

BUILDING THE NEXT GENERATION ON A FOUNDATION OF BIBLICAL TRUTH

*"We will tell the next generation
the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord."* Psalm 78:4

Spring 2014



The article **"How to Raise a Pagan Kid in a Christian Home"** by Barrett Johnson is a warning to parents who are sincere in their desire to raise "good" Christian children but unintentionally may have set objectives for their children that have nothing to do with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

How can this happen? Johnson states: "Too many times, (Christian) parents have it as their goal to make their kids good and moral. It is as if the entire purpose of their family's spiritual life is to shape their children into law-abiding citizens who stay out of trouble. The only problem with this goal is that it runs in stark contrast to what the Bible teaches. The gospel is not about making bad people moral, but about *making dead people alive*. If we teach morality without the transforming power of the gospel, then we are raising moral pagans. We end up teaching morality, but not Christianity."

Johnson's comments were spurred by something he heard Phil Vischer, creator of the Veggie Tales series say. After ten years of writing Veggie Tales, Phil had a revelation that he had actually not been teaching kids Christianity in Veggie Tales at all. But instead had been teaching kids to try to behave like Christians whether they were or not. Phil was quoted as saying, "You can say, 'Hey kids, be more forgiving because the Bible says so,' or 'Hey kids, be more kind because the Bible says so!' But that isn't Christianity, it's morality.. . We're drinking a cocktail that's a mix of the Protestant work ethic, the American dream, and the gospel. And we've intertwined them so completely that we can't tell them apart anymore. Our gospel has become a gospel of following your dreams and being good so God will make all your dreams come true. It's the Oprah god."

So what are we to teach our children? Barrett Johnson points out: "Do you teach your kids 'be good because the Bible tells you to' or do you teach your kids that they will never be good without Christ's offer of grace? There is a huge difference. One leads to moralism; the other leads to brokenness. One leads to self-righteousness; the other leads to a life that realizes that Christ is everything and that nothing else matters. I want my kids to be good. We all do. But as our kids grow up, the truth of the gospel can easily get lost somewhere between salvation (where we know we need Jesus) and living life (where we say 'I've got this'). My experience is that the vast majority of parents are encouraging moral behavior in their kids so that God will bless their (usually self-centered) pursuits. It's the American Dream plus Jesus. And it produces good, moral pagans."

Do we measure our child's grow in grace with the question "Did my child behave him/herself?" as though their behavior is proof of our parenting skills or the child's spirituality. Or, is our measure of their lives that their faith is wrapped up in their *belief and trust in Christ's imputed righteousness and His paying the penalty for their sin. Since they have been made spiritually alive by the Lord's gracious act of regeneration, this enables them to lead holy lives by the power of the Holy Spirit* as they gratefully continue in the means of grace God has provided for His children.

Johnson concludes with these thoughts: "Because the world has enough pagans, even plenty of really nice ones, what we need are kids who fully grasp the reality that they have nothing to offer, but who intimately know a God who has everything they need."



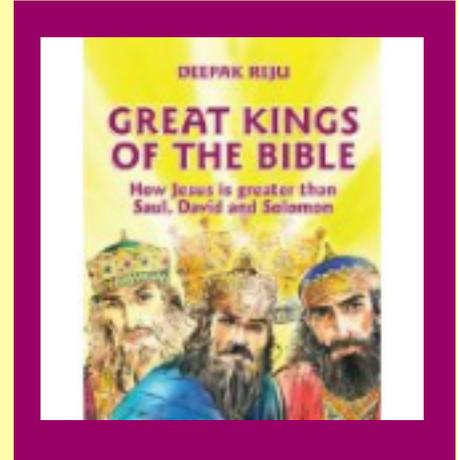
Recommended book:

“Great Kings of the Bible” by Deepak Reju

This book tells of the first three kings of Israel: Saul, David, and Solomon. They each ruled 40 years and made a great impact on Israel but all were plagued by sins.

Many years later a very different king would come born in a stable, serving the sick, poor and needy; without any sin. His greatest victory was his death on the cross and because of that God made him, the greatest of all king; the King of Kings.

This book was written to show kids contrast between the kings that men chose and hoped in and in the One True King – greater by far than all of them.



Available at the church office while our library is not accessible during Phase 2 remodeling.

Resurrection Biscuits

Help illustrate the empty tomb!

Ingredients:

- 1 pkg. refrigerated crescent dough
- 1 bag large marshmallows
- 1/2 cup butter, melted
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 2 tablespoons cinnamon

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees, and grease a muffin tin.
2. Prepare a small bowl of the melted butter (for dipping) and another small bowl with the cinnamon and sugar mixed (for dipping).
3. Separate crescent dough into triangles, and place a marshmallow on each one
4. Seal the edges of the dough around each marshmallow, and explain that it represents that tomb of Jesus that was securely sealed after he was buried inside.
5. Roll the dough in your hands to form a smooth circle
6. Dip the dough in the melted butter
7. Roll the dough in the cinnamon sugar mixture
8. Place each roll in your greased muffin tin
9. Bake for about 15 minutes.
10. Allow the “tombs” to cool slightly before children open them to see that they are empty (the marshmallow melts away and leaves an “empty tomb”)!

Read Matthew 28 and explain the significance of the empty tomb.

