
Teaching Children to Know and Love God by Knowing and Loving Theology

Bruce A. Ware

I. Introduction – Background to Big Truths for Young Hearts

II. Teaching Children to Know and Love God by Knowing and Loving Theology

A. The Progression of Truth – Head, Heart, Hands, Habitat

- The mind's understanding (knowing the truth) is necessary for the heart's engagement with that truth (loving the truth). Knowing the truth provides the possibility and basis for loving the truth (e.g., Edwards's illustration of fire).
- The heart's engagement with truth (loving the truth) is necessary for the hand's activity in applying that truth (living the truth). Loving the truth provides the possibility and basis for living the truth.
- The hand's applying the truth (living the truth) is what makes possible the transformation of others and our cultural environment (transformed by the truth).
- The order is crucial:

Head → Heart → Hands → Habitat

Knowing → Loving → Living → Transforming

B. The Possession of Truth – Head, Heart, Hands, Habitat

1. **Head** – Start with the priority of learning well the truth of God's word
 - With children, the first priority in what we can assist them with is the “head” – knowing the truth. Since most younger children are not saved, the “heart” is not ready to be touched fully. And even when saved, some maturity and reflection is needed to begin to sense the weightiness of truth. Knowing the truth as fully and accurately is crucial all else.
 - Children are curious, by nature, and have many questions. Resist the urge to squelch this curiosity and questioning due to not knowing how to answer them.
 - Take them to the Bible, so they learn that the authority you have and they also should have is God's word. Resist the urge to apply your parental authority in making them believe the truth. Help them, even as young children, to be like the Bereans who search the Scriptures to see if this is so.
2. **Heart** – Move eventually to the level of heart embrace of the truth
 - But in time, the “heart” becomes the key issue. Not only do they know the truth, but do they feel the weight and sense the personal significance of the truth.
 - Pray fervently that God would work in their hearts and help them see not only the truthfulness of the truth but also the glory and wonder and beauty of the truth.
 - Help them learn, at a young age, Thomas Chalmers's principle of the “Expulsive Power of a New Affection.”

