

# Two Possible Outcomes for Your Children After High School

Richard Ross, PhD

## Possible Outcome One: Our Offspring Will Leave the Church after High School

". . . over 1 million youth at least nominally in the church today will choose to leave each year for the next three decades. Thirty-five million youth raised in families that call themselves Christians will say that they are not by 2050."

(Pew Research Center, the Baylor Religion Survey, Public Religion Research Institute, and the Gallup Annual Religion Surveys).

Researcher Kara Powell notes: "Across cultures, a major turning point for young people's faith seems to be high school graduation. Multiple studies highlight that 40 to 50 percent of youth group seniors—like the young people in your church—drift from God and the faith community after they graduate from high school."

## Which to which half will each of your children belong?

But half of church youth abandoning their faith is not the whole story. An additional 40 percent of youth group members will become lethargic church adults, showing little transformation and making little kingdom impact.

**Only 10 percent of the teenagers will become world-changing disciples for a lifetime.**

(George Barna, Christian Smith)

### God's Plan

". . . and that you may tell in the hearing of your son and your son's son the mighty things I have done in Egypt, and My signs which I have done among them, that you may know that I am the Lord" (Exodus 10:2).

"Tell your children about it, Let your children tell their children, and their children another generation" (Joel 1:3)

### Missing God's Plan

"So the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord which He had done for Israel" (Judges 2:7).

"When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the Lord nor the work which He had done for Israel" (Judges 2:10).

The parents had seen the mighty works of God. If their children did not know of those mighty acts, the only explanation is that the parents did not tell their children.

### The Results Missing God's Plan

"Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served the Baals; and they forsook the Lord God of their fathers . . ." (Judges 2:11).

"Yet they would not listen to their judges, but they played the harlot with other gods, and bowed down to them. They turned quickly from the way in which their fathers walked, in obeying the commandments of the Lord; they did not do so" (Judges 2:17).

If the parents do not teach their children the mighty works of God, it will be almost impossible for church leaders to make up the difference.

### **The "Doctrines" of This Culture**

- I. Identity**—You must be true to yourself. Look inside, see who you are, and be true to yourself.
- II. Happiness**—You should never sacrifice your happiness for anyone else. In the end, you cannot sacrifice your happiness for others.
- III. Freedom**—As long as you are not harming somebody, you should be free to live your life the way you choose.
- IV. Truth**—Truth is not objective. Many truth claims are socially constructed. Or, you go inside yourself to find truth. Then you come out and tell everyone that they have to accommodate your truth.
- V. Salvation**—Science is our salvation.
- VI. Sin**—The only sin is telling people they sin.

### **Your Children**

When your child is 18, what will be more important to you than anything?

When they are 28:

- As a single
- As a married person
- As a parent

When your child parents your grandchildren, what will be more important to you than anything?

### **Possible Outcome Two: Our Offspring Will Become 18-Year-Old Disciples**

#### **What Does an Eighteen-Year-Old Disciple Look Like?**

Matthew 22

35 And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him.

36 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?"

37 And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.

38 This is the great and first commandment.

39 And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

Matthew 28

18 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Matthew 6

9 Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

10 Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

1 Corinthians 10

31 So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

**An 18-Year-Old Disciple:**

- Loves God supremely
- Loves people sacrificially
- Makes disciples globally

**An 18-Year-Old Disciple Joins Other:**

1. Believers who love God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength.
2. Believers who love others more than they love themselves.
3. Believers who know their identity is in Christ and their purpose is to know, enjoy, and share the glory of God.
4. Believers who grasp more and more of the grandeur and majesty of the Son, enthroned at the right hand of the Father.
5. Believers who worship with awe intertwined with intimacy.
6. Believers who abide in Christ as branches infused by the vine.
7. Believers who embrace the spiritual disciplines and who pray in running conversations with Jesus through the day.
8. Believers who invite the Holy Spirit to fill their lives.
9. Believers who increasingly die to self and invite Christ to live through them.
10. Believers who know they exist to reflect Christ's sovereign rule and to join Him in bringing His kingdom on the earth.
11. Believers who joyfully serve out of gratitude for the gospel and Christ's completed work—who love Him because He first loved them.
12. Believers who feel no need to earn what already is theirs.
13. Believers who so love Jesus that they introduce others to Him.
14. Believers who increasingly become like Christ, thinking His thoughts, sharing His worldview, and demonstrating His sacrificial compassion.
15. Believers who make disciples who make disciples.

16. Believers who risk everything—comfort, possessions, security, family, and their very lives—to be abandoned to Jesus and to make the gospel known among all peoples.
17. Believers who have an allegiance to their King that far transcends their allegiance to the culture.
18. Believers who know how to search and interpret the Scriptures to discover more of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus.
19. Believers who can articulate, defend, and live out the faith that is in them.
20. Believers who look forward to adoring and reigning with King Jesus forever and ever.

**Vital Questions:**

1. Does your teenager know Jesus? Are you sure?
2. Does your teenager know he/she exists for God's glory—and the coming of His kingdom?
3. Does your teenager invite Christ to live through him/her?
4. Is your teenager seeking to discover and fulfill God's unique plan for his/her life?
5. Does living with you make it more likely all these answers are YES?

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