

A Word From Your Pastor

"But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit. Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life. Be merciful to those who doubt; snatch others from the fire and save them; to others show mercy, mixed with fear - hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh."

Jude 1:20-23 NIV

Is this a challenging time to be a parent? No question about it! Are parents today facing issues that would have been unthinkable to their grandparents' generation? Absolutely!

This month I would like to focus on the situations where the parents have tried to be consistent to keep their children in church, and to raise them in obedience to God's Word, only to see them leave home, leave the church, and sometimes even leave God. If we haven't experienced this yet ourselves, we certainly know of someone who has! How should a loving parent deal with such a child?

Jude dealt with false teachers who rejected the Lord, but his bold confrontation ends with an obvious wave of pity and compassion for those they were deceiving. In Jude 22,23 he gives us specific help to deal with three different types of rebels. Please Note: Much of this article will be taken from *"Leaving Home . . . And God"* by Rand Hummel.

1) Some Are Playing with Fire and Must Be Warned

Jude 1:22 - *"Be merciful to those who doubt;"*

You must show mercy to those whose faith is wavering. Show the same mercy and compassion that God has shown you. Hear your children out. Tell them why you believe what you believe rather than demanding blind allegiance. It is especially vital to help them see the flaws in the secularist reasoning that surrounds them. Solomon said, ***"My son, give me your heart."*** (Prov. 23:26) If you don't have the hearts of your children, you will never impact their lives. Through their times of doubt, they need patient listeners and Biblical direction.

2) Some Are Falling into the Fire and Must Be Helped

Jude 1:23a - *"snatch others from the fire and save them;"*
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Until kids are 18, you have the opportunity to put as many restraints and reminders in their paths as you can. They may *'dislike'* you for it at the time, but they will thank you later. Don't be afraid to lovingly limit their entertainment, filter their computers, or question the *'foolishness'* of their friends. Our fear of God and our love for our kids should motivate us to rescue them from even the possibility of God's judgment.

3) Some Are Being Burned by the Fire and Must Be Committed to the Lord's Grace:

Jude 23b - *"to others show mercy, mixed with fear - hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh."*

Even if your children have left home, they are never out of God's reach. When you pray, make sure God is the object of your faith. If He can change the heart of a king, He can change the heart of your child. Release your kids into His care to do whatever is necessary for them to be reconciled to Him - whatever is necessary. Be careful not to *'fund'* their sin, soften God's chastening hand, or rescue them out of the *'pigsty'*. (See Luke 15:11-32 - The Parable of the Prodigal Son) And always guard your own relationship with Christ!

Even the best parents will make mistakes, but in the end our children are responsible for their own choices. We can prepare our kids for judgment, but they will kneel alone before God. The only perfect Father is our Heavenly Father, yet consider how we treat Him. *"Lord, we need Your mercy for our kids and ourselves."*

There is quite a statement that God made about Abraham raising his family according to the Word. Please read Genesis 18:19 from the Amplified Bible: ***"For I have known (chosen, acknowledged) Abraham [as My own], so that he may teach***

and command his children and [the sons of] his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is righteous and just, so that the LORD may bring upon Abraham what He has promised him." We are truly blessed with wonderful families in our congregation!!

Abiding in the True Vine,
Pastor Mike

