

Parents,

I want to write this letter to you to let you know where I am coming from, to encourage you as we fight together for your children. I am passionate about ministry, and I really enjoy hanging out with and working with your kids. I want to make something clear though - I am all about Jesus! Jesus first and foremost. I am about the Word of God, I am about living a life of Christian worship in response to His Word, I am about Christian community, I am about introducing people to Jesus, and I am about having fun. So, let me give you my thoughts (based out of Scripture) on youth ministry.

Our young people need Jesus. We are living in a world that is filled with distractions and obstacles. We live on this earth surrounded by people who disregard God and deny His very existence. We live with so much deceit around us, and we deceive ourselves because of things like body image, popularity, intelligence, etc. It is a hard world we live in; especially for our kids because they are in their developmental stage. Many people in this world want to make it hard on anyone that has a relationship with Jesus. People fear truth, and therefore, feel the need to try to disprove it. It seems hopeless when we face the reality of the world we live in. There are so many pressures on our kids to conform to the patterns of this world. It often is easier to just go with the flow, but I am pushing our youth to go against the grain. We want to plow a counter-culture with the leadership of Jesus.

In John 17 Jesus prays a powerful prayer to the Father. We pick up about half way through in verse 14 just after Jesus prays about his purpose for coming to the earth.

14 I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 15 I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. 16 They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 17 Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. 18 As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. 19 And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth. 20 "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, 21 that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. 22 The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, 23 I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. 24 Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. 25 O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. 26 I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them."

Things are not hopeless! Jesus is for us, so as Christians, who can be against us? How do we become conquerors? How do we gain ground in this uphill battle? There are 10 significant truths to live by, as believers of Jesus Christ, to help raise our kids to live by.

- 1. Jesus is for us and with us. (v. 14-26)**
- 2. We are to live by the Word. (v.14)**
- 3. The World is against us. (v. 14-15)**

- 4. We belong to the Kingdom of Heaven. (v. 16)**
- 5. We are to be set apart in the truth. (v. 17,19)**
- 6. We are a sent people on God's mission. (v. 18)**
- 7. Sacrifice is a part of life with Jesus. (v. 19-20)**
- 8. Be unified for the glory of God. (v. 21-23)**
- 9. Christian community is of great importance. (v. 24-25)**
- 10. Love God and Love People (v.26)**

This is Jesus' desire for us and our kids. My desire is to see all people walk this way. We have a tough road ahead of us, but together we are stronger. I see youth ministry as one of the greatest tasks, and I believe that every parent is a youth leader. Will you work with me to reach your kids? Will you allow me to speak, not only into your child's life, but into your life as well? Will you help me with things I don't see and don't know?

I have created Parent Pulse so that we can gather together and get on the same page. I truly believe this is an integral part of youth ministry. If I can't connect with you, you can't connect with other parents, then it'll be harder for us to connect to our kids. This is why I think Christian community is so important, and why I believe we should hold it in high regard as we raise our kids.

I pray this is an encouragement to you, and that together we can make disciples who make a difference.

In This Together,

Pastor Justin Reese