

Halloween Costumes Are Chosen All Year Long

As Halloween is quickly approaching, I knew our kids' hearts would soon be focused on two things, what they were going to dress up in for Halloween, and what type of candy they were going to get when they go Trick or Treating. Now initially I thought it would be a good idea to write about making proper choices in costumes as to promote within our kids those virtues that are exemplified in characters like Superman and Strawberry Shortcake. After thinking and kind of forming an idea or two about that type of article, I had to abandon the whole "forcing our children to wear something we think is good" line of thought. Here's the reason why. ***As parents we are in the process of helping our children choose their Halloween costumes throughout the year.*** We are the ones with the responsibility of regulating what they watch on television, what they listen to on the radio (which next to friends is the largest influence in their life), what movies they see, and what they see us promote and idolize in our lives.

Halloween is just a time where our kids get to show off what they really like in costume form.

This is why I abandoned the idea of trying to write an article about promoting a wholesome costume, in favor of writing about cultivating hearts within our children that long for good and wholesome things. The Psalmist wrote in Psalm 119:97 "*Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day.*" He was saying that he loved God's Word, and the good things of God throughout this expansive Psalm. As parents, that is what we should strive for, to have our children love good things, reject evil and sinful things, and pursue a relationship with God.

The big question of course is, how do we do that? We live in a world where there are numerous bad influences and the ever present enticement of evil, so how do we place our kids on the right path? Let me give three things to help put us on the right track.

First, we model it. ***If we want our children to choose good things WE must choose good things and love them.*** Families pass down good and bad traits from generation to generation. Eating habits, the love of sports teams, professions, mannerisms, and taste in clothing can all be passed down from one family member to the next simply because of the immense influence of family and how the younger generation learns from the older. Mom's and dad's the things you love, good or bad, is most likely going to become what your kids love.

Second, we promote Christ. ***Our children, without Christ, are children of wrath and will stray from God because it is their nature to do so.*** Their greatest need is Christ, and without Him they have no hope of eternal joy, peace, or life. With Christ they can truly know right from wrong, and be able to discern the will of God from the sinful ways of man. That is why, as parents, we should pray for our children's salvation, we should bring them to church, read the Bible to them, and promote Christ throughout their lives. Our children desperately need Christ.

Finally, we walk our children down the path of godliness. We cannot parent by proxy. ***Our children need to see godliness modeled but more so they need to be on that path with us.*** They need to see us pray, see us worship God, work alongside us in the ministries of the church, and be part of the battle of life while we are there to fight alongside them. They need to know why we don't watch certain movies and television programs. In this they learn and grow in their mental understanding of the good things of God and the destructive power of evil. In this too, we as parents are empowering our children with knowledge that will grow with them, and help them make far more important decisions than Halloween costumes.