

“...Having the eyes of your heart enlightened...” *Ephesians 1:18*

## Welcome Visitors!

You are our honored guests and we are pleased that you have chosen to visit us today. Our goal is to do everything according to God's word, including respecting its silence. This is a church of Christ; we are not a denomination, not part of anything larger than this local church and we have no earthly "headquarters." The five elders oversee this work and, ultimately, we answer only to Christ. The comments you hear today are primarily aimed at our own members, as we examine Scripture and seek to be built up in our faith in Christ. If you don't understand something, please do not hesitate to ask one of the elders. We welcome and appreciate your comments and questions on any issue and especially if you see or hear anything that you feel does not correspond to God's word. We are here to serve; please help us do that.

***Please fill out a visitor's card and put it in the collection plate. Thank You***

### Schedule

#### **The Lord's Day**

**9:30 – Classes**

**Auditorium: Deuteronomy**

**Room 13/14: Ruth**

**10:30 – Assembly**

**Speaking today: Jeff Herrin**

**2 PM Class at the Building**

**Room 13/14**

**Minor Prophets**

**5 PM (building)**

**"Gospel Preaching in the Early Church"**

**Weekly Young Adults Class**

**5 PM @ the Posey's**

**Tuesday, 10 AM**

**Ephesians: "Rich Kids"**

**Wednesday, 7 PM**

**Auditorium: Deuteronomy**

**Room 13/14: Ruth**

**Singing at the Folsom Care Center**

3rd Sunday each month at 3:15 PM (see Grant Mulligan)

**Men's Saturday Morning Meeting**

7 AM, second Saturday of the month (see Tyler Wade)

### Information

#### Children's Classes

We have classes for children from 18 months and up. Please see the map in the hallway or ask any of the members which room is appropriate for you and/or your child. There are several Bible studies in progress on Sunday afternoon and evening. Check with David Posey if you have questions.

#### Restrooms

There are two sets of restrooms: one off the first hallway to the right of the lobby and another at the end of the first hallway to the left. Ask anyone and they'll be happy to point you in the right direction.

#### For Small Children

There is a special room for nursing mothers and a separate "cry room" at the rear of the auditorium. You enter them from the first hallway to the right, across from the restrooms.

#### Online

You can find copies of class material and archives of previous editions of the View and listen to sermons online at [www.folsomchurch.com](http://www.folsomchurch.com). Find us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/folsomchurch>

#### View & Junior View

Be sure to pick up a copy of the View and Junior View; both are sent out weekly, plus there are some hard copies printed on Sundays.

“If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.”

I Corinthians 13:1-3

# Why Your Kids May Become Atheists No Matter What You Do (and Why That Shouldn't Discourage You)

BY NATASHA CRAIN

My 5-year-old and I were playing the game Connect Four the other day and, for the first time ever, she was in a position to beat me. I absolutely won't let my kids win a game for the sake of winning, but when I see that they've gotten into a position to win on their own, I'm willing to point it out (yes, I am *that* generous).

All my daughter had to do was put her checker in a specific spot and it would guarantee a win on her next turn.

I excitedly explained, "You're going to win! You did it on your own! I didn't let you win at all! Look. If you play right here, you are going to win on your next turn no matter where I play next."

She looked at it a minute and realized I was right. A guaranteed win if she played where I showed her.

Then she played somewhere else.

I was flabbergasted that my little girl, who has long been desperate to beat me at Connect Four, didn't take the guaranteed road to victory. I literally couldn't understand it.

I blurted out, "What are you doing?! You FINALLY could have really beaten mommy! WHY didn't you play where I showed you?"

She shrugged, then replied, "Because I wanted to play over here."

## Reminder: Our Kids Aren't Purely Rational Creatures

My daughter's response was positively *maddening* because it was so illogical. Why give up the win just because you "want" to play somewhere else? It didn't make sense.

But it made me reflect on the fact that humans are not purely rational creatures. There are all kinds of reasons why we make the decisions we make, and that includes the decisions we make about our spiritual life.

This is precisely why, *no matter what we do*, our kids may become atheists.

If you've been reading my blog for a while, you know I'm passionate about equipping Christian parents with an understanding of secular challenges and helping them address these with their kids. I strongly believe that if we aren't intentional in how we disciple kids today, we are failing them in the most important area of their lives. So does it sound contradictory that I'm now saying *no matter what we do*, our kids may become atheists?

It shouldn't.

It's simply an acknowledgment that even when we line up the checkers of truth and point clearly to how our kids can "win" spiritually, they may *choose* to do something else.

Dr. Gary Habermas has offered a framework that further illuminates this reality. He suggests there are three kinds of spiritual doubt that people deal with in determining their faith:

- **Intellectual doubt** is doubt about the facts of Christianity. It's when you question the information you have and/or are presented with new information that *makes* you question it. The intellectual challenges to faith are *everywhere* today, having been brought to the public's attention by vocal atheists like Richard Dawkins.
- **Emotional doubt** is doubt created by subjective feelings that aren't necessarily tied to the facts. For example, your child may understand 1 million important facts about the truth of Christianity, but after he or she loses a friend to a terrible disease, none of those facts may matter. The looming emotional question of why God could allow such a thing may be beyond the reach of all the intellectual reasoning in the world (at least for a period of time).
- **Volitional doubt** is choosing to doubt even when one doesn't have apparently reasonable cause to do so. It's analogous to my daughter choosing to play in the wrong place *just because* that's what she wanted to do. Pride is a significant factor here.

Research shows that the exodus of youth from Christianity today is primarily due to *intellectual* barriers to faith (see David Kinnaman's *You Lost Me*, for example). Kids are leaving home unprepared with basic *facts and information* about why there is good reason to believe Christianity is true and are subsequently losing their faith when they are presented with compelling information that challenges what they previously believed.

There is no excuse for Christian parents allowing their kids to leave home subject to so many intellectual doubts.

First Peter 3:15 tells us that we should *all* be prepared to give a reason for the hope we have. Not just people who happen to have a Master's degree in Theology or Apologetics. Not just people who happen to have some time and energy left over after taking their kids to their 13th extra-curricular activity for the week. *All of us.*

My book, *Keeping Your Kids on God's Side: 40 Conversations to Help Them Build a Lasting Faith*, is written explicitly for that purpose: to give parents the critical information they need to equip their kids with so their kids can encounter intellectual challenges with confidence. ▷

Does that mean our kids won't become atheists, as long as we give them enough information? Of course not. Remember, there are still emotional and volitional doubts that are part of the picture (as well as intellectual doubts that some will continue to have). We can help them build a lasting faith, but ultimately their faith is not in our control.

That said, we should never be discouraged away from putting all we can into our kids' spiritual development. Here's why.

(The following is an excerpt from the final paragraphs of my book.)

The time and consideration we give to our kids' faith development is an investment, not a purchase.

With a purchase, a person gives with the expectation of a certain and specific return.

With an investment, a person makes contributions, knowing that there is also a risk of that investment not resulting in the desired outcome.

Make no mistake: It's an investment of our training efforts that God has asked us to make with our kids (Deuteronomy 6:6-7). There are no guaranteed outcomes, as with a purchase. For a long time, I didn't fully grasp that difference. I envisioned certain outcomes for my children based on the effort I was putting into their spiritual development. When they didn't live up to my expectations, it resulted in my frustration and even anger. It made me not want to do anything more because it didn't seem worth it.

Then I realized one day that I was pursuing results, as if I could purchase those outcomes with the currency of my efforts. I was immediately convicted of the error in that thinking and realized I needed to become an investor. I felt liberated—newly free to do the job God has given me without the burden and illusion of control.

So go be an investor. Put in all you've got. Then pray that God will take that and make it grow, all for His glory.

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**Natasha Crain** is a national speaker, author, and blogger who is passionate about equipping Christian parents to raise their kids with an understanding of how to make a case for and defend their faith in an increasingly secular world. She is the author of two apologetics books for parents: *Talking with Your Kids about God* (2017) and *Keeping Your Kids on God's Side* (2016). Natasha has an MBA from UCLA and a certificate in Christian apologetics from Biola University. A former marketing executive and adjunct professor, she lives in Southern California with her husband and three children. She writes at [www.natashacrain.com](http://www.natashacrain.com)

## THE CULTURE COLUMN: FEAR

*According to a survey involving 20,000 teenage believers, failure and rejection are the king and queen of adolescent fears — nothing scares kids more than messing up.*

Therapists say that it is the meaning clients assign to the perceived failure that dictates how they experience it. "Much of the time it is actually fear of rejection or fear of disappointing others — parents or peers — that drives that fear."

In a world where young people are graded at almost everything — school, sports, even at home — mistakes feel like getting an "F" as a person. The teens fear will rise commensurate with the emphasis parents (or coaches, or peers) put on these things. Pressure builds when expectations of others increases.

For parents, it's like walking a tightrope. You want to encourage your kids to live up to their potential, without discouraging them. Or, to channel James Dobson, you want to shape their will without breaking their spirit. When we push too hard, kids will get scared, whether they show it or not (probably, not).

Ultimately, we're trying to lead them to a healthy place, where they realize that Jesus is their best friend, who will "never leave you or forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5) and embrace the promise of Hebrews 13:6,

So we can confidently say,

"The Lord is my helper;  
I will not fear;  
what can man do to me?"

Another acute fear among teens, associated with the fear of rejection, is the fear of loneliness. An article in *Group Magazine* suggests that there are two classes of teens in the church: (1) Those who have managed to build a network of solid friendships with people who see them and appreciate them and (2) those who go through their life feeling generally unseen and unappreciated by anyone.

The fear of being alone drives some kids to seek attention — to be *seen* — at any cost. That can lead to risky behaviors in order to fit in to some particular group.

I've often felt that the most dangerous psychological state for a young person is to feel insecure. Today's culture with its obsession with looks and other shallow criteria, along with broken homes and inattentive parents, leave many kids in the lurch, seeing acceptance, often from people who do not have their best interests at heart.

Loneliness is frightening at any age, which makes paying attention and presence with them a great gift.

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