



# Terms used in Healthy Thinking Kids

## Choice and Consequence:

Children may need help understanding that not all consequences are bad. All choices have consequences. Good choices (eventually) lead to good consequences. Bad choices (eventually) lead to bad consequences.

## Three Types of Thoughts:

- (1) A **harmful thought** (“trash can thought”) is a thought that can be an obstacle to God’s best for us, God’s best in us, and God’s best through us. Harmful thoughts vary widely in the kind of harm that they do, but they all share the potential of being obstacles to the abundant life that God offers us in Christ (John 10:10). We want to **replace** them.
  
- (2) A **healthy thought** (“backpack thought”) is a thought that can draw us closer to God’s best for us, God’s best in us, and God’s best through us. They all share the potential of drawing us closer to the abundant life that God offers us in Christ (John 10:10). We want to **keep** them.
  
- (3) A **heavy thought** (“suitcase thought”) is a thought that may be too “weighty” for a child due to age, maturity level, or spiritual readiness. We want to **entrust** them.

Heavy thoughts are not necessarily harmful in themselves, but they may become a hindrance if explored too early or too long. Heavy thoughts can be good to process:

- (1) At a LATER time, OR
- (2) For a LIMITED time with adult help.

Rather than completely replacing them (as with harmful thoughts) or keeping them (as with healthy thoughts), *heavy thoughts* can be put in the “suitcase” and entrusted to a parent. The parent can guide when it is a good time to process the heavy thought again.

## **Examples of heavy thoughts:**

a. *"Is God really good?" "Why is there so much suffering?"*

It can be important to wrestle through such heavy questions, but a trustworthy adult can help with timing and processing. Even children who are not yet concerned with such questions can be gently prepared for the days ahead when heavy questions do come. For those children who may become consumed with such questions, the practice of entrusting the heavy thoughts to a parent (and eventually to God Himself) from a young age is a very beneficial habit to develop.

b. *Other questions the child may not be ready for.*

In *"The Hiding Place,"* Corrie Ten Boom asked her father what a sexual sin was. He explained this was something that she would need to trust him to carry for her until she was older. He illustrated with the analogy of a suitcase too heavy for a young child, saying, "Some knowledge is too heavy for children. When you are older and stronger you can bear it. For now you must trust me to carry it for you."