



The Good News

August 11th, 2019

Volume 19, Issue 31

Back to School

Edited and adapted by Michael McCleary

By Matt Smith (fellow Christian)

We're all familiar with the phrase "Back to school" to some degree, and it has different connotations to each of us depending upon our experiences as children and adolescents. The air begins to cool down, the leaves start to turn—and our children once again face an ever-increasing assault on their faith in God and their obedience to His will. To those of us who have reached multiple decades on this earth, the environment our children face on campuses is significantly different than what we went through as children. Never have there been more draws on the attention of adolescents, something we all know is already in short enough supply. Schools are not as attentive to children as they used to be, simply because there are more children per teacher. Their ability to discipline children has also been significantly reduced through social changes, which means those children now have less reason to adhere to the will of the instructors in class, on the playground, etc. Cell phones, laptops, notepads, etc., give our kids access to a world that is virtually impossible to censor properly. While we know the temptations and influences our children face are no different than the ones we faced—and likewise, the ones our predecessors have faced—there is no question that today's child faces these issues far more often than we did. Facebook; twitter; atheistic views/ opinions /teachings from school; these are just a few of the things our children face on what is becoming a minute-by-minute basis. If our difficulties as children in the past were a windstorm, our children today face a veritable hurricane of influences that are contrary to the will of God.

How do we handle this as parents? How do we deal with this as the true figures of authority in our children's lives? The things we teach our children and the time we use to do so are both more valuable now than they have ever been, simply because more of their time is taken up by outside influences and there

are scores more of those influences than we saw at their age. The defenses against this onslaught are, however, no different than they were for our parents when they taught us. The only way any of us, including our children, will successfully navigate this life is through faith in God the Father. As such, helping our children to develop that faith is still the most effective means of combating the influences we wish to keep from shaping and molding the minds and hearts of our children. They need to know the will of God in order to obey it. They need to be strong in their faith to help them better withstand the efforts of others to pull them away from God.

Prov. 3:5,6. Because we are fighting for our children's attention more now than we ever have, we need to be more consistently faithful ourselves than ever before as well. Sitting down with our children each day, even for just ten or twenty minutes, and reading the bible with them will help make that a more prominent part of their lives. Just as important, however, is the need for us to be earnestly faithful individuals. If our children see us relying not on our own wisdom, but that of the Lord, they will be more likely to do the same when they face difficulties of their own. We must be more than weekend Christians; we must live the life we teach them to live, and in doing so, our children will see honesty from us, not a contradiction. They will see that turning to God does provide answers to life's questions. Most importantly, however, is the fact that living in God's will on a continual basis is a form of teaching all its own, and our children *will* see it. Actions do indeed speak louder than words, as James 2:17,18 tells us. We can teach our children every single moment they're in our presence by being the kind of people we want them to emulate. We can teach them by living the life God has asked us to live. Our children will need that kind of influence more and more.