

Parents Can't Depend on Schools to Teach Virtue

All parents wish the best for their kids. However, too many parents today think only of material well-being and future "success," while forgetting moral education or pushing it off on the schools.

But according to Aristotle, if children aren't taught to love the good and hate the bad from a young age, *it will be nearly impossible for them to ever become virtuous.*

Let that sink in.

Philosopher [Charles De Koninck](#), writing on the same issue in 1960, said the following:

"The aim of moral training is to instill into the child the right habits before he can act on his own account, thus providing him with the opportunity to become a good person. We must be aware that a child lives in a condition which is most precarious, for the habits he acquires will in the main depend upon the habits and thinking of his parents and of other persons with whom he grows up."

In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle tells us that virtue is a habit. And because we form some of our most ingrained habits at a very young age, raising a virtuous individual makes it essential that good habits be instilled in children rather than bad ones.

Once we are set in a habit it becomes very difficult to change, as anyone who has tried can attest to. Those habits strongly influence our desires as well, so it becomes difficult to even want to change.

De Koninck also reminds us that parents should play the primary role in forming good habits in children:

“When we hear the word ‘education’ we think immediately of school, whereas the most important and lasting education must normally be provided by the parents at home. It is during his tender years, when the child is all touch, eyes and ears, that he is given shape or left irreparably shapeless, and, whatever his fate, it is almost certain to be final.”

This makes the first few years of life crucial, and parenting during them a most serious and noble task, foundational to the continuation of civilization.

One might wonder how many of today’s societal problems could be solved if only we returned to a stronger emphasis on good parenting from the beginning, instead of expecting schools to pick up the slack, or leaving our future generation’s moral fate up to the whims of popular media and their environment.

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