

Equipping the Family??

2008-03-31 16:03:23 by Steve Wright

“Education coordinators from six major denominations were asked in a study conducted by Effective Christian Education if their congregations were providing classes for parents on effective parenting or communications. Only eight percent indicated that their church was providing such assistance.”

Quoted From; *reThink*, Wake Forest, (InQuest Publishing, 2007)p.85

Family Ministry Wisdom...

2008-04-12 16:04:12 by Steve Wright



John Angell James -

“The chief end of every Christian parent must be the spiritual interest, the religious character, the eternal salvation of his children.”

Ken Wilson in *The Obedient Child* page 33

“The affection we show our children... is their first taste of the grace of God.”

John MacArthur JR in *Successful Christian Parenting* page 47

“One of the worse things parents can do is be intimidated into thinking someone else would make a better evangelist for their child, thus abdicating their most crucial responsibility, missing the best opportunities for the reaching their child and forfeiting the best blessings of parenthood.”

Dr. Allen Jackson New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary

2008-05-09 20:05:46 by Steve Wright



Dr. R. Allen Jackson
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1. You were a student pastor for some time— Tell us a little of your story?

I knew I was supposed to be a youth pastor the first time I taught the Bible to a group of youth. I had graduated from college with a business degree and I was interested in finding a job that would lead to financial security by the time I was 30. When a small church in Stone Mountain, Georgia asked me to be their part time youth minister, I accepted and confirmed what God had been telling me about my calling. I served four churches over 15 years as a youth pastor and have been teaching youth pastors for the last 15 years at the New Orleans seminary.

2. Some would say that student ministry is in transition as it relates to families. Would your research confirm that? Why or why not?

I think that research has confirmed and ratified what respected voices have been saying for some time. What used to be assumed in a church culture—that families would attend church together—is no longer valid in a postmodern (some say post-Christian) culture. Since fewer families are coming to church together, it has become more noticeable that family involvement is vital to spiritual maturity in teenagers. Mark DeVries, Jim Burns, and Richard Ross were saying this a decade ago and recent research has caused youth ministers to pay attention to the family dynamic. If we don't involve families, we are not giving students the best possibility to deepen their faith and to sustain that faith into young adulthood.

3. You have said that parents have too much time and not enough time. What do you mean by that statement?

The modern work schedule is frantic. Adults and students have few margins in their schedules. Yet the reputation that some parents have at Little League parks, soccer fields, classrooms, gyms, and other places of “competition” is that they hover over their children and make most if not all of their decisions for them. Not enough time—but we squeeze more into our schedules. Too much time—we won't trust other adults to be fair.

4. You have also coined a term “Christian Socialism”, please explain?

The old socialist notion was that the state was best equipped to raise children. Parents were necessary to biologically produce children, but the feeding, education, physical training, and leadership development was best left to the “experts” i.e. the government. Occasionally in contemporary public and private schools there seems to be a climate of distrust between parents and educators. Unfortunately, in some youth ministries as well, there is a practice—I believe it to be mostly unintentional—where the attitude seems to be “drop your student off at youth group and we will take care of the spiritual part of their development.” Parents are to take their teenagers home and feed them (except that we do a lot of that too!), but the spiritual nurture should be left to the experts. As I acknowledged in the question above, research has shown that parents need to be intimately involved in the spiritual training and discipling of their children.

5. What advice would you give to a young student pastor who sees the biblical call to minister

alongside parents but lacks personal experience?

Take the time to get to know parents. Listen a lot. Sit with them at football games on Friday nights. Enlist them to be a majority of the Sunday morning teaching team. Trust them for feedback and advice. Constantly affirm the value of having lots of adults around. Allow adults to be somewhat self-policing. By that I mean that we can trust them to help us see if a parent or parents are hovering. Mostly, use all the resources at your disposal to help parents learn how to disciple their children starting when they are in grade school, and continuing through their high school years.

6. Do you feel churches are hiring guys too young? Is there a different model out there for churches to follow?

I do not know what too young might be. Obviously if there aren't a few buffer years between the youth minister and the oldest teenagers, there can be issues that detract from the main purpose of youth ministry-partnering with families and other church staff to help students to become maturing disciples of Jesus Christ. Some men and women are very mature for their age and I believe that the sense of balance between being fun and being an adult is more important than chronological age. With that said, I do believe that theological training is vital for youth pastors. In a growing number of churches, the youth pastor is the main voice speaking theology into the lives of youth. The senior pastor is charged with speaking truth and biblical doctrine as he preaches, but the youth pastor is often the person most often in front of teenagers. The youth pastor needs to know how to handle the Word in teaching and preaching venues.

7. How should churches minister to parents who have abdicated their spiritual responsibility?

Youth ministries are uniquely set up to provide surrogates in the form of Sunday school teachers, small group leaders, coaches of sports teams, and sponsors on retreats and camps. The church as a whole should make a concerted effort to cultivate relationships with parents who do not attend church with their children. I like the idea that adults who are similar in age and lifestyle are most effective in the cultivation of those relationships. The responsibility for uniting families in worship and study is far beyond the scope of just youth ministry.

8. Some guys feel that their pastor's only concern is numbers. Sunday School attendance and Baptisms. How would you encourage these guys?

First, I would confirm that their feelings are accurate. I believe that the numerical indicators are one measure of effectiveness in youth ministry. I also believe that we should constantly be hearing testimonies of what the Lord is doing among the youth, youth workers, and youth parents. I suspect that pastors who hear of spiritual victories-even those that do not result in baptism or Sunday school attendance-will be excited to learn of numerical growth in some areas, spiritual depth in others. I do not believe that we can dismiss numerical evaluation nor do I believe that we can hang our hat on it.

9. What is NOBTS doing in way of training student pastors in way of understand the "Theology of Family"?

Interesting phrase. Theology is "thinking about God" and when paired with "family," we end up with a Theology of Family being "thinking about how God thinks of families." We have been fortunate to be included in conversations with researchers like Christian Smith, Wes Black and Walt Mueller who have done great work to expose some of the problems with youth ministry as it has been done in the past 25 or so years. We have been alert to include research, discussion and even some assignments in courses which are part of the youth ministry curriculum. Our core classes all have units which point to ministry to families both from a theoretical and pragmatic point of view. Our newest class is called "Transitioning Youth from High School to College" which is a further acknowledgment of one of the struggles faced by families today.

I Need Your Help... Steve Wright

2008-05-26 09:05:32 by Steve Wright

The opportunity... I am in the very early process of dreaming with this project, and to pull it off I am going to need the help of a large number of you who share a similar burden. My concern is that very few Christian parents have an intentional plan in place to disciple their children. From the surveys we have conducted and others we have seen, very few Christian parents have at least one dedicated time each week set aside for prayer and Scripture reading in their homes. Blame it on busy schedules or travel or convenience or sports or academics, or blame it on the dog, the simple truth is that for many it just is not happening, despite an overwhelming desire on the part of many students, especially teens, who long for this type of instruction from their parents. Here is what a few of the teens in our surveys have said;

"I wish my parents prayed with me"

"I wish my parents would talk more about their faith"

"I wished we read the Bible with me"

"I wish my parents were less awkward about the Bible"

"I wish my parents would read one scripture at dinner"

"I wish they talked more directly about God and their faith"

"I wish my parents would help me get closer to God"

What if?

What if we asked those who share this concern (hopefully you) to begin praying about this issue? What if we then asked these people to help shape this rough idea into something that God might use to have a huge impact on families and future generations? I believe we could then take this idea — or challenge as we are now calling it — to pastors, Christian leaders, bloggers and others who might help cast the vision to those they influence.

These leaders could use this challenge as a resource to encourage the written truth that God has place on the heart of every parent - Deut 6:4-9. I personally believe that until parents embrace their God-given responsibility we will continue to lose this generation of young people at an alarming rate. Fear should not be our motive but the facts from many studies confirm that the "Spiritual drop-off approach" is failing at an ominous rate.

What do I need?

1. Prayer- Nehemiah 1:4 is a great reminder of someone who knew that he could not solve the issue of his day. He also knew that God could solve by moving on behalf of His people. Nehemiah was so concerned that He mourned, wept and fasted for days. Are we really as burdened as Nehemiah over the spiritual condition of families today? If we are, then it should first show up in our prayer life.
2. Creative ideas- I have a very basic rough sketch of what this challenge could look like is below. How might you suggest we sharpen it?
3. Understanding the purpose- Our desire would be for this entire project to express grace. Not bondage or legalism! We want this to be a win for families, something that is doable and something that puts a win under their belts.

The Purpose is to give parents a free 52 week Bible reading plan that allows them to intentionally disciple their children. Our hopes would be that this simple bible reading plan would be used by parents as a resource so that parents can recapture a tremendous gift that God has given to each of them.

4. Practical ideas- Here are a few.

- a) A banner designed that bloggers and organizations could post on their websites. This banner could be placed on sites of churches, bloggers or other organizations that desire to encourage parents to biblical obedience of training their children.
- b) Input on the document that many would read. What should it say and is it concise? Once someone clicks on the online banner what should the challenge say that invites parents to participate?
- c) Creative ideas that I haven't even thought to ask for, such as video productions for YouTube, Godtube, etc.
- d) Promotional ideas. How would we best get the word out on this? What endorsement contacts does each of us have?

e) I would like to list on our Lasting Divergence Facebook group the names of all who are involved in shaping this challenge to help communicate a Kingdom mindset and form a true partnership from across denominational and organizational lines. This could send an incredible message throughout the Body of Christ by allowing believers to focus on a biblical truth that we all support rather than what divides us!

Are you in?

After reading the basic idea below, would you leave a comment letting us know that you are willing to help? You could also leave a post on the Lasting Divergence Facebook group so we can contact you.

I value your feedback... both positive and negative. If you share the concern that many parents have either abdicated their role or haven't been trained and resourced for this apparent privilege please know that we could use your help.

If you are willing to help you can email Steve Wright at admin@lastingdivergence.com or leave a note on our lasting Divergence Facebook group wall.

But what if?

What if many families across our country reclaimed this spiritual discipline? What if only "one" family began to open God's word at home and Christ was made much of? I can say with all sincerity that this would be worth all the time and effort if one more family honored Christ in this way! It is that important!



John Newton's exhortation...

-John Newton (1725-1807)

"I think, with you, that it is very expedient and proper that reading a portion of the word of God should be ordinarily a part of our family worship; so likewise to sing a hymn or psalm, or part of one, at discretion; provided there are some people in the family who have enough of a musical ear and voice to conduct the singing in a tolerable manner: otherwise, perhaps, it may be better omitted... If you read and sing, as well as pray, care should be taken that the combined services do not run into an inconvenient length."

You can read more on John Newton's thoughts on Family worship [here....](#)

John Newton is not the only great spiritual forefather who encouraged Christian families to have a "Badge of Distinction." There were in fact many others.

A few others and their thoughts on the subject of Family Worship...

-Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758)

“Every Christian family ought to be as it were a little church, consecrated to Christ, and wholly influenced and governed by his rules. And family education and order are some of the chief means of grace. If these fail, all other means are likely to prove ineffectual. If these are duly maintained, all the means of grace will be likely to prosper and be successful.”

-Richard Baxter (1615-1691)

“We must have a special eye upon families, to see that they are well ordered. The welfare and glory of both the Church and the State, depend much on family government and duty. If we suffer the neglect of this, we shall undo all. Therefore, if you desire reformation, do all you can to promote family religion.”

-Matthew Henry (1662-1714)

“Masters of families, who preside in the other affairs of the house, must go before their households in the things of God. They must be as prophets, priests, and kings in their own families; and as such they must keep up family-doctrine, family-worship, and family-discipline: then is there a church in the house, and this is the family religion I am persuading you to...”

You must read the scriptures to your families, in a solemn manner, requiring their attendance on your reading, and their attention to it: and inquiring sometimes whether they understand what you read.”

-John Knox (1510-1572)

“Brethren, you are ordained of God to rule your own houses in his true fear, and according to his word. Within your houses, I say, in some cases, you are bishops and kings; your wife, children, servants, and family are your bishopric and charge... Of you it shall be required how carefully and diligently you have instructed them in God’s true knowledge, how you have studied to plant virtue in them, and [to] repress vice. And therefore I say, you must make them partakers in reading, exhorting, and in making common prayers, which I would in every house were used once a day at least.”

-Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892)

“First, let us begin by emphatically declaring it is parents (fathers in particular) and not the church who are given the primary responsibility for calling the next generation to hope in God. The church serves a supplementary role, reinforcing the biblical nurture that is occurring in the home...”

WHY...

These great preachers spoke with clarity and conviction on this subject because they possessed a great Theology of Family (make this a hot link) that understood and taught that parents are accountable to be the primary disciplers of their children. This God-given privilege is too important to be left to others; after all it is parents who serve as daily mentors to their children. Here are just a few places that I have found where scripture points to this wonderful gift that God has entrusted to parents.

Exodus 10:2 shares the importance of passing down the faith saying, “that you may tell your children and grandchildren [the things I have done] ... and that you may know that I am the Lord.”

Exodus 12:26-28 speaks of explaining the symbols of the faith to your children when they ask (the Passover in context).

Deuteronomy 4:9 exhorts us, “And teach [the statutes of the law] to your children and to their children after them.”

Deuteronomy 4:10 says, “Assemble the people before me to hear my words so that they may learn to revere me as long as they live in the land and may teach them to their children.”

Deuteronomy 11:19 commands, “Teach [God’s word] to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.”

Joshua 24:15 says, “But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve... But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.”

Psalms 78:5-6 says, “He commanded our forefathers to teach their children, so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children.”

Proverbs 22:6 says, “Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.”

Isaiah 38:19 shows God’s plan for discipleship saying, “Fathers tell their children about your faithfulness.”

Luke 1:17 fulfills the prophecy of Malachi 4:6 saying, “He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children,

and the hearts of the children to their fathers.”

Ephesians 6:4 commands us, “Fathers do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.”

1 Thessalonians 2:11-12 shows a picture of the relationship God wants us to have with our kids saying, “For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.”

1 Timothy 3:5 is part of a list of qualifications for leadership. It shows the importance of knowing how to care for your family before you can care for the Church.

2 Timothy 1:5 and 3:15 speaks of the faith that was passed down to Timothy from his mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois.

These truths were not presented as obituary options for Christian parents. Steve Farrar says “There is no new and improved version to these commands. They have not been upgraded. They were perfect when they were given and they will be perfect for as long as men walk the earth.”

The cost...

Some have suggested that we have some type of cost associated with this challenge. Their thought is that if parents pay “something or anything,” then they will be more committed to sticking through with their commitment.

I want to appeal to a greater motive that EVERY Christian parent should possess. “Eternity.” The only hope that our children, grandchildren and even we, ourselves, have is the gospel which is freely offered to us through His Grace.

So the cost if you own a Bible is free!!!

Christian parent- What is your family’s Badge of Distinction? What happens in your family that is uniquely Christian on a weekly basis that you are passing on to your children? We are all busy. Sports, academics, the arts, recreation, church and a ton of other things keep us moving at wrap speed, but our first and primary responsibility must be Christ– alive– in our children. John Bunyan author of Pilgrim’s Progress reminds us of what is ultimately at stake as we decide to embrace our God-given role.

John Bunyan 1628-1688

“Thy children have souls, and they must be begotten of God as well as of thee, or they perish. And know also, that unless thou be very circumspect in thy behavior to and before them, they may perish through thee: the thoughts of which should provoke thee, both to instruct, and also to correct them.”

These words should awaken every parent to the high calling we have to pass on the true gospel to our children.

Encouragement...

Pastor J. Ligon Duncan says...

“Start family worship as soon as possible, as soon as one is married, and continue it after children come along, no matter how young the children are (and the younger the better). The point is not for the youngest children to be able to comprehend (or even to sit still during it!). The point is impress upon them, by paternal example the priority of God and his word in all of life. They learn this, even if they comprehend nothing in the reading, praying and singing, simply by seeing a father pausing day after day to read the word with his family.

Now there is a whole host of practical questions and problems that come to mind once we determine to begin family worship. How long should it last? It should be regularly brief, as little as 10 minutes when the children are very young. Gradually, it will run a little longer as they grow older and conversations strike up. Don’t kill it by trying to go too long. Pace yourself. Regularity and repetition is the key. When should we do family worship? When it works - morning/breakfast, supertime or bedtime are the three most common times.”

The John Newton Challenge

Marriage is Beautiful or Is It??? Steve Wright

2008-06-16 10:06:48 by Steve Wright



When Tyler (my youngest son) was in early elementary school he asked me this question on the way home from school one day. "Dad, Why would a man want to marry another man?" His dad a pastor, attending a Christian school and in church more than the average bear. Our children are hearing so many conflicting opinions concerning one of the greatest gifts that God has blessed us with-Marriage.

Is the institution of marriage a forgone conclusion in the lives of young people today? I wanted to provide you with some research that will help you understand the battle a little bit better. I hope the research provided here will give you a glimpse of why it is so important that children are taught a healthy Biblical framework of marriage.

1. Why would we need to get married? Why not just live together?

"Marriages are down 20% over the last decade." Source-CNN Highlight News June 9, 2008

"Marriage may no longer be a more perfect union" [SOURCE](#)

"Marriage license applications in Oklahoma County declined to their lowest number in at least two decades." [SOURCE](#)

"Researchers have reported that couples that live together prior to getting engaged have an increased risk for divorce and marital distress." [SOURCE](#)

"Family fragmentation costs U.S. taxpayers at least \$112 billion each and every year." [SOURCE](#)

"The marriage rate in 2005 (per 1,000) was 7.5, down from 7.8 the previous year." [SOURCE](#)

"According to the U.S. Census Bureau, unmarried couples account for some 5.5 million households in the U.S. Evidence also shows that couples who live together may not discuss important or troublesome issues in their relationship." [SOURCE](#)

"Divorce Myth 2: Living together before marriage is a good way to reduce the chances of eventually divorcing.

Fact: Many studies have found that those who live together before marriage have a considerably higher chance of eventually divorcing. The reasons for this are not well understood. In part, the type of people who are willing to cohabit may also be those who are more willing to divorce. There is some evidence that the act of cohabitation itself generates attitudes in people that are more conducive to divorce, for example the attitude that relationships are temporary and easily can be ended." [SOURCE](#)

"Divorce May Be the Price of Living Together First" "Couples who lived together before marrying have nearly an 80 percent higher divorce rate than those who did not and they seem to have less regard for the institution." Monday, June 9, 2008

2. Why would we want to have kids? Won't they interfere with my life goals?

"At the age of 27 this young woman at the height of her reproductive years was sterilised to "protect the planet". Incredibly, instead of mourning the loss of a family that never was, her boyfriend (now husband) presented her with a congratulations card. While some might think it strange to celebrate the reversal of nature and denial of motherhood, Toni relishes her decision with an almost religious zeal. "Having children is selfish. It's all about maintaining your genetic line at the expense of the planet," says Toni, 35. [SOURCE](#)

"Childless By Choice - childless couples an emerging demographic - Statistical Data Included. That's 4.1 million women saying no to motherhood in 1995." [SOURCE](#)

Children 'bad for planet' HAVING large families should be frowned upon as an environmental misdemeanors in the same way as frequent long-haul flights, driving a big car and failing to reuse plastic bags, says a report to be published today by a green think tank. [SOURCE](#)

Many studies have shown that children create strains between couples. But while this report indicates children may bring a drop in a measure such as marital happiness, [SOURCE](#)

INCIDENCE OF ABORTION

Nearly half of pregnancies among American women are unintended, and four in 10 of these are terminated by abortion. Twenty-two percent of all pregnancies (excluding miscarriages) end in abortion. Finer LB and Henshaw SK, Disparities in rates of unintended pregnancy in the United States, 1994 and 2001, Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health, 2006, 38(2):90-96. Jones RK et al., Abortion in the United States: incidence and access to services, 2005, Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health, 2008, 40(1):6-16.

3. Who is marriage for-man and women or whoever wants to be called "married"?

LOS ANGELES — Two things are certain in California's mounting legal showdown over same-sex marriage: Gay couples will wed this month, and, come November, voters will decide whether the state's constitution should exclude them from such unions. [SOURCE](#)

Massachusetts has recognized same-sex marriage since 2004, and California since May 15, 2008, [SOURCE](#)

Same-sex marriage

Dozens of states had ballot measures on same-sex marriage during the midterm elections in 2006, and the issue looks to heat up again as candidates campaign for 2008. [SOURCE](#)

BOSTON - Less than seven months after same-sex couples began tying the knot in Massachusetts, the state is seeing its first gay divorces. [SOURCE](#)

4. Can we walk away from family when it is no longer convenient for our lifestyle?

The divorce rate in America for first marriage, vs second or third marriage
50% percent of first marriages, 67% of second and 74% of third marriages end in divorce, according to Jennifer Baker of the Forest Institute of Professional Psychology in Springfield, Missouri." [SOURCE](#)

"Interviews with young adults suggest that they want their initial marriage to last, but are not particularly optimistic about that possibility," Barna noted. "There is also evidence that many young people are moving toward embracing the idea of serial marriage, in which a person gets married two or three times, seeking a different partner for each phase of their adult life." [SOURCE](#)

Evangelicals shift toward acceptance on divorce.

For increasing numbers of clergy, a divorce no longer generates the kind of career-killing hue and cry of decades ago, in part because plenty of people in the pews have experienced divorce themselves. The shifting views on divorced clergy reflect a growing concession among rank-and-file conservative Christians that a failed marriage is no longer an unforgivable sin. For many evangelical Christians, the line seems to have shifted from a single acceptable reason for divorce - adultery - to a wider range of reasons that some say can be biblically justified. [SOURCE](#)

PRINCETON, NJ — More Americans than ever believe divorce is morally acceptable, with the percentage who say this jumping to 70% in Gallup's 2008 Values and Beliefs survey, up from 59% in 2001, and breaking

the previous high of 67% in 2006. PRINCETON, NJ — More Americans than ever believe divorce is morally acceptable, with the percentage who say this jumping to 70% in Gallup's 2008 Values and Beliefs survey, up from 59% in 2001, and breaking the previous high of 67% in 2006.

5. What are the roles within the family? Who is in charge? Who does what?

“Like so many women raised at the tail end of feminism's first wave, I assumed that my spouse and I would enjoy a relationship based on equality. Equality is an overworked word, but to me it meant sharing the income, chores and child care.

So when my husband asked me the other day, “Did your concept of ‘equality’ ever include supporting the family?” I had to admit that my answer was no.

I wanted it to be yes. If men could provide for their wives and families, as they have traditionally in many cultures, why shouldn't women feel just fine about assuming that role themselves? Why didn't I?” [SOURCE](#)

However, sex, gender identity, and sexual identity refer to different aspects of oneself. Therefore, one may be any combination of sex (male/female), gender (masculine/feminine), and sexual identity (straight, bisexual, lesbian/gay.) In recent history, people oppressed on the basis of different sexual identities (bisexuals, lesbians, gay men) and people oppressed on the basis of gender identity have formed communities which are partly separate and partly overlapping with one another. Because of this historic separation, someone who is a member of one of these communities does not necessarily understand and prioritize the issues of others of these communities. One who belongs to more than one of these communities may feel welcome in both, but usually neither addresses all one's needs or the way that one's needs from different communities overlap or interact. [SOURCE](#)

Some feminists hold that the sex/gender distinction is not useful. For a start, it is thought to reflect politically problematic dualistic thinking that undercuts feminist aims: the distinction is taken to reflect and replicate androcentric oppositions between (for instance) mind/body, culture/nature and reason/emotion that have been used to justify women's oppression (e.g. Grosz 1994; Prokhovnik 1999). [SOURCE](#)

Park Day School is throwing out gender boundaries.

Teachers at the private Oakland elementary school have stopped asking the children to line up according to sex when walking to and from class. They now let boys play girls and girls play boys in skits. And there's a unisex bathroom. Admissions director Flo Hodes is even a little apologetic that she still balances classes by gender. Park Day's gender-neutral metamorphosis happened over the past few years, as applications trickled in for kindergartners who didn't fit on either side of the gender line. One girl enrolled as a boy, and there were other children who didn't dress or act in gender-typical ways. Last year the school hired a consultant to help the staff accommodate these new students. “We had to ask ourselves, what is gender for young children?” Hodes said. “It's coming up more and more.” [SOURCE](#)

This cross-dressing man - who gained worldwide attention as the subject of a “Gay Terrorist” joke email - has a right to dress this way, but should he be allowed to use the woman's restroom? [SOURCE](#)

Staff at a public school in Highlands Ranch are preparing to accommodate the second-grader, who wants to attend classes dressed as a girl and be addressed with a girl's name. The school will allow the boy to use a unisex bathroom, and they are giving parents packets of information on transgendered people. [SOURCE](#)

Could 272,400 teenagers be wrong?

2008-03-31 18:03:14 by Steve Wright

“An extensive study of 272,400 teenagers conducted by *USA Today Weekend Magazine* found that 70 percent of teens identified their parents as the most important influence in their lives. Twenty-one percent said that about their friends (peers), and only 8 percent named the media.”

Quoted From...Wayne Rice and David Veerman, *Understanding Your Teenager*, (Lakeside, CA: Understanding Your Teenager Books) p. 118.

Josh McDowell says...

2008-03-31 18:03:30 by Steve Wright

Josh McDowell sums it up perfectly, "Parents... carry more weight-for good or bad-than they give themselves credit for."

Quoted From...Josh McDowell, *The Last Christian Generation*, (Holiday, FL: Green Key Books, 2006), p.60.

The Family-Church Connection...

2008-04-03 20:04:17 by Steve Wright

The Christian church and the Christian home as institutions are closely bound together. They are like Siamese twins: if you cut them apart you may sever an artery of life and cause one or both to die. The church cannot function as she should in a disordered world unless she employs the home as her main reliance in Christian nurture. And I feel certain that the family cannot be a Christian family or a happy family unless it stays in the circulation of those spiritual influences of which the church is the great custodian. [i]

Clark, Robert E., Joanne Brubaker, and Roy B. Zuck. *Childhood Education in the Church*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1986. p.33.

Secular research pointing to Biblical model....

2008-03-31 18:03:23 by Steve Wright

In Altemeyer and Hunsberger's book (secular book) called *Amazing Conversions*, we are told the stories of forty-six college freshmen they call the "Amazing Apostates." These students were identified in a survey of more than 2,000 college freshmen as being among those who were raised in church-going, Christian families but had abandoned their faith by the time they reached college. Here are a few excerpts from their extensive research.

- All of the different approaches to studying parental influences in the religious socialization process converge on a *single conclusion*: Parents play an extremely important role in the developing religious attitudes and practices of their offspring. In fact, few researchers would quarrel with the conclusion that parents are *the* most important influence in this regard.[i]
- We acquire our religion from our parents almost as certainly as we inherit the color of our eyes.[ii]
- You can make a pretty good prediction of how a university student, raised as a Christian, will still accept Christianity if you know how much the family religion was emphasized while he was growing up.[iii]
- Parents of those who "kept the faith" emphasized religion twice as much as the parents of those who became apostates.[iv]
- If today's young people seem less religious than their parents, it may be traced to their parents' neglecting to pass on the grandparents training.[v]
- During their research they asked these freshmen to identify who they most turned to when they experienced doubts or questions specifically in regards to religion and their faith. The responses were, in order:

- Talking with parents
- Reading the Bible
- Talking with friends
- Spending time in prayer
- Talking to a minister or religious leader
- Going to a camp or retreat to renew their faith.[vi]

Research and common sense tell us the importance of parents in the spiritual future of their children, but it also points to the role of the church. What is needed, and is rarely the case, is a partnership between church and parents.

Quoted From...

Bob Altemeyer, Bruce Hunsberger, Bruce Hunsberger, *Amazing Conversions*, Prometheus Books, 1997, page 226[iii] Ibid, page 10.[iii] Ibid, page 11.

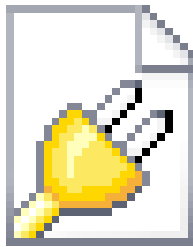
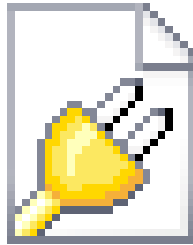
[iv] Page 11 quoting someone else???

[v] Ibid, page 11.

[vi] Ibid, page 18.

Quotes from “King Me” - Steve Farrar

2008-04-08 19:04:07 by Steve Wright



King Me: What Every Son Wants and Needs From His Father. Chicago: Moody Publishers. 2005.

Pg. 18: Parenting

S.D. Gilbert said it well: “It may be hard on some fathers not to have a son, but it is much harder on a boy not to have a father.”

Pg. 19-20: Parenting

You have no higher calling in life. It is your God-given assignment. There is nothing nobler in all of life than to shape your son into a man.

Pg. 27: Parenting

It was a matter of life and death, said Moses. Deuteronomy 6:5-7 contains a job description for fathers. And the life of the nation depended on their doing this job.

Every man in Israel was given a job description by the Lord.

Pg. 29: Parenting

In other words, a son would learn how to be a man by observing his father. The father would mentor his son by being “with” his son. It was the father’s job to turn his son into a man—a godly man who also loved God

from his gut, a responsible man, a man who would take over the family in his place when he breathed his last breath.

Pg. 20-21: Deut. 6

There is no “new and improved” version to these commands. They have not been upgraded. They were perfect when they were given and they will be perfect for as long as men walk the earth.

The job description is timeless.

Could they get off the hook by hiring someone to do these two tasks for them? The answer is no. The kings were not excluded from these foundational responsibilities.

Pg. 40: Parenting

Are your boys still under your roof? Then understand this. They don't need more things. They need you. They need for you to give them Deuteronomy 6.“> ([more...](#))

National Study Confirms...

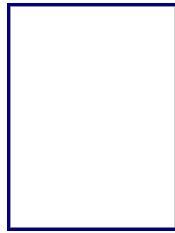
2008-03-31 19:03:54 by Steve Wright

Christian Smith concluded from his multi million dollar, national study that, “Contrary to popular misguided cultural stereotypes and frequent parental misperceptions, we believe that the evidence clearly shows that the single most important social influence on the religious and spiritual lives of adolescents is their parents. This recognition may be empowering to parents, or alarming, or both.”

Smith, *Soul Searching*, 261.

Are our children prepared???

2008-04-10 19:04:16 by Steve Wright



“Are our Children being prepared to articulate and defend their faith in a gentle and attractive manner? 1 Peter 3:15-16 speaks of this preparedness,

But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.

The Bible is clear that every Christian’s task, including the teenagers in our ministries, is to be ready to give biblical answers and defend their faith. With today’s multicultural society where our students face different beliefs daily, it is more important than ever that students know and are able to articulate what they believe. I understand this passage isn’t saying that teens must have an answer for every obscure or ridiculous question, but I believe they should have a strong, solid understanding of foundational truths of God’s Word. So, are our children equipped to explain these basic truths to another person? Do they possess a basic biblical worldview?

In a study of teenagers, of which 70 percent were active in church youth group, and 82 percent identified themselves as Christians, Barna found:

§ 63% believe Muslims, Buddhists, Christians, Jews and all other people pray to the same god, even though they use different names for their god.

§ 87% of our kids believe Jesus was a real person who came to earth, and 78% believe He was born of a virgin, yet nearly half (46%) believe he committed sins and over half (51%) say He died but did not rise from the dead.

§ 58% believe that all religious faiths teach equally valid truth.

Newsweek and *Beliefnet.com* asked 1,004 Americans this question: “Can a good person who doesn’t share your religious beliefs attain salvation or go to heaven?” Sixty-eight percent of evangelical Protestants said yes.

It’s hard to read facts like these and not go into “statistic overload.” The basis of these statistics is explained well by Josh McDowell, “It’s not that they haven’t embraced a version of Christianity; it’s simply that the version they believe in is not built on the true foundation of what biblical Christianity is all about.” Christian Smith in his groundbreaking national research says, It seems to us that religious educators need to work much harder on articulation. We were astounded by the realization that for very many teens we interviewed, it seemed as if our interview was the first time any adult had ever asked them what they believed. By contrast, the same teens could be remarkably articulate about other subjects about which they had been drilled, such as drinking, drugs, STDs and safe sex. It was also astonishing how many Christian teens, for example, were comfortable talking generally about God but not specifically about Jesus.

Smith also says, Scholars who have looked at young Christians say their spiritual drift is in part the result of a lack of knowledge about their faith. The vast majority of teens who call themselves Christians haven’t been well educated in religious doctrine and therefore really don’t know what they believe.”

Still Number 1.....

2008-04-11 19:04:11 by Steve Wright



In a recent 2008 study conducted by Reuters the Bible still reigns supreme-

“When it comes to literary pursuits in the United States most people agree on at least one thing — the most popular book is the Bible, according to a new survey.

It came in first in a Harris Poll of nearly 2,513 adults but the second choice in the survey was not as clear cut.

Finally, they may not agree on candidates, but one thing that brings together partisans is their favorite book. For Republicans, Democrats and Independents, the top two books are the same — the Bible followed by “Gone With the Wind.” Yahoo News April 8th, 2008

The Bible should remain the top curriculum of choice for those leading parent ministries and Family Ministry...
