

Maybe You Shouldn't Treat Everyone the Same

"Forsake foolishness and live, and go in the way of understanding." He who reproves a scorner gets shame for himself, and he who rebukes a wicked man gets hurt. Do not reprove a scorner, lest he hate you; rebuke a wise man, and he will love you. Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser; teach a just man, and he will increase in learning (Prov. 9:6-9).

Thomas, Susan and Harold all grew up in the same home. Their father was an angry man who had allowed bitterness to infect his inner life as well as his outer life. On the worst days, this dad would have too much to drink. Like a grenade with the pin pulled, he exploded over the slightest issue with anyone in the family. His wife and kids would run from the room, because sometimes he would hit his children. As the three children grew up, they each responded very differently.

Thomas became just like his dad. When he married and had kids of his own, he sadly carried the sins of his father into his family. People feared him, but no one respected him.

Growing up, Harold decided he would be the funny one and try and make jokes and lighten the mood when his dad would start to rage. He never learned to deal with problems, but instead turned everything into a joke and made light of serious things. As an adult, Harold avoided doing hard things and instead just acted foolishly. Always the life of the party, he could not hold a job or have a serious conversation and became the stereotypical happy drunk who ignored reality. Harold became foolish. Lots of people liked him, but no one respected him.

Susan met a girl at school whose family were Christians. As a

teenager, Susan started hanging out at her friend's house a lot, and before long, they were picking her up on Sundays to attend church with them. Then Susan met other kids her age and their families. As Susan observed other families, the unhealthiness of her own grew obvious.

Over time, she learned to forgive her father as God had forgiven her, and she decided to attend college and get a counseling degree. Today she is both a mother with a healthy family and a licensed Christian counselor who helps abused children.

From this family, we learn that your experiences in life do not determine who you become. Instead, *how you choose to respond* to your experiences determines who you become.

As our kids grow up, we tell them to treat everyone the same. Perhaps that's not a good thing. The truth is, we need to treat different people differently. People decide how we treat them by how they behave.

{eoa}

Mark Driscoll *is a Jesus-following, mission-leading, church-serving, people-loving, Bible-preaching pastor and the author of many books, including Spirit-Filled Jesus, which you can order here. He currently pastors The Trinity Church in Scottsdale, Arizona, with his family. For all of pastor Mark Driscoll's Bible teaching, please visit or download the app. You can download a free devotional e-book from pastor Mark here.*