

Question of the Month

Why are we REALLY losing our kids?

If you've been following our ministry for any length of time, you are probably well aware that we deal quite a bit with the phenomena of youth from Christian homes walking away from their faith before they finish college. Statistics indicate that currently two-thirds or more are leaving their beliefs by the wayside, many never to return. There's a very good chance that you or someone very close to you has had personal experience with this tragic trend.



It is a regular occurrence having parents approach me after a speaking event telling me, with tears in their eyes, their son or daughter was one of those who has walked away. I always feel very deeply for them, but I must admit that I am never surprised. Not because of anything about the parents themselves, but because this is becoming more and more common. What often happens next is they ask (not in these exact words), "Can you fix them?" What they usually mean is can I share some really interesting facts about creation that will help turn them around and bring them back. I wish it were that easy! These parents are always very sincere in their requests, but their understanding of the situation is often very skewed.

It has been my experience over the past 33 years that most who walk away did not do so mainly because of a contrary argument they heard, although this can be very significant in some cases. However, in most cases, something else was going on. I could write an entire book on this, and others have, but I will simply share a few thoughts regarding these situations.

As helpful as having an ability to confidently defend your faith might be, it is even more important to experience the reality of Christianity personally and believe in its incredible relevancy.

Something that really took me by surprise a few years ago is that even though I have been immersed in defending the Christian faith for well over 30 years, and I am acutely aware of youth walking away from their faith, I never stopped to ask myself, "Why didn't I walk away when challenged by my professors in college?" I ran into as much opposition, if not more, than most youth, so why didn't I walk away? Why did I instead, feel compelled to find evidence for what I believed? The answer came to me immediately—it was my relationship with my parents! It wasn't related to my education, my intelligence (or lack thereof), or anything else. I had so much respect for my parents that I didn't want to disappoint them, and I also never even for one second considered that what they or my pastor, taught me was wrong. I then reasoned that if what I believe was true, there had to be tons of supportive evidence, and I was determined to find it!

Here's the main point. I saw first-hand what the Christian life was like, first and foremost from my parents, then from my pastor and others at church. It was real, it was relevant, and it was tangible. My subsequent search for evidence served to further underscore what I already knew to be true and helped me explain and defend it to those who were skeptical (which was virtually everyone else I

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knew on campus, except for those in the Navigator's fellowship group I attended and a few other similar groups).

Here's the problem. Have you ever had someone ask you to give them something you didn't have? That's obviously impossible. So, what do we do as parents if we are trying to keep our kids from leaving the faith, but they don't see Christianity lived-out in our own lives? We are all in a panic Sunday morning because we might be late to church, and the car ride is often filled with tension and argumentation regarding any number of things. Then we get to church and are all smiles as we greet others, only to return to being stressed out again on the way home. Then, the rest of the week often has almost nothing to do with church or Christianity. Dad is working all the time. Mom is frustrated that he's never around to help out with the kids' homework or chores around the house. The kids often are either ruled by an iron fist, or perhaps, by parents that are too permissive and just want to be their kids "best friend". But then Sunday comes around again and it's a rush to get to church on time. And round and round we go. (I know this certainly does not represent every Christian home, but probably way too many.)

It's that kind of an environment that is fairly easy to walk away from. When the youth hear a multiplicity of reasons from their professors as to why the Bible is outdated and filled with errors and contradictions, they are often all too eager to latch onto those arguments and use them as weapons against their parents, whom they were told "don't know what they are talking about." And then little Johnny walks away. But he's not so little anymore, is he? He's in college and can make his own decisions, including giving up much of his faith, which was burdensome and kept him from doing all the fun things his friends are doing and living how he really wants to live. He's probably wanted that for quite some time, but could never justify it before, but now has an academic justification and is excited about it.

This article is too short to offer detailed solutions at this point, but I wanted to simply help parents better understand what might be actually happening in their children's lives, even before significant issues are exposed by the challenges of secular professors in the universities. I will have to save recommended actions for a future article.

This is such an important issue, so If you have any further questions about this or any other issue, please don't hesitate to [contact us!](#)