

FAMILIES ADVANCING GOD'S MISSION

Part 4 of Forward: Leadership Lessons from Joshua. Joshua 24:14-15.
Peter Foxwell. Cornerstone Church. June 16, 2024.

THE TOUGHEST ASSIGNMENT

Christian parents face the toughest parenting assignment in history.

- The challenge is to raise Christian kids in a culture that no longer understands, supports, or tolerates authentic, biblical Christianity.
- A new religion now dominates: secularism.

THE SIGNS OF SECULAR RELIGION

There are four major signs of secular religions rise.

- Christianity has been pushed to the fringes of American life.
- The culture has abandoned truth, logic, and common sense.
- Individual autonomy and free expression have god-like status.
- It has infiltrated the church so that professed believers think it's acceptable to live like pagans.

THE NEW PAGANISM

Secular religion is not normal or neutral.

- This is not the history of the West or America.
- It is a state-sponsored revolution of beliefs and behaviors.

Secular religion has thrown the true God out.

- It has replaced Jesus Christ with false and demonic deities.
- It is neo-paganism.

THE BIG QUESTION

How can we raise our children to know, love, and follow Jesus?

- Friends, schools, clubs, media, and government are actively recruiting them into the new paganism.
- The answer is found in Joshua 24.

JOSHUA 24:14-15

These are Joshua's famous last words to Israel.

Joshua 24:14-15 (CSB) "Therefore, fear the LORD and worship him in sincerity and truth. Get rid of the gods your ancestors worshiped beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt, and worship the LORD.

15 But if it doesn't please you to worship the LORD, choose for yourselves today: Which will you worship — the gods your ancestors worshiped beyond the Euphrates River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living?

As for me and my family, we will worship the LORD."

Joshua's message to Israel was:

- A negative command: Get rid of your false gods.

Joshua 23:16 (CSB) "If you break the covenant of the LORD your God, which he commanded you, and go and serve other gods, and bow in worship to them, the LORD's anger will burn against you, and you will quickly disappear from this good land he has given you."

- A positive command: Fear and worship the true God.

Joshua 24:16-17 (CSB) The people replied, "We will certainly not abandon the LORD to worship other gods! 17 For the LORD our God brought us and our ancestors out of the land of Egypt, out of the place of slavery, and performed these great signs before our eyes. He also protected us all along the way we went and among all the peoples whose lands we traveled through."

- God blesses nations and families that faithfully serve him.

THE BLUEPRINT FOR CHRISTIAN PARENTS

Apply Joshua's commands.

- Purge every false god from your family - reject the ideas and lifestyles of neo-paganism.
- Lead your family to fear and worship God - be a distinctly Christian family.

Verse 15: "As for me and my family, we will worship the LORD."

Establish your home and family as an Embassy of Christ and his Kingdom.

- A deeply spiritual place.
- A gospel-saturated place.
- A holy place.
- A sheltered place.
- A hospitable refuge.

JESUS IS UP FOR THE CHALLENGE

Jesus never fails.

- He is with you, supporting, energizing, guiding.
- You can do all things through Christ who gives you strength.

Consider making this commitment or recommitment:

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, please give me strength to remove the false gods of neo-paganism from my life and home. Please give me more grace to lead my family to fear and worship you. Help me create an embassy of Christ and his Kingdom to raise kids who resist the godless culture and follow Jesus. Amen!

RAISING GODLY KIDS IN AN UNGODLY WORLD

Adapted from: <https://www.focusonthefamily.com/parenting/raising-godly-kids-in-an-ungodly-world/>

Godly kids need to understand moral relativism vs godly behavior. Moral relativism is the standard of the day. What's right or wrong for you is up to you, not me, and certainly not God. The problem with moral relativism is it is immoral.

Godly kids need to learn to use Jesus' words as the godly standard. First, talk about the teachings of Jesus regularly. Use everyday situations as opportunities for spiritual formation. The Christian faith is caught and taught, so model and instruct.

Godly kids need open dialogue with their parents. Conversations create a bridge of understanding what is ungodly and what is godly. Talk about cultural issues with your children. don't preach at them, but do ask a lot of good questions.

- What did you think about that scene in the movie?
- How did you feel when that man said _____ to that woman?
What do you think Jesus would want you to do in a similar situation?
- Ask clarifying questions such as, So, what did you mean when you said...?

Don't shame them with a negative reaction.

Godly kids need Jesus and the Gospel. Focus your teaching on God's plan of salvation in Christ. Remember, godly kids are not perfect kids, and they need grace and space to grow.

It's not helpful to talk to your kids with an angry tone. You don't teach grace and truth when you use derogatory labels in a cruel or hateful way.