



PARENT PAGE

Go & Do

It's easy for teens to get the wrong idea that what we care most about in their relationship with God is what they DON'T do: Don't have sex. Don't drink. Don't do drugs. Don't hang out with the wrong friends. Don't cut class. Don't swear. Don't skip church. Don't watch that. Don't listen to that. Don't laugh at that.

In fact, it's easy for any of us to fall into measuring our own relationship with God on a negative scale. We're tempted to think—and to communicate to our kids—that Christianity is really about not blowing it. “He loves you. He's forgiven you. The least you can do is not screw up!”

Instead, let's encourage conversations about how our faith can—and must!—motivate us to positive actions for Him. We want to talk to kids about moving past the sit-and-don't response to God to a joyful go-and-do response for Him.

Many teens become surprisingly active and expressive when given the opportunity to turn faith into real action. That's what we're hoping to generate as we talk about the “command cluster” of do's in Hebrews 13:1-8. Find a minute to read these very short verses and then look for an opportunity to try out a few of the questions below with your son or daughter.

Talking Points:

- Do you think God cares more about what we DON'T do or what we DO when following Jesus? Why do you think we sometimes get confused that being a Christian is all about NOT doing certain things?
- What are some of the things that our faith in Jesus should make us want to get up and go do? [Parent: This might be a good time to read Hebrews 13:1-8 with your child.]

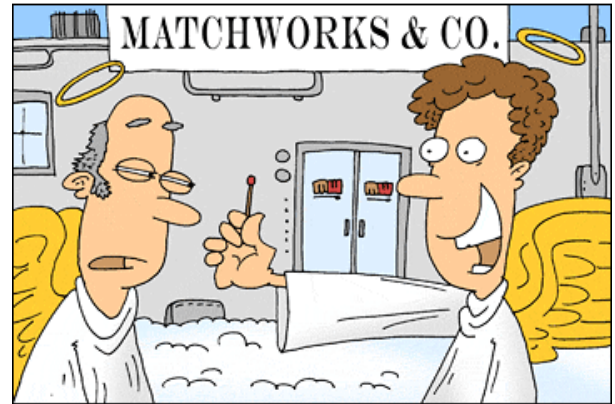


- Do family members love each other differently than friends do? What do you think the Bible means when it tells us to love other Christians like brothers?
- Can you think of a few specific ways you or we have shown brotherly love to other Christians in the last few months? Can you think of any ways other Christians have loved you or us that way?
- Can you think of any times when our family or our church has “entertained strangers”? What are some ways our family might be able to offer hospitality to people we don't know?
- Do you know anything our family could do to help people around the world who are suffering for believing in Jesus? Would you be willing to do a little research and find out how we can help?
- What do you think it means to love money or the things money can buy? Why would loving or living for money be a problem?
- Do you think our society cares too much about money? Do you think our family sometimes cares too much about money in one way or another? What are some things we could do to change that?
- What does it look like for a person to be content with what he or she has?
- Outside of our family, who would you say have been some of your strongest Christian leaders or role models? What difference did trusting God seem to make in their lives?
- How could we imitate the faith of some strong Christians we know who seem to be really content or joyful or purposeful in following Jesus? What are they going and doing that we could try to do, too?

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YOU BUILT AND STAFFED AN ENTIRE FACTORY
JUST SO THAT YOU COULD MAKE THE "MATCH
MADE IN HEAVEN" GAG?!?

Parents are Asking . . .

Q: How can I get to know my teenage son's new group of friends without being a hovering parent?

A: Stock the fridge and pantry, and let them hang out at your house. Once they're watching a movie or doing anything else reasonably safe, you can get all the information you need without being annoying. Pop your head in occasionally and say, "Hey guys, anybody need anything else to drink?" Then come back 20 minutes later and ask, "Who wants a hamburger?" (Don't overdo this, though, because you'll come across as their servant.) Observe how your son interacts with his new friends. Is he comfortable being himself around them? At the same time, you'll be building relationships with these kids so you have a good sense of who they are and so they develop a healthy respect for you and your home.

Q: When a neighbor asked if her daughter could carpool with my kids on school mornings, I was happy to do it, but now I'm driving her home as well. There's been no effort to reciprocate. I'm annoyed!

A: Let's consider your neighbor's situation first. Maybe she hasn't offered to help with the carpooling because she works full time. She should certainly tell you that — and show her appreciation. But some people can feel so indebted to a generous friend that they have a hard time acknowledging it. Ask her directly whether she can pitch in. If she's really strapped, you'll feel better and may not mind continuing to help a mom in need. But if it turns out she's just taking advantage of you, call her and say, "Our family schedule is changing, and starting next month, I won't be able to take your daughter to school anymore." Period. You don't owe her any more explanation than that. If she presses or complains she has no alternative, be pleasant but firm ("Sorry to hear that, but I'm glad I was able to help out for as long as I have"). When you hang up, give yourself a pat on the back for saying no to a user.

Q: I think my daughter took money out of my purse. It wasn't a lot, but I'm very concerned. What should I do?

A: Ask her directly. If she accepts responsibility, tell her, "I am hurt and disappointed, but let's talk calmly so I can understand." Be empathetic but make it clear that this behavior is totally unacceptable. If she denies the theft and you suspect that she is lying, don't overreact by calling her a thief or a liar. Instead, decide whether you think stealing is consistent with her personality. If it is, tell her, "I want to be able to trust you, but because of your past behaviors, I can't right now. And until I can, you won't be allowed near my things." While the betrayal of trust is important, what matters most is uncovering her motivation. Is she buying clothes and make-up? Or is she getting into drugs or alcohol? If it's the latter, she needs immediate professional intervention. Have your daughter do extra chores to repay her financial debt. Donate anything she bought with the stolen money to a charity, and make her do volunteer work for at least four Saturdays, for moral reparations. Take her to see a juvenile court in session. If money continues to disappear, or escalates to shoplifting, ask a cop to scare her straight.