

No, Hollywood, You Can't Have My Kids!

I was sitting in a green room with a well-known individual when my wife walked in, holding our little princess. The gentleman sitting next to me took notice of what her mom and I already knew.

"That girl is absolutely gorgeous!" he exclaimed. Then he added, "She needs to be on TV."

Instinctively, I responded, "I love her too much to prostitute her to the world like that."

Extreme? Not at all. I'm not interested in raising a star. I'm raising a saint!

Right now, the world is watching as **Justin Bieber** becomes the latest to take the all-too-familiar path that so many have blazed before him. It's striking to see how many of these fallen stars begin their ascent to fame in the **church**. They left God's house for the promise of bright lights, adoring fans and big paydays. Many times they end up in the jailhouse, crack house or funeral home.

How many celebrity parents wish they had fought harder to keep their kids out of the limelight so that they might remain in the Lord's light? Probably fewer than I'd hope.

These stories offer a very real and public example of why we parents have to fight hard to keep our gifted children out of the world's hands. It's time we tell Hollywood, "You can't have our kids!"

Personally, I am completely uninterested in what Justin is doing. I don't care about his latest tattoo. I don't care about who he is dating. I don't care what club he was caught

walking out of, and I don't care about the house he just egged.

What I do care about is *my* kids.

We live in a world where achieving celebrity status is touted as the apex of success. We celebrate and idolize individuals in every arena of life. Even in the **church**!

I'm not concerned about how many people know my child's name; I'm concerned that my child knows the name above all names. I don't care how many people follow her; I care that she only follows Him.

Parents, we haven't fought the world hard enough for our children. It is our job to nurture, protect and train them up in the ways of the Lord. Let's learn from the mistakes of the past and not fail our gifted children in the future. Here are a few ways how:

1. Fight to help them discover all their God-given gifts.

If you're gifted to speak, sing or shake a hand, there is a place for you to serve in the sanctuary. However, those gifted with other skills, like leadership, athletics, academics, acting, writing and so many more, rarely find a place for those gifts to be discovered and developed in the house of God.

God is the giver of the child and the gift. He commissions the family first, then the church to steward those gifts. We have to seek ways to encourage their talents and teach them to use their gifts to glorify the Lord.

2. Fight to guard the gift.

I'm sure you've seen the "my child can beat up your honor student" bumper sticker. Every proud parent should celebrate their child's accomplishments. But when celebration turns to bragging, we've stepped over the line.

Many parents attempt to live vicariously through their children's accomplishments. They believe what their child can do says something about them as parents. This teaches our children that "doing" is more important than "being." (Honey Boo Boo, anybody?)

My child's spiritual life is not secondary. It comes first, and nothing else compares. We don't skip **church** or pass up **prayer** time or devotions for school, athletics or anything else.

When you choose to forego spiritual things for secular things, you are silently teaching a dangerous lesson. Parents will push their children to excel in life on the field, stage or classroom but neglect to see them excel first before the Lord. If we fail here, we fail everywhere!

3. Fight to celebrate the Giver of gifts.

"First of all, I want to thank God" is the nod you often hear thrown out after an award or championship game is won. I've been in rooms with people watching who say, "Oh, I didn't know he was a Christian!"

He's probably not.

If you can't see the fruit of the Spirit in their lyrics, acting or sportsmanship, you will not find it in their life either. No shout-out to Lord can make up for a loose life.

We must teach our children to glorify the Giver, not the gift. They must learn they are gifted only because God is good.

If the gift gets elevated, it becomes an idol. When God is elevated, the gift can bring Him glory.

We teach our children that true **worship** is a lifestyle and that everything they do can be done as unto the Lord. It is only when God takes priority in their life that the gifts can find their proper position.

The Lord has blessed us with three amazing children, which means I've got three incredible reasons to fight for this generation. I know that God has an amazing plan for each of them, just as He does for each and every child. I also know that the enemy has a plan for them as well. He desires to kill, steal and destroy. Not on my watch! I'll fight to see God's dreams accomplished in them to the fullest.

Sorry, world—you can't have my kids!

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