

# The Gospel Unashamed

"From the cowardice that shrinks from new truth, from the laziness that is content with half-truths, from the arrogance that thinks it knows all truth, O, God of Truth, deliver us."

*A Controversial Newsletter "The Printed Voice of Summit Theological Seminary"*

~ All articles are written by George L. Faull, Rel. D. unless otherwise stated ~

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George L. Faull, Editor

## Hyper-Grace

--By Terry Carter

There is a teaching that has gained popularity in the religious world in recent years. It is called, "hyper-grace".

In a nutshell, this is the teaching that all sin has been forgiven for the Christian, whether it is past, present, or future sin. Since even future sins have been forgiven already, a Christian does not need to confess their sin to be forgiven.

There are some who have used this teaching to turn grace into a license to sin.

"For certain individuals whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. **They are ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into a license for immorality** and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord." **Jude 4 NIV**

However, others who teach this admit that we still need to work at being sanctified people. Often, they are not very specific about what would happen if you fail to do this.

Would they still be saved since their sins are already forgiven? Would they lose their salvation? I'm not clear on their position here.

However, these questions need to be addressed clearly if you are going to take the position that our future sins are already forgiven.

When I type "forgiveness of future sins" into Google, the first search result is a link to an article on [www.billygraham.org](http://www.billygraham.org).

In response to a question, the first line of the answer says, "*One of the Bible's greatest truths is that Christ died to take away all our sins-not just part of them, but all of them: past, present, and future.*"

I am not surprised that this teaching is common in the denominational world. However, I am surprised at just how common it is getting to be in our brotherhood.

Those in our brotherhood that I have come across have not come to all the same conclusions as others. However, their starting premise is identical.

If the conclusions we reach are not the same, we must explain carefully why our conclusions are correct and those of others is not.

I think there are many problems with the idea that our future sins are already forgiven. Let me explore just a few of them here.

**First**, I know of no Scripture that even hints at the idea that our future sins are forgiven.

I'm not even sure that it makes sense logically to talk about sins being forgiven before they are even committed. Often an appeal is made to the doctrine of justification rather than citing a particular verse to

support such a position. There is no verse that makes such a claim.

It is a conclusion that they infer from verses that speak about our justification. For example, some have appealed to **Romans 8:1** - "**Therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus**, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit." (**NKJV**)

They point out that there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ. They conclude from this that our future sins must already be forgiven.

The text itself says nothing of the sort. In fact, that statement is qualified by the second half of the verse. In order for there to be no condemnation, two requirements must be met.

**First**, we must be in Christ Jesus.

**Second**, we must not be walking according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

What happens if we are walking according to the flesh? Are our sins already forgiven or do we stand condemned? Is repentance and confession required in order to avoid condemnation or are they optional?

Incidentally, walking according to the flesh or the Spirit is not about any one particular thing we might, or might not do. It is about our general way of living, our general direction in life.

Another verse that is appealed to, is

**I John 1:7** - "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and **the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.**" (NKJV)

Here the word "all" is emphasized. They infer that this means past, present, and future sins. But again, the text says nothing of the sort. The verse says nothing at all about the timing of the forgiveness in relation to the commission of the sin that is forgiven. What the verse does speak to is the ongoing cleansing of sin that is available to a Christian who is walking in the light as He is in the light.

As in the previous verse, this is a requirement that must be met for this ongoing cleansing to be available. The previous verse states that if we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.

**"If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth."** I John 1:6 (NKJV)

Once again, walking in the light or darkness is not about any one thing we might or might not do. It is about our general way of living. If we are living as we ought to live, we enjoy continual, ongoing cleansing of sin. The very fact that a Christian needs such cleansing indicates that they do sin and that sin needs to be forgiven, or cleansed. No cleansing would be necessary if forgiveness had already been granted prior to the sin being committed.

To deny that you have sin that needs to be forgiven is to deceive yourself and make God a liar. This is why there is a need for confession of our sins for the ongoing, continual cleansing that we require.

**"8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves,** and the truth is not in us. **9 If we confess our sins,** He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. **10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him**

**a liar,** and His word is not in us." I John 1:8-10 (NKJV)

Why would we care whether He is faithful to forgive our sins and cleanse us if we have already been forgiven and cleansed before we ever commit the sin? The truth is that even Christians need forgiveness and cleansing on an ongoing, continual basis. To suggest otherwise is to be deceived and to make God a liar.

**Second,** there are several verses which indicate that Christians need forgiveness after, or when, they sin. That would not be possible if their sins had already been forgiven before they were committed. We have already looked at **I John 1:9** and we will say more about it later. Let's look at a few others.

"And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. **And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.**" James 5:15 (NKJV)

How could it be true that "he will be forgiven" if he has already been forgiven? Clearly this is addressing a Christian who has sinned and needs forgiveness.

A few verses later, we also see that it is possible for a Christian who has sinned to need to be covered. One among them who has wandered from the truth needs to be turned from the error of his ways. When this happens, a soul is saved from death and a multitude of sins are covered. How is this possible if his sins were forgiven before he ever committed them?

**"19 Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth,** and someone turns him back, **20 let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins."** James 5:19-20 (NKJV)

Why would Paul need to pray that it not be charged against those who forsook him at his first defense if they had already been forgiven before they

forsook him? The clear implication is that they were in need of forgiveness for this offense. Paul is asking for their forgiveness.

**"At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them."** II Timothy 4:16 (NKJV)

**Third,** it seems to me that many who hold this position have adopted it as an overreaction to another false teaching. That is, they are opposed to the idea that when a Christian sins, they are no longer in a saved state. To return to a saved state, they must confess that sin and then they will be saved again until the next sin. This is obviously a false concept of what it means to be a Christian. But it is not necessary to posit that our future sins are forgiven in order to oppose such a false idea.

We have already seen that the context of **I John 1:9** is about our general way of living. The verse is not talking about a need to confess each and every sin in order to move back from an unsaved state to a saved state. Nothing of the sort is implied in these verses. The idea is that we remain in Christ. That is, we remain in a covenant relationship with God through Christ.

To illustrate this, consider the covenant relationship of marriage. It is not true that every time you do something wrong, you are no longer married until you make amends. However, if you never admit that you do what is wrong, the marriage will eventually be broken. In fact, it may remain broken until you are willing to admit your missteps and repent of them.

Similarly, it is simply not true that each individual sin puts a Christian into an unsaved state until they confess that specific sin and repent. However, failure to admit that you are a sinner will eventually break the covenant relationship with God. That covenant relationship will remain broken until we confess that we have sinned and need forgiveness. When we do that and repent of our sins, we

are once again "walking in the light". Forgiveness and cleansing are then available once again on an ongoing and continual basis.

It is important to see that the connection between confession and forgiveness is not something unique to the New Testament. This was also the case in the Old Testament. I've listed just a few of many passages from the Old Testament that illustrate this.

**"He who covers his sins will not prosper, But whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy." Proverbs 28:13 (NKJV)**

"I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," And You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah" **Psalms 32:5 (NKJV)**

**"2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin. 3 For I acknowledge my transgressions, And my sin is always before me." Psalms 51:2-3 (NKJV)**

"12 "Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say: 'Return, backsliding Israel,' says the LORD; 'I will not cause My anger to fall on you. For I am merciful,' says the LORD; 'I will not remain angry forever. 13 **Only acknowledge your iniquity, That you have transgressed against the LORD your God, And have scattered your charms to alien deities under every green tree, And you have not obeyed My voice,' says the LORD. 14 "Return, O backsliding children," says the LORD; "for I am married to you. I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion." Jeremiah 3:12-14 (NKJV)**

**"I will return again to My place Till they acknowledge their offense. Then they will seek My face; In their affliction they will earnestly seek Me." Hosea 5:15 (NKJV)**

The Hosea passage is especially important as it demonstrates that

even people who were in a covenant relationship with God would not receive forgiveness until they acknowledged their sin. The same can be said of the Jeremiah passage.

An important part of offering sacrifice for sins was confessing your sins over the sacrifice. Aaron was to confess the sins of Israel over the scapegoat each year before releasing it into the wilderness so that he might bear the iniquities unto a land not inhabited.

**"21 "Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and shall send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a suitable man. 22 "The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to an uninhabited land; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness." Leviticus 16:21-22 (NKJV)**

This was for those who were in a covenant relationship with God. Jesus is our scapegoat. He bears our iniquities when we confess our sins to Him.

There is no need to invent new theories that go beyond what the Scriptures actually say. Further, we must not adopt theories that contradict what the Scriptures do say.

The bottom line is that in Christ we have forgiveness. However, we must remain in Christ to enjoy that blessing. That is how a covenant relationship works. Confession of sin and repentance is part of what is required to remain in Christ.

There is no need for hyper-grace. God's grace was sufficient for Paul and it is sufficient for us.

**"And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." II Corinthians 12:9 (NKJV)**

## **Baptism is not for Christians, but Sinners!**

**--By George L. Faull**

When one is immersed into Jesus Christ, it is the last thing a sinner does, not the first thing a Christian does!!!

One does not baptize a Christian, but rather, you baptize an unforgiven sinner. **(Acts 2:38)** If one has obeyed from the heart the form of doctrine (teaching), of the Gospel (Jesus died, was buried, and was risen) that he heard as a servant of sin, he was then made free from sin to become a servant of righteousness and God, he will not receive the wages of sin (death) but rather, the Gift of God, which is eternal life. **Romans 6:17-23**

He has obeyed the Gospel – **2 Thessalonians 1:7-10** and will not be damned. **(Mark 16:16)** Assuming he has been an overcomer.

In the drama of dying and raising with Christ, the one baptized plays the role of a dead man. He does no work, any more than a dead man does. He died and was planted together in the likeness of Christ's death and he arose from the watery grave in the likeness of Christ's resurrection. He arose as a new creature, free from sin, with the purpose of no longer serving sin. He died with Christ and is free from sin. **Romans 6:3-8.**

This being true, the old man is to consider himself dead to sin, but alive to God through Christ Jesus, our Lord.

So now sin is not to reign over him, nor his bodily members to be used as instruments of unrighteousness. Sin no longer has dominion over him, nor does the Law, but rather, God's grace.

So, we are not any longer to willfully sin. We may fall down, but we do not lay down. This is the clear teaching of baptism despite the fact some well-

known commentators say there is not a drop of water in **Romans Chapter 6**. But what else can one say and hold the doctrine that baptism has nothing to do with salvation? To find no water in **Romans 6** is to find no orange juice in an orange.

Surely, they twist this Scripture to their own damnation and their hearers' condemnation, as they do the other Scriptures.

Many of our friends' gospel is not their death, burial, and resurrection equaling salvation, but rather, salvation and then years later a drama of death, burial and resurrection. They believe you're to bury those already saved. It is a strange doctrine to bury the LIVING, rather than the dead. It presents another Gospel and perverts the drama of the true Gospel of salvation.

It is, "He that believeth and is baptized" that is saved, not he that believeth and is saved should be baptized.

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## Dear Brother Faull,

Do you believe the new doctrine many of the brethren have been preaching lately, that baptism forgives our past, present, and future sins?

I never heard the doctrine until the last couple of years and wonder what you think.

### Answer:

I believe that the Scriptures speaking of our baptism refers to our past sins. I never heard of this new doctrine till about 5 years ago, but I have heard it preached 3 or 4 times since by some great friends of mine.

I believe it is a false conclusion and a very dangerous doctrine causing much misunderstanding and confusion.

Remission of future sins and baptism is neither promised nor stated in any verse of which I am familiar. So, I cannot believe it for faith comes by hearing and one does not hear "Your sins in the future will be forgiven you".

The only promise that I know of that promise come years later in medieval days by those selling indulgences which so grieved Martin Luther.

If this new doctrine is true that one is forgiven as soon as he sins, with neither Godly sorrow that leads to repentance, nor an acknowledgement of being a sinner, it seems our Catholic friends, when selling indulgences, were selling snowballs to Eskimo's.

I've never read where the new doctrine was used to refute the need of buying an indulgence. If the new doctrine is true, indulgences would be unnecessary as snowballs to Eskimo's.

When we were baptized, we entered into a relationship with the one who died for us. It is like marriage between a man and a woman. It is not the vows said at the marriage that grants forgiveness when one sins against the mate. It is because of the

relationship that exists between them in marriage that there is forgiveness.

For a person to not repent or even acknowledge wrongdoing will not strengthen the relationship but doing so makes the relationship an open loving reality. The same is true of our baptism. It is not that original act that forgives us, but the continued relationship we have that is maintained by confession of our sins and the repenting of them.

Someone who says that "the remission of sins" means all past, present, and future sins are forgiven, is not right. John baptized for the remission of sins. Was John's baptism for the remission of past, present, and future sins?

**Mark 1:4**, "John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." Why were his converts then baptized into Christ?

And how do we practice **Matthew 18:15-17** on a brother that God has already forgiven when we go to him?

How do we gain the brother and how do we confront him before one or two witnesses if he is already forgiven? Why would we tell the Church if God has already forgiven him? This doctrine would nullify Matthew 18's instructions.

Or how about one who sins against us and when he says, "I repent", forgive him when God has already forgiven him? Does God forgive him but not us?

**Luke 17:4**, "And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him." What if he will not repent? Did God forgive him without acknowledging his sin?

Or how do we disfellowship an unrepentant person for sins that God has already forgiven?

**1 Corinthians 5:7-13**, "7 Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened.

For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: 8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened *bread* of sincerity and truth. 9 I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: 10 Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. 11 But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. 12 For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? 13 But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person." The doctrine is incompatible with Church discipline.

Why pray for the brother who is committing the "sin not unto death" if he is already forgiven?

**1 John 5:16**, "If any man see his brother sin a sin *which is* not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death? Why pray for one already forgiven?"

Or, why does a forgiven man need an advocate if he is already forgiven of the sin?

**1 John 2:1-2**, "1 My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of the whole world.*"

And what shall we say of one who commits suicide? Shall we teach a Christian who is struggling with depression, "all the sins you ever committed since your baptism will be forgiven"?

Will it not embolden troubled souls to commit suicide? To do so is to forget that God has taught "...you know that

no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." **1 John 3:15**

When Simon, the sorcerer did what the Samaritans did he "believed and was baptized **also**"? He did what the others did. But when he tried to purchase the power to give the Holy Spirit... "20 But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. 21 Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. 22 **Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.** 23 For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and *in* the bond of iniquity. 24 Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me." --**Acts 8:20-24**

Why were his sins not already forgiven? He was told to repent and pray to God. He sinned and thus repentance and confession in prayer was needed to open the gates for cleansing of his sins. Likewise, why did Jesus command the churches of Asia Minor to repent? **Revelation 2:5, 16, 22, 3:3, 19**. Were the guilty individuals already forgiven? To teach the sins of Christians who are already forgiven because of their original baptism, is a dangerous doctrine.

Any man I have heard preach it, keeps insisting he is not preaching "Eternal Security", but that is what it is because the doctrine cannot help but lead to that conclusion. Every time I have told someone of this new doctrine, the people say, "Well, that would be Eternal Security" or "once in grace, always in grace"!

Baptism is the point of pardon for the lost but it's our relationship to the Saviour while we are walking in the light as He is in the light, that cleanses us for all sins. If we say we do not sin, we deceive ourselves but when we acknowledge we are sinners, we can trust Him to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Why? Because we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous one!

## Seeker Sensitive

--By Terry Carter

Today, everybody is talking about being "seeker sensitive". That usually means that you are concerned about how non-Christians will perceive your worship service.

Every effort is made to impress them and make them feel comfortable. This is all done in hopes that they will return and eventually become members.

There are books and articles about how to be more "seeker sensitive". Seminars are held on the topic. You can even buy books of sermons for seekers.

It's not a bad thing to be seeker sensitive as long as you are not seeker driven. It's good to be concerned about how unbelievers feel about your services. The problem is, that many are more concerned about how unbelievers like their service than they are about how God likes it. They would rather impress non-Christians than the Lord.

God is also concerned about the unbeliever's reaction to our services. However, His perspective is somewhat different from what you read in many of the popular books today.

You can see God's perspective on this issue in **1 Corinthians 14:23-25**, "23 If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in [those that are] unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad? 24 But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or [one] unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: 25 And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on [his] face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth."

The word for "convinced" in verse 24 means "to convict or refute". It is the same word used in **John 16:8**, "8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness,

and of judgment". It has the idea of exposing and correcting a fault. That is not exactly something that makes a person comfortable.

But look at the results of bringing someone to conviction. They worship God and declare that God is among you.

Are we really concerned about the souls of the unbelievers, or are we more interested in attracting them to our nice little social club? To convert, you must first convict. That's what the Holy Spirit does to the world, **John 16:8-11**.

Is the Spirit working in our services?

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## Where are the Children?

--By Tabitha

**Deuteronomy 31:10-13**, "And Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles, 11 When all Israel is come to appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law **before all Israel in their hearing**. 12 **Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the LORD your God, and observe to do all the words of this law: 13 And that their children, which have not known any thing, may hear, and learn to fear the LORD your God**, as long as ye live in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it."

**Nehemiah 8:2-3**, "And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation **both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding**, upon the first day of the seventh month. 3 And he read therein before the street that was before the water gate from the morning until midday, **before the men and the women, and those that could understand**; and the ears of all the people were *attentive* unto the book of the law."

As Moses instructed the people at the end of the Jubilee during the feast of tabernacles, to gather all the people together; men, women, children, and the stranger in their land, to hear the words written in the Law, it also tells us WHY he was told to do so; "That they and their (future) children **would "learn" and "fear the Lord our God" and "observe to obey the Law"**.

One was a gathering done at the end of the Jubilee, which was on the 50<sup>th</sup> year, the other a restoration of worship.

But this example was not just in the Old Testament, it is in the New Testament, as well. In **Matthew 14:21**

and **Matthew 15:38** it gives the account when Jesus was feeding the multitudes that the men were not the only ones mentioned, it also states "...**besides women and children...**" were amongst the gathering. Families were **together** hearing the Master speak, seeing the apostles taking bread to the companies, and serving the Lord.

God's wisdom on gathering ALL the people together shows these benefits: 1 - God wanted all to hear the "same" instructions.

2 - God wanted the people and children to hear and obey His Words.

3 - God wanted the children to learn to fear (respect) our God.

4 - God wanted the leaders to pass along His message to the people so what was being taught daily within their individual families would give confirmation of truth and training.

5 - God did not want anyone to say, "I didn't know that".

6 - God provided validity to the children what the parents were instructing them individually.

7 - God provided a way for the strangers to know that His people were different and obeyed His instructions.

8 - God wanted to confirm that His appointed leaders were to be listened to and respected.

In many congregations I have visited, I don't see the children in worship services; and if I do, it's not for very long before they are ushered out to their individualized classes or to practice for plays or challenging games.



One church website I visited posted the following information for their worship services (Exact Quote):

*"For Kids Ages 4yrs-5th Grade - We have Jr. Church, where during the first hour, they have a mini-service*

*built just for them. Their service prepares them for the future by mimicking the adult service in the worship elements included: songs, offering, communion, and a "sermon" message that is, of course, geared towards children and presented on their level. Then during the ABF/Sunday School Hour, they head to classes, divided by age group."*

Why would children 4 years old thru the 5<sup>th</sup> grade have a "separate" worship service for their OWN level? (Didn't they just have that type of level given for them during the Sunday school hour?) This is not the example shown in God's Word and certainly is not training them to honor those who are their elders, nor seeing how they should progress as they mature.

Is it any wonder that we are seeing many of the youth who do not show respect, relate to or fellowship with older folk; who want to bring in a snack and a drink in the assembly (that's how they've been trained), or drop out of Church altogether? I am sure that those Church leaders are not intentionally trying to do harm, but there is a division being made here when **unity** should be the goal. (This, of course, does not include the newborn and very young babies who are not able to control their behavior as they are of no understanding yet about discipline at those ages.)

Separating the children and/or groups from the adults during the main Worship Services raises some concerns:

#1 – It divides.

#2 – Children are not seeing how the adult worship service is to take place - which is to be done "decently and in order". **1 Corinthians 14:40**, "Let all things be done decently and in order."

#3 – Children are being taught in a different environment therefore will cause them not to wish to be amongst the adults for worship because it's "not done like they're used to it".

#4 – Youth services usually have "fun" involved to keep the children attending; but what one wins them with, is what they will lose them with.

#5 – The adults do not get to have the vivaciousness of the youth among them.

#6 – The children do not have the wisdom and experience of older generations to help guide, mentor, or teach them.

#7 – Children will have little respect for the leadership or elderly if they are only amongst their own peers.

#8 – It is not training them the true way God intended His Word to be received. "Let the older men teach the younger, let the older women teach the younger." **Titus 2:4**

It should be noticed that God intended all the ages of people to be together where the Word of God is being spoken by the leaders. No division or separation into groups or individual age classes have been noted in Scripture.

I witnessed a few parents who visited the congregation I am currently in ask if we had "children's church". They were told that we did not, and we never saw them again.

Many people are seeking a place where they can take their children during services. It almost seems like they desire to have their children babysat for an hour or two instead of having a family unit worshipping together.



What is the purpose of children's church? Most would say it is to teach the children on "their level of understanding". Scriptures teach that this should be done in the home by the parents.

Coming together as an assembly should be the whole congregation being taught the same thing; where everyone is hearing the same message and children would hear the leaders confirm what parents may

have been trying to teach them at home.

Years ago, one mother told me that she wanted her child in a children's service because he would not mind her and always acted up, therefore not allowing her to get anything out of the message herself.

She was a friend of mine, so I politely told her that her young son should receive training outside of the Church service in the home to learn how to behave during services when they attend. She was a widow, had not remarried, and had a full-time job, which she said exhausted her so much that she had little time to do any training outside of the home. So, at each Church service she would sit out in the eating area where people usually end up talking and her son would go outside and climb in the trees.

Whether she kept her son with her or placed him in a separate class for his age group, the situation would have still been unresolved, and the same problem would only be moved geographically to another class where he may interrupt a whole classroom of kids and dishevel the teacher. One situation may be resolved, but a worse one would have been created.

Years have gone by and that boy is now a young man who does not even attend services and if he does come, he does not go into the main assembly but sits out in the other area talking to others or roaming around and texting. Wasn't that what he was trained to do?

How will the children know who the Shepherds are, their duties, and be able to trust Godly mentors (should they have a need to talk with someone outside the family home)?

Then again, another friend of mine called me very concerned because her children did not attend the Children's Church and the other parents were constantly putting her down and making her feel "guilty" for not sending them to the children's services. She and her husband train

their children Biblically at home and the children's services were more about games and having fun rather than learning God's Word.

Christian members were treating my friend like she was damaging her children when she and her husband were the ones trying to honor God's example in how to train and raise their children.

Young people today should be hearing the same message from the Master's Word, learning to fear (respect) the Lord, and seeing the communion plate being served to the saints by those designated to do so (possibly their own father or grandfather). There should be order, balance, respect for authority and leadership, and something to look forward to being part of in the future. Satan delights in division.

### Something To Think About...

**Member:** We haven't seen you much in the past several years, you were usually in with the youth programs, so we thought you were with them.

**Young Man:** Yea - it's been a while since I've attended services here. I used to go to the services for us kids but after a while it seemed as though it was only about games, like they didn't really care about teaching Scripture or much Spiritual growth.

**Member:** You didn't get any Bible lessons?

**Young Man:** Well, sure, but it was the same old popular Bible stories... Jonah and the whale, Samson and his strength, Joseph in jail in Egypt, Noah and the flood....

**Member:** Yes, I guess I see your point.

**Young Man:** You know that my dad died a few months back.

**Member:** Yes, I know. That's the last time I saw you – at his visitation.

**Young Man:** I didn't feel like talking much then. I've had a lot of things I've thought about since he passed. I guess now I'm wanting to be closer to

the Lord – to see if He has the answer to the emptiness I feel.

**Member:** I understand, and I know He does.

**Young Man:** Do you know what really hurts?

**Member:** Your dad's presence at home?

**Young Man:** No. So many things I missed out because I was around my friends in all the services. I will never get to see my dad do any communion meditations or taking up the offering on Sunday mornings when it was his turn. I won't be able to take the Lord's Supper with him on the Lord's Day. These are things I can't get back and I regret the past years when I should have been with him, learning from him because he knew so much about the Bible.

**Member:** I'm sorry but I see what you mean. You know you didn't have to go to the Children's programs and services.

**Young Man:** Yea, I know but you don't think of it like that at the time. I wanted to be with my friends and thought it was old-fashioned to sit with my dad and family – that wasn't "cool". Now I find after coming back that all but 2 of my friends have left the faith totally. Those who were in the youth programs have really gone a different path.

**Member:** You're right. We've noticed we've lost a lot of the youth, which has been a concern for several of us lately. We just don't understand why.

**Young Man:** I don't know. I doubt if I would have come back if this had not have happened to my dad. I was having a great time just having fun; I didn't need the Lord. But now, the empty feeling I have inside, I wanted to come and be in the place where God's people were; to see if God would help me.

**Member:** The Lord's arms are always willing to welcome back one of His children. I am so glad you

decided to join us today. If you seek, you will find, if you ask, He will give an answer, and if you knock, the door will be opened unto you...

**Young Man:** That's a song we used to sing, isn't it? I think my dad used to read that to me from the Bible. At that age, I didn't know exactly what it meant. Now I know I won't ever be able to ask him Bible questions. All that is gone. I won't be able to hear dad singing, watch him prepare to give his tithe for the offering, or even teach a lesson for Sunday school.

**Member:** Well, maybe this is an eye opener for all of us. Well, son, I really need to get ready to teach for the Sunday school hour. Look me up after services. I would like to talk more with you, if you don't mind.

**Young Man:** That would be nice. My dad always looked up to you and I heard him a few times on the phone asking for your advice. I appreciate it.

### Something to Notice:

See what kids would be missing out during their youth if they would not be amongst their family? In a blink of an eye, it's gone; time we can't ever get back. Not to mention your children are not always going to be little – they grow up so fast and then they're on their own.

What have you trained your children in life? Do You trust God and His example or a kids' feelings and what they want to do?

Why not obey the example from Scripture and have all your family (and any friends staying at your home) join you in the assembly with the rest of the saints?

It's not the responsibility of the Church to train the children and the act of discipline was never given to anyone else; that is all delegated to the parents, by God.

Shouldn't we follow the Biblical design and train the children in the home and equip them in the ways of God? If we honor God's Word and how teaching and training occurs, services and lives would be far different.

Where are YOUR children during worship hours?