

Children Have No Capacity for Virtue Love

What parents are free to do without harm to their own souls must often be canceled or delayed since it might be harmful to their child's soul. They love the child unconditionally in another way by sacrificing their time to monitor behavior, endure the conflict which comes with correction, and allow their schedule to be interrupted in order to handle the matter.

At no point should the parents be deterred in these duties for fear the child will reject them by not loving them. A child has no capacity for virtue love. He starts out as an unbeliever with nothing in his stream of consciousness but with a fully-functional sinful nature. Although he is under the protection of God, he has no personal relationship with Him.

The child has no capacity for personal love for God therefore no capacity to express virtue love toward his parents. The parents may one day receive virtue love from their child but this is not a requirement in order for them to fulfill their duties before the Lord. They must control, train, teach, correct, penalize, punish, and encourage. These are the goals available to parents to move the child forward intellectually, culturally, morally, and ultimately spiritually.

Everything must be related to the spiritual mission of bringing your child to God consciousness. Once this is achieved, then you must present the Gospel until you are satisfied the child is a believer. Then the basic doctrines of eternal security, rebound, the filling of the Holy Spirit, the faith-rest drill and prayer, including thanksgiving, intercession, and petition, are to be taught on a daily basis.

Eventually, the child may express unconditional love toward you but until that day arrives the absence of it must not become a distraction to your assignment as parental despot. The conclusion by parents that their child loves them unconditionally is a delusion. The child may love the parents personally. But that love continues only so long as the child's expectations are met.

Once expectations are unfulfilled then the child converts his emotional expression for his parents from personal love over to personal hatred and will often say so. Parents should put as much stock in their child's personal hatred as they do his personal love—not very much. After all, if a child has no real capacity for love by the same token, he has no real capacity for hatred either.

In reality, the whole motivation behind both is self-centeredness and a desire to please self. This principle is very clearly stated by J. Richard Fugate:

Fugate, J. Richard. What the Bible Says about Child Training, p. 100.

A child loves himself and will express this love toward anything that pleases him. When he says, "I love candy," what he means is he loves himself and that candy pleases him. A child may tell his parents he hates them when they forbid him to eat candy. What he means is that he loves to give himself candy, their restriction has prevented him from pleasing himself, and he hates not to please himself.

The concept that love results from the satisfying of personal desire is a deception. Parents who provide strict controls over their children's insatiable and self-centered natures are the parents who will eventually receive true appreciation and [unconditional] love from their children.

Thus, two principles emerge:

1. Personal love directed toward a human object has no virtue for it is dependent upon the fulfillment of self-centered expectations. Thus, personal love can only be maintained as long as expectations are met. Obviously, personal love for other people is not a problem-solving device.
2. Unconditional love on the other hand is the only virtuous love which can be expressed toward another since its maintenance is dependent entirely upon the integrity and honor of the subject. This is obviously a problem-solving device but also one which is available only to the advanced Christian.

It is therefore very easy for a child to love personally. The motivation is self-love and he loves to please himself. The objects of his love are acceptable to him only so long as they facilitate his self-indulgence.

For the parents, unconditional love is motivated by a sense of obligation, responsibility, accountability, and duty. Thus, the function of unconditional love by parents emphasizes what is best for the child not what ingratiates him.