

Letter to Family Builders

The statistics are not encouraging. We're losing our kids. No, not all of them, but probably close to half depending on whose statistics you read. The Southern Baptist research showed that more than two-thirds of young adults who attended a Protestant church for at least a year in high school stopped attending for at least a year between the ages of 18 and 22. Some eventually come back later in their 20's or 30's, sometimes when they have kids. But many never make it back. The church and the Bible are considered boring and irrelevant, and certainly not worth it. Not what we want for our kids.

What are we to do about it as parents? Well, several things. We can look in the mirror and ask ourselves if we are living an authentic, life-changing Christianity in front of our kids. What do they see in us? What do they hear from us? They know. We can't and aren't fooling them. We can pray persistently for our kids. We can.....

I've had a theory for awhile that there are two things kids need in order to not lose their faith when they leave home. Not only to not lose their faith but to be agents for Christ among friends and in the culture. First, kids need an authentic spiritual relationship with Jesus. Real worship, real prayer, real relationship. Second, kids need an intellectual understanding of Christianity and how it intersects, explains, and informs the culture. In short, they need to have a Christian worldview that allows them to think like a Christian in all the academic subjects.

How do we help our kids develop a personal relationship with Jesus? There's no substitute for having one ourselves. Do we talk about our prayer, our study? Do we worship? Are our church meetings relevant? You get the idea. Pray for your kids. Talk with your kids. It's tough growing up these days. Sexual immorality abounds.

How do we help our kids develop a Christian worldview so that they believe and understand that scripture is true and has the answers to understanding all of the big questions about life? Many of our kids are lost on the intellectual front. In fact, we are already losing them. They question the truthfulness of the Bible. How do we know it hasn't been changed? Why those books? What about other books? They are taught Bible stories and draw pictures of arks overflowing with colorful animals. But what about fossils, rock layers, and kinds of animals? What about Adam and Eve? What about homosexual marriage? Socialism? Right and wrong? Who says? Too often we have failed to connect the Bible with the real world. School is for history and science. Church is for moral stories and spiritual truths. "Evolution is science. Creation is religion." "Science is knowledge. Religion is faith." If the Bible is not historically accurate, then we must naturally question the truthfulness of all scripture, and Christianity is on its way to irrelevance, at least as far as real academic and intellectual pursuits are concerned.

Since late November, Tony Giletto and I have been teaching about the Christian worldview in the Sunday morning high school class. We want you to know what we are doing so that we can work together. We love your kids and don't want to lose any of them. We want them to understand that Christianity is more than just a religion, it is a whole view of reality. It is true. It is true in all places, at all times, and for all people. It is true as it views ethics, law, government, economics, biology, sociology, philosophy, history, and psychology. There are many ideas in our culture. Many conflict with the Christian view. Most are mutually exclusive truth claims – ideas that can't both be true. Our culture demands tolerance and hates intolerant people. "The only thing I can't tolerate is an intolerant person." As Christians we are tolerant of people. We love and respect people, and want the best for them. But ideas are fair game. Some ideas are bad. Some are false. Some are dangerous. Ideas have consequences. Adolf Hitler's ideas about reality included racial superiority. Thus we have concentration camps. Margaret Sanger had ideas about "human weeds" in the population garden. Then we have Planned Parenthood and abortions. William Wilberforce had ideas about God-given human dignity and equality. Thus we have the abolition of slavery and the slave trade in England. Ideas have consequences.

Hopefully when we finish, your kids will have good ideas and answers to questions like:

- How did everything start? Where did it come from?
- Do I have a purpose? How do I know?
- Was Jesus unique? In what way?
- Why is there so much evil and suffering in the world? If God exists and is good and powerful, wouldn't He want to end the suffering and be powerful enough to do it?
- What is right and wrong for me? Is it right for people to try to impose their views on others?
- What about other holy books besides the Bible?
- Are humans unique or special among the animals? Is human life more valuable than plant or animal life?
- Am I just being arrogant or intolerant to claim I'm right or that I know what is true?
- Does science disprove parts of the Bible?
- Did God use evolution to create?
- Why have boundaries on sex and marriage?
- How could a loving God send anyone to hell? Why would He?

Besides this class which will end in February, we want you to consider sending your kids to Summit Ministries' two-week worldview camp this summer. I'm sending a subsequent email about this. If your son or daughter is 16 or older this summer, they are eligible to go. I can't imagine a better experience for a kid's whole spirit, mind, and body than two weeks at the Summit.

Lastly and Lord willing, we are considering this same worldview material for the Family Builder's class for fall 2010. Why? The better that we as parents can understand and articulate a Christian worldview, the better we can talk with our kids about the news, school subjects, and the big questions about life. How many kids have gone off to college and encountered the brilliant and articulate professor who basically explains, "Your parents and people at church meant well teaching you all those Bible stories and legends, but now that you're here at the university, it's time to learn how things really are. Your parents don't really understand what we now know is true about....." There is a battle for our kids. Next to the devil, ignorance and complacency may be our biggest enemies. Going to a Christian college may help, but it's no guarantee.

I apologize for the length of this. I've been trying to get this written for a few weeks and have just now been successful. Please hear my heart. I believe if our kids have a great relationship with Jesus and believe that Christianity offers the most intellectually satisfying explanation of reality (i.e., truth), then they will be ready to take on the world. I know you think that's important. What could be a better investment of our time or money? I welcome your feedback.

Praising Jesus,

John Case