

about heart things. Let them ask whatever they want about anything they want.

3) They didn't "go to church." Sure, they attended services, and typically did so with joy. But attendance in and of itself was neither the extent nor measure of their kids' relationship with God. It was a fraction of their spiritual lives – something they did because God was the epicenter of their heart and family, not because they wanted to check a box or avoid a lecture.

4) The kids knew their ultimate purpose. It was no secret that their children belonged to God, not them, and every decision was made through that eternal lens. They taught me that we're raising future husbands and fathers and church leaders who are ours for just a few short years.

So, we work to instill love and confidence and knowledge and then shoot them off like the powerful arrows God designed them to be. As my boys prepare to

leave home in a few years, I fight the urge to want to hold them tight, not let them go. But it's not about me. God has a plan for these young men that's much, much bigger. Yes, they're going to make mistakes, plenty of them. And yes, I'll miss them so much it makes my heart hurt to even think about. Still, I know I have to let go and trust God, who graciously lent me two incredible, hilarious young men and loves them even more than I do. Ever since they were small, I've reminded them they're only on loan to me from God, and that it's my job to give them back to Him. They were and continue to be a gift, but they're not mine to keep.

- *Melanie Kilgore Hill*

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De 6:6-7 "These words that I command you today shall be on your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your children."

Ps 127:3-4 "Children are a heritage from the LORD... Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth."

Pr 17:22 "A joyful heart is good medicine."

Just Thinkin'

Students of the book of Judges are familiar with the 'cycle of sin' – sin, servitude, sorrow, and salvation. It describes a repetitive pattern in the nation of Israel at the time (and throughout most of their history, for that matter).

And elements of that 'cycle' are actually very good. God's **salvation**, for example, is always welcome – whether we are saved from the oppressions of life or the bondage of sin. And **sorrow** for sin is also a good thing. After all, it's "godly sorrow" that leads to repentance (2 Co 7:10). And even **servitude**, in the earthly sense, can serve a useful purpose. As a form of chastening, it has the potential to strengthen us – if we will allow it to do its work (He 12:4-11), Ja 1:2-4, De 8:2-3, etc).

But one element of the 'cycle of sin' has no redeeming value what-

The Fight Ain't Over 'Til It's Over

soever – the element of **sin**. And how ironic that in the 'cycle of sin' it is God's salvation that sets the stage for future sin – and the renewing of the cycle.

But this is no indictment against God. It simply underlines the ever-present danger of apathy on the part of those who have experienced salvation. Like the Laodiceans some 1400 years later, we can become lukewarm – and thereby useless to God (Re 3:16).

Such examples should serve as a wakeup call today for the people of God. The welcome contentment that comes with being a Christian (Ph 4:11) can set the stage for our spiritual lethargy and demise, if we are not careful.

Remember, the fight ain't over 'til it's over – and it ain't over 'til you're dead.

- *WKing*

ASSEMBLY TIMES

Sunday

Bible Class 9:30
Morning Assembly 10:30
Evening Assembly 5:00

Wednesday

Evening Bible Class 6:30

RADIO PROGRAM

The Bible Speaks



Sunday 9:00-9:30a.m.
KURM 790AM

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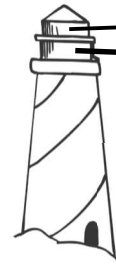
**A Bible in the hand
is worth a thousand
on the shelf.**

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DOWNTOWN GOSPEL BEACON

**PUBLISHED WEEKLY BY THE DOWNTOWN CHURCH OF CHRIST
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FAMILY NEWS

PRAYER LIST –

Preachers we support: Japan, Philippines, Vietnam, Canada, Mexico, Peru, & U.S.

Sick: G&K Fletcher, J&M Swim, J Marshall, S Shell, L&T Deen

Shut-ins: Betty Jo Young, Billie Pennington, Shirley Cole, Mary Lou Lewis, V Carter

Military: Kyler Sullins, Sean Potter

WE REJOICE! – We rejoice with Cameron Burleson who recently made the decision to be baptized into Christ! Let's encourage all of our young people!

SENTENCE SERMON – “The story of Jesus’ birth is not the beginning of the story, but the middle.” - Sam

On Raising Boys (and Girls)

I've been asked a few times recently about advice for raising boys. Because ours are still teens I'm hesitant to offer ANY advice, but I do want to share just a few traits that we as new parents saw in other families with amazing teens (who've since become amazing-er adults who joyfully serve God):

1) Their homes were full of joy. Typically music was involved – hymnals were strung throughout the house and car as singing was likely to erupt at any second. Nagging/yelling was minimal. I once read something like, “The only thing

worse than a whiny, obnoxious teenager is a whiny, obnoxious mom.” That stuck with me. As parents we have to model joy, regardless of the day's emotional/hormonal fluctuations. Pick your battles and recognize that their brains are still growing. Be kind.

2) They were very intentional in creating family time. Closeness to your kids doesn't happen by accident or require expensive vacations, and it can't be whatever exhausted time is left after you've committed them to 15 sports teams and clubs. Have deep conversations