

How Christian Parents Produce Backslidden Children: Part 2

This is part 2 in a two-part series. You can read Part 1 [here](#).

As a pastor for over 30 years, I am amazed that such a small percentage of the children of Christian parents actually serve the Lord when they reach their teenage years and beyond, including the children of Christian leaders. Since nurturing covenantal children is the primary method God uses to establish His dominion on the earth as it is in heaven, there aren't many subjects more important than the one I am addressing in this article.

In this article, I correlate Christian parental behavior with likely outcomes related to the faith of their children. That is to say, each of us could read this article and most likely tell if our children will serve the Lord with all their hearts in the future, or be lukewarm or unbelieving when they get older. The following are my observations on why many children of Christian parents do not serve the Lord when they are older.

Many Christian parents have a superficial understanding of God and their faith

Many parents only have a very superficial belief system; some don't even know the very basics of the faith! Because of this, they cannot possibly pass down the faith to their children with any substance. Thus, their children will also have a very superficial faith at best. Most likely they will have a trajectory of having no faith and not attending church when they are older.

Every parent doesn't have to be a theologian, but every parent should be grounded in the first principles of the faith and

pass them on to their children.

Many children rarely see their parents seeking God earnestly and consistently

Our faith is more caught than taught. Thus, children learn much by observing their parents diligently seeking God in their private lives. This shows children that their parents have a substantive relationship with God, even when other people are not looking at them. Children who do not see their parents consistently and earnestly seeking God are on a trajectory of having a casual acquaintance relationship with God, instead of a friendship.

Many parents depend too much on their church's **Sunday school or youth group to mature their children in the faith**

I have had to correct many parents who think it is the job of the local church to disciple and train their children in the Lord. The truth is, the church only has their children for several hours per week at best. Parents have their children for at least 50 hours per week. Truly, the primary responsibility of training children in the way of the Lord rests with parents, not the church (Proverbs 22:6; Deuteronomy 6:6-9). Children not trained at home by their parents will possibly find themselves on a trajectory toward nominal Christianity without any personal spiritual discipline to seek God.

Many Christian parents consistently miss church for any and all reasons

As a pastor, I marvel that so many parents regularly miss church services because of family events, sporting events, because they are tired or a little sick, or because they want to stay home to relax or shop. Truly, when parents live like this, they shouldn't be shocked when their children grow up to be lukewarm Christians who don't take the things of God seriously! If these same parents treated their business or

place of employment the same way they treat church, they would have gone bankrupt or gotten fired years ago! These children are on a trajectory of making God only a part of their lives instead of Jesus being their lives!

Many Christian parents don't spend quality time with their children

Many leaders are guilty of sacrificing their children on the altar of ministry or work-related ambition. What does it profit us if we gain the whole world and lose our children? Children of these parents are on a trajectory of having low self-esteem and insecurities because they feel they are not important enough for their parents to take time out for them.

Many Christian parents jump from church to church

I am not saying that you can't ever feel led to leave a local church, but some people I know are hopping from one church to another every year or two. Children of these parents are on a trajectory of not being personally stable in their faith, being individualistic in relating to God, not being able to commit to any community of faith, nor trusting spiritual authority in their lives.

Many Christian parents constantly nag their children

I have learned that it is not wise to preach at your children. As they get older it is also important that we do not nag them constantly about doing what is right. At a certain point we need to believe God that He will get a hold of their hearts and convert them.

Instead of nagging our children we need to spend that same amount of time or more in prayer and fasting in faith for their souls. Children of nagging parents are on a trajectory of tuning out their parents and all adults when they get to be teenagers, which will result in rebellion against authority and foolish behavior.

Many Christian parents are too legalistic or religious with their children

A parental approach that is very strict, religious and legalistic may be just as harmful as parental lukewarmness in the home towards Christ. When parents try to force their children to believe in Christ by making them live by strict, oppressive rules without any emotional connection, spiritual connection or fun, they will nurture resentful children who will run from God as soon as they are old enough.

Children of legalistic religious parents are on a trajectory of falling into gross excess in regards to sinful pleasure as a reaction against the oppressiveness of rigid legalistic religion. Children of legalistic Pentecostal homes rarely serve God when they get older and often stop going to church in their older teenage years.

In summary, these are just some of my observations which seem to ensure the backslidden or lukewarm condition of a child raised in a Christian home. However, there are always exceptions to these observations. Some children can go on to fulfill their purpose in Christ with passion in spite of the hindrances of their parents.

Also, as parents we can do everything correctly and not violate any of the above points, and yet still find our children struggling in their faith. This article is not meant to bring condemnation to parents, but to awaken us to our responsibilities as we cooperate with the Holy Spirit in the nurturing of our children. Ultimately, if our children don't meet God for themselves they will not seek Him, even if we follow the best practices as parents.

To subscribe for a weekly teaching click here.