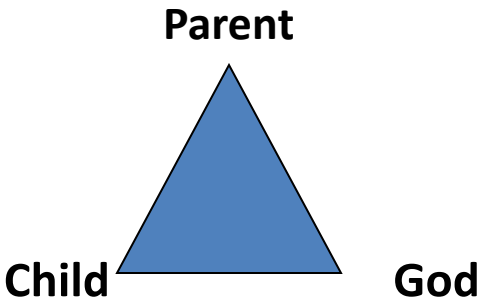


Examples of child's thorns:

Insecure Focused on self Pursuing own agenda Fixated on own comfort/peace Insensitive Distant Moody	Controlling Dominating Manipulative Competitive Bullying Abusive Interfering

Child Seeking Identity From Parent

When child pleases parent to get security, worth & ability



Examples of child's thorns:

Insecure Focused on self Craving for approval Pleasing Too sensitive	Over-dependent Over-submissive Fearing rejection Too complaisant No proper boundaries Avoiding conflict

Empower Parent to Get to Child's Heart

- Parent can't change child
- Parent = God's agent to set up transaction with God
- Child's life will change when his heart changes
- Parental questions to get to heart of child:
  1. What was going on?
  2. What were you thinking & feeling when it happened? (heart interacts actively with situation with thinking & desiring)
  3. What did you do in response? Words & deeds
  4. Why did you do it? What did you think to accomplish? Motives
  5. What was the result? Consequences; reap what you sow (Gal 6:7)
- Change is a process through many days and years: ask the questions again and again and again

Tripp, 2009: DVD Session 4

Empower Parent to Get to Child's Heart

Change is a process through many days and years:
Ask the questions again and again and again

Tripp, 2009: DVD Session 4

Parent Influences Child's Response

"You cannot save your child from the pain of life's inevitable problems,

but you can influence how your child will respond to them"

Sunderland, 2007:32

Child's Treasure > Structure > Strategy

Treasure

Desires: Control, comfort, success

⇩

Structure

Thoughts of self: Safe/unsafe; worthy/unloved; able/unable

Thoughts of God: distant, uninvolved; loving & caring

Thoughts of parent: protector; care-giver; trustworthy; violent; uninvolved; unpredictable

⇩

Strategy

Anger, passiveness, isolation