

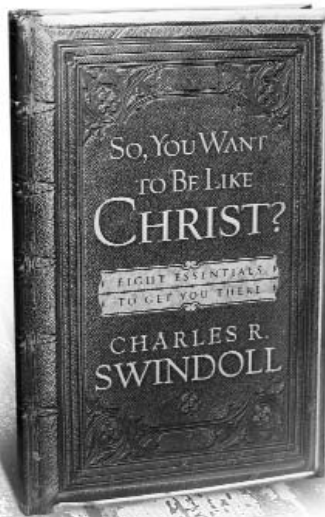
So, You Want to Be Like Christ?

Eight Essentials to Get You There

The message Josh McDowell shared with Dallas Seminary graduates is one that

all of us need. He called us to become more like Jesus Christ in our families and ministries—a challenge at the very heart of everything the Seminary believes and teaches.

Dallas Seminary chancellor and acclaimed Bible teacher Charles Swindoll has the same passion to see God's people build Christ-like character. In his new book, Dr. Swindoll points out that Jesus taught us what it means to take up our cross and follow Him by spending 40 days in the desert, committing His early morning hours to prayer, and



ultimately fulfilling the will of His Father on the cross.

Most people who have confessed Christ want to take up their cross and follow Him. They just need to know how. *So, You Want to Be Like Christ?* fills this need for a practical understanding of the disciplines of discipleship involved in following Christ and truly becoming like Him!

Dr. Swindoll also suggests projects, activities, and exercises that will help you incorporate these essential disciplines into your daily life. This life-changing book is perfect for individual or group study. Send for your copy today, and begin the exciting adventure of becoming more like Jesus Christ each day!

To receive this resource as our thank you for your support of Dallas Seminary, use the enclosed reply card (for subscribers) or call 800-992-0998. Thank you!



DALLAS THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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VERITAS

Equipping Christians to live by truth—*veritas*—from God.

Teaching the Truth So Others Will Know and Live It

by Josh McDowell

Josh McDowell



Josh McDowell once considered himself a skeptic, believing Christianity was worthless. While a student at Kellogg College in Michigan, he accepted a challenge by a group of Christian students and professors to intellectually examine the claims of Christianity. During his journey to discredit the resurrection of Christ, Josh discovered compelling historical evidence for the reliability of the Christian faith and became a Christian. Now an internationally known speaker, author, and traveling representative with Campus Crusade for Christ, Josh has authored or co-authored over 90 books, has spoken to students on thousands of campuses around the world, and has touched the lives of more than 10 million young people in 84 countries. For more information about Josh and his ministry, visit www.beyondbelief.com. This article is taken from Josh's commencement address to the 2005 graduating class of Dallas Theological Seminary on May 7, 2005.

If any faith is based upon real and relevant truth, it is the Christian faith. Jesus said, "You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (John 8:32). When the truth is no longer made real and relevant to people's lives, we gut the true faith of Jesus Christ.

This is why I am so concerned about the issue of truth in relation to young people, which is the area of my ministry and heart. I want you to hear the responses of professed "born-again" church youth to several essential doctrines of the Christian faith, and then I want to talk to you about what you can do to reverse this trend, both as parents yourselves and as those who will be teaching families in your ministry.

The survey I'm quoting from

(continued on next page)

JULY 2005

VOL. 5, NO. 3

defines born-again church youth as those who say that they personally have trusted Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and that if they were to die today, they would go to heaven because Jesus is their Savior and has forgiven them of their sins. In 1991, 52 percent of these young people agreed with the statement that there is no such thing as absolute truth. In 1994, that number jumped to 62 percent, and in 1999 it escalated to 78 percent of self-described born-again church young people.

Right now this figure is the most staggering statistic in the history of the church, with an amazing 91 percent of professed born-again, church-attending youth saying there is no absolute truth. Sixty-five percent of these same young people also say that we cannot know whether any religion is true or not, including Christianity. And today, fewer than 4 percent of these youth agree that the Bible is the infallible Word of God and true in every situation.

Statistics like these reveal that our young people's behavior is out of sync with what they have been taught to

believe. As people who are committed to teaching the truth and who have had the benefit of one of the finest seminary educations in all the world, you need to know where the church is today so you can do something about this slippage in the commitment to truth on the part of our young people.

Our Relationships Drive Our Beliefs

Our behavior is driven by our values, and our values are formed by our beliefs. But for nine years I had been struggling day and night with the question, what engenders our beliefs?

About 11 months ago the light came on, and it wasn't what I had anticipated. What I discovered is that our beliefs are engendered by our relationships. Let me show you how this works.

In Psalm 86, David wrote, "Teach me your way, O LORD, and I will walk in your truth" (v. 11). Isn't that what you as graduates want, to be able to take everything you have learned here and to teach people so that they might live according to the truth? Do you know what the key to that is? In verse 13 David

said, "For great is your love toward me."

John 1:14 says of Jesus, "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us." And then John said that Jesus was "full of grace and truth." Grace is God's unfailing love. It's speaking of relationships. Three verses later the Bible says, "Grace [unfailing love] and truth came through Jesus Christ" (v. 17). Paul emphasized in Ephesians 4:15 that we are to speak the truth. This is what you have been trained to do, and no one can say they have been better trained to do that. But how do you do it? Paul said it right there in Ephesians. You must teach "in love." Beliefs are engendered by relationships.

We Are Hard-Wired to Relate to Others!

Dartmouth University Medical School released a study called "Hard-Wired to Connect," in which it was reported that all scientific research now shows that from the moment a child is born, that baby's brain is biologically "hard-wired" to connect in relationships. Here are two conclusions the study

drew from this evidence that are very relevant to us as Christians today.

First, you must develop loving, intimate relationships with anyone to whom you hope to impart information in a way that it will impact that person's life. Second, you need to model the truth you want to see ingrained in another

person's life. You future parents and grandparents, please hear me. What this means is that you may be able to expound and exposit truth to your children, but unless your children know deep down in their heart that you love them, they may very well walk away from the truth.

Jesus said in the Upper Room after washing the disciples' feet, "I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you" (John 13:15). Paul said, "Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you" (Philippians 3:17). In 1 Corinthians 11:1, he said, "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ." The study from Dartmouth confirms

YOU NEED TO MODEL THE TRUTH YOU WANT TO SEE INGRAINED IN ANOTHER PERSON'S LIFE.

OUR BELIEFS ARE ENGENERED BY OUR RELATIONSHIPS.

what the Bible has been teaching for more than 2,000 years. Beliefs must be taught in the context of relationships if we want our own children and the people we teach to follow Christ.

After the tragic shootings at Columbine High School in Colorado, the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse wanted to find out how family structure influences a child who is into drugs, alcohol, and violent behavior. What they found is that a child raised in a single-parent home in which the mother is the head of the home is 30 percent more likely to go into drugs, alcohol, and violence.

But listen to this finding. A child raised in a two-parent home who has a fair to poor relationship with his or her father is 68 percent more likely to go into drugs, alcohol, and violence. Now here's the good news. A child raised in a home with both biological parents who has a good to excellent relationship with his or her father is 94 percent *less* likely to ever get into drugs, alcohol, or violence. In other words, it is possible but totally improbable. It is not just the structure of a home, but the *relationships*

within the structure of a home that impact children the most.

Johns Hopkins Medical School commissioned a study of 1,377 medical students who graduated from their school over a period of 30 years. The study was seeking a common factor for five major diseases in a person's life. After 30 years of study, the Johns Hopkins researchers found one factor: not diet or exercise, but the lack of closeness to the subject's parents.

I was astounded by that, so I called Johns Hopkins and talked to the people who did the research. They said that stress is a major contributor to disease, and a child raised in a very loving, intimate home environment, especially where there is a very intimate relationship with the father, is able to handle stress so much better.

I was in Phoenix on one occasion speaking at an outdoor high school assembly to about 1,700 students. I had been warned that a group of Gothic students, the ones who dress in all-black clothes and have all the piercings and everything, was going to come and try to break

up the meeting and throw me off campus, as they had done to every other speaker. I stood on top of some huge boulders to hold the students' attention as I spoke and had just started when six Gothics came up and stood there with menacing looks on their faces. I knew I had to do something, so without the audience knowing it, I switched my talk to speak on intimacy, the capacity to be real with another person.

When I finished speaking, I brought it down to how Christ can help us be real. I stepped off the boulders, and as soon as my feet hit the grass, the head of this group of Gothic students literally leaped toward me while 1,700 students gasped. He came within six inches of my nose, but what the students didn't see were the tears just rolling down his cheeks. And they didn't hear him respectfully say to me, "Mr. McDowell, would you give me a hug?"

Before I could even lift my hands, he clamped my arms to my side with a tight hug, put his head on my right shoulder, and cried like a baby. He said, "Mr. McDowell, my father never once hugged me or told me that he loved me." All this young man wanted was the

love of his father.

Molding Our Children through Relationships

My wife, Dottie, and I have raised four children. I found that I could mold them like clay in the hands of a potter in terms of imparting truth and impacting their moral behavior as long as they could answer yes to three questions without hesitating. Those times when they hesitated or said no, trying to mold them was a tough job.

Here are the three questions: "Do you know that I love you?" "Do you know that I love your mother?" "When you get married and have a family, do you want you and your spouse to have the kind of relationship I have with your mother and with you kids?" When my children could say yes to these questions, shaping them was like working with soft clay. Relationships lead our children to accept the truth that we live out and teach to them.

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 13, "If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal" (v. 1). If I can speak truth to my child but do not have love, all of my teaching

IT IS IN THE RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN THE STRUCTURE OF A HOME THAT IMPACT CHILDREN THE MOST.

sounds to my child's ears like meaningless noise.

I learned this lesson one day in my study. I was being pressured by a deadline for a book when my then two-year-old son walked in and said, "Daddy."

Before he could say anything else, I said, "Son, I'm busy right now. I'll talk to you at dinner." He turned around and walked out, and I went on studying.

In about 30 seconds, Dottie came into my study, and I made one of the biggest mistakes of my life. I said, "Honey, not now. I'm busy."

That was not the right thing to say! She walked over to my desk, put her hands down on top of all of my papers, pointed her finger at me, and said, "Honey, you are a five-ring circus. You are always going to have a talk to prepare and somewhere to go to give it, but you won't always have a two-year-old son who wants to sit on his daddy's lap and ask questions." Then she turned and walked out.

Within about three minutes, I found myself on my knees at my desk, making a pledge before God that I try to honor to this day. I have broken it many

times, but I said, "God, from this moment on I will never, ever put my ministry before my wife or my children." On my knees that day in my study, God showed me something that has been a salvation to me in my ministry. He showed me that my family is my first ministry.

I want my associates to be those who encourage not only my walk with Jesus but also my walk with Dottie and our children Kelly, Sean, Katy, and Heather. Because if my children see the unfailing love of God being lived out in my life, they will walk according to the truth.

If you go out to win the whole world yet lose your family, the entire body of Christ will suffer. But I want to encourage you with this: As you go out and teach the truth to others, teach them how to live it, and they will walk in the truth.

AS YOU TEACH THE TRUTH TO OTHERS, TEACH THEM HOW TO LIVE IT, AND THEY WILL WALK IN THE TRUTH.

Author's note for parents who have done things rightly and still have children who rebel: Each one of us needs to be aware that there is no guarantee in parenting. You can be the most loving, godly, relational, sensitive, knowledgeable parent in the whole world, and there is still no guarantee that your child won't turn away from you, won't look you in the eye and say, "I hate you," get pregnant, become addicted to drugs, or end up in prison. There is no guarantee. But for a parent to build a loving, intimate relationship with their child and have that child turn away is the exception, not the rule. —Josh McDowell

Being an example others can follow

Anyone who is committed to the truth of Jesus Christ has had to come to grips with the apostle Paul's stirring challenge in 1 Corinthians 13 to incarnate our teaching in our own lives as we seek to show the love of Christ to those around us.

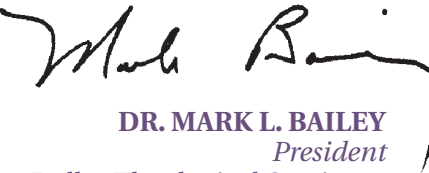
Learning how to teach the truth in love and to live Christ-centered lives is high on the priority list for all of us as faculty, staff, and students at Dallas Theological Seminary. But we all need to be reminded of the importance of modeling the truth we are teaching. Renowned speaker and author Josh McDowell did that for our Seminary family in an unforgettable way during his recent commencement address to our 2005 graduates.

As you read in this issue of *Veritas*, Josh McDowell's message is a clarion call to all of us to raise godly families that will have a dramatic impact for Christ on the next generation and also to be a model to the families among whom we live and minister on a regular basis.

Developing godly leaders who know the Word of God and are able to teach others has long been at the heart of Dallas Seminary's commitment. But it's important for you to know that we are equally committed to nurturing our students as individuals, as husbands and wives, and as parents whose lives and homes will reflect the love of Christ and become the training ground for the next generation of *loving* leaders.

My prayer for each student at the Seminary is that they will love and serve Christ with such effectiveness that they can say, with the apostle Paul, "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1). I trust that Josh McDowell's stirring message blessed you and encouraged you to live a life of love.

Please know that your prayers and financial support for Dallas Seminary are helping mold godly, effective leaders for a world in which individuals and families need to see Christ's love in action. Thank you for standing with us in this important work.


DR. MARK L. BAILEY
President
Dallas Theological Seminary

