

The Road Less Traveled: Our Christian Teens are on it! - Pastor Chris Kirkendall

I borrowed this title from Robert Frost who wrote the poem "The Road Less Traveled." However, the road less traveled that I'm talking about is the road that the youth of America should be on. There is a major problem in the United States of America with children raised in Christian homes that leave the church in their late teens to early twenties.

It is reported that 70 - 88 % of Christian teens are leaving the church by their second year in college. To put it bluntly, just because a child was raised in church, doesn't mean that they will remain in church. By these statistics there is a 12 - 30% chance that they will stay in church and continue their discipleship during their late teens and twenties.

I believe there are several reasons for this. I believe they range from spiritual

warfare to parental neglect to an increasingly "God-less" culture.

Consider this quote:

"Our research suggest that religious congregations are loosing out to school and the media for the time and attention of youth. When it comes to the formation of the lives of youth, viewed sociologically, faith communities typically get a very small seat at the end of the table for a very limited period of time. The youth - formation table is dominated structurally by more powerful and vocal actors. Hence ... most teens know details about television characters and pop stars, but many are quite vague about Moses and Jesus. Most youth are well versed about the dangers of drunk driving, AIDS, and drugs, but many haven't a clue about their own tradition's core ideas. Many parents also clearly priori-

tize homework and sports over church or youth group attendance." (Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton, *Soul Searching*)

Please join me in prayer as I pray for a plan for Faith Christian Center to build a legacy by changing these statistics. The road that the youth of America are own may be the wrong road, but I believe that revival can change the hearts of youth and detour them to the correct road. The Road Less Traveled can become a powerful life changing ONE WAY BLVD for Jesus Christ.

Matthew 7:13-14

"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because* narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

FCC Times of Refreshing



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What are You Willing to do for a Miracle? - Pastor Chris Kirkendall

Our culture is a culture of chance. Chance simply means; the absence of any cause of events that can be predicted, understood, or controlled. It also means luck or fortune. I am amazed by the number of people that I have met through the years that live their life by chance. They have not developed any real model of success or expectation, only chance and a vague understanding of life.

The model of success can only come with a relationship with Jesus Christ. It is after our hearts have been changed by our salvation experience that true peace, prosperity, and our place can fully be ours. As Christians we do not have to live our life by chance. God has made a way for us to lead a refreshing life continually as we are connected to him. (John 15:1-8)

In the Bible (2 Kings 5), there was an important man, Naaman who had leprosy, which was willing to do anything for a miracle. Or so he thought. Naaman is a great example of the "type" of person who is concerned with reputation, stature, and career. You see Naaman was a captain in the Syrian army. He is described as great,

honorable, and a man of valor. What a great description! I hope that I can be described as that kind of person. The problem that Naaman had was that he wanted control and he wanted statistics to the cure for his leprosy.

Naaman was surprised at the advice he got from a young girl that was taking care of his house. Her advice was kind of like this: "You need to hear our preacher! When he preaches, God shows up! In fact you might get healed." She was so convincing that Naaman set out to go hear this preacher. Except when he got there, the message made him mad. Yep! That's true.

You see, Naaman expected the preacher to "recognize" his stature and prescribe a special message for him so he could be healed. Instead, what he got was an anointed word of God to go dunk seven times in a muddy river and if he did he would be healed. Now it was decision time! What was he willing to do to get his miracle? Eventually after an argument, Naaman went down to the river and got his miracle.

There are many in the body of Christ today like Naaman. Their need may not be to be healed of leprosy, but it is just as real of a need as Naaman's leprosy was. Like Naaman they desire a "special" word or instruction that is just for them. BUT what if... their breakthrough came during a worship service, Sunday school, revival, outreach, or some other "mundane" Christian activity; that has been deemed dead or unprofitable like the Jordan River. I encourage you to keep your faith in Jesus Christ, the fact that he is the same yesterday, today, and forever! Your breakthrough moment could be right around the corner. Don't give up before the seventh dunk... no matter how ridiculous you might think it is.

Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. For you have need of endurance so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise:
- Hebrews 10:35-36

Jeri and I bless you with a wonderful August. We pray that you will experience great *Times of Refreshing!*

Times to Remember:

Sunday	
Sunday School All Ages	9:15am
Sunday Service	10:30am
Wednesday	
Mid-week Service Pioneers Club Youth	7:00pm

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RUN! RUN! RUN FOR YOUR LIFE! - Justin Kirkendall



I've heard it said that people are in one of three states:

- In a trial
- Just coming out of a trial
- Headed toward a trial

That pretty much captures everybody- because that's just the way that life is- and as Christians, we aren't exempt from life's trials, hard times, etc.

However, as Christians, we have the ability to have peace in whatever season of life we find ourselves in.

We have the *ability* to have peace, but do we exercise that ability in our everyday lives- when we need it? Do we really believe that we can have peace in the midst of hard times? We should...

Colossians 3:15, "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful."

Peace is defined as:

- Cessation of/ or freedom from any strife or dissension
 - Freedom of the mind from annoyance, distraction, or an obsession, etc.
 - A state of tranquility or serenity
- Silence; stillness

Now, I'm not sure I can speak for everyone; but I know that throughout my week, there's hardly ever time for "silence" or "stillness"; and

if we don't watch it- it begins to affect our lives and take it's toll on our mind, will, and emotions. Instead of finding out peace/rest/joy in Christ- we find it in tv shows, food, relationships, -fill in yours vice here-, etc. We run to those things when Christ is our defender. He's our Peace-keeper. He's the one that leads us (Psalms 23) into what we **need**.

I love the story of the Israelites in the Old Testament and their relationship with the Lord- because it is kind of reminiscent to our Christian walk. The Israelites would go from zealously serving God or being miraculously delivered by God to complaining about being out in the desert! We do that too! One day- God is mighty to save; something comes up - and we just don't see how this will ever "work it self out". I love that God dealt with the Israelites about peace and taking matters into their own hands: -

Watch what happens in Isaiah 30:15 -16

This is what the Sovereign LORD, the Holy One of Israel, says "In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength, but you would have none of it. You said, 'No, we will flee on horses.' Therefore you will flee! You said, 'We will ride off on swift horses.' Therefore your pursuers will be swift!"

Our salvation comes from repentance and rest! Our strength comes from quietness and trust! Rest and Quietness = Peace?

But like the Israelites, we take things in our own hands- and we run from the God of peace, the God of rest, the God of hope. and what we need to do is run to Him- when things are chaotic, when things are difficult, when we are broken, when we don't have

peace. If you keep reading on down in Isaiah 30, verse 18 seems to be of a comfort for those of us who don't always run the right way:

18 Yet the LORD longs to be gracious to you; he rises to show you compassion. For the LORD is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for him!

HA! He **longs** (definition: to have an prolonged desire or unfulfilled need) to be gracious! He can't stand it- He wants to be good to us because that's what God is: good. He is the definition of good and that should bring us a sense of hope and peace.

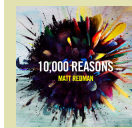
Anyway- I hope that throughout your month- whether you're in a trial, coming out of a trial- or all is good- you have a peace that passes all understanding.

My Worship Picks:

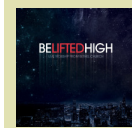
Here are a few of the latest worship releases that have made it to my Ipod- Look for them in stores or at amazon.com



William Matthews: Hope's Anthem. I absolutely love this CD! Fantastic mix of worship styles! Be listening at FCC for "This One Thing" and "I Just Want You more"



Matt Redman- 10000 Reasons! I absolutely love the song "Never Once"!



Bethel Live- Be Lifted High Best worship CD of the year for me! Fantastic worship songs like: You are Good, One Thing Remains, What Would I Have Done, Furious! Pick this one up!

Check out the worship blog for more: faithchristiancenterworship.blogspot.com

Defining Successful Parenting Part 2 - The Real Job of Dads

A dad's primary, underlying job isn't control. It's to **validate** every one of his children.

To validate means to let your child know over and over and over, through words and actions, that the following are true:

"Hey, you exist and you matter to me."
"You're good enough."
"You're an okay kid."

Psychotherapists sometimes talk about the **looking-glass-self principle**. It's the idea that children get their earliest, most lasting impressions of who they are from what's reflected back to them by their parents. These impressions become those "records" in the jukebox of your child's brain.

Let's say 4-year-old Johnny walks into the room where his dad is reading the newspaper, and Dad doesn't confirm Johnny's presence. Dad doesn't say, "Good to see you, son!" He doesn't even say, "Don't bother me. Can't you see I'm trying to read?" Johnny may begin to doubt his own existence.

It's like the old, philosophical question: If a tree falls in the forest and there's nobody around to hear it, did it make a noise?

In Johnny's case, the answer is no. His existence hasn't been validated by any response. He interprets that to mean, *I'm not an okay person*. This may be a totally wrong interpretation; his dad may not believe this for a second about his son, but this is how Johnny - and most children - will interpret this scenario. That's the way children's brains operate. That's often why children do bad things, as in these cases:

- *16 year-old Jenny barely saw her dad, thanks to his 12-hour days and golfing habit. He did give her a new computer, though, and thought that would be enough to show her he loved her. She used it to post suggestive photos of herself on MySpace. When her mom found out and tipped off Dad, he went ballistic and banned Jenny from using the computer for the rest of the year.*
- *15-year-old Ace saw his math grade going down the tubes, so he figured out a way to cheat on the final. He was desperate for a good grade because his dad only seemed proud of him when he did well in school. His cheating technique wasn't very practiced, though; he was caught and flunked the test and the course. As a result, Dad ruled that Ace would have to wait a whole year to take the driving lessons needed to get a license.*

- *13 year-old Bob remembered the fun he used to have playing chess with his dad. These days, though, Dad traveled all the time and buried himself in televised sports when he was home. Without asking, Bob borrowed his father's expensive chess set and took it to school for chess club. Somewhere along the way, he lost a few pieces. When he confessed, Dad yelled at him for being a "careless idiot." After that, Bob didn't think there was much chance the two would ever play chess again.*

In all these cases, a failure to do his job led a father to "clamp down" and substitute control for validation. That's a substitution that doesn't work.

Note, too, that by misbehaving these kids got **some** response - even if it was negative. By acting out, teenagers can affirm they exist and that their existence has impact on the world around them. Their lives have made "ripples in the water," so to speak. They get **something** from their parents, even if it's punishment.

To avoid that kind of acting out, remember: **A teenager needs as much of your time and attention as a toddler does**. In fact, a dad's validation is so critical to a child's emotional health that he or she will go to any length - and I do mean any - to get it, whether it's real or artificial.

What Validation Isn't

What do you think of the following example? Does it fall under the definition of validation or not?

Jason wanted to play basketball, but he was no star athlete. In fact, he never shot baskets at home and barely dragged himself to practice for the YMCA team, frequently skipping at the slightest excuse. At home he whined to his dad about how hard the coach made the players work, demanding extra running drills.

When games started and Jason spent most of his time on the bench, he got frustrated and decided to quit. His dad felt sorry for the boy and told him it was all right to drop off the team. "Some people just don't recognize natural talent," Dad assured Jason.

Is that validation?

And the answer is . . . no.

Validation doesn't mean lying. It doesn't mean telling me, "Great game, son!" when I really played poorly.

Many parents have so bought into the self-esteem movement that no matter who wins or loses the baseball tournament, everybody deserves a trophy. In a

feeble attempt to "validate" every player (and assuming the only way to do that is with a shiny cup), we end up extracting the genuine power and intention of true validation.

Just as validation has nothing to do with control, it has no relation to being a "softie" as a parent. You can be firm and strong and still validate your child. It means acknowledging your son or daughter, certifying his or her **existence**, affirming the person apart from the not-so-good performance.

Some fathers go to the opposite extreme, withholding validation when kids don't "measure up." Our culture is so conditional in its validation - affirming only those who've won fame or fortune, or been born (or surgically assisted) with "good" looks - that the same approach often creeps into our parenting. It's easy for a man to validate a good performance; it takes a lot more time and energy to see and value the human being in the absence of any performance and put it into words.

In a way, these forms of "invalid validation" are another attempt to control the way our kids turn out. We want them to grow up full of confidence, so we give even mediocre performances rave reviews. Or we want them to achieve, so we skip the praise so they'll try harder to earn it.

A dad's biggest job is to relinquish that kind of control and affirm that the existence of each of his children, with or without any great (or poor) performance, is acceptable. If you're a father, recognize that each of your children is worthy of being alive. **You** may know that, but each of your children needs to hear it from you.

Value that child as a person, even when disciplining an action or attitude. Make sure your child knows he or she is good enough for you.

Otherwise, when that tree falls in the forest, the silence will be deafening.

The best time to begin validating is the day you bring your baby home from the hospital. Parenting a teenager begins when he or she is born.

When he or she is **born**. Really.

But it's never too late to start. Do it often enough to cut a record in your teen's jukebox that says, "I'm okay. I'm good enough." If you can do that, trying to compensate with control won't be such a temptation.

Taken from *Losing Control & Liking It*, a Focus on the Family book published by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. Copyright © 2009, Focus on the Family. All rights reserved. International copyright secured. Used by Permission.