



## ***Counselor's Corner***

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### **The Heart Is Central**

Hello and welcome to the Counselor's Corner! We are pleased to have the opportunity to share with you some of the issues and thoughts that we feel God has laid upon our hearts for the CPA High School community.

In conversations with parents over my years of working with teenagers, it is evident that typical, well-meaning mothers and fathers want their children to be, among other things, successful and well-behaved. This is what I want for my two kids as they grow from babies into young adults. I want my young son, Isaiah, to obey Kara and me (especially, at bedtime!). We have spent many hours brainstorming deep into the night on how to *get him* to change certain behaviors that we do not like or allow in our home for one reason or another. Certainly I want Isaiah to be happy, but often I want him to BEHAVE, regardless of how he feels at the time. In those moments I honestly do not care what is going on inside of him; I just want him to do what I say. My hunch is that many parents are like me, and are often more concerned with their child developing a strong work ethic, leadership abilities, Christian morals, and academic performance than they are with how their kids *feel* about things when life gets hard.

The thought occurred to me this morning that maybe neither happiness nor right behavior get to the root of what God wants for all of us. Maybe He is interested in something deeper, more to **the core of who we are**.

The term "heart" occurs in the Bible more than 720 times. I wonder how significant that number is. Consider 1 Samuel 16:7, where God informs the prophet, "For God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart." (NAS, emphasis mine). The writer of Proverbs also highlights the importance of our internal world when he says "Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flows the springs of life," (Proverbs 4:23, NAS, emphasis mine).

*The heart.* The heart should be watched over, honored, observed, pondered. For from it comes the very essence of our entire lives. It is what God sees when He looks at us, over and above our external appearance, success, or performance.

Certainly our children's behavior matters, but what would it look like for us to partner with God in looking at our hearts and our children's hearts? Are we willing to honor our hearts as more important than our external appearances and

performance, and **our children's hearts** as more important than their behaviors? Remember, the author of Proverbs seems to say our hearts are most important, where the wellsprings of life can flow out of us.

Our hearts are central. Our children's hearts are central. And if they have ever asked Jesus to save them from their sins, He has promised to give them a new heart, a GOOD HEART. Consider Ezekiel 36:26, where the Lord says, "I will give them a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees." He has given us a new heart, and his Spirit **moves** us to love and obey Him.

Be encouraged that God is on the loose, moving his people to love Him and others with all our hearts. What would it look like for me to engage my four-year-old son tonight in a way that recognizes his heart as the central issue, and looks for opportunities to shepherd it towards Jesus? Do I recognize when his heart is being moved? Can I see it in myself? Are you able to envision how you might do that with your children? This is the whole point, the wellspring of life, **what God changes in us**, and what God judges.

"A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart," (Luke 6:45, NAS, emphasis mine).

Finally, a prayer for today and this week: "Jesus, thank you for my new heart, a heart that really does want to know, love, and obey You more than it wants anything else. Please make this truth a deeper reality in my daily life. Help me to see and honor the hearts of my family members. I invite your Spirit to move in me and in my family today, that we may know your love as our most precious possession, and that we would be willing to sacrifice anything that keeps us from experiencing more of You."

#### Our Mission

Christ Presbyterian Academy, an educational ministry of Christ Presbyterian Church, assists Christian families in helping students come to know God, evaluate all knowledge and all life by His truth, and live transformed by His truth for His glory.

#### Our Motto

*Soli Deo Gloria* — To God Alone Be the Glory