

# Christian Book Summaries



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## Family Driven Faith

### A Quick Focus

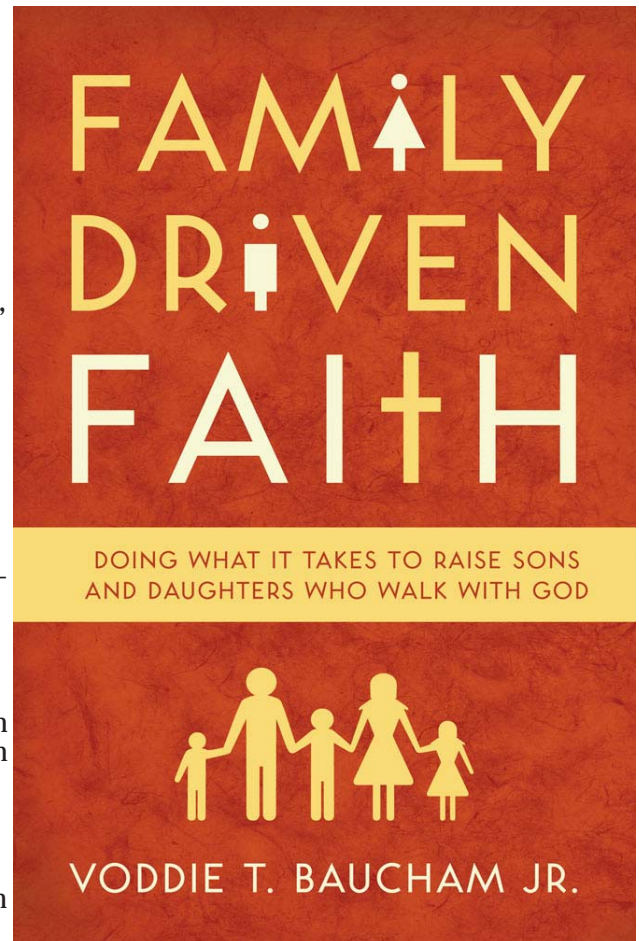
#### The Book's Purpose

- Show that God has not left families alone in the area of raising children
- Promote home-based discipleship and child rearing
- Call parents and the Church to raise children according to *biblical* standards, not *cultural* standards
- Challenge parents and the Church to save a generation that is rapidly walking away from the faith

#### The Book's Message

Christian children are leaving the faith in startling numbers. Our efforts to stop the flow are proving to be pointless. Parents have turned to the Church to fix the problem, but the Church is not equipped to do work of that magnitude. It is up to parents—not an outside source—to learn how to train, educate, and disciple their children in the faith.

God equipped the family to be the heart and soul of multigenerational faith, and families are given the guidelines in the Scriptures, notably in Deuteronomy 6. No matter how ineffective or unprepared parents feel about spiritual leadership in the home, they can rely on the Bible to guide their families toward godliness.



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# The Lay of the Land

For a number of years statistics have been showing that teenagers who identify themselves as Christians are leaving the Church in large numbers. Most do not believe in absolute truth, insisting that experience is the only standard that is justifiable. Many believe that Jesus sinned during His life on earth. Today's culture of secular humanism has invaded their worldview.

The main problem is not simply that they are leaving Christianity. The main problem ***“is that most of them, by their own admission, are not Christian!”*** Christian parents who believe they are raising godly children are discovering too late that their children have no biblical foundation or Christian belief system.

If we as parents don't model Christ while living in the home, who will teach our children about faith? Nurturing a family is the most significant work a parent will ever do; families desperately need mothers and fathers ready to step forward and take the reigns of leadership, not parents willing to let their children be trained by worldly standards. Often parents committed to strict rules in child rearing are accused of stifling children and creating youngsters who will want to rebel. Many parents who adhere to biblical standards feel the pressure to conform—even from other Christians and church leaders!

However, we have a biblical obligation to train our children during their formative years—before they leave home. When parents give in to the societal pressures to do everything possible to make their children popular and happy, they not only miss opportunities to establish biblical roots in their children, but they also train their children to value the world's values instead of biblical ones.

**“Is there any biblical validity to the idea that Christian parents should allow their children to experiment with ungodliness?”**

What do many Christian parents place ahead of intentionally nurturing the faith and biblical knowledge of their children? There are three priorities that often eclipse faith-building exercises in the home.

The first is “making the grade.” The number one goal for parents, both Christian and non-Christian, is offering their children a good education.

The second is “making the team.” Many believe that the only way their children will learn teamwork and sportsmanship is through playing sports. Further, they believe, if you sacrifice sports for something else, you are depriving your child of a foundational need in life.

The third is in the areas of dating and nurturing relationships with the opposite sex. Parents view the dating scene as normal in their teens' lives and even necessary for sound development.

Without doubt, these three priorities play a significant role in life—when viewed and treated in their proper context. However, there are far-reaching consequences when these three emphases replace or come before the most important pursuit of all—striving for godliness. By emphasizing education, athletics, and dating or popularity and not placing spiritual development into the equation, we can send the message that church and a personal walk with Christ are fine, as long as they do not get in the way of these other pursuits.

The overarching values in our culture tend to be anti-marriage and anti-child. Sadly, many Christian parents and children are buying into both messages. Children are getting married later, pursuing careers, and postponing having children until they believe they have fulfilled their dreams. College students are more apt to pursue work in a missionary field than take the challenge of raising children, and large families are often viewed with disdain. Many feel that children are hindrances to high-income, visible careers. Parents are deemed unwise and irresponsible if they choose to breach the unwritten quota of two children per family.

However, the Bible teaches the opposite. Deuteronomy 6, for example, offers a blueprint for families to study and follow in their homes as they work very intentionally to raise up God-fearing children.

# A God with No Rivals

***“Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one!”  
Deuteronomy 6:4***

Most adults tend to understand the serious nature of extramarital affairs; however, they often fail to realize the damaging consequences of idolizing something other than God. Parents make a big mistake when they try to mix the secular culture with the God of the Bible. Many parents are teaching their children from an early age that church, and often moral development, are less important than the extracurricular activities life offers.

If a child is gifted in a sport, after school hours and weekends are dedicated to nurturing that gift. If a child is active in a club or a social group, parents make sure the child attends whenever that group meets. If a child demonstrates outstanding academic aptitude, every effort is made to place the child in the right school and help her earn the best scores. Many parents spend countless hours helping their children develop a wide array of gifts, yet never even think about teaching them how to pray, worship, or understand Scriptures. In this context, children begin to understand that this life has it all, and a personal walk with Christ is a good thing to develop when nothing else is happening.

So, why are many Christian parents astonished at their children's lack of ability to integrate faith into daily life once they become adults?

**“Anything that causes us to compromise our beliefs can (and probably will) become an idol. Some people will only worship that idol halfheartedly, but some will sacrifice all on its altar.”**

Paul's advice in Ephesians 5 is a detailed ideal for avoiding the idols of the day. Verses 15 through 21 identify these five steps to avoid idolatry in our daily lives.

1. Watch your walk (vv. 15-16).
2. Be good stewards of the time (v. 17).
3. Understand God's will (v. 17).
4. Constantly yield to God's Spirit (v. 18).
5. Order your relationships by the Book (v. 21).

Watch your walk: ***“We cannot expect our children to rise above our example.”*** If children do not see parents studying God's Word, they won't study it either. If they see parents' living and speaking one way at church and quite another way at home, they will follow suit. As diligently as parents may try, they cannot teach something they do not practice themselves.

Be good stewards of the time: ***“If we don't carve out time to disciple our children, it simply will not get done.”*** All of us need to evaluate how we spend our time. The world does not give time back once lost, and children lose out on a parents' attention and affection when a parent is involved in so many outside activities that family becomes second. Parents must schedule their time—or expect to fail. Non-negotiable dates pertaining to family should be guarded; nothing should preempt them. Children need to know their parents put them first, above all else.

Understand God's will: ***“The key is to understand that our children don't belong to us; they belong to God.”*** So often what we say as parents does not align with the way we live when it comes to parenting. We force our wisdom on our children when God may, in fact, desire something far

better for them. For example, most parents think it's unwise to be married before graduating from college. Where does the Bible communicate this? Many parents think that in order to be successful, their children must earn a certain degree or pursue a specific occupation, perhaps one that allows for good earning potential and security. Since biblical success is quite different from worldly success, we would do well to pray over our children and fervently ask God to guide us in counseling them in these key areas.

Constantly yield to God's Spirit: ***“It is also important that we instill habits of holiness that will have lasting influence on our children.”*** While daily acknowledging that God is of utmost importance, it is also important to teach children that God is central regardless of the circumstances. Mealtimes are excellent opportunities to demonstrate that God plays a central role in daily life. This can span the entire course of the meal. This awareness of God in our lives shows in times of crisis, often revealing a family's true faith. Special occasions mark unforgettable times to lift the Lord up as central, instead of getting lost in the season or festivities.

Order your relationships by the Book: ***“Mom and Dad's marriage takes precedence over everything else.”*** In a culture that promotes “children above everything else,” Christian parents must show their children what a biblical marriage is all about. If young boys do not learn how to honor their mother, as their father does, they will not honor their wives as Christ honored the Church. If young girls do not learn biblical submission to their fathers from their mother, they will not understand biblical submission when they are married. Nurturing the marriage relationship needs to be a priority in order to shape a child's understanding.

# Learn to Love

***“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.”  
Deuteronomy 6:5***

Without doubt, the love God desires from His followers needs to flow into our other relationships.

**“Is there one kind of love that is religious and another that is irreligious? Is there one definition of love that governs my prayer life and another that governs my family life?”**

Christian families need to be known for their love if they want to shine for Christ in a culture of opposition and selfishness. Those with broken hearts, those who are downtrodden, and those on the brink of disaster should be drawn to Christian families to get a ***“whiff of the fragrant aroma of love.”***

Sadly, many Christian homes do not radiate love. And far too many Christian marriages are unsuccessful. One cause for this is the widespread belief in the Greco-Roman myth of romantic love, the notion that love is ***“random, overwhelming, and uncontrollable.”***

## **A Random Force**

Christians have joined the rest of our culture in mistaking true love for something far less and buying into some myths. The first myth is that love is a random force—we simply cannot choose who we fall in love with. It just happens.

## **An Overwhelming Force**

The second myth is that love is an overwhelming force. Once we are smitten, there’s nothing we can do to break away. If we do, we will be miserable all of our days.

## **An Uncontrollable Force**

The third myth is that love is an uncontrollable force. This myth makes room for just simply “falling out of love,” since it ***“sometimes goes away as quickly and mysteriously as it came.”***

## **A Sensual Force**

And the final myth that Christians embrace about love is that it is a sensual force.

**“Love is equated with sex. Sex is the new marriage in modern media. Movies used to start with two strangers meeting and moving toward wedding bells and exchanging vows. Now the couple meets, has sex, and then after acknowledgement that they have something ‘special’ exchange phone numbers.”**

Why are these myths so harmful? Beyond damaging marital relationships, embracing these myths can wreak havoc in the family, since all four of these false definitions of love are direct opposites of God’s definition of love. For example, if love is nothing more than a random, overwhelming, uncontrollable, or sensual force, how do we love our children?

These attitudes toward love result in children who lack perseverance and character, children who question God’s love for them. Children are left wondering if God will abandon them or divorce them when things get bad.

A biblical portrayal of love is much different. Deuteronomy 6:5 shows us that true love encompasses our wills, our emotions, and our actions. ***“Love is an act of the will accompanied by emotion that leads to action on behalf of its object.”***

Love, plain and simple, is a choice, not an arrow shot by Cupid. The ability to wholeheartedly love another person means that we *will* to love him or her. Love also incorporates emotion, but it does not start there, since emotions come and go. The will can be fixed. We can determine to love.

Love also requires us to apply effort and action. ***As Jesus said in John 14:15, “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.”*** Obeying Christ by keeping the commandments is an active way to demonstrate love. Love in action is for the benefit of the one we love, not for our own benefit.

**CBS**

# Give Him Your Heart

***“These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart.”***

***Deuteronomy 6:6***

When we come to the Lord our entire worldview must change—not only our loyalties, but our thinking, our language, and our understanding. We must embrace God and a whole new world while living in the one that completely disregards Him. We must come to understand that a biblical worldview is not natural for our hearts and minds to accept. We cannot attain a biblical worldview by attending church once a week. We must delve into it fully on a daily basis, exploring the depths of Scripture. As this worldview permeates our thinking and behavior, we will model it to our children and pass it along to them.

**“A worldview is like a pair of glasses.”**

It is the way we see the things around us. We unconsciously assume things, anticipate things, and perceive things in a certain way. A worldview defines our big picture. Most of us incorporate a secular humanistic worldview because it is taught and accepted everywhere. Classrooms, textbooks, media outlets, leaders of our society, and even our churches embrace these ideas without realizing it. Christian parents must become intentional in deviating from this error and must begin to teach their children with a worldview based on God’s Word.

The first building block in developing a worldview is ascertaining what you believe about God. Secular Humanism is atheistic; Christian Theism is God-focused.

The second building block is determining what you believe about man. Secular Humanism sees evolution as man’s creation; Christian Theism sees man as created by God.

The third building block is exploring what you believe about truth. Secular Humanism does not adhere to any absolute truths; Christian Theism holds that truth is objective and absolute.

The fourth building block is finding out what you believe about knowledge. Secular humanists believe that knowledge is discovered through nature and science; Christian Theists believe that ***“our pursuit of knowledge must balance reason and revelation.”***

Finally, as you establish a Christ-centered worldview, you need to discover what you believe about ethics. Secular Humanism proposes that ethics are based on the culture, whereas Christian Theism holds that ethics are absolute and steady.

Christian parents must build their worldview on the solid foundation of God’s Word—and teach their children to do likewise. Families cannot be united unless all members understand the same basic principles and agree to those principles in light of how God wants the family to function. Mixing worldviews only leads to confusion and contradictions. Our children need to know how to face the onslaught of a secular worldview with true biblical answers, and we are the ones who need to teach them.

**CBS**

# Teach the Word at Home

***“You shall teach [God’s Word] diligently to your sons.”***  
***Deuteronomy 6:7***

**“Moses saw the home as the principal delivery system for the transmittal of God’s truth from generation to generation.”**

Christian parents must be careful not to abdicate their responsibility in teaching the Bible to others, whether schools, teachers, pastors, churches, or coaches. Though many of these are trying diligently, not one of them can do the thorough, comprehensive job that God has given to parents. Even the most

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basic efforts, like Bible reading in the home, can have a dramatic effect on a child's faith.

God did not give your children to others; He gave them to us—and for good reason. In the Bible, God has given parents everything we need to navigate this awesome responsibility. The task to which we have been called is sobering—producing godly children who will transmit the faith to the next generation. Although it's overwhelming, it's a task we must embrace very intentionally.

**“We don't have to break codes or unravel riddles in order to understand the basic teaching of God's Word.”**

There is nothing wrong with wanting our children to succeed, or finding help when we need it. What *is* wrong is when we allow other “professionals” to train our children in God's truth. A father used to be considered spiritual if he led his family in prayer and worship. Today parents search for the best nurseries and youth ministries to which they can hand off their children. It's far too easy to delegate the work of spiritual development to others. We need to return to the mind-set of recognizing that it is our God-given responsibility—and privilege—to nurture our children spiritually in our homes.

There are a few home-training basics that work for all families. We can start with the simple plan of reading the Bible to our children. It is our source of wisdom, righteousness, direction, and hope—the very Word of God given to us to guide us and teach us.

Encourage openness and questioning, and search for answers together. Discuss the Christian faith and the claims of Scripture. And build a strong library of biblical resources. Keep in mind through all of this that home training will always take effort and perseverance. Raising godly children will never just happen. It will take determination and consistency. The Bible is the key to making every effort count.



# Live the Word at Home

***“You shall ... talk of them [God's words] when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up.”***

***Deuteronomy 6:7***

The Bible has specific instructions for raising children. As 2 Timothy 3:16 states, ***“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.”*** The book of Proverbs, as well as numerous stories of parents in the Bible, gives us insight into raising our children. The verse in Deuteronomy is no exception. It commands us to implement the Bible into every part of our lives, all day long.

Paul gives us insight into how to disciple our children when he admonishes children to honor their parents and fathers to not anger their children in Ephesians 6:1-4. From this passage comes three phases of development through which we need to guide our children.

The first phase is discipline and training. The second phase is a “catechism phase,” and the third phase is the discipleship phase. In the discipline and training phase, we focus on behaviors. It is important that we train our children at a tender age how to respond properly to authority. We must teach them to do what they are told, when they are told, and to do it with the right attitude.

And, what is most important is not only that we teach our children these things but that we teach them according to biblical standards and ways, not secular standards and ways. We need to understand that the fifth commandment holds significant meaning for our children when they obey it: ***“Honor your father and your mother so that your days may be prolonged and that it may go well with you on the land which the Lord your God gives you” (Deuteronomy 5:16).***

This commandment is the first commandment about human relationships. It's also the first commandment with a promise. These things make disciplining and training our children vitally important.

In the “catechism phase,” we teach our children to believe like Christians. This is the phase in which we teach them the theology

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and doctrine of our beliefs, passing on the responsibility and understanding of faith to them by teaching them what Christianity truly is. Children should be allowed a “safe zone,” where they can ask questions and receive answers so they can solidify what they believe and why they believe it.

The last phase from this passage is the discipleship phase. This is where we teach our children what they are to do with what they have learned. This phase cannot happen until the first two phases are in place~when a child’s mind and heart have been prepared and when she trusts and respects her parents.

One of the most important aspects of discipleship is education. Therefore, one of the most important questions parents today should ask themselves is **“Whom will (my) children resemble at the completion of their ‘formal’ education?”** Several Scriptures offer principles and directives to help us decide how to educate our children, with Proverbs 1:7 being foundational. **“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.”**

As parents, we have the responsibility to ensure that our children are educated in a system that acknowledges God and contributes to their development and discipleship. For many, home schooling is an ideal system. Not only does it ensure the proper foundation to begin education, but it also fulfills the Great Commission as we help our children develop the attitudes and beliefs that will cause them to be voices in the darkness. Through home schooling, parents can teach a proper biblical worldview; shape morality according to scriptural principles; and model for society that there are just some things (such as drugs, sexual promiscuity, homosexual propaganda, teen pregnancy, and functional illiteracy) we are not willing to expose our children to.

**“Let me be clear~I applaud men and women whom God called to teach in government schools ... However, there is a big difference between sending fully trained disciples into enemy territory and sending recruits to our enemy’s training camp.”**

However, where home schooling or private Christian schooling is not an option for families, this issue is still one of the most important issues facing parents today, and we need to make sacrifices to ensure the above discipleship process takes place wherever our children are schooled. **“Oh, how I long to see the day when Christian schools are seen as cities on the hill that beckon parents looking for something better, saying, ‘On Christ the solid rock we stand, all other ground is sinking sand.’”**

CBS

# Mark the Home as God’s Territory

**“You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”**

**Deuteronomy 6:9**

As Christian parents, we should display plaques and other items that show we belong to Christ. These can have lasting impact on our children, as we identify *who* we are and *whose* we are. Engaging the senses can profoundly stimulate a child’s faith.

Establishing a time for daily family worship needs to be a priority in Christian homes. Gathering for prayer, Bible reading, and singing brings families together in spirit and helps connect the dots between our lives.

We run ourselves breathless creating experiences for our children that often do little to help them develop their faith, but so often we can’t find the time to come together to intentionally draw strength and wisdom from God’s Word. It’s not easy to come up with a schedule that will work, but it’s crucial. If God is not a priority before our day begins and as our day ends, then all the things in between are pointless. Parents need to determine to lead their family into their spiritual walk, not neglect the walk for the sake of the other activities.

Where do parents begin in making family worship a part of their lives?

1. Family worship must grow out of conviction. Parents must understand that they need to take responsibility to instruct their children in the ways of the Lord.
2. Family worship begins with the head of the household. God created fathers to lead their families in spiritual matters. That is not to say that mothers don’t have a role, but we must order our lives according to the plan of God.
3. Family worship must be scheduled. If our worship is planned for

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**MARK THE HOME AS GOD'S TERRITORY**

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the same time every day, it will eventually take a back seat to other activities.

4. Family worship must be simple. It does not require a wide array of crafts, music, books, and research. All it takes is a Bible, maybe a story or a song, and perhaps a brief devotional. Read together, and then ask questions of each other.

5. Family worship must be natural. This isn't the time to be everything for everyone. It's important for parents to be themselves or it won't become an intimate, authentic time together as a family.

6. Family worship must be mandatory. Everyone in the family, of all ages, must be present.

7. Family worship must be participatory. One person should not dominate; all family members should share in the experience.

Observing these seven instructions will yield seven blessings:

1. Family worship honors God.
2. Family worship draws a family closer to God.
3. Family worship will draw your family closer together.
4. Family worship lays a foundation on which your children can build.
5. Family worship often exposes weaknesses in the home that need to be addressed.
6. Family worship trains smaller children to learn how they can draw strength and stability from Christ and abide in Him.
7. Family worship makes corporate worship meaningful and understandable for our children.

**“We can turn our homes into sanctuaries for the worship of Almighty God ... Our lives can be fully engulfed with the presence and priority of God. That will go a long way toward establishing family driven faith.”**

CBS

# Enjoy the Gifts Without Forgetting the Giver

***“Then watch you, that you do not forget the Lord who brought you from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.”***

***Deuteronomy 6:12***

Many Christians have come up with the idea that if someone is wealthy, they have been blessed by God. We mistake money for wealth and we forget that the love of money can actually drive a stake between man and God. We take for granted our own ability to provide for ourselves and lose sight of the fact that everything comes from the Lord. As a result, many Christian parents are working diligently to provide certain material possessions for their families, missing the fact that their children are drowning in their things.

**“All the while our children are screaming at us from beneath the piles of untouched toys and unworn clothes begging for a few minutes of our time. Time we simply don't have because we are too busy trying to find that one thing we can add to the pile that will make the screaming stop.”**

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Families can be damaged simply by living in a culture that places value on cars, clothes, and possessions. And Christians fall into the same trap, failing to realize that the work it takes to maintain these lifestyles can distract us from the precious treasures God has entrusted to us—our children. In our society, the “ends justify the means,” and Christians often embrace that mentality as well. But no amount of money or possessions can replace godly parenting. **CBS**

## The Coming Revival: Is the Church Ready?

The Church has a key role to play for families committed to nurturing and training their children in the home.

Sadly, most churches mirror society’s values rather than biblical ones, when it comes to the spiritual development of youngsters. Many families who believe in taking on this role in the home are made to feel unique or different in their churches. Large families are rare, home schooling families are isolated, and in many cases we simply don’t support and encourage each other for living life outside of the “normal” approach of the world around us.

If the Church wants to reverse the trends of teens leaving the Church and Christian families failing in ever increasing numbers, then it must begin to champion the notion that the home is the God-given place for raising up godly young adults.

We have continued to push the children- and youth-ministry agendas with bigger events and passionate, well-trained ministers, pouring money into these ministries. However, the commitment to our children and youth ministries must change. College pastors are doing the best they can, but by the time young people reach this age, it’s too late. High school pastors are doing the best they can, but by the time junior high ministry is finished with students, it’s too late. Junior high ministries are doing the best they can, but by the time they get them from the children’s ministry, it’s too late. Do you see where this is heading? The problem is that we put our stock into separate ministries, funneling our children out to the “professionals.”

The current strategy is not working! First, there is no clear biblical example or mandate for this approach. And second, the current approach doesn’t embrace a biblical model and actually may be working against it.

There are many reasons churches develop youth ministries. ***“We need youth ministry for parents who don’t disciple their children”*** and ***“We need youth ministry for kids who don’t have Christian parents”*** are two that top the list. However, God did not create the Church to compensate for parents failing to do their job.

What our children and teens need is rich participation in the church as a large body, having opportunities to observe other families interacting with each other in worship and teaching.

## A Radical Departure from the Norm

**“The answer to our current crisis is a renewed commitment to biblical evangelism and discipleship in and through our homes.”**

Many churches and ministries are starting to realize the need for family-based youth ministries. They see the failings of our current structure and understand that parents have a vital role in truly developing their own children. But, there is a stronger movement coming to play in churches and families today. The “family-integrated” church does not include parents in the separate ministries. It, in fact, doesn’t separate the ministries at all. Instead, families participate in corporate worship, Bible study, fellowship and outreach, without being segregated at all. From youngest to oldest, families share in the life of the Body together.

**A RADICAL DEPARTURE FROM THE NORM**

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Family-integrated churches are set apart for several reasons. First, families worship together. Second, there is no systematic segregation in the church body. Third, evangelism occurs in and through the homes, not just at church. And fourth, the priority is placed on education as one of the most important components of discipleship.

There are also several key factors in the methods of a family-integrated church. A family-integrated church promotes a biblical view of marriage and family. It celebrates family worship and discipleship. It strongly emphasizes Christian education. And it expects biblically-qualified leaders to run the church.

**“The harsh reality is that unless we radically change the way we view the church and the family we will not see an end to the decimation of both institutions in our culture.”**

Bottom line, only when our families change will we be in a position to stop the downward slide in our society, in our churches, and in our families.

**“The evidence is sobering. The answer is simple. The time is now. We will either win the culture one family at a time or will continue to lose the culture one family at a time.**

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Family Driven Faith: Doing What it Takes to Raise Sons and Daughters Who Walk with God by *Voddie T. Baucham Jr.* Copyright 2007 by Voddie T. Baucham Jr. Summarized by permission of the publisher, Crossway Books, a division of Good News Publishers, Wheaton, Illinois. 224 pages. ISBN 1581349297. \$19.99. Available at your favorite bookstore or online bookseller.

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