

## *Saturday "Sermon"*

David C. Stancil, Ph.D.  
First Baptist Church of Bristol, Virginia  
[dave@fbcbristol.org](mailto:dave@fbcbristol.org)  
October 10, 2009

## **Kids**

I recently saw a church marquee that said "The thing you really need to spend on your children is your time." I've thought about that a lot.

Have you ever wondered how you're going to know whether or not you've done a good job as a parent? I'm all for standard measures such as academic excellence, aesthetic appreciation and athletic achievement, but I sometimes wonder if we've been honest with ourselves about why we spend so much time and money on such activities for our kids.

We tell ourselves that "we're doing it for their own good," and that may sometimes be true; but I wonder whether we might sometimes be pushing ourselves and our kids into all these activities for other reasons. Could it possibly be that we want our kids to excel at least partly so we'll have bragging rights with our friends? Could it possibly be that we want our kids to excel at least partly so they might have a better chance at college scholarships—which would save us money? Whose good are we really seeking, after all?

Surveys and interviews have repeatedly shown that what our children want most is not academics, aesthetics and athletics so much as their hearts hunger for our love. Could it be that our kids agree to do the other stuff because we suggest to them in subtle ways that "if you do well, then we'll love you"? Somehow I suspect that our kids don't want time with teachers and coaches nearly so much as they want special time with us.

Jesus, at whose word the universe burst into being and by whose power it is still sustained, told us that "Anyone who listens to my teaching and obeys me is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock. Though the rain comes in torrents and the floodwaters rise and the winds beat against that house, it won't collapse, because it is built on rock.

"But anyone who hears my teaching and ignores it is foolish, like a person who builds a house on sand. When the rains and floods come and the winds beat against that house, it will fall with a mighty crash" (Matthew 7:24-27).

By themselves, academics, aesthetics, and athletics are sand. Rather than teaching our kids to build their lives on these things, perhaps we'd do better to learn how to build our own lives on the Rock who is Jesus, after which we might give our kids the time with us for which they really hunger, teaching them those foundational things they really need to know. Just a thought.