

Dear Parents/Youth Sponsors/Prayer Parents,

It is amazing to think of the individuals which have shaped the way that we have viewed life. For some it is a coach who made them go the extra mile, a teacher who wouldn't give up, or a boss who corrected us along the way. These individuals do not know the impact that they have made upon our lives. It is easy as a parent or a youth leader to not realize the difference we are making for the Kingdom of God. We are often confused at the process and wonder if the most important lessons will ever be realized. If we are not careful we will become burned out or frustrated. We may lose our temper, cool, or even interest. But there is nothing more that our kids need in their life than a Godly role model. An individual who is showing them that faith in Christ is not a cliché, but is real and dynamic. I do want us to consider this too: Those who influenced you the most, did you know it at that time?

So often children and teenagers seem ungrateful or unaffected because they have not pieced everything together. It hasn't been until the past couple of years that I have looked back and said "Wow, they had a huge influence on my life!". Even though the following verses was in concern to Church division, it also speaks to the process of Christian maturity and the role that leaders play.

1 Cor. 3:6-9 says, I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, [ye are] God's building."

As a parent, youth sponsor, or prayer parent, we should be encouraged to know that even though we may not see the fruit of our labors that we have had the chance to be part of the process in God's plan. The real question though is do we (1) realize that truth and (2) do we act upon that truth? God has placed us as stewards in the lives of our children. Is our home a home which has God first and follows after Him? Do we set aside time each day to specifically focus on what He has done and look for opportunities to teach them more about God? Joshua 24:15 says, "...but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

Does this sound overwhelming? Yes! But that is why we are not to do it on our own. It is to be done through the power of Christ who lives within us and has given us the Holy Spirit. We need to be connected first to Him and allow His grace to overflow out of our lives into their lives. We should seek for every opportunity to share the love of God. Whether it is a word of encouragement, a silent prayer during the midst of our busy day, or a letter tucked away into their book bag.

Look for ways to be involved with the sharing of His Word and discipleship. A great opportunity is right around the corner! VBS! Are you willing to invest in the lives of these Children? Are you able to tell them about the love of Christ? What impact are you making for His Kingdom? Do not do it out of feeling forced, but out of compulsion for the love that He has shown us.

Joe Butler