

F. LaGard Smith answers the question: Are the youth leaving the church because we are doing something wrong?

Discussion and study guides / questions / topics for your consideration.

1. Notice how the initial answer turns the question just enough to perhaps add depth to this discussion.
 - a. The question starts: “Are the youth leaving the church because...”
 - i. When – in the life of ‘the youth’ – do you think this question might be referring? 12, 16, 18, ?
 - ii. Does the When matter?
 - iii. Who is the “we” that may be ‘doing something wrong’?
 - iv. Why is it the “we” who may be ‘doing something wrong’?
 - b. Note how the answers begins: ‘...if young people leave the home...’
 - i. When is the when of this answer?
 - ii. When is the when which you would have begun to answer this question? 16, 18, 20 years of age?
 - iii. What happens to a young person when they leave the home? Where do they go?
 - iv. Have they been trained (Prov 22.6; Heb 5.13,14); can they wear and use the armor offered from God (Eph 6.10ff)?
 - v. Have they been equipped to withstand deception (2 Pet 2.1-22) and to do good works (2 Tim 3.16,17)?
 - vi. Who do they associate with? (Ps 119.63; Prov 2.20; 1 Cor 15.33,34) for more on this see paragraph 4 below.
 - vii. What happened to you?
 - c. Note also the turn of phrase of the answer ‘...depart from the faith...’ (1 Tim 1.19,20). What do you think this means?
 - i. To you, is this different than ‘...leaving the church...’?
 - ii. Can someone leave the faith and not leave the church?
 - iii. Can someone leave the church and not leave the faith?
 - iv. Why or why not? Discuss.

- v. Consider this: what did Christ say He would build (Matt 16) and what did He shed His blood for (Acts 20.28)?

2. Is it a family problem? Is it a church problem?

- a. IF the answer is predicated on “the when” our young sons and daughters leave the home – after – they leave the home – what is occurring before they leave the home?
- b. What are “we” doing right?
- c. What are “we” doing wrong? Or, perhaps, not doing enough of?
- d. There are two perspectives of viewing these ‘problems’ - either it’s a family problem because the family is failing the young or it’s a family problem because ‘the problem’ is impacting the family. Or both?
- e. There are two perspectives of viewing these ‘problems’ - either it’s a church problem because the church is failing the young or it’s a church problem because ‘the problem’ is impacting the church. Or both?
- f. Discuss.

3. The fullest answer to ‘the problem’ is given as ‘...it is a cultural problem...’

- a. The culture is defined as the ‘common enemy’ of the church, family, parents, and children. What do you think? (Matt 16.26; 24.38,39; Lu 21.34)
- b. Are parents subject to cultural influences? (Psalm 119.18,19; Matt 5.21-24; 13.21,22 or 13.23)
- c. As our children grow in our families, in our homes, what do they see and hear regarding the culture’s effects upon parents? (1 Jo 2.13-14; 1 Jo 2.15ff;)
- d. What do they see and hear regarding the parents responses to the culture? (Eph 5.20,21; 5.25,28,33; 6.1,4; Col 3.19, 21, 23; 4.5,6)
- e. What do they see and hear regarding the culture’s effects upon the church?
- f. What do our see and hear regarding the church’s response to the culture?

4. Are there solutions? Culture is labeled as the common enemy. Another word for enemy is adversary.

- a. Who and what is behind ‘culture’? (2 Cor 4.3,4ff; Eph 2.1-3; 1 Jo 3.7,8; 5.19)
 - i. Does this matter to you? Do you *really* believe it?

- ii. What can we do? (1 Jo 4.1-3; 1 Jo 4.4-6; 1 Jo 4.7-11).
 - b. Do you *really* believe there is a battle? Where is the battle? (Eph 6.12) Does it belong to the Lord? (John 16.32,33; 18.35-37; Col 3.1-3).
 - c. Regarding the importance of associations, of “friends” who are personal companions or ‘facebook’, Instagram, or other online circles and influencers in our lives, how important are these? Discuss also Prov 13.20; 1 Cor 5.9-13; Eph 5.1-12; 1 Pet 3.3-5.
 - d. Where are our feet and the feet of our families? (1 Kings 18.21ff; Prov 24.21; Eph 4.1-16 esp. v13,14,15)
5. This is a most serious and potentially grievous discussion. Is it all hopeless and despair?
- a. Read Deut 6.4-9 and 11.18-25. v. 24 “every place you put the sole of your foot...” can be conquered IF what? For our young men and women, do you believe that?
 - b. But beware...Judges 2.7-10. Why, if their families and congregation, followed Deuteronomy above, would a generation arise who did not know the Lord?
 - c. Discuss Ezek 18.4-32.
 - d. What is the Lord’s promise? Revelation 2.7, 10,11, 17, 26-29; 3.5-6, 12-13; 20-22.
 - e. Application question: when is the last time you have prayed and wept for our youth?