

Daniel Perrin – L7: The Problem of Evil – Thursday, February 13: Love and Evil?

1. Is it really possible for love and evil to coexist?
 - Is it an act of love for God to permit evil? Permit rebellion/death/war/atrocities/deception?
 - Is it REALLY LOVE for God to permit sin?
 - What I usually do is to look at these things as a parent.
 - When I do this, it takes the whole question out of the theoretical and into the practical.
 - Is it possible to be truly loving AND allow your children to rebel?
 - What would I have to do so that there would be NO EVIL in my children?
 - Let's take ONE Example: How could I, as a parent, keep my kids from fighting?
 - Wouldn't *loving* parents keep our kids from fighting?
 - You know what fighting means, right?
 - There are actually a couple different ways to stop your kids from fighting
2. With new advances in technology and genetic research, this method may be accessible on the horizon:
 - Restructure the DNA of your child.
 - Use genetic selection to isolate the genes that produce a sweet and compliant personality, one that would rather agree than disagree.
 - Worldly wisdom is considering this option: a "Custom Made-To-Order Kid"
 - You could couple that with some minimally invasive procedures where you put probes into the brain to actually inhibit certain functions from taking place.
 - Basically you shut down the functions of anger or conflict by paralyzing the parts of the brain where those fighting thoughts AND DECISIONS take place.
 - Think of it like a restraining bar that takes place in the brain when the child wants to say "fighting" words / the bar goes down and the words can't come out.
 - They can have the feelings, but just can't operate the mental processes to follow through with them
 - Angry words? / Stuck inside: no fighting
 - All you see is peace.
 - This is a little controversial, but there are people ready to try this.
 - MAKE THEM DO WHAT YOU WANT ... from the inside out
 - Inhibit the free development of thoughts and action.
 - You determine the outcome by dictating which responses you will allow.
 - It's like multiple choice behavior where you determine the choices.
 - If you try this, you could never say to your child: "Talk to me?" — WHY?
 - They could never be honest. They could only say what YOU want to hear
 - The ultimate conclusion: They would be a stuffed animal or a doll that only does what you want.
 - I can't have a *relationship* with a stuffed animal.
3. SO LET'S TRY ANOTHER OPTION that doesn't manipulate the genetic make-up of my child:
 - I want them to express their individuality — but without fighting
 - SO, when they express the first inclination of fighting — I'll nip it in the bud.
 - I'll break their will to fight. / I'll let them feel what fighting is *really* like.
 - My response will be sudden and intense from day 1. / Shock AND awe! / I'll remove every privilege. / I'll get in their face. / They'll FEEL the wrath fighting brings on them. / They'll never want to fight again.
 - They will still have the power of choice and the freedom of expression ...
 - ... BUT They'll have no will to fight as long as they're in my house.
 - WHY? — They're TERRIFIED / They HATE me
 - And as soon as they have freedom to express themselves *without* being severely punished ...
 - All the suppressed rebellion will likely be given full sway to rule their life.
 - That's not what I want as a parent.

4. Shall we look at a third option?

- At every stage of my child's development, I will be nearby and involved — ILLUSTRATING and TEACHING the better way.
 - I will teach them to use words of mediation and compromise
- I will come alongside them with a dependable smile / Offer to mediate
- I will interrupt my rest / my convenience / my hobbies / my book ...
 - ... to listen to the unspoken complaint / to give appropriate voice to the victim / to encourage compassion within the aggressor
- I will not give up addressing the issue when it arises
 - I will be honest with my feelings about fighting
 - I will share my experiences with my kids — including some of the consequences of my behavior — so that they have age-appropriate examples to follow and avoid
- I won't ignore it because I don't want to deal with it right now
 - And I won't let the steam build until I blow up
- As the child grows, I will allow appropriate levels of natural and painful consequences
 - Without destroying their will or inspiring terror
 - I will not punish forever. / I will forgive and start over.
- In all things, I will DEMONSTRATE myself by never responding in angry passion myself
 - I won't return anger for anger
 - I will return love for anger.

5. Is this guaranteed to eliminate all fighting from the home?

- No. — But which home is loving?
- The first two options could eliminate fighting from the home — but the spirit of rebellion is present in the child or the child has no freedom to be a unique person.

6. **Desire of Ages, p.22** — *The exercise of force is contrary to the principles of God's government; He desires only the service of love; and love cannot be commanded; it cannot be won by force or authority. Only by love is love awakened. To know God is to love Him; His character must be manifested in contrast to the character of Satan.*

7. As a parent, my focus is not simply the present moment — I want no fighting NOW

- My perspective is the growing character of my child — so that they learn how to choose wisely.
- This is what is spoken of in the memory text this week.
- **Revelation 21:4** — *And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.*
 - As parents, we see through the conflicts now (when we are approaching them in the pattern of divine love) — we see through to the goal: a child's character transformed into the image of Christ
- **God does the same:**
 - **Romans 8:18** — *For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*